

# LA CAJA BLANCA

PRESS RELEASE  
21/09/2006

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## RICHARD MOSSE

1980, County Kilkenny, Republic of Ireland

La Caja Blanca will open its new season of exhibitions on Thursday 21st of September with a solo show by the Irish photographer and video artist Richard Mosse.

In a time when war torn cities and landscapes devastated by natural disasters fill the newspapers and television programmes we consume, this young artist questions the validity of the images distributed by the media industry as a means of communicating the reality of human suffering.

To present this selection of stunning photographs and thought-provoking video pieces, Richard will be travelling to Mallorca from his studio at Yale School of Art, US.

Richard will be available for interviews between 18th and 22nd of September.

Untitled [Bosnia] | L\_lambda print \_ June 2002 \_ edition of 3  
Photograph shows the shelled offices of Bosnian daily newspaper "Oslobodenje", Serbo-Croat word for "liberty"

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## ARTIST

Richard Mosse (1980, County Kilkenny, Republic of Ireland)

## PRIVATE VIEW

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2006

## EXHIBITION DATES

21/09/2006 – 15/12/2006

## ADDRESS

La Caja Blanca, Calle Can Verí Nº 9, Palma de Mallorca 07001, Islas Baleares, España.

## GALLERY OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 11.00 to 13.30 and 17.00 to 20.00

Saturdays: 11.00 to 13.30

Sundays: Closed

Other times by appointment

## MORE INFORMATION

[www.lacajablanca.com](http://www.lacajablanca.com)

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La Caja Blanca | arte contemporáneo emergente

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## THE EXHIBITION

In a time when images of war torn cities and landscapes devastated by natural disasters fill the newspapers and television programs we consume, this young artist questions the validity of the images distributed by the media industry as a means of communicating the reality of human suffering.

Richard's photographs and video pieces have been taken in locations most foreign offices have blacklisted, including Bosnia, Ramallah, Beirut, Kosovo, Iran and Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. In what will be his first solo show ever, Richard will present a selection of feisty video pieces and stunning photographs produced between 2002 and 2006.

### The photographs

Show devastated landscapes and schoolrooms crumbling onto the classroom desks ... images which despite the subject matter, fail desperately to reveal any of the human suffering which took place. Instead, what strikes the viewer is an overwhelming sense of stillness, serenity and stunning beauty.

### The videos

Go even further... *Yani Intifada* (2005) and *Jew on a Ball* (2006) interview the inhabitants of these locations with the artists' characteristic cheekiness, only to reveal the apparent impossibility of transmitting human passions and pain through language. Richard's work is fresh, feisty and absolutely stunning.

### Background

#### Richard's 1<sup>st</sup> visit to Mallorca

To begin preparations for his upcoming show – was marked by the unexpected news of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Richard had been in Beirut only a few weeks before his visit to Spain, gathering the footage for what has now become his most recent piece; "Jew on a Ball".

These circumstances had a profound effect on the project Richard was preparing, leaving it with it a distinctly Middle Eastern flavour.

#### Richards 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Mallorca

Will be in the month of September, when he will travel from the US (where he is currently completing an MFA in photography at Yale School of Art), to attend his opening show at La Caja Blanca.

## THE ARTIST

### Background

*What makes a twenty something year old scrape together the cash from a student loan, pick up his camera, and traipse over to a war zone to shoot his own targets?*

Richard was born in County Kilkenny (Republic of Ireland) in 1980 in a Quaker family. He studied in Quaker schools until the age of 18 when he moved to London, the city he considers home despite the dislike he professes for the underground.

His father is an internationally renowned Master potter who specialises in traditional pottery techniques in Ireland. Thanks to him and his relationship with other artists and craftsmen, Richard was exposed to contemporary art from a very young age.

Family friends such as James Turrell<sup>1</sup>, also a Quaker, spent substantial time with the Mosse family in Kilkenny, producing part of his work in collaboration with Nicholas Mosse, Richard's father in the family house<sup>2</sup>.

### Training

Richard Mosse was awarded a place at the prestigious Goldsmiths College (London), a university with a reputation for producing some of the most famous and infamous artists, including members of the YBA generation such as Damien Hirst, Tracy Emin, and Tacita Dean among many others.

Only a few months into the course, Richard was advised by his tutor to "stick to commercial photography" (read *give up trying to be an artist*). A hard blow for a young, aspiring artist. Mosse was warned his place at Goldsmiths could be retracted if he did not stop making trips across the world and stay in his London studio like the rest of his colleagues.

A couple of months later, things took an unexpected turn ... Mosse was selected to participate in the 2005 edition of *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, a highly regarded exhibition which plays a vital role in unearthing fresh talent amongst artists emerging on the international arts scene. This news helped convince Richard's cynical tutors to bear with the unorthodox working methodology... and so, Richard was able to continue travelling to war-zones and sites of natural disasters in his quest for "understanding people, places and situations" through his art, without having to renounce to academic training.

Richard is currently immersed in one of the world's most exclusive institutions dedicated to photography. He is studying an MFA in photography at Yale School of Art.

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<sup>1</sup> About James Turrell: Born in California (1943), James Turrell and his compatriot Robert Irwin were key figures in the "light and space school", a movement in which "perception" rather than the object is key to "experience" of the artwork, that is the "artwork" is a mere light conduit for experience.

<sup>2</sup> "Lapsed Quaker Ware" is one of the pieces Turrell produced in conjunction with master potter Nicholas Mosse. The work consist in a set of seventy-some pieces of pottery, coming out of Josiah Wedgwood's 18th-century designs (Wedgwood was himself another Quaker). The thinking, designing, slow process of figuring out the fabrication, and final perfected execution of Lapsed Quaker Ware (which had as its working title Love, obedience, drink) was a five-year collaboration among the two men.

## NOTES TO THE EDITOR

### Mallorca's Art Circuit

Mallorca is the city with the most number of art galleries as a proportion of its population in Spain. The city centre, *Palma de Mallorca*, gathers over 60 spaces dedicated to exhibiting contemporary art, all within walking distance from one another.

There are many reasons behind the vibrancy of the island's arts scene, from its history to its current demographic structure and social dynamics.

### History

The island of Mallorca has been a hub of cultural and commercial activity throughout history due to its privileged geographic location - in the Mediterranean Sea, flanked by Spain on the West, Italy on the East, North Africa on the South and France on the North.

Traditionally, the island has been a haven for artists and intellectuals with key personalities from all over the world coming to settle in and enjoy the unique lifestyle and scenery Mallorca offers.

Collecting and acting as patron to the arts has historically been an important aspect of Mallorca's social and cultural life, an interest which has been passed on from generation to generation. Young Mallorquins of the 21st Century tend to be well travelled, multilingual and highly educated, with a keen interest in the latest developments in contemporary arts and culture, a feature which generates an unusually dynamic market for emerging visual arts.

### Demographic Structure

The island's airport is one of the largest and most modern in Europe, which means flying here from most European capital cities takes a maximum of two hours. This also means the population is a fluctuating, eclectic mix of races, tongues and social idiosyncrasies. Travel is an important characteristic of the local lifestyle; the local resident population of 1 million fluctuates radically throughout the year due to the 11 million visitors the island receives annually from across the world.

### Social Dynamics

In Mallorca, visiting exhibitions and attending exhibition openings are very much part of the social calendar. The high point of this is without a doubt, the *Nit de l'Art* (The Night for Art), a much celebrated yearly event which marks the start of the arts season. The event takes place on the last Thursday of September, with an opening party held simultaneously by all exhibition spaces, galleries and cultural centres. Effectively it's an open-to-all party which lasts until early hours of the morning. Because most of the spaces are within walking distance from each other, art lovers, artists, collectors, and the "beautiful people" take to the streets strolling from exhibition to exhibition enjoying all kinds of shows, performances, and parallel activities being held all over the city.

Amongst art lovers, its one of Europe's best kept secrets:

In 2006, we will be celebrating the 10th edition of the *Nit de l'Art*, which this year, will take place on Thursday 21st of September.

Feel free to download an itinerary of shows and performances from the *la caja blanca* website: [www.lacajablanca.com](http://www.lacajablanca.com)