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PRESS RELEASE



RICHARD BILLINGHAM **NEW PICTURES**

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Billingham's new colour photographs of landscapes explore his longstanding interest in beauty and nature and confirm his extraordinary ability to capture an intense feeling for his surroundings. While the earlier photographs of his home district of Cradley Heath (1992-1997) had a close psychological relationship with his past, the new landscapes look forward to that sense of experiencing a place for the first time, whether the beaches of Karachi or the highlands of Ethiopia, a brooding Irish moorland or a green corner of the South Downs. However, these works are not about documenting a specific geographical place but more about the timeless pictorial values of the image.

In this new work, Billingham has for the first time moved to the use of a medium-format camera that enables him to shift between the domestic detail on the leaves of a holly bush and the epic drama of a mountainscape or the open countryside. Through these individual pictures, each different in size and scale, Billingham alights upon patterns and structures in the natural world with an acute sense of its spatial and temporal qualities whether it be in capturing one-off changes of light, a moment of stillness, a fold in the hills or a dramatic turn in the weather.

Billingham looks to the structure of paintings that move the viewer by their composition and his work has to a considerable extent been informed by a deep appreciation of landscape painting. The works owe less to antecedents in the photographic world than to the human engagement with nature found in the paintings of Cuypp or Ruysdael, Claude or Poussin, Turner or Constable.

Billingham's celebrated pictures of his immediate family and environment have been the subject of many museum exhibitions throughout the world. As images of love, beauty and intimate community they represent one of the most moving bodies of work of the end of the 20th century. These new pictures confirm that he is an artist of rare sensibility who is equally able to communicate a profound and intimate relationship with the outside world.