

All in a day's work

Author; David Collyer

Published by Static Age

£16

Available from www.staticage.co.uk

I first came across David Collyer's work in early May of this year. David was fortunate enough to have a photo essay published in the Guardian newspaper (Collyer 2020) and even made that day's front page. It is photojournalism but was not photographed by Guardian staff or a professional photographer, but someone with an intimate knowledge of the work of the operating theatre, as David is an Operating Department Practitioner, who practices in anaesthetics at Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny. It is a photo essay about the theatre "family" there as they prepare for and continue to provide care during the early part of this Covid 19 pandemic.

As David writes in the introduction, he "deliberately decided not to seek permission to include patients, but to turn my camera on my colleagues "(Collyer 2020). The photo essay immediately captured my attention and I purchased the book which contains 88 of the photographs taken, the main output of David's project. These photographs have been carefully reproduced, with a Foreword by Prof Owen Sheers (Professor of Creativity at Swansea University) and Introduction, conclusion and technical notes by David himself. David's notes tell us the photographs were taken on a small film camera with only available light, so some images appear grainy but that is the nature of available light and capturing some colleagues in haste to get places, it does not detract from the impact of them in the slightest. The images are more remarkable as having completed a shift David has developed and processed each film at home, a labour of love indeed.

A lot of care has gone into providing these photographs, they capture every emotion from birthday happy to dog tired and everything in between, they are a remarkable record of the challenging times Nevill Hall and every other NHS theatre department is going through and the care and sense of community each theatre department has for each other.

The first two print runs sold out quickly and I have been lucky to get a copy from the third print run of 300 copies. So, who should buy this book? All of us, as the proceeds are bound for mental health charities. All of us, who are part of the Theatre family in this mad pandemic era, you will have in your hands a sensitive and accurate record. All of us, who are interested in the ability of photography to record people; their stories and emotions. Some might remark that the captions provided in the Guardian photo essay are missing from the book and is to the book's detriment, I disagree spend time studying the images, they speak for themselves.

Collyer. (2019) All in a day's work. The Guardian. (online) Available from https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/may/06/abergavenny-nevill-hall-hospital-coronavirus-photo-essay?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other. accessed 17/06/2020