MARK TURIN

A retrospective of the work of artist Robert Powell is currently on display at the Museum of Ethnography in Katmandu. This exhibition is the first time that the artist’s work has been given such a thorough, and meticulously planned, showing in Nepal. The exhibition is part of a larger project, ‘Robert Powell: Himalayan Imagery’, which was initiated in 2001 by the University of Zurich and which has involved a comprehensive examination of Powell’s entire oeuvre. The project has been driven by a desire to understand the relationship between Powell’s work and the cultural and social contexts in which it was produced.

The exhibition at the Museum of Ethnography is divided into two main sections. The first section focuses on the artist’s early work, which was largely done in the 1970s and 1980s, and is characterized by a strong sense of place and a deep respect for the local culture. The second section focuses on the artist’s later work, which is characterized by a more abstract, more impressionistic style.

In his early work, Powell was a master of the landscape genre, capturing the beauty and serenity of the Himalayan landscape. His later work, however, is more concerned with the textures and colours of the landscape, and with the way in which the landscape is perceived and experienced by the viewer.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, which includes a comprehensive catalogue of the artist’s work, a essay on the artist by the art historian Michael Oppitz, and a detailed analysis of Powell’s work by the art critic Ann Treisman. The catalogue also includes a selection of essays by other art historians, including a piece by the Swiss art historian Ulf Kozlik.

The exhibition is a testament to the importance of Powell’s work, and to the enduring relevance of his art. It is a reminder of the power of art to capture and convey the essence of a place, and to provide a window into the worlds of other cultures. The exhibition is a must-see for anyone interested in art, culture, and the history of the Himalayas.