

# ARTFORUM

## Caroline May

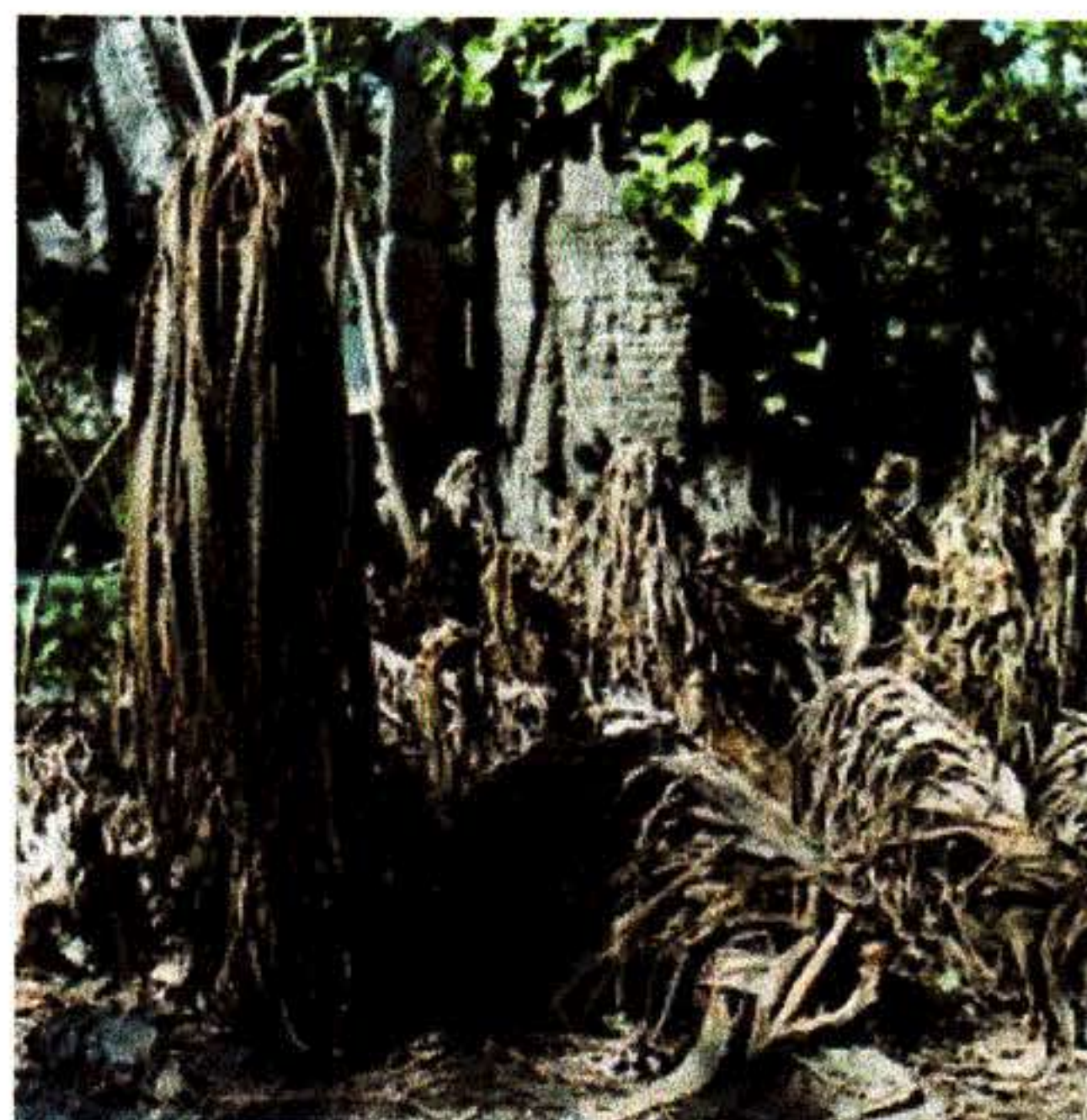
### THE APARTMENT

29A Ithakis Street

November 10–January 8

Caroline May's new body of work marks a branching out from her previous preoccupations with gender performance and the sexualized male body. For her current solo exhibition, May turns her lens to landscapes seemingly suspended in time, as if awaiting reactivation: sites that formerly provided the settings for sexually charged and socially marginalized—even deviant—behavior. Her *Untitled (Bath House)* (all works 2010) documents the ruin of the Kyllini Roman baths in rural Greece, a onetime locus of male gathering, leisure, and socializing. In the absence of the performed masculinity of her usual sitters—or any other form of bodily presence, for that matter—the ruin itself is embodied; the landscape becomes queered.

At times, nature seems to play along: In *Untitled (Cactus I)* and *Untitled (Cactus II)*, the decayed phallic plants are almost too good a prop on this stage, where old meets new, and youth meets decay. The ambiguity of the photographic image—the very idea that images can conceal as much as reveal—comes alive in *Untitled (River Party)*, where May captures a site that hosted rave parties a few years back. Here, the unexpected encounter of wild nature and bland concrete forms a still, almost impressionistic landscape that has only graffiti on a hidden wall to suggest the earlier presence of humans. But a rave is never an ordinary gathering, just as this setting is not a piece of scenery deprived of agency. As May's photographs propose, landscapes—like human bodies—can perform a multitude of identities, some of them sexual and most of them queer.



Caroline May, *Untitled (Cactus I)*, 2010, color photograph, 39 x 39".

— Irene Gerogianni