



Still from the *The Enclave*, 2012–13, shot on infrared film and transferred to video.

Weaving between blazing pink, violet, and crimson fields of tall grasses and other exotic flora, we follow rebel troops in berets and camouflage through a stunning panorama of plains, mountains, and villages that might, at first glance, evoke a *Vogue* fashion shoot set in the Land of Oz. Instead, this six-channel video projection takes us through the killing fields of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, jumping from screen to screen and offering a deeply immersive experience without 3-D paraphernalia. This is *The Enclave* (2012–13), an extraordinarily beautiful yet jarring 40-minute multimedia installation by New York-based Irish photographer and video artist Richard Mosse.

Installed in the Irish Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, *The Enclave* was made with Kodak Aerochrome, a discontinued infrared surveillance film used to detect hidden targets for aerial bombing (and a favorite medium of psychedelic artists in the 1970s). Mosse’s film glows with a supercharged surreality, as the green landscape is transformed into saturated pinks and eye-catching reds. This color palette has characterized Mosse’s photographs and videos for the past several years, since he first discovered the film. “My process is deeply intuitive, and all I did was turn everything pink,” he says. “I’ve been criticized for that, but my images are no more abstract than a black-and-white photograph. They are both constructs.”

Born in 1980 in Kilkenny, Ireland, Mosse has a B.A. from King’s College in London, a postgraduate diploma from Goldsmiths College in London, and an M.F.A. from Yale University. Since 2008, he has been represented by Jack Shainman Gallery in New York, where *The Enclave* is on view through March 22. Known for enormous photographs of conflict zones, the artist discovered Aerochrome while looking for less conventional, more gripping ways to represent harrowing narratives that “exist beyond language”—a search that became increasingly urgent after his travels through Iraq in 2009, where he photographed Saddam Hussein’s palace and other devastated sites.



Richard Mosse.

“My work had nothing to do with photojournalism,” Mosse says, “but hardly anyone noticed the difference between my photographs and those seen in the newspapers.” And although the Aerochrome film was something that “no serious photographer would touch,” Mosse liked it because the infrared, made to “detect the invisible, also made a little-known war that was a humanitarian disaster visible.”

With that goal in mind, he travelled from 2010–11 to the war-ravaged eastern Congo, accompanied by American artist and cinematographer Trevor Tweeten and Australian musician Ben Frost, who composed the soundtrack for *The Enclave*. There, Mosse made his first series of eerily gorgeous, impossible-to-overlook photographs, radiant with his now signature rosy hues. “Beauty is important to me,” he says. “It’s a way to make people see, to make them feel. But it also creates an ethical problem in people’s minds, a confusion when human suffering is made beautiful. I want that; I want people to pay attention.”

—*Lilly Wei*

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