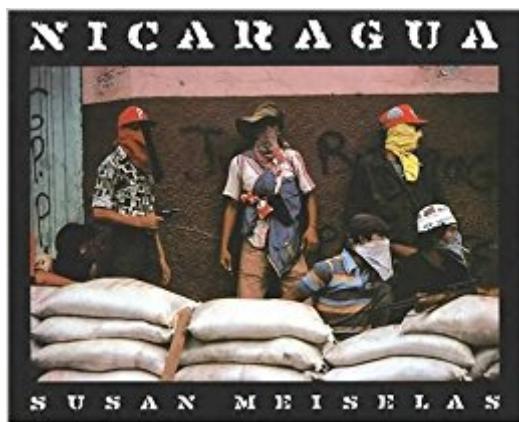


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Susan Meiselas: Nicaragua: June 1978-July 1979



Synopsis

Originally published in 1981, Susan Meiselas' *Nicaragua* is a modern classic--a seminal contribution to the literature of concerned photojournalism. John Berger praised the work for its ability to, "take us right inside a revolutionary moment... Yet unlike most photographs of such material, these refuse all the rhetoric normally associated with such pictures: The rhetoric of violence, revolutionary heroism and the glorification of misery." *Nicaragua* forms an extraordinary narrative of a nation in turmoil. Starting with a powerful and chilling evocation of the Somoza regime during its decline in the late 1970s, the images trace the evolution of the popular resistance that led to the insurrection, culminating with the triumph of the Sandinista revolution in 1979. The 2008 edition includes *Pictures from a Revolution*, a DVD in which Meiselas returns to the scenes she originally photographed, tirelessly tracking down the subjects and interviewing them about the reality of post-revolution Nicaragua. The DVD booklet features a new interview with Meiselas in which she discusses the history of the project. Susan Meiselas, born in Baltimore in 1948, received her BA from Sarah Lawrence College and her MA from Harvard University. Her first book, the classic *Carnival Strippers*, was published in 1976. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Hasselblad Foundation Photography Prize (1994) and the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award (2005). Her work has been exhibited at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Art Institute of Chicago. A member of Magnum Photos, Meiselas was named a MacArthur Fellow in 1992. She lives in New York.

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Customer Reviews

"In a culture that seemingly suffers from attention deficit disorder, photographer Susan Meiselas stands out for her insistent desire to go back and revisit the people and places she has shot... The Nicaragua project, in particular, demonstrates Meiselas's unusual commitment to return to the places where she has worked and to gain understanding of the impact her photographs have had on the lives of her subjects as well as viewers of her images." --International Herald Tribune

"The book begins relatively serenely, with photos of the impoverished masses contrasted with images of the opulent ruling class: men in flashy white suits at the government place. But as the insurrection progresses, they become increasingly violent; the picked-over remains of a dead body, bloodied children injured in a skirmish, a woman carting her husband's corpse to a safe burial spot." -- Eliza Honey --The New Yorker: The Book Bench

"Some of the photographs (such as a Molotov-tossing rebel) quickly became iconic images of the struggle; others (a 16-year-old widow pushing the body of her dead husband in a wheelbarrow, or a Sandanista playing clarinet to his fellow fighters as they hunker down behind a barricade) endure for their pure expression of humanity in the face of war." -- John Lavine --Color Magazine

"Nicaragua is striking for its almost complete lack of text within the main body of work; the sequence is carefully built to follow a train of events, and the images communicate in simple symbols the complex politics and the state of a nation." -- Jen Allan --The Royal Photographic Society

"The potency and in-your-face intensity of 'Nicaragua' hasn't diminished. It is simultaneously a time capsule of a specific political struggle and a call for citizens of all nations to become more fully engaged with the issues and concerns of our troubled world in the past, present and future." -- Neil Kendricks --The San Diego Union-Tribune

Another photojournalist in Central America at the same time as Susan Meiselas and I told me that he and Susan would be on the same street corner at the same time shooting the same scenes, and Susan's pictures would always come out better than his. She has an innate knack for indelibly capturing the moment: the compressed rage of a guerrilla hurling a Molotov cocktail over a barricade; the anguish and terror of a teenaged widow trundling her husband's body in a wheelbarrow while threatened by an off-camera helicopter; the grim faces of the guerrillas, triumphant but by no means finished, as they continue their war into the future. A powerful, very graphic photo essay, best read from the beginning as it starts with the mind numbing poverty under the Somoza dictatorship, through the beginnings of the uprising by kids in blue jeans and bandannas with .22's, and then as the tide turned in favor of the Sandinistas (now heavily armed by Cuba), to final victory, with the grimy, hopeless faces of Somoza's men now tied up and awaiting

beatings and possible execution. A bonus feature is a DVD of Susan's return to Nicaragua, to track down and interview the people she'd photographed over a decade before. The young widow, still wearing the same earrings as in her photo with her husband's body in the wheelbarrow, wept with disappointment that the revolution had failed to achieve dreams of a better life for the working class poor. I do have to comment that the DVD started breaking up about halfway through and became impossible to play. Nonetheless, I strongly recommend that anyone with an interest in recent third world revolutions buy this gem before it's gone.

Susan Meiselas reminds me of an FSA photographer of the thirties, independent, relentless and technically proficient, she worked her way around Nicaragua, skilled in the Spanish of the area, she was in the midst of a violent revolution, in which one photographer/correspondent was coldly executed. Obviously courageous, she exposed herself to potential serious injury or death. The prints in the book are of superb quality, and what makes this book really special is the attached DVD that shows how she revisited the people and the areas she photographed many years before. The video is moving, of the impoverished revolutionaries who had hoped for a better life, of the depressed and hungry wife, of the still young former soldier, missing part of one arm, who was disillusioned and frequently wept, of the very tough Indian woman, burying a man under fire at age 14 with little or no help. This is a very, very special book. Strongly recommended for anybody interested in photography and Latin American History.

My boyfriend is from Nicaragua and his parents participated in the revolution that was taking place around the time these beautiful photos were taken. I got this as a Christmas present for him. It's an amazingly well-crafted book, arrived in shrink-wrapping and without any blemishes. It also had a DVD in the back that I didn't see in the product description, so that was really nice. This is an amazing product. Kudos to Susan Meiselas. Absolutely riveting photos.

Being from Nicaragua, I absolutely appreciated this compilation of memories. I highly recommend this book for both, people who want to learn about the Nicaraguan experience and for ex-patriots who need to remember.

I lived in Nicaragua for 2 years, so this book was very interesting to me. The pictures aren't top notch, but they do a good job showing the situation at the time. I like this book because it really tells a story through the photos, even though it's pretty sad.

Susan Meiselas' poignant images of Nicaragua in a time of revolution are compiled into this book that has become a classic in the canon of the great photography books. A must-own.

Wonderful book of my history.

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