

**Press release**

**Richard Mosse | *Ultra***

14.03–18.04.2020

Opening: Friday, 13 March, 5–9 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new works by Richard Mosse. Richard Mosse's new body of work, *Ultra*, captures the precious, irreplaceable beauty of the rainforest eco-system through a closely examined depiction of its plant and insect life. At a time when the fragile rainforest is under serious threat from population pressure, burning and deforestation, cattle farms, palm oil plantations, illegal goldmines, and other human-built infrastructure, Mosse investigates the complexity of its biome, its symbiotic relationships and interdependency.

The rainforest is a place of constant predation, where the natural world is in a perpetual cycle of kill-or-be-killed. This series examines the ways in which plant and insect life have evolved over millions of years for survival, often by developing forms of camouflage, while orchid flowers have evolved to perfectly complement the shape of orchid bees, formalizing the interdependence of the eco-system.

To make this series, Mosse borrows a scientific photographic technique to capture ultraviolet fluorescence. The resulting artworks have been composited from numerous separate images (typically fifty or more frames) to yield large-scale, hyper-detailed, ethereal landscapes. The natural world takes on an unfamiliar and almost alien aspect due to the fluorescence of UV light in the visible spectrum, making the soft surfaces and fibrous stalks of flowers seem sheathed in tinted metals while textured plant life takes on a glowing bejeweled quality that seems almost intestinal. The light amplifies the camouflaged patterns of insects; the crosshatching in their eyes and wings are depicted with lucid clarity. Mosse observes:

*"My subject, the tactile cloud forest mosses, lichens, spider webs, bark, corporeal orchid flesh and the dazzling carapaces of insects, once illuminated by this unearthly light, became profoundly beautiful. Wandering through the forest at night with a UV torch, I was enchanted by an unseen glowing world of natural activity. The ultraviolet fluorescence seemed to heighten my perception of this complex interdependency; the colors and textures began to meld under this narrow wavelength of visible light, refining my focus on the building blocks of life. These highly aesthetic forms have evolved to warn, entrap, ambush, evade, kill and survive. Our existence is not predicated on their destruction. We have the technological means to protect this extraordinary natural beauty, which is essential for our survival as a species."*

The intimate and detailed landscapes of *Ultra* appear to be a departure for Mosse, an experienced conflict photographer, but the investigation of this ecosystem continues his practice of using hyperspectral visual effects to explore the crossroads between aesthetics, violence, camouflage and perception.

**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 solo exhibitions in venues such as The Barbican Center, London; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; FOAM, Amsterdam; Portland Art Museum, Portland; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Nasher Museum of Art, Durham; Reykjavik Art Museum, Reykjavik; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Akademie der Kunst, Berlin; Lille3000, Lille; Kunsthaus Graz, Graz; and MCA Chicago, Chicago. Recent exhibitions include RAY Triennial at MMK, Frankfurt, Germany; Hamburg Triennial of Photography, at Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburger, Germany.