

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Ofer JOSEF (Tel Aviv 1965 -)

Jaguar 2

Pen and black ink and black wash on paper.

210 x 297 mm.

Artist description:

Born in 1965 in Tel Aviv, Ofer Joseph moved to France at the age of sixteen. He became one of the youngest students to gain admittance to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, which he entered at seventeen. He spent much of his free time at the Paris zoo, studying animals – in particular felines – and producing numerous animal scenes. After leaving art school, Josef settled in Brazil where he lived for some thirty years, including three years working in relative isolation in a small village of some eighty inhabitants on the banks of the Rio Negro, a major tributary of the Amazon River, where he continued to find inspiration in the local wildlife. The artist now divides his time between Spain, Brazil and Portugal, and continues to create his sometimes disturbing, but always memorable visions, bringing them to life on paper. Since 1987, Ofer Josef has had successful solo exhibitions in galleries in Berlin, Malmo, Marseille, Paris and Porto. Josef's work is held in several private collections, as well as in the Teylers Museum in Haarlem in the Netherlands.

Josef's imagination overflows with hundreds of creatures he presents in his ink drawings, revealing an inner world in which human comedy, encompassing the erotic and the grotesque, is always close to tragedy. As has been recently noted of the artist, 'Ofer Josef has developed a unique style, mixing poetry and darkness. His drawings, of great intensity, evoke fantastic landscapes populated by strange creatures and tortured human figures. The artist explores the themes of solitude, anguish and death, but also hope and resilience.' The dreamlike imagery of Ofer Josef's pen and wash works find analogies in the dark prints and drawings of such earlier artists as Francisco de Goya, James Ensor, Victor Hugo, Käthe Kollwitz, Alfred Kubin, Odilon Redon and Félicien Rops, while he shares with Otto Dix and George Grosz a sense of the grittiness of the dispossessed.