



The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis

By T. J. Demos

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In *The Migrant Image* T. J. Demos examines the ways contemporary artists have reinvented documentary practices in their representations of mobile lives: refugees, migrants, the stateless, and the politically dispossessed. He presents a sophisticated analysis of how artists from the United States, Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East depict the often ignored effects of globalization and the ways their works connect viewers to the lived experiences of political and economic crisis. Demos investigates the cinematic approaches Steve McQueen, the Otolith Group, and Hito Steyerl employ to blur the real and imaginary in their films confronting geopolitical conflicts between North and South. He analyzes how Emily Jacir and Ahlam Shibli use blurs, lacuna, and blind spots in their photographs, performances, and conceptual strategies to directly address the dire circumstances of dislocated Palestinian people. He discusses the disparate interventions of Walid Raad in Lebanon, Ursula Biemann in North Africa, and Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri in the United States, and traces how their works offer images of conflict as much as a conflict of images. Throughout Demos shows the ways these artists creatively propose new possibilities for a politics of equality, social justice, and historical consciousness from within the aesthetic domain.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*The Migrant Image* provides an in-depth study of contemporary art in a global context, read through the specific lens of migration. T. J. Demos offers a seamless bridge between a critical and informed art history and an authoritative presentation of the socio-political interests that are essential to contextualizing each artist’s practice. The achievement of *The Migrant Image* is to provide a full and rich justification for our paying attention to these works as multi-layered and probing artistic gestures that also have the capacity to renew a political imagination.”

(Claire Bishop, author of *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*)

“T. J. Demos has established himself as a leading critic of politically engaged art, especially as it pertains to the main topic of this book, migration in the more general sense, and migration under late modern, late capitalist globalization. Nowhere else can readers access so many profiles of key works by these artists, or see their work read so deftly and thoroughly from relevant theoretical perspectives.”

(Terry Smith, author of *Contemporary Art: World Currents*)

“*The Migrant Image* is an important reflection on a form of art practice marked by the ‘posts’ of postmodern critique and a political commitment to oppose prepackaged discourses of crisis, austerity, and futile resistance. In a timely way, Demos shows the two are compatible. The Migrant Image will stimulate fascinating debates in the academic, artistic, and documentary spheres. In triangulating among these camps Demos brings down the barriers separating them.”

(Alex Fattal *Public Books*)

“Think of T.J. Demos’s *The Migrant Image* as a field guide to art for those interested in the politics of human rights, globalization, migration, and war.”

(Ryan Wong *Hyperallergic*)

“T. J. Demos’s *The Migrant Image* is the most comprehensive and in-depth scholarly investigation of the effects that globalization has had on contemporary artistic practice over the past three decades. The scope of Demos’s investigation is impressive, most notably in his unpacking and explication of key terms in global art discourse that have proven problematic, and at times elusive. The effects of globalization on creative and intellectual practices in the arts has been a controversial subject that has eluded easy consensus – and Demos skilfully brings a much needed legibility to a discussion that is as divisive as it is complex.”

(Derek Conrad Murray *Third Text*)

“Demos’s deft criticism means that he is able to bring together a broad range of artwork and argue very persuasively in each case for its effectiveness. . . . His authorial voice rings crystal clear throughout the analysis of this range and mix of artistic practice.”

(James Day *Art History*)

“Framing contemporary artworks dealing with the theme of migration within the twenty-first century context of ‘crisis globalization,’ Demos engages with a growing and interdisciplinary body of scholarship on neoliberalism and uneven development. The book’s main intervention, however, is within the subfield of global contemporary art history, where it will serve as a very useful text for students, researchers, critics, and

curators concerned with the relationship between art and politics in the post-September 11 era."
(Tammer Salah El-Sheikh *Arab Studies Journal* 2016-07-01)

About the Author

T. J. Demos is Reader in Art History at University College London. He is the author of *Dara Birnbaum—Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman and The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Katy Pinkham:

The guide with title The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis includes a lot of information that you can understand it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. This particular book exist new information the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world now. That is important to you to learn how the improvement of the world. This specific book will bring you inside new era of the syndication. You can read the e-book on your own smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

Pamela Adair:

The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to set every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis yet doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be among it. This great information may drawn you into brand new stage of crucial contemplating.

Dan Morris:

The book untitled The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis contain a lot of information on this. The writer explains the woman idea with easy means. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read that. The book was authored by famous author. The author will bring you in the new period of time of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can keep reading your smart phone, or product, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice read.

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