

FREE Information sheet. Please take one.

Rena Effendi

Liquid Land: Legacies of Oil and Power

26 April to 22 June 2013

Opening on the anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, this exhibition by Azerbaijani photographer Rena Effendi reveals the struggles and resilience of people living in some of the world's most polluted areas in the former Soviet Union.

The exhibition brings together two related bodies of work made over the last ten years. *Chernobyl: Still Life in the Zone* depicts the lives of elderly women in the Ukraine's notorious Zone, the restricted area around Reactor 4 which exploded on 26 April 1986. In the aftermath of nuclear catastrophe, these women returned to reclaim their homes from an inhospitable world, where most of the food they produce still contains dangerous levels of radiation.

Liquid Land shows communities and refugees of war living amongst the oil spills and industrial ruin of the petroleum-rich Absheron peninsula in Azerbaijan, near to the capital Baku. These landscapes and portraits are paired with images that pay tribute to Effendi's late father, a scientist who devoted his life to studying butterflies in the Soviet Union. The only remaining visual evidence of his life's work is a collection of photographs of endangered butterflies for a book he never published.

Taken as a whole, this exhibition transcends geographical borders to become a collective portrait of people who have survived isolation, devastating pollution and political chaos, to continue their lives with determination.

To find out more, pick up a free information sheet, browse the reading area, watch the short film, or come along to our free artist talk and book signing with Rena Effendi at 2pm on Saturday 11 May. The publication *Liquid Land* is available from the Shop at the special exhibition price of £19.99 (usual price £24.50).

A touring exhibition from INSTITUTE / Courtesy of Rena Effendi and the Prince Claus Fund

Rena Effendi (Baku, Azerbaijan, 1977) is a social documentary photographer based in Cairo. Her first job, at the age of 19, was as a translator for the Azerbaijan International Oil Company, a consortium of some of the world's largest oil producers. Having gained an inside perspective, Effendi began to take photographs in 2001, focusing on the oil industry's effects on ordinary people's lives. Her work on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was published as *Pipe Dreams: A Chronicle of Lives Along the Pipeline* by Schilt Publishing in 2009.

Her international awards include the Fifty Crows Documentary award, the Getty Images Editorial Grant, and National Geographic's All Roads Photography Award. Rena has exhibited worldwide, including at the Visa Pour L'Image Festival of Photojournalism in Perpignan; the 52nd Venice Biennale; and the Istanbul Biennial. Her work has been published in *Newsweek*, *Time*, *The Financial Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Marie Claire*, *Le Monde*, *National Geographic*, and others. Rena Effendi is represented by INSTITUTE for Artist Management worldwide and by Grinberg Gallery in Russia. www.refendi.com