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Santa Muerte



Synopsis

The origins of Santa Muerte - a religion/cult that has been denounced as satanic by the Mexican Catholic Church - can be dated back hundreds of years. It was developed through a syncretism between indigenous Mesoamerican and Spanish Catholic beliefs and practices. Only in the last decade however has it become more predominant in Mexican society, where many commentators have noted its rise with the killing and violence associated with the war between rival drug cartels and the Mexican Government. Since 2011 British photographer Angus Fraser made several visits to Mexico, researching, interviewing and documenting Santa Muerte devotees. His work examines the contrast between Western and Mesoamerican perception and acceptance of death. His images include portraits of believers, spiritual leaders, shrines, private and public altars, paraphernalia, prayers, ceremonies, and street gatherings. Making contact with many individuals who originally built and manage the shrines, now considered to be guardians and spiritual leaders of the faith, they gave him access and permission to photograph not only in their places of worship but also in their private homes. He also had access within the prisons, where Santa Muerte has a very strong following amongst the Mexican penitentiary system. As he states: I was accepted by the cult's following and given unlimited access into a world that is considered macabre, illegal and even satanic by the mass media. Admittedly, along the way I encountered individuals who lived up to the Santa Muerte stereotype that the US and European media have created. But on the whole the hospitality, kindness and warmth I was shown contradicted all the negative perceptions I had read, seen and heard. My aim is to tell their side of the story and in part my own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are very few books in English on the subject of Santísima Muerte. Most of them have a tendency to be filled with spells and prayers, and have very little text that deal with how to truly devote yourself to La Flaca. Although this book is predominantly photographs, the contents far outweigh almost any other book I have seen. This book shows true devotion to the Saint that we bring into our lives. The book itself is beautifully bound in black cloth, with the iconic graphic on the cover. There are three placeholding ribbons, each color representing the color of the Mexican flag. This alone touched me greatly, as many people seem to forget that the cult of Santísima Muerte is a Mexican Catholic practice. The few pages of text speak volumes, and the photographs of devotion and love far outweigh most Santísima Muerte books currently on the market. If you were looking for a book of spells, then this book is not for you. If you truly want to live a life of devotion to La Reina de las Brujas, then take what prayers and altar workings are in this book (as well as the photographs) to heart. True devotion to Santísima Muerte starts by developing a strong relationship with her, and this book shows what years of these relationships look like. By far the most important book on the subject in my collection.

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