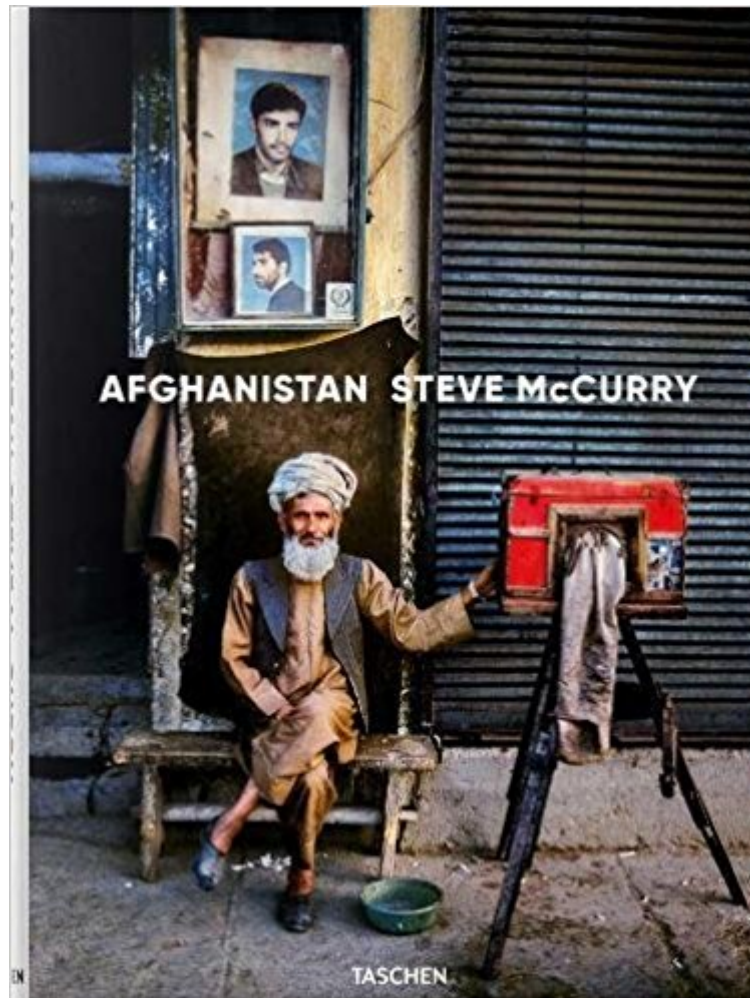




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# Steve McCurry: Afghanistan



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## Synopsis

War and Grace Magnum photographer Steve McCurry's Afghanistan retrospective

Afghanistan has long been a country overwhelmed by tribal rivalries, colonial wars, and geo-political conflict. The Afghans have called their mountains "the land of rebellion," a land that has not been successfully occupied since the times of Alexander the Great. These invaders – Persians, Arabs, Moguls, Sikhs, British, Russians – may have been thwarted, but wandering through the bazaars of Kabul will attest to their legacy. In the people of Afghanistan, the genes of countless races meet and intermingle. Deep are the fissures in Afghan society; the schism between Sunni and Shia, the endemic violence across clans and tribes, and the blood feuds and rivalries within lineages. Yet born of such chaos and entrenched conflict are these most breathtaking of images. In this definitive retrospective of his work in Afghanistan, Steve McCurry has curated over 140 gripping images to present a torn, proud people, from the desert of Kandahar to the streets of Kabul and remote rivers of Nuristan. For almost four decades, McCurry traveled to the country regularly, documenting its people with a rare and disarming humanity. His most striking portrait Afghan Girl (1984) has graced the covers of magazines around the world, in equal parts haunting and evoking remarkable grace and dignity. In common with so much of McCurry's work, it has a timeless, painterly quality – entirely at odds with the troubled region in which it was taken. McCurry has always been subjected to dangers that are an inevitable part of life "on the road" for photographers. He often ventured behind the lines, usually at great risk. His first trip to Afghanistan in 1979 involved him dressing in Afghan garb in order to be smuggled across the border from Pakistan. That journey into the treacherous, unpredictable landscape – territory controlled at various times by the Mujahideen, the Russians, and the Taliban – was one that McCurry would make numerous times. Many other photographers would follow in his footsteps, but none would return with such a flawless body of work. "They are a proud people, eyes leveled straight, in contempt as much as in curiosity: these are the faces, both male and female, that peer so defiantly from Steve's magnificent photographs."

• William Dalrymple Text in English, French, and German

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## Customer Reviews

Steve McCurry was born in Philadelphia, PA, and has been one of the most iconic voices in contemporary photography for more than forty years, with scores of magazine and book covers, over a dozen books, and countless exhibitions around the world to his name. After numerous travels throughout India, the Middle East and Afghanistan, he founded ImagineAsia in 2004, with the mission to help provide educational resources and opportunities to children and young adults in Afghanistan.

This book is a treasure and is McCurry's best work to date. The quality of the printing is superb. It's obvious that the move to Taschen was a brilliant decision. The design is elegant and allows the magnificence of the land and its people to shine through. Bravo!

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