

Loss and Beauty: A Journey into a Landscape of the Holocaust

Art has always had a troubled relationship with loss, yet from loss has come some of the most incisive and brilliant art. Before “Shindler’s List” there was, of course, Claude Lanzmann’s exhaustive, 9 1/2 hour movie “Shoah”.

Photographer Keron Psillas’ *Loss and Beauty* is an evocative look at the landscapes and architecture of Auschwitz and Terezin—a journey of redemption in which the author finds a “fierce, insistent, undeniable voice imbued with light and truth and spirit and humanity.”

It is always uncomfortable when an artist finds art in the shadows of horror, yet in both her lyrical words and her technique of layering multiple images over each other, Keron does not shy from art, nor does she question where she is leading us or herself.

A photograph of railroad tracks running through an orchard is placed opposite her thoughts: *“What was Birkenau? Farmland, marsh, orchard, forest...all were leveled to make a place for brutality and death. And what of the unnamed places?”*

What is striking about Keron’s journey is the way her words and the tonality of these images are woven into one piece. The quiet interiors, the light, the somber moodiness of the images is so masterfully presented that we are transported into a different time, absorbed by her words and forced to imagine what these places were and what they represent.

Photographers make images, but photographers are often linguists—writers who have chosen to represent sounds and light and shadow and time and place through their blending of many mediums. *Loss and Beauty* is a quietly intense book with a straightforward layout that only makes its statement more powerful. In Keron’s words and images we are in this landscape of loss, with a caretaker who opens herself to finding meaning in a place which denied all sense of hope to an entire generation. It is hard to say she has found beauty there, but she has crafted a striking work of art that enables us to explore her own private journey with her, and to come to a separate peace with a landscape of darkness.

- Eric Meola