

Marlborough Gallery



Ahmet Güneştekin, *Million Stone*, 2015. Black marble, 147 5/8 inches tall (including the pedestal), pedestal: 11 3/4 x 74 3/4 x 65 inches. Photo: Cemal Emdem.

Ahmet Güneştekin *Million Stone*

May 6–November 22, 2015

Press conference and preview: May 6, 5pm

Opening: May 6, 6pm

La Pietà, Santa Maria della Pietà

3701 Castello

Venice

Hours: Tuesday–Sunday 10am–6pm

Vaporetto stop: San Zaccaria

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Curated by Matthew Drutt

The Million Stone: the fourth-century mile-marker monument, emblematic point of departure for the measurement of all roads leading to the cities of the Byzantine Empire, at the same time symbol of masculine power due to its intrinsic cultural term: the phallus

The legend of Lilith: the Sumer goddess of fertility and agriculture who was later demonised, known as the first rebel to stand against masculine domination

The history and the power of the relations of a city, Istanbul: once believed to be the centre of the world, a city with many names, a crossroads for different cultures and religions, where each new power and political force changed the city's name and former cultural texture according to their own identities

The fundamental consideration that Divine Religions are continuations of each other

These are the strong conceptual elements that internationally-renowned Turkish artist **Ahmet Güneştekin** will reinterpret to transform the fascinating 600 square metre complex of the Pietà into the stunning **Million Stone**.

Curated by **Matthew Drutt**, well-known American editor, writer, and independent curator, and commissioned by the **Marlborough Gallery**, this exhibition presents eight recent new works by Güneştekin, works capable of evoking atavic symbolisms and bring powerful messages in a display that will surely capture people's attention.

Güneştekin is an eclectic self-taught artist who makes free use of unconventional techniques, which unfold from his personal artistic experimentation unrestricted by his lack of academic training.

With the almost four-metre long **Million Stone** sculpture in black marble, Güneştekin denies the phallus, the symbolic core of the *Million Stone*, and signifies the concept of degenderalisation. Opposite the *Million Stone*, are three works inspired by the legend of **Lilith** which aim to attribute a meaning of rejection and opposition to masculine power. Woman and man are together on an equal basis, sharing the same rights.

Particular attention is also given to the history of Istanbul: in order to reveal the history of its many names, the work **Kostantiniyye**—a huge sculpture consisting of 13 letters of the word itself—reunites all the city's past names, which like its monuments have accumulated in Istanbul's century-long cultural memory: Byzantion, Byzantium, New Rome, Constantinople, Constantinopolis, Dersaadet, Islambol, Asitane, Dar-ul-Hilafet. This project encourages the comprehension of the city's history within the frame of power relations, rather than within a historicist context. By emphasizing that the past is a phenomenon constructed in the present, it reunites the traces left in collective memory in a timeless present. The aim is to constitute a threshold that enables one to question the nature of power relations.

The "**Holy Encounter**" series attempts to create common concepts and values. It expresses the possibility of developing an equal point of view on different religions.

Following the extraordinary success of *Momentum of Memory* (Ahmet Güneştekin's first solo exhibition in Italy which Massimiliano Gioni himself praised as one of the ten must-see shows of the last Biennale), the artist's current project voices the degeneralisation and the mystical soul of his country, revealing stories, power relations and legends trespassing geographical borders testifying to the common roots of different cultures.

The architectural project of the exhibition is designed by **Emre Arolat**. The exhibition is sponsored by **Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism** and **Çalık Holding**.

For all **press enquiries** please contact Elena Pardini, Head of Press at Lightbox:
elena@lightboxgroup.net / T +39 348 3399463



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