

**GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA**

PARIS - BRUXELLES

**Eugène Leroy**

***Peintures - Fusains***

**5 September – 31 October 2015**

**3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, 75004 Paris**



EUGÈNE LEROY, HOMME EN CROIX, 1990  
OIL ON CANVAS  
195 X 130 CM

The Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to devote an exhibition of Eugène Leroy, whose singular work has not been shown in Paris since the exhibition *Les dernières peintures d'Eugène Leroy* in 2010 at the Galerie de France. After the exhibition presented in its Brussels gallery in 2013, this is the second exhibition that the gallery has devoted to this great painter from the north of France, born in Tourcoing in 1910 and dead in 2000.

Blending the most diverse heritage, from Rembrandt to Malevitch, and including Jean Fautrier, Eugène Leroy explored the multiple possibilities of material and matter, deploying a science of impasto which conferred an incomparable relief to his paintings. This paradoxical opacity, made of light and colours, gives the onlooker the impression of '*entering into a cavern*', as one of Leroy's greatest admirer's, the German painter Georg Baselitz, would say : '*There I found images brown like the fields, like stone, wood, moss, scent,*' he recounted, reflecting on his first encounter with Leroy's oeuvre, '*as though all the painter's trousers were hanging from a hook and told the story of an unknown masterpiece.*'

The *Peintures-Fusains* exhibition presented at the Galerie Nathalie Obadia allows visitors to discover twenty works, charcoals on paper and a dozen oil paintings, in medium and large formats, produced during the last decade of Leroy's life from 1990 to 2000 – of major importance because during this time the artist achieved international recognition.

The latter is illustrated in particular by Leroy's consecutive participation at the Biennial of São Paulo in 1990 and Documenta in Kassel in 1992, both while the artist continued to pursue his personal trajectory, resolutely at the margins of the period's dominant trends. Two major retrospectives would follow at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Nice in 1993 and the Kunstverein in Düsseldorf in July 2000, three months after the artist's death in his home-studio in Wasquehal. The Peintures-Fusains exhibition is also an opportunity to showcase five oil paintings of major importance, dating between 1988 and 1991.

« Pour un corps de femme », « Seuls », « Homme en croix », « Lumières sur Marina », « La marée », « Noël 88 », « Lumières d'hiver »... Evocative, the titles of the paintings by Eugène Leroy presented at the Galerie Nathalie Obadia convey the constant attention he paid to light and human representation; his way of clashing with his subjects, which he seemed to tame through paint to then negate their contours; his attempt to capture their essence while conserving their mystery, buried beneath an accumulation of layers, added year after year, shaping a face, body, landscape. The drawings obey the same concerns, as art critic Denys Zacharopoulos so rightly remarked: 'But it is from the shadow, made up of multiple interwoven or blurred charcoal lines, that bodies and faces emerge like apparitions'<sup>1</sup>.

Through this exhibition, which offers onlookers a kind of epiphany and a genuine 'celebration of the senses'<sup>2</sup>; the Galerie Nathalie Obadia is proud to pay homage to one of the great French painters of the second half of the twentieth century.

<sup>1</sup> Eugène Leroy: Peintures, 1962-1996 (Domaine de Kerguéhennec, Centre d'Art Contemporain / La Criée, Centre d'Art Contemporain / Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes), edited by Denys Zacharopoulos, produced and published by Luc Derycke, p.9

<sup>2</sup> Eugène Leroy by Bernard Marcadé (Paris: Editions Flammarion), 1994

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**Eugène Leroy** was born in Tourcoing in 1910 and died in 2000 in Wasquehal. Despite his participation at the Biennial of São Paulo in 1990 and Documenta in Kassel in 1992, where his work attracted much attention, his oeuvre remained unknown for a long time due to its singularity. For fifteen years now, institutions, the art market and a new generation of artists, including German artist Georg Baselitz, have shown a genuine renewed interest in Leroy's oeuvre, which has contributed to a new recognition of it. In 2010, after an important donation of the sons of the artist, the MUba-Eugène Leroy in Tourcoing presented «L'exposition du centenaire», the most important retrospective devoted to the artist, accompanied by a monograph, which became a reference work, and the «Georg Baselitz-Eugène Leroy: le récit et la condensation» exhibition in 2013, a huge critical and public success. **Eugène Leroy's** works feature in many prestigious private and public collections, including those at the Fondation Maeght (Saint-Paul de Vence), Centre George Pompidou (Paris), Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris (Paris), Stedelijkmuseum (Amsterdam), Berardo Collection (Lisbon) and Ludwig Museum (Cologne).

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