

HAMILTONS

MURRAY FREDERICKS: BLAZE | 14 NOVEMBER 2022 - 21 JANUARY 2023



BLAZE #9, Lake Pamamaroo, Menindee, 2022 © Murray Fredericks

Hamiltons Gallery presents BLAZE, a new series by the renowned Australian photographer Murray Fredericks. This astonishing body of work is on view from 14th November 2022 to 21st January 2023. Frederick's new series has fire as its central theme whilst transporting you to the vast regions of the Australian salt planes and wetlands.

Hamiltons has represented Murray Fredericks for over a decade. His atmospheric photographs border on the sublime – giving rise to the emotional and physical sense of an overwhelming awe of nature. These large-scale, colour photographs are set against the vast expanse of the Australian landscape, in particular flooded lakes and river systems. However, unlike Frederick's previous works, BLAZE has fire as its central theme. Using non-destructive methods, Fredericks seemingly sets trees alight to create mesmerizing natural 'beacons'.

The creation of this series was an extremely labour-intensive process. It saw Frederick's spend weeks scouring the outback to find the perfect location, this often involved camping for days at a time, carrying the necessary equipment through woodlands and across sandy planes. Once satisfied with the location Fredericks painstakingly attached bendable gas pipes up the back of dead trees, the pipes followed the trunks and leafless branches, consciously hidden from the camera. This method, sourced from film industry pyrotechnical specialists allows for the flames to burn but only for a few seconds leaving enough time to capture the image, and causes no trace or damage to the trees or the surrounding environment.

BLAZE was produced during 'La Nina' which is an event that occurs every 3 to 5 years. La Nina refers to the cooling of surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, this increases the chance of above average rainfall for Northern and Eastern Australia during summer. The central Australian deserts and marginal areas are defined by an infinity of dry creek beds and salt planes with rare biodiversity capable of withstanding years of drought. After the intense rainfall and flooding of La Nina these areas explode back into life. Having experienced this phenomenon Fredericks wated to capture it on camera. His addition of fire to the landscape adds to the unexpectedness of the already unusual scene.

Fire is a seminal element of ancient and contemporary Australia. Both fire and water have deep cultural histories as symbols in art and literature. Responding to these cultural references, Fredericks employs fire as an intervention in the flooded Australian landscape to create this series of powerful images. "The beauty of the explosive energy that is being presented with a picture of a flame - it has got to be evolutionary, we are all attracted to it, we swarm to it."

– Murray Fredericks, 2022

Creating BLAZE was a very personal process for the photographer who has returned to the theme of the Australian landscape again and again. It is astounding how much he has wrung out of a seemingly barren, unforgiving stretch of land. BLAZE sees Fredericks strip back his process to the bare minimum and his inspiration comes from the fundamental elements of space and nature, fire and water; the outcome is pure artistic expression.

Hamiltons exhibition features 8 large scale, archival pigment prints mounted to aluminium. The photographs will be accompanied by the film BLAZE, an observational documentary by Academy Award-nominated team Bentley Dean (director) and Tania Nehme (editor).

The exhibition **Murray Fredericks: BLAZE** will run from **14th November 2022 to 21st January 2023** at Hamiltons Gallery, London.

Biography

Murray Fredericks, was born in 1970 in Sydney, Australia, and graduated with a degree in politics and economics from the University of Sydney in 1992. The years that followed saw Fredericks spend long periods, often alone, in the Himalayas and in the deserts of the Middle East. During these solo journeys he became aware of the profound effect that time spent in isolation and in powerful landscapes, can have on the mind and on one's sense of self. These experiences provided the basis for his approach to making pictures.

His first major project entitled Salt (2009) was produced in the middle of Lake Eyre, an extensive salt pan in South Australia's outback. Fredericks camped alone, in the middle of the dry lake for many weeks at a time. 'Array' is a continuation of Fredericks' renowned series 'Salt' (2007), and then more recently 'Vanity' (2017). In 'Vanity', Fredericks introduced a mirror into the previously undisturbed landscape, in 'Array', Fredericks takes this a step further by introducing multiple mirrors which he painstakingly carries himself. In these works, the artist intersects endless space through the ethereal reflective quality of multiple mirrors. Rather than employing the mirror as a symbol of self-reflection, Fredericks redirects our gaze away from ourselves and into the immense environment.

Fredericks has exhibited widely, his work and sits in major public and private collections nationally and internationally, including the National Gallery of Victoria, The Museum of Sydney, Artbank, the Sir Elton John Collection, Macquarie Bank, the Valentino Collection, to name a few. The series Salt inspired a twenty-eight-minute documentary film by the same name with Fredericks was cinematographer and co-director won twelve major international awards; the film played at over fifty festivals.

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