

DLD College - World Art Day – My Favourite Work of Art

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'Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance' 1914, by August Sander

As a Photographer and Teacher and I have looked at thousands possibly millions of Photographic images, but I am always drawn back to this 1914 Photograph by August Sander entitled, 'Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance'. It is perfectly well composed even though it was probably captured in a 60th of a second. Although a straightforward snapshot, it makes me wonder when I look at it what their story is (As did Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Richard Powers who constructed a whole story around the image in 1985) What their lives were like, what happened at the Dance? did they meet a future partner?

Across the world people dress up to go out, but perhaps rarely walking in suits to cross a field, though, so this is also a history lesson. Sander photography became an in-depth documentary of the German people and covered all social classes, jobs and ages. Visual images like this are powerfully engaging but are also visual records we can learn from. To quote August Sander, 'Look, Observe, Think ' Being monochrome, it is not complicated by colour. You look the men straight in the eye with their three hats, three canes, and three suits. To quote Sander again, 'In photography there are no unexplained shadows.'

In a world of billions of reprographic images, instant accessibility, connectivity and *likes*, this image, over a hundred years old now, demonstrates the power of the portrait and its role in making us think about unique, individual people and their life story. This what makes this photograph, among the thousands and thousands I have seen, one of my favourite images.