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In Plane View: Abstractions of Flight

Anne Collins Goodyear



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In Plane View: Abstractions of Flight, by Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum photographer Carolyn Russo, redirects our attention to the often-overlooked simple beauty of aircraft design. With precedents in the work of Robert Delaunay, Charles Sheeler, and Arshile Gorky, among others, Russo uses fine art photography to bring out new visual dimensions of these powerful symbols of the 20th century, transforming them into works of art. Russo's striking color photographs distill the complexity of civil and military airplanes and spaceships into bold combinations of line, shape, light, and color.

Beautiful in themselves, Carolyn Russo's photographs become even more intriguing when we learn their source: the iconic air and space craft of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

Through her unconventional approach Russo reveals new layers of meaning, from the whimsical to the profound, in the appearance of some of history's most revered flying machines. Juxtaposing her playful and discerning eye, scholarly text from NASM and the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery provides fresh perspectives on flight and photography that will leave audiences looking at the world with new eyes.

The book features 90 color photographs, quotes by aviators, artists, and poets, historical captions on each aircraft, and interpretive essays by Anne Collins Goodyear, assistant curator of prints and drawings at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, who specializes in the relationship of art, science, and technology.

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