



THE ENCLAVE

IN CONGO - A DIALOGUE

The ways in which
The Enclave is critically
received in Congo, by a
population who are intimately
familiar with the conflict
situation that the work
describes -- I feel that such a
dialogue could be very
significant.

Richard Mosse

The Enclave is a major six-channel video installation by artist Richard Mosse that represented Ireland in the 55th Venice Biennale. The Project is the culmination of Mosse's work in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Using an extinct type of infrared film once employed by the military to detect camouflaged installations from the air, Mosse renders *The Heart of Darkness* in irradiating technicolor. With a significantly slower life than images constructed by photojournalism, Mosse's highly aesthetic approach considers problematic imagery from an oblique angle that strategically allows a different temporality in seeing. Mosse embraces the infrared medium's subtle shift in wavelength in an attempt to challenge documentary photography, and engage with the unseen, hidden and intangible aspects of eastern Congo's situation—a tragically overlooked conflict in which 5.4 million people have died of war related causes since 1998.

To produce *The Enclave*, Mosse worked with the cinematographer Trevor Tweeten to evolve a style of long tracking shots made with a Steadicam system, resulting in a spectral, disembodied gaze shot on 16mm infrared film. The piece's haunting, visceral soundscape is layered spatially by eleven-point surround sound, composed by Ben Frost from recordings gathered in North and South Kivu.

The Enclave comprises six monumental double-sided screens installed in a large darkened chamber creating a physically immersive experience. This disorienting and kaleidoscopic installation is intended to formally parallel eastern Congo's multifaceted conflict, confounding expectations and forcing the viewer to interact spatially from an array of differing viewpoints. *The Enclave* is an experiential environment that attempts to reconfigure the dictates of photo-journalism and expanded video art.

In 2015 The Enclave was invited to the Salaam Kivu International Film Festival - the largest cultural arts event in the DRC - to make its Congolese and African premiere.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, SKIFF brings together artists and activists from around the world who share a common vision of positive social transformation through critical creativity.

The process of installing *The Enclave* in Congo, the opening event, and the work's reception by the people of Goma, both at the exhibition itself as well as in specially planned seminars, workshops and discussions, has been carefully documented on video by Richard Mosse and Trevor Tweeten, with moderation by the New York based art critic, Christian Viveros-Faune.

This footage will be cut into a documentary format and offered for distribution to television news channels including Al Jazeera, Arte, Channel 4, France24, CNN International, and others. It will also be made available online, offered to various important platforms such as The Guardian, NY Times Lens Blog, Time Lightbox, Creative Time Reports, Frieze Magazine video channel, Vimeo, YouTube, etc. The interviews will be transcribed into text format and edited for publication in a book, *Companion to The Enclave*, published by Aperture Foundation. They will also be freely available on Richard Mosse's web archive.

This material will help gauge the response of a Congolese audience to a project that is a hybrid of Western contemporary art, photojournalism, and advocacy, which has its ultimate goal of raising awareness about eastern Congo's ongoing conflict situation. We hope these interviews will help stimulate dialogue and discussion.

The following presentation contains excerpts from interviews and other documentary material recorded during The Enclave exhibit in Goma, July 3-12, 2015.



There is a straight-up
Fitzcarraldo aspect
to all of it.

Christian Viveros-Faune



Install of The Enclave at Cap Kivu Hotel,
Goma, by Congolese crew

Pascal

in conversation with Christian



Interviewer Pascal, give me your full name.

[Pascal] My name is Pascal Musimbi Watoukalous.

Interviewer And what do you do? Are you a student?

[Pascal] I was a student, but I unfortunately couldn't complete my studies. My wish was to finish, but it didn't work out. I am managing like others. I am an artist, a film director.

Interviewer Okay. So Pascal, you're the perfect person to ask an opinion of The Enclave. What are your first impressions on seeing the film?

[Pascal] As an artist, I understood what the director wanted to say. There were no words, but the film was eloquent. The location is a first for Goma. It's a first for Congo.

Interviewer Pascal, where were you when the rebels came through Goma?

[Pascal] I was here and it made me cry because I lost a member of my family. I lost my uncle that day with explosives from Rwanda. It really hurts me. But as a human being, I have forgotten. My wish is peace in my country. My wish is to change things.

Interviewer These images in The Enclave, bring up pain and they bring up sorrow. I wanna talk to you about how they are different from regular documentary images. How do you find them different?

[Pascal] I have seen scenes on TV, on international channels like BBC, RFI. But what I saw today -- I liked the manner in which I saw it. It seemed so real, as if I was living it. I felt it as if it was live. It is very different from other documentaries I have seen before.

“I understood what the director wanted to say. There were no words, but the film was eloquent”

I congratulate the one who made this film. He brought out first the interest of Congo. Why just Congo? Why did he only come to Congo? There are wars everywhere: in Somalia, there are wars in Libya, there are wars everywhere. But he took the risk to come to our country. Truly I say congratulations and I appreciate it.

Interviewer We talked about how some of these images bring up a significant amount of pain and sorrow. But I also want to know, from your perspective, as an artist as well, is there beauty in these images?

[Pascal] What I noticed first was the change of color. It wasn't natural. Plants' natural color is green. But the image was red or pink. I don't know how you managed to get such images. Especially in an environment where there is a war, in an environment where the living conditions are tough. How did you manage to obtain such beautiful images from a dark place - from a place where life is very difficult?

Interviewer What can you say captivated you so much from an artist's point of view?

[Pascal] I couldn't believe that a silent film - a film with no spoken words - could be understood so easily.

Interviewer Is there anything that you're personally going to take away from seeing this film, Pascal?

[Pascal] Yes, it really motivated me. It gave me courage.

“When you see it,
you see yourself in it.”

Interviewer Now, what they are doing is that they will be recording everything that you are saying. What were your thoughts when you viewed everything? What did you hear, what did you learn?

[Interviewee 3] When you see it, you see yourself in it. I have felt fear since 1993 -- we are from Masisi -- since that time, there was war in Masisi. And when it breaks again, it reminds me of more things. This has made many people traumatized, others suffer diseases like cardiac disease, others suffer from epilepsy. What is epilepsy in French?

[Other interviewees] Epilepsy.

[Interviewee 3] Epilepsy, because of the effects of war, and as I see that again I remember so many things. There is no development, people don't farm. At our place there is a lot of hunger. There are so many refugee camps. Many children are now refugees, or child soldiers. You can meet a child who has not even learned how to talk well, going to the armed group. Now that I have watched it, I have just felt something in my heart, something which I do not know. Twenty years of war in a country - it is too much.

[Interviewee 4] I have seen the film represents so many things. In our hometown, since I was born, I've witnessed people fighting and I do not know the happiness of sleeping in a house, as I just sleep in the fields. And the children born after me, they also suffer like me. We left our village and moved to Kashuga. We left because of war. These things that I see here bring fear, and remind me a lot of it. There are children far behind, who don't know the importance of education because when they are born, they are born in fighting communities - that's what they see.

Interviewer What did you think about the colour?

[Interviewees] [Laughter] The colour is blood.

[Interviewee 2] Violence, war of bullets, machetes, knives and so forth; it's all blood, already. To show the example of the blood that has been shed.

[Interviewee 3] Before we were farmers, supplying food to other provinces. But now most lands are forests, people don't farm there anymore. There are wild animals. We cannot cultivate there so we only cultivate the lands that are near the road to feed ourselves, and supply is difficult. Just because of war. Because you see a woman cannot go to the *shamba* alone.

[Interviewee 2] Another recommendation that I can say, concerning war, since we have seen about the war; if they can show us another film about how life could be without war,

Interviewer For you to come here today, you heard this film was here, who informed you it would be held here?

[Interviewee 2] Sofi is the one who told us. We were working, shop, and she told us to go and watch; it's important what they are presenting.

Interviewer Are you happy after watching and have you enjoyed participating?

[Interviewee 2 & 3] Yeah, we are happy that we have participated.

[Interviewee 2] And that is why we encourage you, saying that after this, bring another one about life after war.

[Interviewee 3] [Laughing] Let them come and occupy the whole place. Let it be seen everywhere, so that others see also.

Interviewer Thank you so much.

[Interviewee 2] We also say thank you,.





If we remove just one colour,

it can be another army; it can be another country. It becomes universalized. It's not only bringing people together but it's showing that what's happening here, it can happen anywhere.

Sikombe



Top left: interview with Sikombe (Goma space manager)
Above: entrance to The Enclave in Goma

Kakule

in conversation with Christian

[Kakule] 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Interviewer His sound is good?

[Background] We're rolling. Birds are a little loud right now.

Interviewer Not much to do about that. Shut the fuck up birds. What is your full name?

[Kakule] My name is Kakule Jean-Robert.

Interviewer What do you do? What is your profession?

[Kakule] I was a humanitarian with Tearfund, in the UK. And after that, I was at the German World Vision; after World Vision I was at Dungu near South Sudan in the Danish Refugee Council.

Interviewer Oh wow.

[Kakule] And now I have been jobless for 2 years. That is why I left Butembo to look for a job where I can. I did an exam with the UN but no results yet. I was lucky to see Mr. Richard. That is why I am here as a laborer.

Interviewer Right. And you're working with us at the door there, at the movie - and you've seen the movie several times, no?

[Kakule] Yes. For me the movie was very exciting, because it reminded me of the consequences of the war. Because I was not here. We listened only on the radio that M23 is here and South Kivu.

Interviewer And you've also been on the inside, privy to other people's opinions of the movie. What have you heard?

[Kakule] Some people felt like I felt. It touched them personally because it made them remember. For instance, the man of the Kivu lodge...he wrote {in a record of visitor comments} something very interesting, "Now I am able to put pictures to the noise. We were hiding. But now I see."

Interviewer Let me ask you a very basic question about the film. Why do you think the artist changed the natural colors of the landscape?

[Kakule] Because I am a scientific man, I know that when I read it on the picture -- I know it's infrared. So I understood it like this.

Interviewer Do you think the decision to make everything red with infrared film -- do you think this

has a symbolic importance?

[Kakule] It is symbolic of blood. Because it was during the war. But other people can't understand that.

Interviewer A lot of the images in this film are difficult and some of them are painful. Would you say that they are also beautiful? Do you find beauty in any of this?

[Kakule] Yes. I saw our bridge in Mabenga, on the road leading to Butembo. Another thing which touched me and made me feel sad was how we became refugees in our own country. In our country we became refugees. This is not a good thing. In fact, some people said that maybe we are cursed. You live with fear every time. So we have this in our memory.



David, Gavila, Makuza & Marie

in conversation with Christian



Interviewer I want you to each tell me what you think about the film..

[Gavila] Allow me to start. We are really happy with the film because it shows our country's image. Whenever and wherever they talk about our country they only talk about war. These images show the real life we lead in our country.

[Marie] We always hear people talking about what happens in the outskirts and in rural areas but we've never seen the real situation. We always hear people saying that there are wars, deaths, assassinations and so on, but through this film we have seen the reality of these talks.

[David] I think the film is very good. Unfortunately we have watched just a part of the full reality. If we could see the whole reality that would be better. There are some people who do not understand the reality even after watching it. A full film would be great.

Interviewer Okay. So what would complete the movie, what is missing? Several of you have suggested that something is missing in the movie. If you had to fill in the blank, what is it? What is that missing part?

[Makuza] Yes, thank you very much. We are grateful for showing us what is happening in our country. It is well done. It would be better to complete the film by interviewing people who live in these areas.

[David] Personally I think that when the war came to an end, or when it is about to come to an end, you combined war images with those of peace. I think that after the war, you should put images of peace, not only images which reflect the atrocities. You need to add images that reflect the restoration of peace.

Interviewer They're all law students, correct?

[*Interpreter*] Yes.

Interviewer You are a very sophisticated group of viewers. I want to ask you something abstract, philosophical. Do images always tell the truth? Do photographic images tell the truth?

[Gavila] I can say that what I have seen here is really the life we lead now. It is war, gunshots - that is the situation we live in.

Interviewer So if it is the truth, why is it red? Are these documentary images or are they something else?

[Marie] Firstly, they are different in terms of the technique. The technique used is different from what we notice on other television channels. Secondly, what creates the difference is people are always repeating the same thing. People do not delve deeply into the reality.

Interviewer Let me suggest something to you. I am a journalist, the filmmaker is this man here and he is an artist. This film is intended to be not a documentary, not a piece of newsreel footage, not a fiction; it's supposed to be a work of art. Think of it like a painting, if that makes sense for you.

[Marie] Yes, for me, the red color represents blood, so everywhere there's the color red, blood was shed.

Mosse Blood is not pink.

[Makuza] I think the director wanted to break the norms. When it comes to the message, I can say that the filmmaker has tried to be responsible for the film he has made.

Interviewer We want to thank you very much, first for coming here, and then for talking with us. You are very kind.



You are not looking at just one angle.

This goes with our daily life, the way we live here. People wake up in the morning and they don't know what they will eat. So they have to go out to get something to live off. The same thing is happening here. People are moving to get an angle, to get a point, to get a view of their life.

Sikombe



For me,
this film is
a document.



It will survive and be
seen for many years to
come. People will be
able to come back to it
and try to understand
what happened, so as to
anticipate the future.

John



Above: interview with John, currently unemployed, from the conflict zone
Middle: former child soldiers (with Raiya Mutomboki) attend The Enclave
Right: Congolese viewers queue to watch The Enclave



Diego, Iliana & Prince

in conversation with Christian



[Iliana] Yes. [Diego] Yes. [Interviewer] So dumb, right?

Interviewer What did you think of the film? Did you like it?

[Diego] I liked the fact that in the film I could see what really happened. Because at first I simply heard the shots. I didn't know what was really going on in the field. It provided arguments to what people had been saying about the M23 and the war that broke out in 2012 in Goma.

Interviewer Where were you, Prince, when the M23 came?

[Prince] Me? I was at home. We were at home when the war broke out because people started fleeing. Some went to Bukavu. But we stayed at home. The war was still ongoing, as we would often hear on TV. That they were at Trois Antennes, sometimes Kilijoué. We would stay at home because we would hear shots all over.

Interviewer What would you do at home?

[Prince] We would just stay at home. We would be praying because there were stray bullets here and there. And some people were hit in a few houses, and dead children.

Interviewer Is this like the war movies or is it different?

[Diego] It's different, because in the war movies it's not totally the reality. This is the reality we see in the movie.

Interviewer You recognised it?

[Diego] Yes.

Interviewer You know the streets, you know the hills, right?

[Diego] Yes, and the noise.

Interviewer Right, the noise.

[Interpreter] There were no special effects there. No. It was 100% real, unfortunately.

Interviewer Do you think you guys will remember?

[Diego] I am not going to forget, but it may be the case that one day I will almost not think about it anymore. But if people start talking about it, it will immediately come back.

“It's going to be the first time I won't hear any shootings on my birthday”

Interviewer When I was 9 -- I am from Chile, South America -- and when I was 9, a little younger than you, I lived through a coup. Lots of bombings and lots of shootings, same as this.

I still remember. It's an interesting time to see what the adults do too, no?

[Diego] I think the adults see it under a different angle. First of all, because they have children to protect, for example, and have more material goods than when one is a child, like houses and more. They do not want to lose everything all of a sudden. But I also sometimes wonder what's stopping them from really doing something against those wars and all the troubles in the world.

[Iliana] I didn't really understand why the M23 acted like that. I don't know if they did it out of revenge because of the genocide in Rwanda, or maybe it has nothing to do with it, I don't know.

Interviewer Thank you very much you 3. I'm looking forward to when you grow up, because I don't think you will fight, so that'd be wonderful.

[Illiana] If I survive my birthdays.

[Interpreter] Lilly is a bit traumatized because for the past 3 years her birthday is on the 25th of September, and so each time there's shootings on the street.

Interviewer Okay.

[Interpreter] So now they're leaving for France and she says, "It's going to be the first time I won't hear any shootings on my birthday."

Interviewer I think you deserve a birthday without shootings. I think that's a great thing. Thank you guys very much.

Prince

in conversation with Richard

Prince I don't think, when someone watches the film, that they get much information. And when you watch it and you don't understand it well, you may think that it is photos that were put there to show how people were running from the war. They show people, when the M23 captured Goma. And when you watch the film, it gives one thoughts: these are things which have passed, but it also gives you thoughts of how we were attacked by our neighboring country who were torturing us, making us suffer and experience hunger, because of the things they were doing. Now when I was watching the film I asked myself, why did they put that in the video? And those images, they were being differentiated; why was it like that?

[Richard] Our experience, here in North Kivu particularly, is it's a place of rumour and fear and you can never verify information – or you can but it's very difficult. So you can hear about a mass rape in the bush but it takes a week for that information to come out of the bush, and by then the evidence is no longer there to verify it. So fact is a very difficult thing; relatively speaking, it is a slippery thing here. More slippery than other places because of the broken infrastructure, the heavy rains and the bad roads, lack of cell phone communication in all places. So this was really a way for us to formally portray that, to disorient the viewer and to force the viewer around the space, to sort of negotiate the space for themselves rather than sitting in a cinema captive from one position looking at the film from a captive perspective. To be forced around the space by the screens. And as you'll notice sometimes the screens go black. So you think you've got the best seat in the house; you've chosen your place to stand and then the screen goes black, you're immediately forced to, like, 'Oh, God, I have to relocate.' So it forces you to engage with the piece spatially and basically to engage with it as a viewer, to really engage with your viewership.



Congolese youths

in conversation

We are dying like flies, dying without knowing the cause. What I think is, we need to first unite ourselves. When we are united, maybe the war will be over.

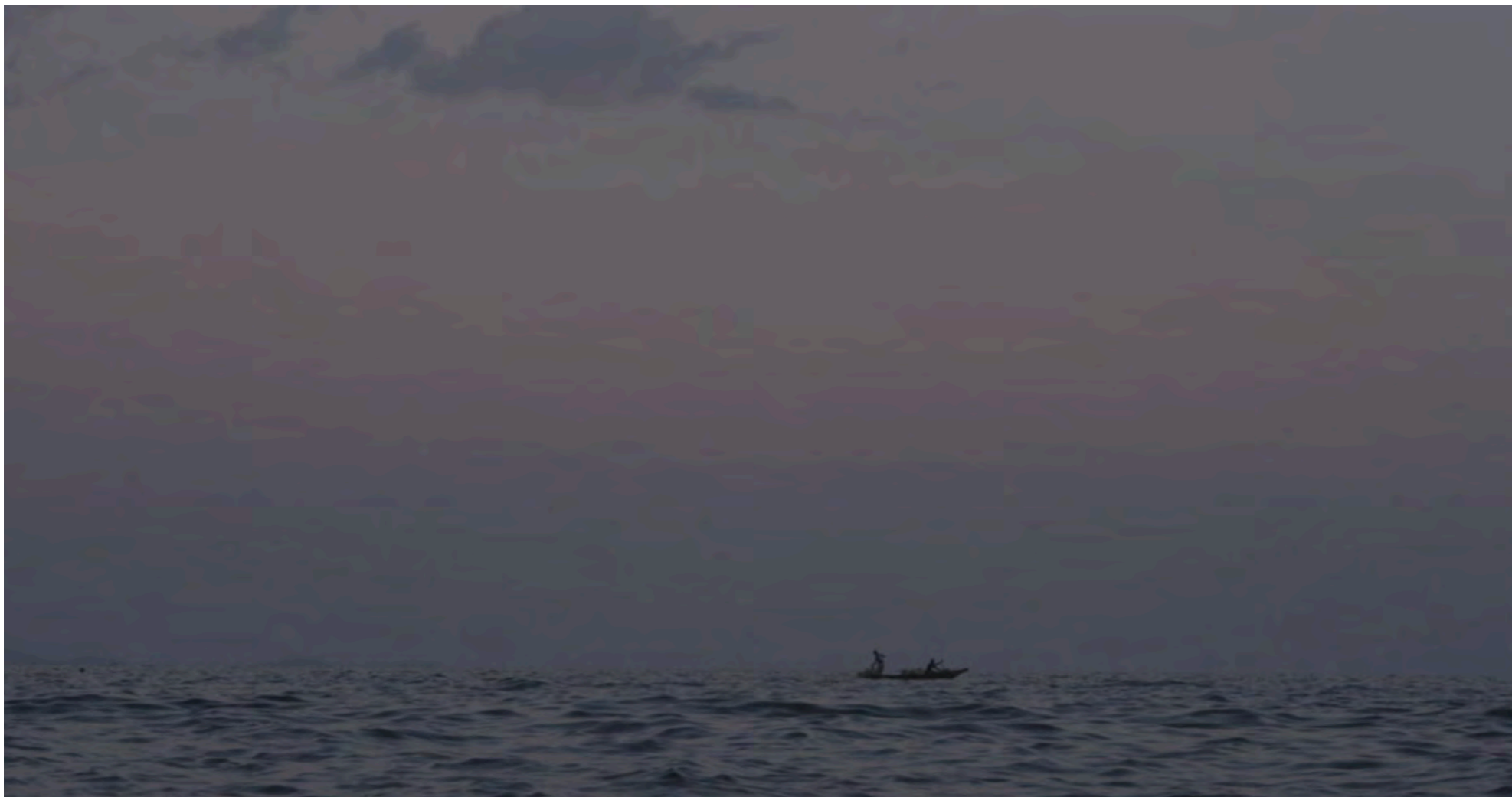




Above: performances at SKIFF, 2015
Right: The Enclave Q&A with Richard Mosse

The thing that I have always noticed about Congo is that its people really understand performance, in a way that we don't. And that's why their dancing and music is so absolutely amazing.

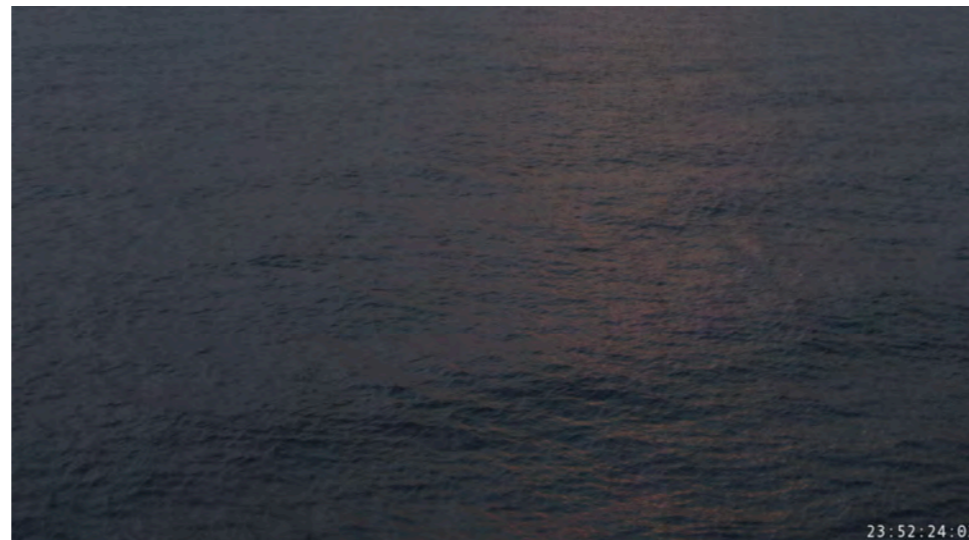
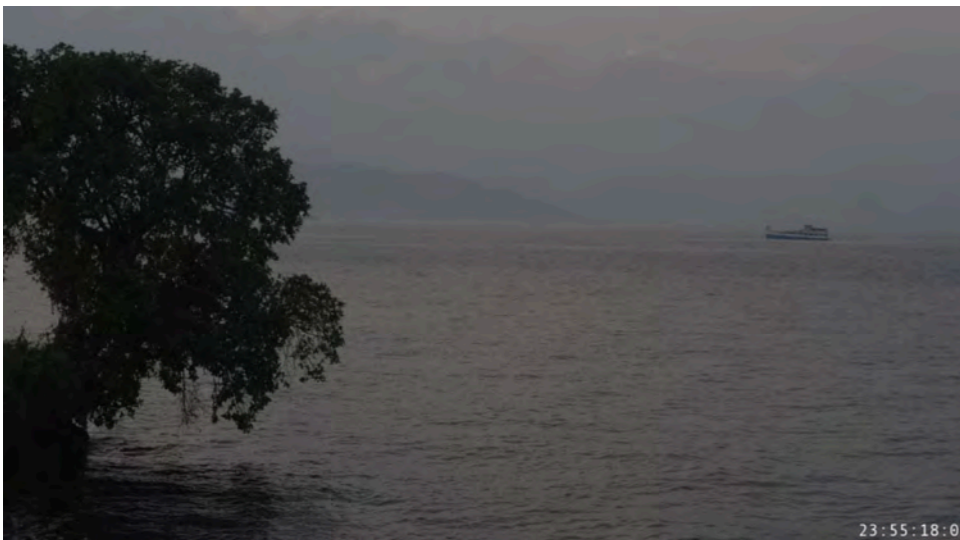
Richard Mosse



The film is like a dream.

You know, when you are dreaming, sometimes you find good things. Sometimes you find bad things. It gives you the experience of thinking – is it this or is it that?

Adolphe



Above left: Lake Kivu, Goma
Bottom right: @SKIFF, 2015

It is a deep truth...a profound reality.

I cannot say that it is entertainment but rather a type of truth. They are symbols. They are physical symbols. Whereas, on the international channels, we see the people from a distance. The images seem a bit hidden. As if they have been filmed from afar.

But I noticed one thing in the movie: things really are close.

We see clearly.

Olivier (economics student)



It is not a documentary. I think it is war.

This is far away from those kinds of wars that we see on the BBC. This one is very violent and I experienced that myself.

Moise (youth leader)



in the year of 2007-2008

10:15:33:06

When I see those clips, it reminds me...

In the CNDP war, they shot me when I was just running. They shot me here, the bullet entered here and come out here. This film touches me. It is very different from other films.

Patrick (taxi driver)

I say that a good thing cannot be forgotten
and a bad thing also cannot be forgotten.
This film got deep into my heart.

Amissi



and a bad thing also cannot be forgotten. This film got deep into my heart

10:40:59:18

“An important part of my ambition with the film was to raise visibility of the conflict situation, of this conflict situation in other places”

Interviewer Based on a small survey that Yole!Africa conducted, some people did not react well to the to the movie. It brings back bad memories to some of them. They are frustrated. Do you think this movie can bring something positive to Goma's population and to the rest of the Congolese in general?

[Richard] Yeah, so I didn't make the film to please people. It's not entertainment. It's not a film with a happy ending. It doesn't really have an ending. It's quite a challenging film. It's an art form that's intended to challenge. That's my intention. It's not an easy thing to understand or interpret. It forces the viewers to confront themselves. That was really -- at least I hope it does what I'm intending -- what I wanted to happen. And so, as a result, some people might really hate it. They might have really strong emotions. And I think evoking emotions is not necessarily a bad thing. Particularly when the recent past is so troubled.

Interviewer Do you think there is a positive image of Congo in the movie?

[Richard] I think the image, it subverts the normal image of Congo. It portrays it in this strange shimmering pink and shades of red. It's a very unusual color palate in my opinion. Maybe you interpret it differently. And so, most images of Congo are quite negative. So really, I'm trying to turn them on their head to try to challenge that. I don't think the film takes a position politically. I have political opinions, but I don't put them in my art work. Because I believe -- and this is totally personal -- that once you suffuse your work with a very strong political message it becomes propaganda and it's no longer art.

I'd just like to also say that, in my culture there's a huge... in art, we have histories of tragedy. We use plenty of metaphor in some of the art we make. There are references. And I have no idea if some of those references will fly, if they will

be acceptable here. This is part of the reason I brought the piece here. And if it's lost on... I'm sorry if it doesn't translate to people here. But I do think that people must have a chance to see it, because it was made here. So it's the least I can do, to bring it here. Whether or not people appreciate or understand or like it, that's a whole other question. And I'm still finding out where the work lands - if it can find a footing here, and find meaning. And I'm actually very interested to know what you have heard. Can you tell me a bit about what you're hearing?

Interviewer I'm from Benin. I came back 40 months ago. I don't know the story of the people here but that video made me understand what happened to people in Goma. But for some others, they are reminded of what they went through. There are scenes of atrocities in the movie, violent scenes in the movie, and they do not accept to see it one more time. It's a matter of choice.

[Richard] I think that's totally fair and I completely understand how people feel negatively stereotyped. An important part of my ambition with the film was to raise visibility of the conflict situation, of this conflict situation in other places. On some level, to make people aware of the conflict because in the mass media all we hear is one person died today in New York, you know. Instead, we don't hear that a hundred people were raped in Shabunda, like last week. This is not important to the press. I'm really interested in trying to engage with that problem of communication. So I guess you could say I didn't make the piece for people here, for a Congolese audience. I didn't really think of the audience too much, actually. I made it for myself, this work. And so, I'm very interested to see how people respond to it. So it's really good to hear this particular response about the negative portrayal.



Richard

in conversation with Christian

[Richard] You know, making this work was so full of horrible uncertainty, in a wonderfully creative way, and failure, and the unknown of course, and a bit of fear, and a lot of stupidity, and a lot of just hanging around, you know? And so these things just come together and it evolves a bit like a journey.

There was part of me, in my mind, I felt like I'd put the camel through the eye of the needle...and one of the things that I thought could redeem my sanity was to get this work to bring it here.

I do these lectures and I do these openings and people are always very interested. They always ask me, what do the Congolese think, and it's a very valid question. And the Enclave is a massively complicated installation. It's six - actually 7 projectors, because you always want one spare - it's 6 double sided screens, 10 speakers and 2 massive sub-woofers. And all kinds of wares and all kinds of boxes and cables and all that stuff. So the idea of just taking it to Congo is nice on paper but it's a massive undertaking. And I always understood that.

Christian There is a straight up Fitzcarraldo aspect to all of it.

[Richard] There is a bit. And we felt that last week as you came off the plane, you saw how frantic we were. I was about to lose my marbles. Everything was about to fail but actually the team of people, the teams of people, plural, who came together to make this happen was second to none.

Christian A lot of them being Congolese too.

[Richard] Oh yeah, all of them. yeah.

† † †

[Richard] The questions that people are floundering with, because we're in a city - Goma - which is in a conflict situation and has been for decades. And it's in a state of anarchy. There is a government structure but there's all these NGOs bringing money in. And a lot of people are having trouble understanding an artwork in its own right. They expect results, concrete results. Something that concretely affects change locally. And that can be quantified and written down.

Christian Jobs, education, food.

[Richard] Statistics. Do you agree that an artwork is not judged by those criteria?

Christian I absolutely agree, And one of the questions we've gotten is, 'what good is this for Congo?', basically. 'What use is it?' is the essential question. And when asked those kinds of things, my immediate reaction is, what good is any film, any artwork? Ultimately, for any community art does other things. At the level of subjectivity, it's about how it affects people on an individual basis. And then collectively. And I do think that's something that The Enclave does. Whether it's in Venice, New York or here. And that's something we've also heard from folks who've seen it, Congolese folk. That they feel touched by the piece. That they identified with it and it gives them a different perspective. I would even venture to say unique because those experiences don't exist here. Museums don't exist here, contemporary art definitely does not exist.



The way that it is shaped in the space and the story itself, you don't know when it's ending and when it's starting. So it's kind of our history. Because we are living here and now but we don't know how this cycle started and we don't know when it's going to end.

Sikombe



Richard

in conversation with Christian

Christian Part of what's here, and part of what you captured in pinks and reds and fuschias through your use of infrared film is now three hours away in Goma, playing as a full installation, the same way it's played in multiple museums around the world. It's curious to hear some of the reactions from the Congolese viewers in that they immediately understand the documentary function of what you've done and they're clearly compelled by your use of the infrared hues and also by the multiple screens and the fact that you're moving everyone around into an immersive experience, right? But still they seem to have some difficulty distinguishing between what you do and straight-up documentary. Why do you think that is?

[Richard] Well, as you've seen yourself I suppose - flying into Goma as you've done a few days ago, first time in Congo - you're immediately struck with this NGO infrastructure, this sub-economy of pity. And it's very important that it's there; I'm not criticizing it, to tell it to go away. Maybe it is part of the problem, you know? I'll leave that to the other people to decide, the smarter people. But unfortunately what the culture has been is that there is always this expectation of 'the message'. And they don't have this pretext of art forms or any kind of events without 'the message'. And this is also related to of course Christian missionary work, people coming in to convert souls...

Christian And just straight-up experience. I mean, there's no art museum.

[Richard] Precisely. And that's really the most interesting thing about doing this: to bring this completely uncompromised video art installation, highly immersive, everything that we would have in a New York museum or wherever in Europe. We just transplant it. We pick it up and we've dropped it into Goma.



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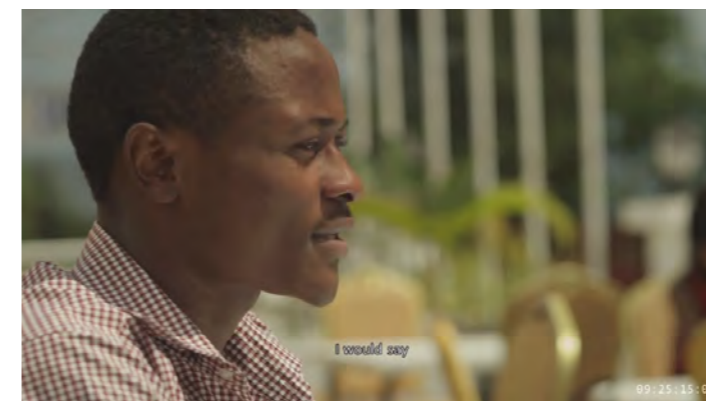
[Richard] You know, there's no real concrete thing that you get out of it. There's no real reward, except this weird trainwreck of cultural disconnect. And sometimes this beautiful universality; you realise that we're all humans. And im not quite sure where it will end up... Really, the project is closure, in a way.

Christian I hate that word but it was coming off my lips. I can't think of a better word to describe this entire process of coming back, of bringing the Enclave back to Eastern Congo. And I assume it must feel that way for you. It must feel as if you're closing a loop somehow. And that the reactions that you're getting here are as important in their mystery, and sometimes in their confoundedness, to what you got elsewhere.

† † †

[Richard] I sort of consciously really tried to ensure throughout - and not just with the video installation but also all the photographs and their presentation - I always wanted to keep the meaning really deliberately wide open, like an open book or a blank slate. So people come to this work and they project all these very different, contradictory responses and interpretations. And that's beautiful. Sometimes they're really negative and people are unloading a lot of baggage and that's great, and I can be the scapegoat for people with a certain... and surely I should be. I'm this white dude coming in. And that's part of the work. But then for others it's like this way of understanding something in a new way. And it's just wonderful to meet people who have come from way up in the bush and they're like, this is much closer to my experience than some doc about some armed group.

also in conversation with



- 1: Adolphe (Congolese fixer) & Augulian (architecture student)
- 2: Yvette (Sowers of Hope) & Joel (law student)
- 3: Israel (medical student)
- 4: Pacifique (civil engineer) & Alice (law student)

This project was made possible with generous support from:



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