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Kaja Silverman
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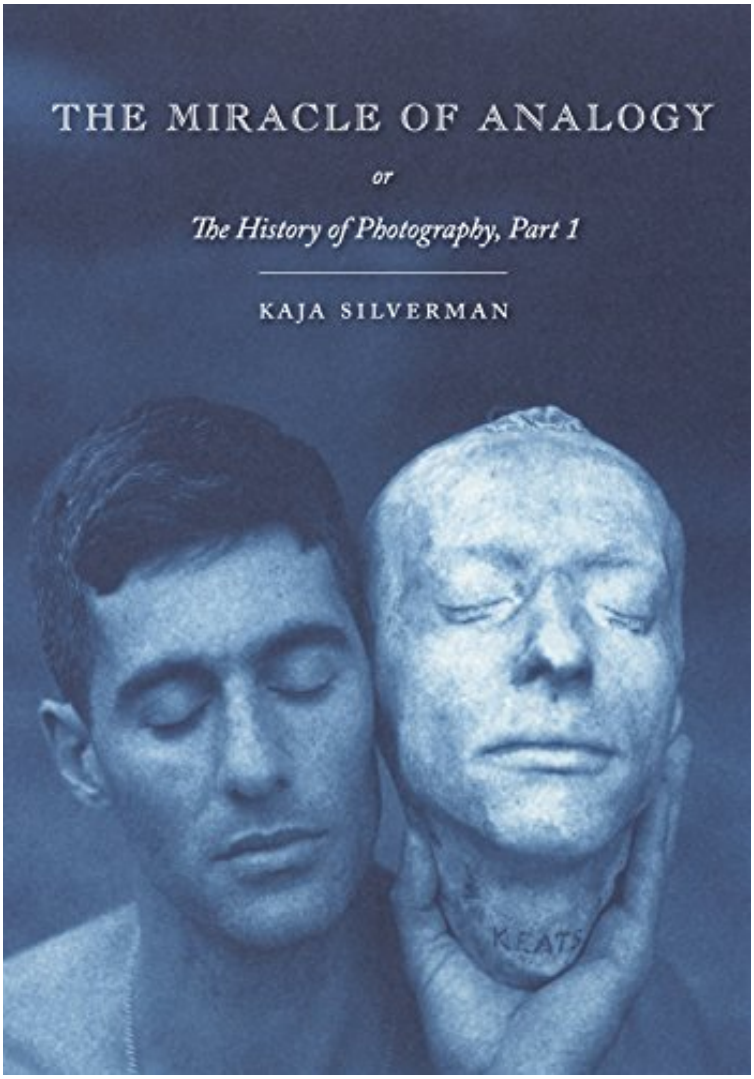

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Kaja Silverman : The Miracle of Analogy: or The History of Photography, Part 1 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Miracle of Analogy: or The History of Photography, Part 1:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Jeannine B JohnsonPurchased as a gift1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Love the bookBy Artist and CuratorLove the book, it is dense with ideas clearly researched and with in depth discussions around Walter Benjamin and other writings that are often the basis of photographic discussions. It was great to go back and e-evaluate the original texts in such detail, and that propels the work into new areas of exploration.Great book for any photo history buff as well due to the collection of the earliest photographs and array of images of camera lucida devises.A real treasure! (I am buying the hard back version too

because I want the color plates that are not in the paperback!)10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. I was really impressed...By SJ CowanSilverman's history of photography is academically rigorous but has a poetic quality that makes it extremely enjoyable to read. In terms of the academic quality: there is an obvious amount of knowledge and research that went into writing this bookmdash;I don't mean to suggest that it is full of jargon that a nonspecialist would struggle to understand. This is because Silverman's style, which is subtle and philosophical, but also very approachable, gives each chapter its own sort of sensuous rhythm. And besides the gentle aesthetic quality of her writing, the images she chose to illustrate her points with successfully draw the reader in and drive her narrative forward.I was really impressed by Silverman's ability to not only engage with the history of photography in a creative way, imagining an alternative conceptual framework by which to understand not just the *being* but also the *becoming* of photography; but also with her ability to craft such a complex idea into a book that was so fun to read. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the history of photography (previous knowledge of the subject would help, but is by no means necessary), aesthetics, or in the work of Walter Benjamin or Merleau-Ponty; and I would also, recommend it for those interested in Alva Noeuml;, his "Varieties of Presence" in particular. My only complaint is that I have to wait to read the second volume...but I will definitely be reading this volume again once the second is released.

The Miracle of Analogy is the first of a two-volume reconceptualization of photography. It argues that photography originates in what is seen, rather than in the human eye or the camera lens, and that it is the world's primary way of revealing itself to us. Neither an index, representation, nor copy, as conventional studies would have it, the photographic image is an analogy. This principle obtains at every level of its being: a photograph analogizes its referent, the negative from which it is generated, every other print that is struck from that negative, and all of its digital "offspring." Photography is also unstoppably developmental, both at the level of the individual image and of medium. The photograph moves through time, in search of other "kin," some of which may be visual, but others of which may be literary, architectural, philosophical, or literary. Finally, photography develops with us, and in response to us. It assumes historically legible forms, but when we divest them of their saving power, as we always seem to do, it goes elsewhere.The present volume focuses on the nineteenth century and some of its contemporary progeny. It begins with the camera obscura, which morphed into chemical photography and lives on in digital form, and ends with Walter Benjamin. Key figures discussed along the way include Niceacute;phore Nieacute;pce, Louis Daguerre, William Fox-Talbot, Jeff Wall, and Joan Fontcuberta.

"Not simply a new counter-history, The Miracle of Analogy marks a paradigm shift after which photography will never again be thought of in the same way. Kaja Silverman's book sets the stage for future debates about the range of photography studies." (Natalia Brizuela, University of California Berkeley)"This is a lovely, intriguing book, powerfully argued, compellingly illustrated?a major provocation. Challenging all the ways we're so used to thinking about photography, its richly textured counter-history invites us to rethink the very meaning of the 'analogue' in the contemporary digital age." (Rebecca Comay University of Toronto)"The Miracle of Analogy is a must-read. Driven by careful study of various practitioners while masterfully juggling historical analysis with theoretical insight, Silverman unearths a missed opportunity in understanding what photography was, is, and will be." (Jacques Khalip Brown University)"The Miracle of Analogy or the History of Photography is a methodically argued and meticulously textually-documented book. The central ideas of this carefully researched volume are important and original." (George Lzroiu of Contemporary Philosophy)"A masterly account of how photography strengthens the binds that connect us with others and the world, this book argues that each picture holds within the instant of its making an opportunity to see anew the dense and entangled relationships that ground our understanding of what it means to be here." (Paul Chan artist)"[This book] is overflowing with excellent and challenging explorations of photography and the extensive interaction of photography with visual life. Silverman provides a superb overview of photographic making and thinking . . . Her intensive investigation of ideas and pictures through careful analysis of the writing of significant authors is remarkable and very effective in communicating her broad investigation of photography's effects on human thought and action. The writing is excellent and makes for satisfying reading . . . Highly recommended." (C. Chiarenza Choice)About the AuthorKaja Silverman is Keith L. and Katherine Sachs Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author, most recently, of Flesh of My Flesh (SUP, 2009).