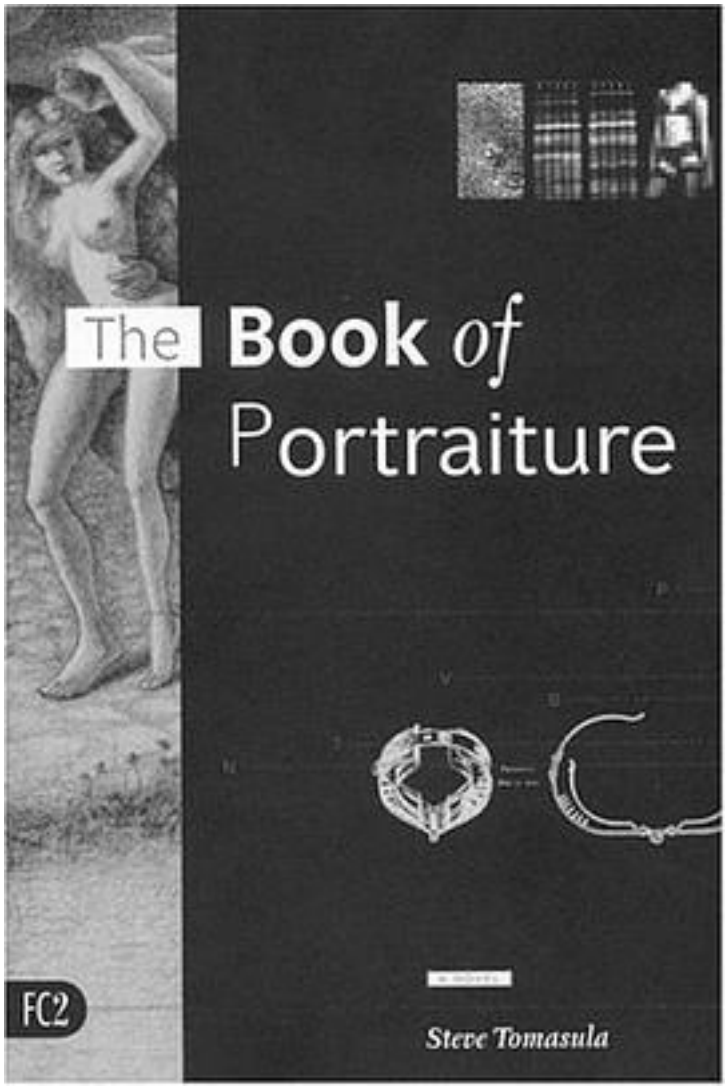
The Book of Portraiture



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A desert nomad struggles at the close of the ancient world to inscribe himself into life, and centuries later a Renaissance artist attempts to overcome his lowly origins by painting nobility. Throughout Steve Tomasula's visually arresting fiction, human beings seek to become both what they are and are not through visual representation. An early twentieth-century psychoanalyst in search of a cure for sexual neurosis discovers the image of his own desire in a female client, and an accidental community of twenty-first century devotees of the image connects the pixels to make their group portrait come into focus. Across a canvas that spans centuries, several narrators look through the lens of their own time and portray objects of desire in paint, dreams, photography, electronic data, and genetic code. Together the images comprise a collage of styles, habits of mind, and ways of speaking which tell the story of people trying to understand the world and their place in it. "The Book of Portraiture" is a novel about the irrepressible impulse to picture ourselves, and about how, through this picturing, we continually re- create what it means to be human. "Tomasula's five interlocking chapters cross continents and centuries and aesthetic sensibilities to build to a dazzling and dizzying whole. "The Book of Portraiture" is one of those rare books that manage to be at once emotionally and theoretically satisfying."--Brian Evenson "Once again, Steve Tomasula has fabricated an incisive and sly commentary on art's way of being in the world, and the manner in which it intersects, and conflicts, with our perceptions. Virtuosic in its execution, and sublime in its discernment, "The Book of Portraiture"is an able continuation of Tomasula's ongoing project to redraw the boundaries of contemporary fiction."--Christopher Sorrentino "Think of Swift, Groddeck, Lautreamont, and George Carlin conversing together in a large wastebin--up to their chins in 21st century sweepings--and you will begin to have an idea of Tomasula's very funny, very smart and downright scary epic vision."- -Rikki Ducornet

作者介绍:

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