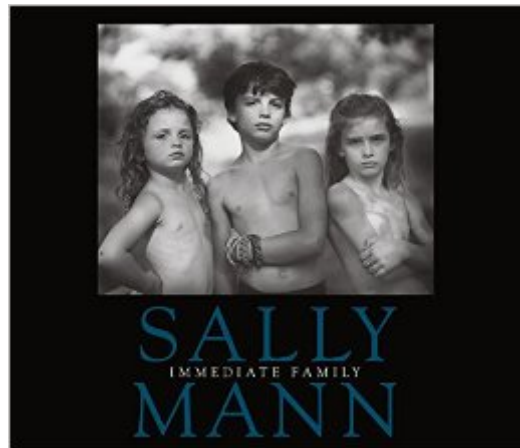


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# Sally Mann: Immediate Family



## Synopsis

First published in 1992, *Immediate Family* has been lauded by critics as one of the great photography books of our time, and among the most influential. Taken against the Arcadian backdrop of her woodland summer home in Virginia, Sally Mann's extraordinary, intimate photographs of her children reveal truths that embody the individuality of her own family yet ultimately take on a universal quality. With sublime dignity, acute wit and feral grace, Sally Mann's pictures explore the eternal struggle between the child's simultaneous dependence and quest for autonomy—the holding on and the breaking away. This is the stuff of which Greek dramas are made: impatience, terror, self-discovery, self-doubt, pain, vulnerability, role-playing and a sense of immortality, all of which converge in these astonishing photographs. This reissue of *Immediate Family* has been printed using new scans and separations from Mann's original prints, which were taken with an 8 x 10-inch view camera, rendering them with a freshness and sumptuousness true to the original edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wonderful autobiography about a courageous, talented, free-spirited, and kind-hearted woman. It was absolutely absorbing to come to understand how her life experience was embodied in the subjects that she focused on. As a southerner, I was lead by Mann to recall once again what it was to grow up white in Louisiana in the fifties, and to understand in a deeper way how out of touch we whites actually were with blacks in general, but more specifically with our loving black maids, who

raised us like their own children. Many of us sensed that something was fundamentally wrong with our lives, our churches, and our families, but we also knew that trying to talk about these things with our parents and pastors would not be well received. What cowards must of us were; I have always felt guilty about this, as Mann so bravely described in her own life. A stunning book, one of the best that I have read in years. Sally Mann is a national treasure.

A time capsule of growing up in the south, carefree and innocent, without prejudiced beliefs of the beauty of being young and human. Those who've found controversy in the images are only imposing their own fears and belief systems, rather than approaching the work for what it was in the eyes of the artist who created it; a celebration of the family and private time together, watching the young ones grow up. Very highly recommended.

This is a well-produced book of lovely family photographs. Some are unposed, but those that are posed are not elf-conscious, "studio-like" pictures, and the children do not seem to be inhibited, even when nude. My only criticism, if you could call it that, would be that the children all look so serious. A smile here or there would not go amiss.

I don't know how many editions of this book are available on but I bought this one because it's supposed to have even better print/ image quality than earlier books (I think cheaper too). The images are generally well composed, some seem well thought out and others more like quick snapshots ( yet I understand Mrs. Mann uses a large format camera, probably magazine page size negatives- hardly a "snapshot" camera!). I didn't count the nudes (most just of her three children) but they tend to be casual in nature, not "sexy" and probably number fewer than "clothed" portraits. If you have any acceptance of nude photographs these won't upset you. Hardly any of the portraits are split between pages, in this edition at least. From what I've seen of her work this may be Sally Mann's best book, worth owning by collectors of art photography.

This book is so much more than just an appealing array of three often unclothed young siblings. Each photo repays many times over open-minded attentive scanning for components relevant to the observer. For example, I love the photo of Emmett ("Popsicle Drips") for its shotgun blast of simultaneous images and references which contrasts the physical vulnerability of this pre-pubescent lad with the in-your-face early genital maturation, his sturdy thighs vrs the twist of his still undeveloped trunk culminating in an extended arm in a "Christ on the cross" position: an impossibly

rich photograph, not to mention its titled highlight, the popsicle drips (intrinsically early childhood) framing his budding genitals. While we know from Sally that many of the photos were "Hold still!" posed, none of her children's reactions were posed and in fact their reactions to being posed (boredom, annoyance) are so authentic their scowls are intrinsic and integral to the impact of each such photo. If your interest in this book is prurient, don't bother: on the other hand, the children's natural reactions to being posed and photographed could be an antidote, a form of therapy for the voyeur who might fantasize that the photographed nude child invited the attention.

Brilliant early work. Being familiar with her work over a long period of time, I see this book as somewhat limited; some images appear too close to the 1970s work of Emmet Gowin, which I am not sure is an entirely fair assessment. But this is important work. To see this work in context, I would recommend her memoir, "Hold Still," and the film about her, "What Remains." Significant work by a very important photographer.

Sally Mann's "Immediate Family" is one of the best, and most significant, of late 20th C photography books. It's fresh and iconoclastic, makes direct human contact, and is of high technical quality. Shouldn't be missed.

Essential book of modern photography. Buy it before it's once again out of print.

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