



ULRICH RÜCKRIEM

(Düsseldorf 1938–lives and works in Ireland)

Untitled. 1977.

Dolomit stone, splitted, 4-parts.

133 x 37 x 37 cm.

Provenance: - Galerie Tschudi Glarus. 1990. - Purchased from the above, private collection Switzerland. - By descent to the present owner, also private collection Switzerland. The German sculptor Ulrich Rückriem has dedicated himself to the principle of "form-forming division". This means that he selects stones in the quarry, splits them with classic stonemason's tools and reassembles the resulting individual parts. He summarises the process as follows: splitting, cutting, grinding and polishing. His interventions

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are comparatively minimal, because as a qualified stonemason he has at his disposal a profound understanding of the material, its properties and geological composition. The fractures on the surface of the sculptures appear almost like drawings. They emphatically describe the handling of the stone and are witnesses to the events that led to its present state. Rückriem is not concerned with creating a new sculpture, but works with the stone and allows it to "react autonomously" to the action of the tools. For the artist, stones possess an autonomous power, and must in turn find their equilibrium in the face of the changes he has brought about. Despite the weight of the material, his works radiate an incredible calm and effortlessness. At first glance, Rückriem's oeuvre seems to belong decidedly to the realm of Minimalism. In fact, his works are situated rather in an intermediate zone between American Minimal Art and the expressive art tradition of 20th-century Europe. The former is detached and the artist's authorship is either virtually or completely negated. The latter is characterised by physical engagement with the stone and the association with the archaic-primitive creates a social and cultural link. The present sculpture from 1977 combines all these elements and is thus an outstanding example of Rückriem's work.

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