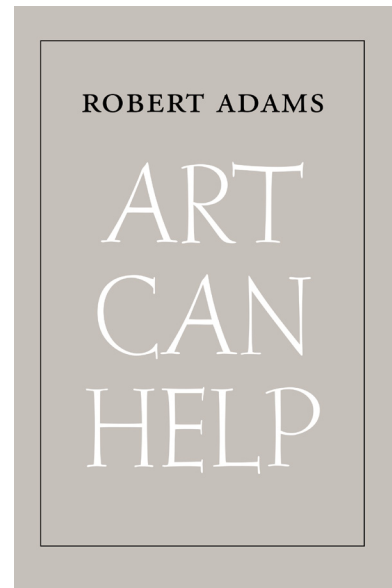


NEW PUBLICATION: ART CAN HELP, BY ROBERT ADAMS

An intimate compilation of essays by one of the world's greatest contemporary photographers on the purpose of art and responsibility of the artist

July 10, 2017, New Haven, Conn.—The Yale University Art Gallery is delighted to announce the publication of *Art Can Help*, an intimate collection of meditations on the purpose of art, and the responsibility of the artist, by one of the world's greatest photographers. In his first collection of essays in more than 20 years, the internationally acclaimed American photographer Robert Adams puts forth the idea, now somehow radical, that art can and should “reinforce a sense of meaning in life.” Following an introduction, the book begins with an homage to the American painter Edward Hopper, an artist venerated by Adams. The author then offers more than two dozen deeply personal reflections on the beauty, richness, and significance of the works of many noted photographers, including Julia Margaret Cameron, Emmet Gowin, Wayne Gudmundson, Dorothea Lange, Abelardo Morell, Edward Ranney, John Szarkowski, and Garry Winogrand.



Eric Paddock, *Cedarwood, Colorado*, 1991.
© Eric Paddock

Each of the essays—more than half of which have never before been published—focuses on one or two works of art, and asks the reader to look closely. Many of the texts summon literary voices, such as Czeslaw Milosz and Virginia Woolf. Adams's background as an English professor is evident in the ways in which he illuminates the vibrant relationship between literature and photography, and the critical role that both play in examining the world and humanity itself. Adams compares Abelardo Morell's camera-obscura image of an attic, for instance, to the empty summer house on the coast of Scotland described by Woolf in *To the Lighthouse*, and in discussing Eric Paddock's *Cedarwood, Colorado*, he invokes the poet Richard Wilbur's words: “The leaves, though little time they have to live, / Were never so unfallen as today.” Adams brings to each photograph the keen eye of a fellow artist and the nuanced language of a gifted writer.

Amid divisive political discourse and growing environmental crises, *Art Can Help* makes a plea for art that asks us to find hope in natural beauty and in the kindness and caring of others. Adams forgoes art hinged on ironic disengagement from the outside world and instead argues for an artistic practice that “encourages us to gratitude and engagement, and is of both personal and civic

consequence.” His singular eye finds beauty in the “blue-cold road” of Leo Rubinfien’s *Leaving Sheremetyevo, Moscow*, and in the hand that stretches out toward a calf in Nicholas Nixon’s *West Springfield, Massachusetts*, which evokes, for him, the hand of God touching the hand of Adam on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Adams’s voice is at once intimate and accessible, and is imbued with the accumulated wisdom of a long career devoted to making and viewing art. This eloquent and moving book champions art that fights against disillusionment and despair. In the author’s words, “More than anything else, beauty is what distinguishes art. Beauty is never less than a mystery, but it has within it a promise.”



Nicholas Nixon, *West Springfield, Massachusetts*, 1978. © Nicholas Nixon, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

About the Author

Over the last 50 years, Adams has offered austere views of a landscape profoundly changed by human development—from his seminal work in the suburbs of Colorado Springs and Denver (1976–82) to his elegiac portrayals of trees in the Pacific Northwest (2009–12). In addition to publishing more than 45 compilations of his photographs—including several with the Yale University Art Gallery—Adams has also written insightful essays on the practice and goals of art, which have been collected in the volumes *Beauty in Photography* (1981) and *Why People Photograph* (1994).

Hardcover with jacket / 92 pages / 5½ × 8¼ inches / 35 color illustrations / Distributed by Yale University Press / Publication date: September 19, 2017 / Price: \$25

Also available from the Yale University Art Gallery:

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What We Bought: The New World, Scenes from the Denver Metropolitan Area, 1970–1974

For more information, visit artgallery.yale.edu/publications.

Yale University Art Gallery

The Yale University Art Gallery, the oldest college art museum in the United States, was founded in 1832 when the patriot-artist John Trumbull gave more than 100 of his paintings to Yale College. Since then its collections have grown to more than 200,000 objects ranging in date from ancient times to the present.

General Information

The Yale University Art Gallery is located at 1111 Chapel Street, New Haven, Connecticut. Museum hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 am-5 pm; Thursday until 8 pm (September-June); and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am-5 pm. The Gallery is closed Mondays and major holidays. Free and open to the public. For general information, please call 203.432.0600 or visit the website at artgallery.yale.edu.

Press Contact

Joellen Adae, Director of Communications, Yale University Art Gallery, 203.432.0611,
joellen.adae@yale.edu