



**barbican**

**Richard Mosse**  
Incoming  
**Creative Learning** Teacher Resource

**GUILDHALL**  
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## Introduction

Barbican Art Gallery has invited conceptual documentary photographer and Deutsche Börse Photography Prize winner Richard Mosse to create an immersive multi-channel video installation in the Curve. In collaboration with composer **Ben Frost** and cinematographer **Trevor Tweeten**, Mosse has been working with a new, powerful telephoto military camera that can detect the human body from a distance of more than 30km and accurately identify an individual from 6.3km, day or night. He has used this technology to create an artwork about the migration crisis unfolding across the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Libya, in Syria, the Sahara, the Persian Gulf, and other locations. Narratives of the journeys made by refugees and illegal migrants are captured by this thermal camera which records the biological trace of human life. Projected across three 8 metre-wide screens, the video installation is accompanied by a visceral soundtrack blurring ambient field recordings with synthetic sound design to create an overwhelming, immersive experience.

At a time when, according to the UN, the world is experiencing the largest migration of people since the Second World War, with more than a million people fleeing to Europe by sea in 2015 – escaping war, climate change, persecution and poverty – Richard Mosse’s film presents a portrait of migrants made with a camera that sees as a missile sees. The film bears witness to significant chapters in recent world events, mediated through an advanced weapons-grade camera technology that reads only heat, and is blind to skin colour, capturing glowing bodies crossing dangerous waters, drowning at sea, or sleeping in makeshift camps, presenting a story of humans struggling against the elements for survival.

## About Richard Mosse

Born in Ireland in 1980, Richard Mosse lives and works in New York and Ireland. Mosse is renowned for work that challenges documentary photography. In his recent work *The Enclave* (2013) – a six-channel installation commissioned by the Irish Pavilion for the 2013 Venice Biennale – Mosse employed a now discontinued 16mm colour infrared film called Kodak Aerochrome that transformed the green landscape of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo into vivid hues of pink to create a surreal dreamscape. Questioning the ways in which war photography is constructed, Mosse’s representation of the ongoing armed conflict in eastern Congo advocates a new way of looking.

## Quote from Richard Mosse

*“I chose the title ‘incoming’, not only because it evokes the idea of incoming fire – prompting a defensive ‘little Britain’ mentality of fear, currently prevalent – but also because it predicates a particular subject-object relation. The refugee is ‘incoming’ from a European perspective. I thought it was important to remind the viewer of the subjectivity within which the work has consciously been made, foregrounding this particular medium as a Western one, designed to enforce our borders and protect our nice affluent English (or German, or Italian) way of life. This approach is clearly not attempting to represent the refugee crisis in a seemingly ‘transparent’ or objective way, like classical photojournalism. Instead it attempts to engage and confront the ways in which we in the West, and our governments, represent – and therefore regard – the refugee.”*

## Before you visit

*Incoming* is an immersive multi-channel video installation, which deals with mature themes in the context of the ongoing humanitarian crisis it documents.

Please note this installation includes scenes which some viewers may find upsetting. Parental guidance advised. No unaccompanied children aged 14 or under.

It is most appropriate for pupils studying at Key Stage 4 or higher. A pre-visit is recommended for teachers intending to bring students to the exhibition.

## Your visit

*Incoming*, Richard Mosse

Curve Gallery, Barbican

15 February 2017 - 23 April 2017

Sat–Wed 11am–8pm (bank holiday 12noon–8pm)

Thu–Fri 11am–9pm (bank holiday 12noon–9pm)

Free: Booking not required. Curator talks are available to school groups, please email [creative.learning@barbican.org.uk](mailto:creative.learning@barbican.org.uk) with your planned visit date to check availability.

Co-commissioned by  
National Gallery of Victoria

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Projections by Christie Digital.

*Incoming* is co-commissioned by the Barbican and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, where the exhibition will travel in autumn 2017.

## Key questions

Review news, television and film coverage of the migration crisis to observe how it has been documented. Beyond the use of text, has the media established a visual language for communicating the crisis? What images come to mind when you think about this ongoing crisis?

What is the relationship between technological advancement and conflict? Consider this question not just in terms of the medium of photography/film, but also historical examples of advancements in medicine, arms and surveillance technology. Does technology perpetuate conflict or does conflict fuel technological advancement?

Research Richard Mosse, and read the quote included in this document. What role can an artist or documentarian play in a crisis of this proportion? How have artists documented conflict in the past? What role can individuals or communities play to address the issues documented in *Incoming*?

## Curriculum links

### Geography/Humanities

The crisis that Richard Mosse documents has been exacerbated by a range of geo-political issues including physical (resources, climate change, etc.) and human (political boundaries, war, poverty) processes. How could a documentary approach be useful to a geographer? What does it communicate that is different to your current understanding of the crisis as a geo-political issue?

### Politics

Can *Incoming* be looked at as a political statement? Is it possible to comprehend and interpret this work as political information? Use *Incoming* as a starting point to research and understand the intertwined issues of conflict, poverty, environment and human rights in this ongoing crisis.

### Photography/Art

Research Richard Mosse further as an artist, how does his work create a visual language for understanding complex issues? What other artists create work which makes a statement on political, global or environmental issues? How has technology impacted the medium of Richard’s expression? How does technology impact how we view and consume both news and art on a daily basis?

### Citizenship

*Incoming* serves as a striking starting point for discussing the ongoing migration crisis through critical debate and analysis of a political issue. How has the migration crisis been portrayed in the media in the context of British, European and global values? Does *Incoming* affirm or disrupt this portrayal? What can members of your community do locally to positively impact this crisis?

### Additional resources

Richard Mosse

<http://richardmosse.com/>

[http://carliergebauer.com/artists/richard\\_mosse](http://carliergebauer.com/artists/richard_mosse)

<http://jackshainman.com/artists/richard-mosse/>

<http://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/richard-mosse-2>

### Further links

<https://amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2015/10/8-educational-resources-to-better-understand-the-refugee-crisis/>

<http://developingartists.org.uk/our-projects/queens-of-syria-jordan>

<http://migrationmuseum.org/exhibition/calaisstories/>

<http://platforma.org.uk/>

<http://simpleacts.org.uk/>

## Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning

This Teacher Resource was prepared by Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning, which supports people of all ages and backgrounds to access and participate in world-class visual arts, music, theatre, dance, film and spoken word. We regularly work with schools and colleges to create unforgettable learning experiences that help to embed arts and creativity across the national curriculum.

For more information please contact: [creative.learning@barbican.org.uk](mailto:creative.learning@barbican.org.uk)



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Co-commissioned by

**NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA NGV**



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