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Haunter of Ruins: The Photography of Clarence John Laughlin

The Historic New Orleans Collection

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Haunter of Ruins: The Photography of Clarence John Laughlin The Historic New Orleans Collection Self-taught photographer Clarence John Laughlin (1905-85) spent most of his career in and around New Orleans. Dubbed "Edgar Allan Poe with a camera," Laughlin and his haunting images capture -- like nothing before or since -- the weathered elegance and dreamy decadence of Louisianas buildings, streets, and cemeteries.Â After experimenting with photography in the early 1930s, Laughlin devoted himself to the medium in 1935 and had his first showing a year later. In 1948 his book on Louisiana's plantation architecture, Ghosts Along the Mississippi, vaulted him into the pantheon of great American photographers. He continued photographing actively until 1967, and lectured and wrote until his death in 1985. Over the course of his lengthy career, Laughlin produced more than 17,000 negatives and a large collection of writings on the art of photography. This stunning volume brings together 65 of Laughlin's characteristic images, both classic and unpublished -- an eerie gallery of French quarter facades and ironwork, funerary sculpture, Spanish moss, and other details that summon up Louisiana gothic. Accompanied by selections from Laughlin's various writings and letters, as well as essays by eight distinguished writersJon Kukla, John H. Lawrence, Andrei Codrescu, Ellen Gilchrist, Shirley Ann Grau, Jonathan Williams, Albert Belisle Davis, and John Wood --- Haunter of Ruins is the only book currently available on this incomparable American original. Haunter of Ruins was chosen as a winner in the General Trade Illustrated Book Category by Bookbuilders of Boston.

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