



The Great Wall of China

Daniel Schwartz

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Beginning in the 1980s, over many years and many journeys, Daniel Schwartz has patiently and obsessively photographed one of mankind's supreme monuments -- the Great Wall of China. Schwartz was the first foreigner ever to be allowed to see so much of the Wall. From the border of North Korea westward he traveled through mountains and deserts and frozen grasslands to the borders of Central Asia. China's new policy of openness encouraged him to revisit the Wall and to photograph areas that had been closed even to him on previous journeys.

This extraordinary project is at once a beautiful photographic essay, an intriguing conceptual art project, and a personal odyssey. As Schwartz has said: "I went to China to find out what I was capable of. . . I wanted to do it because it was impossible. I wanted to find out where the boundaries of the impossible lay and how close I could get to them".

To place the photographs in context, the Chinese historian Luo Zhewen, who has dedicated his life to a study of the Great Wall, has written an essential brief history. Also included is Jorge Luis Borges's short meditation "The Wall and the Books" and an extract from Franz Kafka's illuminating short story "The Great Wall of China".

The Great Wall is acknowledged as the world's most amazing man-made artifact. Daniel Schwartz, with his profound and haunting photographs, has made not only a unique document but a book that is a work of art in itself.

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