

PRESS RELEASE

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Richard Heeps' exclusive exhibition taking a deeper look at South Africa

South Africa is the subject of photographer Richard Heeps' brand new exhibition *The New Lantern* at Light House, Wolverhampton. As the World Cup draws the media spotlight to this tumultuous country once again, *The New Lantern* offers a personal glimpse of quiet, everyday life in and around the Free State region. Combining a foray into portraiture with Richard's signature style of colour-saturated landscapes, this exhibition follows his wife Natasha's first return to her homeland in six years. This wonderfully depicted journey will premiere at Light House Gallery, Wolverhampton, from Thursday 8 April – Friday 4 June and entrance is free of charge.

The exhibition combines an outsider viewpoint with insider knowledge as Natasha took on the role of unofficial tour guide for photographer Richard. Natasha's personal commentary for each image collected on the husband and wife 'road trip' offers a personal insight into a country which has seen monumental changes over the years, but it also raises questions about the family unit, the displacement of people, migration and identity.

Natasha grew up in several towns and went to many different schools in the Free State, and she describes her father as always chasing the proverbial pot of gold. Although everything in the show is immediately personal to Natasha (the title of the work comes from a roadhouse which she used to visit and every image has a connection to her family), the exhibition plays on wider themes of childhood, identity and looking back in order to look forward. With it also being Richard's first visit to his wife's homeland, he wanted to document the changes that she found on revisiting her 'old life'. Whilst her parents are divorced and have both remarried and moved on, Richard wanted to portray how she instantly felt at home seeing things from her childhood.

Richard's sweeping vistas and intensely colourful images are home to a host of interesting characters and observations. There is genuine warmth radiating from each subject and it is easy to appreciate the popularity of his work. Richard states "I try and reflect a strong empathy towards my subject matter and close surroundings. I am trying to create a timeless quality in my photographs using traditional film and darkroom techniques". These emotional connections to his work and flair for tradition are richly visible in *The New Lantern*.

To coincide with this exhibition, Three White Walls Gallery in Birmingham will be showing *Old England* – a special selection of some of Richard Heeps' previous work from 1 April - 10 May, for information visit 3whitewalls.blogspot.com.

The New Lantern is showing from Thursday 8 April – Friday 4 June and entrance is free of charge. Contact Light House on t: 01902 716055 to book tickets or for more information visit www.light-house.co.uk. Light House is located in the historic Chubb Buildings in Wolverhampton City Centre.

**Three White
Walls Gallery**

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For further information contact David Franklin on t: 01902 716055 / e: david@light-house.co.uk

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