

Press release

Richard Mosse | *The Castle*

24 November 2017 – 20 January 2018

Opening: Friday, November 24th 2017, 6–9 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new works by Richard Mosse. The Irish conceptual photographer rose to prominence with his prize-winning series *The Enclave*, which offered a radical rethinking of how to represent a war as complex and intractable as the ongoing conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Mosse's latest body of work continues his investment in questions of globalization, immigration, and human displacement – as well as his reflexive use of military technology to question the ways in which photography is constructed.

The Castle comprises a selection of photographs from Mosse's new series *Heat Maps* that depict temporary encampments and border crossings along migration routes to Europe from the Middle East and Africa. Each "Heat Map" is constructed from hundreds of frames captured using a super-telephoto lens that is part of a military-grade thermographic camera.

Designed for border surveillance, battlefield situational awareness, insurgent detection and search and rescue, this camera can be understood as part of the military-humanitarian complex that constitutes the EU's response to the mass migration crisis. It can image the human body from over thirty kilometers away. The camera depicts a heat signature of relative temperature difference, showing the incandescence of bodily warmth. Reading heat as both metaphor and index, these images do not attempt to represent the refugee crisis in a seemingly "transparent" or objective way. Instead, they ask how the notion of "the visible" might be expanded and how, by using a scopic technology against itself, the conditions of visibility might be fundamentally restructured.

These densely detailed panoramic thermal images disclose the fences, security gates, loudspeakers, food queues, tents, and temporary shelters of provisional camp architecture, as well as isolated disembodied traces of human and animal motion and other artifacts that disrupt each precarious composition and reveal its temporal construction.

If, as Agamben argues, the figure of the refugee represents the "the paradigm of a new historical consciousness", how might we find forms adequate to express the spatial, experiential, and temporal aspects of this condition? Art historian and critic T.J. Demos takes up this question in his book *The Migrant Image*, in which he argues that contemporary artists have created a new form of documentary practice through artistic strategies that "mobilize the image as much as imaging mobility". Building upon Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare life" – that is, a life reduced to the state of its biological existence – the photographs in *The Castle* depict landscapes of indeterminacy, ambivalence, disorientation, and uncertainty, seen through a prism of hypothermia, climate change, complicity, and mortality.

Accompanying *Heat Maps* is a selection of smaller framed video stills from Mosse's new immersive three-screen video installation, *Incoming*. This visceral 52-minute video artwork was co-commissioned by the Barbican and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and made in collaboration with composer Ben Frost and cinematographer Trevor Tweeten. It received its premiere at the Barbican Curve gallery in London earlier this year, with an accompanying artist's book published by MACK, including texts by Mosse and Giorgio Agamben. *Incoming* will subsequently travel to the NGV, opening 15th December 2017; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, in May 2018; and SFMOMA, in October 2019.

Richard Mosse (b.1980, Ireland) lives and works in New York and Ireland. He is a recipient of Prix Pictet Space 2017, the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, the Yale Poynter Fellowship in Journalism, the B3 Award at the Frankfurt Biennial, the Guggenheim Fellowship, a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting and the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship. His immersive six-channel 16mm infrared film installation *The Enclave* was exhibited at the National Pavilion of Ireland during the 55th Venice Art Biennale. He has had exhibitions in venues such as The Barbican Center, London; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; FOAM, Amsterdam; Portland Art Museum; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Nasher Museum of Art, Durham; Reykjavik Art Museum, Reykjavik; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Lille3000, Lille; Kunsthaus Graz; and MCA Chicago, Chicago.