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POETRY NEWS

A Philadelphia Extravaganza: Thomas Devaney and Will Brown's Collaborative *Picture That Remains*

BY HARRIET STAFF



Philadelphia's *Inquirer* delves into this hot topic: a new collaborative book by Thomas Devaney (poems) and Will Brown (photographs) all about Philly. From the *Inquirer's* review:

This beautifully designed book would shine brightly in any gallery, bookshop – or in the hands of any Philadelphian.

In 1970s Philly, photographer Will Brown, then finishing up his studies at the University of Pennsylvania and the Academy of the Fine Arts, explored the art of documentary photography on the then-crumbling streets of Queen Village in South Philly.

Brown roamed the neighborhood, from Lombard to Washington, capturing poignant city still-lives – shoddy storefronts; graffiti-covered buildings; abandoned Caddies, sleek and bulky, parked in the sun; empty, messy rooms touched by sunlight; ghostly storefront windows with mannequins dressed in embroidered blouses and signs boasting the day's discount. The photographs were a portrait of a community buckling under economic pressure. Brown turned to a professional life of photographing works for other artists, on top of supporting a family, and his Philly photos were stashed away in boxes.

Flash-forward three decades, and we have the aptly titled *The Picture That Remains*, which marries Brown's long-deserving photos with the poetry of Thomas Devaney, a Temple grad and very accomplished poet. Published by the Print Center, near Rittenhouse Square, and introduced by Vincent Katz, it is a double-charged read, with Devaney's marvelous poems matching the flavor of Philly history in Brown's photographs. If you can't figure out where in Queen Village the images were taken, the book's index provides photograph titles, many of which are clues to location: "South Street Window (4th and South)," "Grays Ferry Clothing," "Fitzwater St. Caddie." [...]

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