



Xavier Robles de Medina

**I WILL GO AWAY INTO THE WILD WOOD,
AND NEVER COME HOME AGAIN.**

1 September - 8 October, 2023
27 Warren Street
W1T 5NB London

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Alice Amati is delighted to announce the first UK solo show of Berlin based Surinamese artist Xavier Robles de Medina, opening with a private view on the 31st of August and running until the 8th of October. Expanding from the highly detailed monochrome paintings and drawings that the artist is best known for, the exhibition will also include new sculptures and text-based works and a reading area curated by Queer Street Press in response to Robles de Medina's research.

In the Grimm Brothers' tale, Snow White declares: "I will go away into the wild wood, and never come home again" as she is forced to venture into the wilderness to escape certain death. The term 'wild wood' holds both literal and metaphorical meanings, representing the unknown and standing in direct contrast to the concept of one's home. The tension between leaving safety behind and never returning home echoes diasporic experiences, and the artist's personal journey of moving away from his homeland of Suriname. Robles de Medina uses this phrase as the title of the exhibition, inviting viewers to ponder the connection between the protagonist's statement, the artist's own journey, and the historical context around the time in which the story was written in 1812. During the early 19th century, the Global South was still grappling with European colonisation, whilst debates surrounding the ethics of slavery intensified in Western Europe. Considering this historical backdrop, the artist questions whose voice the sentence "I will go away into the wild wood, and never come home again" truly represents— those forced to leave home as a result of war, imperialistic conquest, or enslavement, or perhaps the European explorers venturing into uncharted territories in pursuit of conquest?

In Robles de Medina's practice textual and visual research constantly overlap, resulting in rigorous and layered works that blend the micro with the macro, the personal with the generic, and the contemporary with the historic. Each carefully chosen image that the artist appropriates and translates into paintings, drawings and reliefs is at once connected to his own history and identity, and to a broader collective memory of global events. The process of collecting source images is somehow intuitive for the artist, who, once attracted by specific images, spends as much time contemplating their broader implications and interconnectedness as he does crafting them into their new form and context. For this exhibition, Robles de Medina appropriates images from an animated film, a newspaper article, photographs found online and from a personal archive. Poetic and emblematic, these works exist at the bifurcation between the literal and the metaphorical, demanding us to see beyond what is represented and to read further than words to come to understand the nuances of meaning within what is in front of us.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Xavier Robles de Medina (b. 1990) lives and works between Berlin (DE) and Paramaribo (SR). In 2019 he obtained an MFA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London and he is a current participant in the Berlin Program for Artists (2023-2024). In 2021 he was a finalist for the Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize, London, UK, in 2015 he was nominated for the Prix de Rome Visual Arts (NL), and in 2016 he was shortlisted for the Royal Award for Modern Painting (NL). Recent solo exhibitions include: *What if the tongue is cut out?*, Art Basel Hong Kong with Catinca Tabacaru (2021), *Wan Destination Wanhoop* at SCAD Museum of Art, USA (2020), *Faya Lobi* at Praz-Delavallade, Paris (2020), *Als het hele lichaam oor zou zijn (if the whole body were an ear)* at Readytex Art Gallery, Suriname (2018), and *if you dream of your tongue, beware* at Catinca Tabacaru, New York (2017). He was recently included in group exhibitions at Efremidis, Berlin and Seoul (2023); Mammoth, London (2023); Senegal's fourteenth Dakar Biennale (2022); Künstlerhaus Bremen (2022), Brigade, Copenhagen (2022), amongst others.



ABOUT THE GALLERY

Alice Amati is a contemporary art gallery established in Fitzrovia in June 2023. The gallery is committed to fostering artists at the early stages of their career by often providing the opportunity for their first solo show in the city and a supportive context for artistic explorations and career development. Concerned with encouraging transnational dialogues around topical questions within society and art, Alice Amati brings together British and International artists through a challenging, experimental and rigorous exhibitions programme. Joining a cohort of young and established galleries in the burgeoning artistic scene of Fitzrovia, Alice Amati operates as a platform for new voices in the contemporary global artistic scene with a strong commitment to research, collaboration and diverse practices.

For more information, sales enquiries, interview and image requests please contact: info@aliceamati.com