

**GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA**

BRUXELLES

## ***LA REPRÉSENTATION ET SON DOUBLE***

Thursday, January 16th - Saturday, March 1st 2025



*Laura Henno - Barbarella, Slab City (USA), 2024*

Nathalie Obadia is pleased to announce a group exhibition of photographs at her Brussels gallery. This presentation brings together works by a selection of the gallery's represented artists, including Valérie Belin, Patrick Faigenbaum, Laura Henno, Seydou Keïta, Laure Prouvost, Youssef Nabil, Sarkis, Andres Serrano, Mickalene Thomas, and Agnès Varda. The exhibition offers a rich array of visual perspectives that transcend straightforward narrative. The featured works challenge and reshape reality, with the artists exploring not only the geographical territories they traverse but also the inner landscapes captured within their photographic portraits. Visitors navigate spaces that are at once physical and psychological, prompting a reimagining of the world and its myriad representations.

In her series at Slab City, Laura Henno, for instance, explores a realm where marginality is transformed, through her photographs, into an intimate and sensitive territory. Once an abandoned military base, this site in the Californian desert has become a refuge for those seeking to break free from social norms. The three portraits featured in the exhibition take centre stage, their faces—whether youthful or etched by time—illuminated by a striking light. Their eyes meet the lens, as if trying to convey a message. Far from merely bearing witness, Laura Henno captures the poignant reality of this territory, imbuing it with a subtle poetic dimension.

Similarly, Andres Serrano's *Nomads* series confronts viewers with the stark reality of the homeless. The artist chose to take their portraits late at night in the New York underground, setting up a backdrop to frame his subjects. By relocating his studio to their living environment, Andres Serrano unveils the layers of their identities, hidden beneath the layers of worn clothing that mask the traces of lives marked by the street.

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The recognition of marginalised identities is also evident in the work of Malian artist Seydou Keïta, who was active in Bamako between 1948 and 1960. Long used as a tool of domination, photography was employed to document populations living under the yoke of colonial rule. With Seydou Keïta, photography takes a radically different direction. His subjects are no longer the passive objects of an imposed *mise-en-scène*, but become active participants in an artistic process that reclaims control over their image and identity. Through his portraits, the artist offers a valuable testament to the emancipation of Malian society, affirming its dignity and modernity.

In a contemporary vein, Mickalene Thomas continues her quest to reaffirm the identities of the subjects she photographs. Through her collages and paintings, the artist brings to the fore female figures in bold, self-assured postures. Portrait of Clarivel Looking Down (2008) depicts a young woman with a fleeting gaze and a faint smile. Through this photograph, Mickalene Thomas celebrates her subject's individuality, reclaiming a redefinition of female beauty and identity, far removed from the stereotypes shaped by the male gaze.

Photography enables us to reconfigure reality, drawing on elements such as colour, motifs, and gesture. Youssef Nabil's work exemplifies this approach, as he embarks on a poetic exploration of the Orient, presenting a vision that is both intimate and deeply nostalgic. His photographs, bathed in soft, subdued light, unveil scenes where fabrics drift weightlessly, crafting a dreamlike realm that hovers between dream and reality. This poetic quality, offering a sense of escape, is a distinctive feature also reflected in the work of Laure Prouvost. By directly intervening with the photographic film—adding text and pictorial elements—the artist further dissolves the boundaries between photography, poetry, and painting. Her work invites us to rethink not only how we engage with these images, but also how they shape and deconstruct our perception of reality.

Valérie Belin's work is grounded in a questioning of the boundaries between the real and the artificial. Through intricate photographic manipulation, she constructs compositions where elements are deconstructed and reassembled, thereby challenging the very nature of representation. Her portraits, true hybrid creations, challenge the authenticity of the image and the construction of identity.

Through their work, these artists bring out photography's potential to reshape reality. By engaging with themes such as identity, memory, and intimacy, they succeed in capturing the unseen. Sarkis, for instance, intruded on a television shoot in 1967 to photograph Andy Warhol, revealing the artist in a more intimate and private context. This approach is echoed in the work of Agnès Varda, who, by photographing artists such as Calder and Valentine Schlegel, offers glimpses into personal moments and relationships. Light also holds a pivotal role in this body of work, especially in Patrick Faigenbaum's photographs taken at the Saint-Louis crystal glassworks. Here, light transcends its function as a mere technical tool, becoming a poetic medium that captures the ephemeral in its purest form.

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## Galerie Nathalie Obadia

### Bruxelles

Charles Decoster

### Group show

*La représentation et son double*

16 janvier - 1 mars 2025

### Victoria Palacios

21 mars - 17 mai 2025

## Galerie Nathalie Obadia

### Paris

Cloître Saint-Merri I et II

### Antoine Renard

*Démons*

8 novembre - 25 janvier 2025

### Guillaume Leblon

*AH BON!*

11 janvier - 15 mars 2025

## Galerie Nathalie Obadia

### Paris

Saint-Honoré

### Viswanadhan

17 janvier - 8 mars 2025

### Sarkis

22 mars - mai 2025