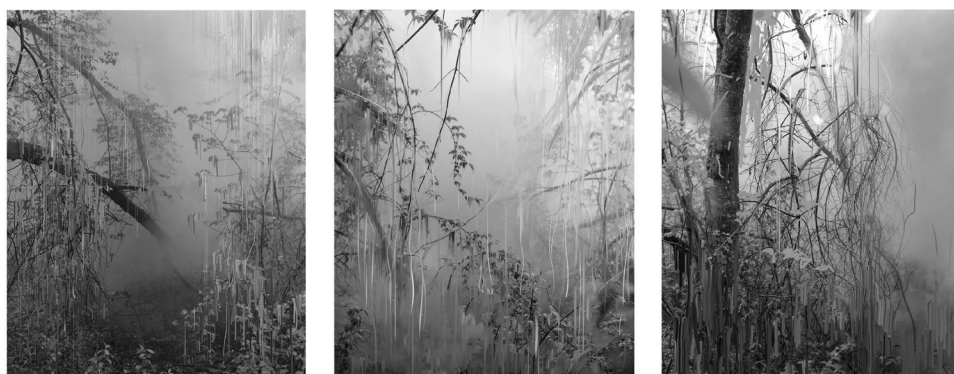


**Sandra Kantanen** *Smokeworks*  
23 November, 2019 – 11 January, 2020

Untitled (*Forest 17, 18, 19*), 2019  
archival pigment print  
triptych, 117 x 97 cm (each)



Sandra Kantanen has delved within the world of landscape photography for the past two decades. This fascination with creating her idealized surreal sceneries stems from her earlier student days, when she went to China during her master's studies in 2000. Kantanen states: "I studied Chinese landscape painting and became completely obsessed with the idea of trying to understand their way of looking at nature. I found out that most of the holy mountains that they had been depicting for thousands of years were almost totally destroyed by pollution and tourism." This notion of what's real or not has been the driving force within Kantanen's work ever since. Hers is an aesthetic journey in challenging the notion of what we as a culture believe to be ideal. Kantanen says: "It became for me a search for a landscape that doesn't really exist, an idealized picture." Yet her path found footing in the grey area that lies between an Eastern way of seeing and the Western sense for romanticism. She no longer sought out a specific place, but rather created her own, with the use of different colored modern smoke grenades infused within a select Finnish landscape. Her choice of these locations is based upon places that are still turning up old military armaments from the Russian occupation of the Hanko Peninsula in Finland, from the 1940s. Kantanen has always had a strong penchant for the use of diffused light within her photographs. This new Smoke Works series combines her sense of painting with light and her ability to digitally record and layer different images upon each other. Sometimes she leaves the photographs as they were taken, if they reflect the ambiance of her liking. If not, she manipulates them through a digital process where she stretches the pixels to the point where they appear as if dripping paint. Kantanen's photographs can only be described in her own words as "mindscapes".