

PARIS

Loris Gréaud

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With its tenuous illumination at floor level, the gallery space seemed to be at the bottom of a swimming pool, if not undersea. On the walls, *Kraken* (all works 2012), paintings made with squid ink, evoked mythological sea monsters. A mirrored ceiling doubled the space as well as the milky light of a video, *The Unplayed Notes*, made by using a thermal camera to chart the warmest areas of two coupling bodies. Formless sculptures, like black coral colonies, slowly rotated on axis; each titled *Twain Rocks*, they are made of pages from Mark Twain's novels.



View of "Loris Gréaud," 2012. From left: *The Unplayed Notes*, 2012; works from the series "Twain Rocks," 2012.

Electric guitar chords (recorded by Lee Ranaldo without amplification in Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique's anechoic chamber) reverberated through the space. These sounds were also superimposed on the sculptures in the next room, fifteen Tatlin-style constructions in glass cases, a series titled "Tainted Love." Visitors had to move about warily through this rarefied world, which seemed at once lunar and aquatic, volcanic and mineral, made up of barely audible sounds and barely visible substances, as exemplified by the body heat captured on video. In this show, "The Unplayed Notes," Loris Gréaud assailed the gallery's architecture from top to bottom. He remodeled the interiors, painted the walls, and adjusted the ceiling height and the lighting in order to accommodate the cross-references among his videos, paintings, sculptures, lights, sounds, and the space itself. An apparently open and elliptical path was, in fact, orchestrated in maniacal fashion to manipulate not only the space but viewers' responses.

Gréaud loves John Boorman's cult movie *Zardoz*, released in 1974, before the artist was born. Perhaps in 2293, the year in which the film is set, this exhibition would be considered a form of realism. But Gréaud is less interested in predicting the future or constructing utopias than in reactivating and staging some of the innumerable futures contained in the past, which, for whatever reason, have not yet been realized. Thus, artistic activity becomes a platform for establishing a dialogue between, for instance, science fiction and the sciences that study invisible phenomena (as in the nanosculptures that constitute Gréaud's 2006 project *Why Is a Raven like a Writing Desk*) or phenomena that remain unexplored, such as the depths of the ocean (as in his recent short film *The Snorks*, 2012).

A sort of perpetual metamorphosis is at play in Gréaud's work. He burns his own drawings and utilizes the ashes as material for his monochrome paintings (*Nothing Left to Falsify*), or takes electrical energy produced by their combustion and stores it in batteries, to be used for a future project. Like energy, Gréaud's work is neither created nor destroyed, but constantly transformed. Such energy transfers are different from recycling. Gréaud is happy to "burn" ideas, a conceptual consumption made all the more striking in that it is not visible. I am thinking, for example, of the blown-glass lamps in the first room, from the "Spores" series: Though each one is different, all have been created exclusively with sand that has passed through an hourglass. Hourglass sand, which measures the passage of time, is transformed into light—a sinister light, at least once we realize that it pulsates to the rhythms, in the film projection *One Thousand Ways to Enter, Bats Edit*, of the flight of a bat filmed in slow motion.

—Riccardo Venturi

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.