

carlier | gebauer

**press release Richard Mosse**

1 May 2015 – 6 June 2015

Opening: Friday, 1 May 2015, 6–9pm

carlier | gebauer is very pleased to exhibit large format landscape photographic works by Irish artist **Richard Mosse** on the occasion of Gallery Weekend Berlin **opening 1 May, 2015 from 6–9pm**.

Richard Mosse has developed a body of photographic and filmic work that is both unabashedly aesthetic and fraught with political and ethical implications. He offers a radical rethinking of how to depict a conflict as complex and intractable as the ongoing war in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Treading a thin line between the conceptual and the affective, Mosse transforms the image into a site of crisis and of resistance.

Mosse depicts eastern Congo's rich topography, inscribed with the traces of conflicting interests, to show the ways in which this region's conflict has affected the landscape, and is expressed in land use, its agriculture, forests, and national parks.

These photographs were captured using discontinued color infrared film originally designed for military camouflage detection, reconnaissance, and targeting. Throughout the 20th Century, the medium also found civilian applications in the land sciences, including hydrology, farming, and mineralogy. It was used to reveal environmental factors otherwise imperceptible to the human eye, such as determining the health of crops.

Mosse employs the film in a strategy of mapping areas of North and South Kivu affected by inter-related aspects of the conflict including sites of human rights violations, the displacement of populations, land conflict between pastoral and agrarian tribes (a conflict as old as Cain and Abel), stripping and alleged poisoning of forestry, the illegal charcoal industry, and exploitation of conflict minerals.

Almost every industry in the region – from artisanal mineral exploitation to the culling of primeval forest for charcoal production – is controlled by armed groups. The illegal charcoal trade is estimated to earn DRC's militias between \$14-50 million USD per year in road taxes. Eighty percent of Congo's precious minerals are illegally smuggled out of the country, robbing this impoverished nation of its patrimony. There are four rainy

seasons per year in eastern DRC, and the soil is fabulously fertile, yet large numbers of people starve. Emergency relief is hampered by broken infrastructure and instability. Huge numbers of people in North and South Kivu flee violence, living and dying in temporary camps for internally displaced persons.

The resulting images carry an uneasy Romantic resonance, ambiguously balancing the sublime with a documentary subtext of environmental damage predicated by at least thirty different armed groups fighting over natural resources – food, farmland, forestry and rare earth minerals – in a place of near anarchy and humanitarian disaster.

**Richard Mosse** (b.1980) lives and works in New York City. He is the winner of the Deutsche Boerse Photography Prize 2014 and recipient of the Yale Poynter Fellowship in Journalism 2014, the B3 Award at the Frankfurt Biennial 2014, a Künstlerhaus Bethanien residency 2012, and the Guggenheim Fellowship 2011. Selected current and recent exhibitions include *The Enclave*, Portland Art Museum, Oregon, USA; *Richard Mosse*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; *Post Conflict*, Nichido Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; *Land in Sicht*, Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen, Germany; *The Enclave*, National Pavillion of Ireland, 55th Venice Art Biennale. Upcoming exhibitions include *The Enclave*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; *The Enclave, Renaissance 2015*, Lille, France; The Nasher Museum, Raleigh NC, USA.

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