



RESISTANCE(S)

TRAVELLING GROUP EXHIBITION

3 June - 25 July 2021 in Brussels

MARUANI MERCIER

Resistance (noun) /ri'zistəns/:

The act of using force to oppose someone or something,
the situation in which people or organizations fight against something
or refuse to accept or be changed by something

After its success in Knokke, the exhibition Resistance will be presented in our Brussels' gallery in a new form. While the exhibition in Knokke focused on the black color and its meaning in art, the new exhibition Resistance(s) will revolve around the theme of art as a mean of resistance. Using a thematic approach, the exhibition studies how resistance falls within a body of artworks from different contemporary international artists working in diverse media. The show reflects on political, ecological, social, and cultural questions that shape our current time, focusing on the act of resistance. The act of resistance is defined in the Oxford dictionary as being "the act of using force to oppose someone or something, the situation in which people or organizations fight against something or refuse to accept or be changed by something."

During the 1930s, artists and writers in many parts of Europe went into resistance. In Germany, after the second World War, artist groups like the Cologne Progressives as well as the Communist painters continued to support freedom of expression, despite arrests and persecution. Traumatized by the assaults suffered by his native country, Pablo Picasso painted in 1937 Guernica, one of the most monumental works of resistance of the twentieth century, managing to create a politically committed work.

For the French philosopher Jacques Rancière, politics and aesthetics are deeply connected and need to be seen as a whole. Every art practice is political in that it either solidifies or questions the symbolic structure of society, as also underlined by the Belgian political philosopher Chantal Mouffe. This political feature of artistic creation challenges the consensual discourses on the neutrality of art and aesthetics. Contemporary artists have opened up new areas of consideration for the spectators, and the increasingly political and social dimension of contemporary art has given rise to the question of the role of the artist in today's society as well as the relationship between the aesthetic and activist dimension of a work of art. They investigate how art can provoke greater social awareness and responsibility.

The exhibition will put together works by: Radcliffe Bailey, Kwesi Botchway, Justin Brice, Stefan Brüggemann, Bill Jensen, Rashid Johnson, Paul Kremer, David LaChapelle, Sherrie Levine, Tony Matelli, Hermann Nitsch, Nathalie Provosty, George Shaw, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Hank Willis Thomas and Gavin Turk.

The exhibition sheds light on crucial contemporary African and Afro-American artists like Rashid Johnson, Radcliffe Bailey, Hank Willis Thomas and Kwesi Botchway. These artists, referring to their culture, are engaged in a political battle against racism, blaxploitation and the history of slavery and colonialism experienced by their ancestors.

The central piece of the show *Resistance* a sculpture by Hank Willis Thomas draws upon the history of the Leopard (Anyoto) Society, a secret society active from 1890-1935 across West Africa. Although it was a society established for political emancipation and empowerment as a way to circumvent colonialist rule, the Leopard Society is depicted by-and-large as violent, evil, and sexually promiscuous in popular culture and the Euro-centric imagination, which can be traced through the dissemination of the Tarzan stories, Tintin comic, Disney motion pictures, and beyond. By isolating the claw of the “leopard” individually, Thomas draws attention to its symbolism of power, unity, and community.

EXXTINCTION is a text-based neon artwork by Justin Brice, an artist known for his work on ecological issues.

A play on the infamous Exxon logo, the artwork draws a direct parallel between our climate crisis and the actions of bad faith corporations, of which Exxon is paramount. The work is the second in a new body of neon signs, expanding on a vocabulary of signage Guariglia began with his widely-exhibited series of highway message boards, WE ARE THE ASTEROID.

Running on a loop, each letter of EXXTINCTION -- including its iconic double-x -- flickers out until the entire piece goes dark. Demonstrating the threat of loss posed by climate change.

Justin Brice
Exxtinction, 2019

neon
49 x 184 x 14 cm
19 1/4 x 72 1/2 x 5 1/2 in
Edi. 1/3



While some of the works presented in the exhibition have a political undertone, not only mentioning socio-political matters but also responding to an environmental urgency, like Justin Brice and Tony Matelli, other works are leaning towards an artistic resistance, a resistance to a specific art movement like Bill Jensen's abstract work with unconventional compositions and a profound sense of color or Paul Kremer and Nathalie Provosty's persistence of use of monochrome colors. In the same way, Hermann Nitsch's painting sits outside the canon of classical painting, inspired by his actions creating paintings made with unorthodox materials such as oil and blood.

On their part, Hiroshi Sugimoto's photograph and George Shaw's painting explore the philosophical notions of space and time, imagination and reality, science, and history. In Sugimoto's Chiesa Rossa an important element that comes to light is spirituality, evoking a certain resistance to time.

The resistance found in David LaChapelle and Stefan Brüggemann's work tends more towards a critique of our society. David LaChapelle's Icarus suggests that humanity has fallen amid the ruins of a throwaway digital society. In Hyper-Palimpsests, the artist combined layers of political and cultural history with his timeless and iconic text statements.



David LaChapelle

Icarus, 2012

inkjet print on dibond

127 x 194.5 cm

50 x 76 9/16 in

framing dimensions: 138 x 205.5 x 6.4 cm

Ed. 1/3



Kwesi Botchway
Heaven, 2021

acrylic and oil on canvas
80 x 80 cm
31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in

The exhibition is completed by the more conceptual and playful works by Sherrie Levine and Gavin Turk, addressing issues of authorship in art. Often employing everyday objects or manufactured items, their works deal with issues of identity, especially those pertaining to an artist's name and signature.

At the core of the show, the role of artists unfolds as the key player of an activist thought, somewhere between resistance and aesthetics. All in all, the exhibition explores the different possible interpretations and aesthetics of the term Resistance, seeking to build a socio-political consciousness among the spectators.

Stefan Bruggemann

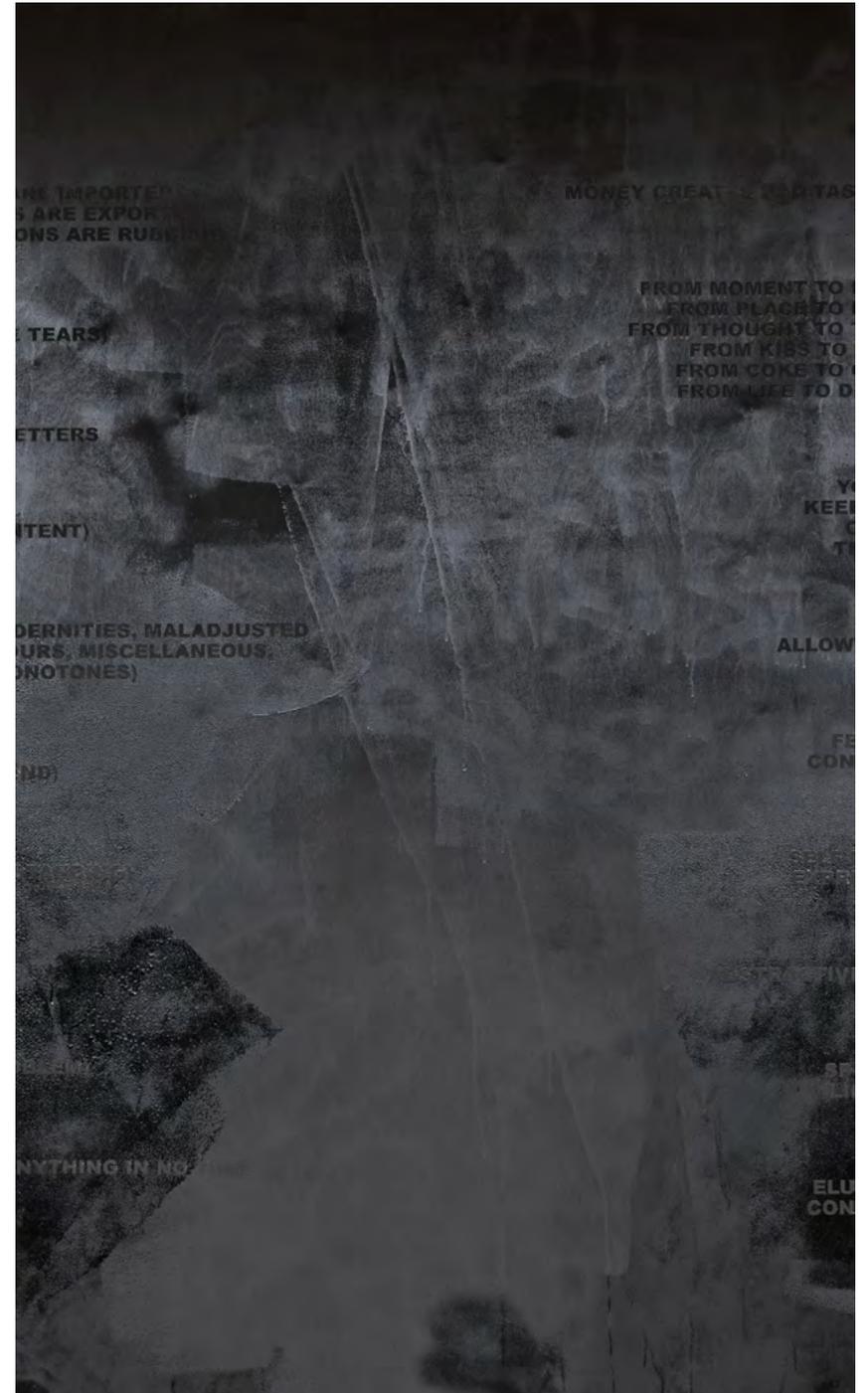
Hyper-Palimpsest, 2019

acrylic and spray paint on wood

205 x 120 x 5.5 cm

80 3/4 x 47 1/4 x 2 1/8 in

ref : BRUGG95546



Sherrie Levine

Silver Mirror : 4, 2010

Frosted mirror maple frame

51 x 41 cm

20 1/16 x 16 2/16 in

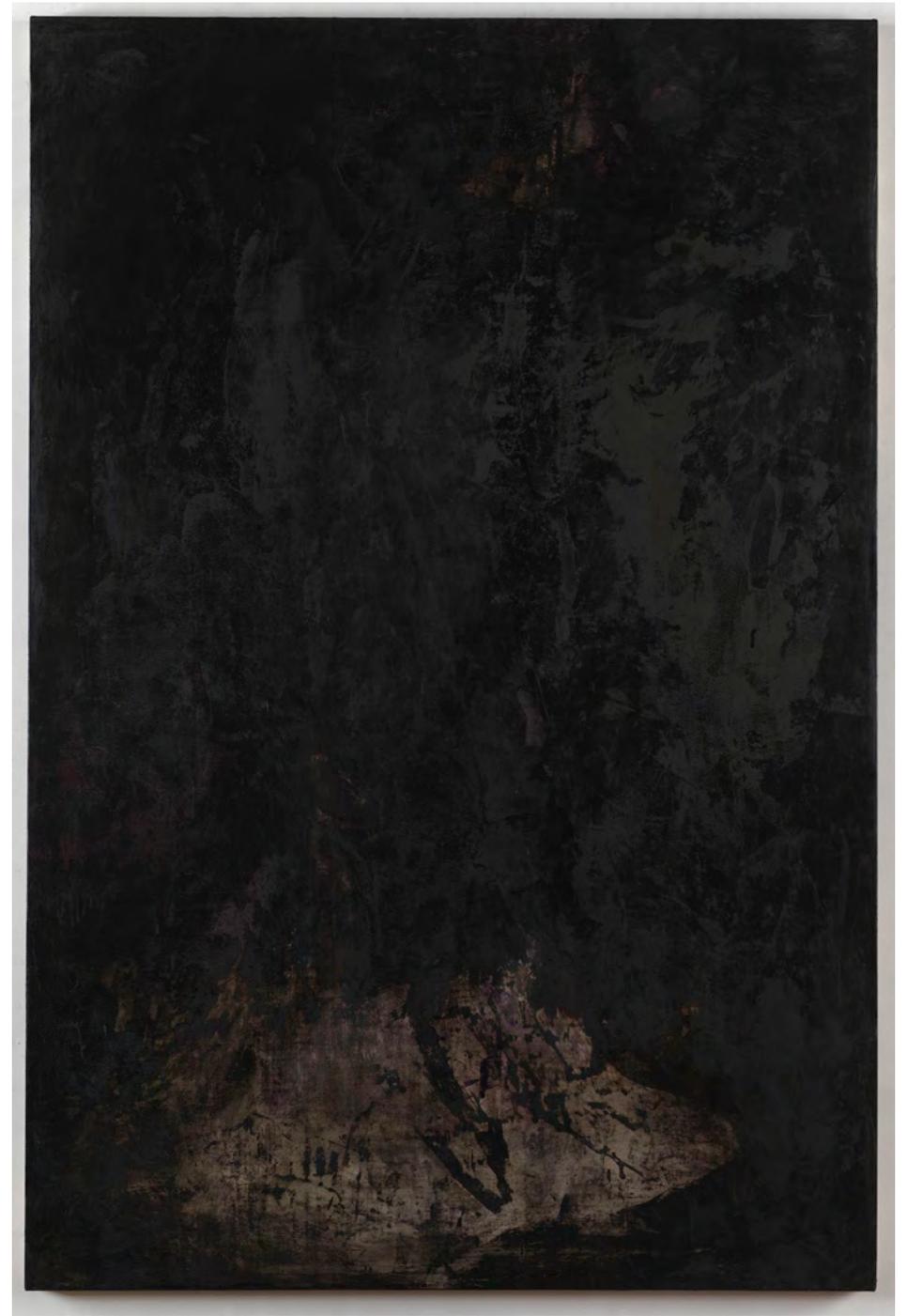
framing dimensions: 53.7 x 43.5 x 2.5 cm

Ed.N° 4/12



Bill Jensen
END OF THE ORDINARY REALM (HUANGSHAN MOUNTAIN), 2013-14

oil on linen
155 x 104 cm
61 1/16 x 40 15/16 in



Rashid Johnson

Cosmic Slop Little Brother, 2012

black soap microcrystalline wax on board

183 x 122 x 4 cm

72 1/16 x 48 1/16 x 1 9/16 in



Justin Brice
Agricultural Landscape (No.118/Pewter), 2018
pewter leaf acrylic gesso linen aluminium panel
203 x 152 cm
79 14/16 x 59 13/16 in

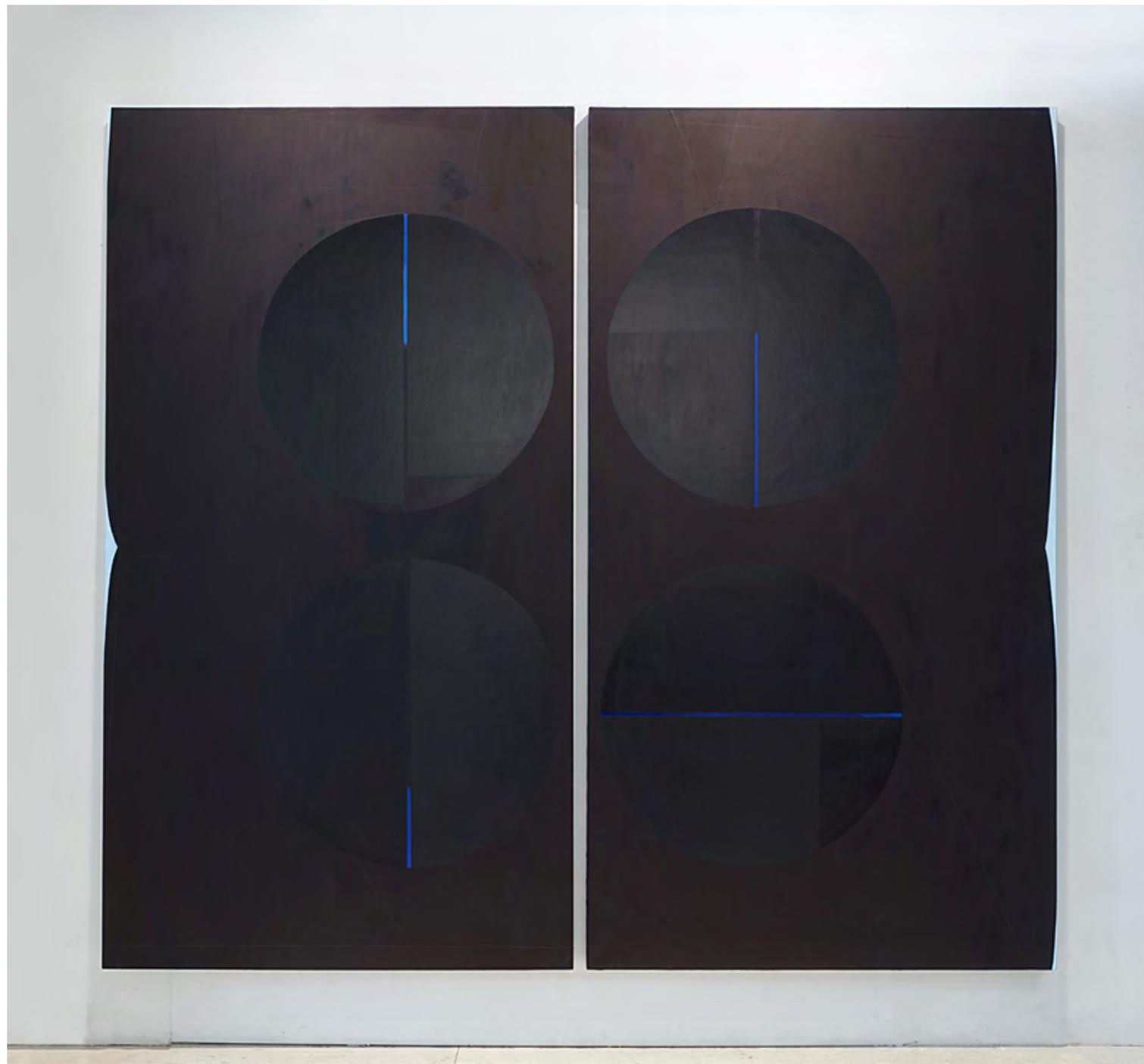




Paul Kremer
Dive 05, 2021
acrylic on canvas
162 x 213 cm
63 3/4 x 83 7/8 in



Hermann Nitsch
19_14, 2014
acrylic on canvas
200 x 300 cm
78 3/4 x 118 1/8 in



Nathalie Provosty
Valence Violence Violets, 2018
oil on canvas
213 x 116.8 x 2 cm
83 13/16 x 45 15/16 x 0 12/16 in

Hiroshi Sugimoto
Chiesa Rossa, 1998

gelatin silver print in artist's frame

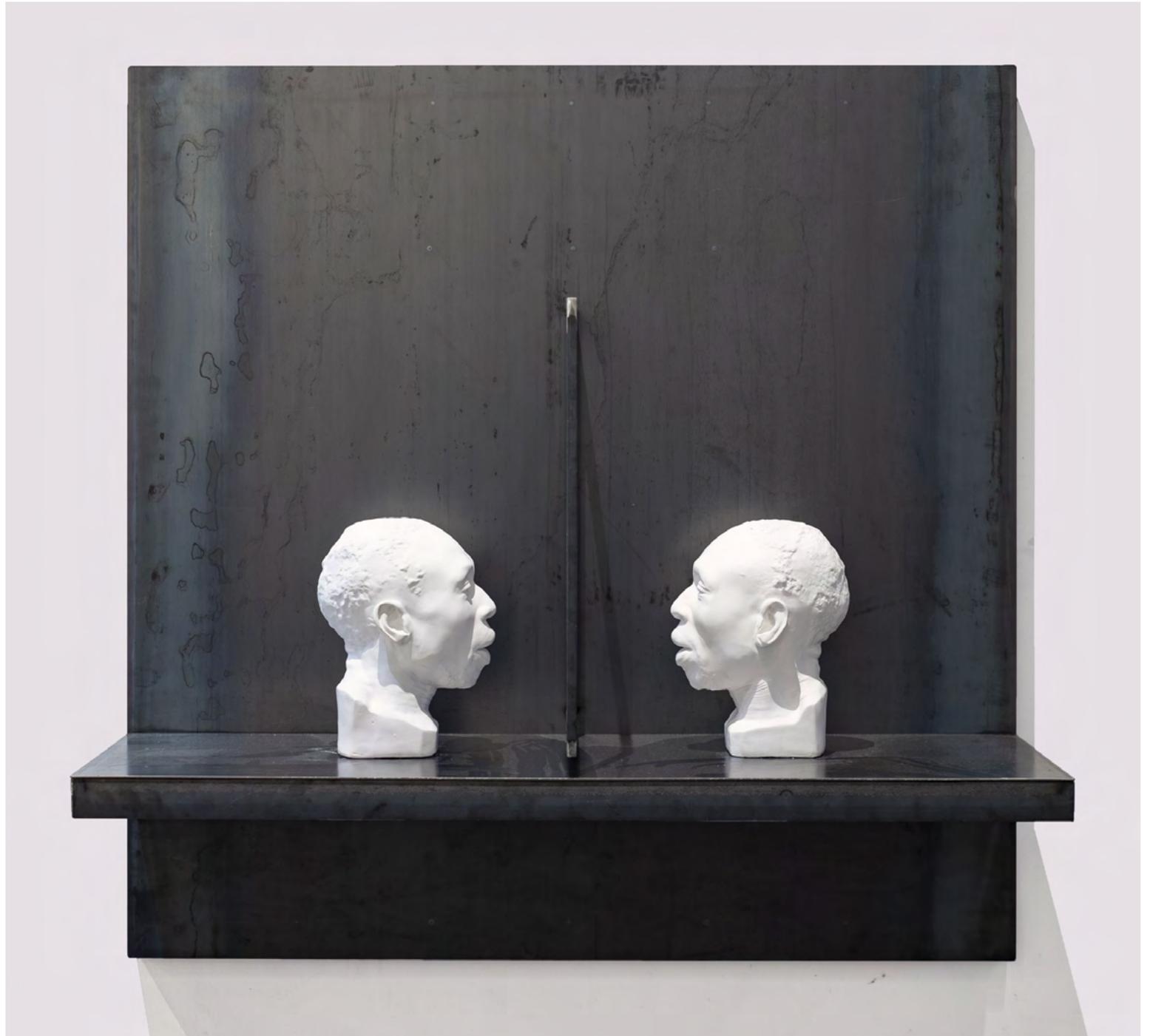
148.5 x 119 cm

58 7/16 x 46 13/16 in

framing dimensions: 182.5 x 152.5 x 7.5 cm

Ed.N° 1/5





Radcliffe Bailey
Double Consciousness, 2019
steel and plaster busts
124.46 x 124.46 x 45.72 cm
49 x 49 x 18 in

Hank Willis Thomas
Resistance in Black, 2021
Nero Marquina Levigato marble
56.3 x 11.2 x 15.3 cm
22 1/8 x 4 3/8 x 6 1/8 in
Edition of 6 + 2 A.P.



Gavin Turk
Ovum Black Umber, 2019
painted bronze
58 x 58 x 80 cm
22 13/16 x 22 13/16 x 31 7/16 in
Ed.1/6





Tony Matelli
Half Buddha Two Oranges, 2020
granite painted bronze
45.7 x 68.6 x 40.6 cm
18 x 27 x 16 in

Incorporating figurative, botanical, and abstract forms in his sculpture, Tony Matelli creates uncanny objects that are both unsettling and comical.



Hank Willis Thomas
Futbol and Chain, 2017

digital c-print
69 x 179 cm
27 2/16 x 70 7/16 in
Ed.2/5

“I was in graduate school, and I was reading a book called Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism (1999)” says Thomas. “It talked about how Nike went from being a \$10 million company when he signed, to being a \$10 billion company 20 years later... I was thinking about black bodies. Bodies like his would have been traded on a market at a different period in time. Now when these bodies are traded today, I was thinking about how much money is made from them. So we go from slaves being branded as a sign of ownership, to black bodies today being branded as a way to make money.” In Futbol and Chain, a player leaps into the air while kicking in a moment of athletic determination, only to be dragged down by the shackle and chain of a football.



MARUANIMERCIER.COM