



Robert Frank: The Americans

From Brand: Scalo Publishers

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Armed with a camera and a fresh cache of film and bankrolled by a Guggenheim Foundation grant, Robert Frank crisscrossed the United States during 1955 and 1956. The photographs he brought back form a portrait of the country at the time and hint at its future. He saw the hope of the future in the faces of a couple at city hall in Reno, Nevada, and the despair of the present in a grimy roofscape. He saw the roiling racial tension, glamour, and beauty, and, perhaps because Frank himself was on the road, he was particularly attuned to Americans' love for cars. Funeral-goers lean against a shiny sedan, lovers kiss on a beach blanket in front of their parked car, young boys perch in the back seat at a drive-in movie. A sports car under a drop cloth is framed by two California palm trees; on the next page, a blanket is draped over a car accident victim's body in Arizona.

Robert Frank's *Americans* reappear 40 years after they were initially published in this exquisite volume by Scalo. Each photograph (there are more than 80 of them) stands alone on a page, while the caption information is included at the back of the book, allowing viewers an unfettered look at the images. Jack Kerouac's original introduction, commissioned when the photographer showed the writer his work while sitting on a sidewalk one night outside of a party, provides the only accompanying text. Kerouac's words add narrative dimension to Frank's imagery while in turn the photographs themselves perfectly illustrate the writer's own work.

From Publishers Weekly

In this 50th anniversary reissue, celebrated photographer Frank maintains the format (left page: brief caption, right page: photo) and introduction (Jack Kerouac: "with the agility, mystery, genius, sadness and strange secrecy of a shadow Frank photographed scenes that have never been seen before on film"), the images themselves have been re-scanned, re-cropped by Frank and, in two cases, changed. Frank's images, taken all across the country, leave the viewer with a solemn impression of American life. From funerals to drug store cafeterias to parks, Frank recorded every shade of everyday life he encountered: the lower and upper classes, the living and dead, the hopeful and destitute, all the while experimenting with angle, focus and grain to increase impact. Preceding an exhibition that will tour U.S. galleries in 2009, this volume will no doubt introduce new generations to Frank's inimitable record of daily life fifty years ago. Kerouac says, fittingly, that "after seeing these pictures you end up finally not knowing any more whether a jukebox is sadder than a coffin"; those who don't comprehend Kerouac's comment have yet to experience this classic collection. 83 tri-tone plates.

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Review

Mr. Frank's landmark book, "The Americans" was one of a handful of major innovations in 20th century photography. -- *New York Times*, By Vicki Goldberg

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jacqueline Gore:

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