



Edward Weston Nudes

By C Wilson B., Edward Weston



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Edward Weston was born in Highland Park, Illinois, in 1886, and began his career as a door-to-door portrait photographer in 1906. After a spell in Mexico City during the early 1920s--where he ran a studio with Tina Modotti--he moved to California and commenced the work for which he is most famous: close-ups of nature, nudes and landscapes. This volume celebrates Weston's nudes, of which Hilton Kramer wrote: "To Weston's eye... the landscape of the human body was an unending revelation of forms both voluptuous and abstract. His genius as an artist lay in his ability to respond to both with equal passion."

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Lee Friedlander's photographs of women in their birthday suits leave me cold, but they invite comparison with Edward Weston's classic black and white nudes. Bare breasts and buttocks took on another dimension when Weston was behind the camera; his headless torsos more closely resemble the work of painters and sculptors than the passionless images of ladies decapitated by Friedlander and other contemporary photographers. Charis Wilson's memoir of posing for (and living with) Weston--and her under-the-skin take on the thought process behind his nude studies--is fascinating.

Review

"To Weston's eye . . . the landscape of the human body was an unending revelation of forms both voluptuous and abstract. His genius as an artist lay in his ability to respond to both with equal passion."--Hilton Kramer, the *New York Times*

"It was as though the things of everyday experience had been transformed for Weston into organic sculptures, the forms of which were both the expression and the justification of the life within. The exhilarating visual purity of Weston's work is the product of a deeper achievement: He had freed his eyes of conventional expectation, and had taught them to see the statement of intent that resides in natural form."--John Szarkowski, *Looking at Photographs*

"Edward Weston understood thoughts and concepts which dwell on simple mystical levels. His work--direct and honest as it is--leaped from a deep intuition and belief in the forces beyond the apparent and factual. He accepted these forces as completely real and part of the total world of man and nature, only a small portion of which most of us experience directly. . . . And it was Weston who accomplished more than anyone, with the possible exception of Alfred Stieglitz, to elevate photography to the status of fine-art expression."--Ansel Adams

About the Author

The daughter of Harry Leon Wilson, a popular novelist of the 1920s, **Charis Wilson** was born in San Francisco on May 5, 1914, and grew up in Carmel. There she met Edward Weston in 1934 and offered to pose for him. For the next ten years, she was Weston's model-- posing for approximately half of all his recorded nudes-- as well as his lover (they were married in 1939). In 1936 Wilson urged Weston to apply for a Guggenheim fellowship, took his original four-line application and turned it into four pages, and helped him become the first photographer ever to win the award. Wilson described the Guggenheim travels in *California and the West*, published in 1940.

Edward Weston was born March 24, 1886, in Highland Park, Illinois. He made his first photographs in 1902 with a Kodak Bull's Eye #2 camera-- a gift from his father. In 1911, five years after moving to California, he opened his own portrait studio in Tropico (now Glendale), California, and began to earn an international reputation for his work. But it was not until 1922 that he came fully into his own as an artist, with his photographs of the Armco Steel mill in Ohio. During 1923-26 he worked in Mexico and in California, where he lived with his sons, Chandler, Brett, Neil, and Cole. Though he continued to support himself with portrait work, Weston turned increasingly to subjects of his own choosing, such as nudes, clouds, and close-ups of rocks, trees, vegetables, and shells. During 1937-39, on a Guggenheim Fellowship,

he traveled and photographed throughout the American West. Three years later, he toured the South and East, taking photographs for a limited edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, until the attack on Pearl Harbor cut short his journey. In 1948 Weston made his last photograph; he had been stricken with Parkinson's disease several years earlier. On January 1, 1958, he died at Wildcat Hill, his home in Carmel, California.

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