

Bad Moon Rising

The moon does not lie. It forewarns.

von Arslougho



Arslougho, „Bad Moon Rising“, Digitae Composition, 4961 × 3508 Pixels, CMYK, 300 DPI.

*“Bad Moon Rising” – An omen of disaster written across the sky. A retrospective on this song by Creedence Clearwater Revival from 1969, the year of the moon landing. The work is composed of an old photograph of tornado damage, a cropped image of a tsunami wave, and a lunar photograph taken by the Artemis II mission in 2026. “Bad Moon Rising” conveys a dichotomic interplay of cheerful melody and chaos and destruction – a warning: “Don’t go around tonight” ... which strikes as almost even more absurd than the pairing of classical music and helicopter gunships in Coppola’s film *Apocalypse Now*.*

In “Bad Moon Rising,” Arslohgo compresses three layers of imagery into an apocalyptic diagnosis of our times, one that reaches far beyond its immediate visual material. A historical photograph of tornado devastation, a cropped image of an oncoming tsunami wave, and a lunar photograph from the Artemis II mission of 2026 coalesce into a monochrome panorama that is simultaneously document, warning, and reflection. The image does not depict catastrophe. It is catastrophe – and it asks what we intend to do about it.

The title refers directly to the song of the same name by Creedence Clearwater Revival from 1969 – the year Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon while John Fogerty sang: “Don’t go around tonight / Well, it’s bound to take your life.” This coincidence is more than a historical footnote. It is the conceptual hinge of the entire work: humanity reaches for the moon, and the song warns against it. The Artemis II photograph positioned in the upper right quadrant closes this arc by embedding the current space program – named for the sister of the sun god, for light and the hunt – within a visual narrative of ruin. The moon is no longer a distant destination. It is a witness.

What dominates the work visually is its radical desaturation. The black-and-white tonal values immerse the subject in a timelessness that strips both the archival tornado photograph and the tsunami wave of their concrete historical moorings. The rubble could date from the early 1900s – or it could appear tomorrow. The water advances like a geological event, indifferent to human chronology. Arslohgo deploys this visual displacement from time as a rhetorical device: the catastrophe is not past. It is structural.

The artist himself draws attention to the dichotomy between the original song’s “cheerful melody” and his apocalyptic imagery – comparing that tension to the juxtaposition of classical music and helicopter gunships in Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*. The comparison is apt, but it may underestimate the particular edge of this work. Coppola staged irony through cinematic means – scenic, dramatic, narrative. Arslohgo works in silence. His image has no sound. Those who know the song hear it inwardly; those who don’t see only the ruins. Both see the same thing and hear something different – an effect cinema, in this form, cannot produce.

That “Bad Moon Rising” belongs to both the Sky Series and the Sea Series is not a matter of formal dual membership but of conceptual consistency: sky and sea meet in the image as the two uncontrollable dimensions between which human endeavor sinks. Above, the heavy overcast; below, the advancing water – and between them, the ruins of what was once a city. The moon presides over it all like a dispassionate judge.

“Bad Moon Rising” is a work about the hubris of departure. It reminds us that 1969 was not only the year of the moon landing but also the year of Woodstock, of Vietnam, of Charles Manson – a year that spelled out utopia and apocalypse simultaneously. Arslohgo refuses to resolve this simultaneity. He lets it stand, heavy and unresolved, above a flooded city, beneath a moon that always knew what was coming.