

WADDINGTON CUSTOT

Press Release

Nick Brandt

This Empty World

In collaboration with Atlas Gallery

7 February–7 March 2019

Private View: Wednesday 6 February, 6–8pm

Waddington Custot is pleased to present an exhibition of new photographs by contemporary British artist Nick Brandt from his latest series *This Empty World* (2016–18). His work is a powerful visual polemic which explores themes of environmental destruction wrought by human activity. In *This Empty World*, Brandt uses colour for the first time, bringing a new immediacy to these environmental issues as experienced by both animals and humans.

Confrontational and direct, Brandt's photographs conceal a painstaking process. *This Empty World* was constructed on Maasai land in Kenya. Each image combines two moments in time captured weeks apart, almost always from the same camera position. First, a partial set is built and lit, and a camera is fixed in place with motion sensors. After the animals have entered the frame and been captured on camera, the sets are completed and populated with a human cast drawn from local communities and beyond. Brandt interweaves the two images in post-production, bringing out the chiaroscuro and detail. At the end of the project, the elements of each set are recycled and the land returned to its original state.

Brandt photographs animals such as elephants, hyenas and lions in their natural habitat in East Africa. These endangered species are increasingly under threat from loss of habitat and sprawling urban infrastructure, represented by the concrete highways, petrol stations and bridges under construction that feature in Brandt's scenes. In 'River Bed with Hyenas' (2018), Brandt has built a set of tremendous proportions with rented and recycled elements. In the foreground two hyenas cower below steep earthen walls and beneath unfurling skies. Above them, workers perch on towering scaffolds, ominous figures of industry and 'progress'. Detritus is scattered in the gully, including a Kenyan newspaper dated 9 November 2016, the day following the announcement of the 2016 US presidential election result – a pessimistic comment on a worsening outlook for the global environment.

Photographed mostly at night, the lurid glow of artificial light creates an eerie and unnatural atmosphere. Brandt's work explicitly references mid-19th century history painting, such as the work of Eugène Delacroix and Francisco Goya. 'Petrol Station with Elephant & Kids' (2018) echoes the composition of Gustave Doré's biblical scene 'The Dove Sent Forth From the Ark (Genesis 8:11)' (1866). Both also share similar narratives in which human and animal are mutual victims of environmental disasters, explicitly depicted in Brandt's 'Elephant & Human Family' (2018).

From this series, 39 photographs will be available in three sizes, the largest print being over 10 feet wide. A curated selection of the medium and large photographs will be on display.

The exhibition will be accompanied by the launch of the monograph *Nick Brandt: This Empty World*, which will include reproductions of the entire series and new essays by the artist.

(*Nick Brandt: This Empty World*, Thames & Hudson, London, due for publication February 2019.)

Please find the link to images here: <https://media.thisemptyworld.com>

PRESS CONTACT

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NOTES

Nick Brandt (b. 1964, London) studied painting and film at St Martin's School of Art, London. He moved to California in 1992. In 1995, Brandt became aware of the terrible devastation of the landscape and fauna of East Africa, which led him to make his seminal photographic trilogy, *On this Earth* (2000–04), *A Shadow Falls* (2005–08) and *Across the Ravaged Land* (2010–12). In September 2010, Brandt co-founded the Big Life Foundation to help promote conservation in the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro ecosystem. The escalating destruction caused by overpopulation, urban expansion and intensified poaching in East Africa led Brandt to make his pivotal photographic series *Inherit the Dust* (2014–16).

Brandt has exhibited worldwide. He has had solo exhibitions at Fotografiska, Stockholm; Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow; Preus National Museum of Photography, Oslo; Salo Art Museum, Finland; Stadthaus Ulm Museum, Ulm, Germany. A forthcoming solo exhibition of *Inherit the Dust* will be presented at National Museum of Finland, Helsinki, in Spring 2019.

Brandt lives and works in California.

Title: *Nick Brandt: This Empty World*

Address: Waddington Custot, 11 Cork Street,
London W1S 3LT

Dates: 7 February–7 March 2019

Private View: Wednesday 6 February, 6–8pm

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm

Saturday: 10am to 4pm

Admission: Free

Travel: Piccadilly, Green Park or Bond Street Tube Station

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Nick Brandt | *This Empty World*

Selected Works



BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION WITH ELEPHANTS & WORKERS AT NIGHT

2018

LARGE	56 x 121 in edition of 6	\$40,000
MEDIUM	42 x 90 3/4 in edition of 15	\$20,000
SMALL	26 x 56 1/4 in edition of 9	\$12,000

WADDINGTON CUSTOT



BUS STATION WITH ELEPHANT IN DUST 2018

LARGE	56 x 89 5/8 in edition of 6	\$50,000
MEDIUM	42 x 67 1/4 in edition of 15	\$25,000
SMALL	28 x 44 7/8 in edition of 9	\$15,000

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Forthcoming exhibition

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