



Invisible: Covert Operations and Classified Landscapes

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Invisible: Covert Operations and Classified Landscapes is Trevor Paglen's long-awaited first photographic monograph. Social scientist, artist, writer and provocateur, Paglen has been exploring the secret activities of the U.S. military and intelligence agencies--the "black world"--for the last eight years, publishing, speaking and making astonishing photographs. As an artist, Paglen is interested in the idea of photography as truth-telling, but his pictures often stop short of traditional ideas of documentation. In the series *Limit Telephotography*, for example, he employs high-end optical systems to photograph top-secret governmental sites; and in *The Other Night Sky*, he uses the data of amateur satellite watchers to track and photograph classified spacecraft in Earth's orbit. In other works Paglen transforms documents such as passports, flight data and aliases of CIA operatives into art objects. Rebecca Solnit contributes a searing essay that traces this history of clandestine military activity on the American landscape.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Described by critic Paul Schmelzer as 'part Gerhard Richter painting, part Bigfoot sighting,' Paglen's imagery is both a best-attempt documentary of secret fragments that can be seen and a euphemism for all else that is not...His photographs are specters of the Global War on Terror and they're the closest we've come to seeing the most secretive aspects of this most abstract of wars." --Wired Magazine, Pete Brook, 18-Aug-10

"I think of the pictures in 'Invisible' as surprising guides to America's darkest, most mysterious spiritual landscape." --Los Angeles Times, Christopher Knight, 10-Sept-10

"The photographs...are somewhat abstract, sometimes blurry, giving them a haunted, ephemeral feel...No matter how ambiguous or elusive the images in this book are, however, the underlying landscapes are quite real...The blank spots on the map that Paglen describes have their corollary in the blank spots in the mind and in public dialogue...The Post, WikiLeaks, and Paglen have filled in a few of those blank spots. The debate is up to us." --New Yorker, Rollo Romig, 26-July-10

"From secret satellites to covert CIA agents, [Paglen's] images rely less on aesthetics than the sheer power of evidence, or as Paglen puts it, their ability to insist on 'underlying sociological, cultural and political facts.' But in doing so they push our belief in evidence, because for every blurred or unfathomable shot there is an explanation, that we either find credible or not." --British Journal of Photography, Diane Smyth, Aug-10

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From reader reviews:

Kathryn Bowen:

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