



## **Richard Misrach**

(b. 1949, Los Angeles)

graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1971 with a BA in Psychology.

The earth and its topography are pervasive in Misrach's work. Although he often embraces seductive subject matter (unspoiled seascapes, dramatic sunsets) in homage to our planet's beauty, Misrach maintains a critical position by also capturing evidence of humankind's negative impact on the environment.

Misrach has made technical contributions to the field; in the 1970s he helped popularize the use of color photography and the now familiar large-scale format. Early in his career Misrach began photographing the American Southwest, which he continued into the early 1990s. The resulting epic series "Desert Cantos" comprises 18 distinct but related groups of pictures that visually explore the complex conjunction between nature and culture. Otherworldly images of desert seas, rock formations, and clouds are juxtaposed with unsettling scenes of desert fires, nuclear test sites, and animal burial pits. Recent series include "Battleground Point," a politically engaged project commissioned by the Nature Conservancy; "Golden Gate," a careful study of times of day and weather around San Francisco's famed bridge; and "On the Beach," aerial views of individuals and groups against a backdrop of water and sand.

Misrach's photographs have been the focus of numerous solo exhibitions, such as his midcareer retrospective "Crimes and Splendors: The Desert Cantos of Richard Misrach," organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1996), and later shown at the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson; "Cancer Alley" at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (2000); and "Richard Misrach: Berkeley Work," mounted by the Berkeley Art Museum (2002). His work has also been featured in group shows, including the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1991); "Landscape as Metaphor" at the Denver Art Museum (1994); "More than Meets the Eye" at the German Society for Photography, Hamburg (1999); and "In Response to Place" at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2001).

Misrach has received numerous awards, including four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships (1973, 1977, 1984, 1992), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1979), the International Center of Photography Infinity Award for a Publication (1988), and the Distinguished Career in Photography Award from the Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies (1994). The German Society for Photography recently honored him with its Cultural Award for Lifetime Achievement (2002).

Misrach's photographs can be found in over 50 museum collections worldwide, including the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Misrach's prize-winning monographs include *Telegraph 3 A.M.: The Street People of Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley* (1974); *Desert Cantos* (1987); *Bravo 20: The Bombing of the American West* (1990); *Violent Legacies: Three Cantos* (1992); *Crimes and Splendors: Three Desert Cantos of Richard Misrach* (1996); *The Sky Book* (2000); *Richard Misrach: Golden Gate* (2001); and *Pictures of Paintings* (2002).

Misrach lives and works in Berkeley.

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