
Guillaume Bresson

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Press release

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is very pleased to dedicate a fourth exhibition to painter Guillaume Bresson, following his solo show at the French Institute Alliance Française (FI AF), in New York, where the artist has been living since 2016.

Considered to be one of the most singular French painters of his generation, Guillaume Bresson presents a group of recent paintings realized in his New York studio. These attest to the evolution of his work from hyperrealistic street scenes to more imaginary territories. Via a system of representation derived from the teachings of Italian Renaissance and French Classicism, Guillaume Bresson portrays contemporary subjects—his striking depictions of society shift toward a form of oneiric lyricism, which, rather than rejecting the social world, transfigures it.

The corps-a-corps, a constant theme in Guillaume Bresson's oeuvre, is presented across a variety of settings that are more or less identifiable, more or less familiar or abstract: suburbia, a laundromat, the domestic environment of a kitchen, snowy woods that recall Pieter Brueghel the Elder's wintry landscapes, a stormy sea.

In the exhibition, Guillaume Bresson displays the different steps of his work process: perspective grids that remain apparent in the large paintings on canvas; smaller preparatory studies realized after sittings held with amateur models, which he subsequently rearranges at will. The artist also experiments with a photographic transfer technique, which constitutes the starting point of several paintings.

Within the paintings themselves, certain areas remain untouched, in contrast with highly detailed parts. This too contributes to a creative painting process that also becomes the very subject itself: Guillaume Bresson's paintings feed on the voids, which confer a deep and silent aura to the depicted scenes.

This highly contrasted work shows a distressing social reality, portrayed at times explicitly and at others symbolically: that of disinherited or marginalized people (often placed off-center on the painting itself), stooped under the weight of life or already lying on the ground, reminiscent of a descent from the cross transposed inside a crashing wave under a twilight sky. The result evokes contemporary migratory tragedies. While human contact is omnipresent in Guillaume Bresson's work and takes for example the shape of two young girls in profile, whose physical proximity brings to mind Giotto's kiss, its absence is all the more remarkable in the way he paints the kind of existential isolation that prevails in often deserted areas. The theme of violence, recurrent in Guillaume Bresson's oeuvre, once again finds its full expression, yet its very ambiguity is more conspicuous than ever.

Through a style of painting characterized by parallels and deviations, Guillaume Bresson subtly thwarts expectations and manages to magnify his subjects, while always remaining true to a sort of contemporary realism, to which he confers its proper and masterful form.

Born in Toulouse in 1982, Guillaume Bresson lives and works in New York.

In 2007 he graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris with distinction. His work questions the notions of staging and narrative in painting. He came to the attention of the public with Dynasty, an exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo and

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris held in 2010, when he also won the Prix Sciences-Po pour l'Art Contemporain.

Bresson's work has since been shown in a number of international institutions including the Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe (Germany, 2011), The Curitiba Biennial (Brazil, 2011), the Perm Museum (Russia, 2012), l'Institut du Monde arabe (Paris, 2015), la Collection Lambert in Avignon (France, 2015), the ArtSpace Boan in Seoul (South Korea, 2016), the Fondation d'entreprise Ricard (France, 2018).

Bresson was chosen in 2015 by the Director of the Avignon Festival to embody the poster of one of the world's greatest performing arts Festival and to benefit from a personal exhibition in Avignon's renown Eglise des Célestins.

Bresson was selected the same year by the board of Patrons of « Les Nouveaux Commanditaires » to create a polyptych for the RedStar soccer team, which became the emblem of the club and has been shown in several group shows including La Grande Galerie du Foot (Grande Halle de la Villette de Paris, France, 2016) ; Le Sport est un Art (Centre d'art contemporain, Meymac, France, 2017) and Par Amour du jeu (Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France, 2018).

Guillaume Bresson's works have been reproduced in numerous articles and exhibitions catalogues. The painter has been the subject of two monographic publications : « Guillaume Bresson » at Editions Dilecta in 2012 and « Guillaume Bresson, Red Star Football Club » at the Presses du Réel in 2016.

Guillaume Bresson's works are part of numerous private and public collections including the collections of the MUDAM Luxembourg and Abattoirs Museum in Toulouse (France), each owning a major piece of the artist.

This year, Guillaume Bresson has benefited from his first solo exhibition in the United States due to an invitation of the French Institute Alliance in New York. Along with Tim Eitel and Hernan Bass, he will be part in 2019 of the collective exhibition on figurative painting Les Enfants du Paradis at MUBA Museum in Tourcoing - France - in the context of Lille 3000 Manifestation L'Eldorado (Curators : Jean-Max Colard and Jérôme Sans).

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