

Rome Was!

The Eternal City from Piranesi to the Present

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EDITIONS

This book took advantage of the recent invention of digital photographic technology which enables the merging and layering of photographic images to document views which are sometimes as much as 180 degrees in width, without visual distortions found in more conventional panoramic views.



Key Sales Information

- The book will be designed so that it can be used, not only by scholars, but also by tourists and travelers in Rome who are now following a modern-day version of the 18th Century “Grand Tour” that had originally been inspired to a great extent by Piranesi’s extraordinary art.
- Langenbach, who became known for his photographic documentation of the Textile Milltowns of New England, Great Britain and India, under a series of grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, has now turned his attention to the iconic historic landscape of Rome.
- Now the undistorted wide-angle views composed by Piranesi and other pre-photographic artists that prior to digital technology were not possible, have now been accomplished by Langenbach and are featured in this book.

Description

Inspired by the extraordinary engravings of the ruins of Ancient Rome by Giambattista Piranesi, Langenbach uses modern-day digital photography to document the same views that Piranesi captured over a quarter of a millennium ago, displaying some of the most iconic ruins of an ancient civilization on the planet.

Author

Randolph Langenbach

Randolph Langenbach has degrees in Architecture (Harvard) and Building Conservation (York, UK), and was Assistant Professor of Architecture at U.C. Berkeley. Both the short film, Rome Was! Ruins Eternal, and now the coming book were begun under a Rome Prize Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome in 2003.

He has also become known in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia for his work in the fields of engineering and building conservation, and he has appeared on television in PBS NOVA for his work on traditional construction after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

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Reader Praise for Randolph Langenbach's Rome Was!

Fun to have this book while "social distancing." Expanded my world exponentially!

I especially loved the quote in 1915 of Bernard Maybeck saying Roman ruins and Piranesi's engravings give us the "note of vanished grandeur". Langenbach brings both the architecture as seen today and the etchings of the past into front and center with new technology, a gift to the ability to see the old with a fresh new vision and awareness.

—Suzanne Hanson, ★★★★★

A unique visual walk through ancient Rome to contemporary time.

History tends to bury its past. Randolph Langenbach reveals to us a history of Rome in the most visual way. His photographic techniques coupled with his extensive architectural knowledge perfectly puts together history and contemporary life. His book is a visually thoughtful delight.

—Avis Mandel, ★★★★★

A Fascinating Project

The book discusses Randolph Langenbach's photographs and the remarkable idea behind his project—to photographically re-create the vision of Giovanni Piranesi's 18th Century etchings of the surviving monuments of ancient Rome. Langenbach writes and illustrates the willing distortions of viewpoint and perspective employed by Piranesi and how these can be emulated in computer-enhanced digital photographs. The illustrations include overlays of Langenbach's and Piranesi's images and explanations of Langenbach's digital process, so that the book is not only a collection of fascinating images but also a veritable how-to lesson on panoramic and joined-frame photography.

—Vland, ★★★★★

Rome and Piranesi Seen in New Ways

Langenbach's book is remarkable in several respects. His analysis of Piranesi's 18th-century views of the antiquities of Rome, by overlaying them with his own photographs of the same places, reveals important facts about Piranesi's process of working (for example, his "subtle shifts in viewing angles combined into the same image"). This leads Langenbach to develop insightful ideas about the nature of perception and the representation of space. The author's gorgeous photographs themselves make the book noteworthy, and their overlays with the works of Piranesi and other artists provide dramatic evidence of the amazing changes in ground level in Rome due to the excavation of the city's ancient sites. This book makes important contributions to the fields of art history, the science of perception, and the history of Rome — and is simply a pleasure to experience.

—Paul V. Turner, ★★★★★

Beautiful, Informative Book

Langenbach's research and skills have resulted in a gorgeous and informative book on the monuments of Ancient Rome. A professional architectural photographer, he makes spectacular photographs that make history come alive. His extensive research and illustrations document the changes over time of the "eternal City." He brilliantly uses hundreds of illustrations done by architects and artists over the centuries and contrasts them with photographic overlays showing the current ruins. A significant and beautiful contribution to the architectural history of Rome.

—Chuck Byrne, ★★★★★

