

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

mga
monash gallery of art

David Hempenstall: Camp Slayer

Opening: 3.00pm Saturday 4 July 2009

to be opened by
Shaune Lakin
Director MGA

Exhibition dates: 1 July–2 August 2009

Monash Gallery of Art is pleased to present *David Hempenstall: Camp Slayer*.

David Hempenstall takes us on a private tour inside Camp Slayer, a US military base in Iraq. Comprising 165 unique Polaroid photographs, the series presents an elaborate record of the base established by US military units in a former Iraqi government palace and amusement complex near the Baghdad airport.

Shaune Lakin, Director of MGA writes that: "These small-scale Polaroid photographs are truly compelling. Hempenstall shocks us with his attention to detail – the small things that describe a personal response to a very harsh military environment. And as American troops withdraw from Iraq, it is a perfect time for us to consider the Coalition's occupation of the country and its legacy."

During 2005-06 David Hempenstall lived and worked on Camp Slayer. Working for the US State Department, he was photographed mass grave sites under investigation by the Iraqi High Tribunal.

Hempenstall's photographs of Camp Slayer were taken during his recreation time. In contrast to the heroic sensationalism that characterises many press images of Baghdad's recent military occupation, Hempenstall's Polaroids provide us with a perspective that is both intimate and experimental. They present a picture of the war and the occupation very different to that found in the media and in military public relations.

MGA curator Stephen Zagala says "Viewed together, this series of photographic fragments seems to allude to a bigger picture - the idea of war itself - that is both too complex and horrific to comprehend and to picture clearly."

David Hempenstall is available for interview.
Images available on request from MGA.

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David Hempenstall
Camp Slayer, Baghdad 30/9/05
(from the series *Camp Slayer*) 2005
dye diffusio transfer print
courtesy of the artist



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Zooming in: artist's talk with David Hempenstall
Thursday 9 July at 3.00pm

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

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