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Yes Yes We're Magicians



Synopsis

Yes Yes We're Magicians is a compilation of anonymous, vintage black-and-white photographs mostly found on eBay from the personal collection of the Canadian artist, collector and writer Jonah Samson. Titled after a line from Samuel Beckett's play, "Waiting for Godot", the dominant mood of the book recalls Beckett's take on human existence as tragicomic. Samson, too, reflects on the absurdity of life through slapstick and dark humor, and a warmhearted affection for the mysteries of human gestures. Involved in all aspects of making the book, Samson has created a carefully orchestrated narrative flow between various kinds of vernacular photographs. Whether a blurry snapshot or a formal portrait, the images draw out the uncanny and magical qualities of photographs. Free of any description, the compelling pictures are allowed to speak for themselves. They are often imperfect, with figures disappearing into misty and watery surfaces, and the details of time and place becoming obscured. Establishing the mood at the beginning with a mysterious color photograph of an erupting volcano, the book interweaves forgotten moments from the past where incidents of the celebratory, melancholic, surreal and bizarre are put into dialogue. As an artist who often reworks found photographs, Jonah Samson brings a distinctive sensibility to this book and treats the form as an artwork in itself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It is impossible to talk about Yes Yes We're Magicians without acknowledging the lavish production of the book itself: it's gorgeous. The front and back covers are designed to fold

out into a single surface so that the reader can appreciate the single image they comprise. The book's binding, thus exposed, is carefully stitched and elegant. Even the text on the copyright page seems crisp and intentionally placed. The book's production is sort of like having plush leather seats in a Ferrari: it may not affect performance, but it sure doesn't hurt." Kris Bone "In the end, perhaps the people in Yes, Yes We're Magicians aren't people at all. Maybe they're just characters play-acting in a curious dramatization of daily life. The fact that we might never know allows them to have both the credibility of reality and the melodrama of make-believe. Samson's mothers, fathers, children, and friends are living stage props we move around inside our heads." Ellyn Kail

feature shoot

Jonah Samson lives on Cape Breton Island in eastern Canada. His photographic artworks have been exhibited widely and he has produced several artist books, including Another Happy Day published by Presentation House Gallery.

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