

032c Gallery is pleased to present “Chutes and Signals,” a solo exhibition by Erwan Sene on view from May 2 - June 3, 2025. The exhibition is supported by Courrèges as a continuation of the artists’ long time collaboration with Nicolas Di Felice.

For his first solo exhibition in Germany, French artist Erwan Sene takes the sewers of Paris as a crucial starting point while transforming the gallery’s exhibition space into a game-like Luna Park, consisting of sculptural paintings, a sound installation, sculptures, miniature models, and a two-dimensional wall installation. While creating this hybrid environment, he investigates the political, sociological, and emotional undercurrents of Paris’ subterranean universe.

The sewers of Paris are a vast network of underground passages, which were developed in the mid-nineteenth century to manage wastewater and rainwater and to modernize the growing metropolis. This underground system, however, goes beyond mere technical functionality with its tunnels forming a symbolic underbelly of Paris—a space of history, social tension, control, resistance, and hidden societies. To conceive the works on view, the artist spent a considerable amount of time investigating this somewhat uncanny world by photographing the sewer system and paying frequent visits to the Paris Sewer Museum as a way to understand its topography and mythology. In his work, this cartography of the city is inverted and presented in the negative, revealing an artificial world of machinery, decongestion balls, and stories.

Historically, the Paris sewer was deeply intertwined with the modern era’s fears around diseases and unrest. As historian Louis Chevalier has noted, the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie saw the sewers not only as a technological solution but also as a dangerous tool that can be used by the so-called “dangerous classes.” In times of civil uprising, the Resistance offered routes for evasion and revolt—routes that bypassed the barricades above. For Sene, this makes the sewer not only an infrastructure, but a place for subversion as well as a key to understanding the psychological and socio-political topography of the modern city.

With the “immersive” exhibition design, Sene recalls the atmosphere of a Luna Park that lingers between control and chaos. His kinetic sculptures and layered paintings are imbued with historical palimpsests and urban unease while some sculptures emit sounds in morse-code-like rhythms akin to sewer pipes digesting urban waste. A sort of La Monte Young Dream House (1969) contaminated by the low-tech proto-cyberpunk devices from the German film Decoder released in 1984. Others whisper in a dialect drawn from “louchebem”—an old French argot associated with butchers and underground culture. The artist described the exhibition’s soundscape as a “sewer system murmuring in digestion”—an urban body with its own logic and resistance, whispering back against control.

Sene uses the sound as a strategic medium, drawing from research on the political use of sound in cities—by governments, police, and surveillance systems, the mantric potential of low-frequency audio vibration are often deployed to disperse crowds, deter loitering, or fragment collective presence and can thereby be turned into a form of warfare. By incorporating noise in his sculptures and making it part of his “Luna Park,” Sene allows his work to communicate in frequencies typically dismissed or ignored. In this way, “Chutes and Signals” opens a space for the invisible and inaudible to become present.

ABOUT 032c

032c is a media and fashion brand for the 21st century founded by Joerg Koch in 2001. Our workshop in Berlin-Charlottenburg is a production and research center where we assess and contribute to contemporary culture. Our findings are published digitally and as a collectible manual for freedom, research, and creativity, printed twice annually.

ABOUT 032c READYTOWEAR

032c READYTOWEAR is a brand of womenswear, menswear, and unisex clothing designed by creative director Maria Koch. Presented on a seasonal calendar, the label explores the evolving nature of fashion itself – as design practice and as industry, as a tool for actualization and as lived experience. 032c READYTOWEAR is available at our storefront and gallery on Berlin’s Kantstrasse, our store in Seoul, and in 80 stores worldwide, including SSENSE, KaDeWe, Webster, and GR8, and directly at www.032c.com/store.

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