

ANTOINE RENARD

AMNESIA

February 3 – April 10, 2021

18, rue du Bourg-Tibourg
75004 Paris



Photo credit : Nicolas Brasseur
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia Paris/Brussels

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present Antoine Renard's work for the very first time. The artist made his debut at the Palais de Tokyo in *Futur, Ancien, Fugitif. Une scène française* in 2019. A graduate of the ENSA in Dijon, winner of the Occitanie - Medici Prize and of a scholarship from CNAP and the doctoral program SACRe 2020 from the PSL University and from the Beaux Arts de Paris, the artist, in parallel to his practice, has also been dedicating himself to a thesis on olfaction in the broader sculptural field. He will, furthermore, be the subject of a solo exhibition at the CRAC in Sète, in 2021.

Essentially sculptural in nature, Antoine Renard's work is situated at a juncture where "culture, science and politics can overlap and generate a dialogue." By creating narrative environments nourished by extensive research, Antoine Renard discusses present-day techno-political issues, consequences of a neoliberal world, of which he evokes, in particular, the manifestations and digressions that happen in the digital sphere.

The exhibition *AMNESIA* brings together a group of 27 olfactory sculptures, which are an extension of those shown at the Palais de Tokyo in 2019. Made in ceramic using a 3d printer, and inspired by Degas's little dancer, an iconic and scandalous work of modern art, they question the body-object as a truly contemporary condition.

Antoine Renard is interested in memory, simultaneously physical, historic and olfactory. Operating layer by layer based on digital modeling, 3d printing functions like a memory process, which, similarly to lengthy sedimentation, gives body to a virtual projection. Different timelines seem to intermingle in these works: while 3d printing attests to a contemporary, somewhat surreal aesthetic, certain irregularities and imperfections create the illusion of an eroded, ancient material, and seem to incarnate the stigmata of a past life. Ceramic, thus stratified, recalls the slow historical process that allowed us to uncover the hidden existence of a young Marie Van Goethem, Degas's model, a penniless little ballerina at the Paris Opera, who fell prey to the patrons' lust and the merciless judgement of her contemporaries.

The olfactory dimension of the sculptures inscribes itself squarely in this work around memory and the way it shapes bodies. Antoine Renard, who, during his residency at the Villa Medici, studied the ritualized practices of perfume in Rome and who shadowed "parfumero" healers in Peru, composes each scent himself from plants that he macerates

or synthetic molecules. Perfume's propensity to bring up memories deepens this connection with the truth of the sitter, whose presence and identity the artist restores. This work on odors also attests to the impact of nuance and pays homage to a person's infinite complexity, reduced, during that individual's lifetime, to caricature and silence.

With tools belonging to his own time, Antoine Renard transposes this young dancer's history and attitude into our own society, marked by big-business domination, consumerist lobbies and all-powerful algorithms. But, above all, it shows that this pose, denoting at once captivity, rebelliousness and eagerness, is still pertinent at a time when attention has become a marketable value, when each individual has consumerist potential. A vast, immaterial platform that concentrates and multiplies these issues, digital technology occupies a crucial place in the artist's oeuvre. From a formal point of view, 3d printing, coupled with the re-compositions made by the artist, offers a slightly virtual rendering, which recalls the vacillating silhouette of a hologram. Antoine Renard thus evokes the questions of the body versus digital technology and, more widely, of the individual within a system that constantly seeks to grab people's attention, at the cost of a certain loss of self. With her upturned face and her eyes closed, this young woman embodies a state of vulnerability, of receptivity, of the *mise-en-scène* of the self, characteristic of this form of contemporary alienation. While the perfume industry always associates itself with a key concept, a marketed image, here the multitude of fragrances recalls, on the contrary, an elusive aura and instills a greater density into the relationship with the other.

The scenography imagined by the artist underlines, in fact, the model's ambivalent attitude, which contributed to her legendary posterity. Like an army of clones spread out on a precise grid and individualized by their pedestals, the layout of these works accentuates the affront: it sets the stage for a personal and massive resistance. By taking for subject this sculpture (whose original in wax formed the basis for numerous bronze copies scattered among museums around the world), Antoine Renard multiplies once again, while prolonging and strengthening his message. The ambiguity of this work comes from a very timely duality, oscillating between values traditionally associated with femininity and masculinity. His young ballerinas thus become tangible bodies, by detaching themselves progressively from their bases, like high reliefs from a distant past, on the brink of independence—the evolution of sculpture is also put into perspective in this exhibition.

Antoine Renard and Galerie Nathalie Obadia warmly thank the teams of *DOC!*, Synarome and the Takiwasi center for their help in the realization of this exhibition.



Born in 1984 in Paris, Antoine Renard lives and works between Paris and Lourdes, France.

A graduate of the DNSEP art program at the Beaux-Arts in Dijon, in 2008, Antoine Renard has won numerous prizes and residencies, notably the Inkubator Innovator fellowship (Germany, 2015); the Goethe Institute Residency Prague (Czech Republic, 2017); the Résidence Cheval Noir (with Komplot), Brussels (Belgium, 2018). In 2019, he was awarded the Occitanie – Medici Prize, and the same year he also received a scholarship for the CNAP's artistic project and a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. What's more, Antoine Renard was the winner of the doctoral program SACRe 2020, from PSL University. His thesis, under the direction of Pascal Rousseau, will focalize on olfaction as an extension of sculpture.

Antoine Renard has already been the subject of several important solo exhibitions, including *Geometries of -l-o-v-e, Very*, Berlin (Germany, 2019); *Cats in the City*, Komplot, Brussels (Belgium, 2018); 1999, *Marsèlleria*, Milan (Italy, 2017); *Resource Operation (Part II)*, *In-Extenso*, Clermont-Ferrand (France, 2017); *Resource Operation (Part I) "The monk's corridor"*, Tlön, Nevers (France, 2017); *I spell it Nature*, DIESEL, Liège (Belgium, 2016). In 2021, a solo exhibition at the CRAC in Sète will focus on his research, in particular on the ritualized practices of perfume, which he carried out in Italy and in Peru.

Antoine Renard's works were also included in significant group exhibitions, including *Futur, ancient, fugitif. Une scène française*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (France, 2019); *The Future of Memory*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (Austria, 2015); *Saturn Drive*, Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin (Germany, 2015); *58th Salon de Montrouge*, Paris (France, 2013).

Paris Bourg-Tibourg

Antoine Renard
AMNESIA
February 3 - April 10, 2021

Sophie Kuijken
April - May 2021

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Group show
February 11 - April 10, 2021

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri II

Sarkis
February 11 - April 10, 2021

Bruxelles

Lu Chao
Black Fruit
January 14 - March 6, 2021

Laure Prouvost
April 1st - May 22, 2021

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