



Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America

Erika Doss

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In the past few decades, thousands of new memorials to executed witches, victims of terrorism, and dead astronauts, along with those that pay tribute to civil rights, organ donors, and the end of Communism have dotted the American landscape. Equally ubiquitous, though until now less the subject of serious inquiry, are temporary memorials: spontaneous offerings of flowers and candles that materialize at sites of tragic and traumatic death. In *Memorial Mania*, Erika Doss argues that these memorials underscore our obsession with issues of memory and history, and the urgent desire to express—and claim—those issues in visibly public contexts.

Doss shows how this desire to memorialize the past disposes itself to individual anniversaries and personal grievances, to stories of tragedy and trauma, and to the social and political agendas of diverse numbers of Americans. By offering a framework for understanding these sites, Doss engages the larger issues behind our culture of commemoration. Driven by heated struggles over identity and the politics of representation, *Memorial Mania* is a testament to the fevered pitch of public feelings in America today.

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