

ENDURANCE *and* SUFFERING

NARRATIVES *of* DISEASE
IN THE *19th* CENTURY



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JOHN WOOD

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Endurance and Suffering

— Narratives of Disease in the 19th Century —

edition Galerie Vevais is very proud to present the finest book in the history of the publishing house — a risky, poignant, bold and absolutely modern book, yet one wedded to the humanist tradition: Endurance and Suffering: Narratives of Disease in the 19th Century, by John Wood.

John Wood, Editor of 21st Editions, is not only a well-know photographic historian and critic whose books have won major awards, but he is also a distinguished, prize-winning poet. Allen Ginsberg wrote the introduction to his first book of poems and Richard Wilbur compared his second to the work of Samuel Beckett. Wood has lectured on photography at many museums in the U.S. and in Europe, and he co-curated the exhibition *Secrets of the Dark Chamber* at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art. He has also read his poetry at many universities, and both the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* carried full-page articles on him in the past during National Poetry Month.

John Wood is the only individual to have twice won the prestigious Poetry Prize of the University of Iowa Press, and among the more than 20 books he has written and / or edited on photographic history and contemporary photographers, five have won major awards, including a 2005 Lucie for Sally Mann; the *New York Times Book Review* Best Photo Books of 1995 for *Secrets of the Dark Chamber*, published by the Smithsonian Institution Press; and the American Library Association's Choice »Outstanding Academic Books of the Year« 1992 for *America and the Daguerreotype*.

He has written or edited books on many photographers, including Joel-Peter Witkin, Flor Garduño, Luis González Palma, Sheila Metzner, Arthur Tress, Robert ParkeHarrison, Eikoh Hosoe, and others. His *The Art of the Autochrome* is the standard work on the subject, as are several of his books on 19th Century photography, especially *The Scenic Daguerreotype: Romanticism and Early Photography*. For many years until his recent retirement he was a Professor both of English Literature and Photographic History at McNeese University.

Endurance and Suffering: Narratives of Disease in the 19th Century bring together the two sides of his work — his poetry and his writing on photo-

graphy. The poems are based on the case studies of 19th century physician George Henry Fox and the medical photographs of Fox's colleague O. G. Mason.

The distinguished Harvard author and scholar, Dr. John Stauffer, Professor of English and Chair of History of American Civilization, said Wood's recent presentation at Harvard »was the highlight of my year: brilliant and passionate and it inspired me to go back to his poetry, which is what the very best talks do.«

Endurance and Suffering follows the passionate concept of *edition Galerie Vevais* to create some of the most beautiful books in the world. Nearly all the books, DVDs and CDs created by this publishing house have won international design awards.

The book is partially printed in letterpress and contains many fine bookbinding details. The limited edition is signed and numbered by the author John Wood and contains an original page of his manuscript. Customers may choose a handmade acrylic table for displaying the book. The design and decoration of *Endurance and Suffering* follows the original book design by George Henry Fox but utilizes a very modern language. Many classic bookmaking details are combined with the highest quality contemporary techniques of photographic reproduction and printing.

The theme of this book is our SKIN, a subject rich in symbolism, but this book is not about faultless beauty, and it is not about new diseases. Why does John Wood want to present this, this negation of beauty in a time we are all trying to reach unattainable ideals of beauty that are constantly set before us?

We like to think nothing can destroy us, despite the World Trade Center disaster, the tsunami and hurricanes, and a pointless war we are in the middle of. The demographic supremacy of our patterns of behavior are changing because of virus. There is virus in our food; there are viruses online, in airplanes, and in the baggage of our fast worldwide business trips.

For centuries we have arrogantly excluded people who are not in step with our privilege and our censored education. And now strong, unprincipled gunmen are winning. They are shockingly ignorant, but nobody can hide the weapons from them, the weapons we have aimed at them before. They are the virus, and they were cultured by us. We profane the world with our aggressive, lopsided perception. We show no respect for the beautiful face of nature, which we have defiled, no res-

pect for faces filled with childlike naiveté, and no respect for the faces of all the dead that lie around us. That is how the virus, which we ourselves have created, controls us. We are hollow people in a hollow society, a society set on its own destruction.

Now starts a new decade. We claim that wealth or the rich can save the world — a revolution from the top down. The instruments for killing the virus worldwide are benefits and excellent education. It seems like a new renaissance. But we still have no idea what we really use to feed a clueless world and what we destroy in the backstage while creating great performances for television. In the nineties everyone thought the great change was coming. Now all we have found out is that the moon is still too far away. But we all must make a contribution to save our planet. We must develop a planetary awareness, and we must create values.

In 1853 philosopher Karl Rosenkranz in his *Ästhetik des Hässlichen (The Aesthetics of Ugliness)* wrote that »great connoisseurs of the human heart have sometimes plunged us into horrifying abysses« and that »the inferno is not only ethical and religious, but it is also aesthetic.« He said »the ugliest ugliness is not what might disgust us in nature« but human »egotism« that manifests itself in our baseness and crimes, in those very things I have just spoken of that are destroying us.

John's book is a sensible, smart answer to many problems, a way to start thinking in another way with respect for the human race. This book does not want to create a sensation or present us with horrors, only to make us consider the diseases that are still in this world.

If we think we are indestructible, we should see this book. *Endurance and Suffering* shows our fragility in a very poetic way.

Alexander Scholz,
editor

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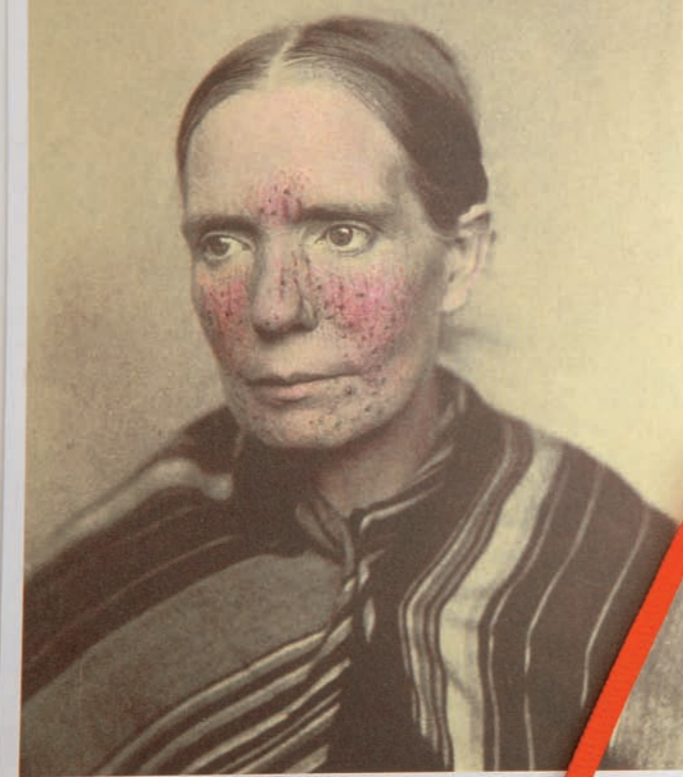
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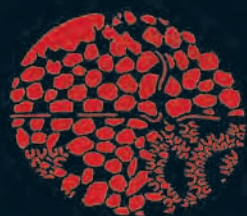
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JOHN WOOD / ENDURANCE AND SUFFERING



by John Wood

Edited by Alexander Scholz



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