

Deutsche Börse prize won by Irish artist for war landscapes on infrared film

Richard Mosse wins prestigious photography prize for portraying war-scarred eastern Congo using discontinued surveillance film

[Photographs from Mosse's prize-winning exhibition The Enclave](#)

- [Mark Brown](#), arts correspondent
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From 'The Enclave' by Richard Mosse. Photograph: Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery

An Irish artist who used discontinued military surveillance film to portray the war-scarred landscapes of the Democratic Republic of Congo – giving them an almost magical and alien psychedelic pink hue – has won one of international [photography](#)'s most prestigious prizes.

Richard Mosse was awarded the £30,000 [Deutsche Börse photography prize](#) for his multimedia installation in the Irish Pavilion at last year's Venice Biennale, called The Enclave.

Mosse and his team spent three years in eastern Congo using infrared film formerly used to identify camouflaged targets. The result is a series of beautiful but unsettling films, sounds and photographs about a conflict that has left 5.4 million dead.

Brett Rogers, director of the [Photographers' Gallery](#) and chair of the judges, said the jury had been impressed by the visceral nature of the films.

"Young people will see how Richard has dealt with the conflict and may come to see it in a different way and understand how difficult it is to depict conflict," she said.

The photographs do not show conflict directly, although some do show soldiers staring confrontationally, gun in hand.

Rogers said the work shone a light on the "invisibility" of complex wars that had taken so many lives. "There is no linear way of telling the story; there is no beginning and no end."

The award is to celebrate Mosse's Venice installation as a whole, although for the Deutsche Börse prize show only the photographs are on display at the Photographers' Gallery in Soho, London.

Mosse's work has raised issues about the aestheticising of violence: the war-torn landscape looks seductive and beautiful.

Rogers said if it had been naturalistic "it wouldn't have been as powerful". The colours were all about getting people in and staying to watch all the films. "Somehow the way he has done it both repels and attracts you – it gets you completely immersed in the subject matter."

Mosse's vivid pink and crimson images were up against black and white works from three other photographers: Spaniard Alberto Garcia-Alix, German Jochen Lempert and American Lorna Simpson.

Mosse, 34, is the fourth youngest artist to win the prize, now in its 17th year.

The prize rewards a living photographer of any nationality for an exhibition or publication which has significantly contributed to photography over the space of a year.

The judges this year were artist Jitka Hanzlová and curators Kate Bush, Thomas Seelig and Anne-Marie Beckmann.

The Deutsche Börse prize show is on at the Photographers' Gallery, 16-18 Ramillies Street, London W1, until 22 June.