IN RESPONSE TO PLACE

RECENT PHOTOGRAPHS FROM RICKY MAYNARD

RESPONSES TO PLACE IN THE

'PRIVATE PROPERTY'

WORK OF RICKY MAYNARD On surveying the images produced Equally, there appears no anxiety by Ricky Maynard for his In Response to recover a 'lost' Indigenous past to Place series, a group of photographs or to justify an Indigenous presence that mark Indigenous sites along a in the city of Melbourne in 2006. section of the heart of contemporary Melbourne (the northern bank of the *In Response to Place* documents Yarra River), I am immediately struck the dynamic culture and histories of Indigenous people as a subtle but

In Maynard's work there is no self-

conscious attempt to reclaim an

Indigenous attachment to place.

by the degree to which the images are able to balance a sense of landscapes past and present and integrate them to form an organic *reality* for today.

under our feet and all around us. Importantly, these places are not segregated from other locations in the city. Nor are they assimilated into or consumed by the city. As all stories should, they co-exist with other stories

to us through the lens and on paper,

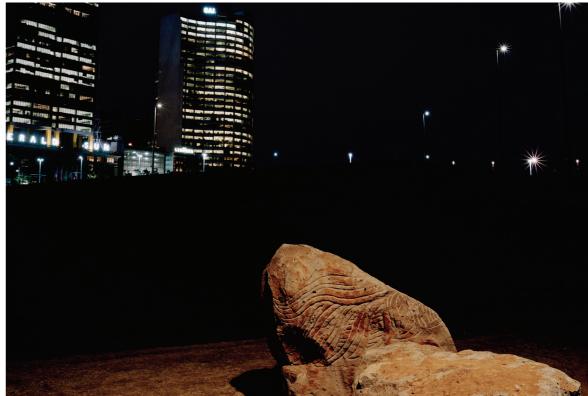
while maintaining their own particular

potent presence that is neither argued meaning and resonance. for nor defended. The landscapes Landscapes are dynamic. They and stories of the Wurundjeri people of Melbourne are understood and do not exist statically and without change. Built and so-called natural reproduced by Maynard as a lived reality and continuum available landscapes shift and shape each other

as part of this dynamic. Ricky Maynard responds to topographies of place with this phenomenon in mind. Other photographers, such as Walker Evans, who documented the environmental disasters of the midwestern dustbowl of America in the 1930s, have influenced Maynard's own work. Evans understood that an image of a rusting advertising sign, or a rotting floorboard in a rundown shack perhaps, could convey the story of a place as effectively as any image of the topsoil disappearing with the harsh winds. In order to tell his own story of Melbourne, Maynard juxtaposes the glass and steel of the city's high-rise towers with the scarred and inscribed surfaces of ancient rocks. He highlights the integral relationship between the architecture of roadways, of light pole, and passing trains, with recent interventions produced on wood and stone by other artists who have responded to the narratives and landscapes of the city. Maynard invites us to appreciate both the changing and familiar light of Melbourne; the city of night, the city of shadows, and a city bathed in the hues of a magical blue blanket of sky.			
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Change rarely impacts upon us equally, whether the effects are positive or negative. The advantages gained by some who engage with place, who covet it, exploit it and gain materially from it, occur at the expense of others. The writer and critic, John Berger, has written that within the photograph there is both an absence and a presence, indicative not of an oppositional and abrasive point of view, but simply a reflection of the emotional states of loss and attachment that exist within each of us. The Indigenous loss of place as an outcome of colonisation appears as an absence in Ricky Maynard's photographs of Melbourne. But without contradiction, a continued and unbroken presence is also a constant vibration throughout *In Response to Place*. This reflects both the strength and honestly of Maynard's work.













To fully appreciate the value of these images it is helpful to visit the sites and landscapes that have been voices were particularly strong. Not were revered artists and thinkers. One was the voice of William Barak. the Wurundieri artist, intellectual and eventual elder. He had been present as a young boy at the signing of the Batman 'Treaty' in 1835, and place remained a continued source of cultural and spiritual vitality.

photographed. During my own walk along the riverbank I could sense the You got to know your father's country. presence of Maynard's creative and Yarra is my father's country...me no intellectual motivation. His voice was leave it, Yarra, my father's country. present in place, as were the voices of other Indigenous people. Two While walking where Ricky Maynard

surprisingly, both of them, like Maynard, the work of another photographer (and poet). Lisa Bellear, who during her all too short life often took her camera into the streets of this city to make pictures of Indigenous people engaging with and being in place. Lisa

meaning for us:

The words of William Barak, resonating

had taken his camera Lalso remembered

Bellear, like Ricky Maynard, celebrated

Indigenous life in this city today while

this philosophy, continue to hold

lived to witness the federation of asking us to bear witness to her images Australia in 1901. The Wurundieri. that reflected both injustice and hope. as with other Indigenous groups of the Port Phillip area, were increasingly The words of Lisa Bellear, as with forced to the margins of their own the photographs of Ricky Maynard. country following the arrival of also ask that we simply give respect

Europeans. Eventually many of them to each other's place: were relocated to the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve near present day Dear anyone to anyone Healesville in the 1860s. Despite the who just might care losses of land experienced by the I didn't know Wurundieri people both land and I iust didn't know

I'm still not

sure

Written by Tony Birch Lectures in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne

(from 'To no one: and Marv did

time'. Lisa Bellear 1961-2006)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Eddie Butler-Bowdon -Program Manager, Collections, City of Melbourne

Jeffrey Taylor - City Culture

and Collections. City of Melbourne Catherine Hockey - Collection management and invaluable creative input

Lillyan Shervington - Assistant

Design by Round

ARTIST STATEMENT BY RICKY MAYNARD

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Zone VI 5 x 4 wooden field view camera

Kodak 160 NPC 5 x 4 colour negative film

Scanned on Imacon Drum scanner

Printed on Chromira printer -Photographic paper

102 x 76 cm Chromira Print

I am interested in making intelligent art with a specific cultural purpose. To seek a balance between craftsmanship and social relevance. Photography has the ability to tell stories about the world and how the photograph has the power to frame a culture. In response to form and discovering significance of place we come closer to understanding place within ourselves, physically, metaphorically and historically. It is a continuing journey and as with this body of work continues to address issues of identity, site, place and nation.

Landscape photography, the main business of which, is a rediscovery and revaluation of where we find ourselves.



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SWANSTON STREET

GALLERY HOURS MONDAY 10AM - 2PM TUE - THU 11AM - 6PM FRIDAY 11AM - 6.30PM SATURDAY 10AM - 4PM

EXHIBITION DATES 24 JANUARY 2007 -21 APRIL 2007



