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Robert Polidori

Synchrony and Diachrony

Photographs of the J. P. Getty Museum 1997

Main description

This book presents 35 photos of the Getty Center taken shortly before the 1997 opening of its new multipurpose complex designed by Richard Maier. Published to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the center, the book reveals behind-the-scenes views of the building as objects from J. Paul Getty's painting, sculpture and decorative arts collections were being installed inside it.

In September 1997 *The New Yorker* commissioned Robert Polidori to photograph Maier's building. Within 48 hours he had made images of its exterior but remembers being unsatisfied: "The building looks great, but it could house anything really—a hospital, a university, or even some corporate headquarters." Polidori wanted to document the museum's interior, to capture what he calls "some sort of museological typology," and proceeded to photograph the rooms in which artworks were either freshly installed or still being so—sculptures under plastic sheets, golden candelabras resting on foam cushions, cardboard boxes containing unseen treasures. The resulting photos show the museum in the process of taking shape, expose the mechanics of curatorship, and reveal, in Polidori's words, a paradox: "The more a room may be filled with the helter-skelter of objects to be arranged, the more naked and raw the possibilities and intent of their placement become apparent."

Biography

Robert Polidori was born in Montreal in 1951 and today lives in Ojai, California. Polidori's work has been the subject of numerous international exhibitions, and he received the World Press Photo Award in 1997, the Alfred Eisenstaedt Award for Magazine Photography in 1999 and 2000, and Communication Arts awards in 2007 and 2008. In 2006 his series of photographs of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Polidori's bestselling books *Havana* (2003), *Zones of Exclusion – Pripyat and Chernobyl* (2003), *After the Flood* (2006), *Parcours Muséologique Revisité* (2009), *Some Points in Between ... Up Till Now* (2010), *Eye and I* (2014) and *Chronophagia* (2014) have been published by Steidl.

Bibliography

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English

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