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Vasantha Yoganathan, *Sea of Trees*

The final photograph I am going to describe is titled *Sea of Trees*. It was taken in 2018 and is landscape in format. It measures 86.5cm in height and 110cm in width. Similarly to the first photograph described, that's around the same width as two kitchen cabinets side by side, and the height of an average kitchen worktop. This is an archival inkjet print on pure cotton paper which has been hand painted with inks.

The composition is split horizontally in two, directly across the centre of the photograph. The sky fills the top half and at the bottom there is a vast expanse of treetops. Presumably the photograph has been taken from a tall building or mountain, as the trees at the bottom of the image are in the middle ground and then extend back and up into the far distance to meet the sky.

The sky is a warm cream colour. It is thick with humidity. There are no indications in the sky as to what time of day it is, or what the weather is doing – the colour is flat, as if we are viewing the sky through a cloudy glass.

A thick lilac mist falls from the sky and obscures the trees furthest away in the distance just below the mid-line of the composition. A palm tree sticks out of the foliage along this line, at the very centre of the photograph. Between this palm tree and the right edge of the photograph there is another paler palm tree – they are both much taller than the rest of the treetops.

A mist shrouds the trees ... appearing as a gradient from the skyline, down to one quarter of the composition's height into the trees.

Closest to the camera, where the mist is lifted, the treetops transform into a rich carpet of natural luscious forms. The carpet of treetops is tufty and wild ... some of the trees are smaller, and some are much taller. Aside from the two aforementioned palm trees, the thickness of the carpet means there are no discernible individual trees ... they become one.

The treetops have been painted with inks in an array of softened colours ... rusty brown, murky lime green, dusky indigo blue, evergreen green, sky blue, mustard yellow, the purple of heather, dusty pink. The way in which the colours have been applied looks natural ... not so obviously added by hand. There is no uniformity to the application of colour – it is a dappled, irregular patchwork of muted tones.

In a recent Q&A between Vasantha Yoganathan and The Photographers' Gallery Print Sales Team, the artist said:

All the works you will see in the exhibition were created during the lockdown in the past six months, and because I had so much time, as with everyone I was stuck at home and I started looking back at pictures that would be interesting for AMMA, and I realised I had set aside so many landscapes and portraits that at the time I deemed not good enough to be part of the show or to be part of the book. Mainly because they were too simple. This was my first gut feeling. I started painting those pictures and trying to play with paints over the prints, which is something I have never done before, not in this way.

And this particular picture is the entry back to the jungle and is leaving civilisation, to go to the wilderness and to go to the jungle, and I really liked all the colours, the sunlight colours that appear on different trees, are quite a subtle way of bringing some magic into the world of the forest. It's a picture where I really had the feeling looking at it and when I was thinking of what title can I give to it... the title came back pretty intuitively because it really looks like there are waves, and there is flow and movement going on.