



# **An Emergency in Slow Motion: The Inner Life of Diane Arbus**

*William Todd Schultz*

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Diane Arbus was one of the most brilliant and revered photographers in the history of American art. Her portraits, in stark black and white, seemed to reveal the psychological truths of their subjects. But after she committed suicide at the age of 48, the presumed chaos and darkness of her own inner life became, for many viewers, inextricable from her work.

In the spirit of Janet Malcolm's classic examination of Sylvia Plath, *The Silent Woman*, William Todd Schultz's *An Emergency in Slow Motion* reveals the creative and personal struggles of Diane Arbus. Schultz, an expert in personality psychology, veers from traditional biography to look at Arbus's life through the prism of five central mysteries: her childhood, her outcast affinity, her sexuality, her time in therapy, and her suicide. He seeks not to give Arbus some definitive diagnosis, but to ponder some of the private motives behind her public works and acts. In this approach, Schultz not only goes deeper into her life than any previous writing, but provides a template to think about the creative life in general.

Schultz's careful analysis is informed, in part, by the recent release of Arbus's writing by her estate, as well as interviews with Arbus's last therapist. *An Emergency in Slow Motion* combines new revelations and breathtaking insights into a must-read psychobiography about a monumental artist -- the first new look at Arbus in 25 years.

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