



Photography and Exploration (Reaktion Books - Exposures)

James R. Ryan

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When Ferdinand Magellan set out to circumnavigate the globe in 1519, he wasn't able to bring a digital camera or a smartphone with him. Yet, as the eagerly awaited images from the Mars rover prove, modern exploration is inconceivable without photography. Since its invention in 1839, photography has been integral to exploration, used by explorers, sponsors, and publishers alike, and the early twentieth century, advances in technology—and photography's newfound cultural currency as a truthful witness to the world—made the camera an indispensable tool. In *Photography and Exploration*, James R. Ryan uses a variety of examples, from polar journeys to space missions, to show how exploration photographs have been created, circulated, and consumed as objects of both scientific research and art.

Examining a wide range of photographs and expeditions, Ryan considers how nations have often employed images as a means to scientific advancement or territorial conquest. He argues that because exploration has long been bound up with the construction of national and imperial identity, expeditionary photographs have often been used to promote claims to power—especially by the West. These images also challenge the way audiences perceive the world and their place within it. Featuring one hundred images, *Photography and Exploration* shines new light on how photography has shaped the image of explorers, expeditions, and the worlds they discovered.

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