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This Land: An American Portrait



Synopsis

Jarred by the 9/11 attacks, photographer Jack Spencer set out in 2003 "in hopes of making a few 'sketches' of America in order to gain some clarity on what it meant to be living in this nation at this moment in time." Across thirteen years, forty-eight states, and eighty thousand miles of driving, Spencer created a vast, encompassing portrait of the American landscape that is both contemporary and timeless. This Land presents some one hundred and forty photographs that span the nation, from Key West to Death Valley and Texas to Montana. From the monochromatic and distressed black-and-white images that began the series to the oversaturated color of more recent years, these photographs present a startlingly fresh perspective on America. The breadth of imagery in This Land brings to mind the works of such American masters as Edward Hopper, Grant Wood, Mark Rothko, and Albert Bierstadt, while also evoking the sense of the open roads traveled by Woody Guthrie and Jack Kerouac. Spencer's pictorialist vision embraces the sweeping variety of American landscapes—coasts, deltas, forests, deserts, mountain ranges, and prairies—and iconic places such as Mount Rushmore and Wounded Knee. Jon Meacham writes in the foreword that Spencer's "most surprising images are of a country that I suspect many of us believed had disappeared. The fading churches, the roaming bison, the running horses: Spencer has found a mythical world, except it is real, and it is now, and it is ours."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"'Bang!' went my heart when I opened the photographer Jack Spencer's powerful This

Land: An American Portrait." (New York Times Book Review 2017-05-29)

Jack Spencer is a fine art photographer whose work is in major private and public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Berkeley Art Museum; the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans; the Brookings Institution, Fairfax, Virginia; the Tennessee State Museum, Nashville; the Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson; and the Cleveland Museum of Art. In 2005, he received the Lucie Award for International Photographer of the Year in the nature category. His work has been published in the monographs *Native Soil*, *Jack Spencer*, and *Jack Spencer: Beyond the Surface*. New York Times best-selling author Jon Meacham won the Pulitzer Prize for *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. He is also the author of the acclaimed volumes *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush* and *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power*. He currently serves as executive editor and executive vice president of Random House.

Beautiful book!

fast ship..great price..great book..a+++

Eloquent, mystical photographs.

This magnificent volume of some 140 photographic images spans thirteen years and the Lower 48 States. Begun in 2003, partially as a response to 9/11, this photographic essay, with intense and raw beauty, is a search for meaning by a photographic artist. The images as they came out of the camera were a starting point for creating images Spencer saw in his mind's eye. This is not a glossy travel brochure with beautiful travel images designed to entice tourists to visit, jump out of the car, take a snapshot, and move on to the next spot. Indeed, it is the exact opposite. These are images over which to linger, to contemplate what the artist was thinking as he created each image and what he hoped to show us. These are images that open the mind and encourage the viewer to look deeply and differently at the world around him/herself. What is the meaning of each image, and, taken as a whole, what do they say about the meaning of America? There are probably as many answers as there are viewers of the book. Jon Meacham, in his Foreword, writes of what he finds "surprising images" in the book. Those were not surprising images

to me. I live in ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ Å“The Land of Enchantment, ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ Å• which, in some ways, is still a frontier. But Spencer ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ â„çs treatment of images from places I know, such as Truchas and Cerrillos, New Mexico, made me see them in a different way. This is a book that will influence my photography going forward. Spencer is saddened, appalled that the majority of people he encountered seemed to be unaware of the beauty around them: ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ Å“I was constantly stunned by the sheer volume of sleepwalking masses. ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ Å• And, ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ Å“ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ Å“a phrase from the Gnostic Gospels of Thomas does come to mind: ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ ÅœThe kingdom of heaven is spread out across the earth but men do not see it. ÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ â„çÆfÂçÃ â ÑÃ Å• I was not surprised when he noted that sometimes the beauty was so great he knew no camera could capture it, and that he would watch a scene, with camera packed. I was fortunate to receive the book as a gift from a friend who knew the images would speak to me. Photographers and artists will find much to enjoy here. People who have quietly enjoyed the beauty of this country, whether in their own back yards or along country back roads or in local, state, or National Parks, or anywhere, for that matter, will find the book and its images offer a chance for reflection about many facets of life. Those groups are a natural audience. But, a group to whom I would especially recommend this book are parents with children of all ages. Study the images and your responses to them. Show them to your children, and let them tell you what they see. Discuss the history of this country, and the magnificent beauty there for the seeing. Help them open their eyes, not just to look, but to see. Five stars.

A great table book. Have already gone through it twice. His perspective and photo's are wonderful and showed me how many wonderful things you can take pictures of.

Great Book !

Bought this for my sister as a gift, she loves the book

Disappointed in this book. Wanted it as family book to educate with, the author lost me completely with his thoughts favoring evolution. This Christian family credits the beauty of our nation to its Creator! Also some pathetic photographs of Texas ... so much beauty there! I returned it.

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