

Loeve&Co St-Germain
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Tuesday to Saturday
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Alex Burke

In memory of Goree

29.04-07.06.2025
Closure from 13 to 17.06
inclusive.



Alex Burke, *Untitled*, 1978
Exhibition view:
Paris Noir
Centre Pompidou



Alex Burke, portrait

This second exhibition devoted to the work of Alex Burke, following on from his recent works less than a year ago, revisits two key moments in his practice, and echoes *Paris Noir* at the Centre Pompidou, in which it is also included.

Subtitled *Artistic circulations and anti-colonial resistance, 1950 – 2000*, this exhibition - curated by Alicia Knock - bears witness to the presence and influence of African and Afro-descendant artists in France during this period, while also identifying a number of common themes and concerns.

Born in Fort-de-France in 1944, Alex Burke studied at the Ecole des Beaux-arts in Nancy, where he discovered the progressive New York troupe Bread&Puppet, whose play *Fire* honored the memory of five Americans immolated in protest against the Vietnam War.

Deeply political, his work has for decades used the transitional metaphor of the doll to convey his engaged gaze on burning notions such as colonialism, social injustice and cultural exploitation, while celebrating the richness and diversity of cultures, capturing the very essence of the communal memory of the forgotten peoples of history.

For this new presentation, we have invited Alex Burke to show, for the first time in France since 1998, the monumental installation *In memory of Goree*, previously exhibited in Nantes, under the patronage of UNESCO. Emblematic of his practice, the artist explains the issues at stake in the following terms: *on February 19, 1998, I went to the African island of Goree, off the coast of Dakar, Senegal, to frank 1,000 envelopes on which I had depicted, in black Indian ink, the silhouettes of faceless men, shadows emerging from the night. I sent these envelopes to twenty-six countries in the Americas. This symbolic action and exhibition in Nantes, a city famous for its ebony trade, is an opportunity to salute the memory of these deported and humiliated men, and to pay tribute to their descendants. For the past 20 years, I've been working on memory and traces, a way of questioning my collective memory and summoning up the constituent elements of Caribbean identity.*

In addition, visitors will discover some rarely-seen black monochrome hybrids of painting and sculpture, created between the late 1970s and early 1980s, a pivotal period in Alex Burke's career when he was building and then deconstructing box-like structures, satirizing a normalizing society that categorizes individuals into isolated, even alienating, social, cultural and geographical spaces. *The role of the artist,* "he declares, *is to alert, to unveil, to show what is hidden from us, to make the invisible visible.*

In parallel with this exhibition and in *Paris Noir* at the Centre Pompidou, works by Alex Burke are being shown simultaneously in London, at Sigfried Contemporary (*Towards the Sun*, with Alvaro Barrington and Roland Dorcély, from May 14 to July 18), and in New York, as part of 1-54 (with Roland Dorcély and Marcel Gotène, from May 8 to 11).

Stéphane Corréard & Hervé Loevenbruck

Alex Burke

The Black Piece

1979

Mixed media on wood
43 11/16 x 35 7/16 x 3 1/8 in



Alex Burke

X on the lace

Circa 1980

Mixed media on wood
39 3/4 x 19 11/16 x 2 3/4 in



Alex Burke

In memory of Goree

1998

Set of thirty-five watercolors and inks
on envelope,
92 1/2 x 172 1/16 in



Alex Burke

Doll

2010-2013

Mixed media and textile
Height 31 1/2 in

