

## 16 Ways of Looking at a Photograph

Class Exercise: Chapter 10, Estrangement

The idea of the power and efficacy of a photographic image that arrests and also estranges us stems from playwright Bertolt Brecht's (1898-1956) theory of the "alienation effect" in theater. For Brecht, cultural and artistic products that numbed and lulled the audience were anathema. Instead, he sought ways to break the audience out of their sense of complacency. Photography, because if left unattended will look realistic, can create an alienation effect through subject matter and the handling of the subject. For this class exercise, read the short piece here <http://beautifultrouble.org/theory/alienation-effect/> about Brecht. In what ways does Diane Arbus' work participate in a stimulating and enlightening alienation of the audience? How is her work similar, in effect, to Brecht's aesthetic of enlightening the audience through alienation?