

Photography and Australia (Reaktion Books -Exposures)

Helen Ennis



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With its moving landscapes and famously independent cultural traditions, Australia is uniquely suited to having its national narrative told through visual documentation. Helen Ennis gathers here a selection of photographs that recount the story of Australia, and through this visual chronicle, she uncovers a distinctively Australian visual culture.

The striking images featured in *Photography and Australia*, drawn from the National Library of Australia and other public collections, powerfully document the iconic sights of the rugged Australian landscape such as the imposing Ayers Rock, as well as documentary photographs, wilderness shots, post-mortem studies of bushrangers, and other images both quotidian and extraordinary. One of the leading photography historians in Australia, Ennis argues that the colonial experience is a central element of these visual testaments, and embedded within this experience are the tumultuous relations between white settlers and Aboriginal peoples.

Her analysis explores how the photographs reveal the racial, social, and political tensions woven throughout Australian history, ranging from modern works by Aboriginal photographers to archival photographs of desolate mining towns and the peoples who eked out their living from the brutal terrain. The photographers' personal perspectives are also embedded in the images, *Photography and Australia* argues, and the book examines how photographers' responses to place, modernity, and globalization were expressed through their works.

Photography and Australia unearths an original and engaging perspective on Australian history, weaving a wealth of vibrant images into a compelling account that will appeal to the Aussie in all of us.

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