



Cairo Inside Out

Trevor Naylor

Doriana Dimitrova, Photographer

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Trevor Naylor's *Cairo Inside Out*, created in collaboration with photographer Doriana Dimitrova, began with the desire to capture the unique quality of Cairo's afternoon light, but wound up accomplishing so much more. It reveals the soul of the ancient city—beautiful, illusive, noisy, maddening, and teeming with life.

To capture the true essence of Cairo, Naylor and Dimitrova avoided the monotonous sand-colored exteriors of its much-visited sites and went indoors to places insulated from the raucous streets, blinding sun, and searing heat. There they discovered cool, peaceful spaces filled with color and cast light—the very heart of Cairo.

The book unveils a place on the cusp of transformation, as the needs of a new generation of future-minded, technology-immersed inhabitants conflict with those of people still rooted in the ways of the past. Both the narrative and the photographs reflect the megacity's jarring transition. Naylor declares that Ramses Square is now one of the “noisiest and most ghastly places one can imagine” for its masses of people and volume of traffic. And, as the number of bookstores declined in Cairo's European-style downtown, its Paris-like streets have become far less appealing to European travelers.

The photographs are as honest as the narrative, showing some of Cairo's less appealing aspects as well as its gems. A marvelous play of light and shadow on many buildings is obscured by rows of laundry hung out to dry. Dirty, crumbling back alleys and cramped ancient marketplaces are shown in stark contrast to the cocoon-like, softly glowing interiors featured.

Naylor writes that “there are few places.... where you can be such an obvious outsider and yet so happily absorbed by a place.” *Cairo Inside Out* is an inviting introduction to a marvelous city.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January / February 2020)

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