

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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December 29, 2008

### **LOT 44 COFFEE GALLERY PRESENTS “SHADOW OF CHERNOBYL” A PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION BY GRAHAM GILMORE**

Lot 44 Coffee Gallery presents a photography exhibition by Graham Gilmore of the devastation and decay created by the 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Power plant explosion. The exhibition shows from Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, through February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. An opening reception for the artist will be on Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. to coincide with the Downtown LA Artwalk. Lot 44 Coffee Gallery is located at 257 S. Spring St, Los Angeles, 90012.

In the early hours of April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1986, reactor number 4 of the V.I. Lenin Memorial Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station exploded spewing tons of fuel, radioactive graphite and nuclear waste into the surrounding area. The city of Pripjat and other small villages stood in Chernobyl’s radioactive shadow. Photographer Graham Gilmore presents a series of photographs taken within that shadow, now called the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone: a radioactive ghost town.

In April of 2008, British-born Gilmore was allowed to enter the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone to photograph the growing decay surrounding the nuclear power station. As one of the only few people to venture and see the zone, Gilmore has captured a haunting profile of landscapes and cityscapes of life that once was. Gilmore reminds us in this exhibition of the inherent destruction that is all too often easily brought on by

human error. Gilmore, however, does not reprimand as his photographs are tempered by a compassionate eye that brings forth a gripping beauty of stark desolation. Very few in the United States have laid eyes upon these images of aftermath: Images of dilapidated amusement park rides, withered schools, solitary village homes, shored river boats all seem to capture the last seconds of an immediate evacuation of 50,000 Soviets fleeing Pripyat, never to return.

The images also illustrate the prowess of Gilmore to photograph such captivating images. As the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone will be toxically radiated for another 700 to 24,000 years, Gilmore had to photograph quickly and efficiently within a limited time frame and with equipment restraints to minimize radiation exposure. At times only certain areas were available to Gilmore where he had to tread lightly to reduce exposure to radiation. No tri-pods or other equipment were allowed to touch the ground. All of his work is hand held which was often a challenge for him when utilizing HDR techniques or switching to use a Holga camera. It is to the benefit of our understanding of this timeless horror that Gilmore's acumen for heartfelt photographic investigation is present within these breathtaking images. As Gilmore remarks, "I was a little worried and apprehensive about being exposed to radiation, but at the same time very excited. It was something I've wanted to do for a very long time. To actually go there and visit such a place is a life changing experience that will stay with me forever." Gilmore has exhibited his photographic work in Europe and now resides in Los Angeles.

The Lot 44 Coffee Gallery invites the public to this exhibition to catch a glimpse of the somber yet prescient destruction of a part of our world as seen through the eyes of

Graham Gilmore.  
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