
Customer Reviews

Avg. Customer Review: ★★★★★

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **SMALL TOWN RODEO**, August 7, 2002

TOP 500

Reviewer

Reviewer: **stuart howard** from New York, NY USA

Interesting, isn't it, that it took a Belgian photographer to create a book filled with exquisite black and white images of the American West specifically symbolized by the small town rodeo cowboy. I was immediately reminded of John Huston's brilliant movie, *THE MISFITS* in which, Montgomery Clift who could easily have been playing one of these very cowboys, calls his home to sadly tell his family that he has failed, once again, to win a prize or top money. A desperately sad scene, played brilliantly by Clift, written by none other than Arthur Miller.

Arena Editions has produced a handsome volume for Wouter Deruytter's magnificent pictures in which the horses, riders, clouds, mesas and mountains look as if they come directly from a John Ford western starring John Wayne. Here we see young men preparing themselves for tests as grueling as chivalric games from the Middle Ages.

I do not usually like alot of text accompanying books of photographs: I prefer to let the images speak for themselves. That said, John Wood's wonderful essay "Youthful Elegance and the Masks of Destiny" helps a city slicker like myself understand exactly what Deruytter's photographs are saying.

Some of my favorites include a little boy sitting astride a metal barrel pretending that the barrel is his first rodeo horse, the same boy practicing wrapping tape around his wrist as his older mentor/idol/friend does the same, a pen filled with black, brown, white horses looking as if they would give the world to be free and, finally, an unnamed cowboy stretching his legs, getting ready for the games, doing a deep bend, so very close in looks to a ballet dancer's plier. This is a beautiful, moving book. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**