Adams, Ansel, 1902-1984

US photographer. Concentrating on the scenic grandeur of the West, Adams produced magnificent prints which are widely exhibited. A co-founder of Group f/64, he was instrumental in forming museum and university photographic departments and was a celebrated teacher. He wrote the *Basic Photo-Books* series of manuals (1968).

Summary Article: Adams, Ansel

from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1902–84, American photographer, b. San Francisco. He began taking photographs in the High Sierra and Yosemite Valley, with which his name is permanently associated, becoming professional in 1930. That year he published the first of many books of his photographs, *Taos Pueblo*. With Edward Weston and others he founded the Group f/64 in reaction to the painterly photographic aesthetic then current. He specialized in characteristic regional landscape, particularly of the Southwest, and worked to emphasize the conservation of nature. In addition to heroic vistas of the American wilderness, he also made smaller and more intimate images of such landscape elements as trees, rocks, driftwood, and grasses.

Adams wrote numerous technical manuals, including the classic *Basic Photo-Books* series, and helped to found photographic art departments at New York City’s Museum of Modern Art (the first such department) and at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. His book *Born Free and Equal* (1944) was an effort to aid Japanese Americans incarcerated in “relocation camps” during World War II. In 1946 he established the first college department of photography at the California School of Fine Art. Adams also published the first superb portfolio reproductions of his own and others’ photographs. His work has become known to a wide audience through the many books, posters, and calendars that have featured his photographs.


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