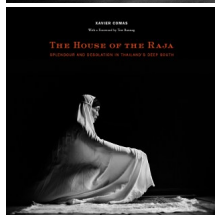


The House of the Raja



Splendour and Desolation in Thailand's Deep South

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Description

Forgotten in Thailand's troubled Deep South, stands a dilapidated wooden palace once home to a Malay ruler, the last of his dynasty.

Locals call it the “House of the Raja”, a place suffused with loss and solitude, laden with the region’s glorious past and tragic present. Intrigued by this demonised, yet little-known borderland, Xavier Comas chanced upon this mysterious house. Crossing the doorway, he fell under its spell and felt compelled to delve into its past. The caretaker, a Muslim shaman who held rituals inside, invited the author to stay and initiated him into its hidden dimensions. As he builds a bond of trust with the inhabitants of the house, the missing pieces of its history gently fall into place, revealing an ancient culture long hidden and the building’s ties to the centuries-old struggles in this contested region.

Comas’ evocative black-and-white photographs take us into a realm of hauntings, mystic powers and fading memories. His first-hand account enthralls the reader with vivid descriptions in which the real and the magical entwine. *The House of the Raja* provides a missing key to controversial issues of legacy, belief and identity in Thailand’s Muslim South.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Xavier Comas (Barcelona, 1970) a fine arts graduate of the University of Barcelona, relies on chance to create his works, using photography accompanied with writing to illustrate the bonds he builds with people and places.

Comas’ work has been published and exhibited in Europe and Asia, as well as being featured by prominent magazines throughout the world. The Singapore Art Museum exhibited his installation *Pasajero* in 2009 and acquired his *Jiutamai* series as a permanent collection. His work *Tokyo up, down*, a random photographic exploration in elevators, was exhibited at the Noorderlicht Photofestival 2011 and by the Museum of Estonian Architecture in Tallinn, Estonia.

In order to create his most notable work to date, *The House of the Raja*, Comas immersed himself in the Deep South of Thailand for over a year and returns regularly. The resulting images have been widely exhibited and are now published in this book, his first both as photographer and writer.