



**THE Message**, by Diana Blok and Mario Broekmans (1981), one of the 287 images in *The Polaroid Book*, ed Steve Crist (Taschen, £19.99), demonstrating what a strong medium this camera, so beloved of amateurs, has proven to be. The image here is one of the more profound among a selection that relies heavily on the


intimacy of bedrooms for its appeal. Among the home-alone images is a vast array of naked bottoms and breasts, most of them not only evocative or tender but beautiful.

Crist has chosen a superb breadth of images, from abstracts and montages to landscapes and still lives. The majority of the photos are

portraits, in one form or another, some of them as tantalising as a novel missing its final chapter, others little more than the sort of snapshots strangers whip out on long train journeys to bore fellow travellers. Most alluring of all, though, to this viewer at least, are the smattering of tree portraits, these black and white

works arguably even more striking than those in colour. If ever there was an incentive to join the ranks of photographers, the immediacy of polaroid art is all the spur you need.

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