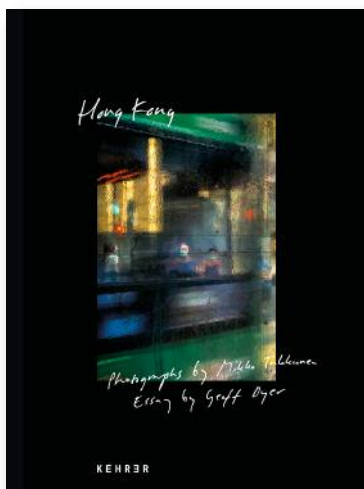


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Mikko Takkunen *Hong Kong*

Essay by Geoff Dyer
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Dive into the captivating world of Hong Kong through Mikko Takkunen's stunning photographs and Geoff Dyer's essay.

With his first photobook *Hong Kong*, The New York Times' photo editor Mikko Takkunen captured one of the world's greatest metropolises during a time of political uncertainty and the pandemic. As the city was still recovering from the aftermath of the anti-government protests of 2019, Takkunen began to concentrate on the purity of seeing and capturing the world anew. Inspired by the masters of the New York School, like Faurer, Stettner, and Leiter, the Finnish photographer sought to capture Hong Kong in a fresh and innovative way, revealing hidden perspectives and moods that many have yet to see. His photos are both documentary and subjective, creating a narrative of the city that's as captivating as it is beautiful. From the vibrant colors to the stunning tonalities, each photograph is carefully curated to take you on an offbeat journey through the magnificent city.

From the essay by **Geoff Dyer**:

The pictures in this book are of Hong Kong, they were taken between February 2020 and June 2021 by Mikko Takkunen, and they are in colour. But it seems to me, to put it somewhat clumsily, that they ask us to ask a slightly different question to the one we began with, or a different version of it at least. Not just, 'what are these colours of?' but 'where do they come from?' On the face of it it's easy to answer using the philosophical principles of Garry Winogrand who pointed out, with implacable logic, that if you photograph a lot in Texas then your pictures are going to look a lot like Texas. They are the colours of Hong Kong because the pictures were taken in Hong Kong.

(...)

Where do they come from, these colours? From Hong Kong, necessarily, because these are the colours of the things in the pictures: the red of the red lanterns, the painted yellow stripes of cross-

walks and so on. In the kitchen still-life a jug of orange juice, a red plastic crate and bucket serve, within the picture, as sources of light. To that extent it's a self-contained or self-generating image, but it also simultaneously makes us conscious of and curious about sources. While the colours are of and from Hong Kong they also derive, if only by association, from photographic history: from William Eggleston inevitably; from the smeared and steamy palette of Saul Leiter's condensation-drenched New York windows; from the implacable black shadows and reflexively fractured geometries of Alex Webb's world-wide web of street scenes. One of Takkunen's self-captioning, Webblike image identifies itself only generically as 'City'. Like all the others in the book it is undated and not of anything in particular. But it quietly insists on itself: not nowhere but now, here. For now at least.

Mikko Takkunen is a photo editor at The New York Times's Foreign desk where he's spent more than five years between 2016–2021 in Hong Kong as the desk's Asia photo editor. He began taking these photographs in early 2020 at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued until the summer of 2021 when he left Hong Kong.

Geoff Dyer's many books include three about photography: *The Ongoing Moment*, *The Street Philosophy of Garry Winogrand* and *See/Saw*. He is also the editor of *Understanding a Photograph*, a collection of John Berger's writing about photography.

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