

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Yoan Capote, *Purificación (Salida)*, 2022, Plaster, barbed wire, link chain and other recycled metal elements on jute mounted on wooden panel, 100 x 175 x 8 cm. (39 3/8 x 68 7/8 x 3 1/8 in.)

YOAN CAPOTE

Litoral

March 1 – April 1, 2023

Private View: Friday, March 3, 6-8pm

Ben Brown Fine Arts is pleased to announce *Litoral*, an exhibition of new works by Cuban artist Yoan Capote at our Palm Beach gallery. This is the artist's fifth solo exhibition with Ben Brown Fine Arts, and first solo exhibition at the Palm Beach gallery. *Litoral* brings together a comprehensive selection of iconic seascape paintings, hailing from the artist's celebrated *Requiem*, *Isla* and *Purificación* series, as well as two sculptural pieces.

Capote first began exploring the potent symbolism and complexity of seascapes with his *Isla* series, thickly impastoed paintings of sea and sky converging in varying colorations and compositional arrangements, employing thousands of tiny fishhooks piercing the canvases to create rhythmic waters. This serial depiction of a singular subject in various atmospheric conditions roots Capote in the artistic tradition of artists ranging from Caspar David Friedrich to the Impressionists to Hiroshi Sugimoto, while also serving as a metaphorical device to contemplate topical issues of migration, immigration, geographical boundaries and political discord. In his *Requiem* series, Capote utilizes pure gold leaf in the fishhook paintings, evoking a spiritual, divine quality, inspired by the artist's encounters with early Renaissance painting and Medieval altarpieces during his travels in Florence, Italy, and responding to a call for healing and reflection during recent times of global health, political and environmental catastrophes. In his *Purificación* series, Capote recycles and manipulates discarded chains, barbed wire fencing and metal debris to make meticulous lines 'drawings' of sea and sky on plaster ground. The materiality of these grisaille palette seascapes conjures thoughts of boundaries and borders, power and oppression, scarcity and dispossession, while Capote's transformation and 'purification' of these harsh materials into lyrical mark makers emphasizes humanity's will to reshape the chains of injustice and our intrinsic desire for liberty.

Capote's preoccupation with the sea stems from his childhood memories of growing up on the politically isolated island of Cuba and his strong yearning to see and experience the outside world. The artist muses, "The sea is an obsession for any island population . . . When I was a child, I looked to the horizon and would imagine the world beyond. The sea represents the seductiveness of these dreams, but at the same time danger and isolation." This duality is revealed in his seascape paintings – they are at once meditations on the sublime beauty and boundlessness of the wild seas, yet their construction of sharp, menacing fishhooks and barbed wire, many tainted with traces of blood, firmly connotes the dangers and impossibility of migration experienced by many Cubans, and countless others around the world.

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The two sculptures in the exhibition similarly touch on themes of migration, hope and misfortune in their oblique, poetic symbolism. *Rudder*, 2022, is a polychromed wood and bronze boat rudder realized in the silhouette of Florida. Suspended from the gallery ceiling, its pendular dynamism induces the drift of a shipwreck or a furtive boat at sea and draws metaphors to the illusions, challenges and often tragedy experienced by migrants. *Presagio*, 2022, also taking its contours from a map in reimagined form, portrays part of the Cuban coastline on the irregular edge of a scythe, paying homage to all the unknown victims of the dire political and economic circumstances of the island nation.

Ben Brown Fine Arts Palm Beach looks forward to welcoming you to the gallery and sharing the poignant, provocative and contemplative work of Yoan Capote.



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ABOUT YOAN CAPOTE

Yoan Capote (b. 1977) is a Cuban artist whose work spans painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography. Capote studied and has taught at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Havana, Cuba. Capote represented Cuba at the 54th Venice Biennale, was awarded a UNESCO prize and received a fellowship grant from the Guggenheim Foundation. His work addresses political, social and migration issues that are both specific to the Cuban identity and universally relevant. Drawing references from the early Renaissance to Symbolism and 19th century painting, Capote's representations of landscape and the sea often become metaphorical illustrations of human, psychological or emotional experience. Capote's work has been exhibited extensively in Cuba, Europe and in the United States where he participated in the critically acclaimed group exhibition *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art, 1950-2015* which travelled throughout the country including to the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC. His work is included in notable public collections such as the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, NY; Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; National Council of Visual Arts, Havana, Cuba; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; and Pizzuti Collection of the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio.

Instagram: @yoancapote

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In 2004, Ben Brown Fine Arts opened its first location in the heart of Mayfair, London. The gallery quickly established itself on the international art scene with exhibitions of long-term gallery artists Candida Höfer, Tony Bevan, Claude & François-Xavier Lalanne, and Heinz Mack, amongst others, as well as momentous exhibitions of 20th-century masters including Lucio Fontana, Alighiero Boetti and Gerhard Richter. In 2009, Ben Brown Fine Arts opened an exhibition space in Hong Kong, becoming the first international gallery to move to the city that would soon become a major international art hub. In Hong Kong, the gallery introduced notable exhibitions of Pablo Picasso, Sean Scully, Frank Auerbach, and Miquel Barceló, as well as survey exhibitions of Chinese contemporary photography, the Düsseldorf School of Photography, 20th-century Italian art, and the ZERO movement. In 2021, Ben Brown Fine Arts opened a third location in Palm Beach, Florida, with an inaugural exhibition celebrating the legacy of American and European 20th-century artists who developed radical approaches to making art, among them Alexander Calder, Georg Baselitz, and Andy Warhol. The galleries regularly exhibit and develop programming for our renowned stable of international, multi-disciplinarian contemporary artists, including the aforementioned as well as Yoan Capote, Awol Erizku, Nabil Nahas, José Parlá, Enoc Perez, Ena Swansea, Hank Willis Thomas, Gavin Turk, and Jan Worst. With multi-lingual staff based in London, Hong Kong, New York, and Palm Beach, the gallery has strong relationships with private collectors, advisors, and public institutions, sourcing and placing important primary and secondary artworks for them. Ben Brown Fine Arts participates in major art fairs worldwide, including Art Basel, Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Basel Miami Beach, The Armory Show, Frieze Masters, TEFAF Maastricht, and TEFAF New York.

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