

PABLO ATCHUGARRY
DANCING WITH THE MARBLE

OPERA GALLERY

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4 - 20 OCTOBER 2019

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Preface

Opera Gallery New York is proud to present, for the first time in our Madison Avenue space, renowned Uruguayan sculptor Pablo Atchugarry.

Atchugarry made his mark as a representative of his country at the 50th Venice Biennale and has now reached international fame and recognition for his spectacular production of monumental sculptures, which can be admired in many public spaces both in Europe and America.

His passion and aptitude for working with weight, volume, matter, tone and color began early on, following numerous trips to Europe in the late 1970s, particularly in Spain, France and Italy. Atchugarry's decisive discovery of marble in 1979 and the visit to Cava del Polvaccio – known as Michelangelo's marble quarry – fundamentally impacted the formation of his artistic career. *La Pietà*, the artist's first monumental project carved in Carrara marble, was made between 1982 and 1983 and drew direct inspiration from the quality of light found in Italy. Until then, the artist experimented with using different materials to create his abstract sculptures including wood, steel, bronze, iron and cement. However, marble, with its singular sinuosity and elegance, particularly mesmerized him. Inspired by the lessons and legacy of Michelangelo, Atchugarry carved the stone block, following its veins, to free the form trapped inside the material, revealing its most intimate nature, its immaterial soul, raising it towards the infinite.

Atchugarry's artistic language, inspired by archetypes of Classical, Renaissance and Baroque statuary, has developed and expanded further into contemporary abstract forms. A harmonious aesthetic which opens out into delicate ascending compositions, utilizing the soft and translucent characteristics of marble and the most brilliant and decisive, graphic quality of painted bronze.

It is with great enthusiasm that Opera Gallery New York presents this carefully curated selection of works by Pablo Atchugarry and a privilege to showcase this internationally significant artist standing at the cornerstone of the global art scene.

Gilles Dyan
Chairman and Founder
Opera Gallery Group

Gregory Lahmi
Director
Opera Gallery New York

Conquering the Light

Luciano Caprile

The desire to take the idea by which the artist was originally seduced and translate it into an appropriate form continues to haunt and motivate him with each challenge he takes on. Pablo Atchugarry has always pursued and achieved what to many of his colleagues is hardly less than utopian, since his ideas so often take root and develop in the very act of standing before a block of marble as it is probed and coaxed into revealing its secret. Atchugarry has no need for preliminary sketches; a few lines drawn on the stone are enough to set him on the path that he will follow, prompted by clues from the stone itself and guided by the resulting revelations. The material itself, in fact, seems to enter into a sort of exquisite exchange with the artist to show him the path he must follow in order to win its soul. And also to emphasize the poetic becoming, captured in the endless instant of its ostension. Thus the material slides upwards in scrolls

and embraces of lines, avoiding all limitation of movement and space. The effect of lightness created by the white cloud of dust that usually accompanies his work as he follows his intuition is a tribute to the eternal concept of harmony. In this way the artist places himself outside time, pursuing an inner process of classicism that leads him to create a movement of forms evoking the ancient Greek-Roman draperies that were revived in the 17th century. What this actually is, however, is an impromptu suggestion overtaken by the abstract development of his work, concluding in a perpetual appeal to the imperceptible. For this reason these compositions give the impression of pursuing a constant enigma. They challenge the observer not only to contemplate the palpable eurythmy on display but also to question what lies beneath the culmination of every work and every closer observation. This is why the

impression Atchugarry gives is one of incessant search for the infinite on the part of the unfinished, on the impermanence which is part of our human condition and which he lifted up to heaven like a prayer, a constant and faintly magical longing that will only dissolve in the presence of the mystery.

The tribute of Genoa's Palazzo Ducale to the Uruguayan artist reveals this longing, this desire for the sublime elevation of both substance and our soul. It is not coincidental, in fact, that standing on the ground floor of the large entrance hall is an old olive tree, long dried out, which the artist recovered and used to interpret our existential angst through a tangle of branches and roots that are part of its nature. Atchugarry retraces its dramatic history by exploring and following its lines, carving his own idea from the very essence of the tree, entering into a symbiosis with nature's design and completing its gesture in plastic harmony with the same. In this case, in fact, the gestures of the artist are so finely tuned that it is difficult to distinguish between his own creative process

and that of nature itself. The result is a design with a highly plastic quality, which directs modulated tangles of thoughts upwards, volutes of aerial elicitation, mute and persuasive tactile invocations diffusing a suspended and surprising release of energy. The artist's hand thus becomes the ultimate caress that accompanies the impassioned quest characterizing all of Atchugarry's compositional impulses: light, the focal point and cornerstone of this exhibition, to aspire to and reach gradually, step by step. Atchugarry himself seems to adopt a gesture that is never conclusive but rather emblematically liberating. In keeping with Marcel Duchamp's provocative statement "the creative act is not performed by the artist alone", in fact, Atchugarry prefers to leave plenty of room to the sensitivity of the observer, who is thus given both the pleasure and the duty of an ideal and personal completeness.

This wood sculpture, entitled *La danza de la vida* (The Dance of Life), is a prologue to the rhythmic, compelling story that unfolds on the upper floor, beyond the double

staircase, in the large, impressive Salone del Maggior Consiglio. The hall, redesigned in the 18th century in neoclassical style, has an extraordinarily lofty atmosphere with a crescendo of emotions aroused by the marble and painted bronze sculptures installed by Atchugarry, which create an ascending rhythm of forms. The resulting effect is an evocative exchange between the articulate, diverse presence of statues, chandeliers and decorations. At this point, Pablo's 'Classicism' plays a decisive role in merging his idea with that of the setting in which it is expressed. This was also the case at the Mercati di Traiano in Rome in 2015 where, reflected in the artist's work, the time-worn reality of the museum's ancient, historical vestiges was revived and unearthed again to be admired by the public. Today, on the other hand, Atchugarry focuses his artistic contribution on enhancing and harmonising a whole room, ideally designed without visual boundaries. In the very heart of Genoa's Palazzo Ducale the artist's quest to conquer the light becomes therefore a shared

aspiration that may be resolved in a compositional structure that finds its true expression in the supple marble crescendo set in the sacredness of a hypothetical, majestic altar. In this way, Atchugarry's works restore a dimension that is not only classical or baroque or informal, but simply and subtly reserved for those special places that are able to accommodate them. And where the light takes on the valued role of guide and haven for the innermost, unfathomable thought of the artist.

The Light of South, 2013
Carrara marble
Unique piece
177.1 x 60.6 x 32.3 in - 450 x 154 x 82 cm
Private collection, Brazil





Dancing with the Marble, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
52 x 13 x 10.2 in | 132 x 33 x 26 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio

Untitled, 2019

Statuary Carrara marble

Unique piece

19.3 x 10.6 x 5.3 in | 49 x 27 x 13.5 cm

Provenance

Artist's studio



Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
17.3 x 10.6 x 6.7 in | 44 x 27 x 17 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio





Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
18.9 x 9.6 x 6.3 in | 48 x 24.5 x 16 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio



Esprit de Paris, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
87 x 16.9 x 10.6 in | 221 x 43 x 27 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio



Untitled, 2009

Bronze and black acrylic paint

Artist proof (edition of 3)

27.6 x 11.4 x 8.3 in | 70 x 29 x 21 cm

Provenance

Artist's studio





Untitled, 2006
Black Belgium marble
Unique piece
40.6 x 11 x 8.7 in | 103 x 28 x 21 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio

Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
39.7 x 9.4 x 7.5 in | 101 x 24 x 19 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio







Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
21.7 x 8.3 x 3.9 in | 55 x 21 x 10 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio

Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
42.5 x 14.2 x 8.7 in | 108 x 36 x 22 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio



Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
32.3 x 7.9 x 7.9 in | 82 x 20 x 20 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio





Untitled, 2018

Bronze and automotive enamel

Edition of 8

28.7 x 8.7 x 27.6 in | 73 x 22 x 70 cm

Provenance

Artist's studio



Untitled, 2019
Bronze and automotive enamel
Edition of 8
18.9 x 10.2 x 9.1 in | 48 x 26 x 23 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio

Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
60.6 x 12.2 x 8.7 in | 154 x 31 x 22 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio





Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
31.3 x 8.3 x 5.7 in | 79.5 x 21 x 14.5 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio

Untitled, 2019
Statuary Carrara marble
Unique piece
34.3 x 9.4 x 4.9 in | 87 x 24 x 12.5 cm

Provenance
Artist's studio







BIOGRAPHY

Pablo Atchugarry was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, on August 23rd, 1954. His parents, Maria Cristina Bonomi and Pedro Atchugarry Rizzo, avid art enthusiasts, identified Pablo's artistic talent and interest when he was still a child and encouraged him to pursue a career as an artist. In his earliest works, he expressed himself through painting, gradually discovering other materials such as concrete, iron and wood.

In 1971, his first concrete sculpture was entitled *Cavallo* (horse); this was followed by other concrete and iron sculptures including *Escritura simbólica* (1974), *Estructura cósmica* (1974), *Metamorfosis prehistórica* (1974), *Maternidad* (1974) and *Metamorfosis femenina* (1974). In the late 1970s, after taking part in several exhibitions in Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Porto Alegre and Brasilia, Atchugarry made a number of trips to Europe to study and perfect his art. He travelled to Spain, France and Italy, where he mounted his first solo exhibition in Lecco in 1978. His paintings were subsequently exhibited in a variety of European cities, including Milan, Copenhagen, Paris, Bergamo and Stockholm.

After experimenting with a range of different materials, Atchugarry discovered in 1979 the extraordinary expressive possibilities and elegance of marble as he carved his first sculpture in Carrara, entitled *La*

Lumière. His first monumental sculpture carved from Carrara marble was completed in 1982. That same year, the artist settled permanently in Lecco, Italy, working on the sculpture *La Pietà*, carved from a single block of marble weighing 12 tonnes.

In 1987, he held his first solo sculpture exhibition in Bramantino's Crypt in Milan, curated by Raffaele de Grada. During the decade of the 1990s, the artist concentrates on the participation of personal and collective shows as well as in numerous art fairs throughout Europe. Late 1996 saw the installation of the sculpture *Semilla de la Esperanza* in the monumental sculpture park in the grounds of Uruguay's government building. In 1999, the artist founded in Lecco the Museo Pablo Atchugarry in Lecco to house works spanning his entire career alongside bibliographical documentation and archive.

Twenty years after his arrival in Italy, the Province of Milan organised a retrospective of Atchugarry's work entitled 'Le infinite evoluzioni del marmo' (The Infinite Evolutions Of Marble) at the Palazzo Isimbardi in Milan. In the same year, he sculpted the monumental work entitled *Obelisk of the Third Millennium*, a six-metre-high Carrara marble sculpture for the Italian town of Manzano (Udine). He also won the competition to create Lecco's Monument

to the Culture and Civilisation of Work, a sculpture in Carrara marble, measuring six metres high and weighing in at 30 tonnes. In 2002, Pablo Atchugarry was awarded the Michelangelo prize in Carrara in recognition of his career as an artist. He was also committed to a range of projects that year, including his *Ideals* sculpture, which stands on Avenue Princesse Grace in Monaco and was created to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the coronation of Prince Rainier. In 2003, he participated in the 50th Venice Biennale - International Art Exhibition with the sculpture *Soñando la paz*, a work consisting of eight pieces, five in Carrara marble and three in Bardiglio della Garfagnana marble. Also in 2003, he sculpted *Ascension* for the Fundación Fran Daurel in Barcelona. In 2004, he carved *Vital Energy*, a Portuguese pink marble sculpture for the Beilinson Center in Petah Tikva, Israel. The following year the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires staged a solo show exhibition of his work. From June to November 2006, the Groeningemuseum in Bruges, Belgium held a major retrospective exhibition reflecting the artist's career, including works from international private collections; in the same year, the Museu Coleção Berardo in Portugal acquired *Vital Path*.

In early 2007, Atchugarry opened the Fundación Pablo Atchugarry in Manantiales, Uruguay, with the aim of providing a stimulus for the arts and creating a place for artists of all disciplines to meet in an ideal location that combines nature and art. In the same

year, he completed an eight-metre-high monumental work *In the Light*, carved from a single 48 tonnes block of marble, for the Loris Fontana collection in Italy.

In 2007 - 2008, an itinerant retrospective exhibition dedicated to his work entitled 'The Plastic Space of Light' was held in Brazil, accompanied by a critical text written by Luca Massimo Barbero. Initially staged at the Banco do Brasil Cultural Centre in Brasilia, the exhibition travelled to the MuBe (Museu Brasileiro da Escultura) in São Paulo and the Museu Oscar Niemeyer in Curitiba. In 2008, the Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales in Montevideo dedicated a retrospective exhibition to Atchugarry's work of the preceding 15 years.

In 2009 Atchugarry created the work *Luz y Energía de Punta del Este*, carved from a single five-metre-high block of Carrara marble, for the hundredth anniversary of the city of Punta del Este.

In 2011, after seven years of work, he completed *Cosmic Embrace*, carved from a 56 tonnes, 8.5 metre high block of marble, and the same year the Hollis Taggart Galleries in New York organised a solo show, curated by Jonathan Goodman. In March 2012, the Times Square Alliance association selected *Dreaming New York* to be exhibited in Times Square during The Armory Show in New York City.

In April 2014, the 8.35 metre high Carrara marble sculpture *Movement in the World* was installed in

the town of Kallo-Beveren, Belgium. In late 2013, Mondadori Electa published the *Catalogo Generale della scultura*, two volumes edited by Professor Carlo Pirovano cataloguing every sculpture produced by the artist between 1971 and 2013.

The Museu Brasileiro da Escultura in São Paulo, Brazil dedicated a major retrospective to the artist's work, entitled 'A Viagem pela matéria' (A Journey Through the Material), from July to September 2014. The exhibition 'Eternal City, Eternal Marbles', featuring 40 sculptures, was exhibited at the Museo dei Fori Imperiali - Mercati di Traiano in Rome from 22nd May 2015 to 7th February 2016. Pablo Atchugarry's works have also been exhibited at the following museums and public institutions: Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo; Museo del Parco, Portofino; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Museo Lercaro, Bologna; Collezione della Provincia di Milano a Palazzo Isimbardi; Collezione della Provincia di Lecco; Fundació Fran Daurel, Barcelona; Groeningemuseum, Bruges; Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk; Museu Brasileiro da Escultura, São Paulo.

Atchugarry currently lives and works between Lecco, Italy, and Manantiales, Uruguay, where he oversees the development of the Fundación Pablo Atchugarry and the international monumental sculpture park, as well as teaching and promoting art.



In 2015–2016 the Museo dei Fori Imperiali – Mercati di Traiano in Rome hosted the exhibition *Pablo Atchugarry, Città Eterna, eterni marmi* (Pablo Atchugarry, Eternal City, Eternal Marble), an important retrospective which showed the artist's production through a review of 40 artworks. The Museu Brasileiro da Escultura in São Paulo organized in 2017 the largest retrospective of his works entitled *A journey through the Matter*.

In February 2019, Atchugarry was honoured by the President of the Italian Republic with the title Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy. In May of that same year, the Contini Art Gallery of Venice inaugurates a solo exhibition *The Movement of Light*.

In the following month of June, the Municipality of Pietrasanta, Italy, organized the exhibition *The Evolution of a Dream*, which presents a selection of Atchugarry's monumental sculptures in marble and bronze placed along Piazza Duomo and Chiesa di Sant'Agostino.

The latest public exhibition of 2019, *Alla conquista della luce*, took place at Palazzo Ducale in Genoa, Italy. Atchugarry's works have been exhibited in various cities worldwide, including London, New York, Miami, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Paris, São Paulo, Curitiba, Brasilia, Panama, New Orleans, San Francisco, Madrid, Cologne, Frankfurt, Maastricht, Amsterdam, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, Zurich, Basel, Abu Dhabi, Milan, Venice, Turin, Stockholm, Seoul,

Singapore, Hong Kong, and many others. His works are present in various museums worldwide, such as the Perez Art Museum in Miami, Phillip & Patricia Frost Art Museum in Miami, the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, the Groeninge Museum in Bruges, Museo Lercaro in Bologna, and the Museo del Parco in Portofino.

Atchugarry lives and works between Lecco, Italy, and Manantiales, Uruguay, where he is committed to the development of the Pablo Atchugarry Foundation and its international sculpture park, as well as departments of art education and diffusion; thousands of students visit each year. Today it represents the most dynamic and interesting fruition of art and international sculpture bearing in mind the internationality of its activities, which generate a large quantity of inter-exchanges with other artists and a readiness to build a bridge of communication between European and American art.



SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2019

Palazzo Ducale, Genoa
Chiesa di Sant'Agostino e Piazza Duomo, Pietrasanta
Cortini Art Gallery, Venice

2018

Opera Gallery, Singapore
Boon Gallery, Knokke-Zoute
Opera Gallery, Paris

2017

Fundación Pablo Atchugarry, Manantiales
Palazzo del Parco, Diano Marina

2016

Boon Gallery, Knokke - Heist
Hollis Taggart Galleries, New York
Albemarle Gallery, London

2015

Mercati di Traiano - Museo dei Fori Imperiali, Rome
Expo Internazionale 2015 - Uruguayan Pavilion, Milan
Paulo Darzé Galeria de Arte, Salvador de Bahia
Costantini Art Gallery, Milano
Art Stage Singapore, Singapore

2014

Palazzo del Parco, Diano Marina
Bologna Fiere SH Contemporary, Shanghai
Museu Brasileiro da Escultura, Sao Paulo
Arte Fiera, Bologna
Albemarle Gallery, London

2013

Museo MIIT, Turin
Fundación Pablo Atchugarry, Manantiales
Hollis Taggart Galleries, New York

2012

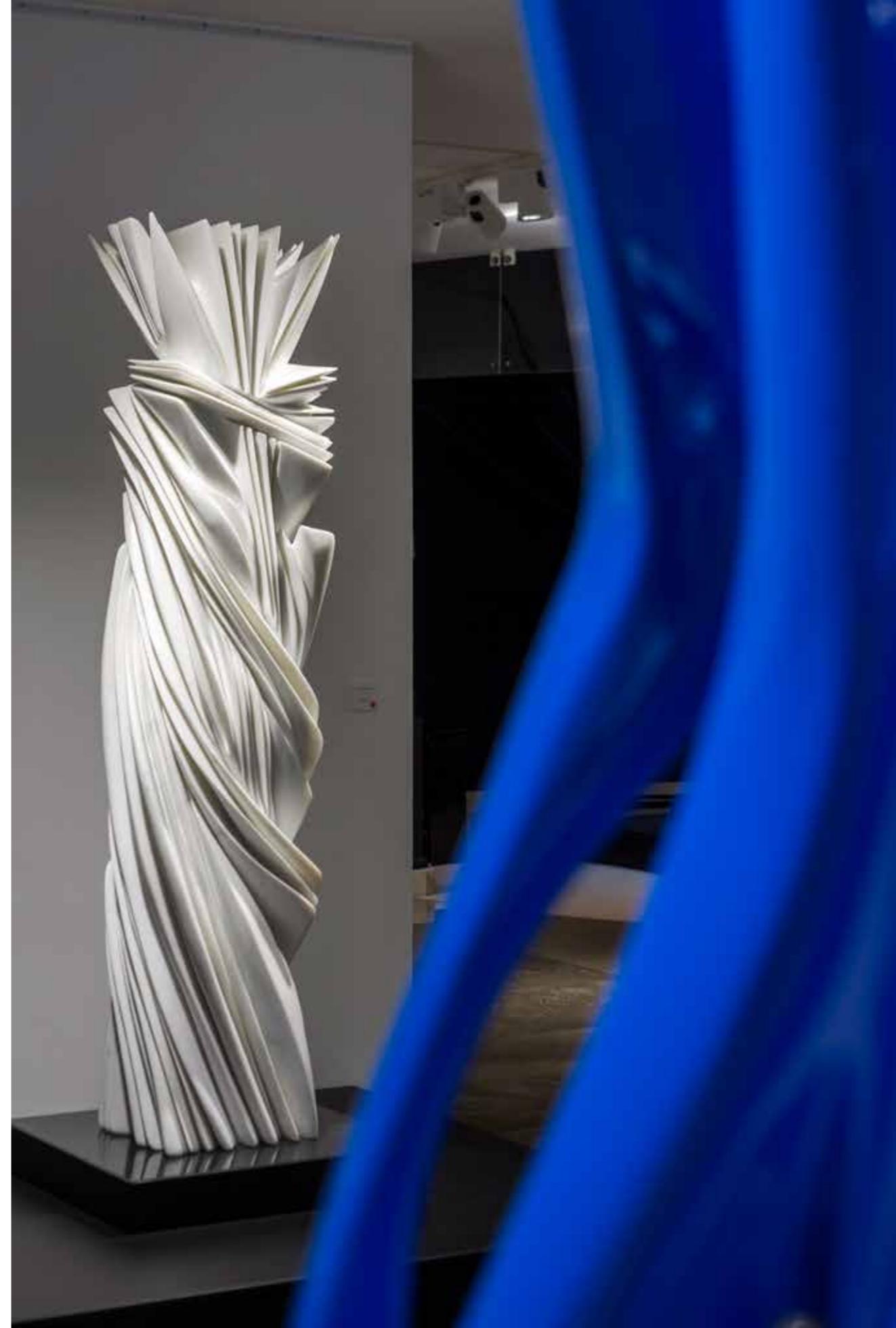
Albemarle Gallery, London

2011

Hollis Taggart Galleries, New York

2010

Albemarle Gallery, London
Bienvenu Gallery, New Orleans





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