

RALPH GIBSON

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEGENDARY SERIES THE SOMNAMBULIST

- EXHIBITION FROM SEPTEMBER 10TH TO OCTOBER 31ST 21ST, 2020
- OPENING: THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2020, FROM 12 TO 9PM

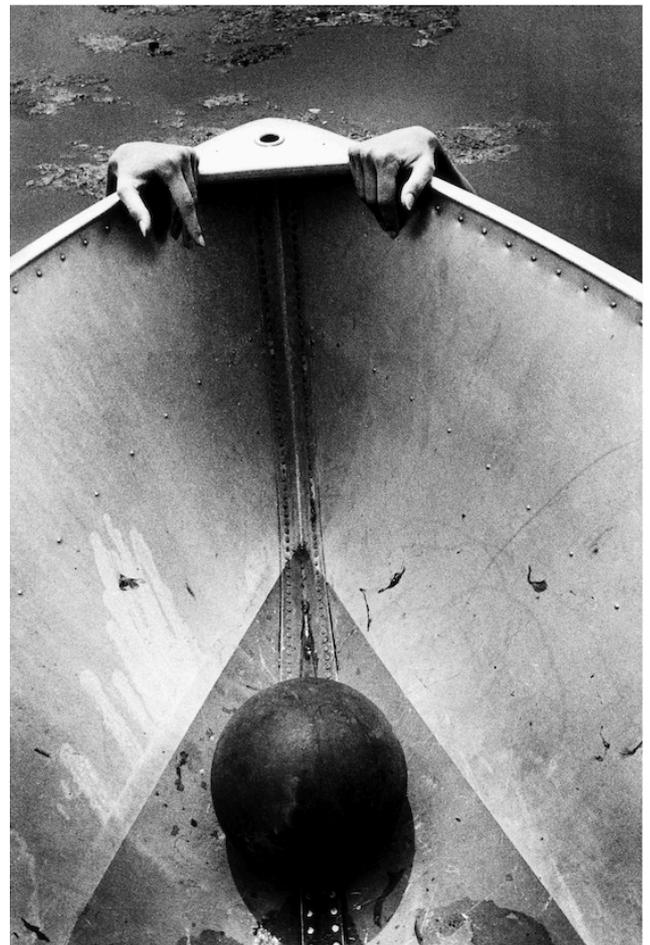
To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first of the three emblematic series that made Ralph Gibson's worldwide fame in the early 1970s, Thierry Bigaignon presents a unique exhibition featuring all the images from the series *The Somnambulist* and unveils some the latest works of the American master.

THE SOMNAMBULIST: GENESIS OF A LEGENDARY SERIES

Published in 1970 as the first of three series – which, together with *Déjà-Vu* (1973) and *Days at Sea* (1974) would later be known as *The Trilogy* – *The Somnambulist* was one of the most accomplished forms of artist's book at a time when this medium was still far from being an accepted art form, and when the concept of a photographic book was still largely synonymous with photojournalism. After being rejected by traditional publishing houses, Ralph Gibson had no choice but to become a publisher himself to bring his project to fruition, and created Lustrum Press.

Influenced by French filmmakers and novelists from the New Wave art movement (Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Michel Butor, Alain Robbe-Grillet), Ralph Gibson proposes a radically new layout, and illustrates the search for an autonomous and innovative photographic language, without text.

Ralph Gibson builds a coherent corpus of works in which all images have their own visual autonomy and conceives the book as a work of art in its own right. A worldwide success!



A UNIQUE SIGNATURE

Fifty years after their publication, the images of *The Somnambulist* still take us through a journey blending dream and reality. Through them, we explore a mental territory of the in-between, where formal contrasts and visual metaphors underline the interest Ralph Gibson has always shown in images of a surrealist nature. Doors, windows, windscreens and other mirrors open onto a subtle and sometimes ambiguous world. Tight frames, pure lines, and high-contrast compositions present in turn architectural details or fragments of a body. The dialogue of sumptuous black and white contrasts, combining audacity and elegance, rapidly became Ralph Gibson's visual signature.

AN UNPRECEDENTED CONFRONTATION OF TWO ERAS!

The publication of *The Somnambulist* marks a turning point in the history of photography, and the images that make up the series seem ageless, timeless. Yet Ralph Gibson has never stopped reinventing himself, keeping a fresh and curious eye, even grasping technological developments. At the beginning of the 2000s, Ralph Gibson seized the opportunities and possibilities offered by digital technology to rethink his photography once again – while, of course, retaining his singular signature.

What could be better than an unprecedented confrontation between two eras? *"For this anniversary, we not only wanted to show the entire series, that is to say the 48 black and white silver gelatin prints in the same format as that of the original book, but to confront the artist's iconic photographs with his recent production of large format digital colour prints"*, Thierry Bigaignon confides. *"This confrontation between historical images and unpublished works shows just how much Ralph Gibson has always been and still is at the avant-garde!"*

A special anniversary edition of the photographs – 3 copies only – in the original 20x25 cm format of the book marks the occasion. For each image, two copies will be available individually. A collector's set, *The Somnambulist 1970-2020*, will include the third copy of the 48 images. A vintage book signed by the artist (first edition of 1970), as well as an anniversary edition of this book will also be available.

ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF THE SOMNAMBULIST

A special 50th anniversary edition of the book *The Somnambulist*, published by the(M) éditions, will complete the special exhibition. Signed by the artist, this book will be available in 50 copies only, each copy having its own unique cover.



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