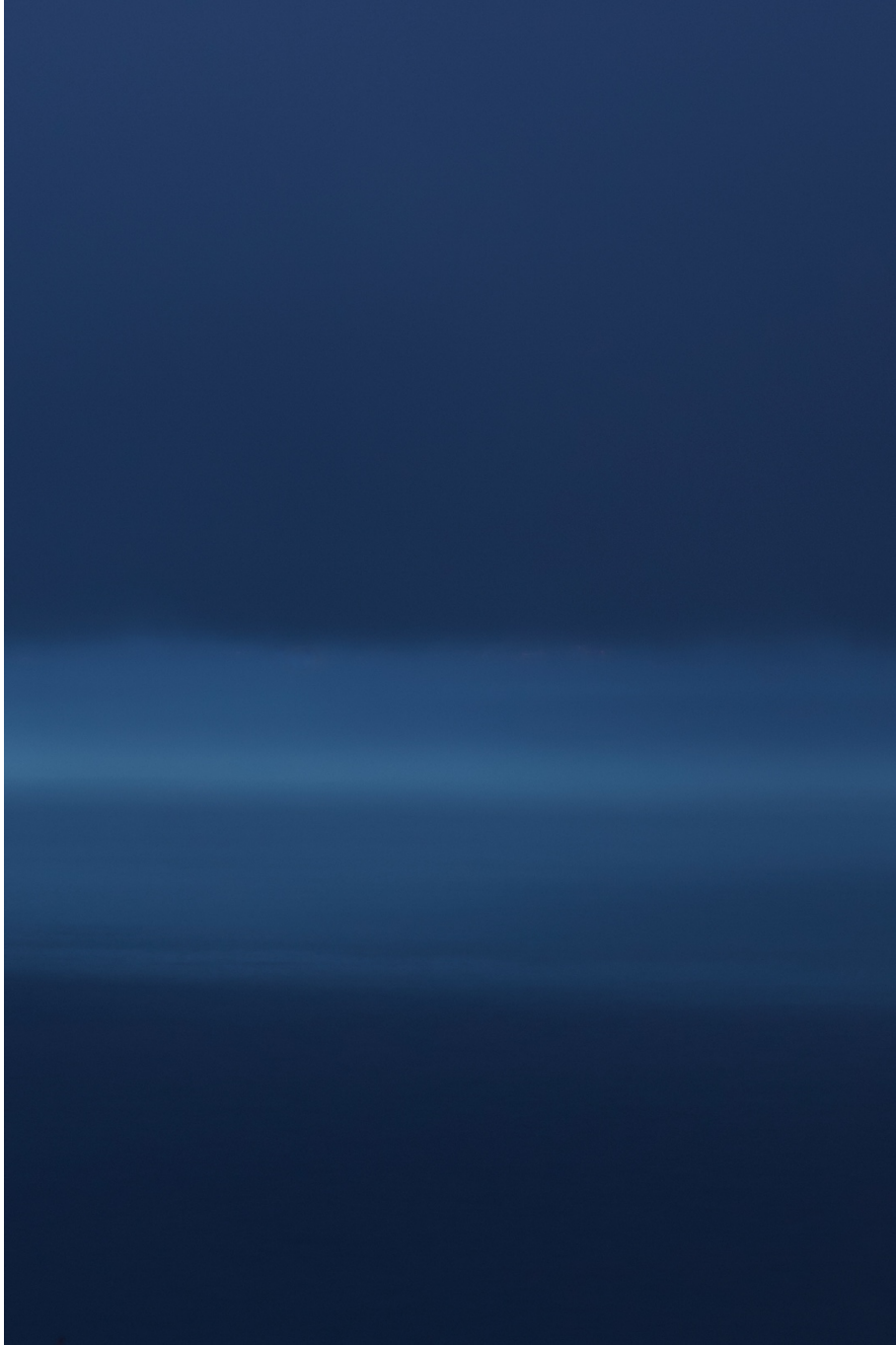


LAKE A MIRROR

Iconographic research



Photographs by François Ventura

June 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

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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. Since 2026, François Ventura has been listed among the twenty or so renowned photographers recognised by Hahnemuehle.

François Ventura still works as a specialist in anesthesia and intensive care medicine in Geneva, and as an emergency doctor for helicopter rescue services in the Valais Alps... which he also photographs.

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)

In any case, 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 extensive bibliographic research project, which is included in the book, 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. Lake Geneva is indeed an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists ^{[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” *limnographs* of Hodler’s Lake Geneva paintings? Of Vallotton’s? ... “Lake” of the famous paintings and photographs by Rothko? By Soulages? By Sugimoto? ...

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.

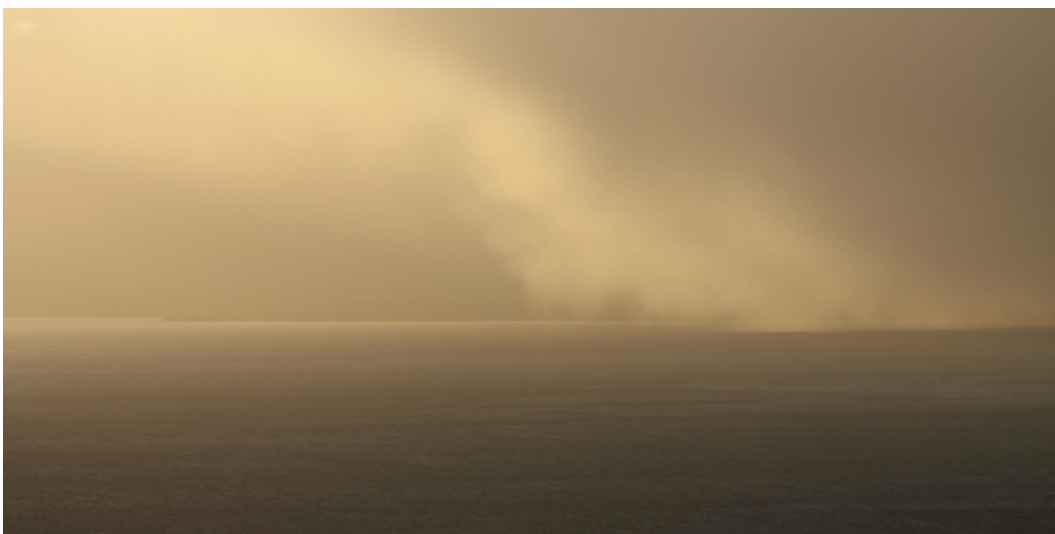
LAKE FAMOUS LEMAN'S PAINTINGS

LAKE François BOCION

François Bocion (1828–1890) explored the charms of the lake, its waters and its days; he observed its shifting moods and all its atmospheric and chromatic transformations, which he captured in works that were at times highly free-form, eventually becoming known to posterity as the painter of Lake Geneva. In 2017, the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts (MCBA) in Lausanne dedicated a retrospective to him titled *Regarder le lac*.



François Bocion – Coucher du soleil sur l'île Saint-Pierre
Huile sur carton – 19.5 x 26 cm



LAKE A PANORAMIC #1
Mercredi 17 janvier 2018 – 17h41

LAKE Gustave COURBET

A leading figure of the Realist movement, Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) devoted two-thirds of his output to landscape painting. He painted numerous works depicting Lake Geneva during his exile in La Tour-de-Peilz from 1873 until his death in 1877. His works reflect a fascination with shifting light, Chillon Castle, and the movement of water, reminiscent of his earlier seascapes of Normandy. The Beyeler Foundation in Basel held a retrospective of his work in 2014–2015.



Gustave Courbet - La Trombe – 1866
Huile sur toile
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon



LAKE A PANORAMIC #15
Lundi 1er avril 2024, 16h32

LAKE Lucien LEVY-DHURMER

The Symbolist painter and pastel artist Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865–1953) immortalized Lake Geneva through a series of dreamlike landscapes in the 1920s and 1930s. His famous works highlight the play of light and the ethereal beauty of the Alpine shores, capturing the lake's mystical atmosphere.



Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer - Lac Léman – 1925
Pastel sur papier 57x72 cm
Musée d'Orsay – Paris



LAKE A PAINTING #28bis
Vendredi 7 mars 2025, 13h02

LAKE Ferdinand HODLER

Look how everything in front of you is nothing but lines and space! Don't you feel as if you're standing at the edge of the world, conversing freely with the universe...

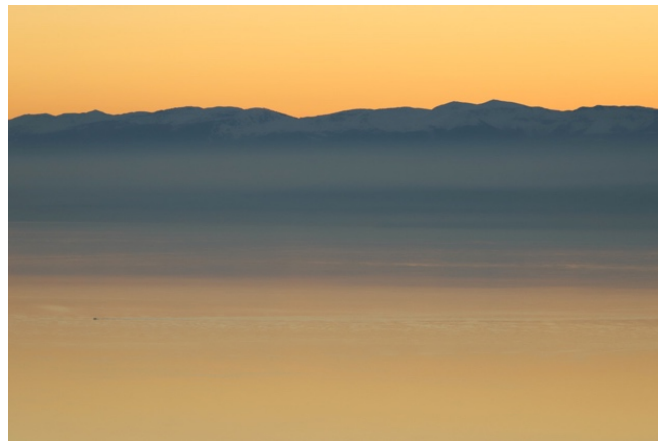
Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918) was one of the most influential Swiss painters of the 19th and 20th centuries. A leading figure in Symbolism, he is famous for his theory of “parallelism,” his grandiose and “planetary” landscapes (particularly of Lake Geneva, which he painted over 100 times from Geneva, Chexbres, and other locations), his monumental paintings, and his self-portraits.

Between November 1917 and his death in May 1918, Ferdinand Hodler produced a series of some twenty paintings depicting the same view of Lake Geneva captured at different times of the day from the Quai du Mont-Blanc in Geneva. The works in this “testamentary” series are among the most significant in his artistic legacy.

In 2018, an exhibition titled *Hodler et le Léman* was held at the Pully Art Museum, and a [reference book](#)^[6] has been published on the subject.



Ferdinand Hodler
Le Lac Léman et le Mont-Blanc au petit matin – mars 1918
Musée d'art et d'histoire MAH Genève



LAKE A PAINTING #1
Dimanche 17 février 2019 – 18h09



Ferdinand Hodler
Le Lac Léman et le Mont-Blanc le matin – mars 1918
Collection privée



Ferdinand Hodler
Le Lac Léman et le Mont-Blanc à l'aube – 1917



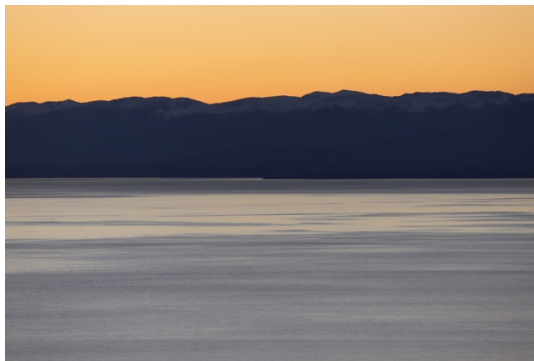
Ferdinand Hodler
Le Lac Léman et le Mont-Blanc à l'aube – 1918
Collection Rudolf Staechelin



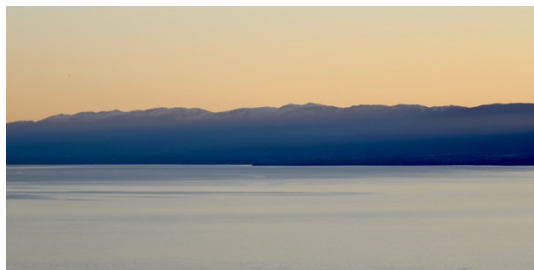
Ferdinand Hodler
Le Lac Léman et le Mont-Blanc à l'aube – 1918



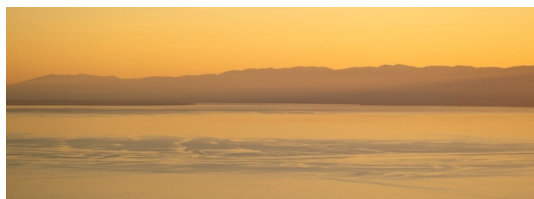
LAKE A PAINTING #13
Lundi 29 janvier 2024 – 16h17



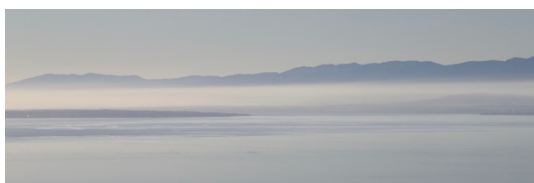
LAKE A PAINTING #29
Samedi 3 janvier 2026, 17h15



LAKE A PANORAMIC #18
Vendredi 18 avril 2025, 19h19



LAKE A PANORAMIC #20
Jeudi 18 septembre 2025, 18h36



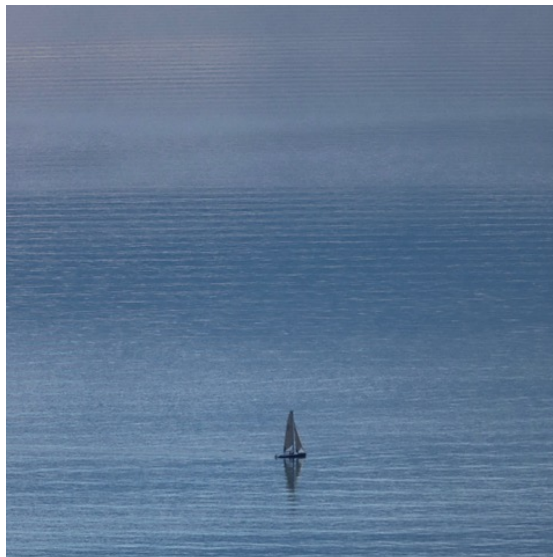
LAKE A PANORAMIC #21
Mardi 4 novembre 2025, 15h51

LAKE Alexandre PERRIER

The Geneva-based artist Alexandre Perrier (1862–1936) devoted his entire life to painting, and to landscape painting in particular. His work is permeated by the same motifs, the same landscapes—Lake Geneva, Salève, Mont Blanc, Praz-de-Lys—which he interpreted day by day and season by season, in an attempt to capture not the fleetingness of the moment, but “what endures,” in the words of Ramuz. Here, there are no breaks or abrupt contrasts, but rather a painting with subtle, melodic lines, punctuated by the pointillist accents of the brushstrokes. The Museum of Art and History (MAH) in Geneva dedicated a *retrospective* to him in 2009.



Alexandre Perrier - Le Lac – 1895
Huile sur toile rentoilée à la cire sur fibre de verre
Musée d’art et d’histoire MAH Genève



LAKE A BOAT #7
12 avril 2018 – 18h40

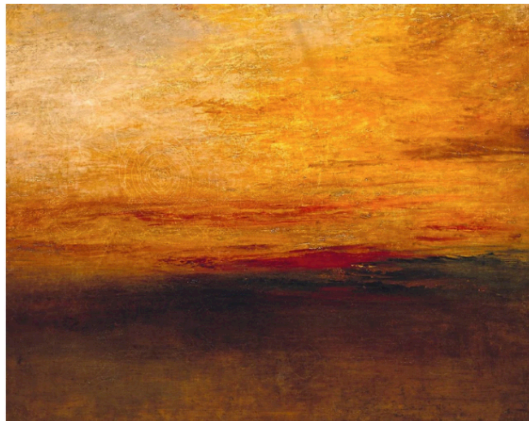
LAKE William TURNER

Yes... Atmosphere is my style

The famous British painter Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) was deeply fascinated by the Alpine landscape during his travels in Switzerland. Between 1802 and 1840, he produced numerous spectacular sketches, drawings, and watercolors of Lake Geneva, masterfully capturing the variations in light, the transparency of the water, and the surrounding peaks such as Mont Blanc. In 2013, the exhibition *Lemancolia* ^[3] at the Jenisch Museum in Vevey featured watercolors of Lake Geneva created by the artist in 1841, on exceptional loan from Tate Britain in London.



William Turner
Léman vue de la Dent d'Oche depuis Lausanne – 1941
Lithographie d'après une aquarelle
Tate Britain, Londres



William Turner - Coucher de soleil – 1830-1835
Tate Britain, Londres



LAKE A PAINTING #11 Mercredi 23 mars 2022 – 18h30



LAKE A DECO #24
24 décembre 2023 – 16h27

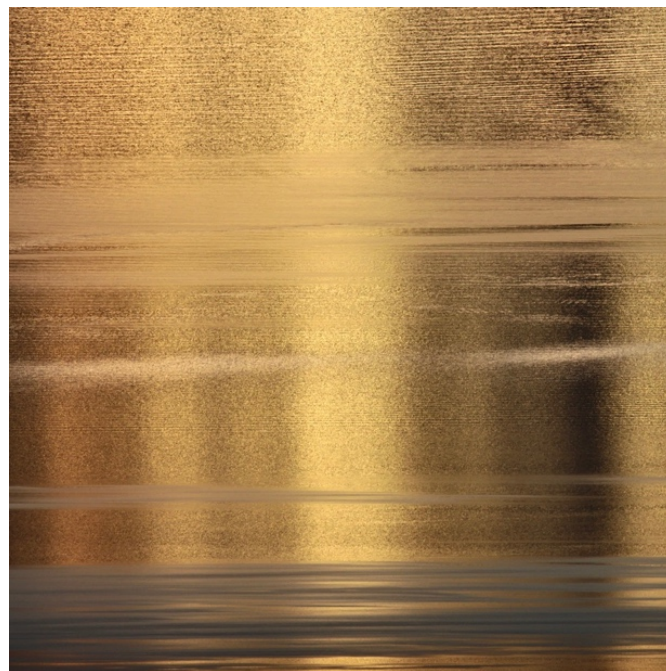
LAKE Félix VALLOTTON

Félix Vallotton (1865–1925), a Swiss painter who became a naturalized French citizen, had a deep connection to Lake Geneva. Born in Lausanne, he returned there regularly in the summer to paint its shores, immortalizing familiar landscapes such as the port of Pully, Vidy Beach, and the waters of Lake Geneva framed by the Alps. Painted between 1910 and 1918, the series of sunsets ranks among his most radical works. Inspired by his summers on the Normandy coast (not Lake Geneva), his canvases are characterized by minimalist compositions and geometric blocks of color, verging on abstraction.

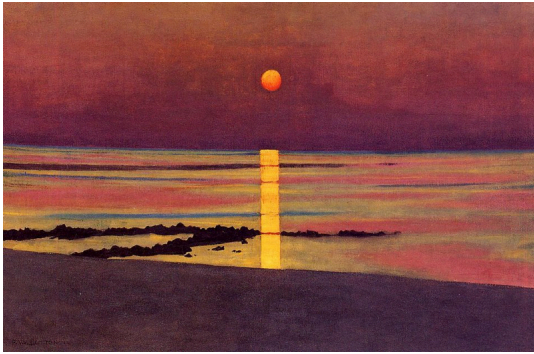
In 2025–2026, the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts (MCBA) in Lausanne dedicated a retrospective and a reference book to him - *Vallotton Forever*^[9].



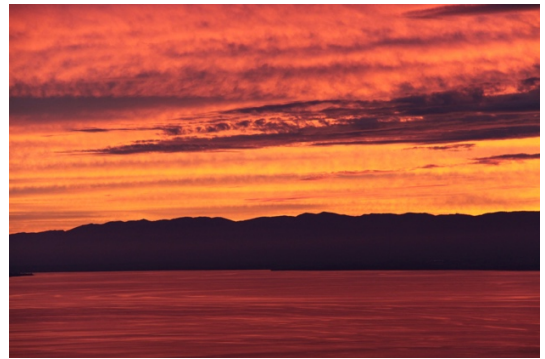
Félix Vallotton - Coucher de soleil – 1913
Huile sur toile



LAKE GOLD #5
Vendredi 2 février 2018 – 18h18



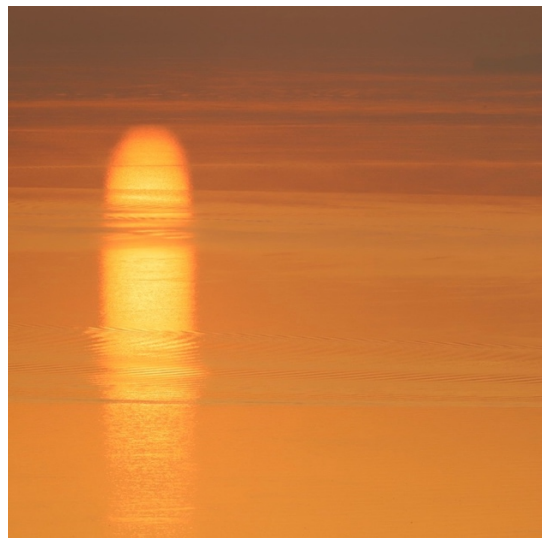
Félix Vallotton - Coucher de soleil - 1913



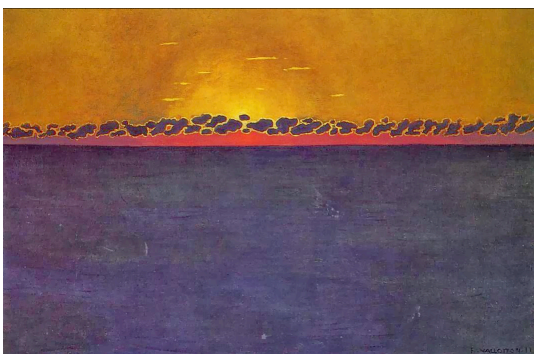
LAKE A MIRROR
Samedi 7 octobre 2017 - 19h12



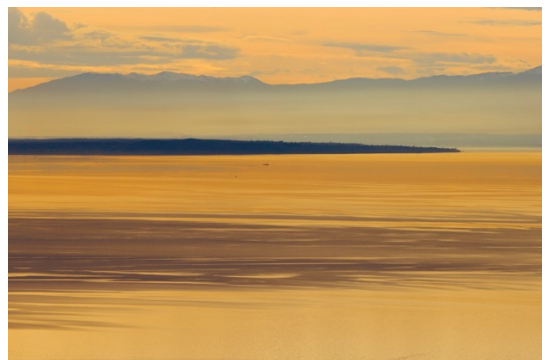
Félix Vallotton - Coucher de soleil - 1894



LAKE A DECO #18
21 février 2019 - 18h01



Félix Vallotton - Coucher de soleil



LAKE A MIRROR
15 février 2024 - 16h12

LAKE FAMOUS PAINTINGS

LAKE Vija CELMINS

Vija Celmins (born in 1938 in Riga, Latvia) is an American painter, draftsman, and printmaker, and a leading figure in the hyperrealist movement. Known for her meticulous, nearly monochromatic works in shades of gray, she is particularly renowned for her photorealistic depictions of nature, such as oceans, deserts, starry skies, and spider webs. The Beyeler Foundation dedicated a major retrospective to her in 2025.



Vija Celmins - Ocean Surface - 2000
Gravue sur bois sur papier Zerkall – 50.8 x 43.2 cm
McKee Gallery, New York



LAKE WAVES #2
Jeudi 17 janvier 2018 – 17h27



Vija Celmins - Océan – 1975
Lithographie sur papier – 31.7 x 42 cm
Tate Gallery, Londres



Vija Celmins - Starfield – 2010
Holographie et pointe sèche – 66 x 88.9 cm
Simmelink/Sukimoto Editions, Ventura, California



LAKE WAVES #3
Jeudi 17 janvier 2018 – 17h30



LAKE SILVER #8
Vendredi 27 septembre 2024 – 15h02



LAKE MATRIX #1
Mercredi 29 janvier 2025, 15:15:20

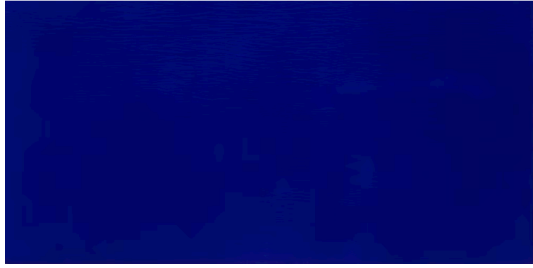
LAKE Yves KLEIN

Yves Klein (1928–1962) was a leading French visual artist of the 20th century and a leading figure of the *Nouveau Réalisme* movement. Celebrated for his monochromes and monogolds, he created and patented International Klein Blue (IKB), an intense ultramarine blue that became emblematic of his work and was inspired by his contemplation of the Mediterranean Sea. However, the artist did not create any specific works directly related to Lake Geneva.



Yves Klein - IKB 79 – 1959

Pigment pur et résine synthétique sur toile marouflée sur bois
Tate Gallery Collection of Modern Art, Londres



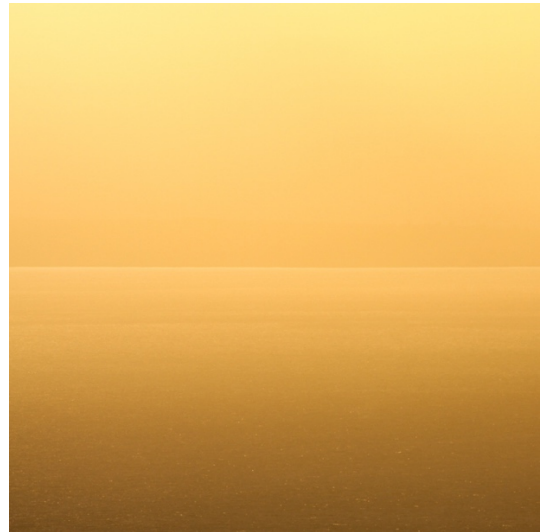
Yves Klein - Monochrome bleu (IKB81) - 1957
Pigment pur et résine synthétique sur toile marouflée
sur bois – 100 x 200 cm
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris



LAKE A PAINTING #10
Dimanche 3 novembre 2019 – 12h21



Yves Klein - Monochrome jaune «violet» M72 - 1957
Pigment pur et résine synthétique sur toile collée et
clouée contreplaquée – 29.4 x 87.5 cm
Centre Pompidou, Paris



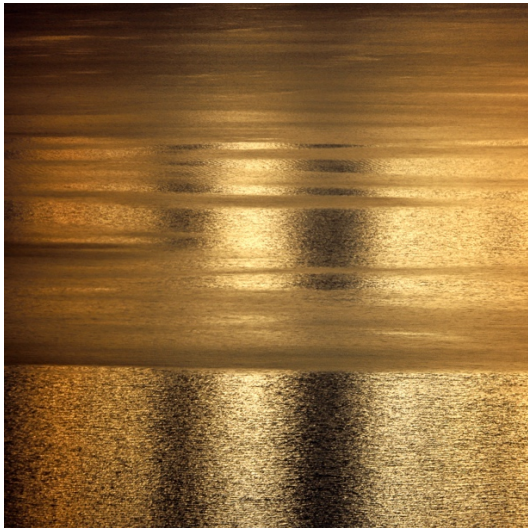
LAKE A PAINTING #7
Mercredi 17 janvier 2018 – 17h49



Yves Klein - Monogold sans titre (MG28) – 1960
Feuille d'or sur panneau – 92 x 73 cm
Museum Folkwang, Essen, Allemagne



Yves Klein - Monogold sans titre (MG24) – 1961
Feuille d'or sur panneau – 60 x 42 cm



LAKE GOLD #2
Jeudi 26 décembre 2019 – 16h29



LAKE GOLD #7
Vendredi 2 février 2018 – 18h19

LAKE Gustave LE GRAY

Gustave Le Gray (1820–1884) was one of the most important and innovative French photographers of the 19th century. Trained as a painter, he played a central role in elevating photography to the status of an art form and perfected numerous printing techniques. He captured spectacular coastal landscapes in his collection *Les Marines*. His skies were so luminous that he often used the photomontage technique (combining two negatives on a single print) to balance the light, which was a technical feat for the time.



Gustave Le Gray

Marine, l'effet du soleil sur les nuages, océan – 1856
Tirage à l'albumine monté sur carton- 31.1 x 40.6 cm
Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York



LAKE A DECO #46

20 novembre 2025 – 16h07

LAKE Gerhard RICHTER

Gerhard Richter (born in 1932) is one of Germany's most important contemporary artists and painters. He is known worldwide for his photo-paintings and for his series of landscapes depicting Swiss lakes (Lake Lucerne) and mountains, painted in the late 1960s. Richter rejects any dogma or single style. He constantly shifts between realistic portraits or melancholic landscapes and vibrant abstract works, created by scraping and layering paint. In 2024, the [Fondation Beyeler](#) dedicated a major retrospective to him, bringing together figurative paintings, painted photographs, and glass installations. From October 2025 to March 2026, his work was exhibited at the [Fondation Louis Vuitton](#) in Paris.



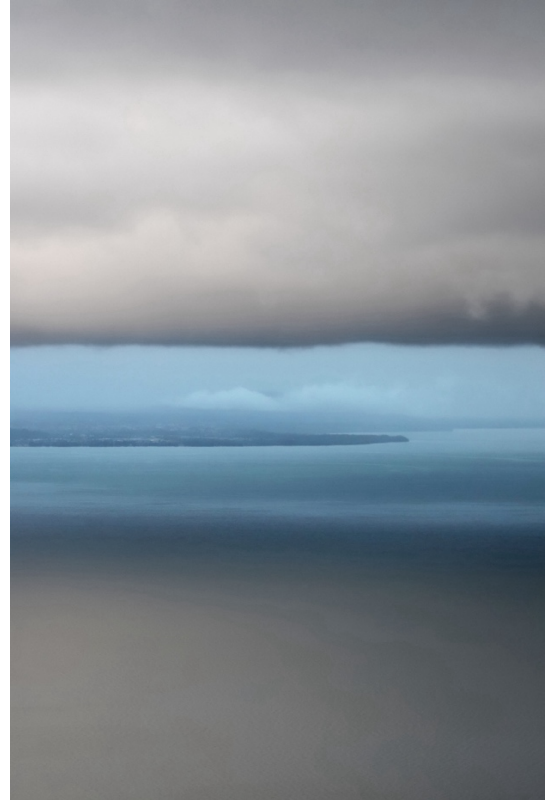
Gerhard Richter – Grau – 1973
Huile sur toile – 50 x 70.4 cm



LAKE SILVER #3
Lundi 15 avril 2024 – 15h23



Gerhard Richter – Seestück (Leicht bewölkt) – 1969
Huile sur toile – 200 x 200 cm



LAKE A PAINTING #21
Mardi 19 septembre 2023, 7h14



Gerhard Richter – Wald (3) – 1990
Huile sur toile – 340 x 260 cm



LAKE A DECO #12
3 février 2018 – 18h25



Gerhard Richter – Grau (880-3) – 2002
Peinture à l'huile sur aluminium – 220 x 154 cm
Tate and National Galleries of Scotland



Gerhard Richter – Seestück (See-See) - 1970
Peinture à l'huile – 200 x 200 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



LAKE SILVER #17
Samedi 19 octobre 2024 – 17h00



LAKE WAVES #20
Mercredi 19 novembre 2025 – 15h46

LAKE Mark ROTHKO

A painting is not a picture of an experience; it is an experience

Mark Rothko (1903–1970) was a major painter of the 20th century. A leading figure in Abstract Expressionism, he is world-renowned for his color fields—monumental canvases composed of large, floating, overlapping rectangles of color. There is no direct or historical connection between the painter Mark Rothko (1903–1970) and Lake Geneva. He never lived there and did not paint Lake Geneva. However, there are interesting artistic parallels. Rothko's large, hazy, and vibrant swaths of color are often compared to the treatment of light and atmosphere found in the work of Lake Geneva painters such as Ferdinand Hodler.

Rothko's work is regularly exhibited in Switzerland (notably at the [Fondation Beyeler](#)) and has been the subject of thematic exhibitions, such as at the [Fondation de l'Hermitage](#) in Lausanne, which explore his paintings as windows into the inner self.



Marc Rothko - Orange and yellow – 1956
Huile sur toile - 231.14 x 180.34 cm
Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum



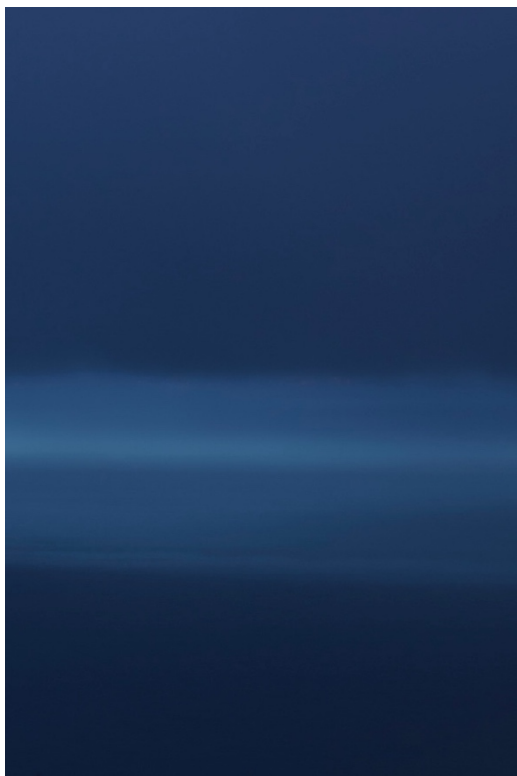
LAKE A PAINTING #26
Dimanche 24 décembre 2023, 16h42



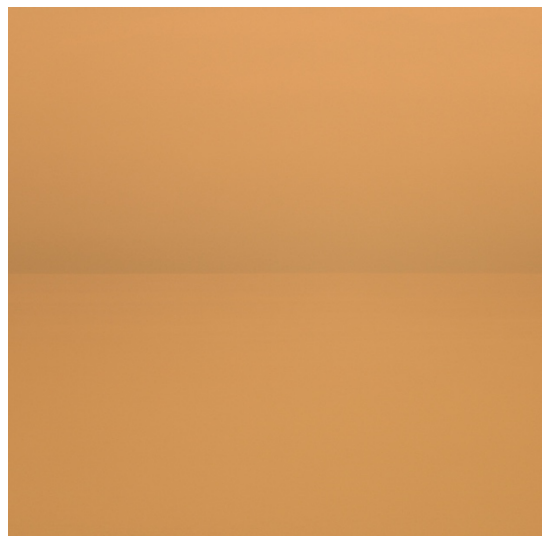
Marc Rothko - Bleu sur bleu sur bleu – 1968



Marc Rothko - Sans titre – 1969
Acrylic sur papier
National Gallery of Art, Washington



LAKE A PAINTING #2
Dimanche 9 janvier 2022 – 17h51



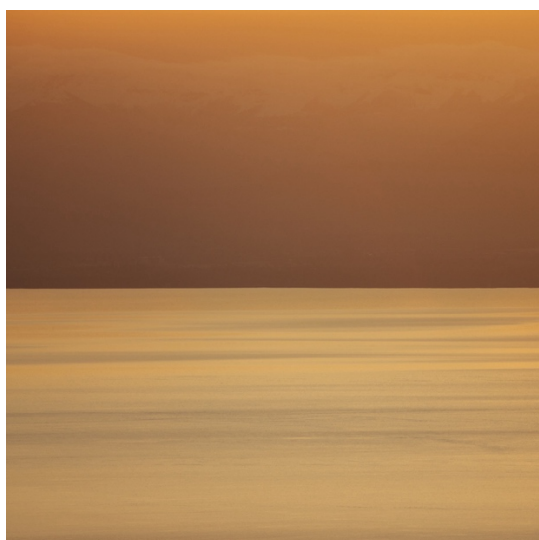
LAKE A PAINTING #6
Mercredi 30 septembre 2020 – 18h00



Marc Rothko - Brun et gris – 1969
Acrylic sur papier - 182.88 x 122.56 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington



Marc Rothko - Sans titre – 1969
Acrylic sur papier
National Gallery of Art, Washington



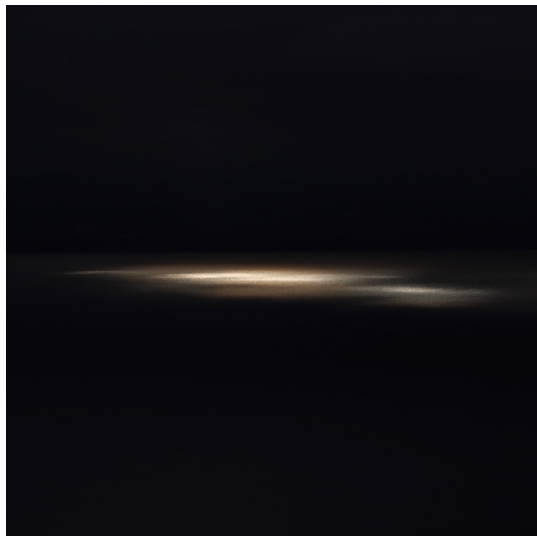
LAKE A PAINTING #27
Mercredi 26 février 2025, 18h09



Marc Rothko - Sans titre – 1969
Acrylic sur papier - 137.8 x 173.99 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington



Marc Rothko - Sans titre – 1968
Acrylique sur papier monté sur panneau de bois dur 100.3 x 66.5 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington



LAKE GOLD #23
Vendredi 30 janvier 2026 – 16h26

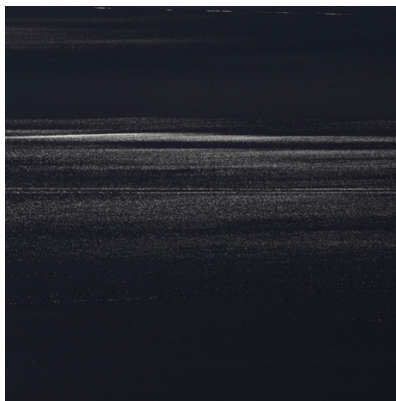
LAKE Pierre SOULAGES

My instrument was no longer darkness, but that secret light that came from the darkness

Pierre Soulages (1919–2022) was one of the greatest French painters of the 20th century, recognized worldwide as the master of *Outrenoir*. Pierre Soulages never painted Lake Geneva, but he left his mark on the Lausanne region. The artist exhibited there, forged ties with the renowned gallerist Alice Pauli, and the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts holds a major work from his pivotal period in the 1950s.



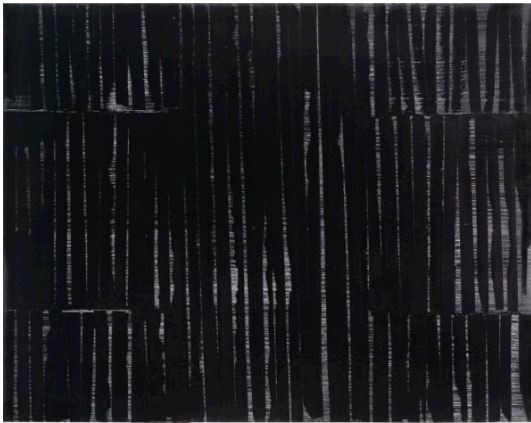
Pierre Soulages - Polyptique – 1996
Huile sur toile – 324 x 181 cm
Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France



LAKE WAVES #11
Lundi 26 février 2024 – 15h11



Pierre Soulages - Polyptyque J - 1987
Huile sur toile – 324 x 362 cm
Fondation Alice et Olivier Paul



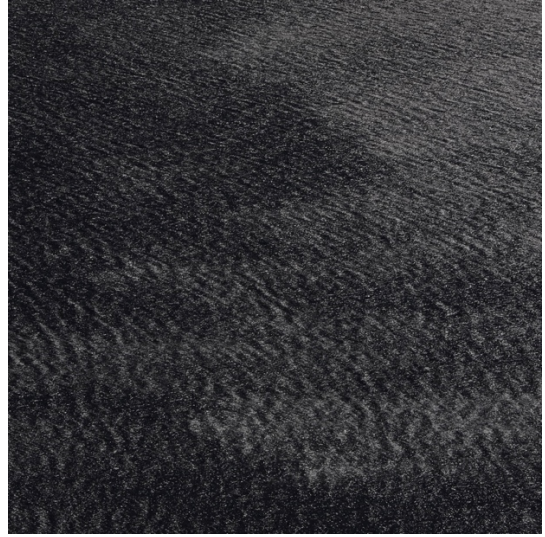
Pierre Soulages - Sans titre – 1984
Huile sur toile – 202 x 255 cm
Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Genève



Pierre Soulages - Polyptyque – 2005
Huile sur toile – 324 x 181 cm
Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France



LAKE BLACK #5
Dimanche 11 février 2024 – 16h03



LAKE BLACK #23
Mercredi 1er avril 2026 – 15h48



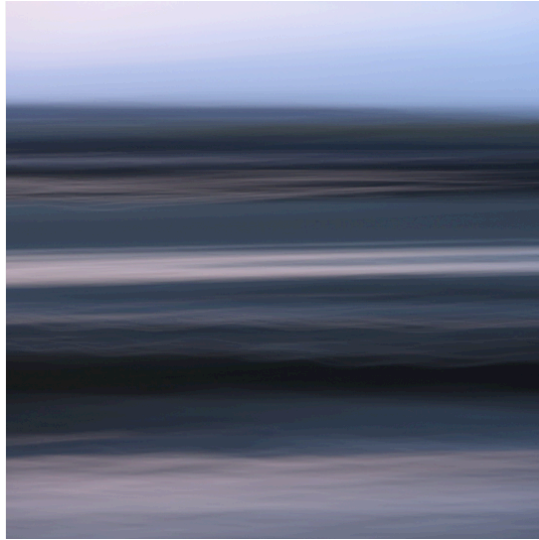
LAKE BLACK #19
Mercredi 4 décembre 2024 – 15h05



LAKE WAVES #18
Mardi 30 septembre 2025 – 15h48

LAKE Hiroshi SUGIMOTO

Hiroshi Sugimoto (born in 1948) is an internationally renowned Japanese contemporary artist, photographer, and architect who divides his time between Tokyo and New York. He is world-famous for his minimalist and conceptual works that explore the notions of time, memory, and perception. He is known for his contemplative photographs (the *Seascapes* series) of the ocean and the horizon around the world, seeking to depict the landscape as it was seen by prehistoric humans. Notably, he exhibited at the *Fondation Cartier* in Paris from 2004 to 2005.



Hiroshi Sugimoto - Seascape 17, Alison Price – 2019

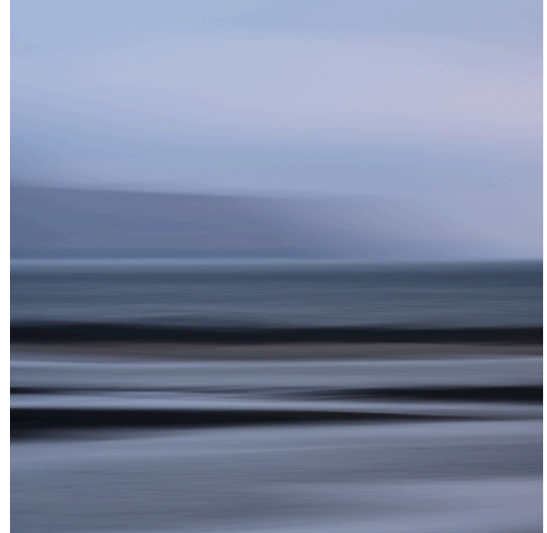


LAKE A PAINTING #30

Vendredi 30 janvier 2026, 17h42



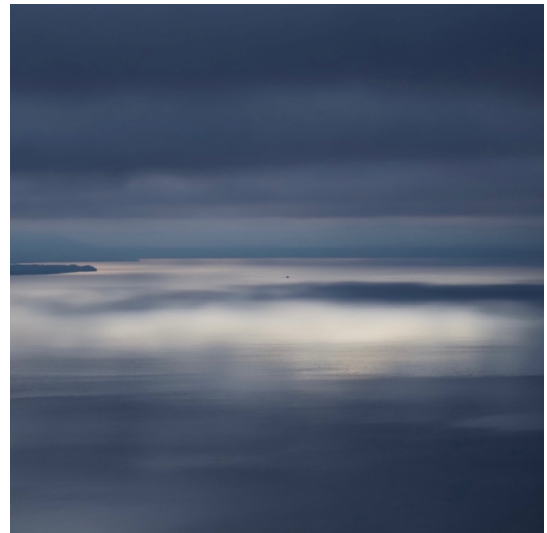
Hiroshi Sugimoto
Bay of Sagari, Atami – 1997



Hiroshi Sugimoto
Seascape 23, Alison Price – 2019



LAKE A DECO #48
27 novembre 2025 – 15h32



LAKE A BOAT #59
30 janvier 2026 – 18h00



Hiroshi Sugimoto
Caribbean Sea, Jamaica – 1980



Hiroshi Sugimoto
Ligurian Sea, Savona – 2019



LAKE SILVER #6
Vendredi 27 septembre 2024 – 14h59



LAKE SILVER #15
Lundi 14 octobre 2024 – 16h26

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