



Only a Grain of Sand
An exhibition of works by
Loïc Raguénès
C L E A R I N G, New York
December 16 - January 20, 2024
Curated by John Utterson

Only a Grain of Sand brings together over a decade of work by the late Loïc Raguénès, following his passing in 2022. Focusing on his production from 2016 to the present, the exhibition nonetheless seeks to encapsulate the totality of his oeuvre. Threads and throughlines proliferate as the viewer moves between modestly scaled works on paper and vast compositional labyrinths. Manifest across the board is a marked sensitivity: Raguénès never overworked an image, instead consigning his paintings to the precarity of a tightrope walker. This is especially apparent in the later works, as the dynamism of scale meets an economy of visual aspects. Commonly described as chapters, Raguénès's discrete imaginal interests often bleed into one another, playing out a game of reorientation and reinforcement. The memorial exhibition touches upon the artist's distinctive practice, ultimately tracing his trajectory as a painter of poetics and quietude.

Raguénès's early dot paintings keep the image-world at bay, clarified only from specific vantage points—namely, afar. Culling from found images, Raguénès's stable order of operations yields aggregated forms through colored pencils, ink and paint. Just as raster images vary in resolution, Raguénès's work toes the line between pixelated impressions and exacted visual representations. Smaller works on paper (such as the "Derviches Tourneurs" set) act as case studies, while later paintings like *Candle In The Wind* mark the artist's return to the circular aspect. Raguénès also exploded his systemized dots onto the wall, designating certain images to be rendered directly onto an apparently neutral surface, imbuing the viewing experience with effervescence. For this exhibition, two such compositions will be on view: an outsized polar bear rendered in blue gridded dots, as well as a subtler abstract composition partially obscured by paintings and works on paper.

As time marched on, Raguénès's paintings loosened up. He came to recognize the musicality of each composition, paying mind to its tempo, rhythm, and lyricism. The wave paintings, for one, encroach upon sublimity, yet evade it at the last second. The ocean is observed, abstracted, and objectified, in perpetuity. Likewise, these works remain caught between the impressions of sound waves and physical ones. The compositions of Bach and Satie were sonic mainstays for him, imposing notions of the repetitive, absurd, and melancholic, all of which seep into the visual practice. The exhibition's title, *Only a Grain of Sand* is taken from Erik Satie's *Trois poèmes d'amour* (Three Love Poems). This tripart song cycle begins here, "Ne suis que grain de sable," translating to "I am only a grain of sand," which initiates the simple ode to an unknown loved one.

Through layers of applied paint, Raguénès's surfaces bear traces of a process that culminates in discernable forms. His steadfast expressions in paint elicit constant interferences between the artist and a clarified image. Notable, too, is the disjuncture between Raguénès's practice and a historical position. His paintings ask more questions than they answer and, as such, he deposits the viewer into fields of abstraction as well as firmer representations of furniture, tugboats, and the like. Traversing his rich aesthetic territories, one meets the reverberations of painting's past, while its present situation is reified, ad infinitum.

Only a Grain of Sand has been organized in collaboration with the Estate of Loïc Raguénès. C L E A R I N G is deeply grateful to all the collectors who generously loaned their works to this exhibition; we thank you for supporting Loïc during his life and allowing us to honor his legacy.

Loïc Raguénès (1968 Besançon, FR; 2022 in Douarnenez, FR) lived and worked in Douarnenez, FR.

Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at Musée des Beaux Arts, Dole; Musée François Pompon, Saulieu; Circuit, Lausanne; Galeria Zero, Milan; Patrick de Brock, Knokke; and C L E A R I N G New York, Beverly Hills, and Brussels.

His work has been included in group exhibitions at Le Consortium, Dijon; de Appel, Amsterdam; Musée des Beaux Arts de Rennes; Villa Arson, Nice; Casino Luxembourg; FRAC Ile de France, Paris; Aquitaine, and Bordeaux; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg; and David Zwirner.

Currently Loïc Raguénès has solo exhibitions at C L E A R I N G New York and Brussels.

Loïc Raguénès's work is part of the collections of Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Fonds national d'art contemporain, Paris; FRAC Ile de France; FRAC Champagne-Ardenne; and FRAC Bourgogne.