



ERIC ROUX-FONTAINE





Dance Hall, 54 x 65cm

In the Werner Herzog movie *Fitzcarraldo*, a fanatical opera fan fights nature and his own insanity to build an opera house in the Peruvian jungle. The showpiece of the action depicts Fitzcarraldo's attempt to drag a vast steamship up a muddy mountain in torrential rain. Yes, it's a crazy film. And it's no surprise to find it on Eric Roux-Fontaine's watch list. The artist says the film inspired his haunting work *Motionless Journey*, which depicts a grand theatre being slowly reclaimed by nature.

*Motionless Journey* is one of the many magnificent paintings to feature in Eric's debut show for the Catto. It is absolutely typical of the artist's style and subject matter. Eric specialises in dreamlike landscapes that burst with opulent vegetation. But into these natural settings, he throws in motifs from the modern human world: a suspension bridge; a chandelier; a fairground ride; even a tightrope walker. The effect is jarring, surreal and exciting.

Eric admits that much of his work is concerned with mankind's (ultimately fruitless) struggle to tame the natural world. He could almost be talking about *Fitzcarraldo* when he says that underlying his painting is the image of... "the man who attempted to shape nature to his will for centuries, taming the plants by putting them in a cage, imposing his rhythm and moods. He then realises that trees communicate, forests are moving, and some plants grow to disappear only to reappear thousands of miles away."

Where does it come from, this unique artistic vision? We can start with Eric's upbringing. He was born in 1966 in the Savoy region of France and attended the fine art school at Saint-Etienne aged 17. Later, he travelled across central America, India and eastern Europe. It was in these exotic settings that he first began sketching the wild landscapes that populate his art even now.

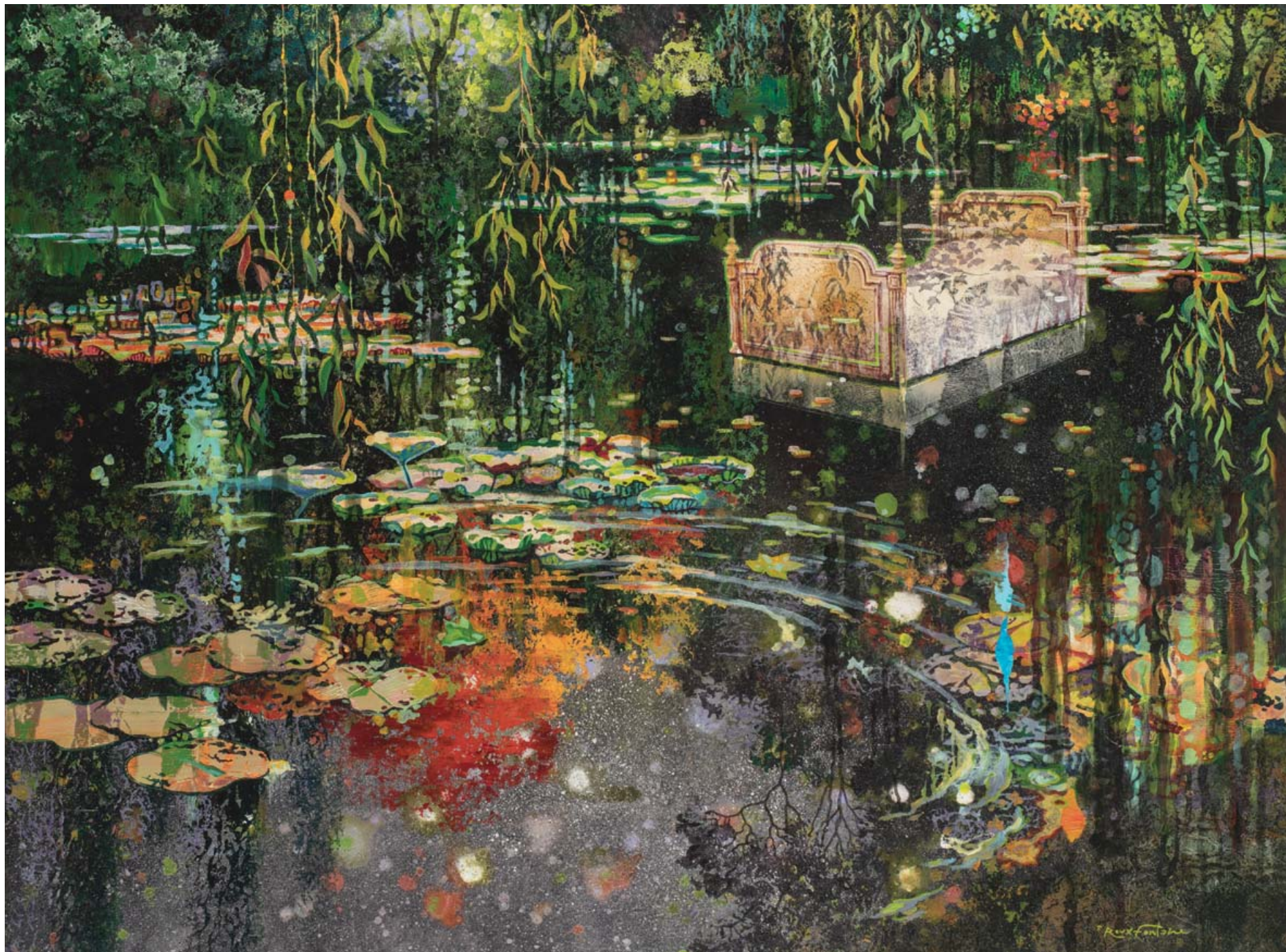
His work quickly gathered an enthusiastic audience. After his first solo exhibition in 1991, Eric accumulated public and private fans throughout Europe. In 1995, his paintings entered the permanent collections of the Musée des Beaux-arts in Chambéry and the Musée Paul Dini in Villefranche-sur-Saône. Soon after, Eric wowed the US market. He hosted solo shows at Boston's M Fine Arts gallery, Waltman Ortega Fine Art in Miami, the Hugo Galerie in New York and more.

Today, Eric continues to delight his audiences by leading them deep into his surreal jungle landscapes. His intention is always to go beyond the surface in search of some more profound reality. He says: "At no time am I trying to depict a place in a literal way. I think we paint with our culture as much as with our nature. And the memory or the feeling we have of a place is sometimes more interesting than the reality. When I put people in my paintings, they are more like actors. It is up to the viewer to put together the movie."

It's a privilege for the Catto to bring Eric's extraordinary work to the UK for the first time. This is a rare opportunity to see the full range of his gifts up close. Highlights of the exhibition include *By Starlight*, an impossibly beautiful nightscape populated with dancing flowers. Or *Cosmology* – in which a giant fairground wheel competes with an equally outsized moon. It's a richly suggestive image – like a 'golden era of sci-fi' book cover.

Eric says all of these works represent his attempt "to recapture the enchantment of the world." Come to the show, and be enchanted.





One Night in Giverny, 114 x 146cm





In Praise of Other Legends, 100 x 100cm



De Sel et d'Or, 100 x 100cm



The Ball, 146 x 114cm







World Cup, 27 x 35cm



P. Gauguin, 27 x 35cm



Mermaid's Song, 27 x 35cm



Cabin Fever, 27 x 35cm





Ball Opening, 73 x 92cm









Behind the Forest, 54 x 65cm



Future Interior, 54 x 65cm





The Elephant Hotel, 73 x 92cm



Cosmology, 60 x 60cm



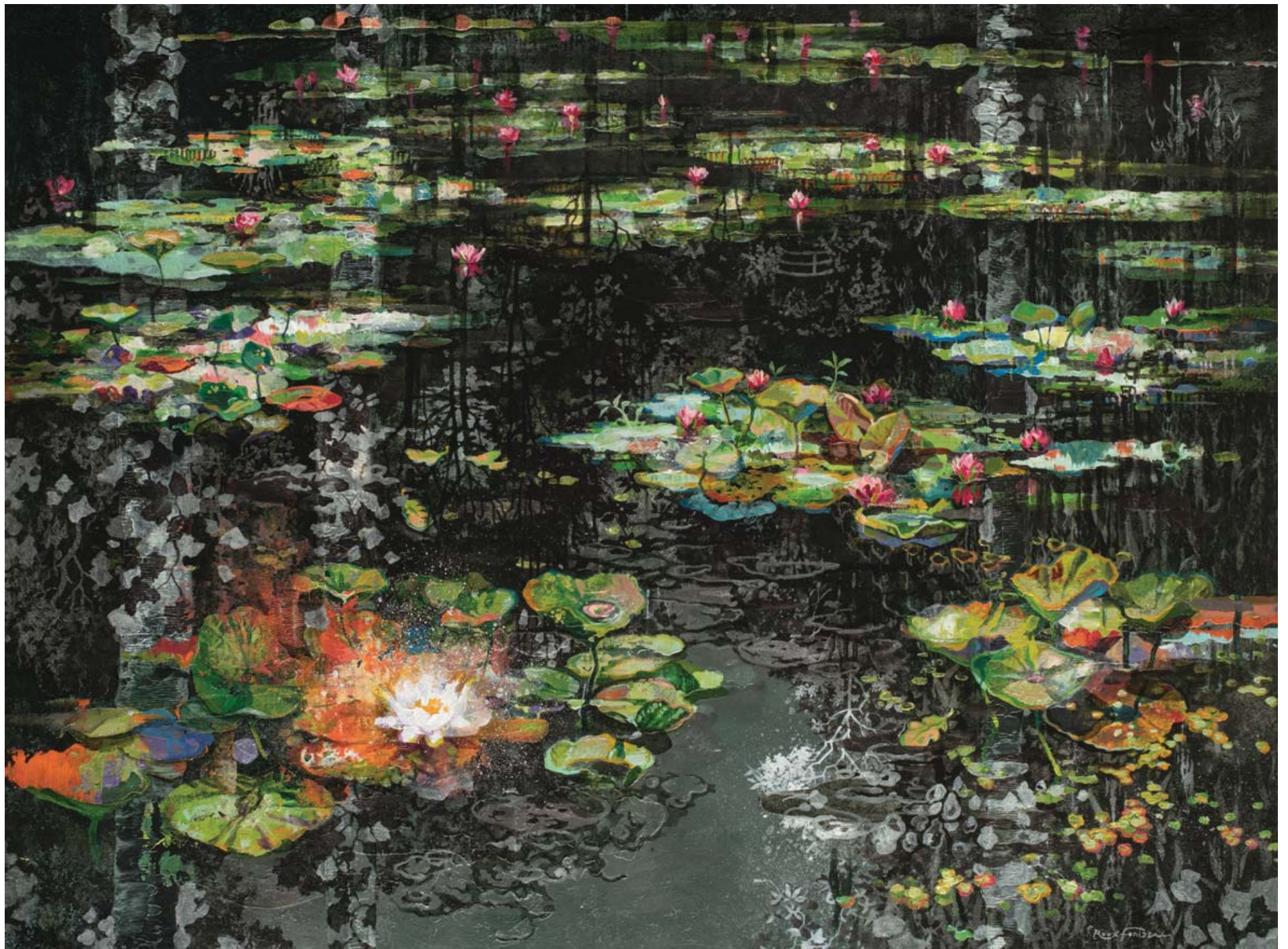


Will 'o' the Wisp, 97 x 130cm









Universal Rhythm, 114 x 146cm





Moon Walk, 27 x 35cm



A New Equilibrium, 33 x 41cm,





Against all Odds, 96 x 195cm





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Opening times: 10am - 5.30pm Mon – Sat

12 - 5pm Sunday • and by appointment

**You are welcome to attend the Private View with Eric Roux-Fontaine  
on Thursday 23rd May from 5.30 to 8.00pm**

Exhibition dates: 23rd May – 10th June 2024