Nostalgia for the Present: ethnography and photography in a Moroccan Berber village

Type: Book (monograph)
Title: Nostalgia for the Present: ethnography and photography in a Moroccan Berber village
Author: Crawford, David
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Abstract: Anthropology and photography have been linked since the nineteenth century, but their relationship has never been entirely comfortable—and has grown less so in recent years. Nostalgia for the Present aims to repair that relationship by involving intentional participants in an inclusive conversation; it is the fruit of a collaboration among an ethnographer, a photographer, a group of Moroccan farmers, and Abdelkrim Bamouh—a native intellectual whose deep understanding of rural Morocco made him not merely a translator but a facilitator of the dialogue. The result is an arresting portrait of everyday life in Tagharghist, a contemporary High Atlas village. The pictures are central, and the text built around them creates a dialogical form of visual ethnography. Nostalgia for the Present is both a memorialization of a people and a way of life, and a rich foray into the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration.

The photos in this book evoke a sense of nostalgia, a longing, and the words explore the contexts and ambiguities that vitalize it. As the book concludes, nostalgia happens in our present, and is about our future. It is a call from our heart (or our liver, as villagers would say) to attend carefully to something we are leaving, something our gut tells us we ought to cherish and preserve, and bring with us on our inexorable march into the unknown.

Description: Photos by Bart Deseyn with Abdelkrim Bamouh
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Photos from Moroccan mountain villages by Bart Deseyn. Berber carpets from the Blazek collection. Exhibition from 10th of November through 7th of December 2012 in Graz. Nostalgia for the present the berbers and their habitat in southern morocco. This photographic project focuses on the context and the social organization of Berber society in rural Morocco. MOROCCO, THE HEARTLAND OF BERBER CULTURE This project is focused on Morocco because it harbors the largest Berber populations of Northern Africa. Although Morocco never had a census taken along ethno linguistic lines, it is commonly agreed that about 40 percent of the population consists of Berber speakers. Moreover, in Morocco, Berber culture has flourished incomparably. It houses collections of Berber rugs and photography, and provides details about Gnaoua music and traditions. The admission charge is 30 Moroccan dirhams (US$3). Mouassine Museum, Derb El Hammam, Rue Mouassine, Marrakesh, Morocco. The collections focus on items handcrafted by Berber women, and visitors will immediately notice the difference between such rugs and the traditional Arabic rugs that are commonly found in the souks and homes around Marrakech. The museum is a testament to a lesser-appreciated, though no less visually pleasing, craft. The admission fee is 40 Moroccan dirhams (US$4). Musee Boucharouite, 107 40000, Derb al Cadi, Marrakesh, Morocco. Bright colours of a Berber carpet | © 16:9clue / Flickr. Share with others. Facebook. Visiting Morocco and Marrakesh in particular definitely leaves you feeling you've gotten a sense of Moroccan life. If you wanna push the boat further on authenticity, I recommend visiting a Berber village. Now the term “Berber” is one that I’m still not sure is politically correct (due to the origin of the word). Our tour guide referred to the people are Berbers though I think he mentioned the fact that the other name of the people is the “Amazighs”. I have a short attention span and while he was explaining this and some more important stuff, I was distracted by a baby goat skipping along...