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Suburban Dreams



Synopsis

Sometimes, I'm so interested in what's going on with people in their homes that I want to know what's in the closet or under the bed. In my photographs I aspire to tell the viewer not just about what can be seen, but also about things that are hidden and locked away. For years American artist Beth Yarnelle Edwards has been making photographs in idyllic suburban middle-class settings in America and Europe. In her pictures she combines documentary interest and cinematographic staging. Beth Yarnelle Edwards' works are in the collections of the MOCA and SFMOMA; the Museet for Fotokunst, Odense; and others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Beth Yarnelle Edwards' Suburban Dreams is a wonderful photographic and anthropological look at how we live inside our homes, with most of the subject matter drawn from California's Silicon Valley. Each set of subjects is well staged in their home setting, capturing the isolation of the teenager hidden within his oversize headphones, the family racing off to work and school with the father already engaged in his cell phone, the view of a street baseball game from the cave of the iconic suburban two-car garage, and so on. Each photograph is a complete study of one important and characteristic aspect of contemporary middle-class life. Some of the photos were created in Europe, with some contrast in interior sensibilities, but with a similar perspective. The photos are gorgeous, filled with intriguing and bold subjects, staring directly at us, cloaked in the trappings of their daily lives. No one appears to be impoverished...these are not the 'cool' photos of down and out drug

users, strippers and hookers. These are our own neighbors. We immediately recognize ourselves and our friends.

The stunning color photographs in Beth Yarnelle Edwards' "Suburban Dreams" are windows on middle class life in Silicon Valley, California, as well as in France, Germany, Spain, and The Netherlands. They are impressive in their composition and fascinating in what they reveal. One could spend a long time looking at all the telling details in each photograph. There's an older couple in their kitchen, several teenagers and children in their suburban bedrooms and playrooms, and several people in bed, just to name a few subjects. The settings are various rooms of various houses, often elaborately overdecorated but sometimes artistically spare, as well as driveways with basketball hoops and garages. Each photograph suggests a whole world. Viewers become curious about the individuals, about the families, about the cultures that are portrayed; our imaginations are engaged. This book is a large, handsome one, beautifully produced; each photograph has its own page. There are introductory essays by the critics Robert Evren and Christoph Tannert that are illuminating, putting Edwards' work in context and helping readers see some of the artistic subtleties of the work. This is an impressive collection of photographs.

Extraordinary and meticulously made photographs which capture the intimate reality of people, personal relationships, and domestic life in an artistic way. I was fortunately able to see this work exhibited at the Oakland Museum and the printed and the large scale images were so wonderful but unfortunately much more expensive than the book.

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