



International Center of Photography

news release

Contact: Communications Department
212.857.0045 info@icp.org



Ken Light
Laura, forty-five years old, on laundry day, Crane Creek Hollow, West Virginia, 2002
Gelatin silver print
© Ken Light

Ken Light: Coal Hollow

On view from
December 9, 2005
through February 26, 2006

Media Preview
December 8, 2005
9:30 - 11am

RSVP:
info@icp.org
212.857.0045

Social documentary photographer Ken Light's stark and moving black-and-white photographs will be on view at the International Center of Photography (1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street) from December 9, 2005 through February 26, 2006. *Ken Light: Coal Hollow* is a collection of twenty photographs taken by the photographer over three years, from 1999 through 2002, which expose the social consequences of the deterioration of the once booming coal mining business in West Virginia, the poorest state in the nation.

Light shows how the erosion of the coal mining industry has devastated individual lives and families in the close-knit communities of rural West Virginia. Where generations of coal miners once made their livelihood off the plentiful supply of coal their mountains produce, machines are now replacing manpower, and communities are struggling to maintain their culture and heritage. The collapse of the coal industry has left in its wake poverty, unemployment, drug use, and mine-related diseases. Among other things, this environment has proven to be fertile ground for a resurgence of Ku Klux Klan activity.

The Bronx-born Light (b. 1951) has spent much of his photographic career working in a black-and-white documentary mode, with the hope that photographic evidence will make a political difference. He is the author of five monographs including "Texas Death Row" (1997), "Delta Time" (1995),

“To the Promised Land” (1988), “With These Hands” (1986), and “In the Fields” (1982), and has edited “Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers” (2000), which features twenty-two interviews with fellow photojournalists.

Light has received two National Endowment for the Arts Photographers Fellowships, the Dorothea Lange Fellowship and a fellowship from the Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation. He is currently Adjunct Professor and Director of the Center for Photography at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California Berkeley, and is a founder of the International Fund for Documentary Photography.

Ken Light: Coal Hollow is organized by Brian Wallis, ICP Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions.

Sponsors:

This exhibition was made possible with support from Sanford Luger and Ellen Samuel.

Publication:

Coal Hollow: Photographs and Oral Histories, written by Ken Light and Melanie Light with forewords by Orville Schell and Robert B. Reich, presents arresting black-and-white photographs and powerful oral histories that chronicle the legacy of coal mining in southern West Virginia. The book presents photographs of a range of people whose lives were shaped by coal: retired miners, men and women who have been jobless their entire lives, a contemporary coal baron, a justice of the State Supreme Court of West Virginia, a writer who bravely ran for governor on a third party ticket, and people who returned to the hills when their lives failed elsewhere.

152 pages, 97 duotones

11-1/8 x 11 in.

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Cloth

\$34.95

Other exhibitions on view:

The Body at Risk: Photography of Disorder, Illness, and Healing

Che! Revolution and Commerce

African American Vernacular Photography: Selections from the Daniel Cowin Collection

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