

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA  
PARIS

VALERIE BELIN

*Reflection*

February 6 - April 4, 2020

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri  
75004 Paris



Valérie Belin  
*Fox Chase Antiques (Reflection)*, 2019  
Pigment print back-mounted on Dibond and framed with non reflect glass (non treated UV)  
68<sup>3/16</sup> x 51<sup>3/16</sup> in. (175 x 132 cm)  
Edition of 6 + 2 AP

After *China Girls* in 2018 in Brussels, Galerie Nathalie Obadia is very pleased to present the fourth exhibition of the artist Valérie Belin, acclaimed as one of the most important photographers of her generation who benefits from a strong international visibility.

Revealed here to the public, the artist's new series, entitled *Reflection* and consisting of eleven black and white images, was produced as part of her solo exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (October 22, 2019 - August 31, 2020). On the occasion of this exhibition, several works from this series joined the collection of this prestigious institution.

Valérie Belin has worked on superimposing various previously unpublished photographs of shop windows and storefronts in Manhattan and other cities in New York state. She thus revisits a recurring theme in her work since the 1990s. The exceptional photographic collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum has been a resource for the artist, whether it be photographs created by the Worsinger Window Service (or Worsinger Photo) - a New York firm that specialized in documenting shop windows and interiors - or Robert Brownjohn's *Street Level* series focused on photographs of signs and typographies. The artist also refers to the work of Eugène Atget and of Walker Evans, the photographer par excellence of vernacular American culture, or even the photographs of Lee Friedlander.

A shop window is presented as a small urban theatre open to the street where goods are displayed and staged against a backdrop of decor. The shop window has always been a source of inspiration for Valérie Belin. In the early 90s, she first made photographs of jewelry and trinkets exposed in different shopping malls. Subsequently there came photographs of crystal vases and silverware (*Verres I et Verres II*, 1993-1994), photographs of glass objects and mirrors in several showrooms in Venice (*Venise I*, 1997), photographs of mannequins (*Mannequins*, 2003), and finally, photographs of storefronts in Luxembourg (*Vitrines Luxembourg*, 2003).

"The window is also a transparent surface - and paradoxically, a mirror. It's the place where the urban landscape briefly appears as a reflection, in a variable manner according to the time of day, the lighting, and the position of the spectator. A photograph of a window in fact contains two images that are superimposed in an arbitrary or erratic manner: the image of what is behind the window and the image of the urban landscape that is reflected in the glass. The window is thus the place of overlay or an accumulation of two images: that of the interior and that of the exterior.

Like all photographers, I take pictures on a daily basis and build up an archive for future use. I had initially made these photographs with the intention of using them as backgrounds for a series of portraits. After having consulted the Victoria & Albert's collection of photographs, I realized that these images could acquire, through the manipulation of signs conveyed by the images, their proper autonomy and *raison d'être* as works of art.

Metaphorically, I would like that the captured images appear as if they were 'projected' on the photosensitive surface of a screen, but that instead of disappearing to be immediately replaced by other images (as in cinema), they will accumulate persistently. The photographic paper's role in keeping the trace of the image will allow for there to be an apparition of the photographed landscape in the windows.

I am also inspired by the aesthetic of experimental cinema from the 1960s. In particular, I am thinking of Jonas Mekas' film *Notes on the Circus* (1966), which was created through a direct montage 'in the camera' by superimposing shots realized at different speeds. What also comes to mind is Robert Franck's Super 8 film in black and white that was for promoting the Rolling Stones' 1971 album *Exile on Main Street*; it reveals a similar aesthetic to that of the Mekas' aforementioned work.

This spatial and temporal accumulation of images on the sensible surface should contribute to the formation of a sort of 'mental' or 'interior' landscape, a landscape 'of spirit', imagined in a dream but consciously constructed by the filter of perception and culture - opposing the 'archaic', 'trivial', or 'primitive' landscape of public urban space which is reflected in the windows. "

Valérie Belin

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Born in Boulogne-Billancourt (France) in 1964, Valérie Belin lives and works in Paris (France).

She graduated from the École Nationale des Beaux Arts de Bourges (1983–88) and gained a DEA (the equivalent of a Master of Advanced Studies) in Philosophy of Art at the Université Panthéon-Sorbonne in Paris (1989).

Valérie Belin also participated in numerous significant solo exhibitions (selection 2007-2019) : *Painted Ladies* at the 50th edition of les Rencontres d'Arles (France, 2019), *China Girls* at the Multimedia Art Museum of Moscow (Russia, 2019), *Valérie Belin : Méta-Clichés* (traveling exhibition in China) at Three Shadows Photography Art Center (Beijing) and at SCôP (Shanghai Center of Photography) in Shanghai and at the au Chengdu Museum, (China, 2017); *Valérie Belin* at the Institut Culturel Bernard Magrez in Bordeaux (France, 2017); *Surface Tension* at the DHC/Art Foundation, Phi Center, in Montréal (Canada, 2015), *Les Images intranquilles* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (France, 2015), *Illusions of Life* at the Multimedia Art Museum in Moscow (Russia, 2014), *O ser e o aparecer* at the Casa Franca-Brasil in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil, 2011), *Hungry Eyes* at the FotoMuseum Provincie in Antwerp (Belgium, 2011), *Valérie Belin: Made-up* at the Peabody Essex Museum in Essex (USA, 2009), and *Correspondances* at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris (France, 2008), the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne (Switzerland, 2008), the Maison Européenne de Photographie in Paris (France, 2008), and the Huis Marseille – Museum voor fotografie in Amsterdam (The Netherlands, 2007).

Works by Valérie Belin can be seen in leading private and public collections, such as in France those of the Centre Pompidou – Musée National d'Art Moderne, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Fond National d'Art Contemporain, Bibliothèque nationale de France, FRAC Limousin, Franche-Comté and Ile-de-France, MAC/VAL, Maison rouge, Fondation Antoine-de-Galbert, Musée Galliera ; in the United States, at the MoMA – Museum of Modern Art (New York), LACMA – Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco), Norton Museum of Art (West Palm Beach), International Center for Photography ; in the United-Kingdom, the Victoria & Albert Museum (London), in Switzerland, the Kunsthaus Zurich (Zurich) and Musée de l'Élysée (Lausanne); in Luxembourg, le MUDAM - Musée d'art moderne Grand-Duc Jean ; in the Netherlands, at the Huis Marseille (Amsterdam); in Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, (Melbourne) Parkes ACT (Canberra); and in South Korea, at the National Museum of Contemporary Art Korea (Seoul).

Valérie Belin won the Prix Pictet in 2015 for her project *Disorder*. The travelling exhibition of which it is a part is being presented between 2015 and 2017 at Somerset House (UK), the MAXXI in Rome (Italy), the CAB Art Center in Brussels (Belgium), the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum in Geneva (Switzerland)

Valérie Belin is represented by Galerie Nathalie Obadia since 2013.

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Paris Bourg-Tibourg

Fiona Rae  
*ABSTRACTS*

January 11 - March 7, 2020

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Joris Van de Moortel

*The ne'er-do-wells set out for a dubious pilgrimage*

November 28 - January 25, 2020

Valérie Belin

*Reflection*

February 6 - April 4, 2020

Brussels

Andres Serrano

*Infamous*

November 14 - January 4, 2020

Sophie Kuijken

January 17 - February 22, 2020

For press inquiries, please contact : Eva Ben Dhiab  
evab@nathalieobadia.com / + 33 (0) 1 53 01 99 76

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+33 (0)1 42 74 67 68

INFO@NATHALIEOBADIA.COM

WWW.NATHALIEOBADIA.COM