

Wesley Stacey

The wild thing

4 March to 30 April 2017

MGA, the Australian home of photography, is staging a major exhibition of photographs by Wesley Stacey. Curated from MGA's nationally significant collection of Australian photographs, the exhibition will survey four decades of Stacey's work. From his lively colour snapshots to his epic black-and-white panoramas, the works in this exhibition pay tribute to the wildness at the heart of our existence.

MGA's Senior Curator, Stephen Zagala describes Stacey as 'a living legend of environmental photography.' In the 1970s he turned his back on the bright lights of Sydney and set up camp in the wilderness of the New South Wales south coast. For over 40 years he has lived in the 'great outdoors', using photography to explore and connect with the ecological complexity of the Australian landscape.



Zagala says Stacey 'bursts through the clichés of landscape photography. He doesn't give us picturesque scenes to be passively admired. Instead he invests the landscape with a sense of movement, which draws the viewer out into the ecological forces of the environment.'

Wesley Stacey is an important figure in the history of Australian art, making a significant contribution to photographic practice in the late 20th century. He studied drawing and design at East Sydney Technical College (1960–62) before working as a graphic designer and photographer for the ABC in Sydney and the BBC in London through the 1960s. In the late 1960s he worked as a magazine photographer in Sydney and from 1969–75 he worked as a freelance commercial photographer. In 1973 Stacey helped establish the Australian Centre for Photography and was a member of its inaugural board of management. In 1976 Stacey moved to the Bermagui area of the New South Wales South Coast, where he purchased land and established a rudimentary bush camp where he continues to live.

Stacey's freelance work through the 1970s saw him specialise in travel and architectural subjects. During this time he worked with architect Philip Cox to produce a series of innovative coffee table books on Australian architectural heritage. Stacey's early interests in travel photography and cultural heritage led him to focus on the landscape genre in subsequent decades. His work with the South Coast Advisory Committee on Woodchipping and, more specifically, with the Aboriginal tribal elder Guboo Ted Thomas during 1977–80 was pivotal in this respect. Informed by critical discussions of the Australian landscape that flourished during the 1980s, Stacey developed an interest in landscape photography that acknowledged both Indigenous and Settler heritage. At the same time, he began using panoramic cameras to create particularly immersive views of the Australian bush.

MGA is one of Australia's leading public galleries. Our mission is to collect, preserve, present and interpret Australian photography in order to provide cultural enrichment to our audiences through innovative engagement, entertainment and education.

MEDIA RELEASE
February 2017



Wesley Stacey: *The wild thing* will be presented as part of CLIMARTE's **ART+CLIMATE=CHANGE 2017**, a festival of exhibitions and events harnessing the creative power of the Arts to inform, engage and inspire action on climate change. www.artclimatechange.org

Wesley Stacey: *The wild thing*

4 March—30 April 2017

Artist talk: 1—2pm Saturday 4 March

Opening: 2—4pm Saturday 4 March

To be opening by Gael Newton (former Senior Curator of Photography, National Gallery of Australia)

FREE GUIDED TOURS every Tuesday at 11am. Join a MGA staff member for a guided tour of the exhibitions on display. All welcome. No bookings required for groups of 10 or less. Groups larger than 10 we would appreciate some notice just email mga@monash.vic.gov.au

MEDIA ENQUIRIES Mark Hislop markh@monash.vic.gov.au T: 8544 0500

Image credit:

Wesley STACEY

Burning forest remnant on the Monaro 1981

chromogenic print

35.5 x 55.0 cm

courtesy of the artist

MGA 860 Ferntree Gully Road, Wheelers Hill Victoria 3150

T: 61 3 8544 0500 | E: mga@monash.vic.gov.au | mga.org.au

Tue-Fri: 10am-5pm | Sat-Sun: 12pm-5pm | Mon/public holidays: closed