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Archives of American Art

Interview with Ansel Adams, 1976 December

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WEBVTT

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<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: I can give you one example - a strange situation. Now the, Polaroid people - I've been a consultant there for a long time,

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it's remarkable what they put out. Most of the work that they're really interested in, I'm not. I mean, they're interested in the diary.

<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: Mmm, mm-hmm [[affirmative]]

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<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: They put out the SX70 camera, which is a miracle. I mean, this whole process, it, it's unbelievable. I don't like the colours, it's too, far too short range -- I'm not happy with it --

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<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: -- But you're talking from another --

<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: Yeah. But, along comes this young man named [[Ronan?]] [[Blocks]] who was in our workshops. And he does the SX70. Then he, he edits it, he takes a tool like cherry wood fingers. Like a manicure, soft wood and he outlines certain things that shape the body and the face and object -

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- and then he puts it in the toaster for 5 seconds and the mylar separates. And it comes out as if it's ceramic tile.

<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: How extraordinary!

<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: It's absolutely unique. Fabulously beautiful. [[garbled]]

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<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: Isn't that interesting!

<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: It's unbelievable. So here's somebody who takes a process and does - it's been done by others, but never with such good taste and stuff so now those people in New York have done it and then they got it dirty, you know.

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I love the nude and I love the daring and I love the explicit and all that, but I don't like things that are dirty. And we, it just gets to the point where you want to open the windows.

<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: Exactly.

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<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: It's got nothing to do with the quality of the work--

<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: What kept you in California?

<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: Hm?

<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: What kept you in California?

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<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: Oh, it was the home. And Yosemite.

<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: It's always been-- [[cross]]

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<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: I thought one time quite - the muse it [[music?]], I had to go sooner or later.

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And I went there first in 1933 and really wasn't very happy there. I mean, I met some wonderful people.

<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: Californians never are.

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<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: Then of course went back to the new halls and we set up an appointment with the Museum of Modern Art.

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<i>JAN BUTTERFIELD</i>: Yes, exactly.

<i>ANSEL ADAMS</i>: [[?]] I was always trying to get back here. I was a terrible father. I had a couple of kids. Virginia did all the familial jobs.



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