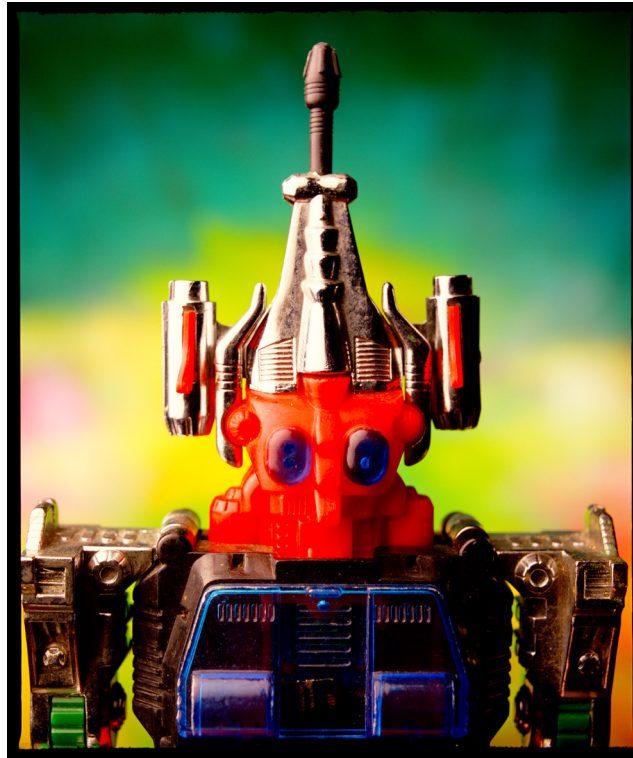


ANDRES SERRANO

The Robots

November 7 - December 23, 2022

91, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris 8^e



Wardaros Takara Insector Robot (*The Robots*), 2022
Pigment print, back-mounted on dibond, wooden frame
Encadrée: 165,1 x 139,7 cm (65 x 55 in.)
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is pleased to present *The Robots*, Andres Serrano's fifth solo exhibition after *Infamous* (2019), *Sacramento*, *Sacred Shadow* (2012) and *Cuba* (2014) in Brussels, and *Torture* (2016) in Paris.

For over thirty years, Andres Serrano has produced an oeuvre in line with his time's sensitivity or the Spirit of the Times, which can be literally translated as *Zeitgeist* – a term borrowed from German philosophy, designating the intellectual and cultural climate, the judgments and ways of thinking that characterize a specific point in time. Born in 1950 in New York, the artist grew up in an America that was trying to turn over a new leaf, after being deeply weakened by a society marked by excesses and abuse, where cruelty had reached a climax. However, those same limits persist today: Andres Serrano probes them by lifting the veil off of the troubling face of the world and, in particular, of the United States, at the dawn of the third millennium. While his series *Infamous* (2019) depicted a conservative and racist America – by revealing clues encapsulated insidiously inside consumer products –, *The Robots* paint a portrait of a world entering a new stage of connectivity: the launch of the Metaverse.

The Metaverse is a digital platform that prepares for the complete dematerialization of the world and even of our own bodies. This new destination proposes an entirely virtual universe in which the users, represented by avatars, can interact, move about, live untethered from our physical world. At a time when machines, technology and digital capabilities proliferate greatly in our contemporary societies, our bodies themselves have been subjected to major transformations: their powers of extension continue beyond their unique materiality. In his *Robots* series, where Andres Serrano presents objects from the 1950s and 1970s, he attempts to collect clues that announce the entirely digital evolution of our environment. In fact, «Before the Metaverse,» as the artist says, «there were robots.»

In December 2021, the artist began the series by purchasing robots, which he carefully selected for their histories and their physical particularities. These attributes elevate simple toys to the rank of collectible objects, desirable and sought out, sometimes reaching outrageous prices. The artist mainly photographed old Japanese robots, in which we can identify similarities with the new Meka NFTs¹. The non-fungible tokens, which have gained popularity over the last few years, are available to buy through online platforms and even through the major auction houses. This type of «new generation» acquisition changes the way we view objects and the world: it is now possible to collect what is immaterial. Thus, while remaining attached to the materiality of ancient objects – by photographing these vintage robots where the patina of time Pigment print, back-mounted on dibond, wooden frame is apparent – Andres Serrano also explores the iconography of the future, which is already at play today.

¹ Inspired by the Japanese robots of the 1960s, the Mekas NFT are gigantic humanoid-shaped robotic armors housing a human who controls them and uses them to fight in the Metaverse.

All the robots in the series bathe in a phantasmagorical universe: the loud colors in the background anchor the characters in another dimension. However, when we look attentively at the collection, certain details are intrinsically linked to real historical events. Most Japanese robots, armed or protecting themselves from missiles, position themselves like invincible, Postwar super-soldiers. They were made after the devastating bombardments by the American army in Japan, during World War II. The numerous astronaut-like robots, built at the dawn of the 1960s, allude to the entry into the space age – in particular with Sputnik, the first machine placed into Earth's orbit, in 1957. The photographed toys stand as symbols of powers or historical witnesses, archives of a sort. Through this series, Andres Serrano allows us to delve into the ambiguity of our relationships to robots.

While research in robotics has today reached dizzying heights, our attitude towards them has always been a mixture of fascination and fear: half-human, half creature, these automats' hybridity seduces as much as it troubles. The robots, as the artist says, also «link childhood and maturity, science fiction and science, existence and meta-existence. They are the future and the past, the intersection of real and unreal, rational and irrational, good and bad. They are us.» Violence and servility are condensed in these automats, which establish themselves as extensions of our own humanity. Through this series, Andres Serrano depicts the ambiguous landscape of our contemporary societies: he both reminds us and warns us of our complex rapport with robotics and with the potential abuses that they could entail.

Andres Serrano was born in New York (USA) in 1950. He lives and works in New York.

Graduated from the Brooklyn Museum Art School of New York (USA) in 1969, Andres Serrano is one of the most recognized contemporary artist on the international art scene.

He enjoyed several major solo shows such as *Andres Serrano – Retrospective* at the Moscow House of Photography (Russia, 2005), *Dark Places* at the Santa Monica Museum of Art (USA, 2006), *Beautiful Suffering – Photography and the Traffic in Pain* at the Williams College Museum of Art (USA, 2006), *En Las Fronteras* at the Villa Croce Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Genoa (Italy, 2006), *A History of Sex* at the Kulturen of Lund (Sweden, 2007), *Andres Serrano* at the Palais Fesch - Musée des Beaux-Arts in Ajaccio (Corsica, 2014), *Ainsi soit-il* at the Château de Villeneuve, Fondation Emile Hugues in Vence (France, 2015), *Redemption* at the Fotografiska Museum of Stockholm (Sweden, 2015), *Andres Serrano* at the Void Derry of Londonderry (Ireland, 2016), *Torture* at the Collection Lambert, Avignon (France, 2016), *Ainsi soit-il* at the Collection Lambert en Avignon (France, 2016), *Uncensored photographs* at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels (2016), *Andres Serrano* at La Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris (France, 2016), *Andres Serrano* at the Petit Palais in Paris (France, 2017), *Andres Serrano - Revealing Reality* at Huis Marseille in Amsterdam (The Netherlands, 2017), *Torture* at the Stills Gallery in Edinburgh (United Kingdom, 2018), *The Game - All Things Trump* at ArtX in New-York (USA, 2019) and *Andres Serrano: An American Perspective* at the Red Brick Art Museum in Beijing (China, 2019).

He also took part in several significant group shows among which *Street & Studio: An Urban History of Photography* at the Tate Modern of London (United Kingdom, 2008), *Traces du Sacré* at the Pompidou Center of Paris (France, 2008), *Autour de l'extrême* at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris (France, 2010), *Unsettled: Photography and Politics in Contemporary Art* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (USA, 2011), *NYC 1993* at the New Museum of New York (USA, 2013), *Le Mur* at La Maison Rouge in Paris (France, 2014), *Slip of the tongue*, at the Punta della Dogana, Pinault Foundation in Venice (Italy, 2016), *Perfect Likeness : Photography and composition* at the Hammer Museum of Los Angeles (USA, 2016), *Joie de vivre* at the Palais des Beaux Arts of Lille (France, 2016), *Nothing but blue skies* at the Rencontres de la photographie in Arles, (France, 2016), *Love Stories* during the PHOTAUMNALES 2016 in Beauvais (France, 2016), *An incomplete history of protest* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New-York (USA, 2018), *Show your wound* at the Dom Museum in Vienna (Austria, 2018) and *Incarnations - African Art as Philosophy* at the Centre for Fine Arts - BOZAR in Brussels (Belgium, 2019).

Andres Serrano's work is present in many private and public collections such as the MOMA in New York (USA), Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris (France), Huis Marseille in Amsterdam (Holland), National Gallery of Australia in Canberra (Australia), the Vancouver Art Gallery (Canada), the Museum of Contemporary Art of Zagreb (Croatia), the ARKEN Museum for Moderne Kunst in Copenhagen (Denmark), the CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (France), the Collection Lambert en Avignon (France), the Institute of Contemporary Art in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), the Israel Museum of Jerusalem (Israel), the Centro Cultural Arte Contemporaneo of Mexico City (Mexico), the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, (USA), the Brooklyn Museum (USA), the Institute of Contemporary Art of Boston (USA), the Modern Art Museum Fort Worth (USA), the New Museum of Contemporary Art of New York (USA), the Groninger Museum (The Netherlands), the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington (USA).

Andres Serrano has been represented by la Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels, since 2012.

Paris Saint-Honoré

Andres Serrano

The Robots

November 7 - December 23, 2022

Collin Sekajugo

January - March

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Guillaume Leblon

Novembre 19 - January 14, 2022

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri II

Jérôme Zonder

SANS ISSUE (étude pour un portrait de Pierre-François)
October 15 - November 12, 2022

Guillaume Leblon

November 19 - January 14, 2022

Bruxelles

Antoine Renard

Strange Attractors

Octobre 27 - December 17, 2022

Fiona Rae

January - March

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