

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

PARIS - BRUXELLES

Sarkis

Infini croisement des détails avec sa mesure en lumière

March 22 - May 3, 2025

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



View of *Contact des détails* (2024) in Sarkis' studio.
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia Paris/Brussels

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is pleased to present *Infini croisement des détails avec sa mesure en lumière*, its eighth solo exhibition dedicated to Sarkis in almost fifteen years of collaboration. Born in Istanbul in 1938, Sarkis is a prominent figure on the contemporary art scene, whose oeuvre, as sagacious as it is unclassifiable, has never ceased to confound its public since his arrival in Paris in 1964.

"In my studio in Villejuif, I have hundreds if not thousands of objects dating from 150 million years ago to the present day, which are part of or will be part of my works, with an infinite interplay between them. It is these infinite interconnections that I'm putting on show, with around a hundred images printed on twelve fabric panels, each measuring 250 × 150 cm. A neon crystal measure with the seven colours of the rainbow is suspended on each work."

Twelve prints on fabric are aligned along the wall of the exhibition: each consists of a mosaic made up of ten images depicting the artist's studio and is accompanied by its own 'measure'. In this way, 120 photographs of his works, separate images tightly framed together, testify to the immense richness of his studio – the magnetic lair of Sarkis the blacksmith. A creative space beyond compare, his studio is the focal point of all the exhibitions that have punctuated six decades of uncompromising work. Both a matrix and *Commencements*, Sarkis' refuge contains hundreds of skilfully arranged works – at rest or tenderly put on show – in a printing factory in Villejuif that the artist took over in 2000.

By extending hospitality to thousands of individual and collective stories, a multifaceted world has evolved in which Sarkis welcomes and reinterprets this "infinite interplay". The artist has become a Master of these striking interconnections: for example, a 150-million-year-old fossilised piece of marble from Erfoud in Morocco has been put together with an electronic metronome tuned to his own heartbeat. Or *Les 7 terrains en arc-en-Ciel* (2024): a fresco of seven shades of fluorescent Liquitex colours, which Sarkis has sprinkled with white rice – an eminently symbolic motif that has been recurrent in his work since 2012.

In contrast to the kaleidoscopic breakthroughs on fabric, Sarkis has modestly positioned a work table – a simple glass slab on trestles, with a roll of material laid upon it. This object of learning reproduces on translucent paper, as a black and white print, the supposedly infinite fractions of the “detailed contact sheets” from his workshop. Like memorial batons, they act as a spatio-temporal autobiography of Sarkis’ work – from Istanbul to Paris, via Berlin, Montbéliard, Lyon Yerevan, San Francisco, Venice and Geneva.

While two cylinders frame a passage of the scroll, suggesting a form of ritual in its consultation, it is the lighting that sets ablaze Sarkis’ *Atlas Mnemosyne*, so reminiscent of that of Aby Warburg. The neon rainbow lights up this modern parchment, bathing the gallery space in its delicate aura and echoing the penetrating vibrations of the neon mesures-yardsticks. Immaterial yet primordial, the lighting envelopes its entire diffracted spectrum and brings a soothing spirituality to the exhibition. A rainbow is like a bridge, and although shadow emanates from light, it is through it that suffering is transformed into treasure.¹

¹ Idea developed by Anne Marquez in the publication *Sarkis Temps d'Expositions*, Flammarion, 2021.

Sarkis has lived and worked in Paris since 1964. There, he was awarded the Biennale de Paris’s prize for painting in 1967. In 1969, he was invited by critic Harald Szeemann to participate in the now famous exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* at the Bern Kunsthalle. In 1976, he began to explore the questions of travel and collecting objects from colonized contexts. With the words *Trésor de guerre*, across different series and mediums, he anticipates by forty years the current debates surrounding restitutions. These pioneering considerations make Sarkis one of the first international artists to invite, in his work, the arts of five continents, and his reflections have been part of hundreds of exhibitions held in the great artistic capitals of the world over the last sixty years.

www.sarkis.fr

Paris Saint-Honoré

Viswanadhan
January 17 - March 8, 2025

Sarkis
Infini croisement des détails avec sa mesure en lumière
March 22 - May 3, 2025

Fabrice Hyber
May 24 - July 2025

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Roger-Edgar Gillet
Gillet et compagnie
February 8 - April 26, 2025

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri - Espace II

Guilty Pleasures
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Brussels

Victoria Palacios
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