

**Press release**

**Tarik Kiswanson | *The Reading Room***

25.11.2023 - 16.02.2024

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce *The Reading Room*, the gallery's fourth solo exhibition with Tarik Kiswanson.

For over a decade, Tarik Kiswanson has explored notions of rootlessness, regeneration, metamorphosis, and memory through his complex and interdisciplinary practice. A legacy of displacement and transformation permeates his works and is indispensable to both their form and the modes of sensing they produce. The artist's Palestinian family left Jerusalem for North Africa and then Jordan before subsequently settling in Sweden, where he was born in 1986. Over the years, Kiswanson's artistic inquiry has retained an attachment to the intimate and personal while simultaneously speaking to universal concerns relative to the human condition and to social and collective histories of rupture, loss, and regeneration. "Existing between different conditions and contexts has allowed me to zoom out, observe how things move, and then zoom back in again to examine what links us on a deeper human level," Kiswanson explains. "It has rendered me at once detached from many things and simultaneously profoundly interested in what constitutes life, what it essentially means to exist. What is a body? What is heritage? And what is time? Those ontological questions have always been at the core of my art." Tarik Kiswanson's fourth solo exhibition with carlier | gebauer revolves around these fundamental inquiries.

In *The Reading Room* (2020), a six-year-old sounds out passages from a selection of books by cultural theorists and philosophers. He transforms reflections on diaspora, displacement, and postcolonial identities into a soundscape of murmurs, whispers, and hums. The film was shot at Columbia University's "The Edward W. Said Reading Room" in New York, which houses the personal library of the late Palestinian American intellectual and theorist, who taught comparative literature at the university for over three decades. Kiswanson's deliberately blurry footage and the faltering sounds of a young boy learning to read seem to slow time, creating an interstitial zone between sound and sense, knowledge, and experience.

In *Recall* (2020-2023), Kiswanson encases significant personal elements in blocks of resin, as if suspending them in time and space. The things they each contain are at once general and hyper-specific: a candle, a pen, a drop of blood, and, in the case of *Anamnesis* (2023), a floorplan. In this sculpture, whose title refers to the act of recalling moments from a previous existence, a small metal floorplan seems to hover weightlessly. Kiswanson created the object in conversation with his three sisters, who worked together to mentally reconstruct their childhood apartment in a social housing complex in southwest Sweden, which had been torn down in the early 2000s. Visible only as a hazy apparition beneath layers of resin, *Anamnesis* speaks to fleeting, deeply concealed aspects of memory.

A group of delicate copper sculptures installed in the gallery's main exhibition space appear as if on the brink of dematerialization. Their seams are welded together with melted silver: remains of objects that followed his grandparents into exile. Part of the artist's ongoing group of works entitled *What We Remembered* (2012-), the new sculptures resurrect a catalogue of forms originally derived from family furniture that the artist depicted as skeletal voids. Over the years, Kiswanson has transmuted these forms into chimerical objects unbound to any biography, history, or geography. In welding these forms together with precious traces of his past, these fragments of personal history provide structural integrity for dynamic, universal forms.

**Tarik Kiswanson** (b. 1986, Sweden) lives and works in Paris.

He is the 2023 winner of the Marcel Duchamp Prize, France's most prestigious art award.

His recent exhibitions include Centre Pompidou (2023), Bonniers Konsthall (2023), Museo Tamayo (2023), Salzburger Kunstverein (2023), Kunsthalle Praha (2023), Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (2023), Museum Morsbroich (2023), M HKA-Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (2022), Hallands Konstmuseum (2022), Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art (2022), Carré d'Art-Musée d'art contemporain (2021), The Ural Biennial (2019), Performa 19 Biennial (2019), 12th Gwangju Biennial (2018), and MUDAM-Museum of Contemporary Art Luxembourg (2017).