



## Gertrude Kasebier: The Photographer and Her Photographs

By Barbara L. Michaels

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This is the first book about the pioneering photographer Gertrude Kasebier (1852-1934). In middle age, with three grown children, she began to study painting and photography, set up a portrait studio on New York's Fifth Avenue, and became one of the finest and best-known portraitists and photographic artists of her day. 116 illustrations.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Best remembered for her soft-focus studies of mothers and children, Gertrude Kasebier (1852-1934) was hailed by fellow photo-secessionist Alfred Stieglitz as the leading portraitist of her day. Yet she was categorized as a "woman photographer," and after she broke with Stieglitz in 1912 her reputation waned. This splendid biographical-critical study, which accompanies an exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, profiles Kasebier's art in its diversity, from expressive portraits of Sioux Indians to a symbolist-influenced female nude ( *The Bat* ). Unhappily married to a wealthy German businessman, Kasebier in one photograph likened matrimony to the muzzling of cattle. In addition to strong portraits of Mark Twain, Jacob Riis, Booker T. Washington, Robert Henri and Auguste Rodin, she shot baffling parables and hand-crafted impressionistic since she's not member or Impressionist school scenes, all perceptively interpreted here by Michaels, guest curator of the exhibit.

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From Library Journal

The extraordinary Kasebier (1852-1934) calmly defied the social conventions of her day to set up her own studio at 36, soon becoming a prominent figure in early 20th-century photography. Her well-known works include photographs of mothers and children ("*The Manger*" and "*Blessed Art Thou Among Women*") plus a group of portraits whose trademark style offers an uncompromising likeness and reveals the personality of the sitter. But Kasebier's personal and professional estrangement from Alfred Stieglitz and the photo-secessionists eventually took her out of the field's mainstream and into semi-obscurity. Michaels, guest curator of the current Museum of Modern Art retrospective featuring Kasebier's works, has written an expert, sympathetic, and much-deserved critical biography of a pioneer who helped elevate the photographic portrait to the status of an art form. Recommended for photography collections.

- *Jacqueline Adams, Carroll Cty. P.L., Westminster, Md.*

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