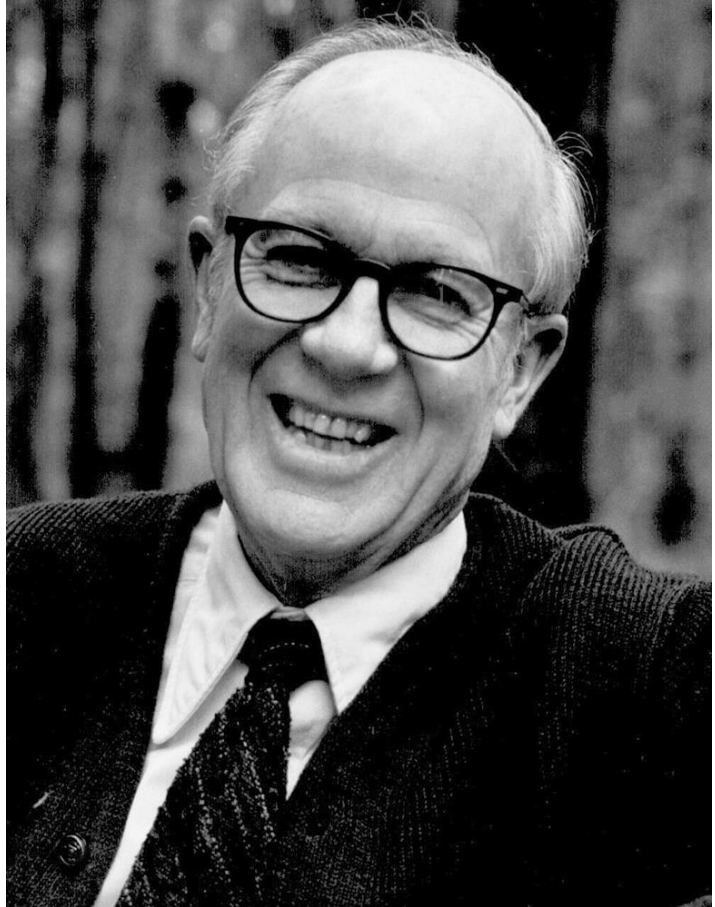


**#66 November 2021 Cameraderie  
Wynn Bullock (1902-75)**



Wynn Bullock was a polymath (a person of wide-ranging knowledge or learning) to a greater degree than any other photographer I have studied for these articles. Here are some comments about him and by him (in quotes) from the Wikipedia article:

A lifelong learner, he also read widely in the areas of physics, general semantics, philosophy, psychology, eastern religion, and art. Studying the work of such people as Albert Einstein, Korzybski, Alfred North Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, Lao Tzu, and Klee, he kept evolving his own dynamic system of principles and concepts that both reflected and nurtured his creative journey.

“Light to me is perhaps the most profound truth in the universe. My thinking has been deeply affected by the belief everything is some form of radiant energy.”

In the mid-1950s, Bullock's artistry came into the public spotlight when Edward Steichen [#9, Sept. 2013] chose two of his photographs to include in the 1955 The Family of Man exhibition [#22, Sept. 2017] at the Museum of Modern Art. At the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC, his photograph "Let

"There Be Light," was voted the most popular of the show. The second, "Child in Forest," became one of the exhibition's most memorable images. By the end of that decade, his work was being featured in many exhibitions and publications worldwide.

Here is the Wikipedia article link:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wynn\\_Bullock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wynn_Bullock)

Here is the Wynn Bullock Family Photography website, below. Have a look—there are many galleries to view.

<http://www.wynnbullockphotography.com/>

Bullock trained in voice and for a time was a professional singer. Later, he took up photography. He was close friends with Ansel Adams (#12, Mar. 2014) and many other photographers of the time. Adams had trained as a concert pianist before he became a naturalist and photographer. What an evening they might have had together at parties of friends, with Bullock singing and Adams playing the piano! To find out if this had ever happened, I wrote to the wynnbullockphotography website and asked just that. Here is the email answer I received from Wynn Bullock's daughter, Barbara Bullock-Wilson:

Dear Stephen –

Thank you for your inquiry about Ansel Adams and my father Wynn Bullock. The two men were indeed good friends and did several significant things together. As photographers they worked together, with other photographic colleagues, to found Friends of Photography in Carmel (Dad served as an inaugural trustee and was the organization's first exhibition chair); Ansel wrote the introduction to Dad's one and only black-and-white portfolio and helped market it (I have attached a copy of the Introduction); and they were two of the five photographers whose archives established the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona in Tucson (the other three were Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, and Frederick Sommer [future articles likely]).

As friends, they did share a love of music. In the last year of Dad's life, Ansel would visit and occasionally bring favorite recordings which they would listen to together. They would reminisce about their histories and experiences as musicians. After Ansel moved to the Monterey Peninsula in 1962, it is possible that they might have made music together, but I don't know of any specific instances when that happened. In 1962, Dad would have been 60 and, although he sometimes sang in the darkroom and at Christmas around the family piano, I don't believe he sang at social gatherings – either with or without Ansel. Ansel was a much more gregarious person than Dad and it is documented that he did play the piano at social gatherings in his home, but I don't recall ever hearing about or personally experiencing the two making

music together. That doesn't mean that it couldn't have happened, I just don't have personal knowledge of it.

If you have any further questions or would like more information about Bullock photography, please don't hesitate to contact me again.

All the best,  
Barbara

Barbara Bullock-Wilson, Managing Member  
Bullock Family Photography LLC

And here, below, is the copy of Ansel Adams's introduction to Wynn Bullock's book that Barbara Bullock-Wilson attached to her email to me:

#### INTRODUCTION TO WYNN BULLOCK PORTFOLIO

The beauty of the world results in a constant vibration of the spirit: the Shapes of nature – through the magic of art – become the Forms of the imagination. Photography clarifies the experience of this transition from Shape to Form as perhaps no other medium can do. There is always a relationship with reality, or actuality, or however we wish to define the world about us. On this relationship we can create marvelous constructions of perception and clarification – and of communication.

Photography evokes many words and many "explanations". It does not require such if the statement is clear and the message resonant. When I look at a Wynn Bullock photograph I am moved aesthetically and spiritually. I do not need interpretations, nor do I wish to compose any for others. The photographs stand clear in their own beauty. They belong to us and they are a precious heritage for the future.

As a photographer and colleague I am thankful Wynn is living and working in our time. His eye has sharpened mine. His sympathies and empathies with the world have strengthened mine. His spirit shines through everything he does; he will not contrive to be fashionable or obtuse, nor does he seek popularity or praise. In this respect he is indeed a rare person.

Because of Wynn Bullock's work I understand more of photography, more of art, and more of the human spirit.

ANSEL ADAMS  
Carmel, September, 1973

Here are Bullock's two *The Family of Man* images.

Let There be Light 1954



This appeared on *The Family of Man* book title page. It demonstrates Bullock's view that light is the elemental stuff of the universe. The title, "Let There be Light," was chosen by The Family of Man exhibition curator Edward Steichen.

Child in Forest 1951



This appeared on *The Family of Man* book prologue page. Bullock's only two images in The Family of Man exhibition and book turned out to be two of the most prominent and famous of the exhibition and book.

Here are a couple of other Bullock monochromes that I like. I like that both feature repetitions.

The Pilings, 1958



This is an interesting mixture of human-made structures and a natural effect. I paired it with the following image because both treat of “erosion,” although different subject matters.

Erosion, 1959



This is eroded earth, but there is, I think, deliberately no sense of scale, which universalizes the subject. In addition, it resembles organic forms, further suggesting universalization.

Bullock did significant color work, expressing his concept of light as the basis of all existence. Here are a couple of samples. I don't know how he produced these.

Color Light Abstraction 1075 (Early 1960s)



Color Light Abstraction 1071 (1960)

