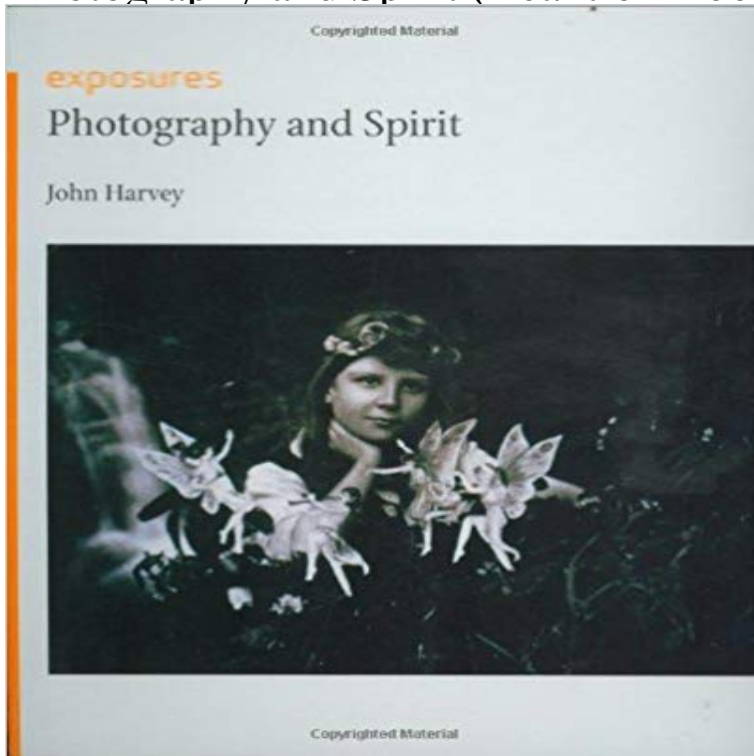


## Photography and Spirit (Reaktion Books - Exposures)



Can film capture what our eyes cant see? There are many examples both historical and contemporary of photographs of spirits or ghosts. These images alternately have been derided as hoaxes or, at the other extreme, held up as irrefutable proof of the otherworld. Photography and Spirit examines these mesmerizing images of phantoms, psychical emanations, and religious apparitions. Drawing upon eighty images taken between 1860 and today, John Harvey explores spirit photography from the various perspectives of religion, science, and art. Some of the photographs he considers were taken by scientists, others by amateur and commercial photographers, and still others by robotic surveillance devices. The diverse origins of the spirit photographs have inspired a multiplicity of interpretations and engendered, in some cases, high levels of skepticism. Harvey's analysis probes the connections between the images, human imagination, and larger cultural traditions. Photography and Spirit transforms what are often fringe objects of kitsch into revelatory artifacts of cultural history, drawing from them thought-provoking insights into the historical connections between the material and spiritual worlds, representations of grief, and human cultures enduring fascination with the supernatural. Photo images of ethereal spirits render the border between what is real and what is fantastic indistinguishable. Photography and Spirit challenges our pre-conceived notions and offers an intriguing new perspective on the nature of photography.

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