



**PIETER OBELS
FENG XIAO-MIN**

OPERA GALLERY

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FENG XIAO-MIN**

4 June – 5 July 2026
LONDON

OPERA GALLERY

FOREWORD



Pieter Obels working in his studio

'Pieter Obels | Feng Xiao-Min' brings together Dutch sculptor Pieter Obels and French-Chinese artist Feng Xiao-Min for their first exhibition in London with Opera Gallery. Presented on the occasion of London Gallery Weekend, the show places these two contemporary artists in dialogue, marking Feng Xiao-Min's first exhibition in the UK and Pieter Obels' return to London after 10 years. It reveals the core concerns of their respective practices grounded in a meditative approach embracing the making process and its unexpected turns, despite their distinct cultural and geographic backgrounds.

Pieter Obels' work is defined by his use of Corten steel. While metal often suggests weight and rigidity, his sculptures possess an unexpected organic quality. Drawing inspiration from the growth patterns of plants, Obels works in close dialogue with his material, allowing its inherent properties to guide the process. This approach lends his practice a meditative dimension, transforming the forge, typically associated with intensity and force, into a site of quiet emergence. The resulting forms, characterised by their rounded openness, are conceived to inhabit and respond to their surroundings, contributing a sense of calm and continuity while also embracing how the environment affects the material, for instance the patina that develops on the steel when exhibited outside.

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Founder and Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Federica Beretta
Global Director
Opera Gallery Group

Giulia Lecchini
Deputy Director
Opera Gallery London

Working from his studio in Fontainebleau, France, Feng Xiao-Min has developed a sustained engagement with abstract landscape. Rooted in a calligraphic tradition that has evolved into painting, his compositions employ subtle variations of colour to construct immersive, contemplative atmospheres. Whether through a restrained palette or more vibrant tones, he evokes indistinct terrains, mist-laden seascapes or shifting horizons, that resist fixed interpretation. The artist chooses not to title his paintings, believing that titles would constrain the way the public interprets his work. As with Obels, improvisation plays a central role. While informed by an underlying structure, Feng embraces the unforeseen developments that arise in the act of painting as integral to the work itself.

In an increasingly accelerated world, both artists offer a deliberate counterpoint through practices grounded in material engagement. Their works evoke a sense of calm that feels almost out of step with contemporary rhythms, an understated form of resistance. Central to this is their commitment to making: each remains directly involved in the physical realisation of their work, privileging process and presence over delegation, and reinforcing the intimacy that underpins their respective practices.

Feng Xiao-Min working in his studio
in Fontainebleau, France





PIETER OBELS

Tear You Up

2026

Corten steel on wooden base

Signed

205 x 75 x 65 cm | 80.7 x 29.5 x 25.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





I See Myself

2026

Corten steel on wooden base
Signed
235 x 110 x 105 cm | 92.5 x 43.3 x 41.3 in

PROVENANCE
Artist's studio

Breath You in My Dreams

2026

Corten steel

Signed

220 x 130 x 135 cm | 86.6 x 51.2 x 53.1 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





How Come You Never Go

2026

Corten steel on wooden base

Signed

178 x 92 x 90 cm | 70.1 x 36.2 x 35.4 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





Against the Current

2026

Corten steel on wooden base
Signed
180 x 100 x 50 cm | 70.9 x 39.4 x 19.7 in

PROVENANCE
Artist's studio

Traveling Blind

2026

Corten steel on wooden base

Signed

228 x 145 x 115 cm | 89.8 x 57.1 x 45.3 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





And Along Came I

2026

Corten steel

Signed

145 x 200 x 130 cm | 57.1 x 78.7 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





Weird Ways

2025

Corten steel

Signed

34 x 40 x 37 cm | 13.4 x 15.7 x 14.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



Look at Her

2025

Corten steel on wooden base

Signed

183 x 60 x 65 cm | 72 x 23.6 x 25.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

The Best Is Yet to Come

2025

Corten steel on wooden base

Signed

240 x 140 x 115 cm | 94.5 x 55.1 x 45.3 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





I Know the End, Let's Dance

2024

Corten steel

Signed

190 x 350 x 230 cm | 74.8 x 137.8 x 90.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Exhibited in the Medici Courtyard



BIOGRAPHY

PIETER OBELS

Pieter Obels was born in 1968 in Kruisland, Netherlands and later studied at the Academy for Fine Arts in Tilburg in 1992, where he currently resides. He is an artist whose sculptures challenge the conventional perception of steel as an austere and rugged material. Despite working primarily with Corten steel, known for its robustness, Obels' creations defy expectations by embodying a sense of lightness and grace through intricate, delicate, and sinuous shapes.

Obels' works mark a striking departure from the typically imposing, heavy forms favoured by many contemporary sculptors, offering a fresh perception of steel. Through a skilful blend of rigidity and dynamism, his sculptures occupy a unique realm between weight and weightlessness, confounding traditional notions of the limitations of steel. The bends and curves in his pieces challenge the perceived boundaries of the material, aiming to craft organic forms with a natural, innate sense of plasticity.

One of Obels' abilities lies in seamlessly integrating his sculptures into natural surroundings. Instead of imposing themselves, his artworks mirror the softness and balance often found in nature, establishing a harmonious connection with the environment through their rusty brown colouration and flowing shapes.

Working independently and without assistants, Obels works with Corten steel, a material that naturally oxidises, which lends his sculptures an elegiac presence—one that evokes a nostalgic longing for a time that valued poetry over power, fragility over machinery, and balance over brute force. He prefers to work in spontaneity, resulting from improvisation. The artist describes the material as being "subservient" to his artistic vision, which is translated in the physicality of the works. He encourages his audience to navigate around each sculpture, allowing them to discover a new detail at every angle. Although rooted in an industrial process, Obels' artworks reflect an aspirational world—a realm dominated by beauty, attuned to nature, and embracing the gentle curve over the rigid line. They resonate with a desire for a more harmonious coexistence, where balance and beauty reign supreme, fostering an environment where dialogue and agreement perpetually thrive.

His sculptures have been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions such as 'Follow the Line' at Galerie Robert Drees, Hannover; 'Materia' at Gallery Rosenfeld, London; 'the Solo Project' at Art Basel, Switzerland; the Swiss Triennial Festival of Sculpture; the Schlosspark in Köln-Stammheim, Germany; and the Gunzburg Sculpture Park, Germany.



FENG XIAO-MIN



Composition N°18.4.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Composition N°15.4.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

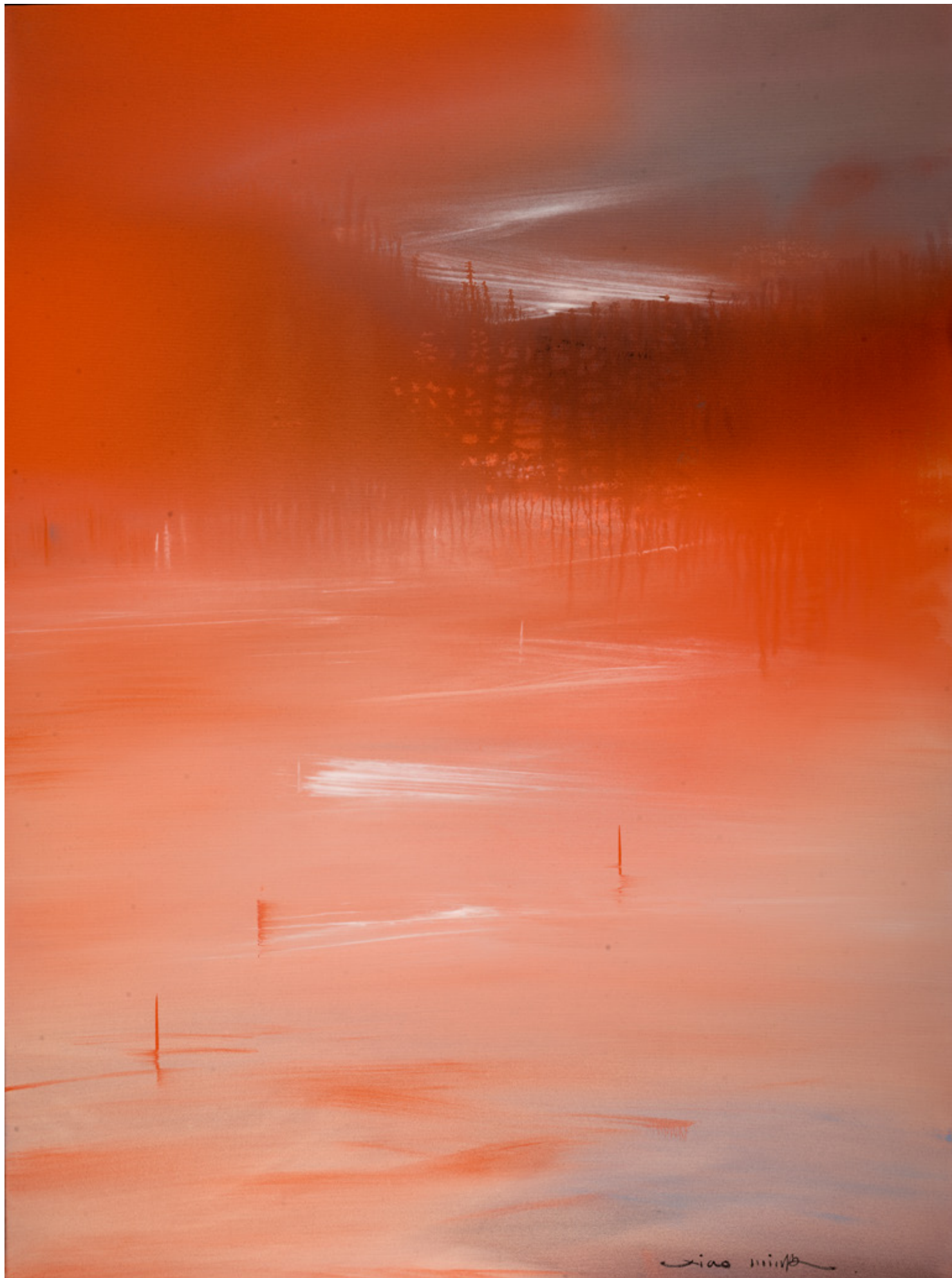
Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

97 x 130 cm | 38.2 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





Composition N°12.4.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Composition N°8.4.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

130 x 162 cm | 51.2 x 63.8 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





xiao min

Composition N°5.4.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse
114 x 146 cm | 44.9 x 57.5 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



Composition N°6.3.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

116 x 89 cm | 45.7 x 35 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





Composition N°18.2.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

73 x 60 cm | 28.7 x 23.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Composition N°8.2.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

73 x 60 cm | 28.7 x 23.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



Composition N°22.1.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

60 x 73 cm | 23.6 x 28.7 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio







Composition N°12.1.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

73 x 60 cm | 28.7 x 23.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Composition N°6.1.26

2026

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

73 x 60 cm | 28.7 x 23.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



Composition N°16.4.25

2025

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse
210 x 300 cm | 82.7 x 118.1 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





Composition N°20.10.25

2025

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse

195 x 130 cm | 76.8 x 51.2 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Composition N°26.6.25

2025

Acrylic on canvas

Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right;
dated, signed, and titled on the reverse
210 x 260 cm | 82.7 x 102.4 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio







BIOGRAPHY

FENG XIAO-MIN

Feng Xiao-Min was born in 1959 in Shanghai, China, and is a French-Chinese painter renowned for his fusion of Eastern aesthetics with Western techniques. His work explores the interplay of colour, light, and spatial composition to evoke landscapes that shift from dusk to dawn, producing immersive, visually powerful canvases. Drawing inspiration from traditional Chinese calligraphy, Feng transforms acrylic on canvas to emulate the fluidity and spontaneity of ink on paper.

Raised by a family of intellectuals, Feng's early exposure to art came through his father, who broadened his horizons to global artistic traditions. After completing his fine arts studies in China, he moved to France in 1988 and enrolled at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. These years marked a significant phase of artistic development, during which he absorbed Western painting techniques and honed his distinctive style.

From 1997 to 2000, Feng was invited to teach at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, an experience that deepened his understanding of pedagogy and artistic discourse. He eventually chose to devote himself entirely to his own practice. Known for painting directly on the floor to manipulate acrylic and water flow, his method emphasises control, and the gestural elegance of calligraphic brushwork, while each canvas presents a carefully considered harmony of colour and space rather than depicting a specific place or subject.

Feng Xiao-Min's works are held in private and public collections internationally, his work has been showcased at institutions such as National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan, SOMA Museum of Art in Seoul, Korea, Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou, China, Shanghai Museum of Fine Arts in Shanghai, China and Grand Palais in Paris, France. He regularly exhibits at international art fairs and biennales and has received prestigious commissions, such as creating works for the 2017 BRICS summit. His paintings have also been featured in publications by the French Éducation Nationale, and several French publishers have produced monographs and books dedicated to his oeuvre.

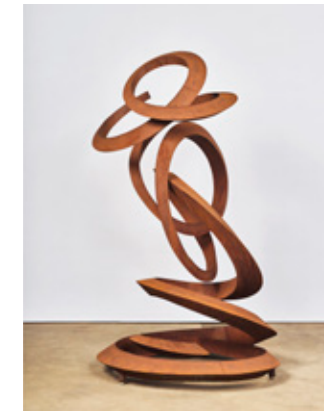
Feng Xiao-Min currently lives and works in Fontainebleau, France.



8
Tear You Up
2026



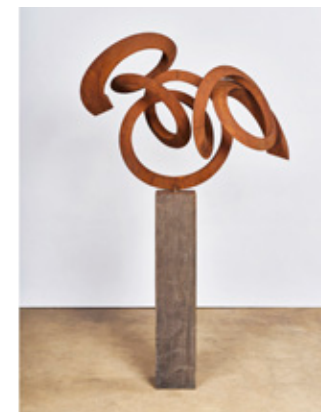
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I See Myself
2026



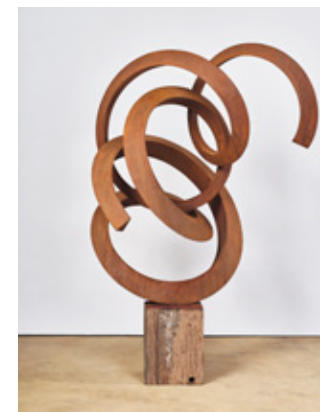
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Breath You in My Dreams
2026



16
How Come You Never Go
2026



18
Against the Current
2026



20
Traveling Blind
2026



22
And Along Came I
2026



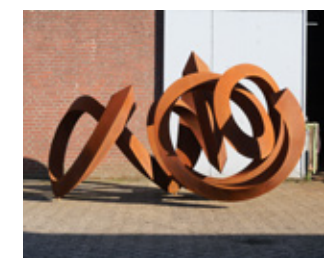
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Weird Ways
2025



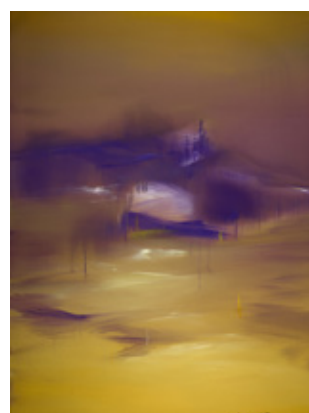
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Look at Her
2025



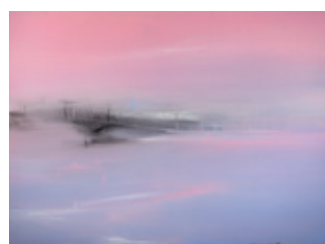
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The Best Is Yet to Come
2025



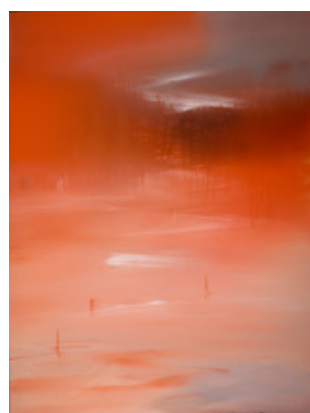
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I Know the End, Let's Dance
2024



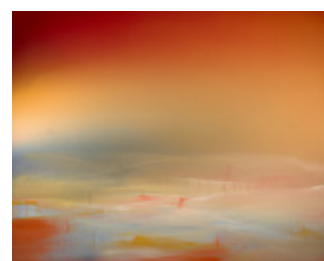
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Composition N°18.4.26
2026



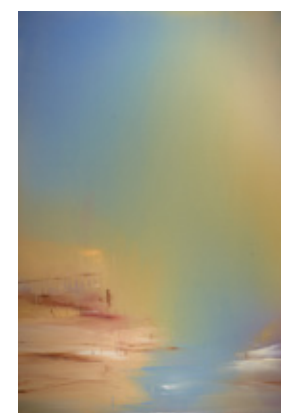
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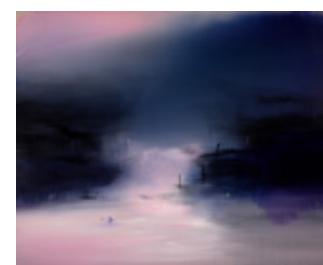
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2026



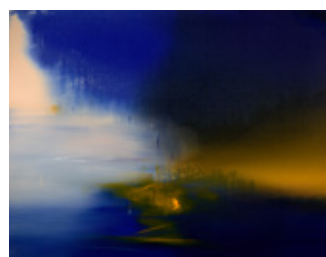
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Composition N°8.4.26
2026



66
Composition N°20.10.25
2025



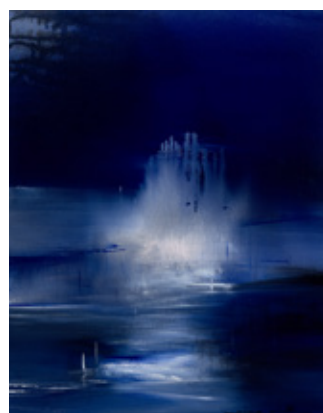
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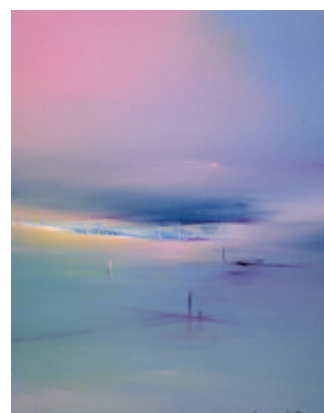
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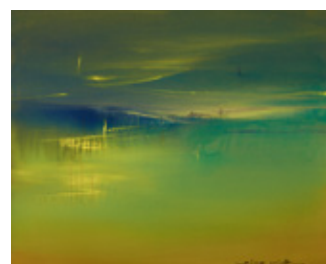
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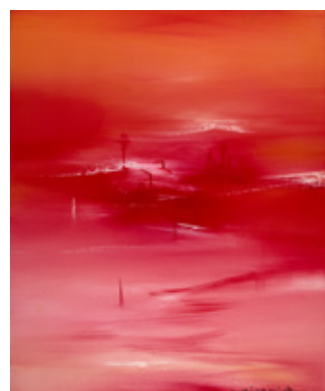
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2026



54
Composition N°8.2.26
2026



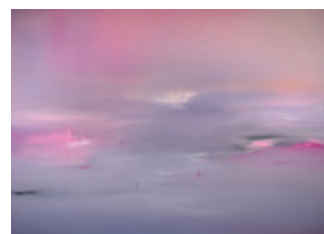
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Composition N°22.1.26
2026



60
Composition N°12.1.26
2026



62
Composition N°6.1.26
2026



64
Composition N°16.4.25
2025

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COVER

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Pieter Obels, *I See Myself*, 2026

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