



Kosmos: A Portrait of the Russian Space Age

Adam Bartos

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The Space Race was an exhilarating moment in history, alternately frightening, thrilling, awe-inspiring, and ultimately, sublime. Its most enigmatic element was the competition. The Soviets seemed less technologically sophisticated (at least from the American perspective) but in fact won many of the races: first satellite to orbit the earth; first man in space; first unmanned landings on Mars, Venus, and the Moon; first woman in space; most powerful rockets; and, until its recent fiery death, the most long-lived space station to name but a few. The inherent contradictions of the age--the mixture of technologies high and low, of nostalgia and progress, of pathos and promise--are revealed in *Kosmos*, Adam Bartos's astonishing photographic survey of the Soviet space program. Bartos' fascination with this subject led him to seek out places like the bedroom where Yuri Gagarin slept the night before his history-making flight into space, located in the Baikonur Cosmodrome, the one-time top-secret space complex in the Kazakh desert. Bartos also takes us inside the cockpit of the Merkur space capsule, used to ferry crew members and supplies to the super-secret Almaz orbital space stations, and behind the changing screens cosmonauts used before being fitted for their space suits at Zvezda, the chief manufacturer of Soviet life-support systems. In total, *Kosmos* presents over 100 of Bartos's photographs, rich with the incongruities of the history, science, culture, and politics of the Space Age. Professor Svetlana Boym's insightful introduction to the technological and cultural aspects of Soviet space exploration provides a fitting context for the photographs. For anyone interested in the space age, *Kosmos* is an essential and fascinating portrait.

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