

# John Szarkowski

## Quotes

*Photography, Lying, Photographer, Might, Thinking, Facts, Different, World, Reality, May, Media, Impossible, Sometimes, Teacher, Wells, Variation, Eye, Persuasive, Music, Vision*

To quote out of context is the essence of the photographer's craft.

~John Szarkowski

A skillful photographer can photograph anything well.

~John Szarkowski

Because we see reality in different ways, we must understand that we are looking at different truths rather than the truth and that, therefore, all photographs lie in one way or another.

~John Szarkowski

Photography is a contest between a photographer and the presumptions of approximate and habitual seeing. The contest can be held anywhere.

~John Szarkowski

It isn't what a picture is of, it is what it is about.

~John Szarkowski

The world now contains more photographs than bricks, and they are, astonishingly, all different.

~John Szarkowski

The goal is not to make something factually impeccable, but seamlessly persuasive.

~John Szarkowski

The very best pictures adapt themselves to many changes in meaning.

~John Szarkowski

What's happening is that people are making a billion photographs a year of their cats, frequently with the cats wearing costumes. Do you think I should be doing shows of cat photography?

~John Szarkowski

Like an organism, photography was born whole. It is in our progressive discovery of it that its history lies.

~John Szarkowski

Pure photography is a system of picture-making that describes more or less faithfully what might be seen through a rectangular frame from a particular vantage point at a given moment.

~John Szarkowski

They were ... pure and unadulterated photographs, and sometimes they hinted at the existence of visual truths that had escaped all other systems of detection.

~John Szarkowski

A camera has interesting ideas of its own.

~John Szarkowski

The photographer's vision convinces us to the degree that the photographer hides his hand.

~John Szarkowski

A photographer's best work is, alas, generally done for himself.

~John Szarkowski

Photography's central sense of purpose and aesthetic: the precise and lucid description of significant fact.

~John Szarkowski

Photography is choosing where to point your eye-cone.

~John Szarkowski

Trained as a musician, [photographer Ansel] Adams understood the richness of variation that could be unfolded from a simple theme.

~John Szarkowski

Luck is the attentive photographer's best teacher.

~John Szarkowski

The central act of photography, the act of choosing and eliminating, forces a concentration on the picture edge - the line that separates in from out - and on the shapes that are created by it.

~John Szarkowski

Whatever else a photograph may be about, it is inevitably about photography, the container and vehicle of all its meanings.

~John Szarkowski

Photography was not invented to serve a clearly understood function. There was in fact widespread uncertainty, even among its inventors, as to what it might be good for.

~John Szarkowski

In practice a photographer does not concern himself with philosophical issues while working; he makes photographs, working with subject matter that he thinks will make the pictures.

~John Szarkowski

Most of Tina Modotti's work that is known to the photography world was done in Mexico in the years 1923 through 1926, when she lived and worked with Edward Weston.

~John Szarkowski

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