

FIFTY ONE

WOKE UP LAUGHING

BRUNO V. ROELS

02/12/2023 - 27/01/2024

Opening:
Saturday, December 2nd, 2-6 pm



Gallery FIFTY ONE
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www.gallery51.com
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Woke Up Laughing

by Bruno V. Roels

Opening: Saturday 2nd December, from 2 to 6 pm, in the presence of the artist
Exhibition: 5th December 2023 - 27th January 2024

For his fifth solo exhibition at Gallery FIFTY ONE, Belgian artist Bruno V. Roels (°1976) presents new work and delves further into the possibilities of the analog photographic process. In 'Woke Up Laughing', his images navigate between aesthetics and experimentation, escapism and a historical consciousness.

Inspired by artists like John Baldessari (1931-2020) and Ed Ruscha (°1937), who approached photography in a conceptual manner, Roels also questions the properties of the image: how it operates, influences, and deceives. What defines photography as photography? And how do viewers interpret it, in an era marked by image manipulation and production, where visual communication sets the tone? These are significant questions embedded in his body of work.

While Roels' artistic practice is primarily rooted in analog photography, he combines analog techniques with other art forms, non-photographic processes, or Artificial Intelligence and generative imaging. This allows the artist's imagination to reach its peak, as nothing is deemed impossible. Additionally, the artist plays with the reproducible nature of the medium, creating unique works often consisting of multiple variations of the same negative, compiling them as equivalent images within the same frame, rendering no image perfect or superior to another. He also produces overprints, where the same negative is printed several times, causing the images to blend. The yellowed, coffee-coloured prints give his work a recognizable vintage look. Artistic imperfections and incidental elements, such as creases and stains that occur during printing, remain visible and characterize his visual language. By imprinting text on the prints or by drawing and painting on them, Roels adds surreal elements and layers of meaning.

'Woke Up Laughing' presents a vibrant universe of palm trees reminiscent of vacation, luxury, paradise and adventure. Roels celebrates their beauty but also sheds light on their darker sides, as, much like photography, they are not entirely trustworthy. A palm tree in Monaco tells a different story than a tree in Fallujah, Iraq, or in Palmyra, Syria, occupied by ISIS. These seemingly pristine and peaceful universal icons ruthlessly resonate with memories of our colonial history. Each image serves as a silent testimony, compelling the viewer to reflect, illustrating that paradise lurks around the corner but remains elusive and unattainable. The bright colours that Roels added to the black and white images make the confrontation lighter and more playful. Due to his background in literature and linguistics, his titles also play a crucial role in his work. Often embodying historical and contemporary references, they create confusion through their ambiguity.

The title 'Woke Up Laughing' refers to the eponymous song by British pop musician Robert Palmer and encapsulates the concept of Roels' exhibition.

*Woke up laughing
You make yourself a fortune out in Hong Kong
You sit at home and wonder whether you were wrong
You take a small vacation just to keep sane
You find on your return your home is blown away*

With 'Woke Up Laughing', the artist presents a series of perspectives, techniques, and approaches. There is much to observe, not only about photography but also about what lies behind it. His images serve as both an escape from and a reflection on the reality in which we live. While he does not seek to impose criticism, he cleverly elucidates the challenges we face today.



Dualist Heretics, 2022

Composition of 2 overprinted gelatin silver prints

55 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



An Ornament For A Summer's Day #2, 2022

Composition of 6 gelatin silver prints

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Giving Back Color #1, 2023

Wax oil pastel on a gelatin silver print

40 x 50 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Extending My Cactus Dream, 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Thunder As A Way to Cleanse, 2023

Wax pencil on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Road Trip With Persephone, 2023

Composition of 2 gelatin silver prints with acrylic paint

40 x 55 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Leaving Only That Very Small And Special Selection, 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



But That Was In Another Country, 2023

Acrylic paint on a gelatin silver print

40 x 50 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



A 17th Century Discovery, 2023

Ink on a gelatin silver print

40 x 50 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



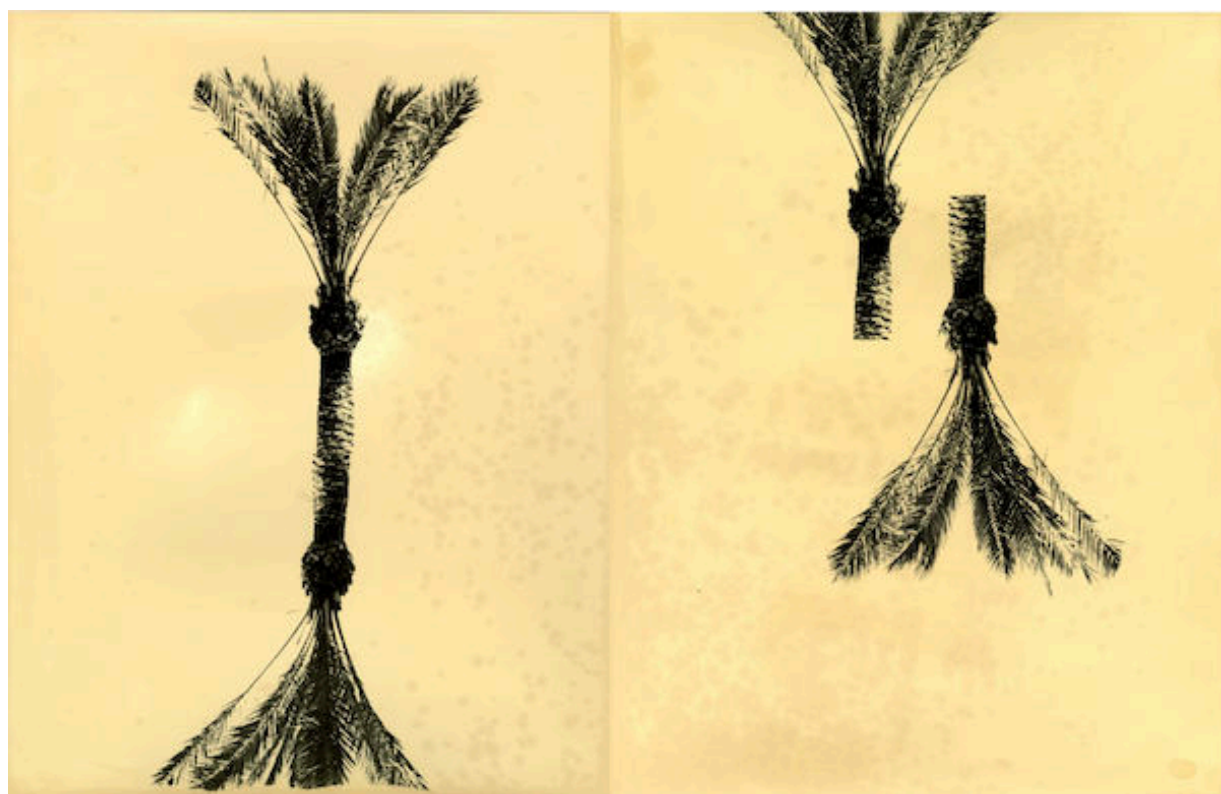
Getting Rid Of Palm Trees (Ibiza), 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



And Paradise Itself Were Incomplete, 2023

Composition of 2 gelatin silver prints

40 x 55 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



The Realm Where Important Deities Dwell, 2023

Composition of 2 gelatin silver print with lino cut prints

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Stacking Potassium, 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Let's Say, An Evening for Dinner, 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Let's Say, An Evening for Dinner #5, 2023

Pencil on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Dealing with Static (How), 2023

Graphite on a composition of 2 gelatin silver prints

53 x 36 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



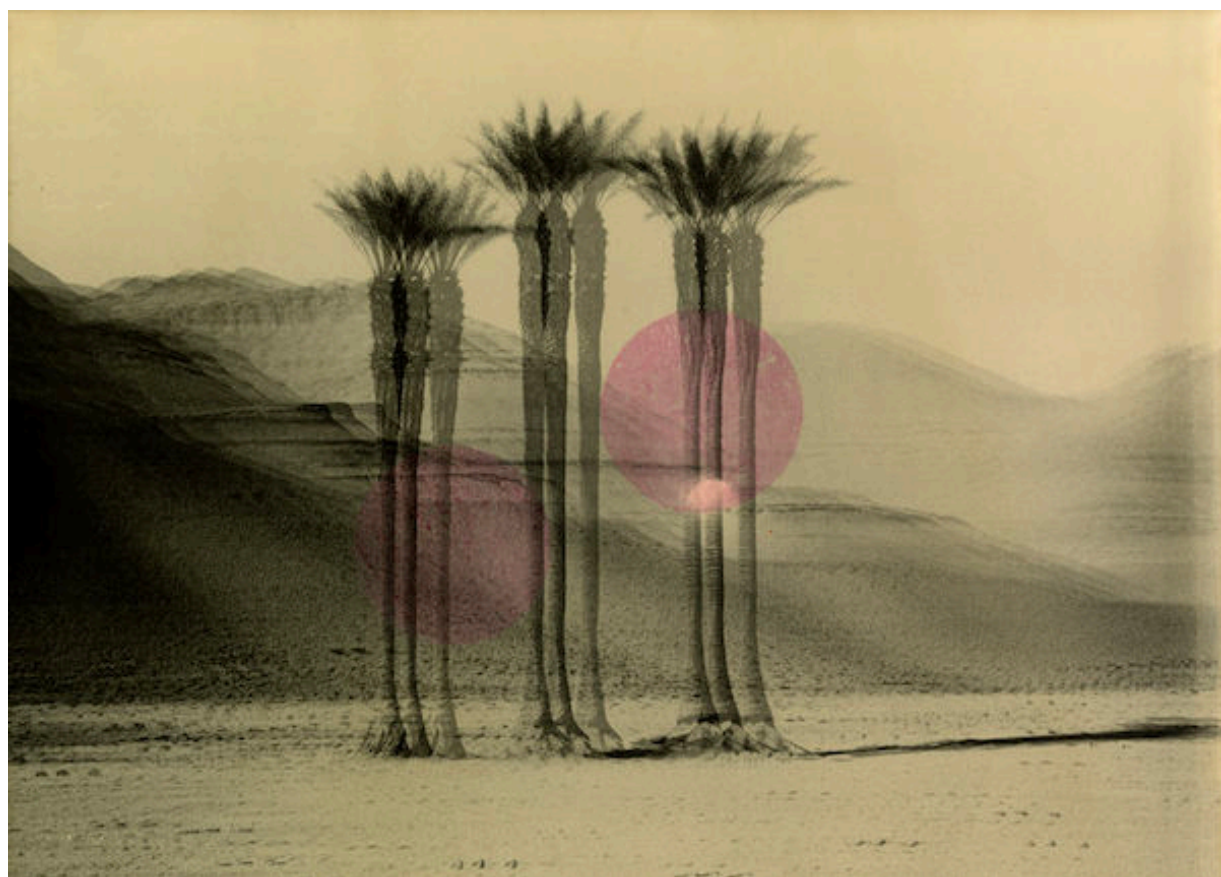
Desertwave, 2023

Lino ink on a gelatin silver print

40 x 50 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



And The Afternoon Sleeps So Peacefully, 2023

Color transfer on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



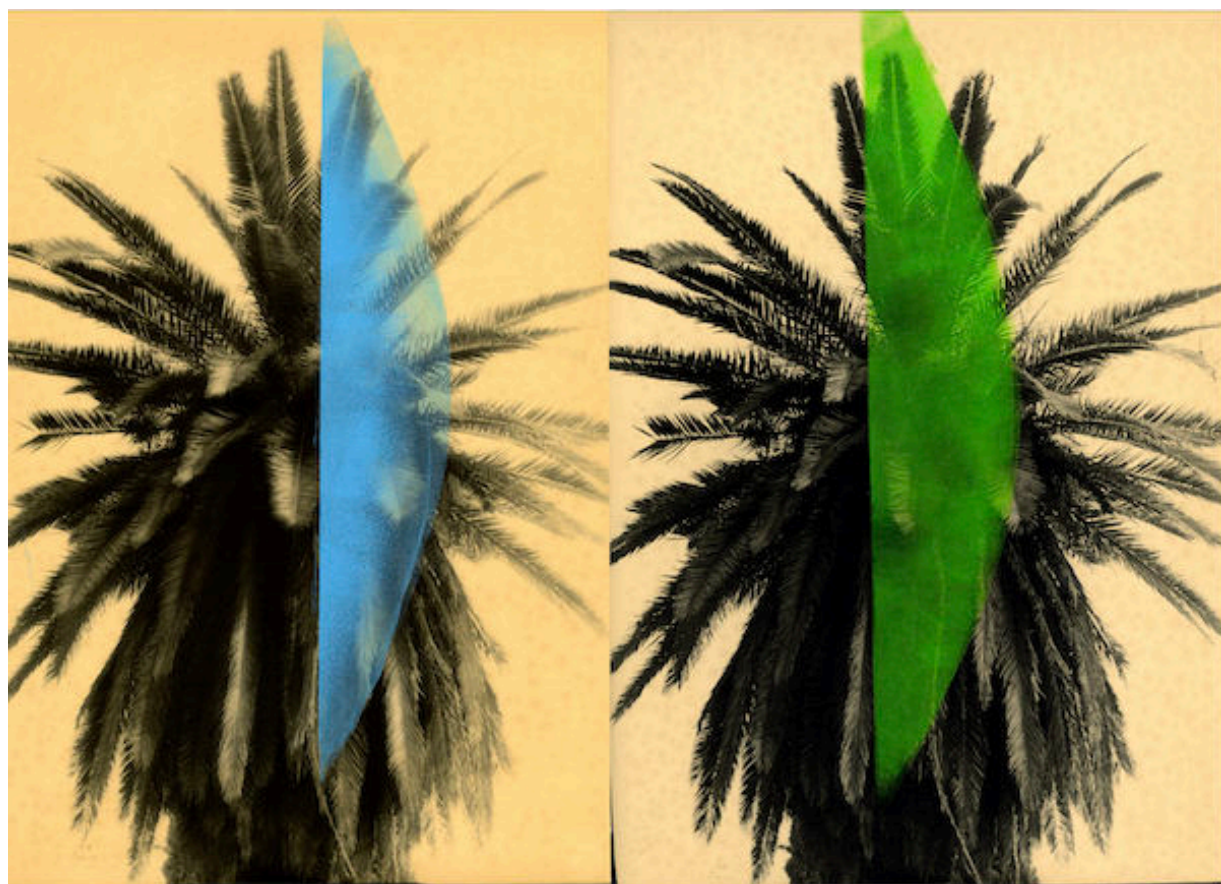
You And I So Beautiful, 2023

Color pencil on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Worshipping (Gaia & Ouranos), 2023

Composition of 2 gelatin silver prints with acrylic paint

50 x 67 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Figura Serpentinata (Demeter IV), 2023

Acrylic paint on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Figura Serpentinata (Demeter V), 2023

Acrylic paint and lino cut ink on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Figura Serpentinata (Demeter In Pink), 2023

Acrylic paint on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Road Trip (Cinematic), 2023

Composition of 4 gelatin silver prints

70 x 60 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Curiouser & Curiouser, 2023

Composition of 2 overprinted gelatin silver prints

40 x 52 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



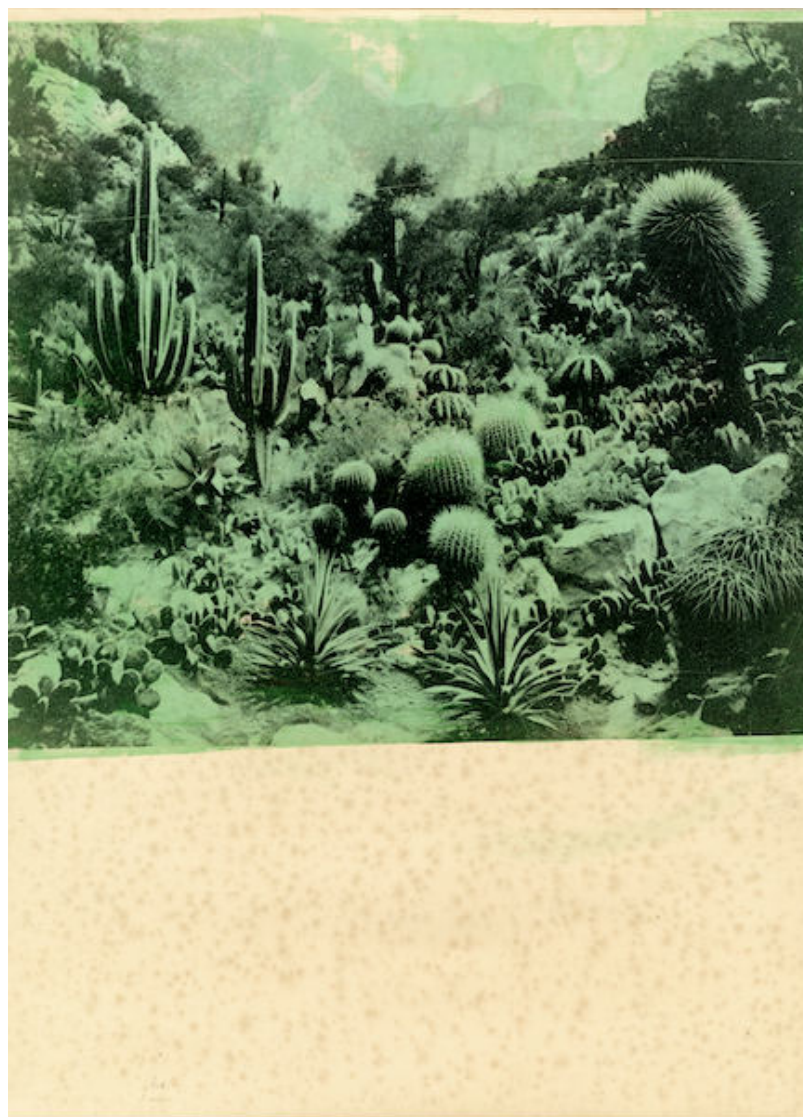
Painting The Flowers Of The World (Persephone), 2023

Lino cut print on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Dreaming Dioramas #1, 2023

Lino cut print on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Dreaming Dioramas #2, 2023

Lino cut print on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Dreaming Dioramas (Sergio Leone), 2023

Composition of 9 gelatin silver prints

128 x 97 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Phoenix (Punctum), 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print
50 x 40 cm
Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Reading Signs In Everything, 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Archetypes, 2023

Composition of 2 gelatin silver prints

53 x 36 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Yellow Moon Yellow Moon 3, 2023

Gelatin silver print

40 x 50 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Night (Cinematic), 2023

Gelatin silver print

40 x 50 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



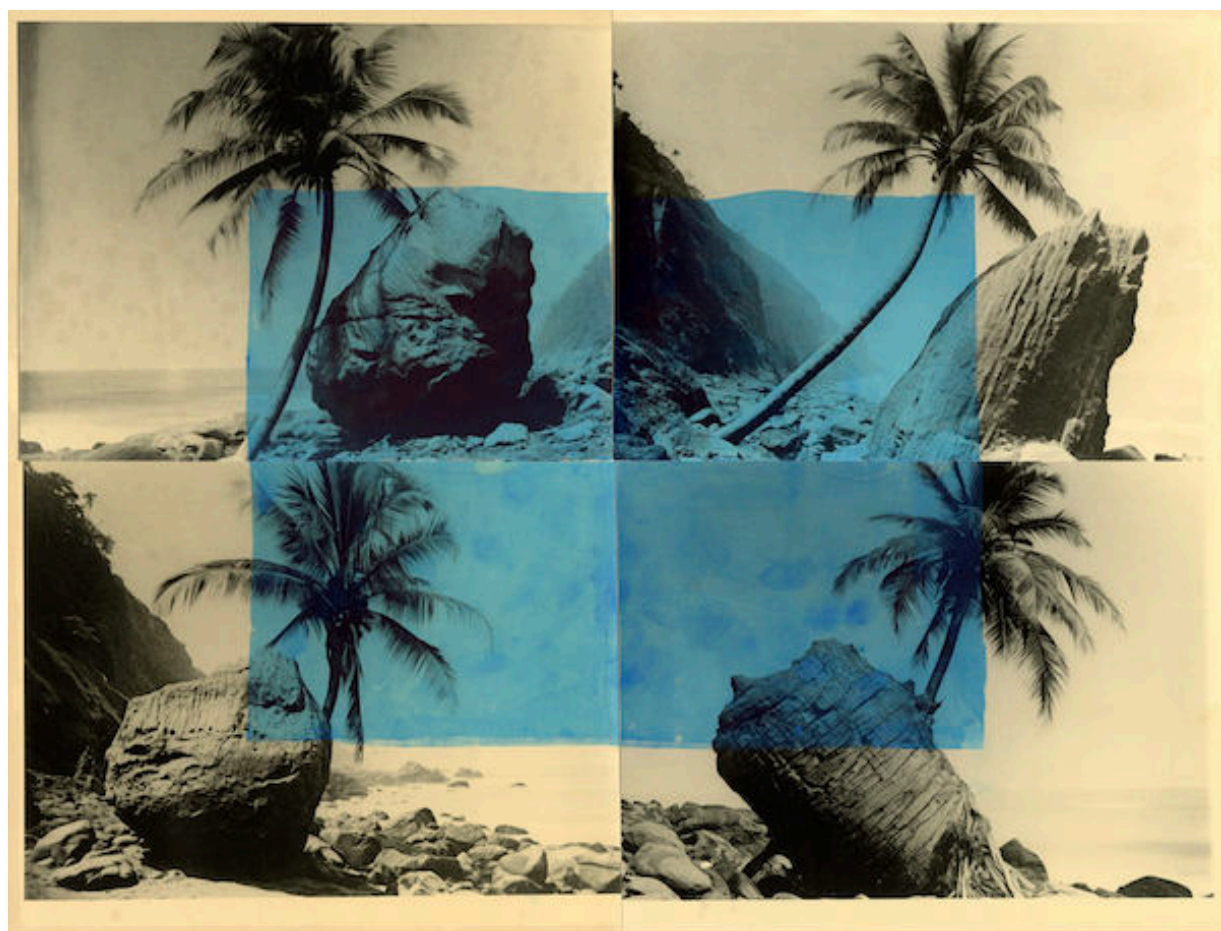
Rescue From Without, 2023

Acrylic paint on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Sailors Turned To Stone (Gorgon Blue), 2023

Composition of 4 gelatin silver prints with lino cut ink

55 x 70 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Heaven's Means Of Removing Evil, 2023

Pencil on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



Supernatural Aid, 2023

Graphite on a gelatin silver print

50 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



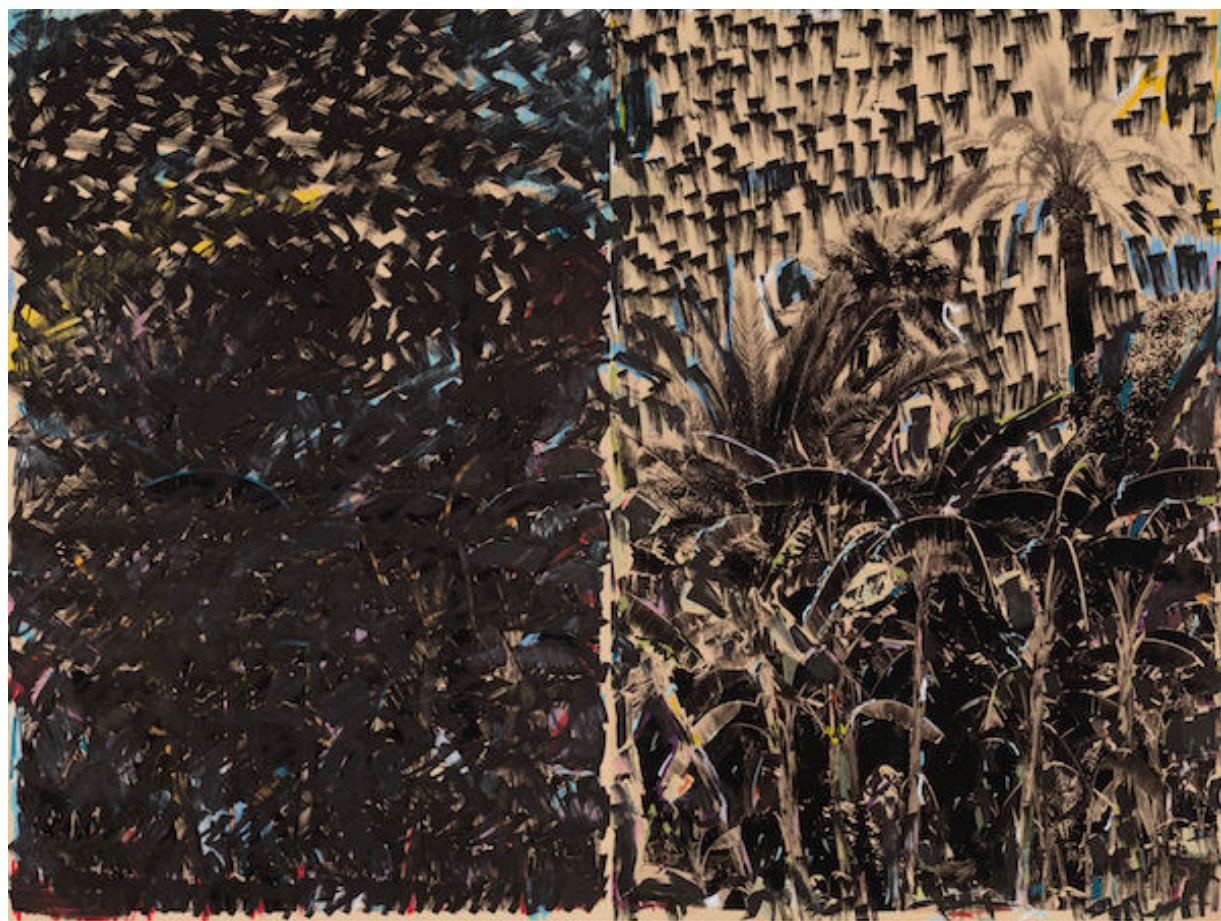
Woke Up Laughing (Dreaming Dioramas), 2023

Inkjetprint on HM photo rag ultra smooth 305g/m2

140 x 100 cm

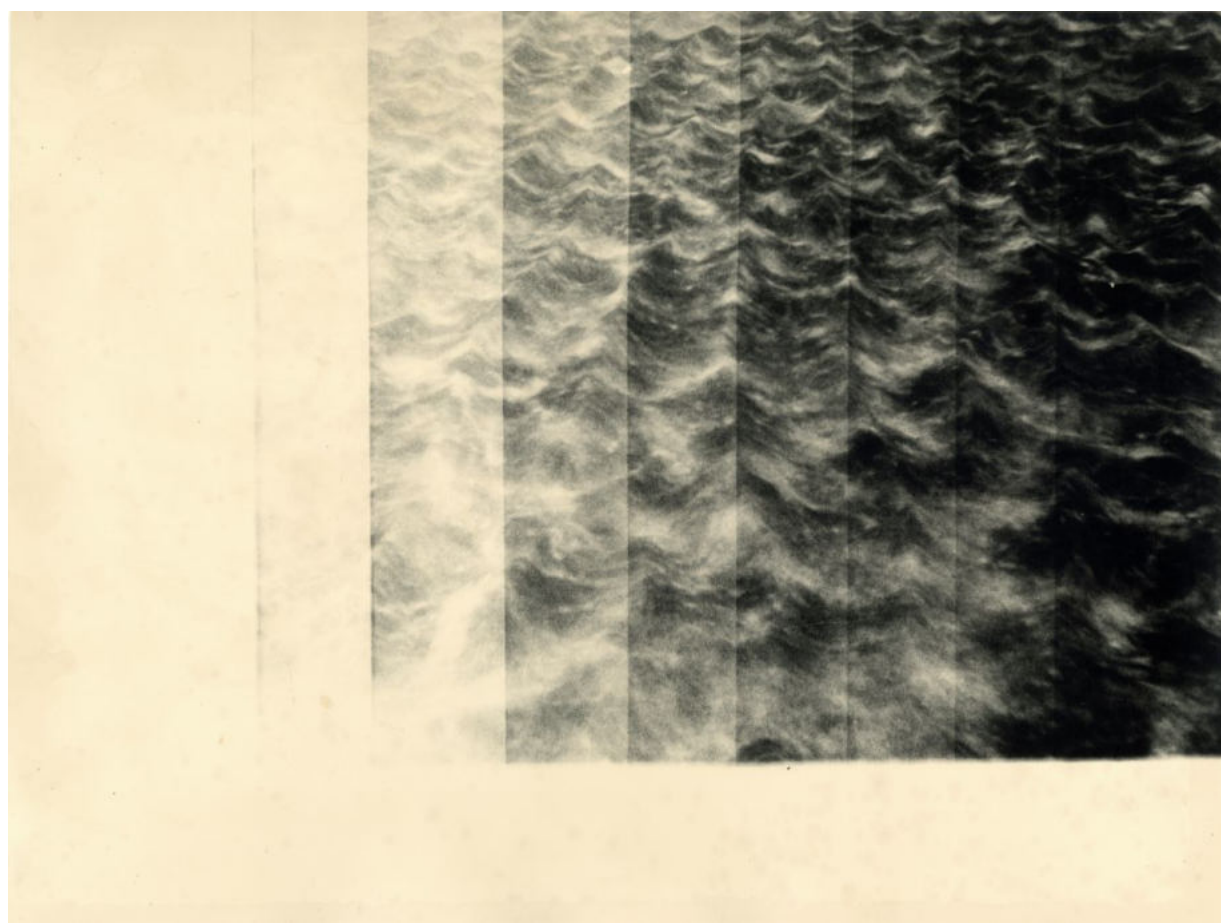
Edition of 3

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



The Edge Of The Jungle (An Implacable Force Brooding), 2023

Composition of two inkjetprints on HM photo rag ultra smooth 305g/m2 with acrylic paint
60 x 80 cm
Unique
Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



A Sea Divided I, 2023

Gelatin silver print
40 x 50 cm
Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame



The Edge Of The Jungle (A Beautiful Day 1), 2022

Ink on an inkjetprint (HM photo rag ultra smooth 305 g/m²)

60 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso frame



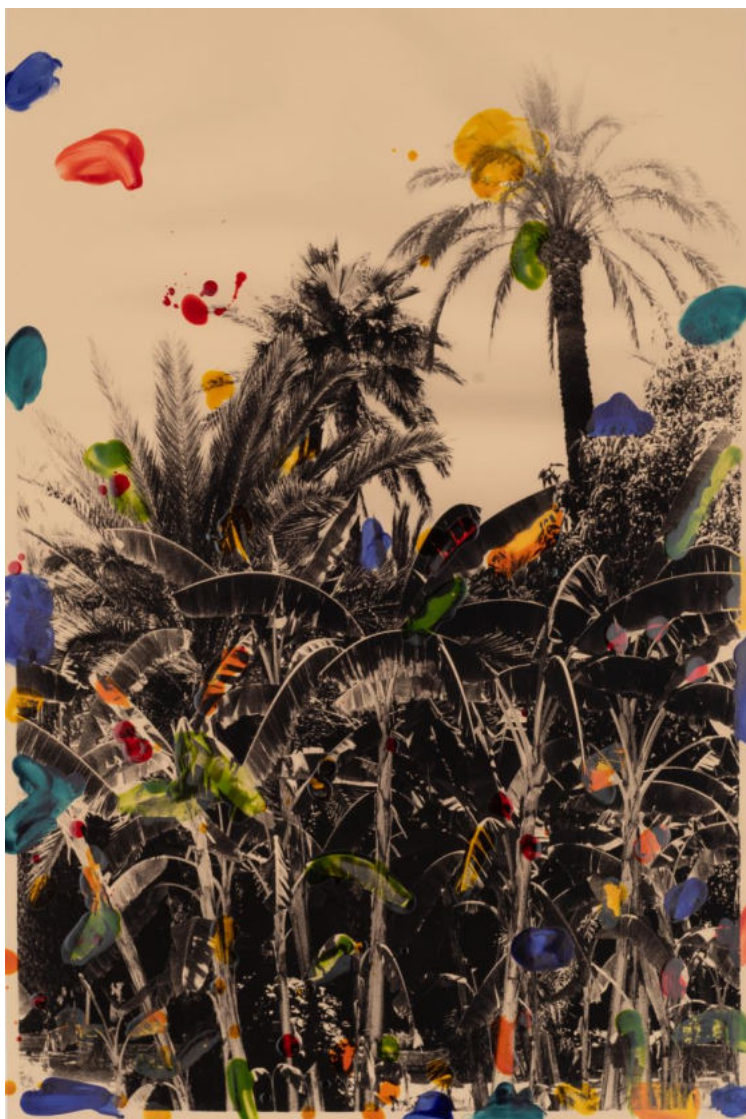
The Edge Of The Jungle (A Beautiful Day 5), 2022

Ink on an inkjetprint (HM photo rag ultra smooth 305 g/m²)

60 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso frame



The Edge Of The Jungle (A Beautiful Day 7), 2022

Ink on an inkjetprint (HM photo rag ultra smooth 305 g/m²)

60 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso frame



The Edge Of The Jungle (A Beautiful Day 9), 2022

Wax oil pastel on an inkjetprint (HM photo rag ultra smooth 305 g/m²)

60 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso frame



The Edge Of The Jungle (A Beautiful Day 10), 2022

Wax oil pastel on an inkjetprint (HM photo rag ultra smooth 305 g/m²)

60 x 40 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso frame



The Edge Of The Jungle (An Golden Day Quickly Spent), 2023

Composition of four inkjetprints on HM photo rag ultra smooth 305g/m2 with acrylic paint, metallic paint, wax oil
pastel and gravure ink

120 x 80 cm

Unique

Signed, titled and dated in black marker on verso cardboard and on verso frame