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Christopher Anderson: Capitolio



Synopsis

Capitolio is New York documentary photographer Christopher Anderson's cinematic journey through the upheavals of contemporary Caracas, Venezuela, in the tradition of such earlier projects as William Klein's New York (1954-55) and Robert Frank's The Americans (1958). It presents a poetic and politicized vision, by one of today's finest documentary photographers, of a city and a country that is ripping apart at the seams under the stress of popular unrest, and whose turmoil remains largely unreported by Western media. No stranger to such fraught situations (he covered the 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel from its inception), Anderson notates the country's current incongruities, where the violent and the sensual intermingle chaotically. "The word 'capitolio' refers to the domed building that houses a government," writes Anderson, elaborating on the title of this volume; "here, the city of Caracas, Venezuela, is itself a metaphorical capitolio building. The decaying Modernist architecture, with a jungle growing through the cracks, becomes the walls of this building and the violent streets become the corridors where the human drama plays itself out in what President Hugo Chavez called a 'revolution.'"

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a working photojournalist, I buy and study a lot of photo books. I have to say that Christopher Anderson's "Capitolio" is one of the best releases in the last couple of years in my opinion. Photography in general and photojournalism in particular is a very mature art. By that I mean that the bar has been raised so high, over the last five decades, that bringing something new and fresh

on the table is sublimely difficult. As such, Anderson borrows the visual language of Larry Towell, W. Eugene Smith and others. However Anderson carries it further into subjectiveness, most likely based on a realization that pure objectivism is impossible to attain. And this he does with a very, very steady hand. Rarely nowadays, do I get really impressed with a photo publication, but this one really did it. The opening shot of the silhouette picture of the "devil" with curly hair in front of a cross sets the pace - we know we are not going to see just another line-up of pretty but boring pictures so common these days. Anderson's very grainy, gritty and dark pictures (shot with good old film perhaps?) is a bold move but works perfectly. My biggest gripe with most photo books is usually the editing. Too often there is too many pictures so that it becomes repetitive, or there are too few so that you don't get a good impression of the story, and most commonly the pictures are incohesive and looks like they have been loosely scrambled together. Not so with *Capitolio*. Tightly edited, varied and never gets boring. It ranges from self-explanatory registrations to subjective pictures where you can hardly make out what is happening. The book needs both, because there are no subtitles! Another reviewer compared it to a well edited movie, and I agree perfectly with that. Of course it would be a big letdown without top notch printing, but as others have mentioned it is pretty much as good as it gets in that regard. B/W is much harder to print well than one might think. On a closing note I should mention that this is a limited edition of only 2000 copies. has already raised the price with ten bucks since I ordered, so get yours while you can still afford it!

The black and white photographs in this book are stunning. As a Venezuelan I was deeply touched and can imagine all the things Mr Anderson saw on his trips to Caracas during one of the most difficult times in our recent history. I would have liked to see some short paragraphs accompanying the photos so other people can better understand the reality behind them.

great book

Drop dead killer photography by the master of B&W photo-J. Frickin intense book.

The best book about Venezuela today. One of the best black and white photographers I have seen. A great book to buy. Beautifully printed in China. Do not miss.

I saw proofs of *Capitolio* on Chris Anderson's iPhone a few months ago (Chris is a friend) and I was stunned. It's that good. Even on an iPhone screen it grabs you. So the book--do not hesitate to get

it. Amazing photography.

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