



Faking Death: Canadian Art Photography and the Canadian Imagination

Penny Cousineau-Levine

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In "Faking Death" Penny Cousineau-Levine examines the work of over 120 Canadian photographers, revealing important aspects of Canadian identity and imagination. Contrasting Canadian photography with American and European traditions, she shows that Canadian photographers are often preoccupied with a place that is "elsewhere," a doubling and duality that also occurs in Canadian literature, film, and political life. Subverting the documentary tradition and other stylistic idioms for their own distinctive ends, Canadian photographers exhibit an ambivalent preoccupation with death and dying, bondage, and entrapment. Cousineau-Levine argues that this is characteristically a 'faked' death that expresses a collective Canadian wish for a symbolic passage to national maturity. "Faking Death" includes 16 colour reproductions and 150 duotones by artists such as Raymonde April, Jeff Wall, Lynne Cohen, Charles Gagnon, Evergon, Michel Lambeth, Thaddeus Holownia, Geoffrey James, Genevieve Cadieux, Shelley Niro, Diana Thorneycroft, Jinme Yoon, Ian Wallace, and Ken Lum. By bringing together this many Canadian works, "Faking Death" provides a compelling visual introduction to one of Canada's most vibrant and internationally recognized artistic media. It is an invaluable tool for curators, artists, teachers, students, and scholars in art history, fine arts, Canadian studies, film, communications, literature, and cultural studies.

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