

City of Salt

Erez Lieberman, Richard Selesnick, Sarah Falkner, and Nicholas Kahn
D.A.P., Inc., 2005
Hardcover; 96 pages
\$125.00

Imagine supernatural worlds, both existing and imagined, intricately created in a trilogy of fantastical landscapes and tales. *The City of Salt*, the second volume after *Scotlandfuturebog* (Aperture, 2002), displays a series of panoramic photographs and stories inspired by Sufi tales (writings of the fabulist Italo Calvino, and parables by many other artists), which are masterfully assembled stories that are used for teaching.

Created by photographer Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick, the creation of the fictional worlds and scenes are first sculpted in three-dimensional, miniature models. Through the use of modern, digital photography, actors and figures illustrate each story.

Each theme represented in the *City of Salt* relates to one's self, reality, fantasy, freedom, control, love or desire through a persuasive narrative, also written by Kahn and Selesnick as well as by Erez Lieberman and Sarah Falkner.

Broken up into five chapters, "Book of Sand," "Book of Fur," "Book of Musk," "Book of Tea," and "Book of Salt," the photographers' visions are positioned on deserts, open sky, villages and water. Photos also incorporate estranged humans and animals as objects or figures that represent Middle Eastern civilization somewhere between pre-urban and post-colonial times.



These paralleled topics allow humanity and its desires to be seen as a whole, emphasizing destiny as the determining factor. Other represented images stir up sadness, confusion, and the hope for god, such as in "Book of Fur," as photos and stories create the connection, expectation, and belief of a higher power.

Each tale uses stories such as "The Great Tower" seen in the last chapter, "Book of Salt," to show the connection to fear of a nation after the disaster of September 11. Two towers stand

tall, pure white in color while they remain under construction, on a desert under a cloudy blue sky. The use of art and photography creates tension in the mind of the reader as well as a sense of passion as seen through the creators themselves.

This is a beautifully structured text with an imaginative use of words and photography. This wondrous book of tales is a complex work of art that will be read throughout our generation.

Bankrupt: Photographs of recently vacated offices

Phillip Toledano
Twin Palms Publishers, 2005
Hardcover; 48 pages
\$47.25

An undying desperation runs through the images displayed in *Bankrupt: Photographs of recently vacated offices*, by photographer Phillip Toledano. To Toledano, the empty and vacant office was represented complete hopelessness, signifying the various economic collapses Americans have suffered sporadically since the 1930s.

Toledano gives new meaning to corporate America's feared pink slip, as the viewer is faced with the empty office buildings. The photos display the loss felt by the American worker left behind by the corporate world.

The impact of loss, as Toledano simply phrases it in his own words, is "heavy, Pompeii-like stillness." The feeling of pure sadness penetrates as Toledano expresses this form of life in a state of serenity that is unexpectedly full of motion and demise.

Bankrupt is a perfect reality check for those starting out in the work force, such as college students who can perceive the world with vulnerable eyes.

Simply put in the artist's words, "Everywhere signs of life; Interrupted."

