

Huw Davies Gallery
18 October - 11 November 2018

The Fall 2017-2018
David Rosendale



Image: David Rosendale, *Falls Creek #76*, November 2017, archival pigment print on rag

To be a moral human being is to pay, be obliged to pay, certain kinds of attention¹

When David Rosendale first set out to Falls Creek with his camera, it was an escape.

He had spent years working in advertising photography, where image-making was all about production, in every sense. Speed was essential, and the purpose of the image was to convey a message to the viewer as quickly as possible.

If in his daily work David photographed products for the commercial world, his artistic practice had become a way of documenting and exploring its underside. He began to photograph landscapes devoid of people – soft nature, weathered places, industrial zones. The impression of human life was everywhere. Rusted shipping containers in primary colours, lunar landscapes of crushed pink-white salt, tyre-tracked snow. It's "the footprint of what we build around us," that interests him.

The result is a body of minimalist landscapes that never dissolve completely into abstraction but retain crucial traces of the human impact on the environment. The Fall series, made in increments over the course of a year – from March 2017 to March 2018 – is the culmination of this work. It conveys a story of the wide rhythms of nature, and the brittle dominance of humans over the earth. It's a pattern that slowly reveals itself.

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At the centre of this body of work is Falls Creek Alpine Resort, a skiing village about five hours' drive from Melbourne. Natural snowfall there is declining along with warming global temperatures, predicted to rise to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels in twenty years' time, according to the UN.

In May this year, the Victorian government reported that even by conservative estimates, days of natural snowfall on Falls Creek's lower slopes are declining. Where the last decade's ski kids had 105 days of natural snowfall, if they're lucky 2050's will have just 59. They'll likely be supplemented with artificial snow, though, buying time.

David's photographs of Falls Creek's sublime landscapes are drenched with weather: sun, rain, blue skies, golden light over swaying grass, thick snow over roads, heavy clouds. A year of weather in one place, changing as the seasons change, being rinsed clean and dried again like a pair of old jeans.

Yet there are traces of everything as it is now, one day, ending. A wooden snow pole, used for orientation and as a line of site in difficult visibility sticks out at an odd angle, plonked there like a straw in a thickshake. Grey clouds form a far-off ring of rain against a bruising sky. Folded ski-lift chairs concertina into a golden snake in the long grass. Perhaps this is the fall before the fall. An elegy of sorts, or a rebirthing.

Artists, photographers, writers, as well as scientists, have all grappled with how to document and portray our changing climate. How to inform without repelling, how to imbue emotion without overwhelming. Because it is overwhelming. As climate scientist Lesley Hughes wrote recently, only half-joking, "climate-change science is the Hotel California of research. You can check out any time you like, but the moral challenge... that comes with it means that leaving is simply not an option."

The question then becomes not how to look, but how to keep on looking.

In this body of contemplative, slow works, which unfold in time as well as in space, David has found an answer not in minimalist reduction, but in story. By slowing down his process, paying 'certain kinds of attention', as Susan Sontag once demanded, he has found in Falls Creek a way to keep on finding newness in an old, drying landscape. The story, and the series, continues to evolve.

Claire Capel-Stanley, October 2018

Claire Capel-Stanley is a Melbourne-based writer

¹ Susan Sontag, *At the Same Time: Essays and Speeches*, 2007

David Rosendale | Artist statement

My series *The Fall*, 2017- 2018 an extensive 12 month photographic study of seasonal change and environment, in the Alpine region of Falls Creek in Victoria. Following my 2016 exhibition, of the same name, which comprised imagery captured exclusively in minimalist snow-covered landscape. In February 2017, I was granted an Artist Residency at the Alpine Resort of Falls Creek from the Falls Creek Arts and Culture Committee, with the aim of documenting all four seasons and imbuing the photographer's role as observer throughout a year-long cycle of change.

The transient nature of imagery sought in 2016's *The Fall*, and the tiny window in which this Winter imagery exists, lead a conceptual evolution for the body of work, to grander fascinations of seasonal change and metamorphosis. In winter, where a snow mask veils landscape, and pairs back the colour palette, the high plains reveal themselves throughout the seasons, their tumultuous moods and infinitely changing personalities. The gargantuan mountains can almost appear to be breathing, sensitive, exhibiting a pulse, and a temper.

Ski infrastructure and the subtle human footprint in the region, plays a supporting role to the majestic mountains, serving as reminder of the fragment human activity plays within the geography. In the face of climate change and sustainability, this body of work seeks to document a naturally occurring ecosystem and simply activate the conversation for respect of the Alpine region and necessity to protect our winters from climate change.

Where most of the human condition is chaotic and without reason, there is a certainty and purpose in the inevitability of the seasons. A metronomic rhythm to which all processes of life keep time. In Victoria's Alps, the seasons are instantly tangible, an experience sometimes difficult to truly witness and absorb in an urban or built environment

Monumental changes in photographic practice and technology over the past decade and the onset of social media has seen the medium perceived to be that for the instantaneous and throw away, in some experiences, danger of devalue. In direct response, the desire for an enduring body of work and commentary on the world inhabited became catalyst for this project. The desire for careful study, observation, repetition and patience became clear directives, with no more appropriate context to study than the seasons, and the seasons no more evident than in the infinite visual landscape of the Alps.

David Rosendale | About

David is a commercial and exhibiting photographic artist based in Melbourne, his work has been featured by major domestic and international brands, and featured in prestigious publications and awards such as the Australian National Photographic Portrait Prize. Work created during *The Fall* was recently semi finalist in the Moran Contemporary Photography Prize.

David's work seeks graphical and compositional harmony within the landscape, his artworks act as witness to the evidences human activity leaves upon it. He constantly travels and explores the lesser taken roads to find the next window on the world. Once a feel for a location is established, through careful planning and intuition, he ensures he is present at precisely the right moment, to allow the environment to reveal something unique to him and to the resultant image.

Image list

1.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #21</i> , March 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
2.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #24</i> , March 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
3.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #29</i> , April 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
4.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #39</i> , May 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
5.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #22</i> , May 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
6.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #52</i> , July 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 121.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$1,430 F	\$880 UF
7.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #47</i> , July 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
8.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #48</i> , August 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
9.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #69</i> , August 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
10.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #76</i> , August 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4.8cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
11.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #74</i> , August 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4.8cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
12.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #59</i> , November 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	\$660 UF
13.	David Rosendale, <i>Falls Creek #78</i> , November 2017, archival pigment print on rag, Australian hardwood frame, 83.0 x 59.4cm, edition of 10	\$990 F	660 UF
	David Rosendale, <i>The Fall</i> , limited edition 52 page comprehensive collection catalogue	\$55	



Image: David Rosendale, *Falls Creek #69*, March 2017, archival pigment print on rag

Public program

Join David Rosendale, Mark Mohell and Joshua Thomas for an artists in conversation on Sunday 11 November at 2pm in the PhotoAccess Huw Davies Gallery. Free event. All welcome.

With thanks to the Falls Creek Arts and Culture Committee

