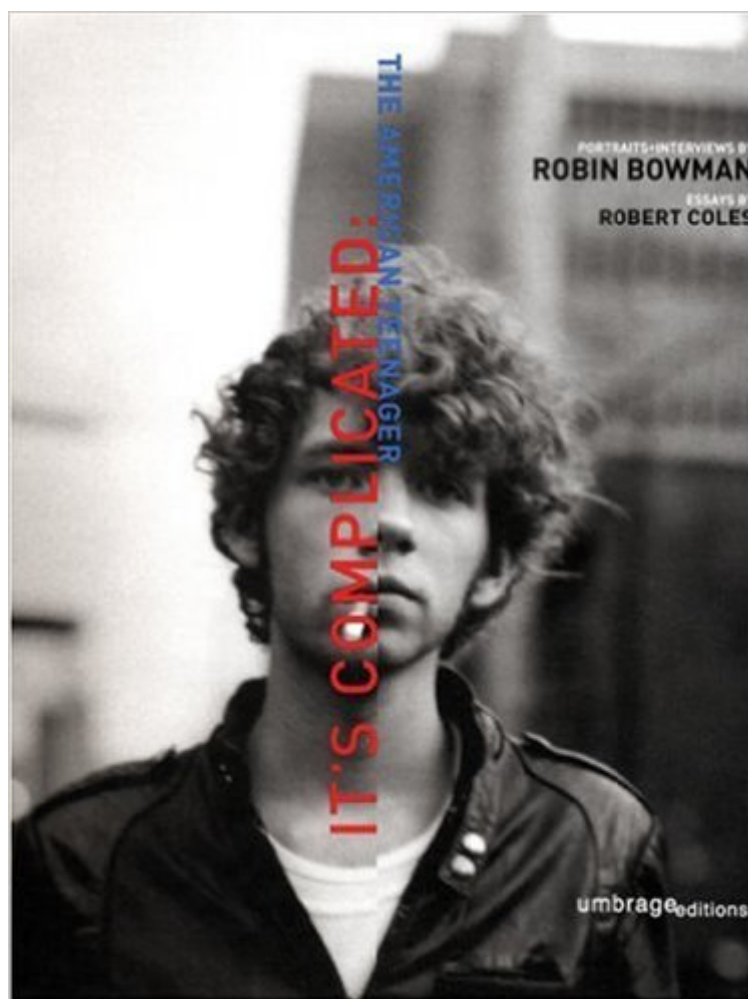


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# It's Complicated: The American Teenager



## Synopsis

Robin Bowman's five-year journey into the heart of teenage America created a series of 414 collaborative portraits, wherein she shares her discoveries of a generation now coming of age. In searing and intimate photographs, presented alongside the young people's voices of passion, pride, embarrassment, lust, pain, bewilderment, anxiety, joy, uncertainty, and rage, the book charts the coming of age of the largest generation in America—77 million strong—in every region of the country and every socioeconomic group: from a Texas debutante to teenage gang members in New York City, from a drag queen in Georgia to a coal miner in West Virginia. Bowman's intimate photographs ask us to reconcile preconceived ideas and stereotypes of teenagers with the diversity of individuals in the portraits. This book and the traveling exhibition it accompanies are about the inside lives of these kids and how they see their reality in their own voices. Robin Bowman, a 2005 W. Eugene Smith Memorial fellow, is a photojournalist based in Portland, Maine. Dr. Robert Coles is the Pulitzer-Prize winning author of the Children of Crisis series and a Harvard emeritus professor of psychiatry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'It's Complicated' is a fabulous book that provides magnificent insight into teenagers in this day and age. It is not only unique in that it combines candid interviews with candid yet beautifully composed photographs, but also because it takes you through walks of life you have never experienced (or never knew existed). The book presents everyone from a young woman who spends her mornings

catching lobster with her father for a living to a group of girls from New Orleans who discuss the role of class and money in their school. I highly recommend this book for anyone who wishes to take a journey with Robin Bowman through the heart of America. Robin Bowman is a modern day Jack Kerouac, using candid moments to craft a history of an era sprinkled with differences in views all over America. You will step away from the book with not only a newfound appreciation for the art of photography and the impact it can make but also with a newfound appreciation for your own adolescence, and for people like Robin Bowman who go out and interview people you have only dreamed of meeting.

"It's Complicated: the American Teenager" is a compilation of photographs taken in a five year exploration by Robin Bowman of the largest generation of teenagers in American history. Consisting of a series of 415 'collaborative portraits', a diverse range of teenagers are showcased by in pictures and in their own words. The photographed teens represent every region of American and every socioeconomic group from Texas debutantes to New York City gangbangers. Offering visually reinforced insights into the diversity of individual personalities and attitudes, "It's Complicated" is an impressive and unique photographic journal, making it a very highly recommended addition to personal, academic, and community library American Photography reference collections.

My 15 year old received this book as a Christmas present. It has remained out and open since then. All of her friends have picked it up and found entries that they found interesting and compelling. The book truly represents the cross-section of the teen experience in America. The author's compassion and concern for the teens as individuals is evident throughout the profiles, allowing it to speak to the universal truth about making it through those teen years. "It's Complicated" indeed.

This is such an extraordinary collection. The kind to be viewed over and over again in different moods and for different insights. In particular I recommend this collection for libraries and other resource rooms where teenagers roam - my own high school students have been glued to it since it arrived and I love hearing them reflect on what they see. Thank you Ms. Bowman for providing us with this entry into our past, present, and future, and for those young people who are young right now - for giving them insight into their peers - near and far.

I sat down with this book with the intent to peruse, but found myself totally absorbed for the entire evening. The photographs are amazing on their own, but the coupling with interviews opens up the

experience - I found myself wishing I had been in that car with Robin as she explored the teen world. Robin has left me with wanting more... I'll be sharing this book with my teenage daughter to offer perspective on her life in this day and age.

Although my teenagers are in their 30's now-I read this with much interest. The photography was beautiful and captured the spirit of these people. You could see that they really trusted Robin and her camera. A wonderful idea. A wonderful book for me to share with my children-who have children and for friends who are wondering who their teens really are! Thanks to Robin and Robert and to Umbrage who let them tell and show their story!

Honesty....you know it when you see it. Robin Bowman's photography is as authentic as it gets. Captivating black and white portraits of teenagers telling their own story through Robin's lens. The respect she pays her subjects and their journey is so plain to see, it's hard to avert your eyes from the portraits. You get the feeling there is some of us in each of them.

I love books about real teenagers. Being a real teenager myself, I often subconsciously get sucked into picturing every other teenager being a lot like me. It is interesting seeing images of teenagers from all over the world. The book is filled with pictures of teenagers and short essays that include questions they answered in an earlier interview. 9/11 is mentioned a lot. I recommend this book.

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