

Eremozoic

A solo exhibition by Jim Naughten

7 October – 18 November 2021



Jim Naughten, *Bear*, 2021. C-Type. 120 x 100 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Grove Square Galleries.

Grove Square Galleries is delighted to announce a forthcoming solo show by photographic artist Jim Naughten, the latest name to join the gallery's growing roster of contemporary talents. Entitled *Eremozoic*, the exhibition – the gallery's first in the photographic medium – will present a new series by Naughten, whose vibrant digital works confront our modern-day disconnection from the environment. The exhibition will run from 7 October to 18 November.

Enchanting yet illusory, Naughten's striking vision aims to highlight the perilous state of the natural world. Trained in both photography and painting, he combines these backgrounds in a practice he refers to as 'digital painting', using digital enhancement programmes to conjure worlds that feel familiar yet strange. From orangutans swinging through psychedelic forests, to deer roaming saturated canyons, Naughten's work explores the idea of the natural world as a faraway fictional fantasy – alerting us to its rapid disappearance and our growing estrangement.



Jim Naughten, *Orangutans*, 2021. C-Type. 100 x 142 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Grove Square Galleries.

At the heart of Naughten's work is a strong interest in scientific and biological theory, as reflected in the exhibition title. Eremozoic is a term coined by biologist and writer E. O. Wilson to describe the current era of the Earth's development, characterised as a period of mass extinction due to human activity. The Eremozoic Age is alternatively referred to as The Age of Loneliness, and this sense of dislocation and disorientation is captured in Naughten's depiction of nature as an unfamiliar, unnatural realm.

Inspired by dioramas of animal forms found in natural history museums all over the world, Naughten extrapolates these images and digitally reimagines them in defamiliarised and unrealistic contexts. By further exoticising his landscapes with a heightened, artificial colour palette, he draws literal attention to our rose-tinted view of the future of the natural world. His technique of digital painting evokes a style close to magic realism, in which the boundary between fact and fiction, imagination and reality, becomes blurred through the intersection of mediums.

'Eremozoic is a continuation of my practice but undoubtedly my most important project to date,' says the artist. 'I'm interested in how, in the evolutionary blink of an eye, humans have come to dominate and overwhelm the planet and how far our relationship with the natural world has fundamentally and dangerously shifted from that of our ancestors. I hope the work will create awareness and discourse about this disconnection, our fictionalised ideas about nature and possibilities for positive change.'

Dazzling and distorting us with new perspectives on our relationship with nature, Jim Naughten's Eremozoic presents an eye-catching body of work that encourages us to look – and think – twice. This exhibition is in support of Fauna & Flora International, 10% of all proceeds will be donated to the charity towards its vital work.

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For further information please contact

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Notes to Editors:

Dates: 7 October – 18 November 2021

Location: Grove Square Galleries, 156 New Cavendish Street, London W1W 6YW

Opening hours: Monday – Saturday 10am – 6pm

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info@grovesquaregalleries.com

About Jim Naughten

Jim Naughten is a photographic artist whose enchanting and illusory body of work explores our modern-day disconnection from nature.

After being awarded a painting scholarship to Lancing College, Naughten studied photography at the Arts Institute of Bournemouth. Drawing on both of these backgrounds, he describes his practice as 'digital painting', using digital enhancement programmes to conjure the striking and alluring worlds of his images. Working in a style close to magic realism, his art blurs the line between truth and fiction, fantasy and reality, nature and the unnatural.

Engaging with biological and scientific theory, Naughten's most recent work is inspired by E. O. Wilson's idea that we are living in the Earth's Eremozoic period: characterised as an age of loneliness following mass extinctions caused by human activity. His images are based on dioramas found in natural history museums all over the world, reimaging these animal forms in defamiliarised contexts and with a heightened colour palette. By creating these new and disorientating perspectives, he encourages us to reflect on themes such as our relationship with wildlife and the future of biodiversity and the planet.

Naughten's work has been widely featured in exhibitions across Europe and the US. This includes solo shows at the Imperial War Museum, Horniman Museum, and a forthcoming show at the Wellcome Collection (2022), as well as group shows at the Royal Academy of Art and National Portrait Galleries in London. His work is included in collections such as The Museum of Photographic Art, San Diego; The Imperial War Museum (UK); and private collections worldwide. He was nominated for the Prix Elysee 2016 and shortlisted for the Vevey Images photo award 2012.

About Grove Square Galleries

Founded in September 2020, Grove Square Galleries is a new London art gallery offering emerging and established collectors an avenue for exploration and discovery. Merging digital innovation and physical exhibitions, the gallery's Fitzrovia space offers an artist-led exhibition programme celebrating contemporary art practice worldwide. Artists represented by the gallery include Orlanda Broom, Crystal Fischetti and Christopher Kieling.

About Fauna & Flora International

(FFI) protects threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science and that enhance human well-being. Operating in more than 40 countries worldwide, FFI saves species from extinction and habitats from destruction, while improving the livelihoods of local people. Founded in 1903, FFI is the world's longest established international wildlife conservation organisation and a registered charity.

Visit: www.fauna-flora.org

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