

Seeing through Race: A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Photography

By Martin A. Berger

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Seeing through Race is a boldly original reinterpretation of the iconic photographs of the black civil rights struggle. Martin A. Berger's provocative and groundbreaking study shows how the very pictures credited with arousing white sympathy, and thereby paving the way for civil rights legislation, actually limited the scope of racial reform in the 1960s. Berger analyzes many of these famous images—dogs and fire hoses turned against peaceful black marchers in Birmingham, tear gas and clubs wielded against voting-rights marchers in Selma—and argues that because white sympathy was dependent on photographs of powerless blacks, these unforgettable pictures undermined efforts to enact—or even imagine—reforms that threatened to upend the racial balance of power.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Brilliant, provocative study of photographs of the US civil rights movement . . . . A first-rate book!” (*Choice* 2011-10-01)

“Fascinating. . . . Berger’s historical reconstruction is convincing.”
(Ariella Azoulay *Burrelles Luce* 2012-09-19)

“A comprehensive study of the language in which editors, reporters, and photographers shaped and demarcated the period’s field of vision.”
(Ariella Azoulay, Tel Aviv University *CAA Reviews* 2013-02-06)

From the Inside Flap

“*Seeing Through Race* is an indispensable and highly original account of how white Americans understood and remembered the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Berger shows us why photography was so central to civil rights, and his readings of iconic images are always penetrating and at times brilliant. His central argument, that whites wanted to be in charge of the movement, is complemented with rich insights on almost every page. It should be required reading for anyone interested in protest movements.”

—John Stauffer, Chair of the History of American Civilization and Professor of English and African and African American Studies at Harvard University

“The fervor of the 1960s civil rights movement may seem outdated by now, but terrible scenes enacted on the streets of Selma and Birmingham are preserved in the mass of surviving news photographs. Martin Berger argues that these pictures were never simple visual documents. By awakening the nation to the horrific violence of fire hoses and attack dogs, they defined what was meant by “civil rights movement.” Always engaging in its narrative as well as in its analytical and theoretical discourse, *Seeing through Race* is a stunning achievement both as history and as criticism.”

—Alan Trachtenberg, Neil Gray, Jr. Professor Emeritus of English and American Studies at Yale University

About the Author

Martin A. Berger is Professor and Director of the Visual Studies Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is the author of *Man Made: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Gilded Age Manhood* and *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture,* both from UC Press. **David J. Garrow** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*.

Users Review

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Often the book Seeing through Race: A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Photography will bring someone to the new experience of reading the book. The author style to spell out the idea is very unique. In the event you try to find new book to see, this book very ideal to you. The book Seeing through Race: A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Photography is much recommended to you you just read. You can also get the e-book in the official web site, so you can easier to read the book.

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James Collins:

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