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# Permanent Error



## Synopsis

The most recent publication from the award-winning photographer Pieter Hugo reveals the devastating consequences of toxic waste on one community in Africa. In his previous well-received volumes of photographs, Hugo offers unflinching yet striking portraits of humans, animals, societies, and landscapes that shock and disturb, but also demand our attention. In *Permanent Error*, he documents a garbage dump in Ghana that has become the repository for discarded computers from around the world. These haunting images document the true cost of a misguided policy—the shipping of millions of tons of obsolete computers to developing countries. The computers are burned to extract valuable metals, effectively turning the site into a toxic wasteland that contaminates air, soil, and groundwater for miles around. These amazing portraits tell a story of a marginal community overwhelmed by poverty, but where human strength and resilience shine through the inhuman conditions Hugo lays bare.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The most recent publication from the award-winning photographer Pieter Hugo reveals the devastating consequences of toxic waste on one community in Africa. In his previous well-received volumes of photographs, Hugo offers unflinching yet striking portraits of humans, animals, societies, and landscapes that shock and disturb, but also demand our attention. In *Permanent Error*, he documents a garbage dump in Ghana that has become the repository for discarded computers from around the world.

PIETER HUGO's previous books include *The Hyena & Other Men* and *Nollywood* (both by Prestel). He lives in Cape Town, South Africa.

*Permanent Error* by Peter Hugo exposes the profound inhumane conditions of the Agbogbloshie dump situated on the outskirts of Ghana's capital, Accra. "The Place With No Name," as labeled by its inhabitants, is a putrid wasteland littered with damaged computer monitors, mother boards, and hard drives. This is not a place of happiness or joyous filled moments. It is a burnt and barren slum of a workplace overpopulated by disenfranchised men and boys of orphans in the many. Emission of poisonous chemicals that have or will kill many who work there, as well as discharging toxic chemicals that will poison its inhabitants for many years to come.

Such powerful work.

I think Pieter Hugo is one of the best African photographers. It's a good book. I think however that the other two books of Pieter Hugo especially "The Hyena and other man" and also "Nollywood" are much better. Maybe it is just because I just like the other subjects more. I don't know. You must decide!

The photographs in Pieter Hugo's new book *Permanent Error* are unsettling, depressing to consider and oddly beautiful at the same time. "What have we wrought" is certainly the appropriate question, put in Jim Pluckett's excellent essay at the back of this volume. Federica Angelucci has written a short fine preface. But what is really scary are the abbreviations presented on the next few pages: "AgCl - Silver chloride, As - Arsenic, B2C - Business to consumer, Ba - Barium, Be - Beryllium, HNO3 - Nitric acid, ICT - Information and communication technologies", and so on. It reads like some nightmare poem. You want to hold your breath when turning to these pages, and also ask yourself, what have we wrought? Like Hugo's previous book *The Hyena & Other Men* we are entering into a surreal and apocalyptic landscape that is only too real. Look at the triptych fold-out image located about three quarters of the way into the book. It shows a massive trash strewn landscape. A young man called Zakaria Salifu stares out at us from the center frame. It is a landscape that is difficult to comprehend. This is poverty. Hugo treads a fine line with his work between photojournalism and art. The strangeness of his subject matter is hard to turn away from. The clarity and beauty of his photographs make it all the more inviting. His straight forward

portraiture is both blunt and empathetic to his subject. These images also mirror back a legacy of what we are leaving behind.

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