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UGO SCHIAVI



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“The works of Ugo Schiavi are a confrontation. His studio a battlefield. His struggles with the raw materials invariably hold a symbolic punch.

His works – installations and sculptures – are built upon fragments that he gleans from an image-saturated world. There is something iconoclastic about the way Ugo Schiavi handles an image. If sculpture is an image that refuses to submit to its two-dimensionality, then the artist’s commitment to this transition is a very physical one. His works are the product of these often brutal transformations.

Schiavi’s relationship to statuary is almost archaeological: beyond the high-definition veneer of his recent figurative sculptures accident and ruin remain. His works provoke a visual shock: a compelling sensation of a clash between the antique and the contemporary.”

Sylvain Couzinet-Jacques

UGO SCHIAVI

1987, Toulon. Lives and works in Marseille.

Education

2011 DNSEP VILLA ARSON – École Nationale Supérieure d'Art, Nice, FR

2009 DNAP VILLA ARSON – École Nationale Supérieure d'Art, Nice, FR

Solo Exhibitions

2022 Centre d'art Bastille, Grenoble, FR

Le Sang de la Méduse, Double V Gallery, Marseille, FR

2021 Gargareôn, Musée Réattu, Arles, FR

2019 Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans, FR

2018 Rudus, Ruderis, Double V Gallery, Marseille, FR

2017 Uprising, THE PILL, Istanbul, TR

2016 Rebuscadores de oro, El Parche, Bogotá, CO

Group Exhibitions

2022 Manifesto of Fragility, curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath,
16e Biennale de Lyon, FR

AS IF IT COULDN'T - 6th Year Anniversary Group Show, THE PILL,
Istanbul, TR

2021 Voyage à Nantes, Nantes, FR

2020 After Party, Fondation du Doute, Blois, FR

Street Trash, Friche Belle de Mai, Marseille, FR

2019 In Situ, Palais des Archevêques, Narbonne, FR

Shuss, La Vallée, Bruxelles, BE

2018 The Nuit Blanche 2018, Paris, FR

Eidetik, La galerie particulière, Paris, FR

2017 Prix des ateliers de la ville de Marseille, Friche belle de Mai, Marseille,
FR

Scabellon, Galerie Double V, Marseille, FR

2016 Memento, Galerie Double V, Marseille, FR

Eden, Aperture gallery, New York, USA

Une Inconnue d'Avance, Villa Emerige, Paris, FR

Generosity, galerie XPO, Paris, FR

Dogwood, Cité Des Arts, Paris, FR

2015 Ad Hoc, La station, Nice, FR

Premières Lignes, Hotel des Arts, Toulon, FR

Seine Saint-Denis Style, Cité Des Arts, Paris, FR

2014 Gestalt, MAMAC, Nice, FR

2013 Des corps compétents, Villa Arson, Nice, FR

Saison 17, Lieu Commun, Toulouse, FR

Festinova, Tbilissi, GE

Festival des arts éphémères, Marseille, FR

2012 Looters will be shot, Galerie de la Marine, Nice, FR

Sunshine and Precipitation, Catalyst Arts, Belfast, IR

L'enclave, HLM, Marseille, FR

WATT, La Station, Nice, FR

2011 Young and Restless, VidéoChroniques, Marseille, FR

Demain c'est loin, Villa Arson, Nice, FR

Awards & Grants

2011 Prix Bernar Venet / Ville de Nice

2016 Shortlist prix Revelation Emerige

2020 Shortlist Audi Talent Award

Residencies

2018 Poudrerie de Saint Chamas, Miramas, FR

2016 Dos Mares, Bogota, CO

2015 Usine Utopik, Tessy-sur-vire, Normandie, FR

PLAC, Toulon, FR

2013 Cité internationale des Arts, Paris, FR

Villa Garikula, Tbilissi, GE

2011 La Station, Nice, FR

Collections

Musée des Beaux Arts Orléans

FMAC, Paris

FRAC PACA

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WORKS AND EXHIBITIONS



Exhibition view, *Grafted Memory System*, Manifesto of Fragility, cur. Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, 16th Biennale de Lyon, 2022



Exhibition view, *Grafted Memory System*, Manifesto of Fragility, cur. Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, 16th Biennale de Lyon, 2022



Exhibition view, *Grafted Memory System*, Manifesto of Fragility, cur. Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, 16th Biennale de Lyon, 2022

The mixed-media work of Ugo Schiavi, which has spawned a kind of archaeology of the future, probes the tensions between history and fiction. His hybrid landscape – both mechanical and natural – entitled Grafted Memory System has taken over the main exhibition hall of the Musée Guimet, which has stood disused for some years now. Fossils and bones fuse with human remains, while cables intertwine with vegetation. Screens built into data centres show 3D images of fragments of the museum's architecture, composite objects and vigorously growing plants. This techno-organic ecosystem serves up an altered vision of nature, reflecting both its fragility and resilience.





Exhibition view, *Grafted Memory System*, Manifesto of Fragility, cur. Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, 16th Biennale de Lyon, 2022





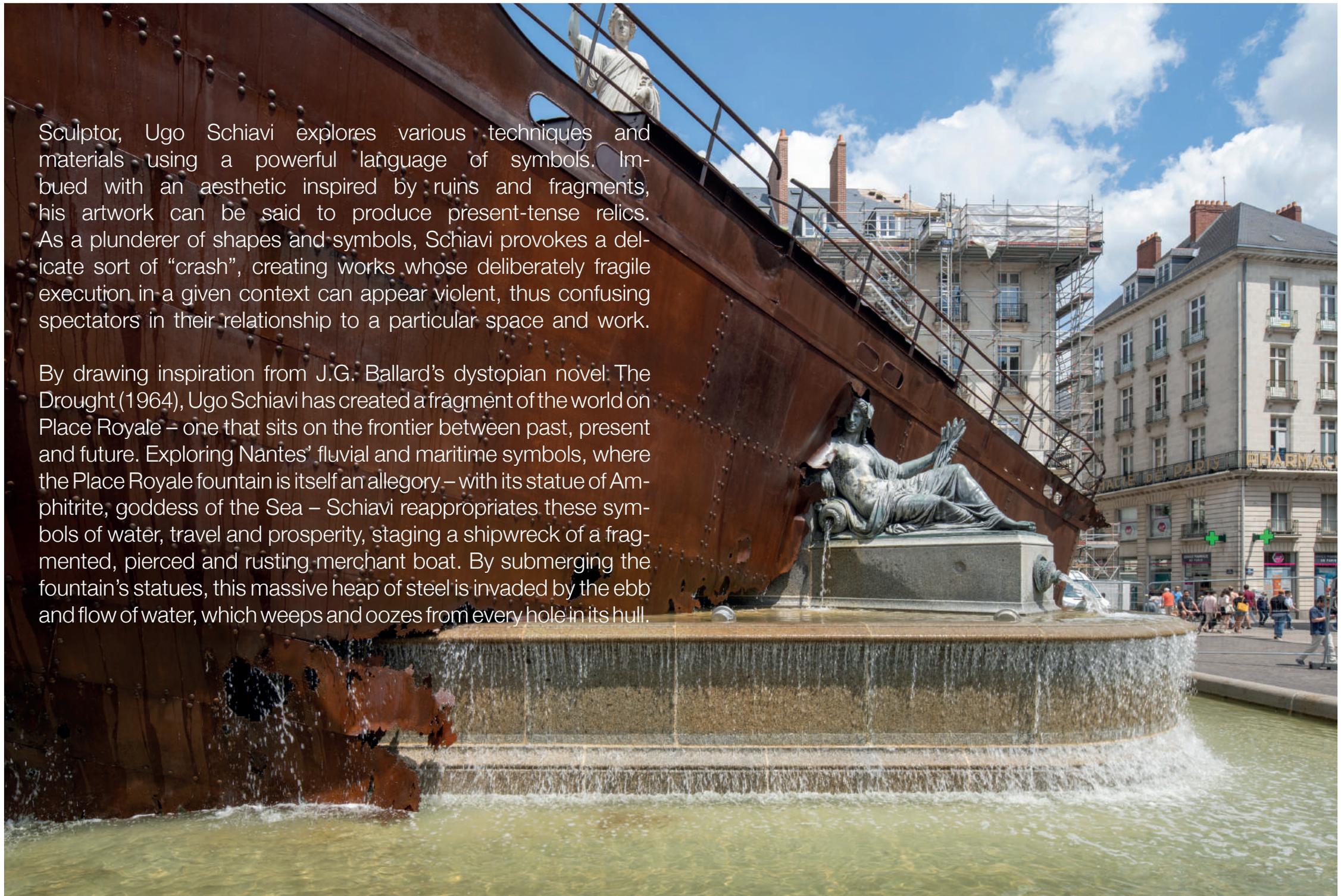






Sculptor, Ugo Schiavi explores various techniques and materials using a powerful language of symbols. Imbued with an aesthetic inspired by ruins and fragments, his artwork can be said to produce present-tense relics. As a plunderer of shapes and symbols, Schiavi provokes a delicate sort of “crash”, creating works whose deliberately fragile execution in a given context can appear violent, thus confusing spectators in their relationship to a particular space and work.

By drawing inspiration from J.G. Ballard’s dystopian novel *The Drought* (1964), Ugo Schiavi has created a fragment of the world on Place Royale – one that sits on the frontier between past, present and future. Exploring Nantes’ fluvial and maritime symbols, where the Place Royale fountain is itself an allegory – with its statue of Amphitrite, goddess of the Sea – Schiavi reappropriates these symbols of water, travel and prosperity, staging a shipwreck of a fragmented, pierced and rusting merchant boat. By submerging the fountain’s statues, this massive heap of steel is invaded by the ebb and flow of water, which weeps and oozes from every hole in its hull.

















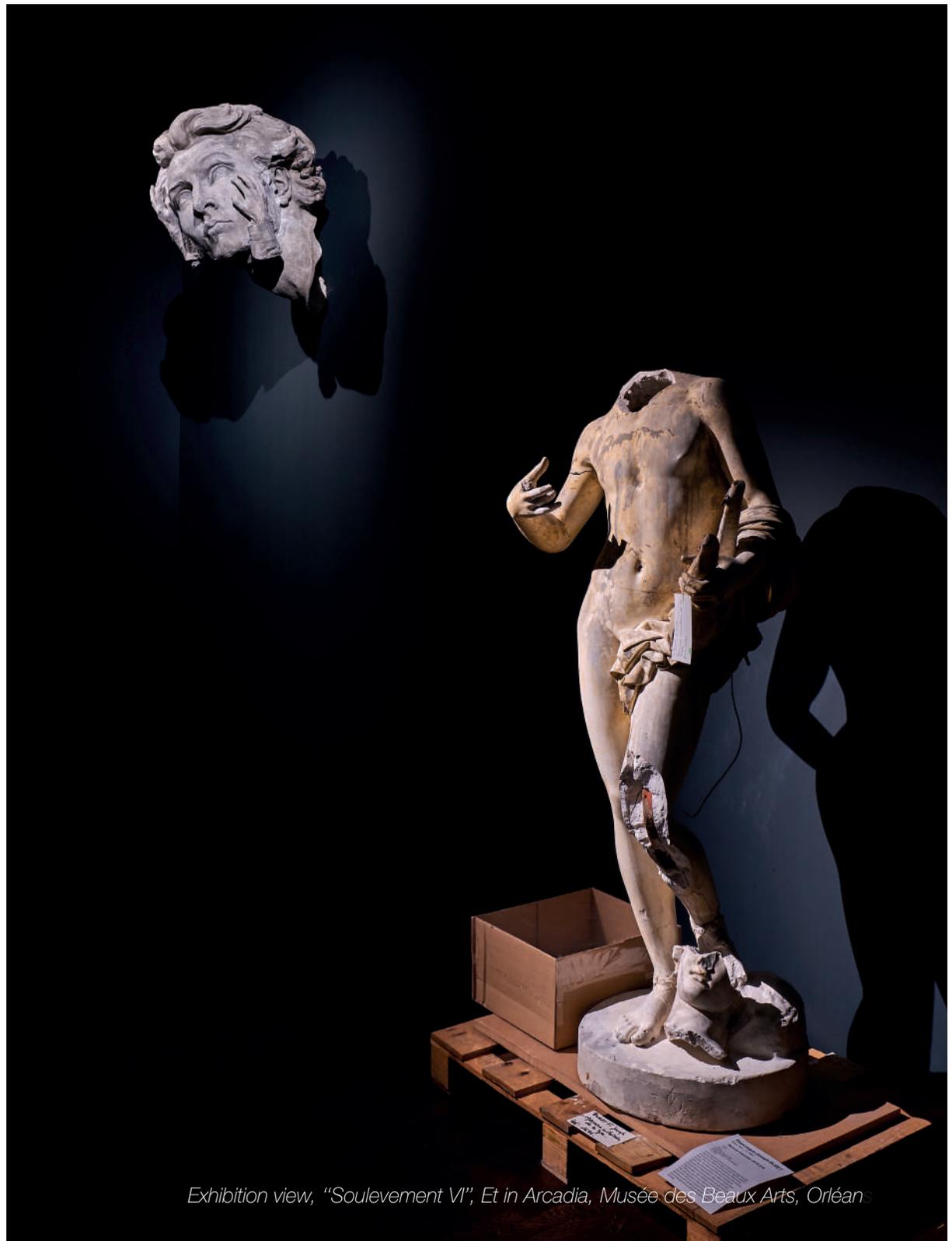


Ugo Schiavi
Jeannes, 2019
Resin, steel









Exhibition view, "Soulevement VI", Et in Arcadia, Musée des Beaux Arts, Orléans



Ugo Schiavi
Et in Arcadia, 2019
Resin, metallic structure
80 x 60 x 20 cm







Exhibition view, *Nuit Blanche*, Paris, 2018.



Exhibition view, *Nuit Blanche*, Paris, 2018.

Ugo Schiavi
Soulèvement II
Nuit Blanche 2018
Résine, ciment, acier









The artist -known for his interventions in public spaces, present a body of new sculptural works resulting from a form of activism within his practice as well as a site-specific installation. The exhibition oppose two types of representations of forces both enabling the artist to establish what he calls a 'contemporary archeology'. On the one hand, the anthropomorphic force articulate around a body of fragmented sculptures representing people climbing on monuments during mass-movements, protests or insurrections, enabling the artist to confront two representations and deal with civil society claiming its rights, and its manifestation in the public space. In order to make these sculptures, Ugo Schiavi travels in places with recent insurrectional history and takes imprints of monuments without authorization, finding ways to avoid local authorities.

On the other hand, the artist perform a site-specific intervention, related to the notions of territory, sampling and conservation and how nature takes over its rights in the Anthropocene era, by sampling and implementing soil from different parts of Istanbul to show how nature overcomes construction.



Ugo Schiavi

Uprising VII Milon de Crotona (d'après Pierre Puget), 2017

Concrete, Iron

60 x 300 x 60 cm





Ugo Schiavi
Uprising IV
75 x 70 x 47 cm
Concrete and Iron



Ugo Schiavi
Uprising II
100 x 75 x 55 cm
Concrete and Iron



Ugo Schiavi
Uprising VII Milon de Crotoné (d'après Pierre Puget), 2017
Concrete, Iron
60 x 300 x 60 cm



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TEXTS AND CATALOGUES

Place Royale Ugo Schiavi Le Naufrage de Neptune



Sculpteur, Ugo Schiavi explore les techniques et les matériaux dans un langage symboliquement percutant. Archéologue du monde contemporain, il s'intéresse à l'évolution des espaces naturels et urbains, aux transformations des matériaux, et à l'actualité des mouvements sociaux et politiques en en transcrivant les métamorphoses dans des œuvres troublantes et fortes. Son œuvre, empreinte de l'esthétique de la ruine et du fragment, fabrique de nouveaux vestiges.

Ugo Schiavi s'emploie depuis de nombreuses années à détourner les monuments dans l'espace public. Ces œuvres symboliques de la mémoire collective sont aussi bien souvent théâtres de soulèvements politiques et sociaux.

Piratant les monuments publics en réalisant des moulages souvent « non déclarés », il décontextualise l'objet en le reproduisant à l'état de fragment. Pilleur de formes et de symboles, Ugo Schiavi provoque avec le patrimoine et l'histoire une forme de crash délicat, créant des œuvres dont le traitement volontairement fragile dans une mise en contexte qui peut apparaître violente, trouble le regardeur dans son rapport au lieu et à l'œuvre. Dans ses dernières recherches, Ugo Schiavi travaille sur des sculptures de plastigloméat, une formation géologique hybride, née de la dégradation de roches naturelles et de matériaux artificiels, majoritairement des débris de plastique. Directement généré par la pollution océanique, le plastigloméat marque l'entrée définitive du plastique dans le cycle géologique. Anticipée par l'écrivain de science-fiction J.G. Ballard, dans le roman *Sécheresse* (1964), cette contamination pourrait modifier irrémédiablement le cycle de l'eau et provoquer des catastrophes : « Sur les eaux territoriales de tous les océans du monde, jusqu'à environ mille cinq cents kilomètres des côtes, reposait une pellicule monomoléculaire mince mais solide, formée d'un

complexe de polymères à chaîne longue saturés, générés par les immenses quantités de déchets industriels déversés dans les océans depuis cinquante ans. Cette membrane dure, perméable à l'oxygène, recouvrait la surface et empêchait presque toute évaporation. [...] À partir de ce brouet de sorcière, l'océan s'était fabriqué une peau épaisse de quelques atomes seulement mais assez solide pour dévaster les terres que naguère il irriguait. [...]

À cinq cents mètres du rivage, les carcasses de deux ou trois bateaux étaient enfouies dans le sel jusqu'au pont supérieur, leurs superstructures grises se reflétant dans les mares d'eau de mer. »

« S'inspirant de ce récit archéologique d'anticipation, Ugo Schiavi créé sur la Place Royale un fragment de monde, à la lisière des temps passé, présent et futur. »

S'inspirant de ce récit archéologique d'anticipation, Ugo Schiavi créé sur la Place Royale un fragment de monde, à la lisière des temps passé, présent et futur. Explorant la symbolique fluviale et maritime de la Ville de Nantes — dont la fontaine de la Place Royale est elle-même une allégorie dominée par sa statue d'Amphitrite, déesse de la mer (qui tient dans sa main le trident de Neptune — désormais absent car maintes fois volé...) —, Ugo Schiavi détourne ces symboliques de l'eau, du voyage et de la prospérité et met en scène un véritable naufrage d'un bateau de commerce fragmenté, percé et rouillé. Submergeant les statues, cette immense carcasse d'acier est traversée par le flux et le reflux de l'eau qui ruisselle et suinte de toutes parts.

Le navire naufragé symbolise une histoire passée. De nombreux bateaux depuis le 18^e siècle ont porté le nom de « Neptune », et beaucoup d'entre eux ont connu de tragiques naufrages. L'histoire portuaire de Nantes a marqué la ville de son empreinte au cours de toute son histoire. Premier port français au 18^e siècle à la faveur de la traite négrière, l'activité portuaire s'est poursuivie jusqu'aux chantiers navals dont l'activité a pris fin dans les années 1980. La devise de la Ville : « Nantes favorise ceux qui voyagent. », marque cet héritage.

Le Naufrage de Neptune projette également vers un récit fictionnel sombre de plus en plus manifeste. Sans âge, l'état de délabrement du bateau de transport de marchandises laissant présager une histoire tumultueuse, il évoque la violence des phénomènes naturels de plus en plus fréquents et à la force décuplée, le voyage, la migration, l'errance et l'entrée du monde contemporain dans l'ère de l'Anthropocène.

UGO SCHIAVI EST NÉ EN 1987.
IL VIT ET TRAVAILLE À MARSEILLE.
IL EST REPRÉSENTÉ PAR LES GALERIES DOUBLE V
À MARSEILLE ET THE PILL GALLERY À ISTANBUL.

AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE : LES NOUVEAUX CONSTRUCTEURS.

Le Naufrage de Neptune, Ugo Schiavi, maquette
© photo : Jean-Dominique Billaud / LVAN

À proximité de la Passerelle Schoelcher Ugo Schiavi **Le Naufrage de Neptune**

« Poursuivant sa narration du naufrage, Ugo Schiavi s'attache à ce personnage disparu sous la coque du bateau, le révélant quelques centaines de mètres plus loin, sur les bords de Loire, à proximité immédiate de la Passerelle Schoelcher. »

Sur la fontaine de la Place Royale, la Loire est représentée par une femme qui déverse de l'eau par deux amphores. Ses affluents sont symbolisés par deux statues de femmes et deux statues d'hommes, à demi allongés. Ugo Schiavi a été frappé par la ressemblance de l'une de ces statues avec la figure mythologique de Neptune, personnage central de son intervention.

Poursuivant sa narration du naufrage, Ugo Schiavi s'attache à ce personnage disparu sous la coque du bateau, le révélant quelques centaines de mètres plus loin, sur les bords de Loire, à proximité immédiate de la Passerelle Schoelcher.

À partir d'une reconstitution 3D, Ugo Schiavi a réalisé une version agrandie en matière polymère du buste de Neptune. Les percées et les manques qui fragmentent l'œuvre sont la résultante de bugs informatiques liés au scan, mis en exergue par l'artiste.

Telle une figure de proue décrochée de l'impressionnante épave du bateau naufragé de la Place Royale, Neptune est ainsi échoué, soumis aux forces des éléments naturels, protagoniste d'un scénario anachronique dans lequel le passé et le futur se côtoient indistinctement. L'artiste fait ici dialoguer mythologie, fiction et monde contemporain.

UGO SCHIAVI EST NÉ EN 1987.
IL VIT ET TRAVAILLE À MARSEILLE.
IL EST REPRÉSENTÉ PAR LES GALERIES DOUBLE V.
À MARSEILLE ET THE PILL GALLERY À ISTANBUL.

Ugo Schiavi

Arts & Culture | May 1, 2017



French artist Ugo Schiavi explores the elements of contemporary art through the art of archeology; a field that most would associate with the “old”.

By creating in various countries over the years, he adopted a multifaceted perception of art. And his last stop is Istanbul! We talked to Ugo while he was preparing for his solo exhibition Uprising at The Pill Gallery.

Nice, Bogota, Tbilisi, Paris... You attended many art residency programs around the world. How do you think experiencing different cultures effected your take on art?

“I hate traveling and Explorers” said Claude Levi Strauss. With this quote I mean that it is my way of creating that pushes me to travel and not the opposite. I like to think that I work as an ethnologist or archaeologist. Thereby, travel is essential, but is not an end itself. It is a tool. Thus, I may as well find myself in the depths of North Carolina to exhume old doors from a car graveyard to transform them into an “antique” shield... Then go to Bogotá to make golden masks from homeless people’s faces – directly inspired by pre- Columbian remains... Or why not extracting square meters of abandoned landscapes in Marseille or in Istanbul... Or even making castings of statues in public places in Paris or elsewhere.

What does “contemporary archeology” have to show us?

Archeology is not necessarily interested by what is distant, ancient or mysterious. It studies what constitutes our present. The vestiges that I create speak about the past, but it also addresses the future, illustrating the timeless conflict between the antic and the current. A reality where we fight against consumer society while being part of it; all at the same time

“What will remain of our society? What will remain of me? In a near future, what will archaeologists understand of our lifestyle?” These questions are not new and many archaeologists and artists have tried to answer. In my case I use archaeology more as an object. My artworks and installations are based on fragments that I gather in a world of images. The dialogue between my art pieces and archeology is an attempt to bring to life the tricky notions of time, space and materiality.

Art in form of activism goes back a long way in history. In your point of view, what does it mean in today's world?

This question could be a subject of a thesis itself. I would not write it. And let's be clear, I do not consider myself as an activist. Being an artist in our society is already to be an activist in a way. I genuinely wonder if artwork still has an impact in a society where the religion-political bloc have reserved the exclusivity of values. Art could change opinions and perceptions but can not change the facts and the balance of powers.

How about your current solo exhibition at The Pill Gallery... How are the notions you explore defined here?

Basically I take over bits of statues that I choose in the public space by using the techniques of imprint and moulding. Most of the time I get help from a « partner in crime » who will « lay » an arm or a foot on a specific part before I immortalise the encounter between the two body fragments: one contemporary and alive the other frozen in history. I describe the operation as « vandal moulding » or « pirate archeology » as it demands a certain level of organisation and a great speed in order to avoid some representative of the authorities putting an end to it. The resulting sculptures operate like a shift which would be the turning of a monument designed to last through the years into a fragile fragment of solidified present time.

Tell us about your creative process. What were your greatest challenges in putting together this show?

My works are tests of strength, and I consider my studio as a battlefield. The struggle that I engage with materials always carries a symbolic force of the fights I actually represent. Here the biggest challenge was to create three new art pieces in one week and make them dialogue with the rest of the exhibition. I'm talking about the three plant parts. The three « squares meters of waste land ». They are formally very different from the fragments of concrete bodies but are nevertheless in the same set.

My "archaeological" projects in Istanbul is an approach to talk about the city today. It's a sampling of territory. A way of taking possession of the reality, a little of the collective territory. An exploratory will, the shaping of a social bond and the revelation of the tensions characteristic of the urban fact. It is an act of appropriation. It responds to a human need which is to leave traces. I think this need is a response to the agonizing awareness of death.



What Remains When Fluxes are Halted: Ugo Schiavi's Speculative Time-Capsules

← UPRISING VII
(D'APRÈS PIERRE PUGE)
CONCRETE AND IRON
60 × 300 × 60 CM
2017

Around the turn of the 2010 decade, curator Dieter Roelstrate wrote an article entitled “The Way of the Shovel,” (e-flux.com 2009) investigating the “contemporary archeological” dimension of art. Similarly, your work, engaging with memory and history, has often been characterized as an “archeology of the present.” How do you relate to this trend?

While I find the phrasing a hackneyed one, I conceive of my practice as a conceptual act of sampling. This means that I don't represent a given reality but collect several specific fragments that I then recombine syncretically. I became interested in molding to convey certain ideas, as it enables me to insert fragments of the past inside the weird and violent framework of our current society.

In each of your three-dimensional works, several layers of time collide as they form a new entity. This could be seen as relating to a dehierarchizing approach to sources and materials often related to the digital age...

I have predominantly been working with sculptural tools such as molding, imprinting or sampling, but I am aware of the dangers of sticking to only one medium. This had recently led me to explore photogrammetry, a technique used to model an object in three dimensions by combining photographs taken from different points of view with a software. While my works are three-dimensional, I start to research each project by developing my initial intuitions through a collection of images, snapshots or freeze-frames, ranging from recent street scenes—protests or fights—to classical sculpture—Bernini— or Greco-Roman statues.

While your work-process is site-specific, the most recent works put forward an image-based practice, expanding sculpture into video—such as *Main Stream Memory* (2021), in collaboration with artist Jonathan Pêpe. How would you define your main research topics?

I am interested in the idea of preservation and memory at large, encompassing digital flows as well. For instance, datacenters are a current research topic of mine, that I attempt to render sensorial, embodied and organic through a hands-on, poetic approach.

UGO SCHIAVI

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"Obedience was dull, revolt impossible, struggle hazardous."
Honoré de Balzac, *Le Père Goriot*, 1835.

"The rising is an endless gesture, ceaselessly renewed, sovereign as, perhaps, desire itself, or that drive, that 'impulse of freedom,' what Sigmund Freud called *Freiheitsdrang*. That is why the field of uprisings is potentially infinite."
Georges Didi-Huberman, *Soulèvements*, 2016.

ON THE OCCASION
OF THE EXHIBITION *UPRISING*,
UGO SCHIAVI, *THE PILL*, 2017

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