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Josef Koudelka: Wall



Synopsis

Josef Koudelka's *Wall* comprises panoramic landscape photographs made from 2008-2012 in East Jerusalem, Hebron, Ramallah, Bethlehem and in various Israeli settlements along the route of the barrier separating Israel and Palestine. Whereas Israel calls it the "security fence," Palestinians call it the "apartheid wall," and groups like Human Rights Watch use the term "separation barrier," Koudelka's project is metaphorical in nature. It is focused on the wall as a human fissure in the natural landscape. Sometimes blocks of concrete define the panoramas; at other times displaced olive trees, a lifeline for one man, collateral damage in another's claim for territory, subtly emerge. As in his *Black Triangle* project, made in the Bohemian foothills of the Ore Mountains in the early 1990s, *Wall* conveys the fraught relationships between man and nature and between closely related cultures. A chronology, lexicon and captions provide context for the photographs. The book is designed by Xavier Barral, working closely with Koudelka. *Wall* is part of a larger project, *This Place*, initiated by photographer Frederic Brenner. *This Place* explores Israel as place and metaphor through the eyes of 12 acclaimed photographers, who were invited to look beyond dominant political narratives and to explore the complexity of the place, not to judge, but to question and to reveal.

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Customer Reviews

Wall: Israeli and Palestinian Landscape, 2008-2012 is Josef Koudelka's book of purposely ugly

photos— from which we cannot turn away. His expansive, brooding black-and-white panoramas have a paradoxical effect: Rather than expand our field of vision they close us in, evoking the experience of closed-off lands and claustrophobic, walled-in streets.

— Christopher Lyon

The vistas are resolutely grim, and Koudelka makes no attempt to aestheticize them, yet his sweeping photos are overwhelming. The moral chasm that opens between the sheer impact of the visual and knowledge of what is being depicted is fully intended: an invitation to consider, rather than to simply turn the page in horror and sadness. — The New York Times Here he has produced a remarkable collection of panoramic photos (each 29-by-10-inch spread is a single picture) of the barrier that has been erected over the past decade in defiance of the internationally recognized border. — The New York Times Josef Koudelka's *Wall* is not a neutral assessment of Israel's construction of a 430-mile barrier separating Israel from the West Bank. His panoramic, black-and-white photographs of the structure and other significant landmarks, made between 2008 and 2012, are disorienting and brutal, utilizing motion blur, angled horizons and perspectives—ranging from expansive to intensely close-up—to contemplate the barrier's material and psychological effects. The captions for the images and other texts, written by researcher and writer Ray Dolphin, by and large focus on the questionable route of the wall and the hardships it's imposed on West Bank Palestinians. — PDN Individually, these photographs of the 'security fence' (as Israelis call it) or the apartheid wall (as it is known by the Palestinians whose lives and landscape are blighted by it) have a stark and spectacular beauty. Taken together they create a daunting feeling of visual incarceration so intense, on a scale so massive, that the sky itself is—by turns—implicated, outraged. — Geoff Dyer, *Time*

by locking them in a cage, what will happen? Having been to Israel and seen the security apparatus first hand, let me tell you that "Wall" is a vivid personification of masonry and steel as an evil, death infused dreadnaught that dominates the landscape. It is also a testament to human absurdity and insecurity. One can argue about the ultimate cost of safety, but, if this is the result, then humanity has lost all sense.

Koudelka grew up under the grimness brought on by the shadow of the Soviet Empire--his earlier books reflect that reality. Here, Koudelka brings that same vision to bear on the wall still under construction separating Israeli territory from that of the Palestinians. The book is full of sadness--the

wall is obviously intended to "contain" the Palestinian "problem", and is being built at considerable expense by Israel, but shows how far one group of people feel they must go to stop suicide bombers...I agree with the first reviewer that the printing in the book is difficult--to me, the images all seem dark and gloomy, too much ink on the page--and, yes, some of the images are not sharp, but I attributed that to Koudelka's camera work--he's working with big film, and not everything is in focus--something that is not the fault of the printer... But both the dark printing and the lack of focus contribute to the feel of the book.I've heard many news stories about the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians--but somehow this book manages to convey a mood of anguish that the news never carries.

Once again master works by Josef Koudelka! Excellent design with good printing on this book. Also a collector item. Cheers.

well done! Exciting. My preferred photographer. Shots are very interesting. A masterpiece of all "walls" existing in the world

Profound photos but political (that's okay) and profoundly unbalanced (that's not okay).

Koudelka is back. After having bought his last book, LIME, I was no more so sure about Koudelka. It was a little bit a boring book, too many pictures and printed too dark (owing Koudleka's wishes).Here it is another story. It is a beautiful book, with the kind of pictures that you were waiting for. It tells us a story about a wall, one more. The Chinese wall is turning to dust in the desert (at least the not renewed parts), the Berlin wall fell after 30 years, how long will this one last? The strange thing is that this wall turns two countries into a prison, not a nice thing. But for Israelis, there is no hope, the wall is their wall and it is the wall of FEAR, poor people.Returning to the book, it is beautifully printed in China on a nice paper. The design by Xavier Barral brings Koudelka pictures to an incredible presence, even if they are so large that one or two of them seem to be unsharp. I have no problems with the cut in the middle of the spread, but may be some people will have some.

I preordered this book and looked forward to it. I was very disappointed. As other reviewers have written the printing quality is below standard. Some of the photographs appear to be out of focus and the tonal separations differ quite a lot from image to image. I wonder just what Koudelka himself feels about his most recent book. I intend contacting as I do not believe that this is acceptable

quality for the price.Pilgarlic.

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