

## ***Fred Kruger: Intimate Landscapes***

**4 February – 8 July 2012**

On 4 February the National Gallery of Victoria will open *Fred Kruger: Intimate Landscapes*, the first comprehensive survey of Fred Kruger's (1831–88) photographs ever to be mounted.

Fred Kruger was one of the leading landscape photographers of the 19th century in Australia, working extensively throughout Victoria. Kruger migrated from Germany in 1860 and a few years later opened a photographic studio in Carlton, Melbourne before moving his thriving practice to Geelong.



*Fred Kruger: Intimate Landscapes* features over 100 works drawn predominantly from the NGV Collection and incorporates loans from Museum Victoria, the State Library of Victoria and private collections.

Many of the photographs in this exhibition depict iconic locations that will be familiar to Victorians, providing visitors with a glimpse back more than 130 years to scenes at the You Yangs, the Esplanade at Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale among others.

This compelling exhibition also showcases Kruger's highly distinctive command of photographic language, providing a fascinating insight into the political and social life of Victoria in the 1800s. Kruger's photographs show how European settlers altered the environment through farming and other developments while also depicting their growing appreciation of the picturesque qualities of the bush.

Isobel Crombie, Senior Curator, Photography said: "Kruger's photographs draw us into an intimate experience of the landscape and are achieved through his orchestration of people within natural environments."

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# NGV NEWS



The contrast between Kruger's heavily industrialised home city of Berlin and the spaciousness of his adopted home country intrigued him as he pictured the Victorian landscape as an environment of prosperity, productivity and ease.

Frances Lindsay, Deputy Director, NGV said: "Kruger's photographs are complex constructions embedded as much in the political and social circumstances in which he lived, as they are formed by his own creative talents and imaginative attitudes towards the land that he had made his home."

Kruger made the most of the photographic opportunities presented to him. From the late 1860s he drove a horse and cart around Victoria taking both scenic views and private commissions. His most political commission was to record life at the Aboriginal settlement of Coranderrk Station at the request of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines.

Working at a time of rebellion at the station, Kruger's images highlighted colonial race relations and still have importance today. These photographs were also widely circulated at the time, being reproduced in illustrated newspapers, included in international exhibitions and sold as part of albums.

It is this combination of rich context, strong sense of time and place and distinctive creative expression that makes Kruger's work so notable in the history of Australian photography.

This exhibition is accompanied by a major publication comprehensively exploring Fred Kruger's career. The 144 page book is lavishly illustrated and available from the NGV Shop for \$49.95.

*Fred Kruger: Intimate Landscapes* is on display at **The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia** from **4 February to 8 July 2012. Open 10–5pm, Tue–Sun. Entry is free.**

This exhibition may contain the names or images of people who are now deceased. Some Indigenous communities may be distressed by seeing the name, or image of a community member who has passed away.

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#### IMAGE CAPTION:

##### **Fred Kruger**

born Germany 1831, arrived Australia 1860, died 1888

*Wreck of the ship George Roper, Point Lonsdale* 1883

albumen silver photograph

18.4 x 27.2 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Mrs Beryl M. Curl, 1979

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