

Chapter 9 At-Home Quiz

1. Describe Peter Emerson's contribution to the beginnings of pictorialism. Why does he later retract his earlier statements and writings?

Emerson believes that the camera should approximate the human eye; the photographer should not manipulate the subject but let nature tell the story; he uses differential soft focus

There were two problems: a lot of amateur photographers began to shoot out of focus, believing that this made the photograph into art; his own photographs were attacked by critics as being "fuzzy." This seems to lead to the retraction which he justifies by saying that he had misunderstood a theory he had read and he mistakenly believed that photographers could not be artists.

2. Based on chapter 9's discussion, what is the difference between photography based on a model of human vision and photography based on a model of camera vision?

A model of human vision would not see the world differently from the unaided eye, although the photographer might compose the image and focus it to communicate human values – according to Emerson, at least, this model was a more subjective response to the world. Camera vision would reproduce the world with mechanical objectivity and/or using the optical theories of modernism, theories being developed by modern art movements. Your book doesn't say much more than this in chapter 9.

3. What were the key contributions of the various photo clubs at the end of the 19th century to the pictorial movement? (This isn't a question about specific activities or exhibitions but ideas/practices/ways of thinking that may have been promoted by the clubs.)

The photo clubs promoted more rigorous standards for exhibitions and contributed to the differentiation between "utilitarian" photographs and aesthetic; most of the photo clubs promoted pictorialist beliefs and contributed to the emergence of photographic as an artistic medium

4. Identify 3 contributions of pictorialism to 20th century photography.

*Increasingly widespread use of new technology for printing (we identified and discussed at least three different new processes)
association of style with the "hand" of the photographer
an artistic vision which is based on seeing and composing rather than combining
use of the camera as a means of self-expression
subject matter becomes less important as the style of printing becomes more important
promotes the idea of photography as art without explicitly imitating other art movements*

5. Choose one image from the Artstor image group on pictorialism to analyze. It should be something which will allow you to address the themes and/or practices of pictorialism and your analysis should demonstrate why your image is a good exemplar for the movement.