

UGO SCHIAVI



What remains of a body after the evidence of all that once enveloped it is gone? Is a solitary limb, a petrified fragment, or a disemboweled shell enough to conjure its essence? What about an unnatural crystallization of disparate elements, a quivering and energetic germination, or a veiny network knotted up like a ball of yarn? Ugo Schiavi's sculptural vocabulary examines the crisis of totalizing systems of representation and their treatment of bodies, whether human or non-human, whether presented in a manner that facilitates prehension or left open to fabulous interpretations through the lens of enduring mythologies. While the artist's first works incorporated traditional gestures such as molding, imprinting, or subtracting, the more recent pieces embrace a syncretic amalgamation of materials or images, notably using 3D scanning or photogrammetry.

Even after sweeping aside the spectrum of sculptural techniques that have staked out the history of representation, a fundamental line of questioning underpins any expanded register of approaches. This is true of the artist, especially since it encompasses the temporal origins of his creative reflections. Ugo Schiavi turns towards the past and draws upon the history of the sculpture to better deepen the representational divide. Certainly, with the different series, the artist evokes formal repertoires as diverse as ancient statuary, medieval gargoyles, Baroque sculpture, and 19th-century allegories. And yet, something connects them, something emerges from the juxtapositions, a notion of an ensemble that we can only properly consider through an immersion – or rather, a deep dive – that ensnares us within a materially mutated texture.

On the one hand, there is individuality: there is a creative intention here, the one envisioned by the artist, the one he has addressed to us and that develops a material and gives it its singularity. At first glance, each sculpture seems to be subjected to the passage of time, suspended between withering and regeneration; however, this impression is an illusion: it is manufactured and captured, a fact of art and artifice rather than a simple, natural inevitability. Ugo Schiavi's works summons up this era when bodies, while fragmented, tend to be simultaneously represented as immutable, eternal, and mired in a perpetual present. Thus, the passage of time is no longer ineluctable because flesh is being embalmed everywhere: that of the digital realm that does not wither; that of real life that is being augmented by transhumanist experiments. The humanbeing has fantasized so profoundly and so capably about the possibility of stopping finitude that at the threshold of this achievement, they pause and realize their mistake: existence can only be savored when it is transitory, just as fragility is a condition of beauty.

Ingrid Luquet-Gad



### ***The Day the Sand Caught Fire, 2023***

Clear resin, various recycled materials, LED strips on metal structure 400 x 400 x 400 cm

At first appearing as a concretion resting on water, *The Day the Sand Caught Fire* requires time, curiosity, and patience to fully appreciate its finer complexities. The eye discerns, perhaps, the remains of a drilling machine, the silhouette of one of Al-Ula's colossi, or an altar from an ancient civilization. These anachronistic interpretations merge or try to reappear through these newly formed ruins, begging the question of what they once were and what they could be. Ugo Schiavi here weaves together time and space, corrupting the distinction between the past and present, causing the creation of ever-evolving hybrids, ultimately heralding a new era and identity. Continuing his series *Gorgones* (2022), he again performs the natural process of sedimentation. Sustained by artworks and objects from Riyadh, the desert around the Tuwaiq mountain, and other locations, *The Day the Sand Caught Fire* stands as an oddity from a time yet to come.

Jerome Sans









***Grafted-Memory-System / The Burning World***

steel, plants, insects, CGI videos, fossils, bones, horticultural  
LED, sound device

link to see the video of the installation :

<https://vimeo.com/924785342?share=copy>









## ***Grafted-Memory-System***

Biennale de Lyon

Abandoned natural history museum of Lyon (Guimet)

steel, plants, insects, CGI videos, fossils, bones, horticultural LED, sound device

link to see the video of the installation :

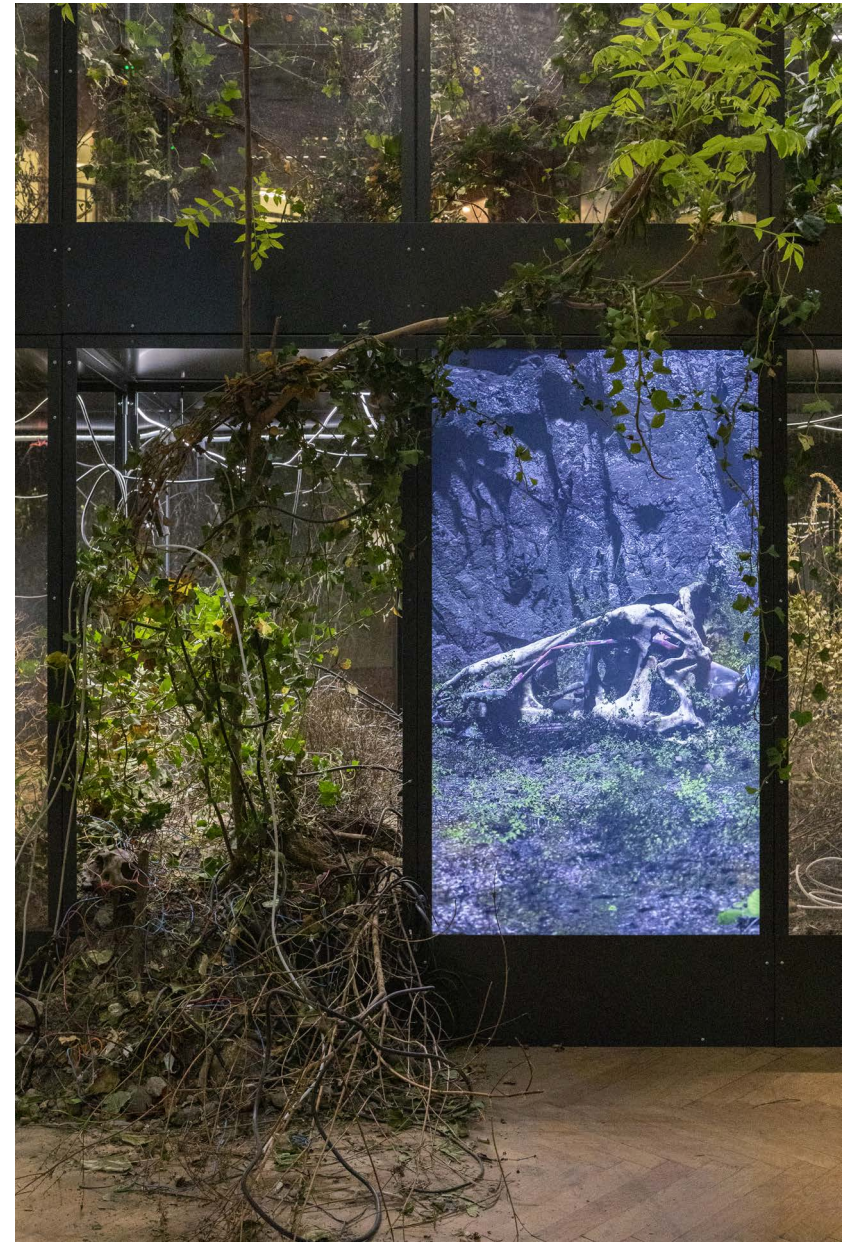
<https://vimeo.com/924780728?share=copy>

Time no longer exists. Past, present and future merge; organic and synthetic agglomerate; material and virtual coalesce. The world has become a constantly changing organism where the exchanges of informations takes place in a continuous flow.

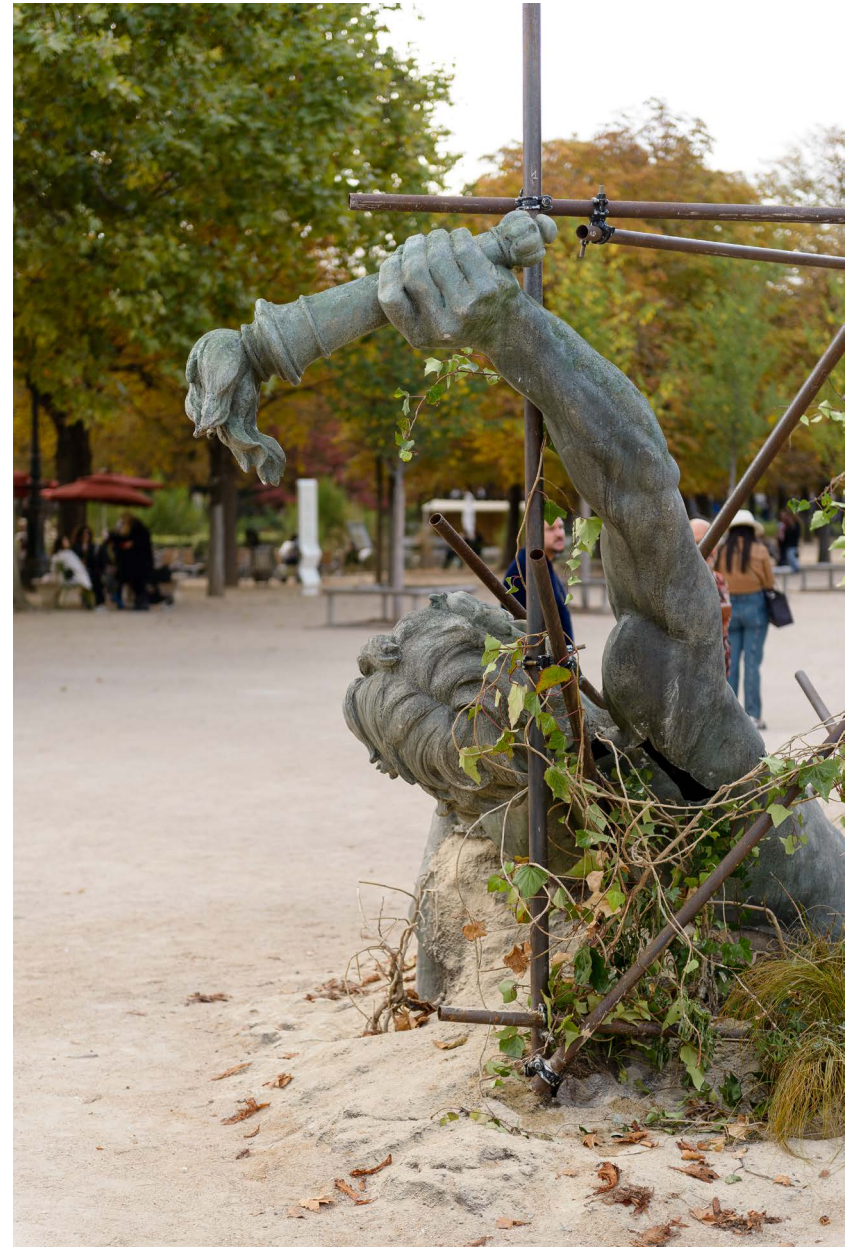
Grafted Memory System is a technological-organic ecosystem emerging from the unconscious of our post-digital societies. Torn between the memory of a founding origin and the myth of unlimited progress, a disused natural history museum is transformed into a data center. Cables and plants intertwine. Fossils and bones merge with human wastes. The future seems to have been abandoned.















**Leviathan, 2022**  
Centre d'Art Bastille, Grenoble





Exhibition view *LE SANG DE LA MÉDUSE*, 2021  
Double V gallery, Paris



We have often wanted to enlighten the present through science fiction, without grasping the truth that such speculation instantly freezes all possibility of invention and action. On the contrary, when Ugo Schiavi dives into the history of humanity, he maintains the possibilities of the present and reclaims its potential through the artistic act. In her essay *Ruines bien rangées* [Tidy Ruins] (2020), the philosopher Hélène Cixous seems to echo his work: "There is a place where history begins-ends, that is to say, the history of a story, a narrow, raised stage that when mounted allows one to see the future arrive from the past." The exhibition *Le Sang de la Méduse* [The Blood of the Medusa] testifies to this: it is a space where nothing is yet frozen. And if the artist has designated the Medusa of Greek mythology as his emblematic character, it is to once again disrupt established perceptions. Rather than her petrifying gaze, Ugo Schiavi champions Medusa's generative power; the only mortal among the three Gorgons, when her blood spilled upon the seaweed, it gave birth to coral. Fluidity is no longer a strict realm of the digital surface; it becomes clouded by life's generative uncertainty.

Ingrid Luquet-Gad



**GORGONE #1, 2022**

Resin, various recycled materials  
29 x 40 x 30 cm





**LE NAUFRAGE DE NEPTUNE**  
Le Voyage à Nantes, 2021



## **THE SHIPWRECK OF NEPTUNE, 2021**

Le Voyage à Nantes

Inspired by the archaeological story of anticipation Sécheresse (1964) by J. G. Ballard, Ugo Schiavi creates on Place Royale a fragment of the world on the edge of past, present and future times. Exploring the fluvial and maritime symbolism of the city of Nantes - of which the fountain of Place Royale is itself an allegory dominated by the statue of Amphitrite, goddess of the sea - Ugo diverts these symbolisms of water, travel and of prosperity and depicts a real shipwreck of a fragmented, pierced and rusty commercial boat. Submerging the statues, this immense steel carcass is crossed by the ebb and flow of water which flows in and out from all sides.

The wrecked ship symbolizes a past history. Many ships since the 18th century have borne the name Neptune and many of them have suffered tragic shipwrecks. The harbour history of Nantes has left its mark on the city throughout its history. The first French port in the 18th century thanks to the slave trade, port activity continued until the shipyards whose activity ended in the 1980s. The city's motto: «Neptune favors those who travel» ratifies this heritage.

The Sinking of Neptune also projects towards an increasingly overt dark fictional narrative. Ageless, the dilapidated state of the goods transport boat suggests a tumultuous history.

It evokes the brutality of natural phenomena that are increasingly frequent and violent: travel, migration, wandering and entry of the contemporary world into the Anthropocene era.





## ***Gargareôn, 2021***

Musée Reattu, Arles

The exhibition «Ugo Schiavi. Gargareôn» (gargareôn, the Greek root of the word throat, which refers directly to the gargoyles whose forms and symbolism he has used) features some twenty works at the cross-roads between classical statuary and contemporary installation. The presence of the Rhône permeates the presentation, which includes the screening of a CGI film, co-created with the artist Jonathan Pêpe, whose flow takes us to an imaginary Arles and plunges us into the waters studded with archaeological remains and monuments that have suddenly sunk...

Excerpt from the exhibition text by Andy Neyrotti



## ***Main-Stream-Memory, 2021***

With Jonathan Pêpe

CGI video

teaser : <https://vimeo.com/645540007>





**Gargareôn, 2021**  
Musée Reattu, Arles



**Gargareôn, 2021**  
Musée Reattu, Arles



## ***Soulèvement***

*Nuit Blanche 2018*

Résin, concrete, sreeel

550 X 300 X 300 cm

Ugo Schiavi's sculptures appear as fragments of bodies eroded by time intended for an archeology of the future. To the glorious and pre-trimmed statuary, the artist molds and grafts contemporary elements in order to weave together historical archive and collective memory. Ugo appropriates the bronze sculpture *The Triumph of the Republic*, located Place de la Nation, and more particularly the allegory entitled *The Genius of Liberty*. This emblematic character suggests through his gestures as much the *Statue of Liberty* or *Liberty Leading the People* by Delacroix, as a demonstrator raising his arm or ready to throw a molotov cocktail. Although frozen, his work seems floating or even unfinished. It outlines the way in which reality is constructed by telescoping and anachronism, in a quest that is both insurrectional and militant against a backdrop of ruins towards new worlds.

Marion Zilio

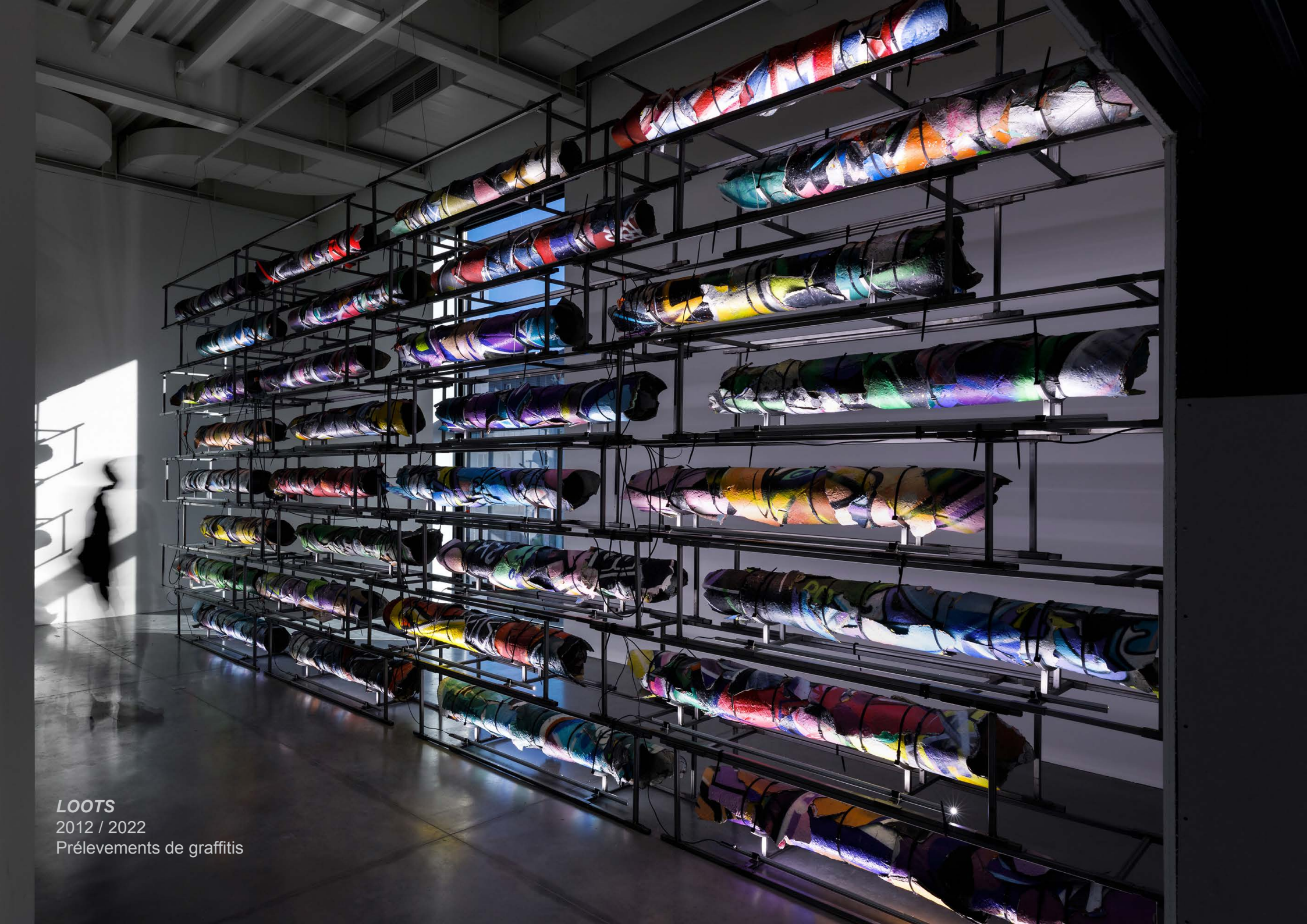






**Soulèvement #2**  
*Nuit Blanche 2018*  
Résin, concrete, steel  
160 X 155 X 125 cm





**LOOTS**

2012 / 2022

Prélevements de graffitis



## LOOTS

2012 / 2022

Stolen graffitis (with Thomas Teurlai)

Looters will be shot. New Orleans, August 2005. After the Hurricane Katrina, you could read this sentence tagged with aerosol across the walls of houses and other still standing shop buildings. Police, overwhelmed by the events, tacitly authorized the still present inhabitants to make their own law by ring on anyone attempting to steal.

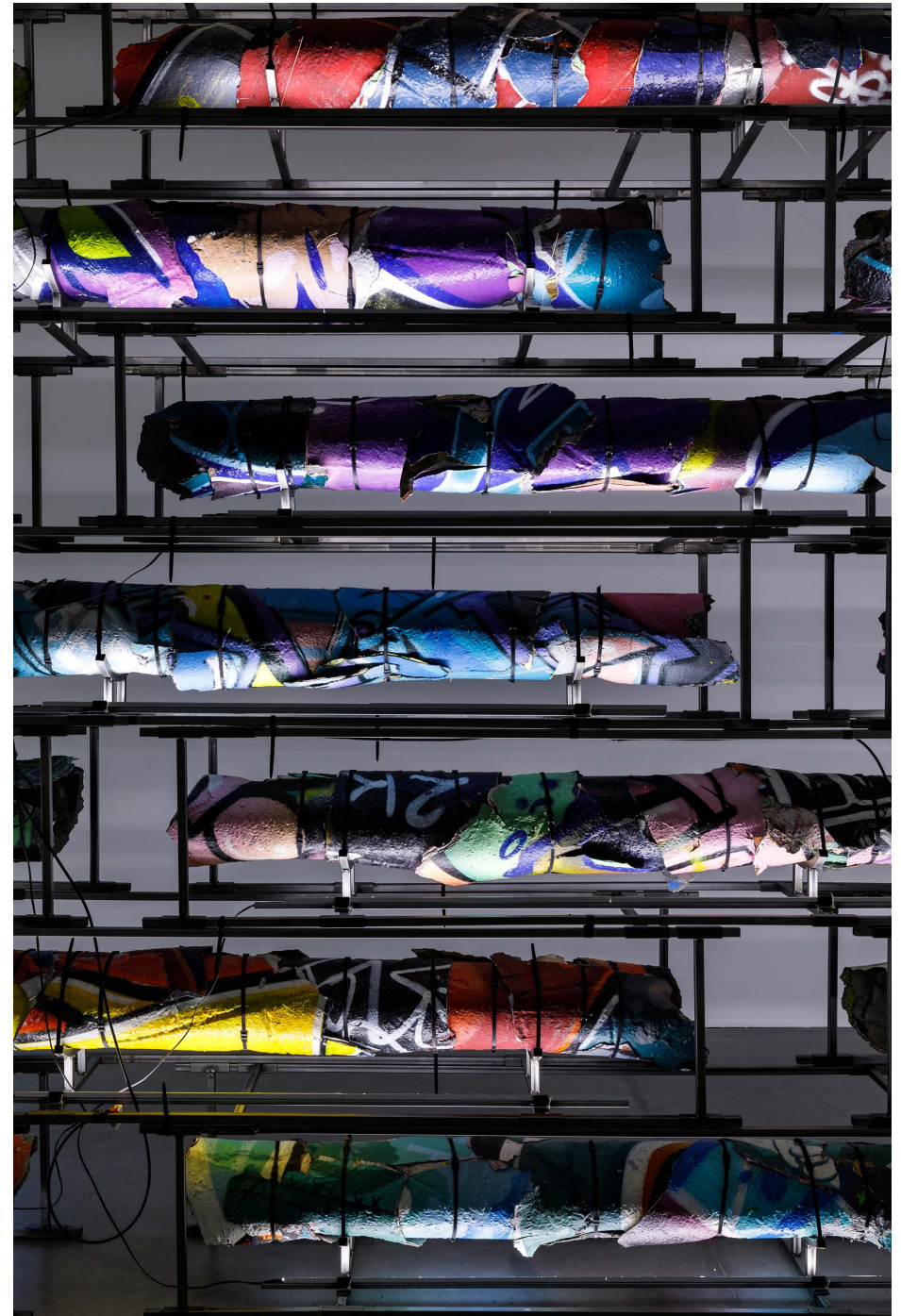
Far from being an act of desperation, our approach is no less plunder. An archaeological looting in a sense, since the objects of our thefts are exclusively piling up graffiti, accumulating year after year, whose oldest tags can be up to twenty years old. The history of this accumulation is visible on the removed colored slice of «skins», detached from their walls. Once gathered together, the booty had to be collected and stored. The gallery space becomes then an underground warehouse, a place to conceal stolen paintings.

But let's be clear, bringing graffiti within a gallery, moving them from the street to the «white-cube», our ambition isn't at all to assign, once again, nobility to this form of expression, which must remain independent. Recently, many people have tried this heresy. It is precisely because the graffiti and its background were never meant to be part of the institutional system of arts, the taggers, whose signatures could be identified by these institutions, are not supported or represented. Rather, they are victims, victims of organized looting.

Ironical gesture, we are becoming the vandals of the vandals. Especially, if one refers to the origins of the word historically associated to looting. The Vandals were a germanic oriental nation famous for having plundered massively Rome in the year 455. Thus, in the words of Michel Egana, while the «barbarian» was etymologically designated as the other monstrous and unthinkable of the world of culture.

Then, the announced sentence will fall, a premonitory headline, we will be slaughtered! Pending to establish the facts, don't count your chickens....

US







**Jeannes,**  
**2019**  
exhibition view *Et in Arcadia*,  
*Musée des Beaux Arts, Orléans*



## ***Et in Arcadia, 2019***

Musée des Beaux Arts, Orléans.

Extrait du texte de Matthieu Lelièvre

Cette Jeanne d'Arc à l'origine si parfaite et inestimable mais tant meurtrie par l'histoire incarne avec splendeur la fragilité extrême du patrimoine. Ce flamboyant symbole guerrier et religieux avait déjà été bien malmené par l'histoire puisqu'embossée et percée par les éclats d'obus qui ont détruit une partie de la ville d'Orléans en 1944, la statue porte encore aujourd'hui les stigmates de la guerre.

Il s'agit alors dans un geste provocateur à dessein de défier le regard et la réflexion. C'est ainsi qu'il décide de reproduire certains graphes et tags présents dans la ville même, sur l'armure, les mains et le visage de la sainte. Par un procédé de surmoulage, il retire à plusieurs exemplaires la sculpture outragée qu'il duplique avec ses nouvelles cicatrices qu'il complète encore et encore. Du monument outragé ressort cette essence si pure, cette dignité intemporelle, cette fragilité sublimée.

Devenue une vision dystopique du patrimoine, l'itération altérée toise et interroge le spectateur. Combien de passants avaient alors relevé les meurtrissures de la sculpture ? Combien d'entre eux la voyaient encore dans le paysage urbain ? Ugo Schiavi remet l'original au centre de l'attention, non seulement l'idée de la sculpture mais encore celle du monument, de l'histoire, du patrimoine et de ses symboles.

La vibrante installation présentée au Musée des Beaux-Arts explore encore plusieurs autres sujets fondamentaux que sont par exemple le principe d'originalité. Ajoutant à la solennité du sujet, la scénographie met en abîme cette installation devenue une vibrante vanité, en recréant l'atmosphère d'une crypte ou celle d'une chapelle. Les Jeanne d'Arc semblent être au chevet d'une idée, celle de la mémoire et du temps.

La disparition du patrimoine et l'actualité qui impose à l'esprit l'exemple de Notre-Dame de Paris, ce patrimoine que l'on pense impérissable puisqu'intemporel, est-il condamné, à l'instar des espèces naturelles, à ne devenir un sujet d'attention qu'au moment même où il aura disparu ? Ce sont précisément ces questions que posent les *Jeanne d'Arc*, mais aussi la plupart des œuvres d'Ugo Schiavi.







Exhibition view *Et in Arcadia*, 2019  
Musée des Beaux Arts, Orléans







Exhibition view *Et in Arcadia*, 2019  
Musée des Beaux Arts, Orléans









## ***Uprising 2017***

The Pill gallery, Istanbul

For his first exhibition in Turkey, the artist -known for his interventions in public spaces, will 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 will 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 will be articulated 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 will 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.



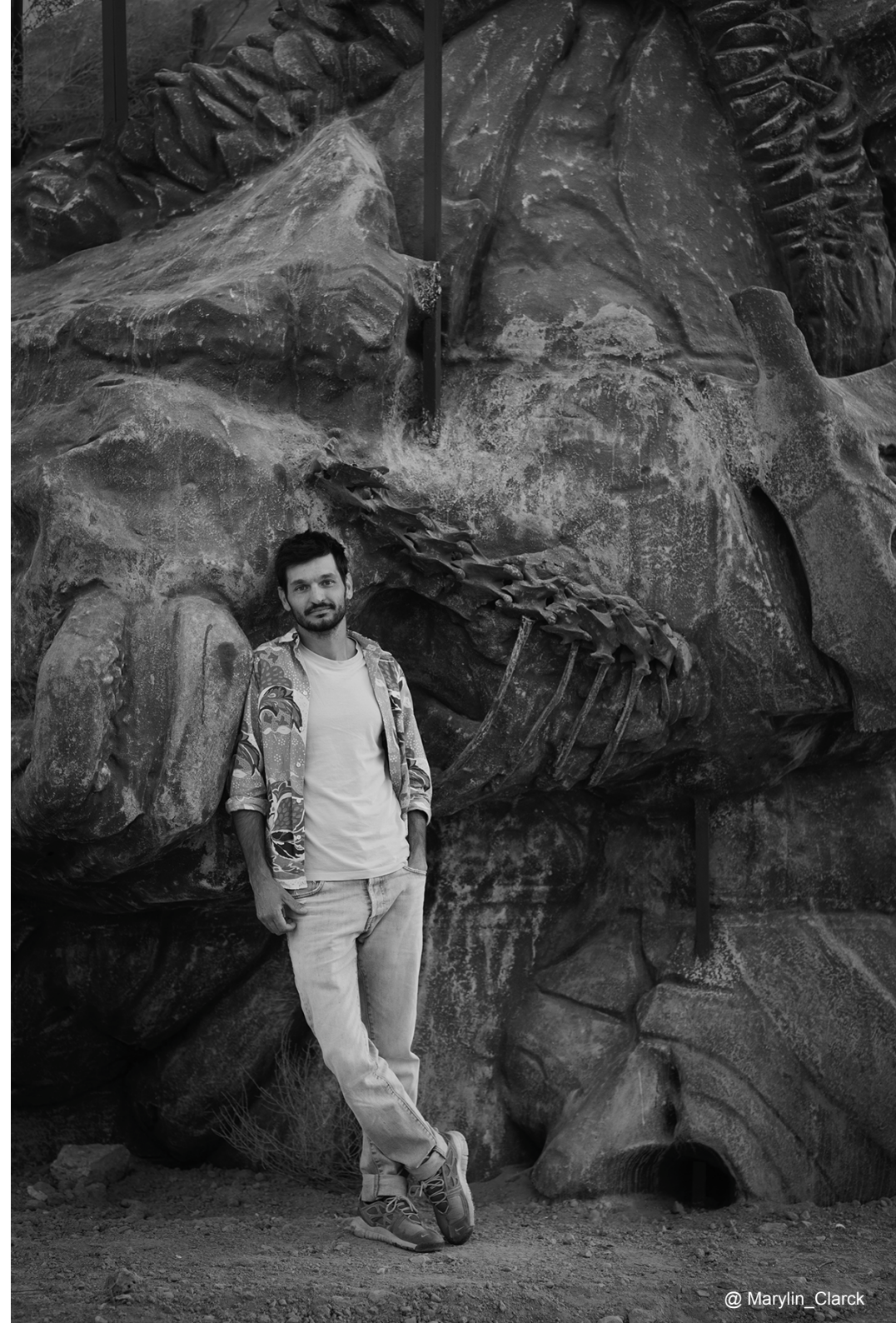


Ugo Schiavi

Born in Paris, France. Lives and works in Marseille, France.

Ugo Schiavi's work resides at the crossing of time, merging the contemporary and the antic in uncanny forms, finding an echo in common memory. Playing on the tensions between past and present, that could be affiliated to fictional archaeology, it gives way to engrossing narratives and balance between strength and fragility, fiction and history. Ugo Schiavi's approach is born from a universal heritage and grows on erasing the idea of temporality via the creation of mutating artworks, willing descendants to public and universally shared monuments. Through his practice appears an anticipated archaeology that defies the linearity of time.

Ugo Schiavi was featured in group exhibitions such as the Lyon Biennale (2022), Le Voyage à Nantes (2021) and Nuit Blanche (2018). He also had several personal exhibitions at Centre d'Art Bastille, Grenoble (2022); Musée Réattu, Arles (2021) and Musée des Beaux Arts d'Orléans, Orléans (2019).





## Education

2010 - 2011 DNSEP  
VILLA ARSON – Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art, Nice  
2006 – 2009 DNAP  
VILLA ARSON – Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art, Nice

## Solo exhibitions

2022 *Leviathan*, Centre d'Art Bastille, Grenoble  
*Le Sang de la Méduse*, Double V Gallery, Paris  
2021 *Gargarôn*, Musée Réattu, Arles  
*Le Naufrage de Neptune*, Place Royale, Nantes /Le Voyage à Nantes  
2019 *Et in Arcadia*, Musée des Beaux Arts, Orléans  
2018 *Soulevement*, Parvis de l'Hôtel de Ville Paris / Nuit Blanche Paris  
*Rudus*, *Ruderis*, Doube V gallery, Marseille  
2017 *Uprising*, The Pill gallery, Istanbul, Turkey  
2016 *Rebuscadores de oro*, El Parche, Bogota, Colombia  
2015 *Battlefield*, The Little Red Shcool House, Eden, North Carolina, USA  
2014 *Face Nord*, SNAP gallery, Lyon,  
2012 *Looters will be shot* (avec Thomas Teurlai), Galerie de la Marine, Nice

## Group exhibitions (sélection)

2024 Manifesta 15, Barcelona (upcoming)  
Villa Hegra prefiguration, Alula, KSA  
2023 Noor Riyadh Festival  
2023 Bienalsur, Riyadh, KSA  
2022 Biennale de Lyon  
2020 After Party, Fondation du Doute, Blois  
*Street Trash*, Friche Belle de Mai, Marseille  
2019 Shuss, La Vallée, Bruxelles  
2018 Nuit Blanche, Paris  
*Eidetik*, La Galerie Particulière, Paris  
2016 *EDEN*, Aperture gallery, New York  
*Une Inconnue d'Avance*, Villa Emerige, Paris  
2015 *Ad Hoc*, La station, Nice  
*Seine Saint-Denis Style*, G8, Cité Des Arts, Paris  
*Premières Lignes*, Hotel des Arts, Toulon  
*Gestalt*, MAMAC, Nice

2013 *Des corps compétents*, Villa Arson, Nice  
*Saison 17*, Lieu Commun, Toulouse  
*Festnova*, Tbilissi, Géorgie  
2012 *Sunshine and Precipitation*, Catalyst Arts, Belfast, Irlande  
*WATT*, La Station, Nice  
2011 *Young and Restless*, VidéoChroniques, Marseille  
*Demain c'est loin*, Villa Arson, Nice

## Résidences (sélection)

07 2018 Poudrerie de Saint Chamas/ Voyons Voir  
04-05 2016 Dos Mares/ El Mentidero Bogota Colombia  
09/10 2015 Usine Utopik, Tessy-sur-vire, Normandie, France  
02/05 2015 PLAC, Toulon, France  
2013/ 2014 Cité internationale des Arts, Paris.  
08/09 2013 Villa Garikula, Tbilissi, Géorgie  
2011/2013 La Station, Nice, France

## Awards & Grants

2011 Prix Bernar Venet / Ville de Nice  
2016 Shortlist prix Revelation Emerige  
2020 Shortlist Audi Talent Award  
2020 Shortlist prix SAM  
2023 Prix Fondation Schneider

## Public collections (sélection)

2024 Euphoria, Village des athlètes, Olympique Game, Paris, St Denis  
2017 *Sampling #2*, FCAC, Marseille  
2020 *Sampling-Plus II*, FRAC PACA  
2022 *Main Stram Memory*, Musée Reattu, Ville d'Arles  
2022 *Loots*, FRAC Bretagne

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