

COLUMBIA GLOBAL REPORTS

Dear Reader,

The public usually encounters the art world at museums, or maybe at galleries—hushed, beautiful places that stand at a remove from the horrors of real life. What option is there for artists who are deeply engaged in the issues of conflict and exploitation around the world? This is the question Kaelen Wilson-Goldie takes on in *Beautiful, Gruesome, and True: Artists at Work in the Face of War*. Wilson-Goldie memorably profiles three artists who work in widely separated locations, but who share a commitment to conveying the emotional and political truth of some of the worst horrors the world has to offer.

Teresa Margolles, in Mexico, creates gory installations that serve as reports from the violent front lines of the drug wars. Abounaddara, in Syria, is an anonymous collective that began creating and posting videos during the civil war there. Amar Kanwar, in India, takes as his subject, mainly through filmmaking, the depredations the mining industry visits on deep-rural villages. All three artists are experimenting with form, because traditional painting and sculpture are inadequate to their subjects, and with how to conduct their careers. They have resisted the familiar pattern of the artist who moves from provincial obscurity to renown in a capital city, and they are trying to exhibit their work outside of the standard patronage system.

Beautiful, Gruesome, and True is about a group of remarkable artists and their art, but it is also a work of reportage about the shocking conditions that have driven Wilson-Goldie's subjects to produce their remarkable work.

Best,



Nicholas Lemann