

MXN BOOK REVIEW - WHEN ART MEETS DIRT!

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By [Dean Hyman](#)

There's beauty in our sport. We often don't get to see it, but we feel it with all our senses in the act of riding. The snippets we get to see are fed to us by the mainstream media, or we venture to find documentation of the fringes we fancy. Those who bring us the fringe images work hard against a relentless truth of photography. A day's worth of shooting might only produce a few images that the photographer loves. And they are long travel days, hiking the tracks back and forth, seeking the sun and the mud and the roost, then returning to a crappy motel room if you're lucky.

Knowing that from experience - an experience I wouldn't trade for anything - I'm impressed by the labor of love that has been crafted by Theresa Ortolani in her off-road photo-documentary *Endurance*. Brooklyn, NY: powerHouse Books, 2009.



Photo: Nathan Kanney and Theresa Ortolani

With 155 photographs on 160 pages, this 8 1/2 X 11" hardcover is saturated with the grit and determination of off-road endurance motorcycle racing. From cover to cover, images and interviews juxtapose pain, fatigue, suffering and sacrifice against the glorious joy that somehow lures people back to this improbable sport. If there's a point to Ortolani's work, it's something like what I've always said about riding dirt bikes in general: this is not for sissies.

I was lucky to attend the release party for *Endurance*, at the powerHouse Arena in Brooklyn's DUMBO section, where fans and friends gathered to celebrate and have their books autographed by Ortolani and Shock Doctor KTM's Nathan Kanney (116). Also attending was a major contributor to the effort, Ian McLaughlin of [IMstunts](#), who Ortolani credits with being her second set of eyes. To McLaughlin she writes "This book is yours, as much as it is mine".



Photo: The muddy KTM 525 EXC belongs to Ian McLaughlin

The sense of teamwork and camaraderie at the party was thick, like a race team that had finally made the long trek to the checkers.

Their efforts paid off with Kanney earning a factory ride over the three years Ortolani followed his rise from privateer, and with Ortolani producing an artful collection of images that will stir a rider's soul. Some will make you laugh. And others might raise a lone tear with their insightful beauty. *Endurance* is a work worthy of its name, and worthy of your library. Order yours and preview images at <http://www.theresaortolani.com/>



The peeps in the photo from left to right are:

- Daniel Power - CEO, powerHouse Books
- Craig Cohen - Publisher, powerHouse Books
- Nathan Kanney - Shock Doctor KTM #116
- Ian McLaughlin - IMstunts Inc.
- Theresa Ortolani - *Endurance* author/photographer