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Koen Wessing: Chili, September 1973: Books On Books No. 8



Synopsis

Koen Wessing's *Chili, September 1973* is a shocking account of government brutality, from a socially concerned and politically engaged Dutch photojournalist who has gone on to make similarly powerful images in Ireland, Chile, Guinea-Bissau, Nicaragua, El Salvador, China, Berlin and Amsterdam. First published in 1973, just months after the fall of Salvador Allende to Augusto Pinochet's coup d'état, it describes the tense days of the military attempt to root out public opposition in the streets of Santiago, and has since become one of documentary photography's most exemplary moments. This entry in Errata Editions' Books on Books series reproduces every spread from Wessing's gritty documentation of Chile's darkest historical moment; art historian and film theorist Pauline Terreehorst contributes a contemporary essay titled "The Man in the Grey Suit: Koen Wessing: Chili 1973." Errata Editions' Books on Books series is an ongoing publishing project dedicated to making rare and out-of-print photography books accessible to students and photobook enthusiasts. These are not reprints or facsimiles but complete studies of the original books. Each volume in the series presents the entire content, page for page, of an original master bookwork which, up until now, has been too rare or expensive for most to experience. Through a mix of classic and contemporary titles, this series spans the breadth of photographic practice as it has appeared on the printed page and allows further study of the creation and meanings of these great works of art. Each volume in the series contains illustrations of every page in the original photobook, a new essay by an established writer on photography, production notes about the creation of the original edition and biographical and bibliographical information about each artist.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Some, few, pictures taken in the immediate aftermath of the bloody military coup in Chile. The photographer gets close to images that could have become part of the collective memory of those days in 1973. Some pictures are telling a story and you can read the fear, surprise, incredulity on the faces of the victims. You can feel the cold violence hovering the National Stadium in Santiago in September 1973. There are 25 grainy, high contrast plates in total. Then there is a long, boring, useless post-face/essay by a Pauline Terreehorst. The author knows nothing about Chile and the circumstances of the military coup apart from some worn off triviality. She writes about the overthrowing a democratic regime... Is that absolutely sure? Was Salvador Allende a champion of parliamentary democracy? Some people in Europe were not so sure, including some leaders of the so called "euro-communism". Actually the picture of the burning of the victims' propaganda shows the title of a magazine with a different story: "Y ahora una dictatura popular" Of course one must understand Spanish to translate; "And now a popular dictatorship". Perhaps things were a bit more complicated down there. But of course Terreehosrt must ignore Spanish and almost certainly doesn't care about the language, Chile and Chileans. What she talks about at length is the Netherlands in the seventies, the underground, the stencil machine publishers, Dutch actors, Dutch authors and the like. Basically she is interested very much in herself. Could have written the postface in Dutch, no English reading person would have missed her writings.

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