

Beautiful Suffering



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Susan Sontag once remarked that since the invention of the camera, photography has "kept company with death." And indeed, images of suffering human beings and devastated landscapes appear regularly in the popular media and even in contemporary art. This volume explores these painful images from the past few decades of photography, weighing in on the intense critical debate that has arisen in recent years around depictions of acute human suffering--especially those that are

beautifully rendered.

Drawing on works from advertising, photojournalism, art photography, and conceptual art, "Beautiful Suffering" features reproductions of all the pieces in the Williams College Museum of Art exhibition that shares its name--including portrayals of AIDS sufferers, Abu Ghraib prisoners, refugees, and casualties of war. It also includes five critical essays that engage the works themselves as well as the larger issues the exhibition confronts: Is it inherently problematic to seek aesthetic pleasure in a rendering of pain? And if so, why? These essays, composed by scholars in fields as diverse as art history and political science, are perfect complements to the powerful images of suffering that probe some of the most pressing issues we face today.

作者介绍:

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