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Zones Of Exclusion: Pripyat And Chernobyl



Synopsis

In the 11 days following the Chernobyl catastrophe on April 26, 1986, more than 116,000 people were permanently evacuated from the area surrounding the nuclear power plant. Declared unfit for human habitation, the Zones of Exclusion includes the towns of Pripyat (established in the 1970s to house workers) and Chernobyl. In May 2001, Robert Polidori photographed what was left behind in the this dead zone. His richly detailed images move from the burned-out control room of Reactor 4, where technicians staged the experiment that caused the disaster, to the unfinished apartment complexes, ransacked schools and abandoned nurseries that remain as evidence of those who once called Pripyat home. Nearby, trucks and tanks used in the cleanup efforts rest in an auto graveyard, some covered in lead shrouds and others robbed of parts. Houseboats and barges rust in the contaminated waters of the Pripyat River. Foliage grows over the sidewalks and hides the modest homes of Chernobyl. In his large-scale photographs, Polidori captures the faded colors and desolate atmosphere of these two towns, producing haunting documents that present the reader with a rare view of not just a disastrous event, but a place and the people who lived there.

Book Information

Hardcover: 112 pages

Publisher: Steidl/Pace/MacGill Gallery; First Edition edition (July 2, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 3882439211

ISBN-13: 978-3882439212

Product Dimensions: 15.4 x 0.7 x 12 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,948,339 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #913 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Photojournalism & Essays > Photojournalism](#) #1494 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Safety & First Aid](#) #4551 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Individual Photographers](#)

Customer Reviews

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster on April 26, 1984, forced the immediate evacuation of more than 116,000 people from that part of the Ukraine, which was subsequently declared unfit for human habitation. Fifteen years and more than 350,000 evacuations later, photographer Polidori (Havana) returned to shoot vacant apartment blocks, highways, classrooms, and dachas being reclaimed by

the forest, and the frightening control rooms themselves. As Polidori writes: "Does any generation have the right to risk the safety of so many future generations?... I felt personally compelled to confront and witness this ongoing tragedy that no ritual can heal." The result is 190 color photos that give this 15" x 11" book a deeply haunting quality. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Robert Polidori was born in Montreal in 1951 and lives in New York City. His work has been shown in Paris, Brasilia, New York, Los Angeles and Minneapolis. He is a regular contributor to The New Yorker, Geo and Architectural Digest (Germany). Polidori has received numerous awards.

Scratched the curiosity itch with Pripyat. Highly recommend!

The Best Book!

The photos are poetic, well composed and beautifully printed. Those interested in images of Chernobyl, or in architectural photography, will find this worthwhile. However, the book contains almost no text, and this weakens it. There is no discussion of the places shown in the photographs, or what happened in each setting. There is no pairing of before and after photographs. There is no discussion of how, technically, Polidori took the photographs. I would have preferred to see all three of these things. There are other sources, of course. A recent issue of National Geographic used the 20th anniversary of the disaster as its cue to cover this ground (and with some very similar photos too). However, this was a missed chance by Polidori. Also, I found the array of photographs of little houses being reclaimed by the forest to be less interesting than Polidori probably expected. The urban photos were much more compelling.

Would be a great book at half the asking price. Not the variety of settings I was expecting

I've met Polidori's work through a fine edition with compilations of his pictures (from this and some of his other books) published in Brazil (ISBN-13: 9788586707414). This edition has equivalent publishing quality as this one reviewed but is far more choicier regarding content. I didn't buy it though, instead ordered the present one, I wanted to have it more "complete" and it was a poor choice as a matter of fact. The good thing to say about the present book in comparison is that it has a uniform mood, artificially created, as you pour through from cover to cover. A feeling which I could better describe as desolation. On the other hand it gets repetitive and even solemn (for example on

the blank sheets following some reproduction) its a book you look at once, like a long silent film, and than display it to your guests.Im not saying its a bad book, it just a bit tiresome, even sentimentalist for that matter.This is not an essential book.Based on the comparison of this two books only, the advice id like someone to have given myself back then is that: On a Polidori's compilation you get more that you loose.

It was a very disappointing the photos are beautiful but they lack either the artsy look or the documentary approach, the quality of the printing and the book in general is superb, but its way too repetitive, a bunch of houses being swallow by the woods, but not a single one from the inside, and the "classic" pictures that you can find all over the internet from inside the school and the hospital... 2 pictures of the same room from different angles followed by a third and a forth of very similar rooms, you get the idea, there is hardly any text... scratch that... there is no text if you want to see the caption of a picture you have to go to the end of the book and look for it, there are no pictures of animals or of the inhabitants... is a word... weak... google kiddofspeed instead, its better and cheaper :D

Robert Polidori has captured in large format, cities which have now become ghost towns, due to the most devastating of nuclear accidents. The colors are muted in the photographs as they are in real life, with everything that's left covered in dirt, debris, and rubble. There may never be a full clean-up because of the radiation still present, which would put people at risk, and the fact that it will never be rebuilt anyway. It appears most of the shots were taken during cloudy days, and I am wondering if the mood would have been emphasized a tad further had some warmer light shined into the interiors.The story of what happened is barely touched upon, but this book is a photo representation of what is left behind, and not a story about what happened. I have no problem looking elsewhere to find the history of the accident, and think the book stands alone as a stunning pictorial depiction of what can go wrong in the nuclear age. One of my favorite photo books in any genre.

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