

RICHARD WHITE, ACCLAIMED PHOTOGRAPHER
FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION MUSE GALLERY OF MILAWA

OPENING: 2pm APRIL 5th 2008.

This April Muse Gallery of Milawa is thrilled to present an exhibition of exceptional landscape photographs by one of Australia's foremost photographic artists, Richard White.

Best known for his picturesque black and white landscape photography, White is renowned as the photographer behind 'The High Country' calendar. White's wilderness photography concentrates on romantic images of mountains, lakes and forests, along with man-made objects within the landscape such as old buildings and winding roads. These subjects are seen under the guise of different seasons and light conditions.

'In nature it's rare that the same scene is repeated twice,' says White. 'Light is the essence of a photograph: it's the quality of light that makes the picture.' White counterbalances this style with images in which high-contrast black and white photography transforms his natural subjects — whether they are patterns in a sand dune or tree trunks blackened by bushfire — into pure form. 'If my work is at all spiritual, this comes from the innate beauty in nature. I don't deliberately seek out beauty in nature, it's more that it appears and I feel compelled to capture it.'

This forthcoming exhibition will feature landscapes photographed by White on his travels through the Victorian High Country and Tasmania, to further a field in New Zealand, Nepal, and North America. Many of these works will be seen for the first time. Says White, 'There will be a variety of images and various sizes, chosen to suit what's best for the individual image.' Also featured in the exhibition are a number of 'pin-hole photographs'. These are taken using a handmade 'camera' comprising a light-tight box with a pinhole instead of a glass lens at one end, which allows light to shine onto a large negative sheet secured on the opposite side. These negatives are used to make 'contact prints' directly on the photographic paper.

Richard says of the technique, 'Pin-hole photographs are extraordinary. They have an infinite depth of field, and a totally different look. It's a beautiful medium to work in, because the images are created so purely and simply, just by uncovering a hole.'

White considers himself a purist. Unlike the majority of professional digital photographs, his photographs undergo very little manipulation or alteration. Accordingly, White describes his images as 'closer to the truth.' 'Of course the images are in a sense removed from the truth because they're in black and white, but the lineage of truth can be traced from the moment the photograph was taken to the negative, and all the way through the process. This is more of a purist form of photography, and that's where my interest lies.'

The handmade quality of the photographic prints themselves is also important. White prints his negatives by hand onto silver gelatin fibre-based papers which are of archival quality. 'The silver gelatin paper has richness, because the paper actually has silver in it,' he says. 'When you see a silver gelatin print next to an ordinary print, it's like looking at a real leather jacket and comparing it to imitation leather.'

White explains that the traditional process of printing is integral to his art. 'I love the process of printing. I love the darkroom work as much as taking the photos: both are important.' After many years in the darkroom, he still enjoys 'seeing an image materialise from the raw negative to a piece of paper.' Due to his adherence to purist techniques, White's photographs now occupy a specialist artistic niche. 'Digital cameras have made the old process something special. It's an interesting shift,' he explains. 'But I love this traditional way of working. Why give it up?'

The Muse Gallery of Milawa Gallery director George Piercy says 'We're excited to be holding an exhibition of such high quality photography. Richard's reverence of unique landscapes is central to his success as a highly regarded artist.'

'I combine images from the heart and technical information from my head,' White concludes. 'I have a real passion for what I'm doing. If I can take photographs for the rest of my life, I'll be a happy man.'

The public is cordially invited to attend the opening of this exhibition at 2pm Saturday 5th April at the Muse Gallery of Milawa, located at the Milawa Cheese Factory complex. The exhibition continues through to 28th April.