

PRESS RELEASE

CUSTOT
GALLERY
DUBAI

Material Journey

10 November 2022 – 4 February 2023



Joan Mitchell, *Untitled* (circa 1971-1973), Oil on canvas, triptych, 28.5 x 52.5 cm (overall with frame).

Waddington Custot Dubai is delighted to present its new exhibition *Material Journey*, featuring works by Etel Adnan, Kenia Almaraz Murillo, Enrico Castellani, Michael Glancy, Jean-François Fourtou, Yves Klein, Joan Mitchell, Takis, Tomàs Saraceno, Pablo Reinoso, Joana Vasconcelos and Sophia Vari.

Material Journey invites the visitor to experience a synesthetic adventure, activating all their senses through the artworks. Auditory, visual, olfactory, and tactile works create an oneiric voyage, led by the artists and the use of their materials of predilection. Artists are by essence adventurers, and while a journey is immaterial, artifacts, and the sensory responses they activate, allow for a dream to emerge.

While our five physical senses are known and something we have become accustomed to, *Material Journey* seeks to awaken an intangible sixth sense: the sense of the imaginary. Imagination is heavily tied to our senses, Vasconcelos' perfumes may remind you of a person, Almaraz Murillo's lights may transport you to a living dream, Joan Mitchell's textures may invite you to gaze at a landscape, Fourtou's natural fiber may recall a garment. Through this exhibition, viewers will experience a personal odyssey, oscillating between distant memories and the creation of new ones.

With this emphasis on the sense of journey through matter, Waddington Custot Dubai has found importance in showing works that use materials from all over the globe. The Middle East has a rich history of trading outposts and routes, with spices and precious materials from distant lands finding their way here before continuing their voyage.

To honor this heritage, we present perfume from Grasse in Vasconcelos' "*Lança Perfume*" (2022), textile from Bolivia in Almaraz Murillo's works, marble from Carrara in Vari's "*Le Jour Eblouit*" (2022), glass from Murano in Glancy's sculptures, Portuguese ceramic in Etel Adnan's "*Staring at the sun*" (2021), and more. Resulting in a convergence of cultures, entirely through matter.



Joana Vasconcelos, *Lança Perfume* (2022), Ceramic and handmade cotton crochet, 32 x 22 x 22 cm, unique piece.

Kenia Almaraz Murillo's specially created works take central stage in the exhibition, showcasing the dual culture of the artist, between Bolivian origins and her western life. Using multi-centenary traditional Bolivian threading techniques, the artist creates textile patterns accompanied by contrasting elements such as neon lights, vehicle headlights and minerals. Almaraz Murillo's work is placed in direct dialogue with the "*Lança Perfume*" series by Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos. Traditional Portuguese baroque crochet techniques are applied to ceramic elements that are soaked in perfume, creating an olfactive and visual experience that is personal to both Vasconcelos and Anne Flipo, the master perfumer behind the specially formulated scents based on the 7 chakras that are applied to these works. Scent, colour and texture come together to create a poetic sense of voyage.



Kenia Almaraz Murillo, *Le Serpent à Diamants* (2022), Alpaga weave, wool, cotton, acrylic, LED neon, gold silver and silk threads, minerals and precious stones, steel structure, 130 x 140 cm.

An intimate triptych by Joan Mitchell is also on view, inventive gestural expression and colours merge together to recreate the memory of landscapes the artist has carried with her. This process of emotional expression based on an outside reference is central to the work of Mitchell, allowing the visitor to be put in a state of gaze at this recollection of nature. This sense of expression is shared with Sophia Vari's abstract sculptures which bring together geometric lines and sensuous curves in unique configurations that speak of sensuality, dynamism and beauty.

A set of three tables by Yves Klein is also on view, using plexiglass to reveal the texture of the trademarked International Klein Blue, of pink pigments, or gold leaf. These tables, with the suspended matter they hold, showcase the effect of energy on matter, the same energy that can be seen in Pablo Reinoso's monochrome breathing sculptures "*Respirantes*" (2022), specially commissioned for this exhibition. With this series Pablo Reinoso's work seems to go from the most intimate (human breathing) to the most immaterial and abstract, shifting in and out of existence.

The works of Takis, Tomàs Saraceno and Enrico Castellani play with the concept of matter as energy, with Takis' use of the movement of light to create an invisible and immaterial play as a foil to the solid mass. Castellani's work deals with the restrictions associated with the plane of a canvas, by driving nails through the back of the work and painting over them in a monochrome tone, he creates a sense of negative space, where the lack of matter in one place, elevates the visual language of the matter in the other. Tomàs Saraceno's installations are covered with iridescent panels, which kaleidoscopically cast radiant hues, shadows, and reflections as visitors move in the space, creating a constantly evolving perception of the object in its environment.



Takis, *Double Signal* (circa 1950), enamelled aluminium, chromed metal, plastic, glass and electric system, height: 210 cm.

Furthermore, all these materials are of notable importance to the body of work of the artists, with them, we uncover deeper aspects of the personality of each of them. Through their memory and being, these works create an indirect connection between artist and viewer, an invisible thread spanning thousands of kilometers links them for eternity.

The gallery serves as a forum for these works of art to express themselves and respond to each other, creating an atmosphere which primes the viewer to share the *Material Journey* with them. As French poet Charles Baudelaire would put it in "*Les Fleurs Du Mal*" (1857): "*The fragrances, the colours and the sounds answer each other.*"