



Peter Eve



Beyond the Frontier - 12" x 84" edition of 20

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Peter Eve - Overview

Peter's photography celebrates national Indigenous culture and the environment. His portraiture intimately captures community life and unique personalities in remote and regional Australia, while his landscape captures the essence of wilderness and place.

Commercial and editorial clients take him from Cairns to the remote Kimberley and from Arnhem Land to the red centre for a variety of commissions focusing on the areas of industry, environment, indigenous arts & festivals and indigenous development.

His evocative images are often seen in national editorial publications, glossy Australian art magazines and annual reports. His practice is moving more into exhibition display. In April 2005, he held a sellout exhibition at Sherman Galleries in Sydney in conjunction with the Jirriwun artists of the Kimberley district.

Peter Eve - Overview

Current	Freelance photographer based in Darwin often travelling through the remote Kimberley and Northern Territory wilderness. Portraiture and photo journalism for editorial clients, the Indigenous Arts, government and private & corporate commercial clients as well as festivals such as the Garma Festival and Walking with Spirits.
2002	Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University) Graduate Diploma in Visual Arts - Photography
2000	Travel involving volunteer work in Nepal and Cambodia.
1992 - 1999	Commercial photography and graphic design based in Melbourne.
1990 - 1991	Photographic assistant.
1986 - 1989	Studied photography at RMIT. Bach. Applied Science (Photography)

Exhibitions

2007	'Deliquescent' Between Earth and Sky. Raft Artspace. Darwin Australia
2007	'Beyond the Frontier'. Portraits and landscapes featuring the artists from Jirrawun Arts based in the Kimberley. Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. January 19 to April 21 2007
2006	'Art, Country, Culture' - A documentary style photographic exhibition that reflects the diversity of art styles, culture and country across the NT and Kimberley. Artback Northern Territory Arts will tour the show nationally. First presented at 'The Dreaming Festival'
2005-06	'Kick'n Up Dust' - Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs. Travelling the world to >20 World capitals. Recently opened in Berlin
2005	'Heart of Darkness' - Images of Paddy Bedford and Landscape. William Mora Galleries, Melbourne 25 May - 18 June
2005	'Beyond the Frontier'. Portraits and landscapes featuring the artists from Jirrawun Arts based in the Kimberley. Sherman Galleries, Sydney. April 6 to 30
2003	Photographic Solo Exhibition - 'Super Snipe'. The Simpson Desert's spirit exposed on the panels of a car carcass.
2002	Photographic Solo Exhibition - 'Long Grass-Short Life' Held at NTU - Documentary photo essay on life of itinerants in the Darwin long grass. Human Rights Exhibition - Human Rights Award for a portrait of from the longgrass series.
2001	Photographic Solo Exhibition - 'Natures Latent Essence' Held at DVAA - Exploration of landscape.
1998	'The Ararat Project' - Group show documenting the life and death of a small rural centre in western Victoria. Thirty photographers worked on this startling portrait.

Publications

2008	Tiwi Footy - Yiloga. 256pp Hardback documentary style book with 5000 word essay ad translated into Modern Tiwi.
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A note on photography:

Early this dry season, while headed down the Buchanan Highway, a dirt track of variable quality that runs between Dunmarra Roadhouse and Top Springs, I fell into a detailed conversation with my companion on the journey, the photographer Peter Eve. By that stage we had worked together off and on for several years, but it had never occurred to me to question him about the ideas that lie behind his work, which radiates a particular quality of coherence and calm. A set of his photographs of Northern and Central Australia illustrates this book: they were selected because we felt they answered to, or amplified, some themes within the essays and memory fragments that make up much of the text.

Peter's vast reticence on the subject of his own image-making seemed, that afternoon, to have been briefly vanquished, perhaps by the roughness of the track, which required his concentrated focus, perhaps, too, by the sheer implausibility of our discussion, which was precise, and often technical in nature, and seemed to form a sharp tonal contrast with the primeval lancewood scrub we were passing through.

Gradually, many of the things that had already struck me about his photography fell into clearer relief. Though he would never have told me this in explicit fashion, as I listened I came to realize that he was at work on a project of visual understanding which almost required the suppression of self. For him, the individual was the enemy of pure image-making, and only in the effort to overcome personality could one's true character come through, and disclose itself in the camera's eye. Often, Peter said, he felt the temptation to discard, without further review, the archive of 80,000 images of the bush which he had compiled on his various long quests through the North and Centre in a succession of ill-starred Four-Wheel Drives. It might be for the best to start again, to begin with nothing – and when he made remarks of this kind, it was hard for me not to see my companion in the role of a romantic, possessed of a boundless love for country: a love he himself wished would never end. Recognition was quite unimportant to him. His occasional impulses to show others what he had captured in photographic form had nothing to do with seeking praise, or even response: indeed, if feedback came, he found it vaguely embarrassing. What he wanted was simply to share the flash of insight when a landscape's form confessed itself, or its components came into balance in the lens.

Much like the well-known street photographers of Paris in the 1920s, or New York in the 1960s, who would never have dreamed of raising their cameras until they had walked a city with obsessive thoroughness, so he believed that the bush needed to be understood before it could be seen. One needed to have a grasp – not just scientific but emotional – of how it worked as a space. His method, in pursuit of this goal, involved plunging for hours on end into the stringybark forests of Arnhem Land, or camping over days and weeks in the furnace of the remote East Kimberley during build-up months. As a result, I found my reserves of patience and tolerance were routinely tested almost to the limit on my various bush expeditions in his company. But those long spells passed together obliged me to give some thought to how he saw the landscape.

I learned that he did not feel easily at home there: he was devoid of the presumptuous, sentimental attachment to the remote world that one so often encounters in those who claim familiarity with the deserts or the savannahs of the tropics. Rather, his bid to find the code of the country called to mind a detective's repeated, advancing investigations. He was aiming to find out nothing less than how the system hung together: how, in each frame, the light moves.

"I still remember," he told me, on a subsequent drive, "the first time that I set out from Oodnadatta, up onto the desert plain of Central Australia, which is, of course, a much easier landscape to comprehend than the North. That was the first time I had encountered the flat, still landscape – the stillness in sight: the panorama you can see out there when you stand on the roof of your Four Wheel Drive. I did feel a sense of connection then, a sense of wishing to plunge into that landscape, to dedicate myself to it. And often now I wonder how much of my life will be spent in trying to stay true to that impulse."

Reviews

"Beyond the Frontier: The Photography of Peter Eve"

Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection Through April 21

gallery Just like the United States, Australia lives with a messy history of contact between its Aboriginal people and the Europeans who arrived later. When this relationship erupts into art, if anything, more questions arise—as with Peter Eve's photographs of the Kimberley region, paired with paintings by Aboriginal artists from that area.

Eve presents two types of images here: sumptuous nature photographs, as aloof and violently colorful as anything in a Sierra Club calendar, and black-and-white portraits of Aboriginal people, shot in a hard-nosed journalistic style. The viewer veers between admiring the exotic hue of cliffs in the Carr Boyd Range (like our own red clay, but turned up a thousand notches) and intimately encountering Paddy Bedford, a white-haired man sitting in a pickup truck with a shepherd dog in the bed.

It's certainly a finely made image. You can almost smell the sun on his skin, feel the road's dust, breathe the smoke from his cigarette. The truck's window makes a second frame around man and dog, increasing the sense of their being distanced from the viewer. Indeed, a social context for Bedford, and the other people in the photos, is hard to grasp. Does Eve see them as stewards of this stunning place? As victims? Artists (which many are)? Sometimes they're shown entwined with the landscape (Peggy Patrick stands within a fallen tree branch, its shadows crossing her face); sometimes they look more like visitors (Rusty Peters sits tentatively on a rock near Black Rock Pool, wearing jeans and sport sandals, holding a pack of cigarettes).



Bold portraits like "Rammey Ramsey" make for a stark contrast to lush landscape shots in Peter Eve's photography exhibit.

The dualities—between the portraits and landscapes, between Eve's photos and the paintings that fill the rest of the museum—are troubling, if we imagine that Eve is not confronting them. The show is too small, and too thinly curated, to know for sure.

C-ville

Charlottesville's News Weekly

KUNUNURRA, USA

After last week's post reporting testimony given at Kununurra by, among others, Cathy Cummins and Kim Griffiths of Waringarri Aboriginal Arts in Kununurra, it seems only appropriate that this weekend we traveled up to the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Museum to see a double-barreled exhibition of art from the region put together by Cummins and Kluge-Ruhe curator Margo Smith. Much of the exhibition space was given over to "Red Hot Ochre," a show of paintings and prints from Waringarri artists, along with other Kununurra luminaries including Rover Thomas, Queenie Mackenzie, and Billy Thomas. Somewhat unusually for the Kluge-Ruhe, this was an exhibition in which the works were for sale, and the number of red dots scattered around the gallery's rooms proved that "red hot" was an entirely appropriate sobriquet for the show. Response has been so enthusiastic that associate curator Denise LaJetta joked that people were bound to be disappointed at the opening of the next exhibition, to be drawn entirely from the Museum's own holdings, when they discover that nothing will be on sale.

Waringarri has produced a distinguished roster of artists over the years, including the late Paddy Carlton and Alan Griffiths, represented in this show by two characteristic and dynamic canvases of men dancing *bali bali balga*. At the Kluge-Ruhe, however, relative newcomers dominated the walls. Mignonette Jamin and Minnie Lumai, two of the artists honored at the Xstrata Emerging Indigenous Art Awards at the Queensland Art Gallery in 2006, had several brilliant canvases each on display. Jamin's work was particularly well-received by the crowd in attendance the night we were there, and a number of people, commenting on the vitality and energy of the work in general, pointed to her canvases to make their point. Lumai's spare paintings were uncluttered and bright in their ochres that verged on pastel shades and drew one's eye wherever they appeared.

The most delightful painting surprise of the show for me was Rebecca Bray, who was represented by two small but powerful works. One of them, shown on the left in the installation shot below, depicts a hill in the Kununurra vicinity which harbors a site where white clay is gathered for ceremonial and artistic purposes. (The tiny crescent of white is visible at the upper edge of the hill in the photograph.) The textures in the painting are rich, giving a low-relief tactility to the central landmass. The application of the red ochre in the background, radiating from the center of the painting, suggests the concentration of sacred power in the area. Bray's other piece in the exhibition, *Mulawun Dreaming*, tells the story of how the Eagle and Crane ancestors caught fish in the Ord River by crushing the leaves of the mulawun bush and throwing them in the water, causing the fish to float to the surface. This latter work was likewise highly textured, its design in red ochre built up on a gritty black ground in a style that is reminiscent of the beeswax cave paintings of the Kimberley region. (The other two works in this photo are by Mignonette and, at the far right, Daisy Bitting.)

Although many of the prints on view were by the "old masters" (Rover, Queenie, Billy Thomas), the selection by current artists from Waringarri was equally impressive. I was particularly taken by a small work by Nancy Dilyai called *Janayiwom Country* which shows angular black masses on a red ground surrounded by yellow hills. The surface tension of this small work caught the eye from across the entrance hall like a flag snapping in a stiff breeze.

One of my long-time favorites among the artists of Waringarri is Judy Mengil, who was represented in *Red Hot Ochre* by the large work shown to the right below (the other is by Minnie Lumai). The spare composition fooled me from afar with its simplicity. On closer inspection, the central roundel revealed in its outer rings a richness of detail and color that brought indoors the imminent flowering of spring that could be glimpsed through the Kluge-Ruhe's windows.

The remaining two rooms in the Kluge-Ruhe's exhibition space were occupied by Peter Eve's photographs from *Beyond the Frontier*, which includes color shots of the Kimberley ranges beside large portraits of Jirrawun artists and other large, black-and-white landscapes. Eve's photography is well known to anyone with an interest in Aboriginal art and culture. It graces the website of Waringarri Aboriginal Arts (among others) and he has documented Garma festivals and Replant at Darwin's Riverfestival 2006. Despite having seeing his work reproduced on the web many times, I was still quite unprepared for the full glory of these photographs up close.

The titular print, *Beyond the Frontier* (above left), is well known but extraordinarily impressive when

seen full-sized, spreading over 200 cm. in length, with a looming cloud that appears poised to crush the landscape below (or Hoover it straight up into infinity). The portrait of Rammey Ramsey on the right, the only color portrait in the show, is built out of light and shadow, with the golden glow of sunlight finally focusing the viewer's eye on the artist's profile and revealing the character of its subject within the landscape as the photograph's ultimate gift.

Kimberley Wandjina, shown on the left in the photograph above, exploits the power of the sun's brilliance on a riverflat to create an image that is literally "solarized." What appears at first to be a feat of technical trickery is seen on close inspection to be a literal image of the sun transforming the watery landscape. In contrast to the brilliance of the light on water, the depth of the shadows cast on the river by the trees lining its banks creates a deep void of blackness. The detail of the tiny trees themselves is the final eye-catching punch in this visual hat trick. The smaller color landscapes are true jewels in the show; again the detail captured by Eve's camera is extraordinary, as in the views on the left below of the Carr Boyd Range (top) and Ragged Range (bottom). The massive rock formations seem monumental at first, but their size and presence is softened by the bands of rich green vegetation that spread across them like drapery.

The show at the Kluge-Ruhe is beautifully hung, alternating portraits of country and artists. The subjects share a ruggedness and an implacable presence. The portrait of Freddie Timms (above, right) shows his painted Ned Kelly armor and penetrating gaze; it is a portrait of the artist as a mythology, a reminder of how the legend of the outlaw who defied colonial authority in the south has become an icon of resistance across the north. In another portrait, Peggy Patrick confronts the viewer from within a cage of tree branches at the site of the Mistake Creek Massacre. Similarly, the family of Rammey Ramsey, his wife and six children, all direct their eyes into the camera and at the viewer, surrounding the artist himself who gazes down at the branding iron clasped in his hands like a scepter. There is no retreat in these portraits; rather there is strength, survival, and a sense of self-assurance that holds the subjects at a remove, emphasizing their individual power. I walked away from these photographs with an echo in my mind of the closing lines of Basil Bunting's poem "On the Fly-Leaf of Pound's Cantos." Comparing the enormity of Pound's mad masterpiece to the Alps, Bunting concludes with a sentiment I find entirely appropriate to the Kimberley and its people.

They are there, you will have to go a long way round
if you want to avoid them.
It takes some getting used to. There are the Alps,
fools! Sit down and wait for them to crumble!

Red Hot Ochre and Beyond the Frontier will remain on view at the Kluge-Ruhe until April 21, 2007.

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