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# Light, Gesture, And Color (Voices That Matter)



## Synopsis

Jay Maisel, hailed as one of the most brilliant, gifted photographers of all time, is much more than that. He is a mentor, teacher, and trailblazer to many photographers, and a hero to those who feel Jay's teaching has changed the way they see and create their own photography. He is a living legend whose work is studied around the world, and whose teaching style and presentation garner standing ovations and critical acclaim every time he takes the stage. Now, for the first time ever, Jay puts his amazing insights and learning moments from a lifetime behind the lens into a book that communicates the three most important aspects of street photography: light, gesture, and color. Each page unveils something new and challenges you to rethink everything you know about the bigger picture of photography. This isn't a book about f-stops or ISOs. It's about seeing. It's about being surrounded by the ordinary and learning how to find the extraordinary. It's about training your mind, and your eyes, to see and capture the world in a way that delights, engages, and captivates your viewers, and there is nobody that communicates this, visually or through the written word, like Jay Maisel. *Light, Gesture & Color* is the seminal work of one of the true photographic geniuses of our time, and it can be your key to opening another level of understanding, appreciation, wonder, and creativity as you learn to express yourself, and your view of the world, through your camera. If you're ready to break through the barriers that have held your photography back and that have kept you from making the types of images you've always dreamed of, and you're ready to learn what photography is really about, you're holding the key in your hands at this very moment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Photographer Jay Maisel's career spans 61 years. His name has become synonymous with vibrant color photography that uses light and gesture to create countless unforgettable images for advertising, editorial, and corporate communications. In addition, his pictures appear in books and private, corporate, and museum collections. Some of his commercial accomplishments include five Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue covers, the first two covers of New York magazine, and the cover of Miles Davis's Kind of Blue. Included among his many awards for excellence are the Art Directors Club Hall of Fame, American Society of Media Photographers' Photographer of the Year Award, and the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award. Since he stopped taking on commercial work in the late 1990s, Jay has continued to focus on his personal work. A graduate of Cooper Union and Yale University, he continues his education by teaching younger photographers at workshops, seminars, and lectures around the world, and has developed a reputation as a giving and inspiring teacher.

I really like Jay Maisel's photography, so this book was a big treat for me. It's full of some of his best pictures, and his thoughts as he was making each and every one. We learn \*why\* he actually took a picture and what was going through his mind before he pressed the shutter button. The book doesn't waste time with idle filler about the "settings" he used or even a discussion of his technique; it's all about creativity. We're allowed to take a peek into the mind of an artist at work. I've returned to the book many times for inspiration. Incidentally, I saved a little money on my book purchase by buying the Kindle version (not the paperback) and having it downloaded to the Kindle app on my iPad. Super viewing!!

Reading Ken Rockwell's over-enthusiastic comments I was glad that we, simple mortals, can finally discover the "secrets" of the world's greatest and I had huge expectations (60 years of "everything" from the world's best, woow).. While the book is not bad and the images are wonderful, the only "secret" I can remember is that, in Maisel's opinion, for good images, one has to wait for the rare moments where the combination of the light, the colour and the essence (gesture) of a scene is... optimum. To me, an aspiring, non-professional photographer, this was the most useful piece of information in the book. There were lots of other details about HIM which I found useless, but

nevertheless entertaining. In my opinion, the "magnificence" of this book is overrated, but it is still an agreeable reading. I guess my disappointment came from the huge difference between the expectations and the actual content, so if you have lower expectations, you won't be disappointed and you'd be happy with this book.

Maisel is clearly a master of photography whose techniques are both unique and inspiring. While this work presents ideas and hint that will advance your knowledge and abilities, it's rather basic at its core. For those who desire to advance beyond beginner, this is an important guide. For the more experienced photographer this may not be satisfying. Jay Maisel is a legend in photography, and rightfully so, but this is not indicative of his creativity and genius.

Clearly, the author is an experienced and talented photographer and I'm sure his classes and workshops are a worthwhile venture. I can summarize this book in one sentence though. Look for the unexpected everywhere you go. Save the \$ and look elsewhere as this is neither a high quality coffee table book nor an extensive tutelage in photography. It falls short on both counts. That said there is still something endearing about the author's style and you do get a sense for his passion of photography in his musings.

I like this book a lot. It is refreshing. I don't like to type this on an iPad in a cramped airport lounge. It is about the F stop, but what it teaches us, is not to get seduced by the technical stuff and to discover the magic again.. A very good read... A good book to return to..

Light, Gesture and Color : "Light and color are about form. Gesture has content as well as form." "Light has a massive effect on color." "Gesture holds its own no matter what the light is." "Gesture incorporates narrative and can convey all sorts of emotion and intellectual content." These quotes from the first heading on Light, and more such as there is no bad light, light without shadow loses drama. Gesture is Jay Maisel's term for essence/ character/ descriptive property/ "it-ness" of his every subject. It is seeing beyond looking, and intensifying the looking into the innermost properties of whatever the subject. Colour has subtleties, hue, shades, saturation it is not black and white, its observation is individual to each viewer. Colour is only perceived in reference to other colours, the eye adapts to colour casts. Put colours together, side by side, additive or subtractive,

and the perception of colour changes. Colour is seductive. Exercise: put down a piece of coloured paper, leave the room to find a colour that matches it. Seeing Colour, Gesture and Light is not immediate it takes practice. This visual experience should be nurtured at all times not only with a camera. He exhibits a photograph of a Handball court, the background wall is green, probably painted rather than by white balance, the players are silhouetted black and a chain wire fence between them and the camera forms a yellow textured filter maybe from incandescent lighting, or the whole thing could be sunlit outdoors. The delight is the light, however sourced, and the green and yellow colour. The figures are secondary and passive, gesture is in the fence. Gesture can apply to everything not just people. Now where are our three cumulative phototypes of creative photography here? Clearly Gesture is personal expression, light is technical and colour is design. Jay Maisel is a colour photographer, even no colour (shades of grey) cannot be excluded from graphic art within the frame. He introduces shooting tips with examples in his monologue: Shoot every day. Always carry your camera with you. We photograph for the joy of it. Make photography fun. Be responsible for every square millimetre of the frame. While the subject is moving towards you setup the background framing DOF/horizons Always shoot it now, light is instantaneous, fleeting, it will not be repeated. There is no bad light, at noon most but not all of his examples are under dappled light. We experience Light, Colour and Gesture in the context of our emotional being. Don't replicate, reveal. Look what can be done with the light even with the power lines along the road. The more light you have in an image, the less drama you get. Light removes mystery. Add light don't fight it. Paint studio black, not white (I like Point Light's mid grey) Make pictures that make viewers ask questions Keep gear simple when you go out, carry one camera - requires less decisions Jay Maisel carries a Nikon 28-300mm, (I carry a Fuji X100 35mm, I have options) He is not a portable flash photographer Be ready, setup for bracketing and be patient. Photographic gifts can just happen If you are open to images they will find you, shoot what is in front of you Often the problem becomes the solution (as in architectural design) Retake the same picture over time, watch it grow with different light and participants Sometimes you need f/22, f/13 is not enough (pinholes diffraction ?) Compose with your zoom lens, he uses the long end but does not exclude wide angle Backgrounds should not compete with subjects Try not to always shoot straight ahead, look down, look up / get down, get high up When have stacked up years of experience and you are aware and ready with your camera you will miss 99 out of 100 decisive moment shots, more if you are unaware Woody Allen said that if you never fail, you're not trying hard enough Yes as Rainman said "There are lots of them" Jay Maisel moves on demonstration of

Gesture, perception becomes clouded in what he sees vs, what we see. It is important not to judge yourselves against others he says, don't compare your photography to other peoples, compare only with your own. (I have said on numerous occasions this is the religious side of photography). He describes the details surrounding example photographs: Photography records history Photographing two people relating to each other is 10x harder than one the ultimate gesture. When you are comfortable with two move onto three as a frame within a frame shooting at train stations (train window within photo frame) To ask people to pose will change the whole thing from what originally attracted you Your buddy's shot will be different to yours, but don't get in the other shooter's way Best to shoot on your own, you are more introspective, less social, more proactive Jay Maisel has a yellow wall too, one of the few he post-processed in the book Like Ken Rockwell claims too, he likes to get it in camera jpeg Monochrome colour - use minimum colour for maximum effect It's the interaction or relationships between colours that makes a colour image Let past successes go or you will never be able to see anew Shoot what moves you, if it is fun shoot it Robert Doisneau said: Find the stage and players will come Photographers are interested in how things look as they are found Use opposite colours on the colour wheel that have the same lightness or darkness Only agree to shoot a wedding if there is a real wedding photographer there too You don't always want bright colours; you want interactions of colour In aeroplanes don't let the camera touch anything, in helicopters remove the doors More detail: leaning out secure the seatbelt with gaffer's tape or with a release "ear" Editing is a second chance for an image to be affirmed or go off on another track Always shoot from your hotel window Crop in the camera as much as possible And so on handicapped by the miniature size of the images on the Kindle delivery which take from the description supporting them. (If I ever published an illustrated book I would not allow it to be ruined by Kindle). I haven't accepted the challenge to read through the above tips and visualise the image demonstrating them. Perhaps after acquiring the hard copy. Jay Maisel is now elderly, the images presented are his personal work over a long career while he worked as a commercial photographer. They are good photographs, not extended and reworked images that he has presented to his many students as art or for critique. They are real, he is quite emotional about them, they come from his inner being in his search for Light, Colour and Gesture, he tells you how for each example. The book is a reminder that straight colour photography technically achieved with design and emotive purpose can deliver art direct from the camera.

There are many books on photo composition and, of course, many books with wonderful photographic art. But few combine both so effectively. I find most books on composition academic and of little value in practical application. Jay's book has wonderful photographs, many of recent work, and are combined with short comments that although brief, I found very helpful in understanding his thinking or the circumstances that led to the photograph being described. Because it is so helpful, this is a book I will go back to time and again.

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