

TEMPLON



Press release

10 July 2023

CLAUDE VIALLAT
A Couple of Sidesteps
7 September – 4 November 2023



untitled n°336, 2022

Acrylic on fabric assemblage, 156 x 116 cm

87-year-old French artist Claude Viallat is taking “a couple of sidesteps” to reveal a series of new paintings created between 2022 and 2023 at the Galerie Templon Brussels space.

A founder and leading member of the Supports/Surfaces group in the 1970s, Claude Viallat has spent the last 50 years exploring the limits of abstract painting through variations around his signature “shape” – a small bone form – reproduced on a wide variety of fabrics and tarpaulins, hung unmounted and unimpeded in space.

With this new exhibition, carefully installed by Claude Viallat himself, the artist unveils a handful of his latest experiments.

In a number of works, the shape, rather than being repeated as an endless sequence, is diluted to the point where it forms large spots of watery colors. In other pieces, it is outlined with dripped paint, suggesting a contrasting image of calligraphy.

The use of multi-coloured fabrics offers him the opportunity to introduce new hues: a deep ruby canvas rubs shoulders with a soft mauve or platinum grey piece. In Viallat's work, the palette always chooses itself: "I am an instrument," he explains. "The work has a life of its own. I only have to concern myself with the result."

Another constant feature of the artist's approach is that the exhibition layout is almost a work of art in itself. The artist delights in juxtaposing canvases, mixing up surprising textures and patterns. He uses this ever-innovative game of contrasts to reveal an audacious and intuitive dialogue between volume and surface, accumulation and void.

Claude Viallat was born in 1936 in Nîmes, France, where he continues to live and work. The many solo exhibitions of his work include shows at the MACBA in Buenos Aires (2022), Venet Foundation in southeastern France (2019), Musée Fabre in Montpellier (2014), Ludwig Museum in Germany (2014), Museo Universitario del Chopo in Mexico (2004), MuBe in Brazil (2001), Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in Germany (1983) and Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou in Paris (1982). He represented France at the 43rd Venice Biennale in Italy in 1988. His works are featured in over fifty public collections in France and internationally, including at the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou in Paris and MoMa in New York.

His native city is holding a major retrospective of his work for the first time. It will take place at the Carré d'Art – Musée d'Art Contemporain starting on 27 October 2023.

The city of Nîmes has also announced the opening of a Claude Viallat foundation in the former Saint Joseph Chapel. Architect Jean-Michel Willmotte has been commissioned with the design of the foundation, scheduled to open in late 2025.

Since his first collaboration with Daniel Templon in 1972, this will be the artist's eleventh exhibition at the gallery that has represented him since 1999.