

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

Press Office

TEL 404-733-4437

FAX 404-733-4529

prinfo@woodruffcenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**UNPRECEDENTED EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS
BY RICHARD MISRACH TO TRAVEL TO ATLANTA**

Richard Misrach: On the Beach
June 6–August 30, 2009

ATLANTA, February 9, 2009 – The High Museum of Art will host a nationally touring exhibition of 20 large-scale photographs by Richard Misrach, a recognized pioneer of large-format color photography. Best known for his images of the American desert, he recently began capturing monumental images of the ocean, sunbathers and swimmers. “On the Beach” marks the largest exhibition of works from this series ever to be on view together. The exhibition was organized by the artist in conjunction with the Art Institute of Chicago, where it debuted in September 2007. “On the Beach” will be on view at the High from June 6 through August 30, 2009.



“Misrach is one of the most important photographers working with color materials, and a pioneer in large-scale printing. These monumental pictures are both playful and intensely contemplative,” said Julian Cox, Curator of Photography at the High. “Misrach’s photographs remind us of our place as humans in a large natural landscape. They have the capacity to elicit the kind of emotion produced by the strongest pieces of artwork: wonder, respect and even a sense of unease with the world as is.”

In 2001 Misrach began this series of large-scale lushly colored photographs of swimmers and sunbathers in Hawaii. Working from a hotel on the beach, he adopted a floating viewpoint that eliminates all reference to the horizon or sky, recording people wholly immersed in the idyllic environment. The photographs, which are vast in scale and viewpoint, coax the particularities of nature into ethereal, nearly abstract patterns of color and light. Yet despite their compelling beauty, an oblique sense of disquietude pervades the photographs. Begun in the days immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the series was made over a five-year period and speaks to the sense of physical and psychological vulnerability that pervaded the nation’s consciousness at that time.

For more than 30 years, Misrach has made important photographic series that investigate man’s often disastrous effect on the land. His magnum opus, “Desert Cantos,” explored the American desert—fires and floods, military-scarred terrain and pits of dead animals—in vivid, poetic images that spotlight both the beauty of the landscape and our problematic relationship to it. In 1999 Misrach was commissioned by the High Museum of Art to take part in the Museum’s “Picturing the South” initiative. Misrach traveled throughout Louisiana to photograph a 150-mile stretch of the Mississippi River—known as “Cancer Alley”—where oil refineries had been dumping waste. As a result of this project, the High’s permanent collection includes 62 photographs by Richard Misrach.

Richard Misrach

Born in Los Angeles in 1949, Misrach is internationally recognized for his large-scale color photography. His work is represented in more than 50 museums worldwide including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum and the High Museum of Art. He has exhibited internationally and was the subject of a mid-career traveling museum survey organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in 1996. Misrach is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Koret Israel Prize. Most recently, he was the 2008 recipient of the Lucie Award for Achievement in Fine Art. He is represented in New York at Pace/MacGill Gallery, in San Francisco at Fraenkel Gallery and in Los Angeles by Marc Selwyn Fine Art.

Exhibition Organization and Support

“Richard Misrach: On the Beach” was organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and curated by Elizabeth Siegel, Associate Curator of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago.

The exhibition debuted at the Art Institute of Chicago in September 2007, subsequently traveling to The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu (December 15, 2007–March 9, 2008), the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (May 25–September 1, 2008), the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle (October 11, 2008–January 18, 2009) and will be on view at the High Museum of Art from June 6 through August 30, 2009.

High Museum of Art

The High Museum of Art, founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 11,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. The High’s Media Arts department produces acclaimed annual film series and festivals of foreign, independent and classic cinema. In November 2005, the High opened three new buildings by architect Renzo Piano that more than doubled the Museum’s size, creating a vibrant “village for the arts” at the Woodruff Arts Center in midtown Atlanta. For more information about the High, please visit www.High.org.

The Woodruff Arts Center

The Woodruff Arts Center is the largest arts center in the Southeast as well as one of the four largest in the nation. The Woodruff combines five visual and performing arts divisions on one campus as one not-for-profit organization. Opened in 1968, the Woodruff Arts Center is home to the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art, Young Audiences and the 14th Street Playhouse.

###

Media Contact:

Nicole Johnson

Public Relations Coordinator, High Museum of Art

Tel: 404-733-4585 | E-mail: nicole.johnson@woodruffcenter.org