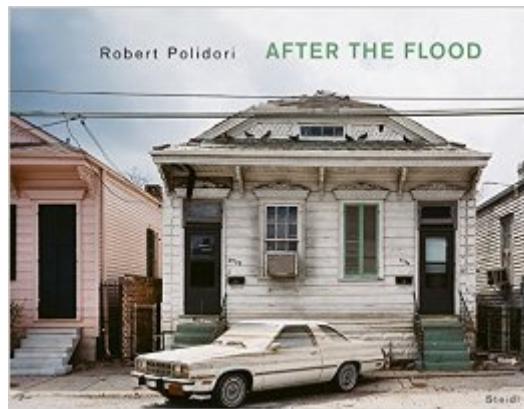


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# Robert Polidori: After The Flood



## Synopsis

In late September 2005, Robert Polidori traveled to New Orleans to record the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina and by the city's broken levees. He found the streets deserted, and, without electricity, eerily dark. The next day he began to photograph, house by house: "All the places I went in, the doors were just open. They had been opened by what I collectively call 'the army,' of maybe 20 National Guards from New Hampshire, 15 policemen from Minneapolis, 20 firefighters from New York... On maybe half of them or a third of them that I went in, I think that the occupants had been there prior. And some of them did leave certain funeral-like mementos before they left. Maybe right after the waters receded they had the chance to just--to go back to their place and just see, and realize there's nothing worth saving." Amidst all this, Polidori has found something worth saving, has created mementos for those who could not return, documenting the paradoxically beautiful wreckage. In classical terms, he has found ruins. The abandoned houses he recorded were still waterlogged as he entered and as he learned (by trial and error, a process that including finding a dead body) the language of signs and codes in which rescue workers had spray-painted each house's siding. He sees the resulting photographs as the work of a psychological witness, mapping the lives of the absent and deceased through what remains of their belongings and their homes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"After the Flood", the latest book by French Canadian Photographer, Robert Polidori, about the

aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is also his largest and most powerful. It is as if his books on Havana and Chernobyl were mere foretastes to this exceptional and moving work, and certainly anyone who has seen these two books came away with a feeling of the power and storytelling that Polidori's images can convey. Polidori has the gift of the detailed eye that can simultaneously give the viewer images of beauty and revulsion in objects and textures. These alone tell the stories. There are no images of people necessary. It is as if he is capturing the tracks and shadows that humanity has left behind. He was able to show this in the urban decay of Havana and of the horrors of the rapid evacuation and subsequent reclamation of nature in Chernobyl. In "After the Flood", he presents us with an almost encyclopedic presentation of the aftermath of the hurricane, flooding, wind, water and mud damage showing the fragility of our cities and the power of nature. The book contains at least 400 images, which have been carefully arranged. The first images show parts of the city still under water and the receding water. The next group shows the destruction caused by water inside the houses. Furniture has been picked up by the flood and re-arranged and we see the effects of water on different materials and soon notice the tell-tale brown lines on the walls, sometimes over six feet high, showing the high water mark. Succeeding groups of images show the effects of mud, water and wind on buildings and cars that have been tossed around at random like toys. Sometimes cars rest against houses in bizarre angles and sometimes the houses are laying on top of the cars. Several pages show smaller images of streets where every house was damaged and abandoned. The last set of images shows the clean up. Mounds of refuse in front of houses, temporary trailers, houses being cleaned and repaired. The effect is very powerful as we see how the lives of hundreds of thousands were affected and how many must have lost everything. The book can only give a taste of the incredible detail the images contain. In a recent exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art they could be seen as the original prints, each at about 40" by 54". They were taken with a large camera and according to Polidori with no lighting, as there was no electricity available at the time the shots were taken and lighting would have been to cumbersome in cramped and sometimes dangerous conditions. Only time exposures could show the incredible detail, which Polidori refers to as the "process of revelation". He call his work "a constant learning process", and anyone who looks at this book will not only learn, but will also ask questions as to how a disaster of this magnitude was possible, and to our place on this earth and our future here. Review by Walter O. Koenig

I purchased this book for my husband for Christmas. He grew up in the 9th Ward. This book of pictures captures the essence of the damage in the New Orleans area caused by the flood following Hurricane Katrina. The pictures are so real that you can just feel the erriness they capture. They

make me think of haunted houses from a movie. But they are real. Real peoples lives and homes.

Robert's photos are AMAZING. I loved the photos when I first saw some of them on display at the Modern Museum of Art in NYC. When I realized he made a book of them, I wanted to own it. I was so moved by the images, particularly one that I saw at the show. I was shocked that the image that I remember most was not in the book. There are likely a thousand awesome photos in the book, but not the one I remember from the exhibition.

Ridiculous amazing amount of detail from this 8x10 photographer. Big fan of this work. Although maybe needs a little editing? There are literally tonnes of images. Still I'd rather have more. Not a book to look through in one go. One to go back to bit by bit. Exhaustive, but brilliant.

These high quality photos come without captions. As a "viewer" (not "reader") you are left to fill in the details of the family who lived in each dwelling, and the small, everyday items captured in many of the photos. It's too much to look at in one sitting; you will need to put it down until you have the heart to go on, and then pick it up again.

Visually stunning, An epic catalog of destruction. The publication is vacant of people, the landscape broken and void of faces...but humanity and the stories of life are apparent on every page. Beautifully rich photos that capture soft light and harsh contrasting structure alike. The weight of paper and binding compliment the weight of this event. Amazing.

The work is great, the subject matter is splendid but the reproduction quality is a little below average. This book would have 5/5 stars if it didn't have the large lithographic dots that mar the sharpness of the images. The resolution is pretty low and noisy which is a shame because they're reproductions of huge 5x7 sheets of film. I still recommend the book.

I bought this book as a gift for my sister-in-law. The book is beautiful! The photography exquisite...I am so happy I bought this book for her.

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