

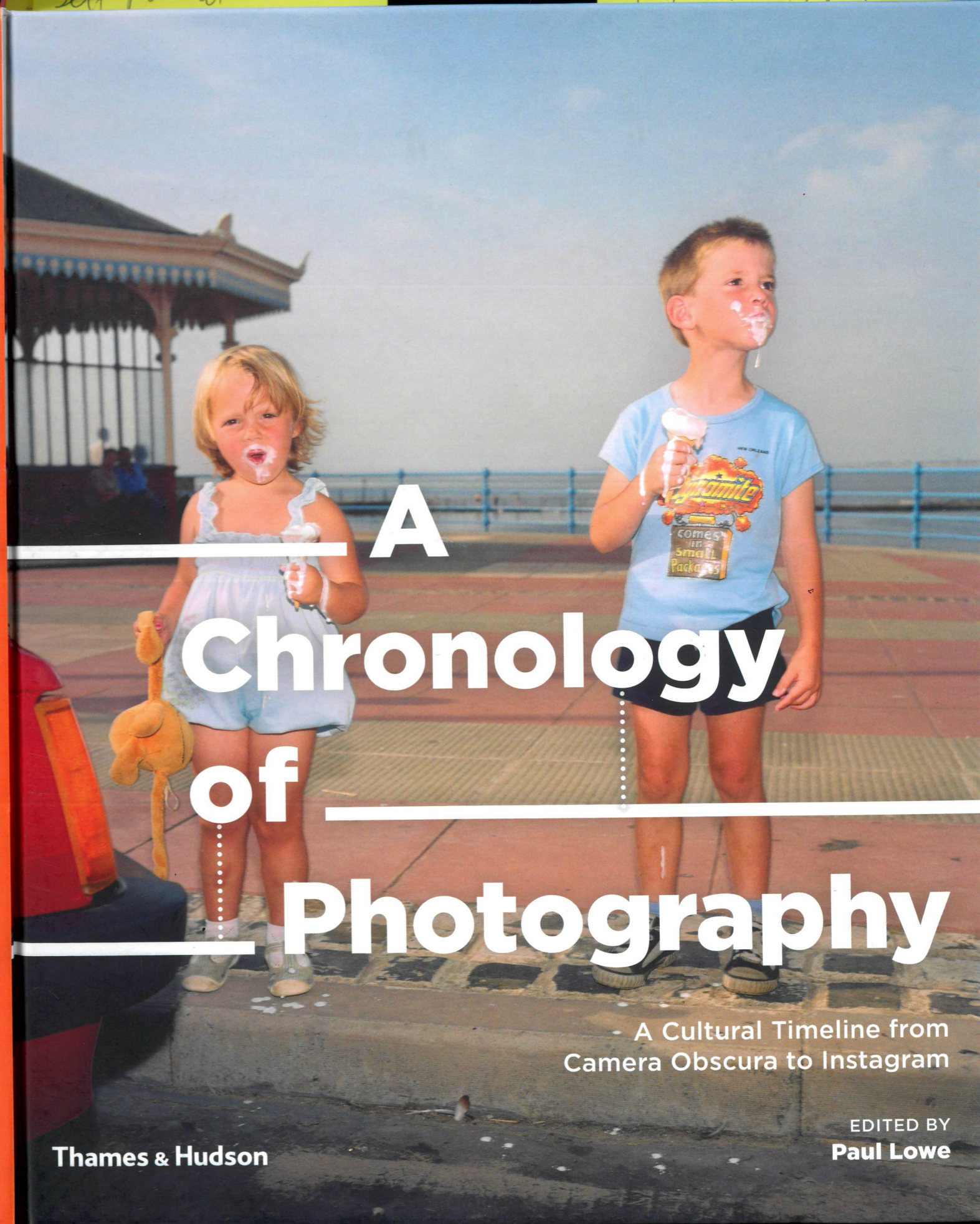
Self-portrait

Staged Photography

○ **A Chronology of Photography** presents a fresh perspective on the medium by taking a purely chronological approach to its history, tracing the complex links between technological innovations, social changes and artistic interventions. Structured around a central timeline that charts the development of photography from early experiments with optics right up to the present-day explosion of digital media, it features sumptuous reproductions of key photographs, together with commentaries and contextual information about the social, political, and cultural events of the period in which they were taken. Special features highlight important themes and influential practitioners, while technical sections explain how the development of new camera technology has affected the practice of photography. Covering a wide selection of genres, styles and artists, it is invaluable as a comprehensive guide to photography in all its different forms and functions.

Front Cover: From *The Last Resort* (1985) by Martin Parr  
 © Martin Parr/Magnum Photos

○ **A Chronology of Photography**



# A Chronology of Photography

A Cultural Timeline from Camera Obscura to Instagram

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## COLOUR BECOMES ACCEPTED AS ART

As colour printing in magazines became more widespread after the Second World War, colour photography became widely used in advertising, commercial and fashion photography, and in photojournalism through publications like *Life*, the *Sunday Times Magazine* and *National Geographic*.

The world of fine art and documentary photography was slower to accept colour, seeing it as vulgar and brash. However, in the 1970s photographers began to explore how colour could be used to go beyond mere description, and to add an emotional, psychological and visceral depth to their work. This movement was encouraged by the influential director of photography at New York's Museum of Modern Art, John Szarkowski, who in 1962 curated a retrospective of the innovative work by Magnum's Ernst Haas, which was the museum's first solo-artist retrospective exhibition dedicated to colour work. Szarkowski went on to work with William Eggleston to produce his seminal book and exhibition

in 1976, entitled *William Eggleston's Guide*. Eggleston's use of the painstaking, complex and expensive dye-transfer printing process enabled him to create a body of work that transcended the apparent 'snapshot' aesthetic he deployed, producing a series of images that gradually reveal a complex and multi-layered exploration of the American social landscape. At around the same time, a new generation of American photographers began to explore how the detail of the large-format 10 x 8 view camera that traditionally was used with black-and-white film could instead be used to describe the subtleties of light and colour, with Joel Meyerowitz publishing *Cape Light* in 1979, while Stephen Shore (1947-) embarked on an epic road trip across America to produce *Uncommon Places* (1982), followed soon after by Joel Sternfeld's (1944-) satirical *American Prospects* in 1987. Taken together, these books became highly influential for the development of colour as a serious art form, and for subsequent generations of photographers, especially in Britain and Germany.

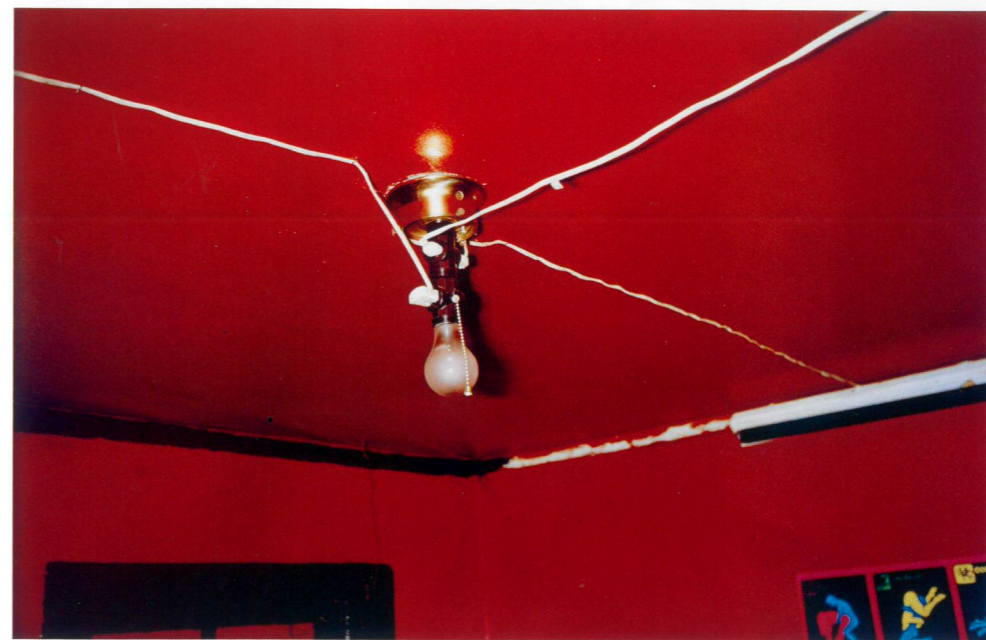


**LEFT. Richard Misrach – *Tracks, Black Rock Desert, Nevada* (1987)**

For some forty years, Richard Misrach (1949-) has been documenting the harsh yet beautiful landscapes of the American West in his ongoing series of works entitled *Desert Cantos*. Begun in 1979, the project comprises over thirty separate bodies of work that are all self-contained yet together form an extraordinarily rich and deep investigation into both the impact of man on the environment, and the nature of light, colour and form. Misrach typically works with a 10 x 8 large-format camera and colour negative film, giving his images a high level of detail and intense saturated colours. He sees the combination of aesthetics and a political undertone as extremely effective, arguing that 'beauty can be a very powerful conveyor of difficult ideas. It engages people when they might otherwise look away.'

**RIGHT. Martin Parr – from *The Last Resort* (1985)**

Influenced by photographers such as William Eggleston and Garry Winogrand, the British photographer Martin Parr (1952-) is known for his documentary images that use garish colours, with his subjects often chronicled in extreme, often absurd, close-ups. In this image from his controversial but groundbreaking 1985 book, *The Last Resort: Photographs of New Brighton*, he used daylight flash, and a medium-format Plaubel Makina camera loaded with colour negative film to capture two children enjoying a moment during a family day-trip to an English coastal resort that is past its prime.



**LEFT. William Eggleston – *The Red Ceiling* (1973)**

To make his exhibition prints, William Eggleston (1939-) used the complex dye-transfer process to give an unparalleled level of saturation and richness to his colour images, perfectly exemplified in this unsettling composition of a ceiling painted the colour of fresh blood. Each print cost hundreds of dollars, and the multiple-step process took three days per print. The printing press uses four separate printing plates (magenta, yellow, cyan and black), and each plate was engraved with a halftone image for each colour, which was in turn covered with a thin layer of ink. The plates were then carefully placed in sequence on to the paper to create the final print.