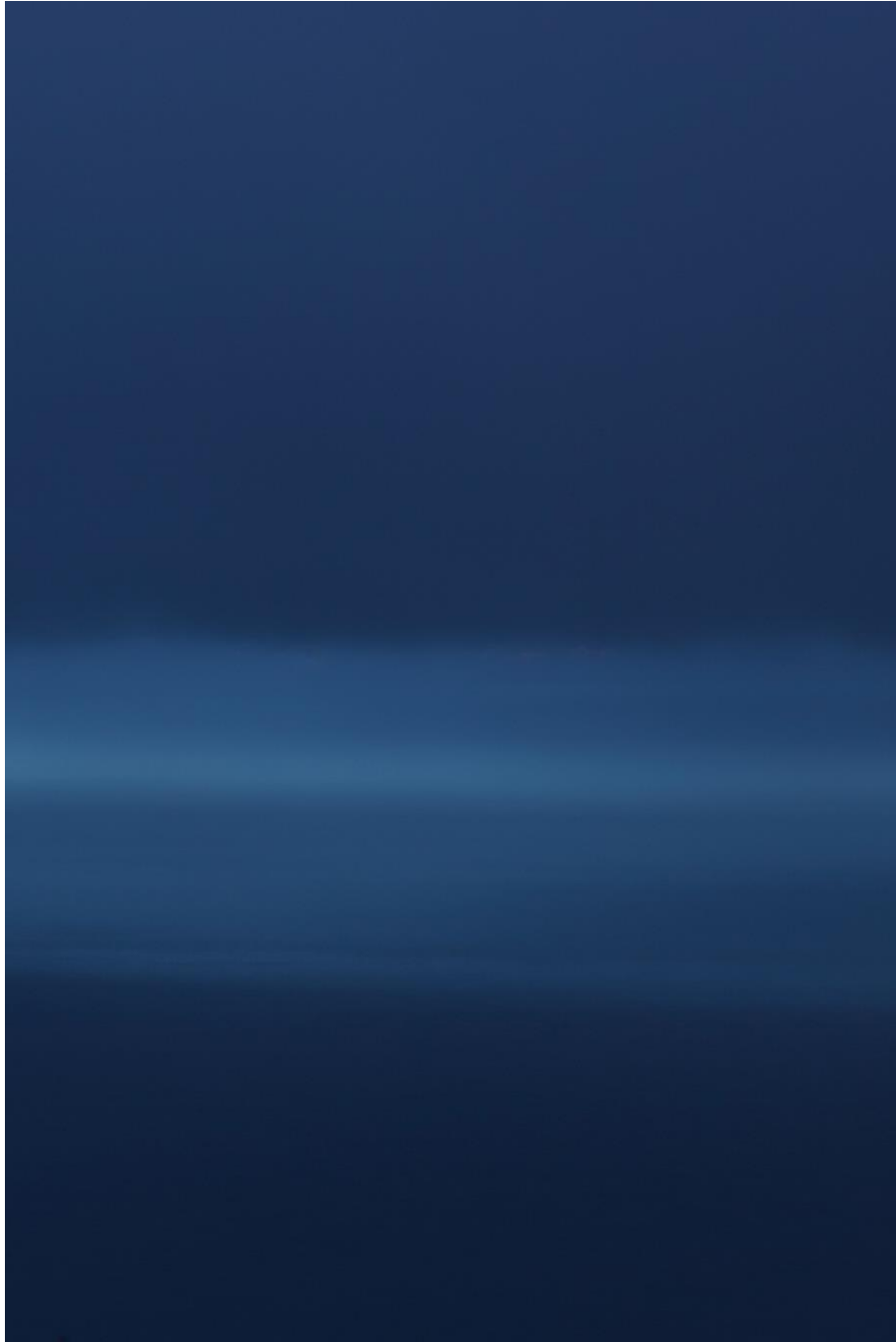


LAKE A MIRROR

Photographs by François Ventura



July 2026

That on a day of contemplation, the thinker may draw from the serenity of the sky and
the deep azure of Lake Geneva more noble ideas, more benevolent ideas, and more
ideas of benefit to humanity than can be drawn from ten centuries of twenty
revolutions
Victor Hugo 1802-1885

The sea is like a sky that is blue, blue, blue,
Above it, the sky is like the soft blue of Lake Geneva
Blaise Cendrars 1887-1961

It was then that I realized clearly that even a landscape cannot be described purely
objectively, cannot be captured by a camera, cannot be painted like a still life;
A landscape is also something alive, a lived experience;
And so that is what I have sought to achieve in a painting
Oskar Kokoschka 1886-1980

Photography is the art of painting with light
Alphonse de Lamartine 1790-1869



BIOGRAPHY

François Ventura was born in 1967 in Vevey and lives on the shores of Lac Léman. As a teenager, after learning photography at school, he enthusiastically produced his first silver prints in his family's basement before taking his camera and lenses to many countries in Asia. A mountaineer, he has photographed the ascent of the most beautiful peaks in the Alps, including the Matterhorn, Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa and the Dent d'Hérens, ...

Since 2017, he has been photographing the same section of the lake and its mirror effects, depending on the light.

In 2022, the book *MIROIR DU LÉMAN – LAKE A MIRROR*, edited by Favre publishing, was selected as a Payot bookshop favorite and its launch took place at the Swiss Camera Museum in Vevey at the invitation of Luc Debraine (director).

In 2023, the book was presented among others at the Open Books exhibition at PHOTO ELYSÉE in Lausanne in collaboration with EPFL+ECAL and on the recommendation of Nicolas Henchoz (curator). This will be followed by exhibitions of large-format prints by Luca Delachaux on Hahnemuehle Art paper, at the Musée du Léman gallery in Nyon, the TCarminé gallery in Geneva and several others under the artistic direction of Murs Porteurs.

François Ventura still works part time as a medical doctor in Geneva.

Interview TV Léman Bleu - January 2023

Interview - November 2025

Interview par Silvana Moï Virchaux - December 2025

Article L'Art à Genève - January 2026

LAKE A MIRROR is a collection of photographs all taken from the same place, and always from the same horizon, the lake... only the moment and the framing change. They are the raw reflet of the nature, seasons, wind, clouds, sun, ...

These images are the mirror of our moods, our emotions, ... our external lights and our internal shadows.

The lake, *like a mirror* of the human soul and solitude in the vast expanse... a place for contemplation.

CONCEPT

The lake as a canvas. The sun, the light, and the shadows as paint. The wind, the waves, and the *natural ripples* as brushes. The photographer to capture this raw scene. The artist to reflect their emotions in the mirror—the lake. Photographs that mirror these scenes.

If, for Alphonse de Lamartine, *photography is the art of painting with light* (Photo from φωτος, photos: light; ... graphy from γραφειν, graphein: to paint, draw, write, ...), then might we create the term *limnigraphy* here? (λίμνη, límni: lake), or even *lemangraphy*.

WORKS

The **first part** of the LAKE A MIRROR project, which began in 2017, is to capture the reality of these lakeside scenes, to show it, to experience it, to feel it, ...

The **second part**, completed in 2022, is an **bibliographic research** project, which is included in the book *MIROIR DU LÉMAN - LAKE A MIRROR*, aimed at comparing these paintings of Lake Geneva with the works they inspired in many famous artists ^{[1][2][3]}. To painters ^{[4][5]} such as Courbet, Hodler ^{[6][7]}, Kokoschka, Turner ^[8], Vallotton ^[9] ... To writers such as Hemingway, Hugo, Ramuz, Rousseau, ... To poets such as Byron, Cendrars, Cocteau, Eluard, ... Filmmakers such as Chaplin, Godard, ... To musicians such as Freddy Mercury, Prince, ... *Beau Brant*. An attempt to mirror their quotations with the original source of their inspiration—a meeting of the photographed reality and the artists' creative freedom ^{[10][11][12][13][14][15]}.

And, building on this, an encounter with artists from other places who are also engaged in a universal search for reflections, light, darkness, color, and introspection. Quotes from artists such as Kafka, Rothko ^[16], Soulages ^[17], ...

The **third part**, created in 2026, is an **iconographic exploration** of paintings and photographs also inspired by Lake Geneva, lakes, seas, oceans, light, mirrors... and to see if the LAKE A MIRROR images—these photographs, these *raw limnigraphs* (only slightly optimized in post-production for printing) of Lake Geneva—might humbly illustrate and put into perspective the famous works. “Like-lake” *lemangraphs* of Hodler’s Lake Geneva paintings? Of Vallotton’s? ... “Lake” of the famous paintings and photographs by Rothko? By Soulages? By Sugimoto? ...

The two bibliographic and iconographic studies, conducted retrospectively, do not claim to compare LAKE A MIRROR to the works of major artists, but perhaps aim to show that a lake alone can inspire numerous works of art and serve as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists ^[18].

COLLECTIONS

The LAKE A MIRROR collection consists of seven art series of 12 to 32 photographs each. The two figurative series, LAKE A PAINTING & LAKE A PANORAMIC, and five more abstract and conceptual series: LAKE GOLD, LAKE SILVER, LAKE WAVES, LAKE BLACK & LAKE MATRIX.

The LAKE A JET OF LIGHT collection, comprising two series – LAKE A BOAT and LAKE A DECO – was originally specially selected through a design competition for the iconic Hôtel Métropole in Geneva.

TECHNIC

The LAKE A MIRROR collection, which began in September 2017, contains more than 8,000 photographs (RAW/JPEG), all taken from Lutry, Switzerland, using a Canon 6D Mark II with a 26-megapixel full-frame sensor, Canon Ultrasonic 100-400 F4.5–5.6 lens, a Canon 1.4x extender, a Benro FIF28C tripod, and later with a Sony α7R VI featuring a high-resolution 67-megapixel full-frame sensor and a Sony FE 100-400 mm F4.5 GM OSS lens.

Most of the photographs in the abstract series LAKE GOLD, LAKE SILVER, LAKE WAVES, and in particular LAKE BLACK & LAKE MATRIX capture completely blinding mirror effects, requiring the use of Category 4 polarised sunglasses to compose the shot.

The chosen technique allows for the *black effect* in broad daylight... The *effect of seeing the mirror rather than the reflection*, the *effect of seeing the inner shadows rather than the outer lights*, not being dazzled but seeing.

ART PRINTS

Filters and other techniques add contrast and spectacular colors to photographs. In an instant, these surreal images leap out at us... dazzling us and blinding us. Here, on the contrary, with these raw photographs you must take the time to let your gaze plunge into the image, the mirror, the lake... and see. As Henri Cartier-Bresson said: *The photos capture me, not the other way around.*

The photographs are not retouched in post-production, but are slightly optimised for printing on Hahnemuehle art paper (PhotoRag UltraSmooth 305 g/m² or Metallic 340 g/m² depending on the series, pigment inkjet) by Luca Delachaux, president of the Swiss Association of Professional Photographers (SIYU), in his Platinum-certified photographic studio in Lausanne. A maximum of five copies of each photograph is printed, signed, numbered, certified and registered on Hahnemühle MyArtRegistry.

The title of each photograph is the name of the series, along with the date and time it was taken.

EXHIBITIONS

- PHOTO ELYSEE, Lausanne, 2023
- Murs Porteurs, Château d'Ouchy, Lausanne, 2024-2025
- Murs Porteurs & Stuart Forbes, Hôtel Métropole, Genève, à demeure
- Galerie du Musée du Léman, Nyon, 2025
- Murs Porteurs, OA Legal, Place Longemalle, Genève, 2025
- Murs Porteurs, Architectes Etienne & Associés, Morges 2025
- Galerie TCarmine, Quartier des Bains, Genève, 2026
- Murs Porteurs, la Foncière, Lausanne, 2026
- Murs Porteurs, Be Water, Casablanca, Maroc, 2026

BOOK

Published in late 2022 by Editions Favre in Lausanne, the book **MIROIR DU LÉMAN - LAKE A MIRROR** is a selection of photographs from the LAKE A MIRROR collection, which humbly illustrate quotes from famous artists who have admired Lake Geneva and its mirror-like effects.

Available from **PAYOT**, fnac, ... and in museum bookshops (Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts MCBA in Lausanne, Swiss Museum of Photography in Vevey, Musée du Léman in Nyon), ... on **Galaxus**.



A subtle tribute to our Lake Geneva

Magazine Aimer Lire Payot

Inspiring and inspiring images

Journal des Indépendants de Genève

A highly accomplished work, as poetic as it is contemplative

Journal Lausanne Cité

There is no prescribed way to look at the images: everyone is free to engage with them, projecting their own emotions, memories and personal connection to the lake onto them. The collection as a whole has a deeply contemplative feel to it

L'Art à Genève

A photographic masterpiece on Lake Geneva: a subtle tribute to your lake

This book is a marvel! It hasn't found a place on a shelf where it would lie lifeless...

It's simply sitting on my sofa...

These photos move me deeply. Each one is a meditation

Anonymes

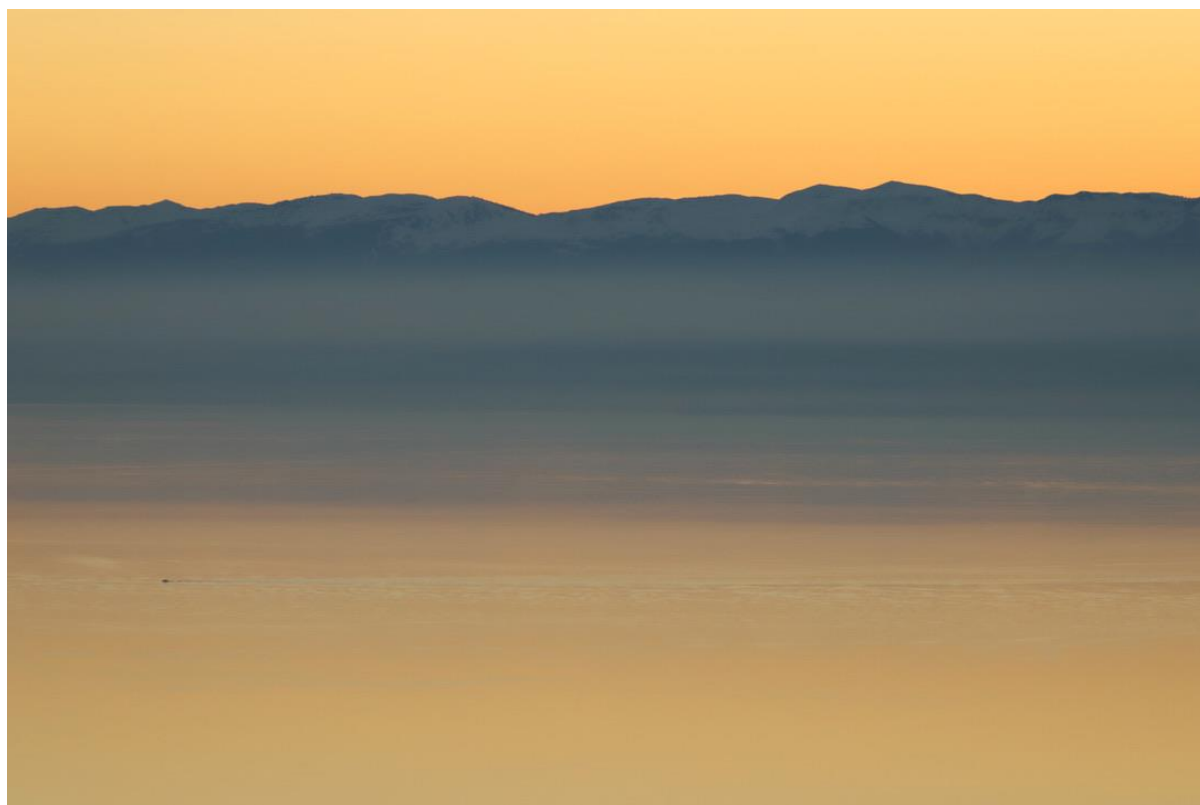
LAKE A PAINTING

32 photographs 2018–2026

These photographs are like paintings

The weather plays its part, and Lake Geneva changes its appearance every hour

Marcel Duchamp 1887-1955



LAKE A PAINTING #1

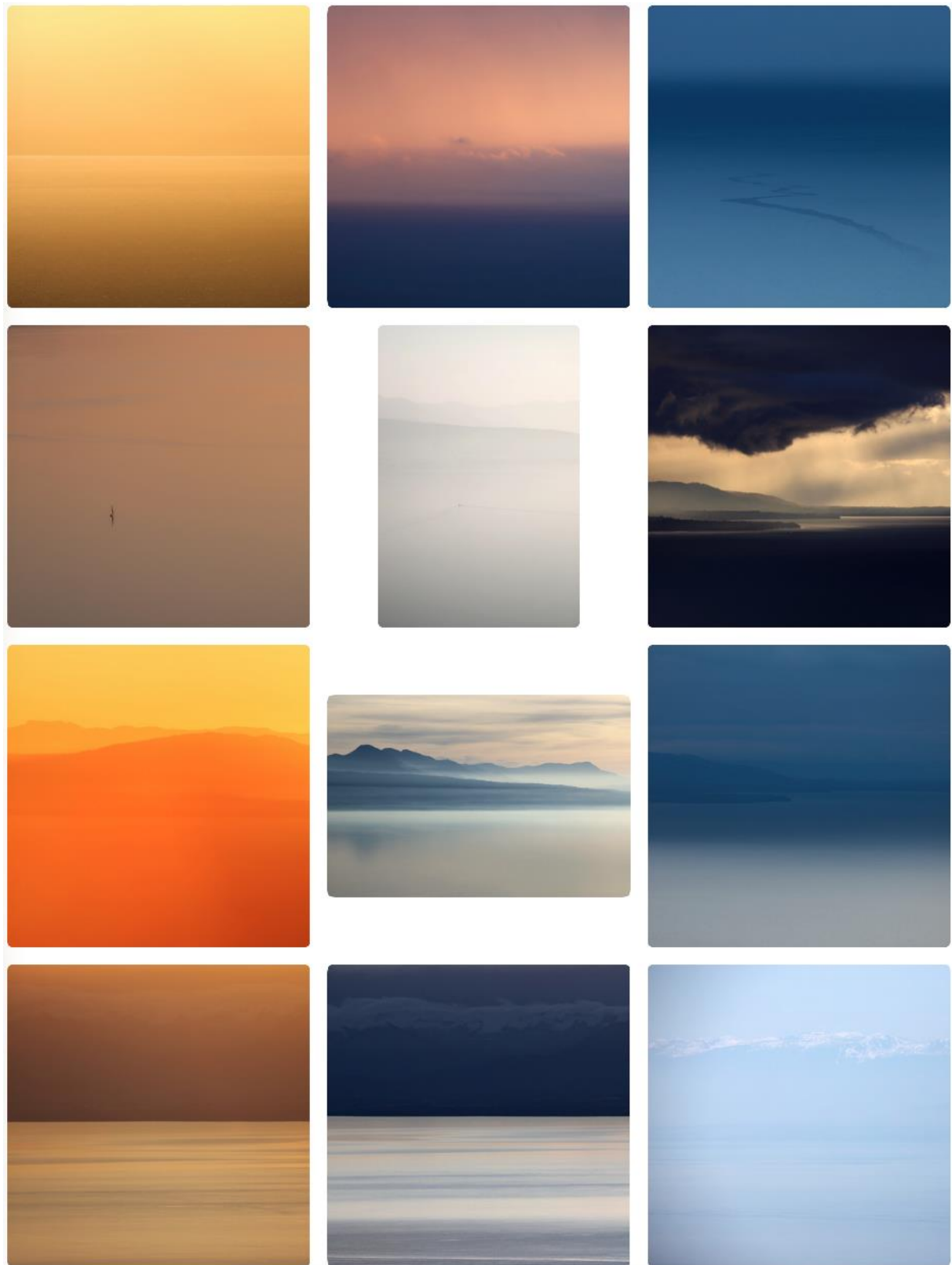
Sunday 17 February 2019 – 6.09 pm

He sits before his lake, like a child before a picture book; leaning on both elbows, bending over it, his forehead pressed forward, he gazes at the smooth surface, at the beautiful patterns created by the reflections of a sky laden with clouds or, even darker still, of its azure expanse alone.

And the lake is there, ...

You can see patches of oil on its surface; it is like paving or a roof; it is scaly, it is zinc, it is blue, it is pink... Just as the child, with every page turned, finds a new opportunity to dream, but you do not even need to turn the page, for the sky turns it for you.

Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, 1878-1947



Just look how everything ahead is nothing but lines and space! Don't you feel as though you're standing at the edge of the world, conversing freely with the universe...

Ferdinand Hodler 1853-1918

LAKE GOLD

23 photographs 2018–2026

The lake, like a golden mirror

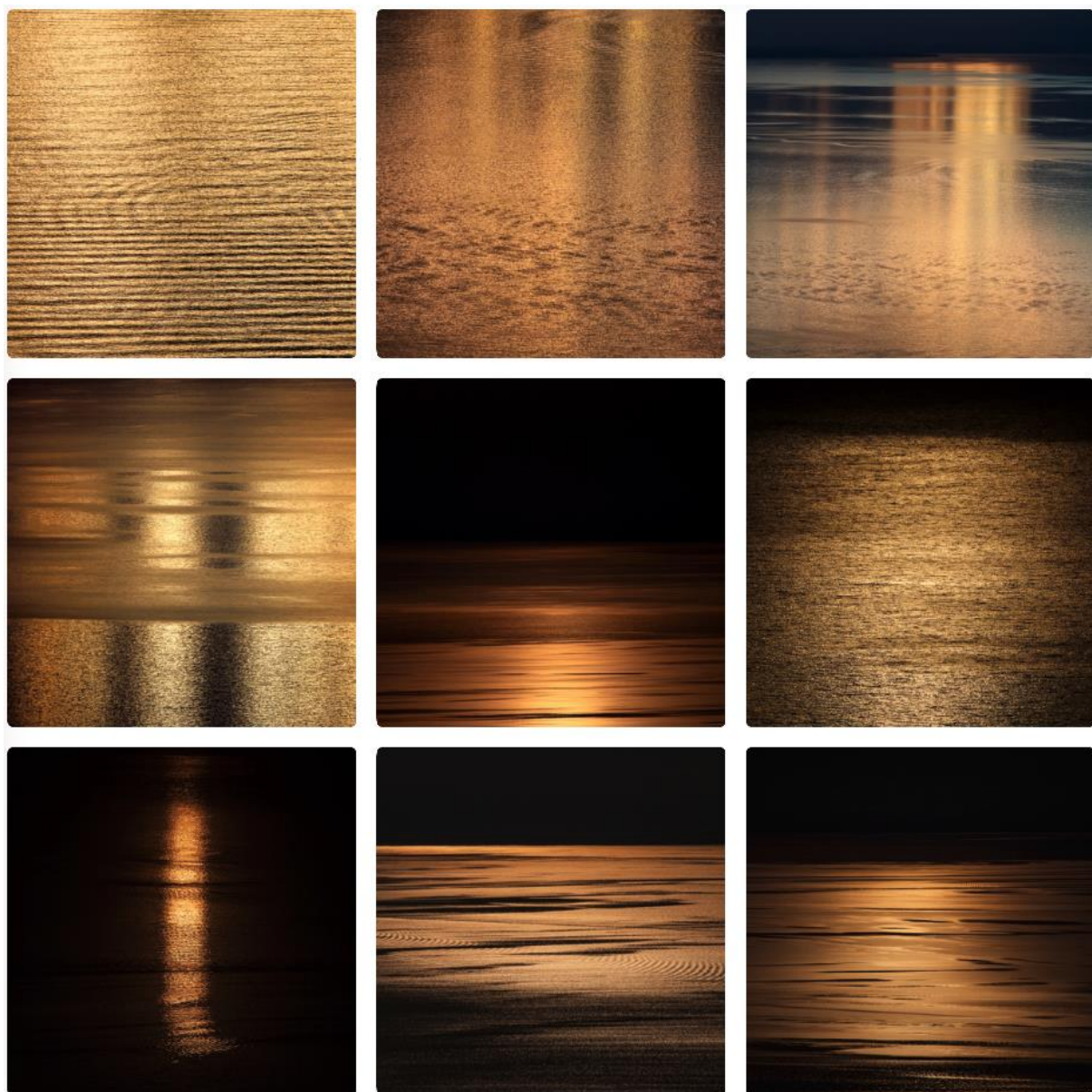
This is an emergency; the light is on, and it will stay on for ten seconds, so this is an emergency.

Jean-Luc Godard 1930-2022



LAKE GOLD #20

Monday 10 November 2025 – 3.51 pm



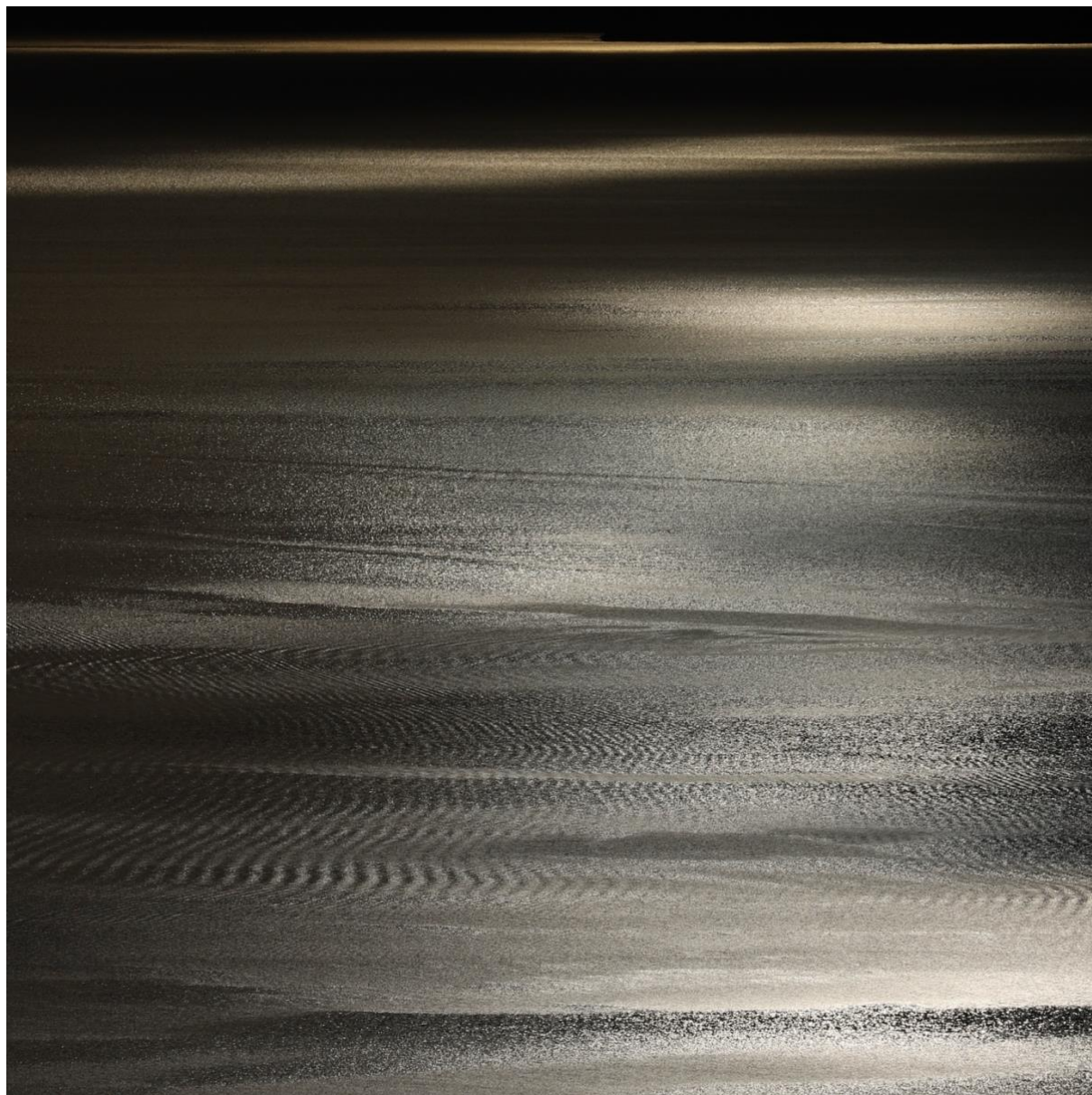
So quiet and peaceful
 Tranquil and blissful
 There's a kind of magic in the air
 What a truly magnificent view
 A breathtaking scene
 With the dreams of the world
 In the palm of your hand
Freddie Mercury 1946-1991

LAKE SILVER

20 photographs 2024–2025

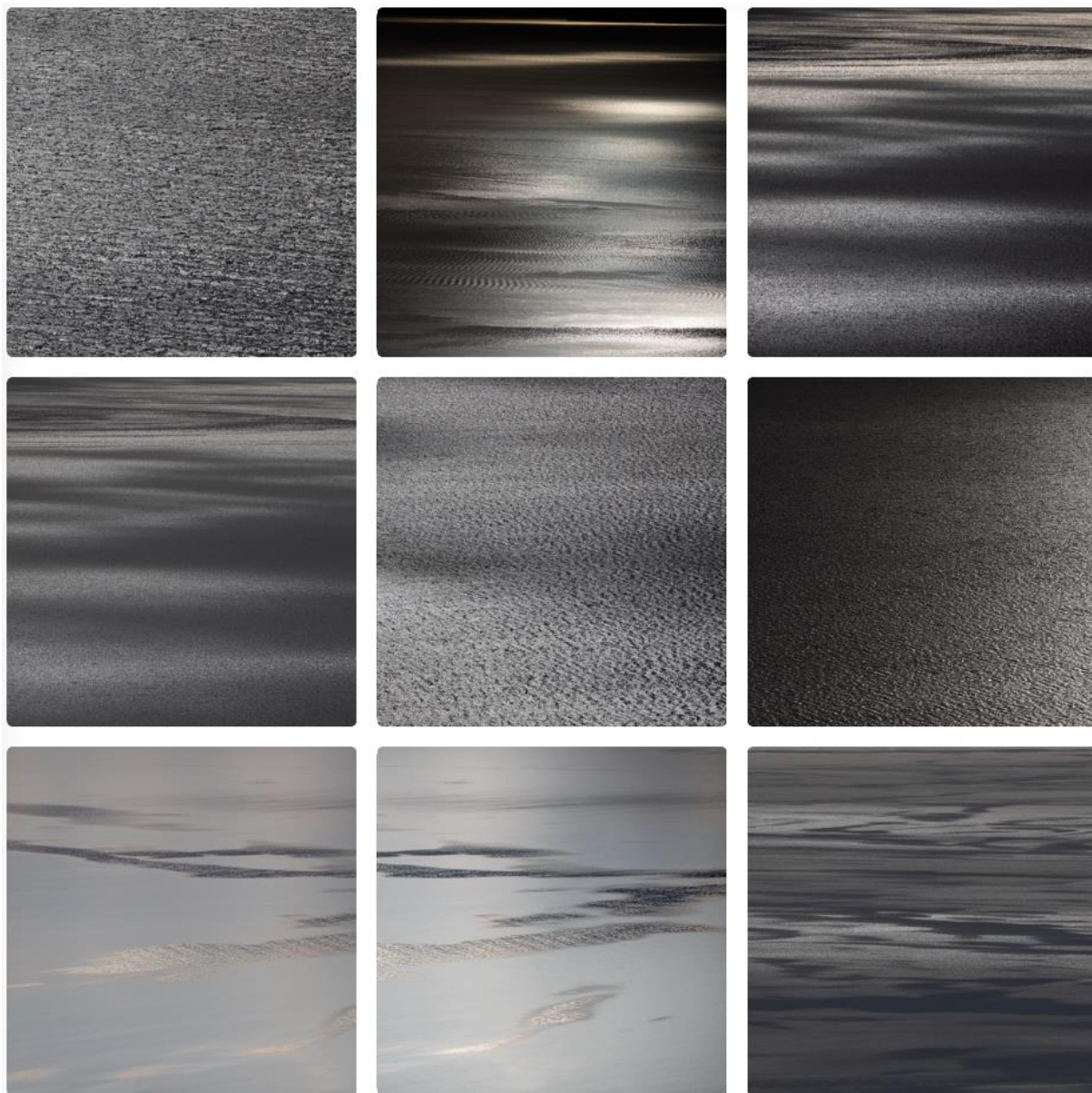
The lake, like a silver mirror

It is not the gaze that captures the images; it is the images that capture the gaze
They flood the consciousness
Franz Kafka 1883-1924



LAKE SILVER #9

Wednesday 9 October 2024 – 4.53 pm



Et The lake! Indomitable. Monday morning's shot was the complete opposite: a misty lake, veiled mountains, a hazy, languid dawn... He'd taken loads of gentle photos...
 But Wednesday's shot was simple: it really grabbed you by the throat
Metin Arditi

LAKE WAVES

23 photographs 2018–2026

Waves like ripples of light and shadow

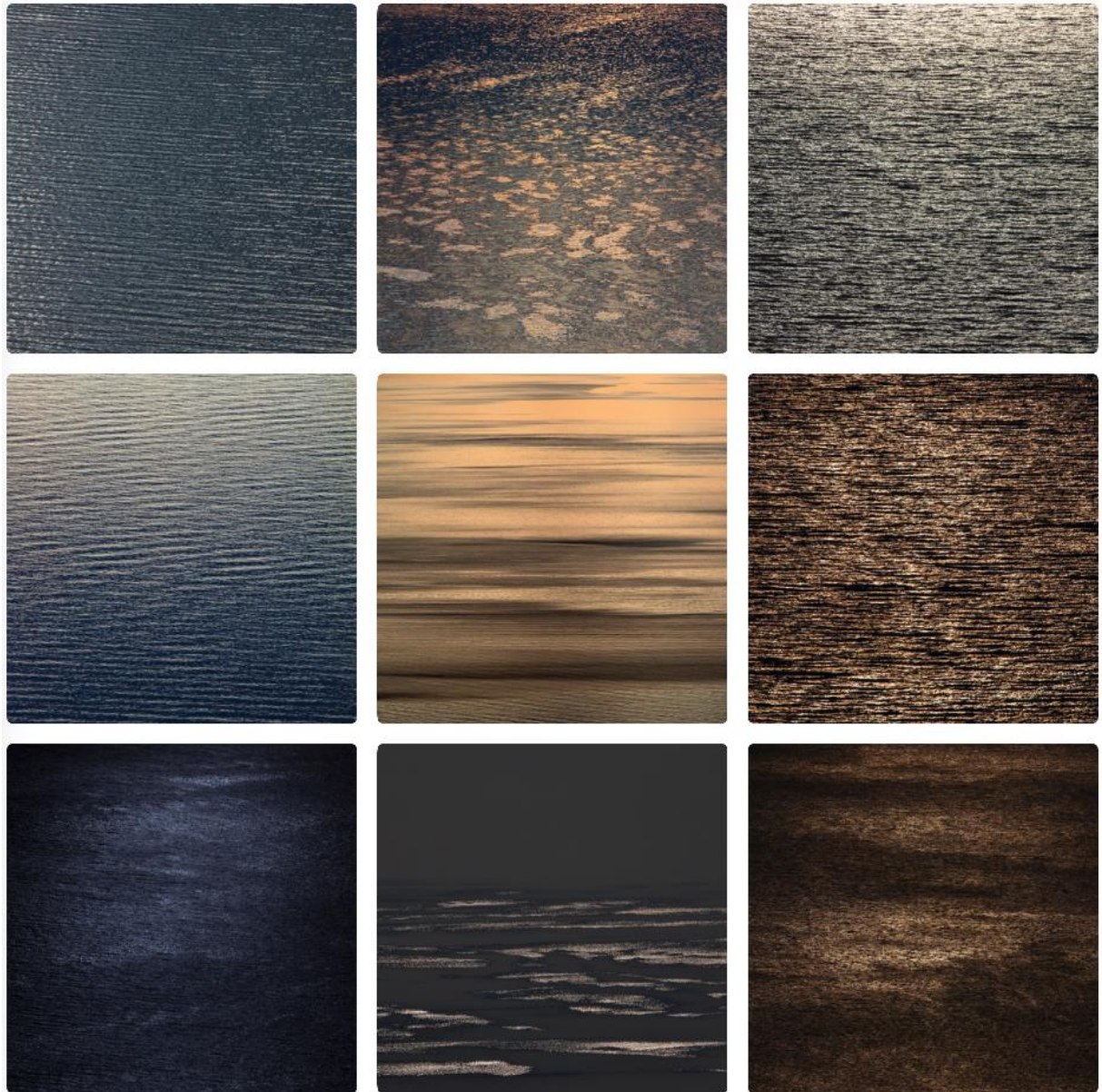
Gazing in turn at the sky, that divine face, and the lake, that divine mirror!

Victor Hugo 1802-1885



LAKE WAVES #7

Friday 4 February 2022 – 5.31 pm



A painting is not a picture of an experience, but it is the experience.
Mark Rothko 1903-1970

LAKE BLACK

24 photographs 2024–2026

Black as the lake

I want the viewer to be with the painting, not with me;

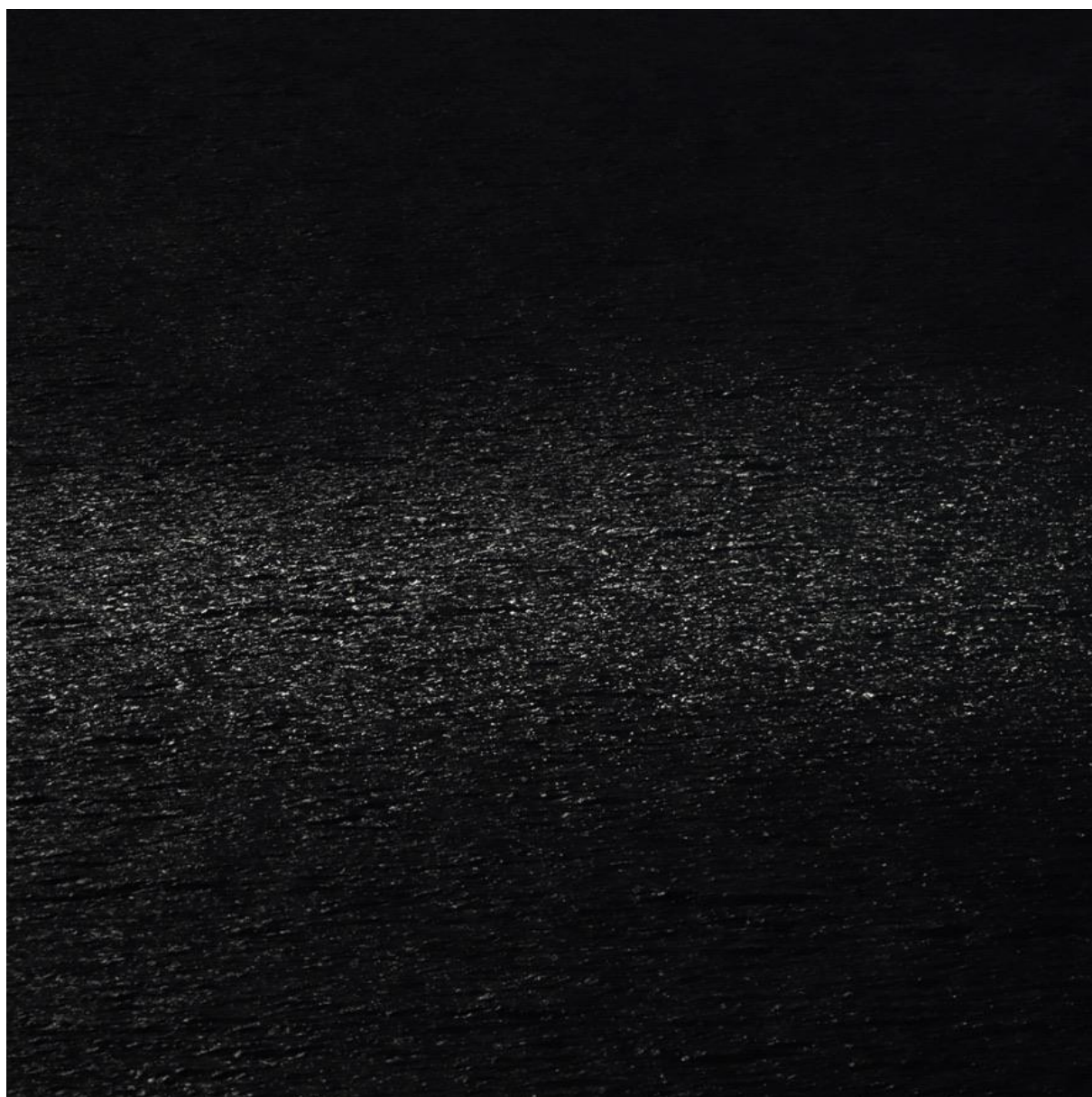
I want them to see what's on the canvas;

Nothing else;

Black is brilliant for that—it reflects;

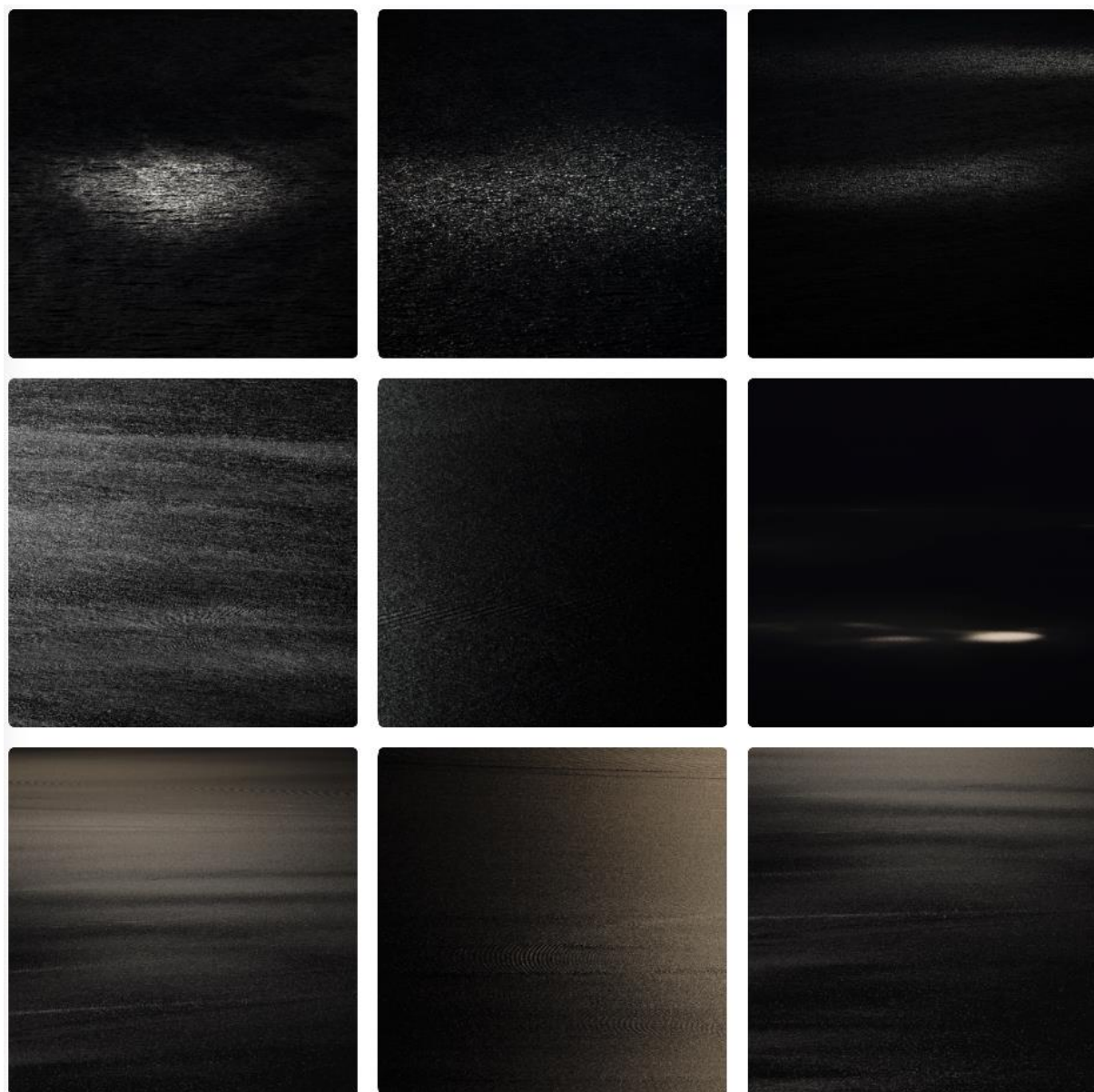
the movements that matter are those of the viewer

Pierre Soulages 1919-2022



LAKE BLACK #4

Wednesday 3 January 2024 – 3.14 pm



This lake? An inkwell in which everyone has dipped their pen.
Jacques Chessex 1934-2009

LAKE MATRIX

12 photographs 2025

The waves, the reflections, like pixels... like a matrix.

Lake Geneva: one must resign oneself to its moods

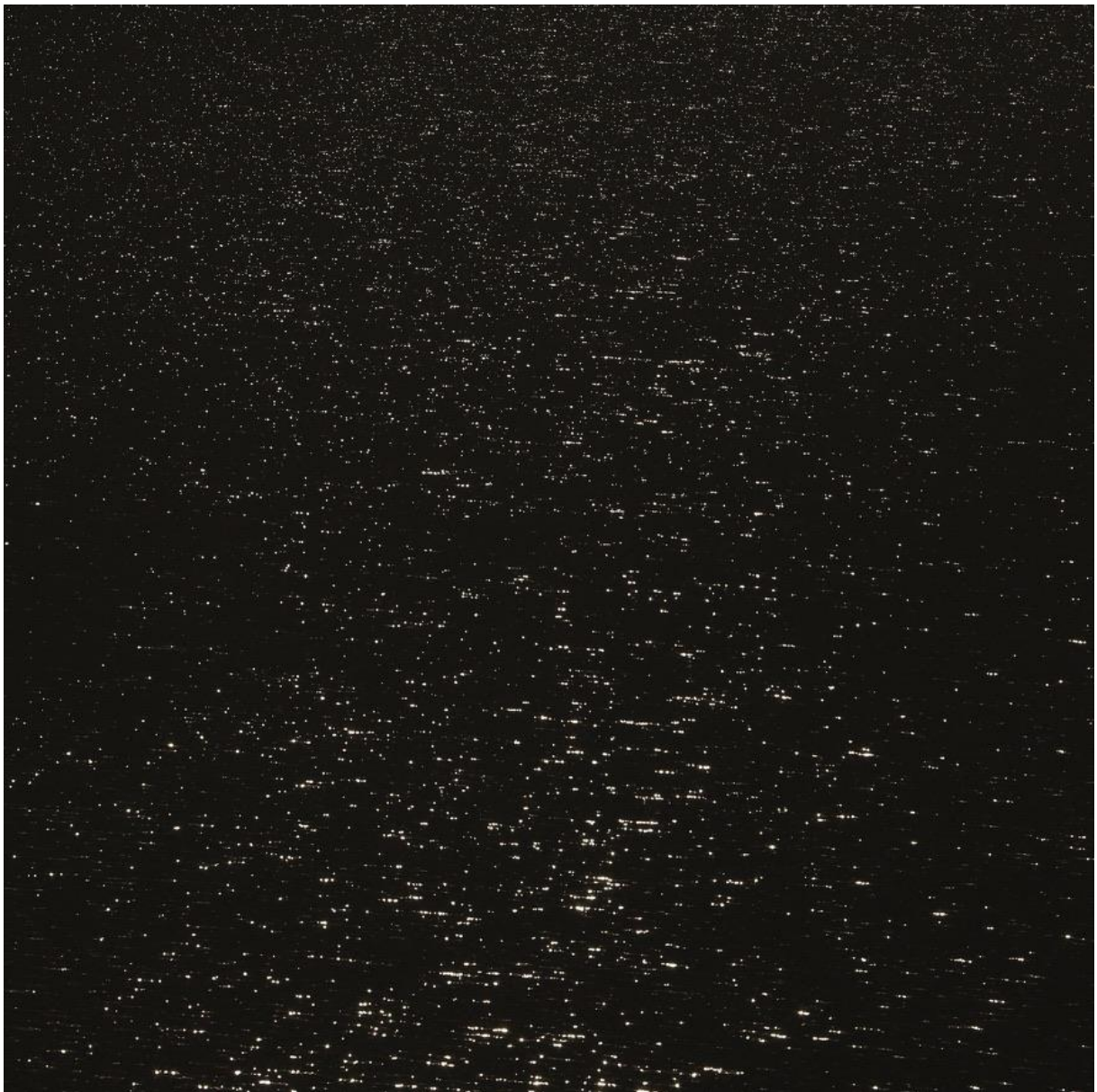
One more drop, and it overflows

Its charm defies interpretation

Only God is responsible for its setting

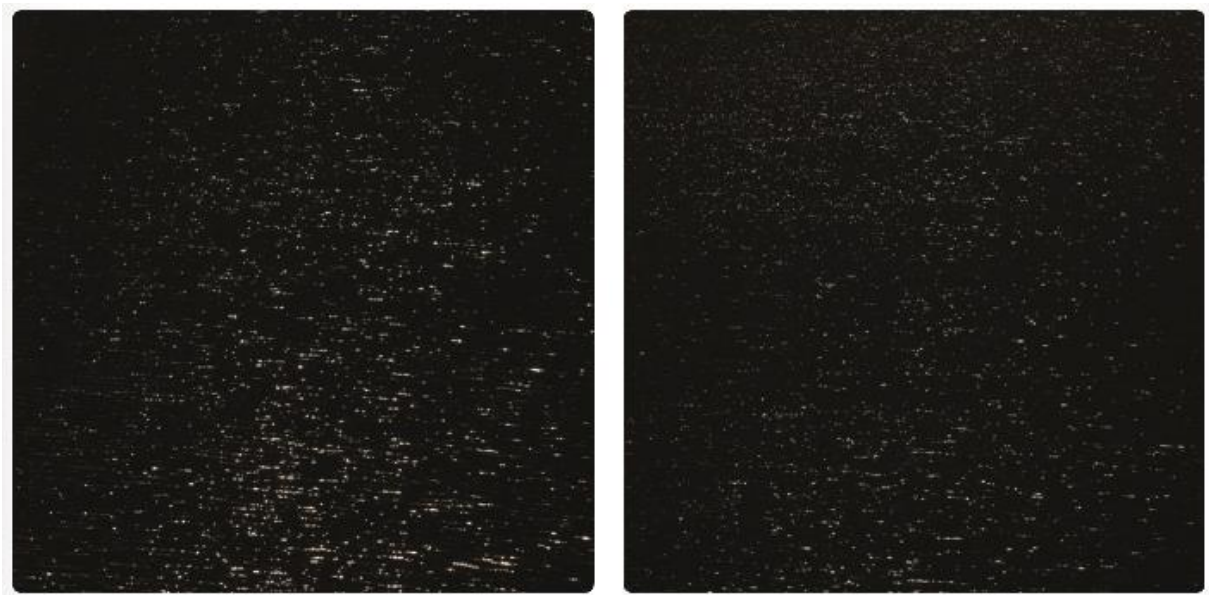
It is the abode of selflessness

Jean Cocteau, 1989-1963



LAKE MATRIX #1

Wednesday 29 January 2025, 15:15:20



The center of the world is everywhere; the theory of relativity has proven it
But the fact that the center of the world is actually situated somewhere in the air above Lake
Geneva, halfway up the great Lavaux vineyards, requires no proof whatsoever, nor can it be proven:
you experience it 'as naturally as breathing', or else you have never truly been here, have never
existed in this place

Denis de Rougemont 1906-1985

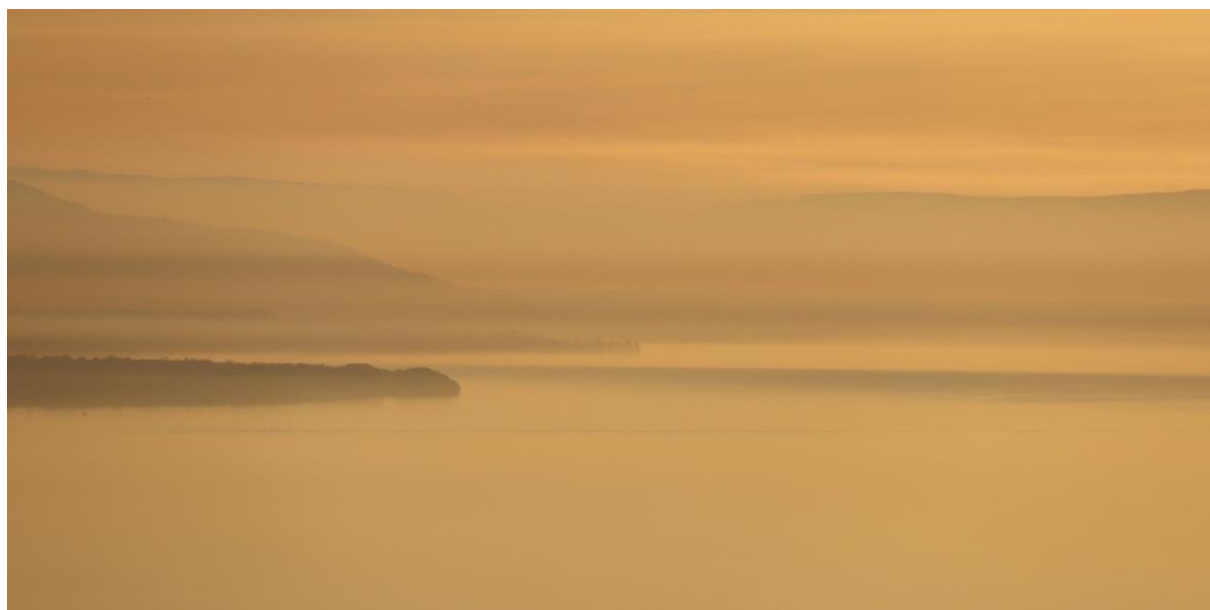
LAKE A PANORAMIC

24 photographs 2018–2026

These photographs are like panoramas

Everything is too big – the scenery and the water

Oskar Kokoschka 1886-1980



LAKE A PANORAMIC #12

Saturday 3 February 2024 – 5.21 pm

How much happier are those who are awake yet at ease... who can derive intense pleasure from the light and the lake they overlook, from the shapes of the distant mountains that blend into the deep apricot hues of the setting sun...

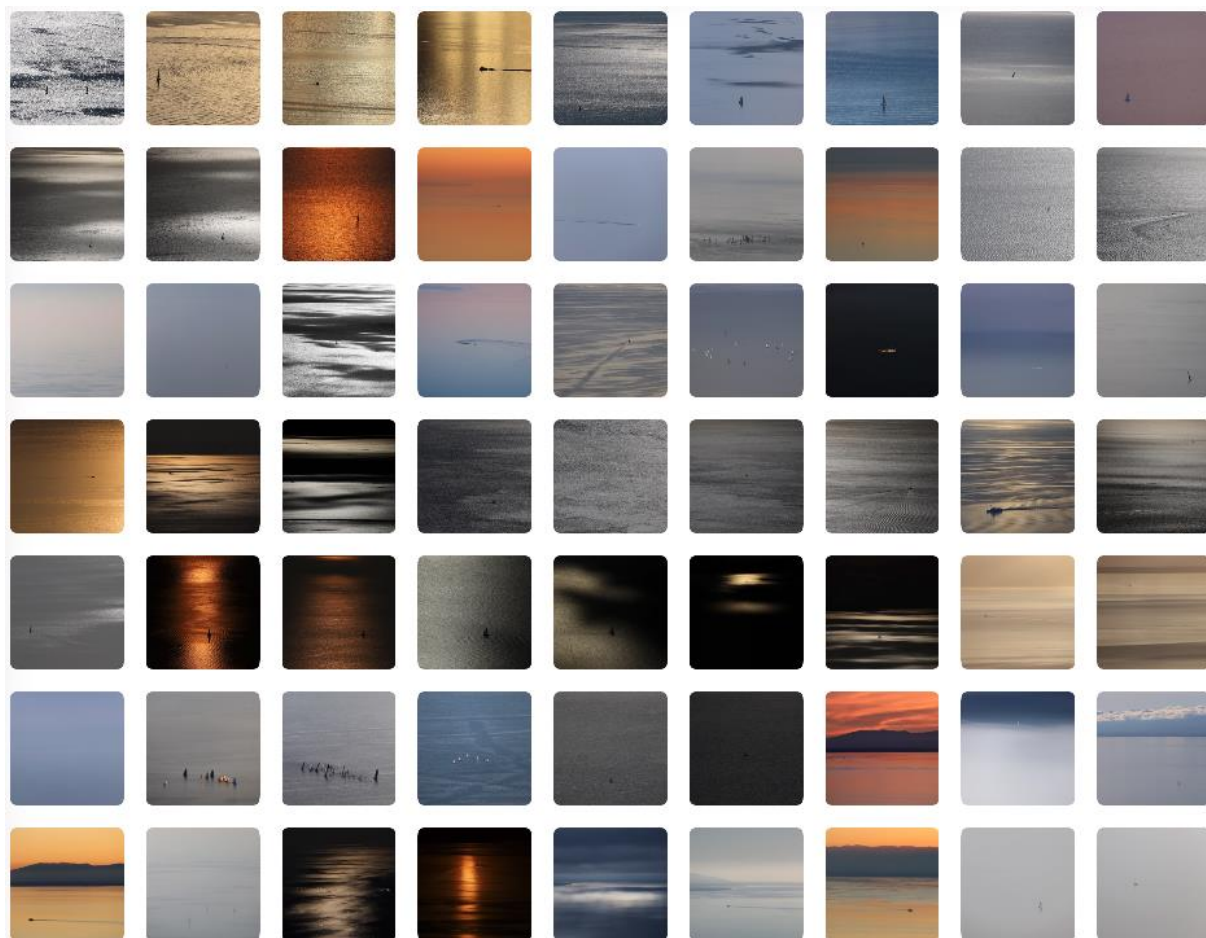
Vladimir Nabokov 1899-1977



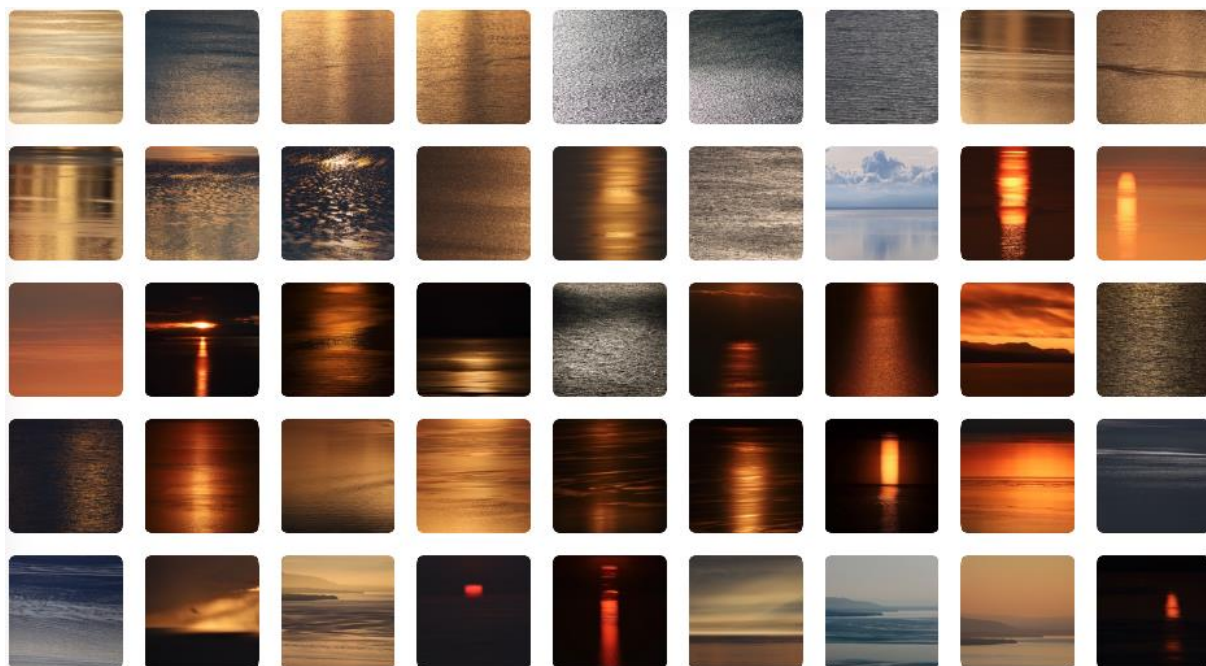
Revolution time has come today
'Cause it took a black face to see the same decay
Like the chocolate of Vevey, in the sun they'll melt away
As for me, I'll laugh and go to the mountains where the waters flow
Back to the vineyards of Lavaux
Prince 1958-2016

LAKE A JET OF LIGHT – Metropole’s Collection

LAKE A BOAT



LAKE A DECO



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- [16] M. Céhère, "Mark Rothko, la peinture-miroir," *Anti Thèse*, 8 décembre 2023.
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MERCI

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Thanks to Nathalie Hecker, curator and artistic director of Murs Porteurs, for allowing me to prepare my first exhibition from June 2024 to March 2025 at the famous and historic Château d'Ouchy in Lausanne... on the shores of Lake Geneva. Since then, our fruitful collaboration has led to the staging of several other exhibitions.

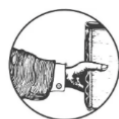
It was also Nathalie who submitted my work to the competition organised by the renowned London design and architecture firm Stuart Forbes Associates for the artistic decoration of the iconic Hôtel Métropole in Geneva following its renovation.

Thank you to Silvana Moi Virchaux, intercultural mediator and artistic director of the TCarmines Gallery in Geneva, for hosting the LAKE A MIRROR exhibition in 2026 and for continuing to support me in my artistic endeavours.

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Thanks to Mehrshad Foroughan and Andrew Barry, researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), who published a physical explanation in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters* in 2022 for the natural frontal slick that form on Lake Geneva and that Hodler was one of the first to immortalize.



FAVRE



François Ventura
Chemin de la Sapelle 39
CH-1090 La Croix sur Lutry
+41.79.346.00.87
info@lake-a-mirror.ch