



NEW RELEASE 2024

David Levinthal *Vietnam*

Texts by Lisa Hostetler, Walter Kirn, Bernard-Henri Lévy
Designed by George Corsillo / Design Monsters

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Levinthal's photographs restage the Vietnam war through exceptional dioramas and individual figures.

In his latest book, David Levinthal explores the visual lexicon of the war in Vietnam through photographs that have thunderous impact. The images showcase the artist's sophisticated handling of photographic tools and techniques to dramatize figures and dioramas based on the war. His reflection on the consequential effects of the conflict on American popular culture and the artist's own memories of the era, *Vietnam* is haunted by the legacy of movies like *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket* and recontextualizes *Hitler Moves East*, Levinthal's breakthrough body of work made with Garry Trudeau just as America was withdrawing from Vietnam.

With written contributions from French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy; writer and critic Walter Kirn; and art historian and curator Lisa Hostetler, the volume takes visual inventory of a war that shattered conventional ideas about America. *Vietnam* is Levinthal's fourth book published by Kehrer Verlag.

From the essay *Vietnam and America's Dark Night* by **Lisa Hostetler**:

Vietnam perches at the summit of David Levinthal's career, with a view over the course of his entire oeuvre. The journey there was long and at times treacherous, but it built within him the firm resolve with which he approaches the thorny and expansive subject. Given the psychological and sociopolitical stakes, it is hard to imagine Levinthal directly addressing the Vietnam War—which had profound consequences for the artist and for American society—in his artwork any earlier. There are practical reasons for the timing of the series as well. Decades of networking with toy collectors and model specialists has led him to collaborate with highly skilled artisans who can conceive and create figures and dioramas specifically for his artistic pursuits.

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From the essay *Vietnam* by **Walter Kirn**:

Vietnam, his series of photos about the war featuring soldiers who are really toys, is a collective, compound flashback composed of memories of memories and images of images. They're mysteriously soft around their edges, and sometimes in their centers too. They emerge from a haze of cultural amnesia, an abstract, mottled, colored haze—sometimes the purple haze of the Jimi Hendrix song, but more often a haze that is orange, yellow, red. "Time is the fire in which we burn," wrote the poet Delmore Schwartz. It's a line which I think describes the soft infernos glowing in the backgrounds of these photos, each one of them a flare from the great blaze.

Since the early 1970s, American artist **David Levinthal** has been exploring the relationship between photographic imagery and the fantasies, myths, events, and characters that shape contemporary America's visual landscape. In 2018, the George Eastman Museum presented *David Levinthal: War, Myth, Desire*, the largest retrospective of his work to date, accompanied by a comprehensive publication on his work. The Smithsonian American Art Museum exhibited *American Myth & Memory: David Levinthal Photographs* in 2019. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship. His work is part of the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Menil Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Forthcoming Exhibition:

American Myth & Memory: David Levinthal Photographs
H'ART Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
2026

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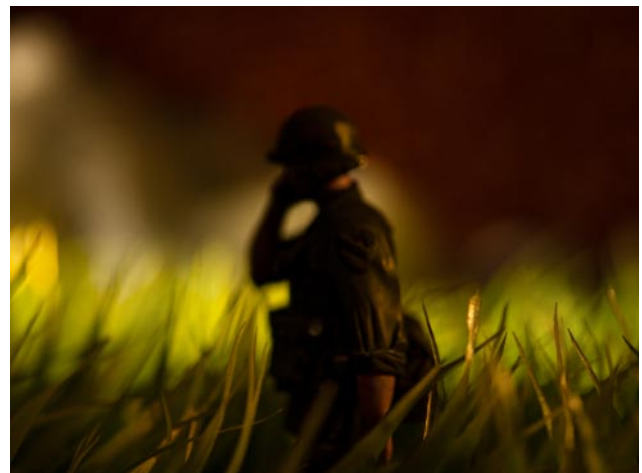
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