2013–2020

Paradise

33 photographs
Monograph: *Paradise*, Komma, 2020
Foreword by Erwin Olaf

Cover: *True Self*

Philippines, French Polynesia, Israel

SERIES	*Paradise*
YEAR	2013–2020
WORKS	33 photographs
PLACES	Philippines, French Polynesia, Israel
BOOK	*Paradise*, Komma, 2020, foreword by Erwin Olaf
LIBRARIES	Getty Research Institute, Rijksmuseum, Stedelijk Museum, Tel Aviv Museum of Art

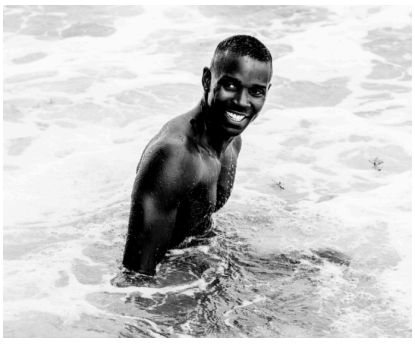
Where the work first found its own language.

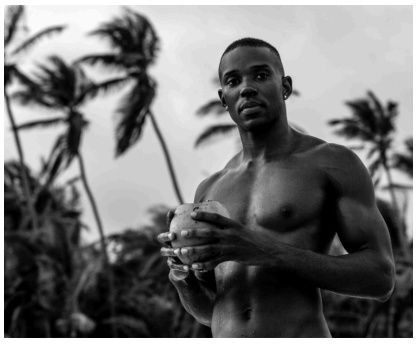
Paradise marks the moment where Ruben van Schalm's visual language first cohered into its own emotional terrain — a space where the human body and the natural world meet in a fragile, elemental harmony. Shot across the Philippines, French Polynesia, and Israel, the series blends the nude with landscapes that are both overwhelming and intimate, staging the body not as an object of desire but as a vessel of vulnerability, longing, and quiet transformation.

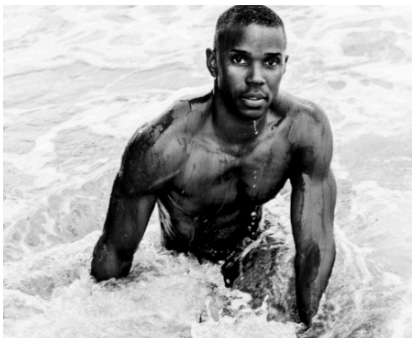
Emerging from a period of personal upheaval and geographic dislocation, *Paradise* became a search for a place where emotional states could coexist with the raw power of the natural environment. The young men who inhabit these images — often encountered on location rather than cast in advance — form a shifting constellation of presence: statuesque yet breakable, luminous yet unsettled.

Here, paradise is not untouched perfection; it is a place where the human figure contends with the elemental forces that expose, erode, shelter, and transform it.

Paradise established the conceptual foundation for van Schalm's later work: the collapse of boundaries between body and environment, the use of nature as emotional architecture, and the search for meaning within states of vulnerability, desire, and quiet metamorphosis.







Smile · The Wind · Rush of Water

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ruben van Schalm (b. 1988) is a Dutch visual artist working between New York, Amsterdam and Tel Aviv. His photographs and films record light, water and weather, and the slow time of the natural world.

Enquiries: info@rubenvanschalm.com