

TimeOut

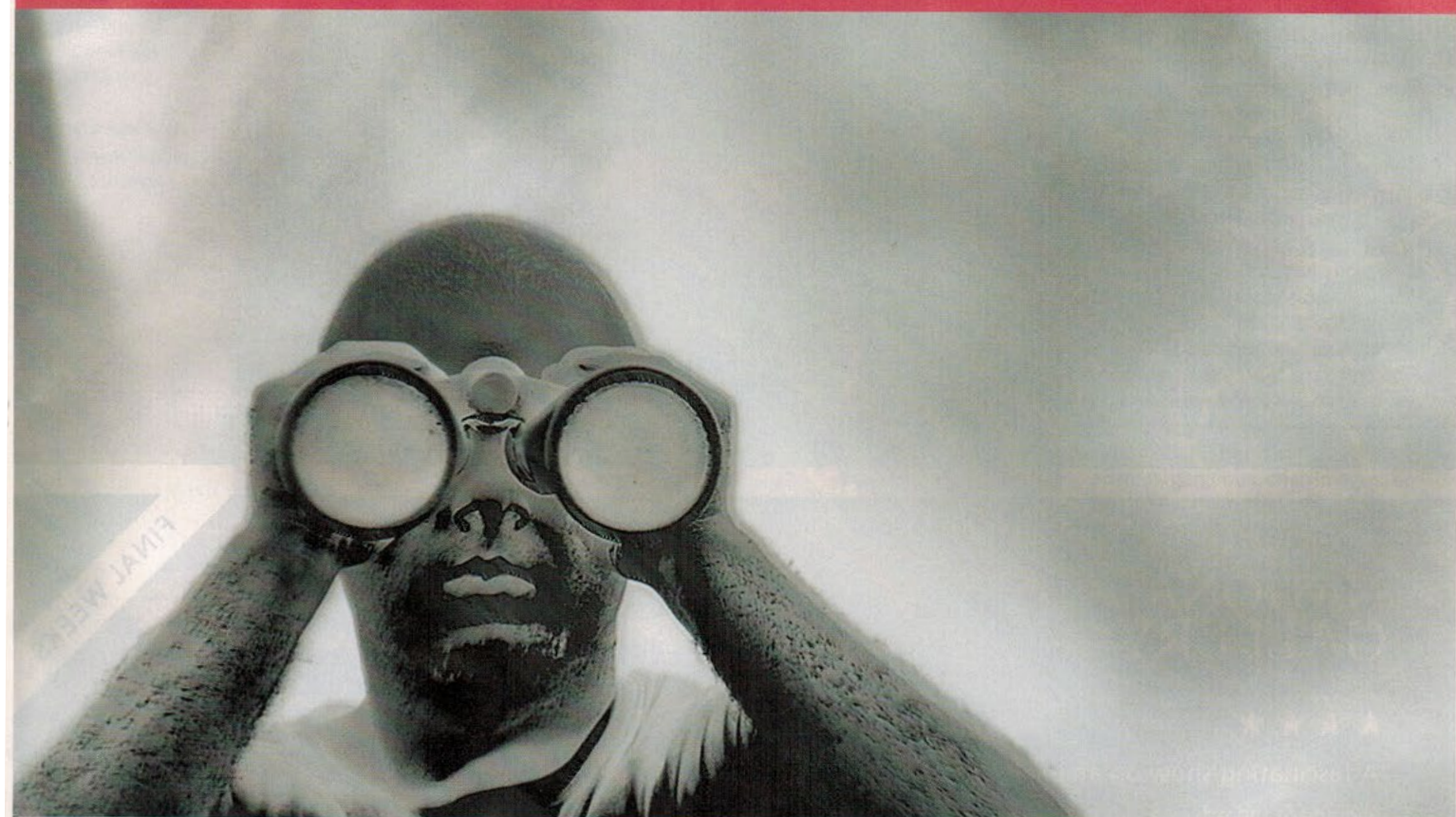
LONDON



The London places that time forgot

Art

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SHOW OF THE WEEK

Richard Mosse



THERE'S TWO THINGS you need to know about this show. One: it will make you rethink the European refugee crisis. And two: it contains some of the most beautiful images you will see in a gallery this year. Or ever. Paradoxically, it achieves both these things thanks to some very non-touchy-feely battlefield technology.

Previously, Mosse has used film that rendered greens as reds, casting the jungly confusion of the war in the Congo as gorgeously, defamiliarisingly pink-hued. This time, the images are all black-and-white, but taken with a camera that responds to heat rather than light. The major application for it is military, but Mosse uses it to document the experiences of refugees with startling results.

The main piece, 'Incoming', is a huge video projection with a soundscape by Ben Frost. It includes scenes we're all accustomed to: knots of men behind wire fences,

people in rubber boats, police in riot gear. But the heat-sensitive technology is profoundly 'other'. It creates pin-sharp, stunningly detailed images, but it's hard to tell refugees from soldiers. Sometimes the warm faces and hands are dark, sometimes bright white. 'Real' skin colour is irrelevant. One of the major causes of death

among refugees is exposure, and 'Incoming' makes you constantly question which parts of these images are warm. A hand leaves a heat print on a cold blanket, while – at the other end of the spectrum – there are white-hot jet exhausts and out-of-control campfires. Heatwise, this is a world of total extremes.

As you read the huge landscapes looking for a spark of life, or assess who is freezing or baking, you are re-analysing a political crisis on the most basic human terms. That that process also creates such ravishing art is a quite monumental achievement. ■ *Chris Waywell*

WHAT IS IT...

Stunning images of refugees created with military technology.

WHY GO...

It's a profound response to a modern tragedy and amazingly beautiful.

→ The Curve, Barbican.
↻ Barbican. Until Apr 23.
Free.