



## OLD SKY NEW PRAIRIES

An exhibition of new works by  
**Loïc Raguénès**  
March 17 - April 24, 2016

*Behind every silver lining there is a cloud*

Loïc Raguénès' painting used to have a figurative subject: appropriated imagery, poor in quality and in content, were reproduced using a laborious, monochromatic technique that revealed the images own mechanical origin through a grid of dots. Raguénès would source images from local newspapers or post-office calendars, troves that preceded the internet proliferation of visual material. For the past two years, figuration has all but disappeared from his paintings, now markedly scaled-down in size and in range of colour.

From his Douarnenez studio on the North-West coast of France, his back turned to the ever changing sea, right outside his window, Raguénès builds up grounds of grey gesso on near-square boards, sanding back as he goes, until the surface is as rich and varied as it is plain. Some of the lighter coloured dots betray the use of a template, traced first in pencil, though the dots themselves are applied freehand as none of them are perfect circles and on close inspection there is always a shower of splashes around them. No two dots are quite the same – the tones sometimes harshly different and sometimes imperceptibly so. They are built up in layers of gouache, often so thick that they begin to crackle under the weight of the paint.

This is the second exhibition that Raguénès has made at CLEARING, New York. He presents a body of work that focuses on the almost molecular structure of light. The background emerges and the dots, that formerly depicted a figurative motif, vibrate with energy. With the most recent paintings of this group Raguénès opens new perspectives for future works. In *Max and Susanna* the dots begin to disappear into the background and in *Pharmacy* there is but one solitary yellow dot, a painting as mesmerising as the most empty and pared back of Turner's extraordinary seascapes.

In an interview in 1962, Glenn Gould, describing the music of J.S.Bach, might have been commenting on a Raguénès painting:

*"With all its eternally undulating flow of harmonic motion, with all its vast linear complication, Bach seems to suggest the suspended, perpetually transient unknowing condition of man. One doesn't come to expect great surprises in the music of Bach, one is not led to expect in the course of a work any moment, any pronouncement, in which the whole work is not involved. In Bach's music it's the constancy of events, the continuous line of development, the certainty of motion which we come to expect and to love. Essentially for Bach, art was a means of expressing that state of belief in which experience could be natively guided -- in which only the obstructions and temptations of the world could thwart the immutable totality of existence."*

**Loïc Raguénès** (b. 1968, Besancon, France) lives and works in Douarnenez, France. In 2015 his work was the subject of a solo exhibition at Galeria Zero in Milan. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Centre d'Art Image, Orthez, France; 40mcube, Rennes, France; Musée François Pompon, Saulieu, France, and Circuit, Lausanne, Switzerland. Recent group exhibitions include Das Optische Unbewusste, KunstzeugHaus, Rapperswil-Jona, Switzerland; The Deer, Le Consortium, Dijon, France; The Seabass, Fondation d'Enterprise Ricard, Paris, and Courbet Contemporain, Musée des Beaux Arts, Dole, France.