



5 Continents Editions srl  
Piazza Caiazzo, 1  
20104 Milano  
T. +39 02 33603276  
info@fivecontinentseditions.com

---

## L'OCCHIO DEL FOTOGRAFO

JOHN SZARKOWSKI

*L'occhio del fotografo* is an investigation of what photographs look like, and of why they look that way. It is concerned with photographic style and with photographic tradition: with the sense of possibilities that a photographer today takes to his work.

The invention of photography provided a radically new picture-making process—a process based not on synthesis but on selection. The difference was a basic one. Paintings were made—constructed from a storehouse of traditional schemes and skills and attitudes but photographs, as the man on the street put it, were taken. The difference raised a creative issue of a new order: how could this mechanical and mindless process be made to produce pictures meaningful in human terms—pictures with clarity and coherence and a point of view?

John Szarkowski's *L'occhio del fotografo*, based on a 1964 exhibition and first published in 1966, is an excellent introduction to the art of photography. It brings together pictures by both recognized masters and unknown photographers that offer an outline of photography's creative visual language, revealing the extraordinary range of the medium's potential.

The pictures are divided into five sections, each an examination of one of the particular sets of choices imposed on the artist with the camera: The Thing Itself, The Detail, The Frame, Time, The Vantage Point.

**John Szarkowski** was a photographer and Director Emeritus of Photography at New York's Museum of Modern Art and one of the chief architects of the emergence of the medium as a cultural force over the past forty years. He is the author of several books on photography, including *Looking at Photographs* and *Photography until Now*.