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Abandoned America: The Age Of Consequences



Synopsis

Originally conceived as an examination of the rise and fall of the defunct state hospital system, Philadelphia photographer Matthew Christopher's award winning website Abandoned America rapidly grew to encompass derelict factories and industrial sites, schools, churches, power plants, hospitals, prisons, military installations, hotels, resorts, homes, and more. Through his collection of writing and photography, Christopher has spent the last decade documenting the ruins of one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever known: our own. The locations presented are the monuments to America's great ambition and crumbling future. They are the remnants of a nearly forgotten past. They are some of America's last standing vestiges of our industrial age, the buildings that put our forefathers to work. Now, broken and ruined, these places are documented in Christopher's book, *Abandoned America: The Age of Consequences*. Exploring sites like the charred remains of the Hotel Do De, the rusted cells of the Essex County Jail Annex, the majesty of the Church of the Transfiguration, or the eerie and dilapidated remnants of the New Castle Elks Lodge, the work spans architectural treasures left to the elements and then all too often lost forever. With 240 pages of beautiful photographs, a foreword by celebrated author James Howard Kunstler, and detailed historical background on each site, *Abandoned America: The Age of Consequences* is sure to captivate anyone with an interest in the modern ruins in our midst.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Matthew Christopher's photographic record of decay depicts the tragic truth: that

something extraordinary has ended and that nothing like it may ever come back. We're now going in the other direction despite a lot of wishful thinking: toward a loss of complexity, a reduction in the scale of activity, a loss of artistry, and probably the end of many comforts, conveniences and amenities we've come to take for granted.

• James Howard Kunstler, author of *The Geography of Nowhere* "The places Christopher photographs tell their stories with silence and extraordinary light — the spaces between the life and death of a building. His pictures make me feel like someone told me a secret."

• Jane Derenowski, Reporter, NBC Nightly News "It's romantic, it's nostalgic, it's wistful, it's provocative. It's about time, nature, mortality, disinvestment."

• Joann Greco, *The Atlantic Cities* "Through his photographs, Christopher makes a powerful statement about job loss, urban blight and historic preservation. In light of the collapse of American industry and the subsequent economic meltdown, the relevance of these topics has never been more important to the examination of America's national identity."

• Joseph and Barrie Ann George, *The Sentinel*

Throughout the ages, mankind has been fascinated by the ruins of previous societies. The desire to gain a greater understanding of our past has driven archaeologists, artists, and scholars from across the world to study the vestiges of lifestyles that have vanished in an attempt to capture their mystique and beauty. Originally intended as an examination of the rise and fall of the state hospital system, Matthew Christopher's *Abandoned America* rapidly grew to encompass derelict factories and industrial sites, schools, churches, power plants, hospitals, prisons, military installations, hotels, resorts, homes, and more. Through his collection of writing and photography, Christopher has spent the last decade documenting the ruins of one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever known: our own. Exploring sites like the charred remains of the Hotel Do De, the rusted cells of the Essex County Jail Annex, the sublime majesty of the Church of the Transfiguration, or the eerie and dilapidated remnants of the New Castle Elks Lodge, the work spans architectural treasures left to the elements and then all too often lost forever.

I am ashamed at the amount of time I spend looking at abandoned places online and when I found this book I was in heaven. I will be purchasing more! This is the best book ever!!! I love that I get history on the places photographed and done so beautifully. If you are considering purchasing, DO IT! check out the facebook page too it is wonderful. Can you please go to Detroit for me Matthew Christopher. :)

As a fan of Matthew Christopher's work, I've been waiting a long time for this book. It doesn't disappoint. These vivid, frozen echoes of a hidden American history are never less than inspiring. His stunning photography and thoughtful accompanying prose come together to create a book that is by turns romantic, melancholy, passionate, meditative, yearning, reverent, and always lovely. A gem.

There are not too many books that blow my mind. In the world of photoshop and everything at this point (for the most part) being captured in some book or another -- THIS BOOK is such a great enigma! Not only is the hard back cover thick and give you a sense of the detail and concern that only quality things of the past adhere to but inside you get a rich display of Matthew Christopher's mind blowing ability to capture the rustic in all venues before they finally are put to rest forever. This type of photography is the most captivating. Within this book you NEVER get the sensation of images being distorted with photoshop. I got the sense that I was right there beside the photographer to witness what he was capturing that time seems to let go of. If this book sold for \$300 I would still pursue buying it. A price like this - to see such amazing images - is one helluva bargain,. Thank you Matthew for sharing the best of what exists in photography! Love this book!!!

Matthew Christopher photography is equaled by his thoughtful writing. While some older building are beyond repair, Christopher puts into perspective our neglect for history and our lack of preserving it for future generations. He doesn't do this in a loud, preaching way but in a way that causes you to pause and really take in the stunning images that you are seeing. I am admittedly a sentimental person and choose to hang on to old relics of any sort, but this book and Matthew Christopher's website have given me a much higher level of appreciation for the "bones" of our communities. I would recommend this book to anyone and I don't think any age is too young to start sharing an appreciation for the beauty that surrounds us and what can happen to it when neglected. With that said, the images are beautiful even through the decayed subject matter. It's a great coffee table book and, hopefully, a thought-provoking conversation starter.

Evocative photography that captures both the glory and demise of landmark cultural institutions. Schools, churches, factories, prisons- all part of the tapestry of an earlier America that has started to recede into memory. Matthew Christopher has found them and dug into their mysteries and stories with powerful imagery and accompanying text. A number of the places photographed were either

razed or gutted shortly after the photos were taken, so the photographs themselves have taken on a life as the last reminder of these sometimes hallowed and desperately neglected places. I've followed his work for a couple of years online and this is an excellent collection of some of his best. Highly recommended, and no one paid me to say this!

There are books and there are books that tell a real story. This book tells haunting stories of abandoned factories, hospitals and prisons that are shuttered and torn down. There are snippets of what life was like when the building was in active use. It is a book of heartbreaks, stories too sad to fathom, and pictures documenting the destruction and desecration of our very humanity. Tales of places, some over a century old that are destroyed by vandals and the elements in a handful of neglectful years. Stories of corruption, poor politics, bad decisions and small glimmers of hope. In the pictures of forgotten places, I learned to value the importance of what I have now. I will look a little closer at closed shops sitting vacant for years with more caring regarding the final outcome. If the owners are not keeping the place maintained, I will speak up and encourage others to add their voices. Allowing buildings to rot is criminal. Consequences, what happens should matter and the pictures in this book paint a picture of what happens when people turn a blind eye to the buildings falling apart around them.

I preordered this book after attending a group shoot with Matthew. This book was far beyond what I expected. We live in a country, quite young compared to others-yet we don't seem capable of maintaining and preserving the buildings that represent our country's youth and vitality. This book shows the images and mourns the loss of some magnificent places as seen through the eyes of one photographer. Paying homage, even as these places fall into disrepair from neglect he manages to honor the paths once chosen and seemingly, easily discarded.

This is a VERY interesting book! The fascinating history behind the photography is very well portrayed. The photos are displayed on double-paged quality paper. The photo content is thoroughly explained. I read the whole thing in one sitting because the content is THAT great!! I'm definitely going to add this to my coffee table collection. I can hardly wait for the next book to come out!

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