

# Visual Pursuits

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## inner landscapes – SOPHIA SZILAGYI

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**Sophia Szilagy**i brings us a world consumed by furious waves and tumultuous skies in her new exhibition *inner landscapes*. Inventing land, sky and seascapes of elemental potency her work arouses a strong emotional response in the viewer, a quality that has seen the artist recognized as a contemporary romantic. Yet delve beyond the initial emotional impact, and a confounding play upon the formal elements of image making is revealed. Szilagy*i* has always deftly manipulated space in her compositions that sometimes skew reality. In this series she further refines this slippery quality of her visual language, generating ambiguous forms that disrupt a straightforward interpretation and make her work all the more compelling to absorb.

In this exhibition her magnum opus is the monumental *evening waves*. This image is one that teeters on the brink – so dense and detailed is its description of churning waves and roiling clouds that it seems to push at the limits of visual sublimity that can be devised by the human imagination, and re-mastered through digital printmaking. The vastness of this image that stretches 4.5m across the wall also tests the possibilities of what is physically achievable in printmaking, through its sheer ambitious scale.



Sophia Szilagy*i* *evening waves* 2013, pigment print on archival rag

In the resulting work the power of the sea is awesomely evoked. Waves seem to contain an almost supernatural energy with their strange vertical thrust, and here Szilagy*i*'s skill at presenting alternate possibilities takes shape. Are they distant foam peaked waves that loom in the background, or snow capped mountains of Himalayan heights? One can read ranging peaks in raging seas, smoke across the water, and sirens in the sky. It is as if all the elemental forces of nature have converged upon this one moment to tumble forth and envelope the viewer.



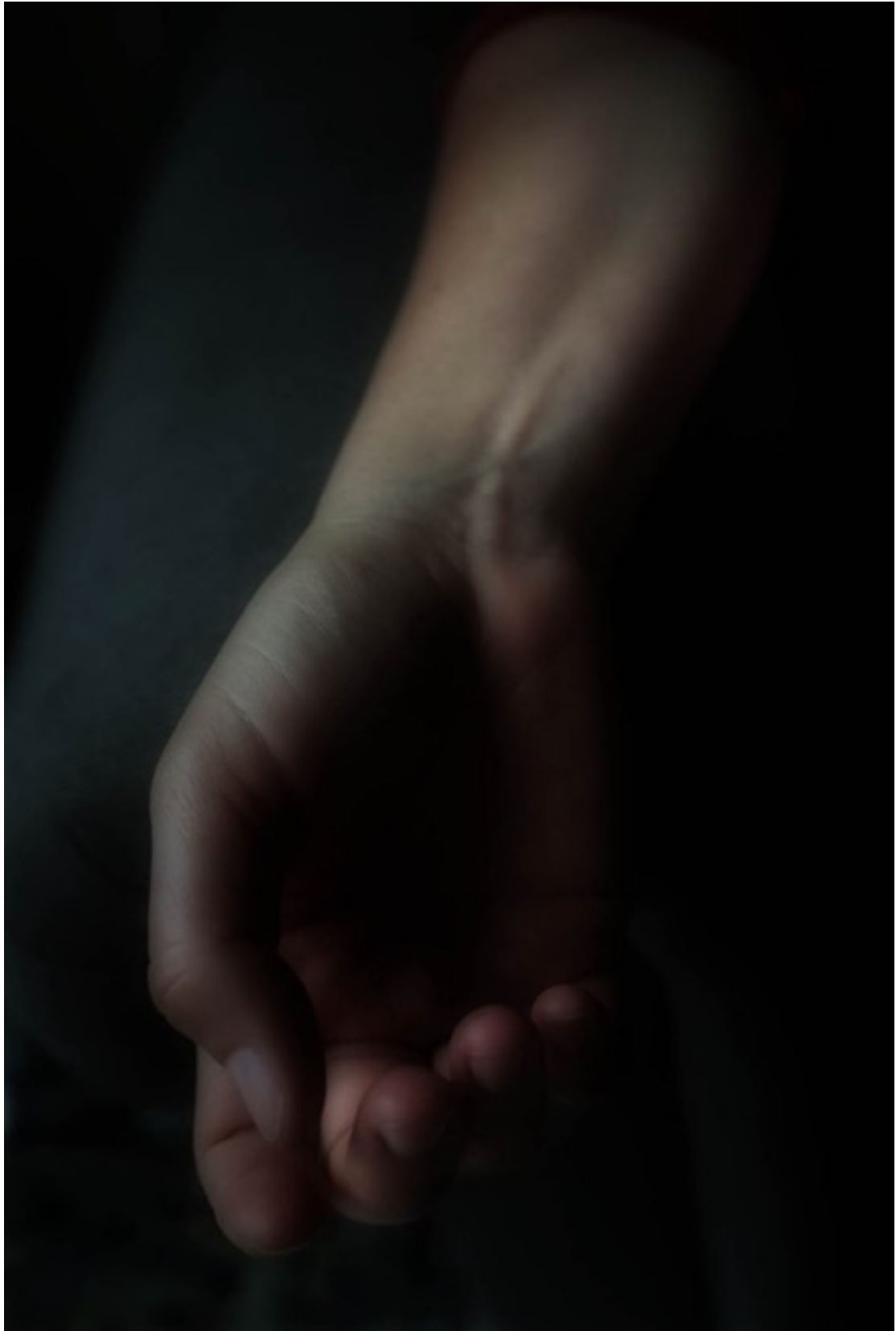
Sophia Szilagyí *incoming cloud*, 2013, pigment print on archival rag paper

Throughout this series Szilagyí employs lighting for powerful effect, perhaps stemming from the early influence of *film noir* on the artist's work. In *dark sea* and *light sea* Szilagyí spot-lights the ocean, creating a circular orb of light within the square of the picture plane that illuminates a set of waves, before fading to black around the edges. This theatrical, unnatural lighting when used upon the sea is strangely confronting, more so than when employed in a figurative context. The artist shines a light on something hidden, revealing a frightening vision straight from the well of subconscious thoughts and archetypal imagery.



Sophia Szilagyí *dark sea*, 2013, pigment print on archival rag paper

In other works Szilagyí captures figurative elements including a woman's back, an upturned hand, and a face. While the influence of *film noir*'s penchant for dramatic close-ups is sensed, more importantly the works add a human context to the exhibition. They reinforce for the viewer that although photographically derived these are not images that document the natural world, but images in which it is profoundly altered – refracted by the lens of the human mind. Within this series of dreamscapes, they remind us of the dreamer. While like individual film frames they contribute to a sense of progression between works, a cinematographic approach that unites the exhibition.



Sophia Szilagyí *arm*, 2013, pigment print on archival rag paper

In these prints Szilagyí constructs a fictional universe where passions are illuminated, and nature is configured to thrill, unsettle and seduce.

Marguerite Brown

[Sophia Szilagy](#)

*inner landscapes*

**October 10 – November 2, 2013**

[James Makin Gallery](#)

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