

# Walker Evans

## Quotes

*Photography, Art, Eye, Men, Thinking, Needs, Reality, People, Real, Staring,  
Use, Looks, Photographer, Style, Light, Poison, Knowing, Vision, Differences,  
Beach*

Whether he is an artist or not, the photographer is a joyous sensualist, for the simple reason that the eye traffics in feelings, not in thoughts.

~Walker Evans

Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long.

~Walker Evans

In order to put meaning back into our lives, we should recognize illusions for what they are, and we should reach out and touch the fabric of reality.

~Walker Evans

The secret of photography is, the camera takes on the character and personality of the handler.

~Walker Evans

Documentary: That's a sophisticated and misleading word. And not really clear! The term should be documentary style! You see, a document has use, whereas art is really useless.

~Walker Evans

The meaning of quality in photography's best pictures lies written in the language of vision. That language is learned by chance, not system.

~Walker Evans

The eye traffics in feelings, not in thoughts.

~Walker Evans

Good photography is unpretentious.

~Walker Evans

That's my idea of what a portrait ought to be, anonymous and documentary and a straightforward picture of mankind.

~Walker Evans

It's easy to photograph light reflecting from a surface, the truly hard part is capturing the light in the air.

~Walker Evans

I wanted so much to write that I couldn't write a word.

~Walker Evans

Photography is not cute cats, nor nudes, motherhood or arrangements of manufactured products. Under no circumstances it is anything ever anywhere near a beach.

~Walker Evans

It is the way to educate your eye and more. Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop.

~Walker Evans

I say half jokingly that photography is the most difficult of the arts. It does require a certain arrogance to see and to choose. I feel myself walking on a tightrope instead of on the ground.

~Walker Evans

It's too presumptuous and naïve to think you can change society by a photograph or anything else... I equate that with propaganda; I think that's a lower rank of purpose.

~Walker Evans

Nobody should touch a Polaroid [camera] until he's over sixty

~Walker Evans

I think there is a period of esthetic discovery that happens to a man and he can do all sorts of things at white heat.

~Walker Evans

What America needs is a political revolution.

~Walker Evans

I used to try to figure out precisely what I was seeing all the time, until I discovered that I didn't need to. If the thing is true, why there it is.

~Walker Evans

Do we know what we look like? Not really.

~Walker Evans

You see, a document has use, whereas art is really useless. Therefore art is never a document, although it can adopt that style.

~Walker Evans

... nature photographs downright bore me for some reason or other. I think: 'Oh, yes. Look at that sand dune. What of it?'

~Walker Evans

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