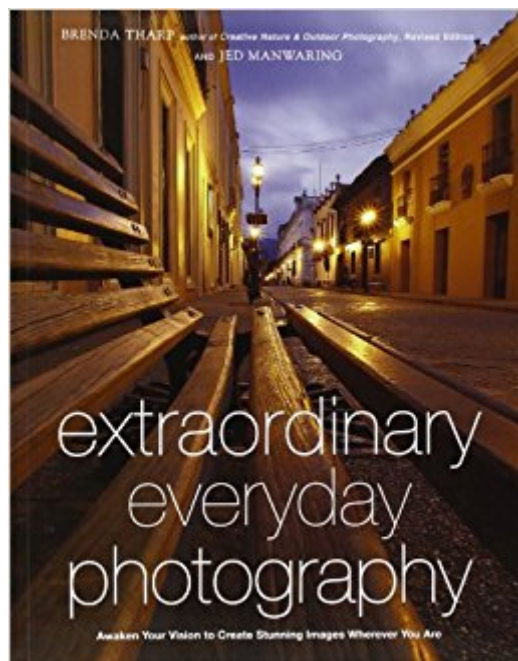




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Extraordinary Everyday Photography: Awaken Your Vision To Create Stunning Images Wherever You Are



Synopsis

Through accessible discussions and exercises, readers learn to use composition, available light, color, and point of view to create stunning photographs in any environment. Photographers are born travelers. They will go any distance to capture the right light, beautiful landscapes, wildlife, and people. But exotic locales aren't necessary for interesting photographs. Wonderful images are hiding almost everywhere; you just need to know how to find them. *Extraordinary Everyday Photography* will help you search beyond the surface to find the unexpected wherever you are, be it a downtown street, a local park, or your own front lawn. Authors Brenda Tharp and Jed Manwaring encourage amateur photographers to slow down, open their eyes, and respond to what they see to create compelling images that aren't overworked. Inspiring photo examples from the authors, taken with DSLRs, compact digital cameras, and even iPhones, show that it is the photographer's eye and creative vision--not the gear--that make a great image.

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Customer Reviews

This is a book from the class of books which aim to improve the photographer rather than one dealing with the technology of photography. Perhaps the best known author along this line is Freeman Patterson who the authors here cite both as an expert in this area and an inspiration for them. These books, such as those I've cited and one other excellent one, 'The Practice of Contemplative Photography: Seeing the World With Fresh Eyes' teach you to see and once you see

the striking image, recording it photographically is just a matter of steps. Who is/are the photographer(s) you admire? Very likely these people did not need to travel to exotic locales like so many photographers desire so they can find 'the shot'. These masters saw the great images they later captured all around them. For example, Henri Cartier-Bresson just wandered the streets taking quiet images using his little Leica. Ansel Adams' images sell for seven figures yet he mostly shot places millions of others have and will travel to yet never equal his shots. Clyde Butcher makes wonderful images where others see nasty swamps. Weston's most famous photographs are of common vegetables. So why do so many art and amateur photographers dream of finally taking that voyage to Antarctica or Africa or some other place to get stunning images when the masters seem to find them in their backyards? The difference is that they are masters because they see artistically. This book, as well as those others cited (and more too) have examples, essays and exercises to help you develop your eye to you too can see like those who can seem to always find 'the shot' where others just walk by.

Hundreds of books exist that explain how to take well exposed, well composed photos. What's so special about this one? The authors, Brenda Tharp and Jed Manwaring, say that while knowledge (the head) of basic photographic techniques is important, it is the heart that is fundamental to the creative process as it is a tool of infinite exploration, perception, and expression in the field of play that is photography today. Brenda and Jed make a case for "seeing deeply and feeling deeply" in order to create images that may or may not be technically perfect, but that have personal meaning -- the ones that makes your heart go pitty-pat and cause you to exclaim a silent or very loud Yes! to yourself. And to carry out that expression effectively, the authors suggest that we begin with a "creative vision that comes from seeing with an open heart and mind." They illustrate the "how" of this process through a series of intelligently presented chapters that each focus on an aspect of expanding one's awareness and perception. Entries such as "Practice Seeing Daily," and "See Beyond the Subject" offer simple but effective ways to see beyond the normal -- for example, to look for potential subjects in close-up and macro work, in reflections, and in patterns. Recommended exercises at the end of each chapter offer simple ways to practice what is discussed. The chapters, "Discovering Pictures Where You Live" and "Capturing Everyday Moments" are at the heart of the book, which challenges the notion that one needs a fat travel budget to take great photos. On the contrary, the authors say, right around you -- in your own neighborhood, park, back yard, or even kitchen -- lie opportunities for "extraordinary everyday photography." Using examples of common objects (a cheese grater!

There are photography instruction books that suggest that a person can be a better photographer if they practice Zen in photography. Somehow my mind rebels at this approach, as if what I consider a form of religion (I know others will disagree) can be picked up and put down like a camera lens. That's why I was pleasantly surprised when Tharp and Manwaring suggested a Zen-like approach without ever mentioning Zen. I was also pleased when they suggested that their recommended approach could be used not only to make photographs of the inherently spectacular, like the Grand Canyon, but also to make better photographs of the everyday world around us. The authors suggest a number of techniques for using the photographer's most important instrument - the mind. The opening chapters deal with learning to see the world and the later chapters with composing the key elements, especially light, to reveal what we see in that world. The book is lavishly illustrated with the authors' images. Each chapter includes several exercises designed to improve your vision, and, even though the text is well written and clear, if you don't work at these exercises, the book is not likely to benefit you. Typically, the chapter entitled "The Moment of Perception" includes an exercise that requires the reader to go out and photograph color, such as an image of one color, or contrasting colors. Doing these exercises is expected to sensitize the photographer to color in all of one's photography. One of the side issues of this approach is that it seems aimed at sensitizing the photographer to form, without regard to content. Many of the authors' images in the early chapters resemble abstract paintings rather than photographs of something.

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