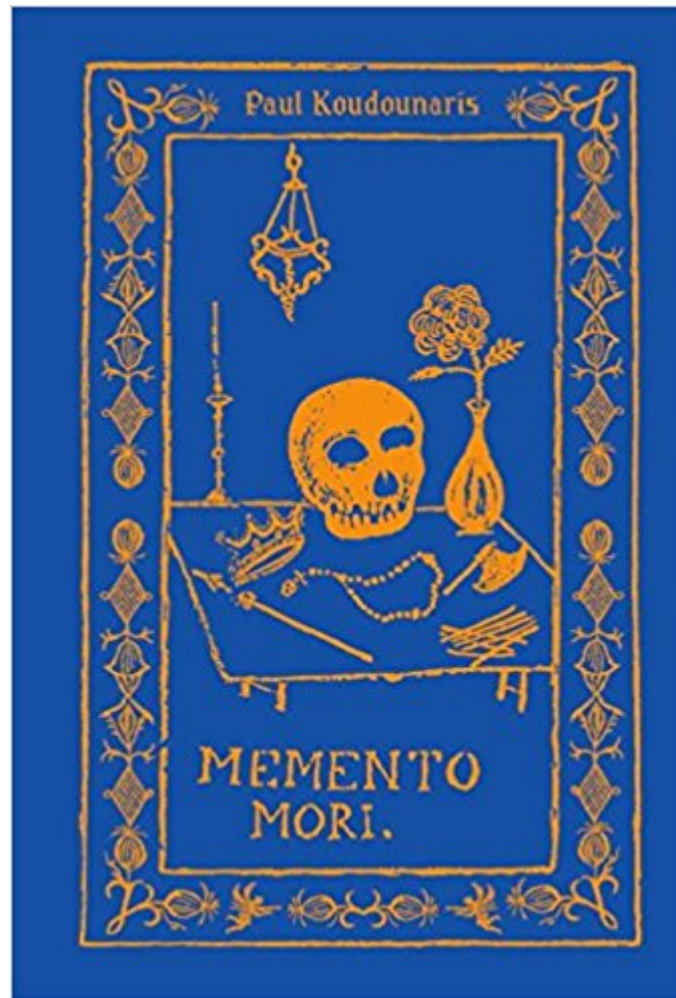




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# Memento Mori: The Dead Among Us



## Synopsis

The astonishing story of how the dead live on in memorials and traditions across the globe, from Ethiopia and Nepal to Cambodia and Rwanda, told through arresting images and captivating narration. Death is universal, but the human response to death varies widely. In Western society, death is usually medicalized and taboo, and kept apart from the world of the living, while in much of the rest of the world, and for much of human history, death has commonly been far more integrated into people's daily existence, and human remains are as much a reminder of life, *memento vitae*, as of death, *memento mori*. Through photos taken at more than 250 sites in thirty countries over a decade, Paul Koudounaris has captured death around the world. From Bolivia's "festival of the little pug-nosed ones," where skulls are festooned with flowers and given cigarettes to smoke and beanie hats to protect them from the weather to Indonesian families who dress mummies and include them in their household routines; from naturally preserved Buddhist monks and memorials to genocide in Rwanda and Cambodia to the dramatic climax of Europe's great ossuaries, *Memento Mori* defies taboo to demonstrate how the dead continue to be present in the lives of people everywhere. 500+ color illustrations

## Book Information

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#97 in Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Travel

## Customer Reviews

"Show[s], in stunning visual terms, mankind's universal desire to cross the threshold of death and continue a meaningful relationship with those who have departed. - Heavy Metal" "Memento Mori is led by the visuals: spellbinding images of decorated skulls,

elaborate burials, and other death-related customs from around the world. [Vice.com](#) – “10 Best New Photography Books of Spring 2015” – American Photo – “Visually stunning . . . documents how different cultures around the world from Ethiopia to Rwanda to Nepal honor their dead.” – OnMilwaukee.com – “Skull after painted or bejeweled skull relays a story that’s as much about life as it is about death. . . . There’s something intangible here – how *Memento Mori*, literally meaning “remember that you will die,” isn’t always a looming threat, and tangible human remains can evoke love and respect for life.” – Hyperallergic – “Some of the most jaw-dropping imagery you’ll ever encounter.” – Rue Morgue – “Part history lesson, and part documentary. . . . This is a fascinating book that points out the evolution of the perception of death and the dead in various cultures.” – Portland Book Review – “Paul Koudounaris aims his lens at cultures where the dead play key roles in the lives of the living – as in a Bolivian festival where skulls are strewn with flower petals, or on Indonesian islands where the mummies of deceased family members are kept at home and given a place at the table, both literally and figuratively.” – Smithsonian.com – “Koudounaris is a skilled photographer, as the 500+ pictures in this oversized book attest, but even more so, he’s a skilled and sensitive historian, who brings an anthropologist’s empathy to the task of documenting and framing the varied practices depicted in the book. . . . Oversized with an embossed cover and spine, *Memento Mori* sports outstanding color prints and beautiful design.” – Boing Boing – “Compelling essays explain how life is celebrated by honoring the physical remnants of the body. Some may find the topic morbid, but the images are undeniably beautiful, haunting, and visually striking. The book’s cross-cultural approach portrays death as a transition, rather than an irreversible and impenetrable border. Recommended for readers who are both fascinated with the macabre and comfortable with their own mortality.” – Library Journal – “A stunning portrait of how human remains are used in devotional and decorative ceremonies throughout the world.” – The Lineup – “Phenomenal photographs and a fascinating survey of death across cultures and history” – | Wrapped in a blue satin cover, with more than 500 illustrations, *Memento Mori* offers a striking tribute to many ways of remembering and honoring death and the dead. – Shelf Awareness

Paul Koudounaris received his doctorate from the art history department at UCLA. His previous books include *The Empire of Death and Heavenly Bodies*. He lives in Los Angeles.

Coffee Table Book? Scholarly, Textbook? Amazingly it can be BOTH! Koudounaris has this subject so well showcased in his 3rd book. Very VERY nice. Aesthetically, the cover is a very exquisite blue shiny fabric - silk like. He has such a great way of photographing the subjects. Disarmingly beautiful and respectful of the subjects. He obviously knows the subject matter and history, has done impeccable research. Kudos Mr. K.

This is my third book by Paul Koudounaris, and he does not disappoint (as long as you're into mummies, skeletons, burial customs, etc.). So many fascinating insights into cultures that are foreign to me; fantastic pictures; I can't find anything I don't like about this book.

This is a beautiful book filled with colorful and interesting photos of how several different cultures treat and view their dead - or better, display their dead. It could best be described as a coffee table book due to its size (just over 13" tall) so it doesn't stand upright on a bookshelf very nicely unless your shelves are highly spaced apart. The photos and the stories/information contained within do make this book a real treasure to read, look at and want to explore more.

This book is impressive. Just like the other two titles of Koudounaris in the same area, the photographs displayed are breath taking. This book is larger in trimming dimensions than previous titles, however, there is less word count on this one. I believe images have a main role on this title, and they serve the purpose. I found a great interest in relating the European traditions previously displayed to similar practices in other parts of the globe. This book is beautiful, design was right on point and the visual aspects are just one of a kind. I am still interested in learning more about the topic.

Beautiful book! I was actually a bit shocked when it arrived since I wasn't expecting it to look quite as good. The photos captured are amazing as well! I've had this book for quite a few months now, and it has held up great through my constant use.

perfect for the coffee table. Beautiful pictures that I found interesting and enjoy when someone comes over to say check this out. Absolutely stunning to look at and will be getting The authors other two books as well very soon. seems a bit pricey but is extremely well crafted and I am glad I bit the bullet on something that was in my wishlist for so long.

I picked this up on a whim after Caitlin Doughty showed it on her 'Ask a Mortician' channel. I will say I'm very happy, and quite impressed. I love unique coffee table books. This goes great along side my Codex Seraphinianus.

Gorgeous photography and interesting text. Clearly the author has a passion for the subject matter and it is evident in the spectacular photographs and text he has included in this volume. Plus, the cover has a great look and interesting texture and the pages are printed on quality paper - perhaps to increase its "coffee-table" appeal?

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