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Harry Gruyaert



Synopsis

The first retrospective of the pioneering work of Harry Gruyaert Born in Antwerp in 1941 and a member of Magnum Photos since 1982, Harry Gruyaert revolutionized creative and experimental uses of color in the 1970s and 1980s. Influenced by cinema and American photographers, his work defined new territory for color photography: an emotive, non-narrative, and boldly graphic way of perceiving the world. In 1972, while living in London, Gruyaert created the striking series TV Shots by turning the dial on a television set at random and photographing the distorted images he saw there. A later series, Made in Belgium, portrays his ambivalent relationship with his homeland in a palette of saturated tones. In his most recent work, he embraces the possibilities of digital photography, taking further creative risks to capture light in new ways. Gruyaert's images are autonomous, often independent of any context or thematic logic. This volume, the first retrospective of his work, is a superb overview of his personal quest for freedom of expression and the liberation of the senses. 80 color illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Amazing photographer. Beautiful book. It reminds me that not all street photography is about getting in someone's face with a camera and flash and freaking them out while you snap their photo. Color, line, geometry and just one great image after another.

There's a consistent grace in the palette Gruyaert applies here. It's somber, kind of melancholic - a

deep, thick color saturation with a Kodachrome red hangover but one that seems to support his perspective about the human condition. There's a sense that he knows our absurd situation well enough but also sees a beauty in our trying to keep so many balls in the air at once.

Although having been compared to some of my favorite artists like Saul Leiter, Alex Webb, William Eggleston and others due to his use of color, I simply cannot get into Harry Gruyaert's photography. Not that some of it is not impressive, it's just that he seems to change color palettes and techniques too much to produce consistency. Some of the photos here are simply dreadful. His 1972 TV images apparently were praised at the time as being unique yet taking pictures of distorted television images was commonplace among photographers I knew personally during this period. I also did it and, like others, just considered it an exercise rather than serious work. We all tossed out our slides like painters throwing away failed practice drawings. Other images presented here are weak and, in some cases, the colors are so off they make the subjects look ill. There is no doubt Gruyaert has made a successful career from his work so it's hard to criticize his vision. Still, it leaves me unenthusiastic.

Can't say enough about this. If you are a fan of Gruyaert, Alex Webb, or Steve McCurry, just get this. Love photos and packaging.

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