

## Sir Sidney Nolan Polaroids

Opening June 3rd 2021

11 Market Place, Henley on Thames, RG9 2AA



Sir Sidney Nolan, Polaroid Photograph of Ned Kelly in sand  
Polaroid  
10.8 x 8.6 cm  
Courtesy of Sidney Nolan Trust

Informality and Sidney Nolan Trust are excited to announce the first ever exhibition of Sidney Nolan's polaroid photography. Nolan's polaroid's which have never been in the eye of the public will show alongside a selection of paintings by the artist on loan from the Trust and private collections.

Sir Sidney Robert Nolan was one of Australia's leading artists of the 20th century and is most known for his iconic paintings depicting Australian bushranger and outlaw, Ned Kelly and his armour.

During the 1970s and 80s the polaroid became Nolan's favoured format. The polaroid was a new, instant way of recording time which provided Nolan a useful mechanism to objectively record and critique his painting whilst also becoming a playful medium through which he began to construct candid yet intricate compositions.

Nolan, a fabled storyteller, explored more than just the recording of an image, instead he used the medium as a way of artistic expression, creating scenarios and exploring multiple exposure techniques. A fine example in the exhibition is an image of Picasso's Guernica superimposed with one of Nolan's earlier images from the 1940s, a staged photograph of a rider mounting an animal carcass that Nolan encountered in the Australian desert during a drought. Enter right, a child's toy figure crosses the image on a miniature easy rider motorcycle. Other examples hint to the gentle nature of the man, of quiet observation. The artist's hand, full-frame, holding a beautiful small bird, either stunned or dead.

Where Nolan turns the camera on himself, something which dominates his polaroid photographs from the mid-seventies when his second wife Cynthia committed suicide, the results are much more disturbing. These flash-fuelled self-portraits render Nolan as a ghostly, transparent figure. In some, his face appears searching, in others, the crazed expressions look more like the camera has been handed to a sinister fictional character.

The exhibition comes at an important time, as The Sidney Nolan Trust recently began the task of sorting, listing, and conserving some of the 25,000 plus photographs believed to exist in the Trust's archive. The photographs consisting of prints, negatives, transparencies, slides, and film reel, trace the artist's extensive travelling career, from early photographs of Heide and the Reeds, through some of his most ambitious exhibitions, to private family moments. It is hoped that in the future his photographic archive will be made available to the public and to inform research.

## About Sidney Nolan Trust

Sir Sidney Nolan (b. 1917 Australia) was a leading artist of the 20th century. His Ned Kelly paintings became iconic, and today the Sidney Nolan Trust, which he founded in 1985, celebrates his life-long experimentation and passion for creativity, as well as his love for the environment. Located at The Rodd, the Trust cares for his former home, studio, and 250 acre estate, together with a large collection of Nolan's artworks, his library and personal archive. Our exhibitions and events present artwork from our collection, as well as exhibitions by contemporary artists. Our learning and residency programmes support children, young people, adults, and artists to learn, exchange ideas and create.

## About Informality

Informality is a contemporary art gallery which opened in 2019 in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. The gallery holds a programme showcasing International contemporary artists' through solo and group presentations that explores topics of the environment and co-existence. Outside of the gallery's own walls, Informality has committed to site-specific collaborations and enhances its exhibition programme with accompanying talks and lectures. These are tailored to aid emerging collectors in researching artists and understanding the art market.

**For press enquiries and hi res images please contact:**

Zee Levine  
zee.levine@informality.co  
+ 44 (0) 1491 577 115