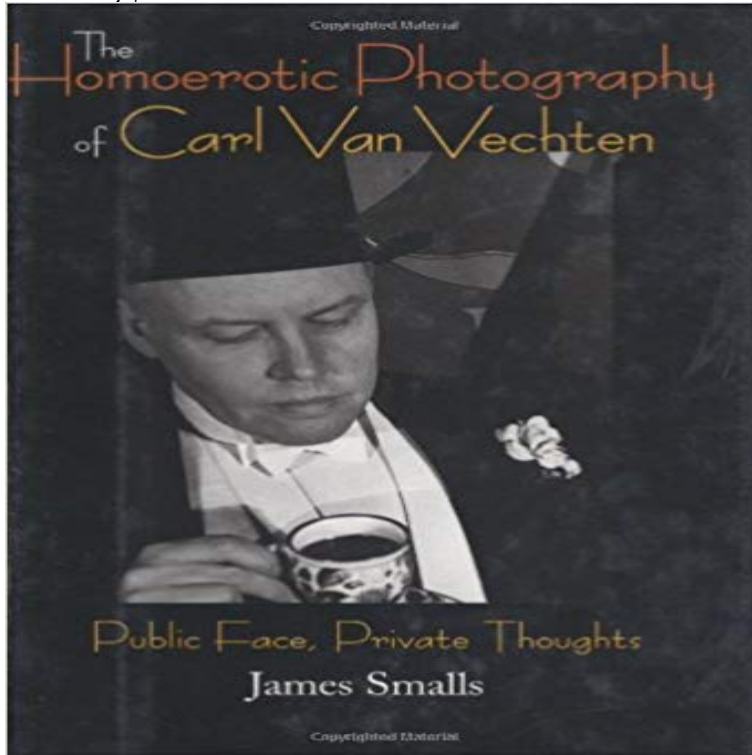


The Homoerotic Photography of Carl Van Vechten: Public Face, Private Thoughts



Carl Van Vechten (1880-1964) was perhaps the most notorious white patron of the arts of black America, particularly during the Harlem Renaissance. In 1932, he gave up a career as a theatre critic and a novelist of light fiction to become a full-time amateur photographer. His photographs of the eras celebrated African American cultural figures are well-known, but until recently his private, homoerotic interracial photographs were sealed in an archive. James Smalls considers how these images relate to Van Vechtens public persona and private desires. He discusses the interracial photographs in the context of white privilege and exotic tourism, primitivisms relation to modernism, camp sensibility and theatricality, and the vibrancy of underground gay visual culture during periods of political oppression. He also considers contemporary viewers conflicting responses to the eroticized black male body in Van Vechtens and later twentieth-century photography. This original and provocative book embraces trans-racial voyeuristic pleasure, while acknowledging the negative political implications of that pleasure. Amply illustrated with 60 pioneering duotones, *The Homoerotic Photography of Carl Van Vechten* celebrates the sensual nude male form with both candour and reverence, offering a rare glimpse into the private domain of the master photographer and his handsome subjects.

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