



Gold Edition Premium Content #GE0033

HOW TO BUY AND SELL PHOTOBOOKS

Part II: Photographer Flashpoints (first 25)

As promised, some photobook flashpoints in this issue. 25 photographers appear, Look for 25 more in Part III.

The following list is comprised of what many consider to be great photographers, but note that it's not simply a list of the so-called greatest photographers. It's a list of great photographers that are great for booksellers: There are multiple titles associated with each photographer, and most of them will be worth reselling, many of them at the \$50, \$100 level and up.

I've divided the list into two sections. Photographers appearing in the first section you almost can't go wrong with. Grab any photobook by (or about) William Eggleston, for example, and it's very likely a winner. Frankly, I've never come across one that wasn't. The second list is comprised of photographers that you have to pick your spots with. Some of these photographers, as you might suspect, are deceased legends - Ansel Adams, for example - and it stands to reason that their fame has produced more titles, some of which exist in larger numbers than is typical of photobooks and have more modest values. Still, bookselling opportunities for these photographers are substantial, and in most cases whatever lower-dollar titles there are will often deliver \$10, \$20 or more - and sell quickly.

I've added an example photograph under each photographer's notes. Since photobooks depend heavily on visuals to deliver value, I think it's important for booksellers to familiarize themselves with the work of the brighter lights in this genre. This will help immensely in the recognition of associated photobooks while scouting.

NEARLY ALWAYS

1. BERENICE ABBOTT (1898-1991)

Abbott first established her considerable reputation on the dime of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930's when she embarked on a project to document "a changing

New York." Today, her cityscape photographs define 1930's NYC, and with only several exceptions, almost any Abbott title - and titles are fairly numerous - should go home with you.



2. NOBUYOSHI ARAKI (1940-)

Japanese photographer Araki's claim to (considerable) fame is his documentation of the Japanese sex industry, specifically Tokyo's red light district - the Kabukicho. For this he has been widely criticized, his work often labeled as pornographic, especially for its emphasis on sado-masochism, and even arrested several times. An unusually prolific photographer, Araki has produced 100s of books, many of them highly collectible. Rule of thumb: If you find one, grab it. He's also made appearances in magazines, notably *Playboy*, and issues containing his work are collected. Warning:



3. RICHARD AVEDON (1923-2004)

Legendary photographer Avedon, known primarily for fashion and portrait photography, is bookselling gold. The 1957 musical *Funny Face* was a fictionalized account of his early career - which indicates that he enjoyed significant success at an early age - but it was his later career, which included major contributions to *Vogue Magazine*, *The New*

Yorker, etc., and minimalist but stunning portraiture that really hit the heights. Some of his more notable subjects were Marilyn Monroe and the Beatles, but many regard *In the American West*, a collection of 126 photographs of virtually unknown subjects (cowboys, drifters, etc.) to be his finest achievement. At your next FOL sale, do NOT let anybody wrestle this book, no matter what the printing, out of your hands - in fact, just about anything with the Avedon name on it will do.



4. PETER BEARD (1938-2000)

Another legendary photographer, this one still breathing. Beard's passion - make that obsession is African wildlife, especially the endangered African elephant. Typically, his work consists of collages assembled out of multiple photographs, sometimes using animal blood and remains as enhancements. Beard was something of a jet-setter in his earlier years, hobnobbing with the likes of Truman Capote, Jackie O', and Andy Warhol - and is also known for his portraiture of movers and shakers in and about this crowd. But perhaps he is best known for a diary he began keeping when he was 11, a grand exercise in collage assembled from photographs and many other of life's scraps. Grab anything. He's red hot.



5. HANS BELLMER (1902-1975)

Artist/photographer Bellmer launched his career in 1920's Germany constructing mutated dolls and taking photographs of them, often in anguished, surrealistic poses - this a protest against the cult of the perfect body (and race) then being widely promulgated by German fascists. After WWII, he abandoned dolls in favor of photographing pubescent girls. Bellmer titles aren't as plentiful as those of some of the photographers featured here, but again, grab anything.



6. HARRY CALLAHAN (1912-1999)

American photographer Callahan, one of the great innovators of 20th century photography, was essentially self-taught - as often the greatest innovators are. His work is notable for simplifying (but not distorting) natural or manmade complex forms into elegant, descriptive statements. His wife Eleanor was perhaps the most photographed

model ever and made numerous appearances in front of his camera. With only a smattering of exceptions, Callahan photobooks should go home with you.



7. WILLIAM EGGLESTON (1939-)

Eggleston's gift is transforming the common into something uncommonly beautiful - and doing it in color - so well, in fact, that he's considered the father of modern color photography. If there's something by or about Eggleston not worth picking up, I don't know about it.



8. LEE FRIEDLANDER (1934-)

Friedlander cut his teeth at Atlantic records in the 1950's photographing jazz artists for album covers and later became one of the most influential photographers of the 20th