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Yoan Capote, *Aguas Territoriales (Procusto)*, 2024, Saw blades, oil, plaster on jute mounted on wooden panels, 100 x 150 cm. (39 3/8 x 59 in.)

YOAN CAPOTE *SEE ESCAPES*

24 May – 26 July 2024
Private view: Thursday, 23 May 6-8 pm

Ben Brown Fine Arts is delighted to present *SEE ESCAPES*, an exhibition of new works by Cuban artist Yoan Capote, curated by esteemed art historian Joachim Pissarro. *SEE ESCAPES* is deeply rooted in the context of Capote's upbringing in Cuba, an island marked by profound historical and geographical circumstances. Influenced by the tumultuous legacy of the Cold War era and the pervasive uncertainty about the future, his work reflects the societal tensions and ideological confrontations of his surroundings. Capote draws inspiration from myriad art historical movements, from the awe-inspiring landscapes and seascapes of Romantic painters Caspar David Friedrich, John Constable, and J.M.W Turner, to the rough materiality of the Arte Povera movement. Through his work, Capote offers a reflection of society's complexities and a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

Exploring a spectrum of themes through an emotional lens, *SEE ESCAPES* presents a progression in Capote's practice, presenting his most recent series *Purificación*, *Aguas Territoriales*, *Sentimientos Encontrados*, and *Family Portraits* to a London audience for the first time, alongside works from the artist's celebrated *Isla* and *Palangre* series. Intricately intertwined with the traumatic socio-political landscape of the artist's upbringing in Cuba, *SEE ESCAPES* expands Capote's iconic seascapes towards a wider, global spectrum of reflection, as the artist explores themes of migration and borders, life and death, hope and tragedy, and the interplay between control and freedom of expression. Capote finds solace in the process of art making, using it as a means to transcend his reality, all while prompting profound contemplation on the human experience and societal dynamics within his work.

Exhibited for the first time, Capote's series *Sentimientos Encontrados* sees the artist intricately collage paper electrocardiogram readings from individuals in Cuba to craft seascapes that evoke the emotional complexities of society. The exhibition presents a new progression in the artist's ongoing *Palangre* series, whereby he melds

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bronze castings with steel fishhooks, offering a contemporary interpretation of traditional bronze plaques, capturing the essence of the seascape through abstract form and texture. Capote's *Purificación* series delves into themes of control and liberation, as the artist repurposes metal detritus into delicate line 'drawings' upon plaster ground, symbolising the transformation from oppression to freedom. Accompanied by video documentation of his process, the series prompts contemplation on power dynamics and man's resilience. The artist's poetic approach to materials is further epitomised in his most recent series, *Aguas Territoriales*, which sees repurposed saw blades reshaped into undulating waves below the horizon. *Family Portraits* explores the emotional turmoil of migration, utilising scratched mirrors in wooden frames to reflect viewers amidst inverted sky and sea motifs, capturing the poignant narratives of departure and disconnection from homeland and loved ones.

Coming of age in 1990s Cuba, Capote always found solace and inspiration by the sea, contemplating the human condition and the power of artistic expression. Intimately familiar with the sea's presence, its vastness and unpredictability becoming a metaphor for the complexities of life itself. The centrepiece of the exhibition is Capote's monumental *Isla (Voragine)* (2024), which explores these dichotomies with a nuanced approach. On one level, the sea is depicted as a place of transcendence, enveloping the viewer into its depths. However, intertwined with this beauty is a sense of danger and tragedy illustrated through the use of sharp, menacing fishhooks. *SEE ESCAPES* serves as a testament to Capote's artistic evolution, inviting viewers to engage with layers of meaning and introspection, encapsulating the intricate emotional and psychological conflicts of individuals within the tangible realm of his art.

ABOUT YOAN CAPOTE

Yoan Capote graduated from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba, in 2001. His work has been exhibited extensively in Cuba, Europe and in the USA where he participated in the critically-acclaimed group exhibition *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art, 1950-2015*, which travelled throughout the United States, including to the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC. Capote has received awards and grants from prestigious institutions such as UNESCO; Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York; Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York; and the Brownstone Foundation, Paris. Notable collections include Tate, London; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, New York; Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague; Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe; Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris and San Francisco; the Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, Ohio; Buhl Collection, New York; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Farber Collection, New York; Karen and Robert Duncan, Lincoln, Nebraska; and North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh.

ABOUT JOACHIM PISSARO

Joachim Pissarro is President Emeritus of the Bershad Professor of Art History and Director of the Hunter College Galleries, Hunter College, CUNY/City University of New York. He was previously a curator at MoMA, a curator of Contemporary Art at the Yale University Art Gallery, and a Chief Curator at the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth. His teaching and writing presently focus on the challenges facing art history due to the unprecedented proliferation of art works, images, and visual data. He co-authored a book on this topic with David Carrier, entitled *Wild Art*. In the same vein, he also taught a seminar on Michael Jackson: The Contemporary Representation of a Cultural Icon. Pissarro formed a company called PARALLEL (with partners, architects John Keenen and Terry Riley), and in 2021 joined forces with Philippe de Montebello and Jennifer Stockman in creating MSG (Global Museum Strategies Group). They avail their expertise to help develop museum projects, mostly in China and the Gulf Region.

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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 Tony Bevan, Candida Höfer, Claude & François-Xavier Lalanne, and Heinz Mack, amongst others, as well as momentous exhibitions of 20th century masters including Alighiero Boetti, Lucio Fontana 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 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, following with notable exhibitions of the gallery's roster of modern and contemporary artists. The galleries regularly exhibit and develop programming for our renowned stable of international, multi-disciplinarian artists, including the aforementioned as well as Yoan Capote, Awol Erizku, Vik Muniz, Nabil Nahas, José Parlá, Enoc Perez, Ena Swansea, Gavin Turk and Jan Worst. The gallery is recognized for our depth of expertise and inventory in 20th century European and American art. 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, and TEFAF New York.

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