

:: GRANT WAHLQUIST GALLERY

Kate Greene: Black Sun

6/2/23 – 7/8/23

Grant Wahlquist Gallery is thrilled to announce Kate Greene's second solo exhibition at the gallery, "Black Sun." The show will run from June 2 through July 8, 2023. The gallery will host a reception with the artist on Friday, June 2nd, from 5 – 8 pm.

Taking its title from philosopher Julia Kristeva's treatise of the same name, "Black Sun" represents a stunning evolution in Greene's consideration of the relationship between vision, knowledge, and authority from a feminist perspective. The works presented marry theoretical sophistication—the artist's reflections on Susan Lepselter's writing on uncanny resonance and the American landscape and Jeff Wall and Kaja Silverman's studies on liquidity and wetness in photography in particular—with technical prowess, resulting in images that are both sublime and foreboding. Simultaneously intensifying strategies present in Greene's first solo exhibition at the gallery while expanding their thematic and historical references, "Black Sun" explores the connections between beauty, mourning, and survival from an incisive point of view and with singular style.

"Black Sun" includes examples of three interrelated bodies of work, including new photographs in Greene's series "Site Unseen." Contemplations of landscape as locus for competing myths and invisible histories, these new works predominantly begin with infrared digital captures of Freetown-Fall River State Forest in Massachusetts, which sits on Wampanoag land. Often described as "the most haunted forest in the United States," the area is replete with centuries of overlapping narratives and themes: European colonization and the displacement of native peoples; the American Revolution; the manufacture of weapons for the American Civil War; true crime stories and their intersection with the Satanic Panic of the 1980s and 90s; environmental degradation and recuperation; cryptozoology; UFOs; and more.

Greene transforms these initial infrared captures through a process of making prints, physically manipulating the prints in water, and re-photographing the manipulated prints until they develop a topography that intersects with that of the initial photograph of the forest. This process evokes both the wetness of darkroom printing as well as occult practices—many of the photographs are manipulated in water taken from the forest itself, establishing them, in a way, as relics. The resulting works, ravishing and abundantly black, are haunting in every sense of the word.

These photographs are presented alongside infrared digital captures of the sea taken at Grand Isle, presented without the re-photographic manipulation described above in elegantly subtle silver tones. The only inhabited barrier island on the Louisiana Coast, Grand Isle has been repeatedly battered by hurricanes and now is threatened by rapidly rising seas as a result of the climate crisis. It is also the site of the death of the protagonist of Kate Chopin's 1899 feminist masterpiece "The Awakening," who concludes the novel by wandering into the sea. Where the Freetown-Fall River State Forest is almost overflowing with history, Greene adopts Grand Isle as a concentrated

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site for articulating the intersection of environmentalism and feminism—that is, the ecofeminist notion of the connection between the historical domination of women and disregard for the natural world. As in prior exhibitions, “Black Sun” also includes studio studies that articulate the concerns of Greene’s landscapes through different forms and gestures. Here, unpacking a symbol of feminine sadness, these studies present bell jars surrounded by and resting on images of grasping, enveloping hands and arms.

“Black Sun” is thus an answer to Kristeva’s question: “Can the beautiful be sad? Is beauty inseparable from the ephemeral and hence from mourning?” Greene answers these questions with a resounding “yes,” further affirming that such hypersymbolic beauty—what Kristeva called “allegory”—can be transformative. As Kristeva explains, “Artifice, as sublime meaning[...], replaces the ephemeral. Beauty is consubstantial with it. Like feminine finery concealing stubborn depressions, beauty emerges as the admirable face of loss, transforming it in order to make it live.”

Kate Greene received an MFA from the Yale School of Art and a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Her solo and two-person presentations with the gallery were reviewed and featured in the Portland Press Herald and ArtNews. Her work has also been featured in exhibitions at venues including: the deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park’s 2022 New England Triennial; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Maine; the Visual Arts Center at the University of Texas at Austin; the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art; the Guatephoto Festival, Guatemala City; Museum Dr888, Drachten, the Netherlands; Bodega Gallery, Philadelphia; Daniel Cooney Gallery, New York; and Eighth Veil, Los Angeles. ROMAN NVMERALS published a limited-edition book of her series *Pyrotechnics* in the Fall of 2016. Greene has taught widely, including at the Rhode Island School of Design, MassArt, and the Maine College of Art & Design. Greene currently lives in Providence, Rhode Island.

The gallery is located at 30 City Center, Portland, Maine. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm, and by appointment. For more information, visit <http://grantwahlquist.com>, call 207.245.5732, or email info@grantwahlquist.com.