

# The Tiny System: Adolph Barr and the Origins of Modern Photography

Adolph Barr (1902-1981) was an American art historian and museum curator who is best known for his work on the development of modern photography. Barr was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and studied art history at Princeton University and Harvard University. In 1929, he became the first director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, where he organized a number of groundbreaking exhibitions on photography, including "Photography 1839-1937" (1937) and "The Family of Man" (1955). Barr's writings on photography were also influential, and his book "Cubism and Abstract Art" (1936) is considered a classic text on the subject.

Barr's interest in photography began in the early 1920s, when he was a student at Harvard. At the time, photography was not considered a fine art, and Barr was one of the first scholars to argue for its importance. In his writings, Barr argued that photography was a unique and powerful medium that could capture the complexities of modern life. He also believed that photography could be used to create works of art that were both beautiful and meaningful.



## The Tiny System by Adolph Barr

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2779 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Print length : 6 pages  
Lending : Enabled  
Paperback : 80 pages

Item Weight : 5.4 ounces  
Dimensions : 5.5 x 0.19 x 8.5 inches



In 1937, Barr organized the exhibition "Photography 1839-1937" at the Museum of Modern Art. This exhibition was a watershed moment in the history of photography, and it helped to establish photography as a legitimate art form. The exhibition included works by some of the most important photographers of the time, including Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, and Walker Evans. Barr's accompanying catalogue for the exhibition was one of the first major publications on the history of photography, and it remains an essential resource for scholars today.

Barr's influence on the development of modern photography cannot be overstated. He was one of the first scholars to recognize the importance of photography as an art form, and he played a key role in establishing photography's place in museums and galleries. Barr's writings and exhibitions helped to shape the way we think about photography today, and he is considered one of the most important figures in the history of the medium.

## The Tiny System

In addition to his work on photography, Barr also developed a system of classification for works of art that he called "the tiny system." The tiny system was based on the idea that all works of art could be classified into a small number of categories, including the following:

- **Iconic:** Works of art that are based on a single, recognizable image.

- **Analogical:** Works of art that are based on a relationship between two or more images.
- **Synthetic:** Works of art that are created by combining elements from different sources.
- **Abstract:** Works of art that are not based on any recognizable images.

Barr's tiny system was not universally accepted, but it has had a significant influence on the way we think about and classify works of art. The tiny system is still used by some art historians and museum curators today, and it is a useful tool for understanding the different ways that works of art can be created.

Adolph Barr was a pioneering art historian and museum curator who played a major role in the development of modern photography. His writings and exhibitions helped to establish photography as a legitimate art form, and he is considered one of the most important figures in the history of the medium.



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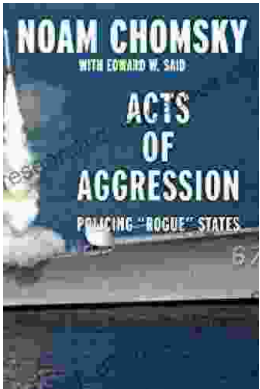
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