Color, Food Photography, and Instagram

Artists invented the first pigments, a combination of soil, animal fat, burnt charcoal, and chalk, as early as 40,000 years ago, creating a basic palette of five colors: red, yellow, brown, black, and white. Since then, after the invention of new pigments, art history went through the greatest movements, from the Renaissance to the Impressionism, as artists experimented with colors never before seen in the history of painting. Then came William Eggleston and introduced color photography as an art. While there is no question Eggleston took amazing photographs with vibrant colors and beautiful images he encountered resistance, criticism and ridicule for his photographs by other artists. American photographer Walker Evans summarized the feeling when he stated, “There are four simple words for the matter, which must be whispered: Color photography is vulgar.” Critics viewed his work as boring and described it as ramshackle and erratic. The New York times labeled his show which featured 75 prints in vivid color, “the most hated show of the year.” But all that changed a few decades later and now today’s critics and photographers view Eggleston’s work as a critical and important moment in the history of photography, as many people who are doing color photography are somewhat influenced by his work.

Today, in a world that relies on social media with all the images and photographs with all the vibrant colors, people were able to advertise and commercial products especially when those products happen to be food items. People today promote their food items they want to advertise and sell by taking colorful pictures that make them look appetizing and appealing. Some people make a living by taking pictures of food at places where they go eat, and by posting these photos on Instagram and other social media they are promoting the food establishment and therefore get paid.

I have a sister who makes cinnamon buns and advertises her product on Instagram. She bakes for some local bakeries and bakes for special orders and events. I am planning on eating some of her cinnamon buns on the holiday when I go for a visit, and I can’t wait, because they are certainly delicious!

