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Richard Misrach: The Mysterious Opacity Of Other Beings



Synopsis

Since the publication of Richard Misrach's bestselling and critically acclaimed publication *On the Beach*, he has continued to photograph at the same location, building a body of work that has been exhibited as *On the Beach 2.0* •a reference to the technological and optical developments that have made the intensely detailed, exquisitely rendered depictions possible. *The Mysterious Opacity of Other Beings* focuses less on the abstraction of water, sand and mote-sized figures, instead honing in on the gestures and expressions of bathers adrift in the ocean. Misrach has rarely ventured into portraiture; this work is his first to focus exclusively on the human figure. Each photograph features one or more individuals crisply rendered from a distance, as they seem to levitate among turquoise waves, isolated from everything save the shifting patterns of the ocean. There is ambiguity and a sense of the uncanny in the figures suspended in the water: are they approaching the shore or moving away from it? Each image is presented both as full frame and as a series of enlarged details that enable the viewer to linger on each individual's surrender of their body to the sea.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though lionized for his poignantly beautiful—often times painfully so—reflections of the American West, large scale color format pioneer, photographer Richard Misrach, turns his gaze to the sea for a second time in his new oversized visual monograph, *The Mysterious Opacity of Other Beings*. A follow-up to his best-selling *On the Beach*, the new book of photography continues

where its predecessor left off, exploring the intermittently murky relationship between us that walk on land and the mysterious sea. but where his first release circles on the abstraction of water, the new publication meditates on the lost quiet of humans actually adrift in the ocean: floating, breathing, beating. Investigating this quiet portraiture of intimate surrender, Misrach dives in head first. Flipping through the pages of *The Mysterious Opacity* (published by Aperture) is not the same as being at the beach, but you might find yourself in a similar state of suspension and wonder. And you don't need sunscreen. The New York Times Taking Note Blog A color photography pioneer who helped usher it to the mainstream in the 1970s, Misrach leavens his meta- physical series with a vivid palette of aquamarine gradations that change from turquoise to viridian to azure. Entropy

Richard Misrach is one of the most influential photographers of his generation, well-known for his ongoing project *Desert Cantos*. His work is held by major institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. He is the recipient of four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Kulturpreis for Lifetime Achievement in Photography. His books with Aperture include *Violent Legacies* (1992), *On the Beach* (2007), *Destroy This Memory* (2010), *Petrochemical America* (with Kate Orff, 2012), *Golden Gate* (2012), *The Mysterious Opacity of Other Beings* (2015), and *Border Cantos* (with Guillermo Galindo, 2016).

Probably the best book by Misrach since *The Beach*. This new body of work is incredible. The large format of the book also helps. Highly recommended.

Hmm. The large format invited easy damage. Images just did not register with me. Gave the book away.

Lovely book. A bit larger than necessary but smaller may not conveyed Misrach's point. The photographs are all of people floating in the ocean, alone or with others. Isolation, loneliness and yet at the same time, life despite the odds in this vast universe. The book is not a little mysterious. And who doesn't like a good mystery?

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