

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

PARIS - BRUXELLES

les Vitraux Mobiles de Sarkis

October 5 - December 21, 2019

18, rue du Bourg-Tibourg, 75004 - Paris



«LA CHAMBRE EDEN DES VITRAUX DANS L'ATELIER SARKIS»
PHOTOGRAPHIE SARKIS, 2017

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is very pleased to present *les Vitraux Mobiles de Sarkis*, the artist's fifth solo exhibition, after *Intérieurs* in 2018, in Paris, and *Il Grido* in 2016, in Brussels.

Composed of nearly 60 stained-glass windows, meticulously created and arranged by the French artist, this installation first seizes the viewer with its impressive scale, then strikes on an emotional level as the details of the images that make up this unprecedented assemblage begin to emerge. Drawn from widely varied iconographical sources, these photographs share a common technique: each is framed within a stained-glass window propped up on an easel. These images were either shot by Sarkis and come from unspecified chronological and geographical contexts, or were reclaimed by the artist, thus contributing to an impression of a common visual memory.

Using as starting points some photographs taken, in particular, in India, in the Netherlands, in Turkey, in Japan, in France, in Germany, or in the entrance of his studio (*Tête blessée en néon, Sculpture de martyre aux films, N°4 Vitraux Atelier*), Sarkis also incorporates his series *Portraits Anonymes (les Portraits Invités)* and the series *Innocents* in the composition of this back-lit glass edifice. *Le Prototype de l'Abbaye de Silvacane* stands as a key marker to show Sarkis's respect for the craftsmanship that goes into these glass works. Produced nearly 20 years ago, in the context of a public commission he received for the stained-glass windows, chairs and crystal bar of the pulpit in the refectory of the Cistercian abbey, it acts as a catalyst, and several projects would later be based around stained-glass windows. One of the most arresting shows was the exhibition *Ailleurs Ici* at the Château de Chaumont-sur-Loire, in 2012, which resulted in the production of 72 stained-glass windows, composed of essential snapshots that emerged from his considerable image library—a candid anthology, of which certain elements became the present *Vitraux Mobiles*.

With the precision and humility that characterize his work, Sarkis transcends the historical religiousness of the medium while also honoring his masters (*Statuette féminine préhistorique, Pieds du retable d'Issenheim, Retable six images, Têtes Premiers*) and the anonymous crowds, which he captures on film with an empathy that expresses the importance he gives to fresh and unposed

glimpses of ordinary life. Be it the *Innocents'* fierce statuettes, inspired by collectible figurines apparently judged too trivial, a store mannequin (*V.84 Vitrine*), an assemblage of metallic beams (*V.83 1 Haç simple (croix)*), or a tattooed back (*V.53 Dos ailé*), his keen gaze freezes these fleeting moments by encircling them in metal.

The humanity manifests itself formally in the lead scars of the glass marquetry: Sarkis favors the seams over the cracks and fixes the scattered splinters with the same benevolence that he displayed in his *Kinstugis* works. The uniqueness of the technique allowing for considerably disparate results, these works project mental images characterized by their eloquent universality. Far from silencing these fugitive expressions, Sarkis's *Vitraux Mobiles* act as windows—or mirrors—that open our eyes.

At the same time as Sarkis's *Vitraux Mobiles*, the gallery also presents in the backroom *Vermeer-Cézanne*, 2019. This creation is the result of Sarkis's research on the oeuvre of Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) and Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), an exceptional comparative work comprising 35 photographs, which attest to the fascinating similarities that Sarkis was able to detect between the two masters.

Born in 1938, in Istanbul, Turkey, Sarkis has lived and worked in Paris since 1964. In 1969, he was invited by critic Harald Szeemann to participate in the now-famous exhibition, *When Attitudes Become Forms*, at the Kunsthalle Bern. In 2015, he represented Turkey at the Venice Biennale with Respiro and participated in Armenia, the Armenian Republic's Pavilion, which won the Golden Lion.

www.sarkis.fr

Paris Bourg-Tibourg

Sarkis

les Vitraux Mobiles

October 5 - December 21, 2019

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For additional information, please contact : Eva Ben Dhiab

evab@nathalieobadia.com / + 33 (0) 1 53 01 99 76

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| INFO@NATHALIEOBADIA.COM |

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