

# Mary Ellen Mark

## Quotes

*People, Thinking, Photography, Real, Reality, Done, Views, Trying, Photograph,  
Opportunity, Cameras, Photographer, Use, Ideas, Subjects, Years, Shutters,  
Heart, Colour, Sometimes*

Finding the right subject is the hardest part.

~Mary Ellen Mark

Photograph the world as it is. Nothing's more interesting than reality.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I just think it's important to be direct and honest with people about why you're photographing them and what you're doing. After all, you are taking some of their soul.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I'm interested in reality, and I'm interested in survival. I'm interested in people who aren't the lucky ones, who maybe have a tougher time surviving, and telling their story.

~Mary Ellen Mark

It's not when you press the shutter, but why you press the shutter.

~Mary Ellen Mark

Usually my ideas for work have revolved around my interest in people, especially people that live on the edges of society.

~Mary Ellen Mark

Reality is always extraordinary.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I was fascinated by my own prom pictures.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I'm just interested in people on the edges. I feel an affinity for people who haven't had the best breaks in society. What I want to do more than anything is acknowledge their existence.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I respect newspapers but the reality is that magazine "photojournalism" is finished. They want illustrations, Photoshopped pictures of movie stars.

~Mary Ellen Mark

One of my all-time favorite photographers is Irving Penn. I wish I could have watched him work.

~Mary Ellen Mark

A great photograph needs no explanation; it functions by suggestion. There is no need to be explicit.

~Mary Ellen Mark

In a portrait, you always leave part of yourself behind.

~Mary Ellen Mark

If you are interested in photography because you love it and are obsessed with it, you must be self-motivated, a perfectionist, and relentless.

~Mary Ellen Mark

The subject gives you the best idea of how to make a photograph. So I just wait for something to happen.

~Mary Ellen Mark

The obsessions we have are pretty much the same our whole lives. Mine are people, the human condition, life.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I'm a documentary photographer. That's what I've always wanted to be; that's where my heart and soul is.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I wanted to travel from the beginning. As a kid, I used to dream about

airplanes, before I ever flew in one.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I work in colour sometimes, but I guess the images I most connect to, historically speaking, are in black and white. I see more in black and white - I like the abstraction of it.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I want my photographs not only to be real but to portray the essence of my subjects also. In order to do that, you have to be patient.

~Mary Ellen Mark

Nowadays shots are created in post-production, on computers. It's not really photography.

~Mary Ellen Mark

Everyone asks me how I get my subjects to open up to me. There's no formula to it. It's just a matter of who you are and how you talk to people - of being yourself.

~Mary Ellen Mark

That's the way I learned photography: You make your picture in the camera. Now, so much is made in the computer. ... I'm not anti-digital, I just think, for me, film works better.

~Mary Ellen Mark

If I hadn't become a photographer, I would have loved to become a doctor. I would have loved to have done something that actually helped people and changed their lives.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I always wanted to photograph the universal subjects.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I think the prom is very serious also. It's an American ritual, it's a rite of passage, and it's very much a part of this country.

~Mary Ellen Mark

When I started out, it was considered very wrong to change an image. There were scandals if someone inserted a sky into a war picture or something. Now it's all about that.

~Mary Ellen Mark

Im just interested in what makes a photograph.

~Mary Ellen Mark

Sometimes I work on film sets. I've done this for 40 years. I always wanted to photograph on the set of an Ingmar Bergman film. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity.

~Mary Ellen Mark

I go into every story thinking I'm going to fail. I think about that all the time - I think it's going to be terrible. Every story is like the first I've ever done.

~Mary Ellen Mark

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