

KOKI ARTS

〒101-0031

東京都千代田区東神田1-15-2 ローズビル1F

03-3865-8650

Rose Bldg 1F, 1-15-2 Higashi-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 101-0031 Japan

+81(0)3-3865-8650

info@kokiarts.com

Center-Surround

Koki Arts is pleased to present *Center-Surround*, a video and painting exhibition by Eric LoPresti from August 15 - 22, 2022. *Center-Surround* is a two-hour multi-channel video which counts off each of the 2,427 nuclear explosions in history and pairs each one with a martial arts fall. This monumental video is accompanied by three works-on-paper from the artist's *Rocks and Tapes* series. There will be an in-person event on Friday August 19.

LoPresti created *Center-Surround* to address two questions. First, how can individual people live under the existential threat of nuclear weapons? Second, considering the horrific power of these devices to terrorize civilians and the fact that they persist despite 75 years of global protest, what can any one person do?

Drawing on his personal history, his visual language as a painter and insights about conflict learned from decades practicing the Japanese martial art of aikido, LoPresti has created a unique artwork which reframes the contemporary challenge of nuclear weapons in a way which is both aesthetic and powerful, suggesting potential for catharsis and change.

LoPresti feels personally implicated in the nuclear issue as he grew up near the Hanford site, part of the Manhattan Project. Hanford was partially responsible for the bombs exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and for the plutonium which powered the US nuclear arsenal during the Cold War. "As an American artist I cannot choose the history I was born into, nor speak to the devastation visited upon Japan in the past. What I can do is create space to think about our current challenges differently."

LoPresti practices aikido at NY Aikikai, an affiliate of Hombu Dojo in Tokyo. He says "I wanted a representation which was both intimate and pushed beyond our usual emotion of fear, so I assembled a diverse team of aikidoists to perform an aikido throw and breakfall for every detonation in history." As of August 2022, there have been 2,427 atomic blasts worldwide, a number LoPresti researched for this project with nuclear historian Alex Wellerstein.

The accompanying *Rocks and Tapes* paintings continue LoPresti's exploration of disaster and control by invoking environmental themes. The works-on-paper are based on imagery of rock falls in the deserts of California overlaid with trompe l'oeil tape marks relating to the color slides of the *Center-Surround*. They imply an evolving relationship between the human-made and the natural even as, to many, the world feels to be falling apart.

This exhibit is produced in association with Malin Gallery. *Center-Surround* was funded in part by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Eric LoPresti makes artwork about deserts, disasters and color. His paintings and digital works juxtapose abstract motifs with imagery of the vast landscapes of the American west, tracking cultural representations of conflict and beauty within our transforming ecology. Following in the painterly tradition of the apocalyptic sublime, LoPresti explores how trauma and aesthetics shape our lives.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Superbloom* at New Mexico State University (NM), *An Ocean of Light* at Malin Gallery (NYC), *Blueprint Paintings* at the University of Rochester (NY) and *Test Site* at the National Atomic Test Museum, part of the Smithsonian Institution (NV). A recipient of grants from the Carnegie Foundation of New York and The Devasthali Family Foundation Fund, LoPresti has been interviewed on international video by *Reuters* and the *Washington Post*, and his work has been profiled in *Artforum*, *Artnet*, *Business Insider*, *The Denver Post*, *Gizmodo*, *The Seattle Times*, *Vegas Seven Magazine* and *The Village Voice*.

LoPresti holds a BA in Cognitive Science from the University of Rochester and an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. He lives in Brooklyn and practices aikido at the New York Aikikai.