

Et in Arcadia Ego

Exhibition of Photography by Vivian van Blerk

**Private Viewing on October 23rd 2008,
Cheyne Walk Salon - London**

Vivian van Blerk's enduring preoccupation is to find a visual equivalent to the real; an equivalent sophisticated enough to evoke the richness of real experience, where the wealth of detail in space offers endless and lasting narrative possibilities. In "*Et in Arcadia Ego*", a body of work extracted from "Hippopotamus and Destiny" and "From a New World" series, Van Blerk is particularly interested in exploring the concepts of the ephemeral and the transient, the familiar and the strange, the obvious and the overlooked, the vain and the virtuous. These elaborate settings are vividly imagined and meticulously constructed by the artist in the form of miniature *maquettes*, which he destroys immediately after capturing them on film. The medium of photography is particularly empowering in this instance, allowing the recording and documentation of data. The camera captures the physicality of a moment, a space, an experience, which once existed to be fleetingly witnessed by us all but is now gone forever. In essence, this metaphor for a contemporary Arcadia, long before visited by the ancient Greeks, is a romantic and introspective view of the world that surrounds us or has yet to be discovered.

Born in 1971 in Cape Town, South Africa, Vivian van Blerk lives and works in Paris. He has exhibited widely both in South Africa and internationally. His work features prominently in important private and public collections, most notably South African National Gallery and the Michaelis Foundation.