

Elephant Reflections

Dale Peterson

Karl Ammann, Photographer

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Nature photography is a unique art form; it needs to present real life through a clear yet creative lens. When high-quality photographs are joined with strong prose and a passion for the subject matter in the form of a thoroughly researched book this unique art form becomes a thing of beauty. That's what happens in *Elephant Reflections*.

Elephant Reflections is an elegant excursion in both word and photo through the world of elephants-how they enter their families spend their days interact with others and deal with man. The book's 131 full-color photos transport readers from the familiarity of their living rooms to the dusty savannas and dark dense forests of Africa.

You don't have to be an elephant lover to appreciate author Dale Peterson's almost ethereal opening piece "Elephant Reflections" a written snapshot of the elephants he first encountered for this book. He discusses the book's organization and takes an in-depth look at the specific cameras and lenses that photographer Karl Ammann used.

What follows is a testament to Ammann's skill, patience, and knowledge as a nature photographer. His elephant photos capture tender moments between mother and calf, the brooding herd as it brushes itself with dirt, their joyful rush into swampy water, and the peaceful colors of a lone bull crossing the grasslands with Mount Kilimanjaro in the background. These evocative pictures are both personal and informative and are grouped into eight sections: Textures, Colors, Perspectives, Fragments, Portraits, Behaviors, Associations, and Passages.

Peterson follows up the photography portion with "Reflections on Elephants" in which he weaves together background information, personal thoughts, and details about what is happening today to the world of elephants. Ammann later journals on the challenges elephants face from encroaching civilization, a variety of poachers, and an uninformed public. A complete index, well-documented references, and a notes section on the photographs offer additional resources for readers who want to know more.

Ammann and Peterson make a formidable team. Ammann is an experienced wildlife photographer whose award-winning work has appeared in *Time* magazine and *Outdoor Photography*. A writer and an editor, Peterson has been honored with Best Book of the Year by several national newspapers and journals. Their respective photos and words express their deep and authentic love for the subject matter and their hope for a world that is more aware and appreciative of these majestic animals.

LORA SCHROCK (April 13, 2009)

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