



All a Blur

Photographs from the Infinity Series

By (photographer) **Bill Armstrong**

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- Bill Armstrong has a grid of nine photographs that is a permanent installation at the foot of the stairs of the Sistine chapel in the Vatican Museum. Hundreds of people see it every day
- **All a Blur** is the first time that the complete *Infinity* series has been seen together. It is a remarkable book
- Deborah Martin Kao, curator of photography at the Fogg Museum called the *Infinity* series a major body of work 20 years ago. It has grown many times over since then
- **All a Blur** is the first in-depth monograph by one of the foremost practitioners of photographic abstraction, Bill Armstrong

The luminous work of Bill Armstrong has long stretched the boundaries and expectations of contemporary photography. In his explorations and subversion of the ostensible objectivity and precision that have distinguished photography among the visual arts, Armstrong foregrounds the medium's qualities that photographers had been attempting to exploit since the beginning of the twentieth century: colour and focus.

All a Blur showcases Mr. Armstrong's *Infinity* series, an ongoing project he has been working on for over 25 years. The book presents 21 different portfolios, all made by using his unique process of photographing a collage of found or appropriated images extremely out of focus or distorted by handheld time exposures. The variety of subjects and results he achieves with this process is so broad it has been said that he has developed a medium of his own invention that lies at the intersection of photography, painting and collage.

With mysterious and poetic images that reflect on history, philosophy, identity and spirituality, Armstrong conjures a unique alternate reality that might exist in dreams, in memory, or, perhaps, in a parallel universe. At the same time, the subject of the work is colour. By taking away focus and the usual expectations of photography, Armstrong is able to investigate the qualities and effects of pure colour in a profound way, freed from the limits of representation.

Bill Armstrong is an internationally acclaimed fine art photographer known for his blurred colour work. His *Infinity* series has been exhibited in over 30 solo and 100 group exhibitions over the past 25 years. Mr. Armstrong's *Sistine Gestures* is a permanent installation in the Vatican Museums in Rome. **Lyle Rexer** holds two degrees from Columbia University and was a Rhodes Scholar at Merton College, Oxford University. He is the author of many books, including *How to Look at Outsider Art* (2005), *The Edge of Vision: The Rise of Abstraction in Photography* (2009), and *The Critical Eye: 15 Pictures to Understand Photography* (2019). He has published hundreds of catalogue essays, reviews, and articles on art, photography, and contemporary literature and contributed to such publications as the *New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Aperture*, *BOMB*, *Harper's*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*. **A. D. Coleman** is an independent American critic, historian, educator, and curator of photography and photo-based art, and a widely published commentator on new digital technologies. He has published eight books and more than 2000 essays on photography and related subjects. He has lectured and taught internationally; his work has been translated into 21 languages and published in more than 30 countries. **Katherine Ware** is Curator of Photography at the New Mexico Museum of Art and served as Curator of Photographs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Assistant Curator in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum, among other positions. She is author of numerous publications on historic and contemporary photography. **W. M. "Bill" Hunt** is a New York-based collector, curator and consultant—a champion of photography. His collection *Dancing Bear* consists of magical, heart-stopping images of people whose eyes cannot be seen. The book of his collection, *The Unseen Eye*, is published by Aperture. **Brian Sholis** was previously an editor at *Artforum* and *Aperture* and the curator of photography at the Cincinnati Art Museum. He is a writer, editor, and the co-founder of *Valise*, an inventory tool for artists. He lives in Toronto. **Collier Brown** is a poet, photography critic, and literary scholar. He holds a PhD in American Studies from Harvard University, where he continues to teach, and an MFA in Poetry from McNeese State University. He is the former editor at *21st Editions* and *Od Review*. His essays on photography have appeared in more than 20 books.

