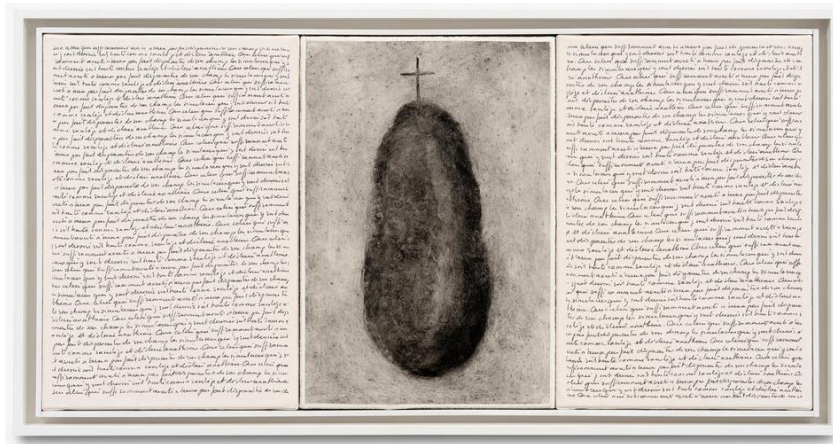


GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



Mégalithes et écriture, 2023, lacquer, acrylic and pencil on canvas, 35 x 72 x 3 cm.

LOÏC LE GROUMELLEC

Ecritures, mégalithes et cupules

July 13 – September 15, 2024

Opening July 13, 5-7 pm, in presence of the artist

Galerie Karsten Greve is pleased to announce the third solo exhibition of French artist Loïc Le Groumellec in St. Moritz. The gallery presents a series of the artist's new works, which strikingly underscore his ongoing commitment to minimal aesthetics. In his endeavour to bring this aesthetic back to the forefront, Le Groumellec pursues his artistic path by drawing certain motifs and other signs from his personal archaeology. Following his exploration of megaliths and abstract symbols, the artist now highlights a new form, discovered during photographic sessions at the Gavrinis megalithic monument: the so-called "cupules" or cup stones.

Ever since his discovery of lithographs of megaliths in the archives of Rennes (France), Loïc Le Groumellec has been working on this subject for over thirty years, pursuing it like an enduring quest. Megaliths are monumental stone structures from the Neolithic period, whose significance remains enigmatic to this day. They are generally associated with ritual, funerary or astronomical functions. Brittany megaliths are archaeological testimonies to the ingenuity of Neolithic civilisations and important symbols of Brittany's cultural identity. Like Brancusi, who incorporated many elements of Romanian folklore into his creations, these immemorial stones and the associated local legends captivate the imagination of Loïc Le Groumellec and permeate his work. He tirelessly explores them, using them as tools or vectors to question the ultimate meaning of painting.

In his ongoing exploration of megaliths, Loïc Le Groumellec introduces a new sculptural form at the heart of his work, discovered during one of his visits to the Gavrinis cairn: cupules, or cup stones. These are small cavities cut into the surface of the stone, whose origin is unclear. Theories most often associate them with a form of writing or ancestral rituals, they might have been used, for example, to crush substances. Loïc Le Groumellec incorporates this new element at the centre of his triptychs, surrounded

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by fine handwriting. The latter is the artist's reproduction of phrases taken from the capitularies (royal decrees) of Charlemagne, in which the emperor ordered the destruction of all representations of pagan gods, including megaliths: "Whoever is sufficiently warned and does not remove from his field the simulacra erected there, shall be treated as sacrilegious and declared anathema." For Le Groumellec, the words *simulacra*, *sacrilegious* and *anathema* are directly related to the pictorial language.

While these two elements are rich in symbolism, their plastic treatment, based on the repetition of the same motif, seems to dilute their meaning, or even cancel it. This is one of the distinctive features of Loïc Le Groumellec's work, which he himself associates with minimal art, in opposition to the overproduction of images, readily described – for a certain number at least - by the artist as vulgar and meaningless. By using a reduced, reiterated palette and motifs, Loïc Le Groumellec manages to put representation at a distance, achieving a pure form of visual expression. This desire to bring minimal aesthetics back at the forefront is the common thread running through his work.

"These "sign-writings", which I have been treating for thirty years without any real effectiveness, are now becoming the focus of my work, enabling me to assert the concerns that have always been mine: to be part of a history of pictorial art that refers to minimalism, monochrome, and a form of radicalism that leads to a distrust, even a rejection, of any narrative through images. [...] These writings allow me to open up a field of obvious abstraction, but also to reaffirm what I have been asserting for nearly thirty years: the spiritual dimension of the act of painting and the fact of painting the sacred through megaliths and these writings".

Loïc Le Groumellec's works exude an inherent aura of mystery, reminiscent of the enigmatic stones of his native region; a sacred language that only these ancestral rocks could understand.

Biography

Loïc Le Groumellec was born in Vannes, Brittany, in 1957. He graduated in 1980 from the École de Beaux-Arts in Rennes and, in 1983, the Yvon Lambert gallery in Paris organised his first solo exhibition. His works can be found in prestigious private collections, and have been included in exhibitions of the CAPC in Bordeaux, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes and the Conservatoire National de Musique in Paris. They have also been displayed by major international institutions such as the New National Museum in Monaco, the French Institute in Cologne, Germany, the Hermitage Foundation in Switzerland, the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal, Canada and the Juan Miró Foundation in Barcelona, Spain. Loïc le Groumellec has designed several theater sets, notably for the Basel theatre and the Opéra Garnier in Paris, and has participated in the creation of numerous illustrated books. The Karsten Greve Gallery has represented the artist's work since 1989. Loïc Le Groumellec lives and works in Paris.

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ABOUT GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

Karsten Greve has been a successful art dealer for more than fifty years. He opened his first gallery in 1973 with a solo exhibition of Yves Klein in Cologne followed by additional premises, one in Paris (Rue Debelleye) in 1989 and one in St. Moritz (Via Maistra) in 1999. Galerie Karsten Greve ranked from the beginning as a leading gallery worldwide and is regularly represented at international art fairs such as the ART BASEL fairs (Basel, Paris, Miami) and TEFAF. The owner's personal contact to artists of the international post-1945 avant-garde, such as Cy Twombly, Louise Bourgeois, Jannis Kounellis, John Chamberlain, and Pierre Soulages created the precondition that representatives of the international avant-garde define the gallery's programme. Karsten Greve's long-standing collaboration with artists such as Gotthard Graubner, Pierrette Bloch and Leiko Ikemura has contributed significantly to them achieving worldwide recognition. The gallery, which is representing about thirty artists, is expanding its portfolio to include rising young artists like Georgia Russell, Claire Morgan, Gideon Rubin, and Raúl Illarramendi. Galerie Karsten Greve is equally well known for its solo exhibitions and its highly ambitious accompanying catalogue productions published by the gallery.

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We are happy to provide you with images of the works shown in the exhibition