

## GUILLAME LEBLON

### *PATAQUÈS*

November 19 - February 4, 2023

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, Paris 4<sup>e</sup>



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Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present *PATAQUÈS*, the artist Guillaume Leblon's first exhibition in his gallery in Paris, following on from *The Traveller Walking on Tiptoes* in Brussels last spring. After his solo exhibition, *THERE IS A MAN and more* at the S.M.A.K (Ghent) in 2018, the artist is currently enjoying a solo exhibition entitled *PARADE* at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris). As an extension of this show, *PATAQUÈS* presents a new set of revisited sculptures.

Living in a big city today engenders a strong impression of temporal and spatial dislocation. When Saul Anton met Guillaume Leblon in New York in 2019, the author pointed out that the incessant changes in modern times did not lead to the demise of the landscapes of yesteryear, but rather revealed "the total absence of stable ground, of a native land"<sup>1</sup>. Mirroring a world in constant evolution, Guillaume Leblon creates new spaces, places we are yet to discover. Although the title of the exhibition *PATAQUÈS* evokes the association of a variety of perspectives of diverse elements, the gallery floor harmonises and brings these works together. On entering the gallery, the visitor steps onto a sculpture by simply coming into contact with the soft and supple carpeting that the artist has laid out, both the wrong and the right way up, over the entire floor space. On the one hand, this "second skin" brings the works into relation with each other and on the other it lends them autonomy by delimiting the spaces allocated to each piece. A movement made up of sensory dynamics thus accompanies the visitors' path: like a plinth awaiting its sculpture, the floor of the gallery welcomes the spectator, who in turn shares the "exhibition ground" with the works, thus placing both the visitor and the oeuvres on the same plane.

Guillaume Leblon's works are based on forms and objects from our everyday environment. A cast aluminium shell – *The Death of Jennifer* (2022) – presents an iridescent down jacket, lying on the ground like a fragment of the landscape that the artist might have retrieved and placed in the gallery. "There is a recurring image at the origin of this piece" Guillaume Leblon explains, "that of bodies lying on the ground in Harlem where I live, wrapped in their down jackets, stricken by the opioid addiction that has ravaged certain parts of the population of New York, especially since the confinements and massive job losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic." In the artist's sculptures, clothing is often used as a body substitute as well as a social marker, anchoring the object in the here and now. Time exerts no hold on the elements of the exhibition: the balls – embedded in the works from the series *Body & Ball* – are frozen in their trajectories; body parts cast in plaster are from this point forward set in their mediums. These conditions have modified the movements depicted in the immobilized elements: an interplay of resistance and opposing forces taking place between the balls and the plaster-cast body parts.

<sup>1</sup> Saul Anton, *Laisser de la place, sculpter le temps, Guillaume Leblon selon Saul Anton*, Translated from english by Elsa Boyer, TextWork Plateforme Éditoriale Fondation Pernod Ricard, january 2020, p.1

Guillaume Leblon materializes “that infinite time”, close to eternity, in the connection between his works and his life experience. *The Death of Mary* (2022), a work currently exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo, is replicated in the gallery by *The Death of Jennifer* (2022). These two sculptures might be seen as symbolically linked to the Pietà, Michelangelo’s iconic sculpture, where, transfixed in marble, Christ rests in the lap of the Virgin Mary before his entombment. The dramatic intensity of these works – bearing in mind that these down jackets bear witness to the wretched conditions of human life on the streets of New York – fades into the background in favour of an abiding beauty, a kind of silent contemplation captured in the material. Whether religious or pagan, each subject here is elevated to the status of a fetish object. Under the gallery’s arcades, the *Grands Chariots* (2012-2022), in ceramic, are inspired by the Egyptian chariots depicted in high relief on the tombs of the pharaohs. In ancient Egypt, these tombs were considered as dwellings for the dead that conserved life for eternity. These Egyptian references continue in *la Nageuse au repos* (2013-2022). The stretched naked body could be a sleeping woman with her face covered by a book; it could also be an Egyptian cosmetics spoon – an object of uncertain function, but which is thought to have been used as a make-up holder or possibly a cult object, placed in the tombs of important individuals.

The sculptures *Still Life* and *Portrait Nu* (2022) are both draped in loose fabric, arranged so it falls in folds. In *Still Life* (2022), the pants - an inanimate object - magically suspended above the draped marble “pedestal table” echoes the artistic genre of the still life. The garment suggests the absence of the body while embodying the ghostly presence of a past life. Drapery, an artistic practise that originated in Ancient Greece, made it possible to conceal – while at the same time embracing – a body’s nudity. In the same manner, the drapery in *Portrait Nu*, in the form of a bathrobe that has absorbed a certain weight of humidity, suggests its intimate relationship to the body. This sensual dimension is echoed when the video *Pocket Love* – filmed on a portable phone, from the pocket of a piece of clothing – is projected to completely overlay *Portrait Nu*: the space is completely flooded with sensuality, with the colours of barely suggested images mingling with the murmuring of loving contact.

In Guillaume Leblon’s work, space is a matter of perception experienced with and through the body. By blurring all our familiar spatial and temporal certainties, the exhibition itself is transformed into a theatre, receptive to all forms of mutation, witnessing the ever-changing world in which we evolve.

Guillaume Leblon is also the curator of the exhibition *OFF WATER*, taking place in the gallery’s Espace II and featuring a selection of works by artists represented by Galerie Nathalie Obadia.

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Born in 1971 in Lille, France. Guillaume Leblon lives and works in New York, USA and Guadalajara, Mexique.

Guillaume Leblon studied at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Lyon (France) from which he was graduated in 1997. He then continued with 2 residences : at the ART 3 Residency in Sabadell, Barcelona and at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam.

In 2011, he was of one of the nominees for the Marcel Duchamp Prize.

Guillaume Leblon has a rich and intuitive visual vocabulary. He creates sculptures that alter our perception of time and space. The artist highlights the potential of the forms he produces and the materials he uses, which seem to keep trace and memorize the passage of time. His own manual intervention and the broader importance he attaches the idea of «making » is part of his working process : by moving, assembling, molding, agglomerating, burying etc. Guillaume Leblon inoculates his sculptures with strong vital energy and narrative potential. His installations develop a poetic relationship with their surrounding space, embracing an active, mobile and open relationship with the greater world.

The artist currently has an exhibition entitled *Parade* at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France). He has recently benefited from significant solo shows in prestigious institutions, such as *| There is a man, and more*, S.M.A.K (Gand, Belgium) in 2018 ; *Le poids que la main supporte*, Panorama, Friche Belle de Mai (Marseille, France) in 2015 ; *A dos de cheval avec le peintre*, IAC Villeurbanne (Villeurbanne, France) in 2014 ; *Under my shoe*, Mass Moca (North Adams, USA) in 2013 ; *Une appropriation de la nature*, Musée de Sérignan, (Sérignan, France) in 2012 ; *Black Apple falls*, Fondation Paul Ricard (Paris, France) in 2011 ; *Site of confluence*, MUDAM (Luxembourg) in 2009 and in 2004, *AZIMUT* at FRAC Bourgogne (Dijon, France).

His work has also been presented in numerous group shows such as *Des Mondes Construits*, MNAM, Centre Pompidou-Metz (Metz, France) in 2020 ; *Accrochage, a selection of the Pinault Collection*, Punta della Dogana (Venice, Italy) and *Collections : Élémentaires*, Les Abattoirs (Toulouse, France) in 2016 as well as during Rennes’ Biennale in 2012 (Rennes, France).

Guillaume Leblon’s works have joined prestigious collections around the world: Fonds National d’Art Contemporain (Paris, France), Centre Pompidou (Paris, France), Carré d’Art (Nîmes, France), Musée d’Art Contemporain de Sérignan (France), IAC Villeurbanne (France), Musée d’Art Contemporain de Rochechouart (France), Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (Monaco), S.M.A. K (Ghent, Belgium), MUDAM (Luxembourg), MAK Museum (Vienna, Austria), MCA (Chicago, United States), CGAC (Santiago de Compostela, Spain), Kadist (France, United States), as well as Regional Contemporary Art Funds in France: Les Abattoirs de Toulouse, FRAC Île-de-France, FRAC Bourgogne, FRAC Bretagne, and private collections: François Pinault Collection (Italy), Laurent Dumas Collection (France), Fondation d’entreprise Galeries Lafayette (Paris, France)

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Andres Serrano

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January - March 2023

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Guillaume Leblon

*PATAQUÈS*

Novembre 19 - February 4, 2023

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri II

Guillaume Leblon

*OFF WATER*

November 19 - January 14, 2023

Bruxelles

Antoine Renard

*Strange Attractors*

Octobre 27 - December 17, 2022

Fiona Rae

January - March 2023

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