Michael Kenna
France

28 January - 21 February 2015

Widely held to be the most important landscape photographer of his generation, Michael Kenna is lauded for his unerring ability to capture the magic and ethereality of the landscape. Having travelled extensively to seek out places of sublime beauty, Kenna has returned to France throughout his career, drawn to the romance of the landscape.

Kenna first travelled to France in 1973 and began photographing the country in the early 1980s. The exhibition will offer visitors a panoramic view of the geographic and cultural variety that traverses the country, charting a journey to both distinctive landmarks – Mont St Michel, Le Nôtre’s Gardens at the Palace of Versailles and Château Lafite Rothschild – and to the splendid grandeur of the countryside – abandoned ruins, rolling hills and coastal outposts.

Directing his lens at otherwise overlooked views of the landscape, Kenna is fascinated by the trace left by human interaction with the environment. Drawn to liminal spaces – shorelines, rivers, crossroads and overlooked corners – Kenna prefers to photograph at moments when the landscape is shrouded in the half-light of dawn, dusk or twilight. His scenes are palpably balanced on the precipice between light and dark, visible and invisible. This romantic vision of France stands in relation to a tradition of photography that reaches through the work of Eugène Atget, Robert Doisneau and Henri Cartier-Bresson whilst his night-time vistas of Paris and eerie landscapes of deserted streets and gardens repeatedly quote the street photographer Brassaï as a vital influence.

Hand-printed in his darkroom, Kenna’s photographs are captivating, intimate windows into a familiar landscape reimagined through the lens of an endlessly inventive and perceptive photographer. His minimalist black and white aesthetic deftly relays the atmosphere of the sometimes charming, sometimes dramatic landscape, with whimsy and romance but also with a nuanced Modernist austerity. Kenna’s photographs have been the subject of some 50 monographs and his work is held by over 100 museums worldwide. The French Ministry of Culture made Kenna a Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters in 2000.

Following the popularity of Beetles and Huxley’s inaugural exhibition of Kenna’s work in 2012, Michael Kenna: France will be the first opportunity to see an extensive selection of works from the France archive in the United Kingdom. Timed to coincide with the much-anticipated release of the monograph, France (Nazraeli Press), the exhibition will feature both iconic and lesser-known photographs from Kenna’s extensive archive.

For more information and images please contact
Thea Gregory: 0207 434 4319 / thea@huxleyparlour.com

Website: www.huxleyparlour.com
Facebook: @huxleyparlour
Twitter: @huxleyparlour
Instagram: @huxleyparlour