

NEWS

HAL BROMM GALLERY

90 West Broadway at Chambers Street

Tribeca New York 10007

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Contact: Katie Svensson

212-732-6196

info@halbromm.com

Christian Brechneff

Pic Paradis, St Martin: The February and March 2020 Sunset Pastels

4 December 2020 - 30 April 2021

Premier exhibition of Brechneff's otherworldly sunset views from Pic Paradis, the highest point on the island of St. Martin



Christiam Brechneff admiring a St. Martin sunset 2017, photo by Mike Magee

Christian Brechneff's emotive new pastels are the subject of his solo exhibition, *Pic Paradis, St. Martin: The February and March 2020 Sunset Pastels*, at Hal Bromm Gallery, Tribeca.

Presented are a collection of sublime works that capture nature untamed in sun, sea and sky: each setting changing with every moment of glorious fading light. Characterized by a variety of reds,

blues, purples, and the ever changing color of the sun, his newest pastels move organically from left to right, light to dark.

The expansive sunset views from Pic Paradis, the highest point on the island of St. Martin, are captured in Christian Brechneff's transportive images. This exhibition showcases his most recent sojourn there in February and March of this year (2020). The artist has returned many times to this favored place since his first visit to the island in the 1980s. He traveled to St. Martin annually where a wonderful host, whose circle happened to include Jasper Johns, offered him a guesthouse right below La Samana; where he created his earlier series of colorful sunsets.



Pic Paradis Pastel Sunset Series 11, 2020

Pastel on Bugra Hahnemühle paper,

Each work comprised of six sequential images (Each 9" x 12") reflecting a complete sunset; 9" x 82" overall

Donald Kuspit, writing on Brechneff's work, stated "Christian Brechneff's new pastels, drawn in various locations around the world, indicate a remarkable direct, close relationship - rather startling intimacy and engagement- with nature, even more intense, I venture to say that of the impressionists". Kuspit continues, "he hurls himself emotionally into the volcano of explosive light that the sky becomes, recording it with responsive devotion to its changing nuances that never loses sight of its overall impact. Indeed, the aesthetics of spontaneous gesture seamlessly converge in Brechneff's pastels, a sure sign that the 'truth' of nature has been encountered and mastered. He is a kind of Jacob wrestling with the angle of light, with his art receiving its blessing. His pastels are mystical epiphanies that nonetheless remain adroitly focused- a romantic art that carefully details the titanic forces at work in sacred nature."



Three complete Pic Paradis Pastel Sunset Series, 2020
 Pastel on Bugra Hahnenmühle paper,
 Each work comprised of six sequential 9" x 12" images, 9" x 82" overall

These works ultimately humble us to the sublime nature of our earth, while reminding us of our irrelevance in the larger universe. In this sense, they invite us to revel in our own fortuitous existence captured in every beautiful landscape and sunset. Brechneff's new pastels offer a similar experience, but perhaps with a refined edge that only years of familiarity with a place, and a pandemic, can bring.



Brechneff working in St. Martin c. 2017, photo by Mike Magee

Christian Brechneff began creating sunscapes from his rooftop on Sifnos, Greece where he has lived each summer since the early 70s. His work moves seamlessly from sunrises to sunsets, continually deploying striking contrasts and fervent gestures. In 1999, he traveled to South Africa and continued to paint sunrises and sunsets in Rock Tail Bay and Kwa Zulu Natal, returning there again in 2000. The following year, determined to paint the Pacific Ocean, he travelled to Haramara, Mexico near Sayulito Puerto Vallarte to capture the depth of colors behind the endless expanse of sea.

Next on his quest, Brechneff stayed closer to New York City, drawing sunsets on Long Island, working from an ocean front guest house in the dunes. Here Brechneff created his warm East Hampton series in dry pastel.



Christian Brechneff in his Manhattan studio with the *Haramara Pacific Ocean* series Photo: Joe Standart

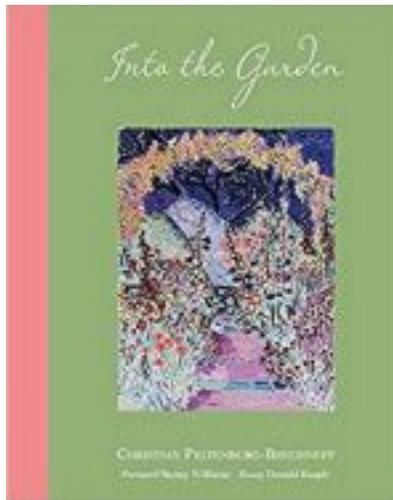
Tracking the sun's changing reflections on the Aegean Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, Brechneff returned to the Caribbean Sea for his most recent Pic Paradis pastels. As Donald Kuspit writes, these settings are "where the end of the world occurs-magical spaces where the 'beyond' becomes visible and sure-footed, indeed, where one can carry on an artistic romance with its magic."

Brechneff turned to painting the four seasons- an organic expansion for an artist obsessed with capturing the unstable forces of nature- when he returned to Switzerland to capture the Swiss Alps in Sils Maria. He continued this theme when he went to Venice working from the seafront in Giudecca.



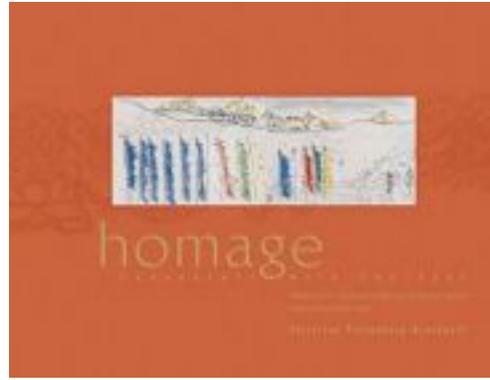
Christian Brechneff and Mike Magee filming the artist's sunsets for his documentary *Like Notes of Music*

Brechneff was born in the Belgian Congo in 1950, raised in Switzerland and later came to study in the United States. In 1975 he received a Masters of Art degree from London's College of Art. Known internationally for his exuberantly expressive pastel and oil landscapes as well as his ruddy ink flower drawings, Brechneff has won numerous awards. His work has been exhibited in museums and galleries across the globe including Daniel Blaise Thorens Fine Art Gallery in Basel, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery in Athens, Karouzou Gallery in Zurich, and now at Hal Bromm Gallery in Tribeca. Currently, works from Brechneff's Flower series are permanently on view at KRB Gallery, for more information contact info@KRBNYC.com or call 212 288 2221.



Christian Brechneff's most recent book, *Into the Garden* (2019), is a collection of works created *en plein air* in some of the most beautiful private gardens in the world. In his deliberate attempts to paint what he sees, Brechneff creates a world of foliage entirely his own. Vivid colors saturate the gardens he represents, sometimes engulfing the entire scene or simply as highlighting details. As Page Dickey commented, "What an enchantment to enter gardens through Christian's eye, down steps, along paths into a dazzling wildness of flowers and leaves, made magical by his brush and pen—not a word needed." Christian Brechneff once again captured the sublime presence of our natural world in a collection of works reminiscent of Van Gough's vibrant color scheme.

Brechneff wrote a loving memoir in his 2013 book *The Greek House: The Story of a Painter's Love Affair with the Island of Sifnos*, published by Farrar Straus and Giroux.



His first book, *Homage- Encounters with the East* (2007 Glitterati Editions), takes the reader to exotic places through his drawings capturing what the camera could never record: the spirit of the places he visited.

For further information, photographs or details on the exhibition, please visit halbromm.com or contact the gallery via email: galler@halbromm.com or call 212 732 6196.