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Book Review for:

The Portrait Photography Course

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This book starts out defining it's subject; portraits, in great detail.

Portraits were being produce long before photography ever evolved. A cave painting found in Angoulême, France (dated 25,000 BC) is thought to be the oldest known example of a portrait. In 1623 Prince Philip IV of Spain commissioned a portrait that he felt was so flattering the he ordered all other likenesses of him collected and destroyed.

When the camera was first invented (First American patent was issued in 1840 photography to Alexander Wolcott for his camera), it took a skilled craftsman to take the photograph, but middle class citizens could afford it. Photography today has progressed to the digital camera and will move on to animation, three-dimensional imaging and handheld communication devices.

The book covers a lot of technical data, explained through the use of samples, examples, drawings and carts; all very clearly presented. There are not only the expected chapters on choosing equipment, lighting, composition and context, but chapters on computer basics, which covers the needed computer equipment and digital capture formats, but the basics of LightRoom™ and Photoshop™.

And all of that valuable information can be found in just the first 5 chapters. Chapters 6 and 7 cover Studio photography and Location/Environmental photography; both complex subjects that each have their own unique advantages and challenges.

Chapters 8 and 9 walk away from the technical side of photography. Chapter 8 contains interviews with 6 professional photographers. The interviews broadly outline the careers of Art Kane, Richard Renaldi, Emily Shur, Kristen Ashburn, Karen Cunningham and Sarah Wilson. Each of these professionals specialize in a different form of portrait photography.

Chapter 9 discusses what it takes to 'Go Professional.'

This is a book that will require multiple readings and a lot of study and thought; but that is what a good book is all about...