

HANS ALF
GALLERY

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HENRIK SAXGREN

CRACK, 2023

*The exhibition is kindly supported by Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansen Fonden
and by Politiken Fonden*

Press Release

Henrik Saxgren is a living legend in Danish photography. Through more than five decades, he has been a key figure in the emergence and consolidation of art photography in a Danish context, and with an unparalleled list of national museum shows to his name, Saxgren has explored every inch of the country – both physically and in terms of scenery and subject matter. The exhibition “Crack”, which opens March 31st, coincides with the prolific photographer’s 70th birthday, but rather than presenting the retrospective selection of highlights from his career that one might expect, Saxgren, who never phones it in or chooses the easy solution, has travelled half way around the world in search of few illusive motifs – and of course shooting them on extremely rare, long-expired polaroid films. It has to be difficult and troublesome to photograph, and the journey and the hardship serve their own purpose.

About the show Henrik Saxgren explains:

“Not too long ago, I was struck by a great desire to fundamentally change my photography. It had become too polished and pretty... So when I was offered another solo exhibition with Hans Alf Gallery, I took it as an invitation to do something radical.

For years now, climate change has been an underlying theme in my books and exhibitions. That is something, I wish to maintain. The droughts, floods and storms that ravage the planet at the moment, all point towards an impending collapse. Now and then I get this desperate feeling that the bedrock of our civilization is cracking up. So when I travel to Utah or New Zealand – and before that to a desert in the Arabian peninsula – it is because I am looking for cracks in the bedrock. That is why the exhibition is called “Crack”.

In order to achieve that fundamental shift in my photography, I committed to a series of dogmas to ensure I wouldn’t succumb to prettiness. I only used polaroid films that went out of production many years ago (in 2007 to be precise, so the newest ones are more than 15 years old). These films are extremely difficult to get a hold of, and since I started, I’ve had to toss several hundreds, because the active chemicals had dried out. Even the working sheets turned out flawed. The negatives have cracks.

The radical approach is travelling halfway around the world without enough film, and without knowing if they actually work, when you reach your destination. Or how they work. The artistic idea is to lose all control and replace it with something unmanageable, where chance is a big part of the process. It is a crazy experience to open a sheet after exposure. I have no way of knowing, how the cracks I shot will interact with the cracks in my film. Or – for that matter – how much of the emulsion is even left. Or what parts of the motif have survived the process.”



Al Naslaa Rock I, Saudi Arabia, 2022
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

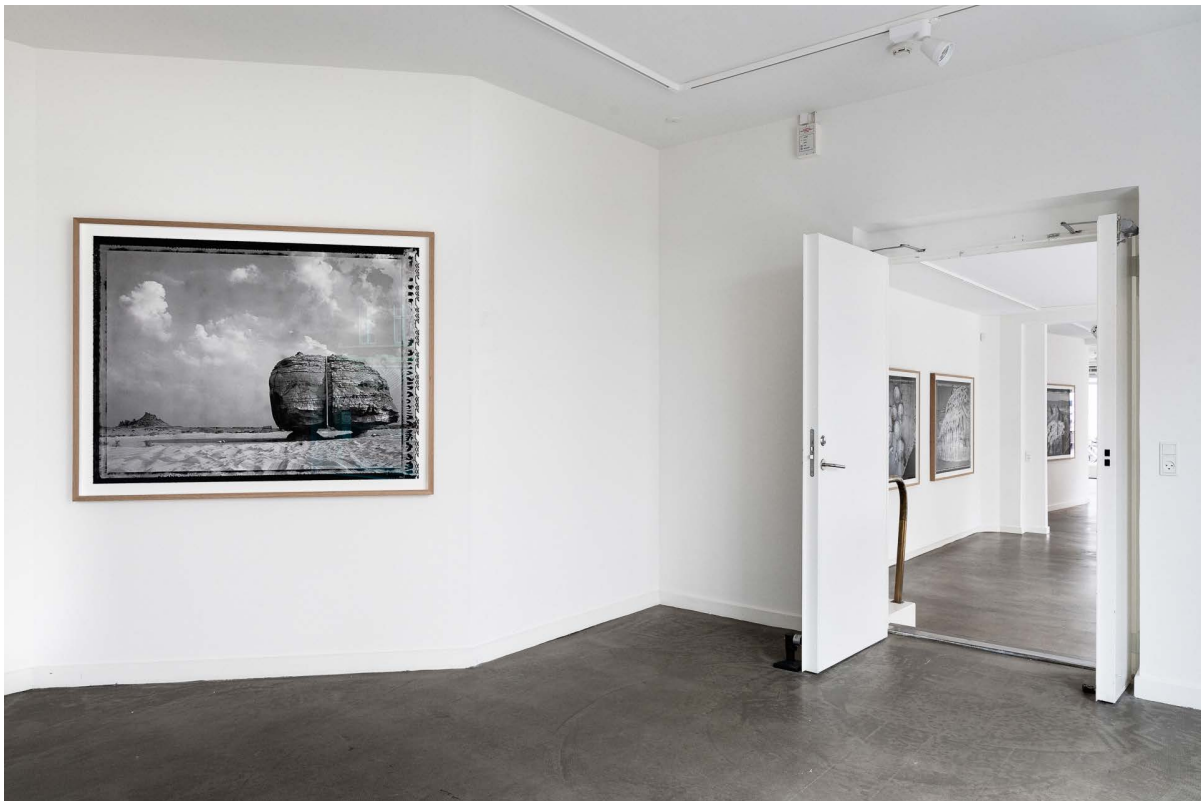
156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



Al Naslaa Rock II, Saudi Arabia, 2022
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



Installation view



Arab Rock, Saudi Arabia, 2022
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



Boulders, New Zealand, 2023
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



Nuuk Fjord Wedges, 2021
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



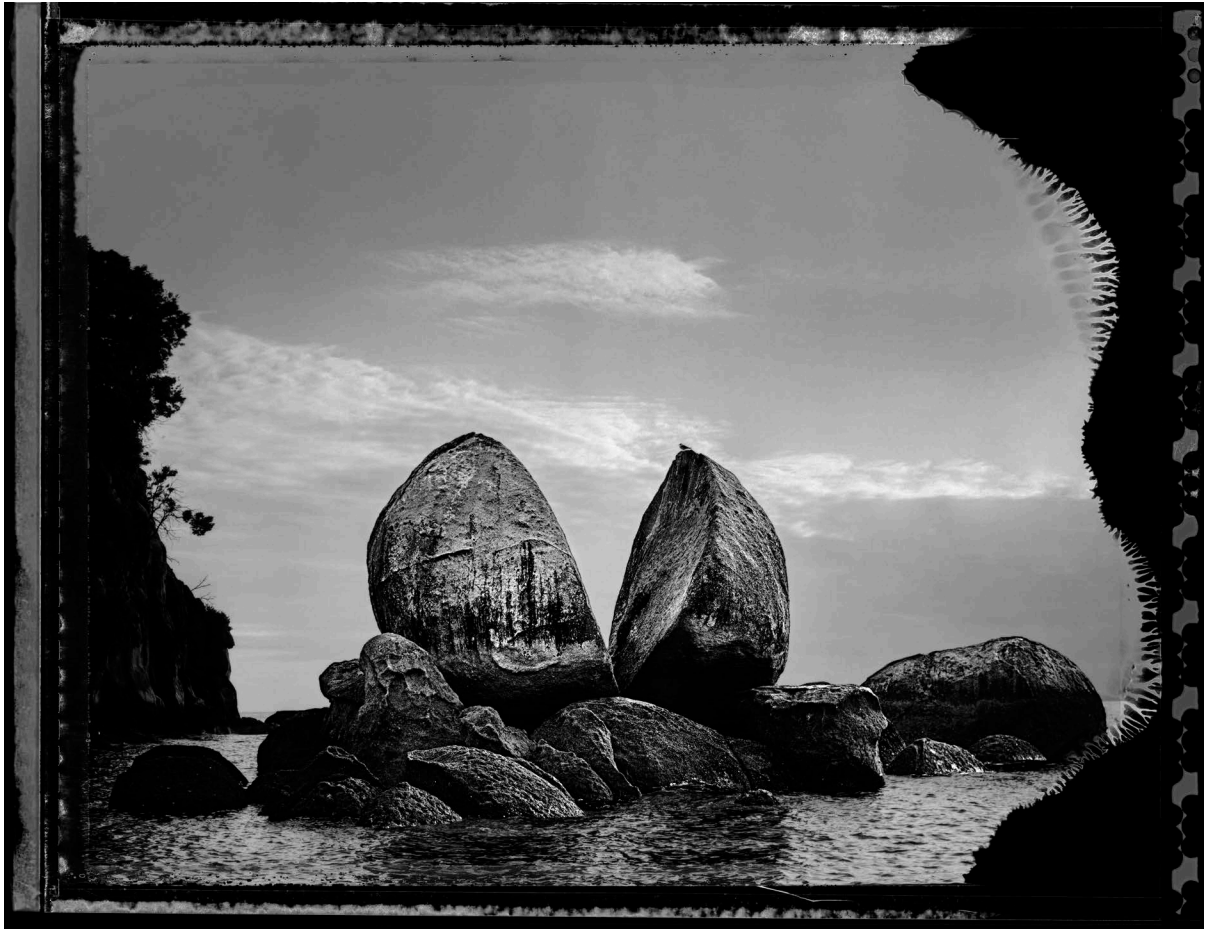
Installation view



Point Fear, Smoky Mountain, 2023
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



Split Rock, New Zealand, 2023
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



Stud Horse, Utah, 2023
4x5 inch polaroid photograph printed on Ilford Textured Cotton Rag

Available sizes & editions:

156 x 192 cm	125 x 155 cm
Edition of 4	Edition of 5
55.000 DKK	38.000 DKK



Installation view



Boulders II, New Zealand, 2023
50 x 68 cm
Pigment print on Hahnemühle Fine Art Baryta
Edition of 10
15.000 DKK



Installation view



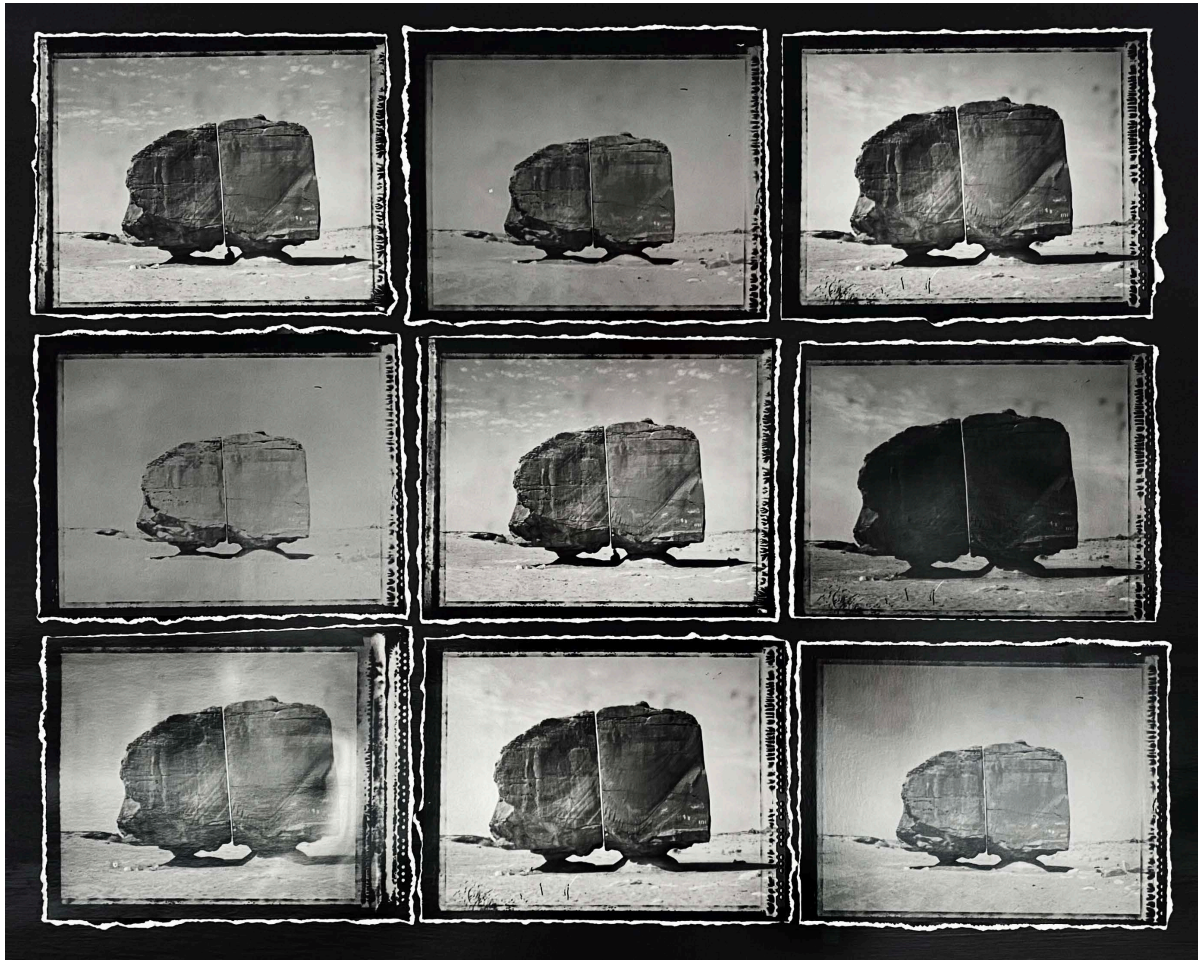
Smoky Mountain, Utah, 2023
50 x 68 cm
Pigment print on Hahnemühle Fine Art Baryta
Edition of 10
15.000 DKK



Point Fear II, Smoky Mountain, 2023
50 x 68 cm
Pigment print on Hahnemühle Fine Art Baryta
Edition of 10
15.000 DKK



Split Rock II, New Zealand, 2023
50 x 68 cm
Pigment print on Hahnemühle Fine Art Baryta
Edition of 10
15.000 DKK



Arab Rock, 2023

48 x 63 cm

4x5 inch polaroid negative printed on Ilford MG Fiberbase Classic

Unique

35.000 DKK

SOLD



Split Rock, 2023

43 x 58 cm

4x5 inch polaroid negative printed on Ilford MG Fiberbase Classic
Unique

ARTIST BIO

Henrik Saxgren (b. 1953, Randers) is a Danish photographer.

In an aesthetically straightforward and minutely narrated imagery, Saxgren conveys heart-breaking human truths and destinies, castigating the individual behind the historic landmarks in recent history.

In 1979 Saxgren was a founding member of '2Maj' – a group of socially motivated documentarians – and from 1985 to 91 he served as photo editor for the magazine Press. After extensive travels in Central America in 2000, Saxgren published his book of photography, "Solomon's House", which explored a post-revolutionary Nicaragua.

At this point in his career, Saxgren's artistic style drastically shifted towards arranged compositions in color after an extensive career in black and white. The first book published after this stylistic change was 'War and love – immigration of the North' (2006); a portrayal of the life of immigrants in Scandinavia. In 2009 he published the book 'Unintended Sculptures', where nature and culture coexist in grandiose passages. Most recently Saxgren published the book 'Bus from Baghdad', in which he follows 46 Copenhagen bus drivers with different ethnic backgrounds.

Henrik Saxgren was a part of the project 'Denmark in Transition' (2008-09), which includes the book 'From where we stand 1-3' (2010). He has exhibited widely in Denmark and abroad e.g. ARoS Museum of Modern Art, The National Museum of Photography, Skagen Museum, Noorderlicht Photography Gallery in the Netherlands and Paris Photo.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022: West Coast, HEART Musem, Herning, Denmark
2021: North Sea, Hans Alf Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
2020: ULTIMA THULE, Sophienholm, Kongens Lyngby, Denmark
2019: TØNDERMARSKEN, Tønder Kunstmuseum, Tønder, Denmark
2017: Ultima Thule, Hans Alf Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
2016: 76° N (Greenland from Above), Hans Alf Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
2014: Beyond the Rush, Rundetårn, Copenhagen
2013: HYBRiD, Glyptoteket, Copenhagen, Denmark
2011: War and Love, Katuaq, Nuuk, Greenland
2010: Unintended Sculptures, De Frog Gallery, Houston, USA
2009: Unintended Sculptures, The National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen
2007: War and Love, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden
2004: Landscapes of War, Superdanish, Harbourfrontcent., Toronto
Voodoo, SUPERDANISH, Pikto Gallery, Toronto
2003: Voodoo! (With Abbas). World Museum, Rotterdam
2001: Solomons House, Narden Fotofestival, Amsterdam
2000: Solomons House, Danish Embassy, Managua, Nicaragua
1993: 25 Portraits, The National Gallery at Frederiksborg Museum

SELECTED AWARDS AND FUNDINGS

2018: Award, Deutscher Fotobuchpreis: "Conceptual artistic photo book", Germany
2017: Prize, Dansk Fotografis Hæderspris, Denmark
2007: Prize, The Golden Bookmarker, BG Banks litteratursponsorat, Denmark
2006: Prize, Martin Andersen Nexø-prize, Denmark
2002: Grant, Nordic Council Artfoundation, Denmark
2001: Grant, The Danish Art Foundation/Statens Kunstfond, Denmark
2000: Grant, The Danish Art Foundation/Statens Kunstfond, Denmark
Grant, Ny Carlsbergfondet, Denmark
1998: Grant, The Danish Art Foundation/Statens Kunstfond, Denmark
1996: Grant, Ny Carlsbergfondet, Denmark
1995: Award, Jyllands Postens Kulturlegat, Denmark

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

ARoS Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark
Skagen Museum, Denmark
Hasselblad Foundation, Göteborg, Sweden
Kunstmuseum Brandts, Odense, Denmark
The Frederiksborg Museum, Denmark
Noorderlicht Photography Gallery, Holland
Ny Carlsbergfondet, Denmark
Danish Art Foundation/Statens Kunstfond, Denmark
The National Museum of Photography, Denmark
Randers Kunstmuseum, Randers, Denmark
Tønder Kunstmuseum, Tønder, Denmark