

MAXIMILLIAN WILLIAM

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COCO CAPITÁN

NAÏVY: in fifty (definitive) photographs

Opening Reception: Thursday 4 May 2023, 6 - 8pm

Exhibition Dates: 4 May - 24 June 2023

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Maximillian William, London is pleased to present *NAÏVY: in fifty (definitive) photographs*, Coco Capitán's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

Anchored in her ever-evolving photography practice, the show will exhibit the fifty definitive photographs of the artist's now complete *Naïvy* series.

*Naïvy* has captivated Capitán for over a decade. Navigating themes of adventure, belonging and loss of innocence, the series pays tribute to an imagined nautical universe: one peopled by Capitán's 'Lost Naïvy' sailors. But Capitán does not present these figures as we know them. Rather than depicting them in the classic sailor suits of the 1940s, Capitán portrays her sailors with their bare lower halves, signifying a departure from the quintessential image. Her artistic exploration of the sailor's image delves into the conflicting notions of autonomy and, tightly regulated military life, heteronormative masculinity, and latent queerness. These dichotomies are manifested in Capitán's manipulation of the suit, with interventions such as embroidering daisies or the word 'LOST'. The costumes themselves embody a departure from regimentation, serving as a canvas for Capitán to subvert traditional expectations and provoke deeper contemplation on the complexity of identity. This sartorial subversion transforms a traditionally homogenous and masculine garment into a symbol of liberation and non-conformity. Capitán's series addresses similar ambiguities in depicting androgynous bodies donning irregular sailor suits, drawing on the queer history of the naval costume and toying with the notion of who is permitted to join the ranks.

Capitán's sailors embody a sense of carefree abandon, their nude bodies fearlessly cannonballing and diving into the depths of dark blue waters, embodying the clever wordplay of "navy" and "naivety" that defines the series. The juxtaposition of their blithe youth with the vintage sailor suit evokes nostalgia as the unfixed future is contrasted with a bygone era. In *Deepest jump to blue* (2022), a figure is suspended in time and space, caught between play and danger as Capitán deftly navigates between these dichotomies expressing the bittersweet nature of coming of age.

The series was initially exhibited, in its entirety at the Parco Museum, Tokyo. In conjunction with the show, the Parco Museum produced a publication featuring a newly commissioned scholarly text by Lena Fritsch, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

## Notes to Editors:

Coco Capitán was born in Seville, Spain in 1992. Based in London, Capitán completed her Master of Fine Arts with Honours in the field of Photography at the Royal College of Art, London, in 2016. Recent solo exhibitions include *Ookini*, Kyotographie, Kyoto, *Who Art Thou: Conversations with Myself*, Yvon Lambert, Paris, *Naïvy: in fifty (definitive) photographs*, Parco Museum Tokyo (2022), *Naïvy*, Maximillian William, London, (2021), *Busy Living*, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris (2020), and *Is It Tomorrow Yet?*, Daelim Museum, Seoul (2019). Capitán's work is featured in collections including Maison Europeene de la Photographie (MEP), Paris and Huis Marseille Museum for Photography, Amsterdam. Capitán has been the subject of several publications including *Posturing: Photographing the Body in Fashion* and has published several books, among them *Transsiberian*, *If You've Seen It All Close Your Eyes* and *Middle Point Between my House and China*.

Maximillian William began with an itinerant model which allowed the gallery to gradually form a roster of contemporary artists. An impulse to expand alongside the advancing careers of these artists led to the establishment of a permanent gallery space in Fitzrovia in 2019. The gallery is artist-centric, collaborating closely with those it supports to build their platforms. On occasion, the gallery seeks to produce exhibitions that highlight those who have influenced its creative community, with the aim of presenting pivotal figures to a new generation. Alongside exhibition making, the gallery is committed to publishing, producing a range of publications from artist books to exhibition catalogues and monographs. The distribution of literature is key to the gallery's commitment to improving accessibility to contemporary art. Publications by the gallery are held in the archives of MoMA and Tate.

For further press information please contact: [info@maximillianwilliam.com](mailto:info@maximillianwilliam.com)

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