

## Michel Comte

### Light IV

NOVEMBER 21–JANUARY 5 2020

OPENING NOVEMBER 21, 18.00



**Michel Comte**

***Black Rift IV***

Black ink and salt on black canvas

100 x 100 x 10 cm

2019

For his first solo exhibition in Turkey, Dirimart presents new body of large-scale installations, expanding upon Michel Comte's exploration of the impact of environmental decline on our glacial landscapes and oceans and the need for collective action.

Michel Comte: "At a moment when Switzerland has just bid farewell to the Pizol glacier and when it is estimated that 90% of the entire glacier volume in the European Alps may be lost by 2100, my work here shows us the effects of global warming and emphasizes how much we all need to respond to this."

A monumental, twenty-meter-long and nearly three-meter-high oxidized steel wall, painted with over sixty layers of black ink and salt dust will dominate the main gallery space. Entitled *Glacier Terminus*, the work references the end point of a glacier at any given time and also serves as a reminder that glaciers are always either advancing or receding, in a process of endless motion. The mass of *Glacier Terminus* reflects the physical and emotional impact of an actual glacier in Spitsbergen that Comte has visited on several occasions, while the dripping, caking, and ruptures of slight white and blue on the surface are reminiscent of the magnificence of such a glacier seen from close up; the black and rust ultimately return us to the irreversible traces of mankind's effect upon nature.

Comte associates his use of pure black pigment with the dust (cryoconite) that has settled on so many of the world's melting glaciers, blown in by strong winds and accelerating the ice's melting process; it can also be interpreted as a metaphor for the decay currently happening in many of the icy areas of the world.

*Erosion*, a wooden sculpture painted with black ink and carbon and consisting of a pile of eleven totemic wooden slabs of up to nearly four meters in length, will fill an adjacent room. This piece is based upon the phenomena of tree carcasses which have fallen due to glacial erosion and been left to corrode and slowly disintegrate into each other. These fallen bodies are frequently washed up and can be seen in the lakes and valleys of glacial landscapes.

For the first time, Comte will exhibit a series of thirteen paintings depicting glacier rifts. Executed in Japanese ink on transparent paper, these black and white paintings resemble in detail a glacial wall but in fact reveal the large cracks that appear in the surface of a glacier before the very dangerous point at which large sections break off and fall into the sea.

Supporting these major works will be three pigment paintings in red and white. Comte has spoken about how the red pigment in these works is an indication of the polluted and highly toxic rain that falls in many places of the world, the water having turned red from chemicals, which have leaked into it. The white color refers to the melted glacier itself.

**Michel Comte** (b. 1954, Zurich) is a Swiss artist, photographer, and



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environmental advocate. Originally trained as a professional art restorer, Comte is a self-taught photographer who has significantly influenced contemporary photography. In addition to his commercial work, he has collaborated on documentary assignments in war zones in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Sudan, and Cambodia for the international Red Cross and his own non-profit organization, the Michel Comte Water Foundation. His recent works include the feature film titled *The Girl from Nagasaki* (2013), a retelling of the classic opera *Madame Butterfly* which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2014, as well as his evocative and powerful *Light* series, which explores the impact of environmental changes via sculpture, (video) installations, and photography.

Twelve years ago, Comte ended commercial work to focus on this private passion that has developed into his most extensive project so far. A keen climber and aviator, Comte has been portraying glacial landscapes for the past thirty years.

“When my grandfather [the Swiss pioneer aviator] Alfred Comte crossed the Alps in 1914 for the first time, he came back with the most stunning images of shining glaciers. Gigantic white masses covered the mountain ranges. Almost a century later, I climbed many peaks and realised the fast decline of our glaciers and global ice caps. For decades, I have been revisiting and taking many images from open helicopters, gliding between clouds or simply climbing and witnessing the vanishing icecaps and glaciers of the world,” says the artist.

For detailed information please contact the gallery at [info@dirimart.com](mailto:info@dirimart.com) or +90 212 232 66 66. All images are subject to copyright, gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.



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