

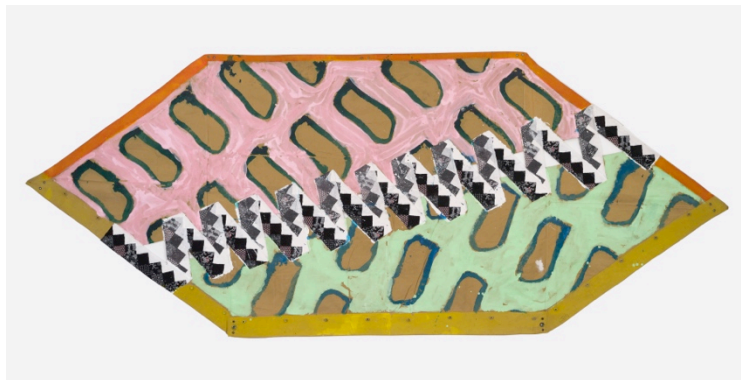
TEMPLON

II

CLAUDE VIALLAT

Sutures and Varia

January 30 – March 20, 2021



Untitled #214, 2020

Represented for twenty years by Galerie Templon, Claude Viallat, an iconic figure of French contemporary art, is taking over the vast space on Rue du Grenier Saint-Lazare for the first time with a radical exhibition that defies the codes of painting, volume and space.

A member and founding-member of the avant-garde Supports/Surfaces movement in the 1970s, Claude Viallat has established himself as a leading figure in French painting. For nearly half a century, he has spurned stretchers and canvases, instead painting on unstructured or juxtaposed textiles, endlessly repeating the same motif in a palette of shimmering colours.

Sutures and Varia offers a selection of works painted in the last two years. The new *Sutures* series, elaborated during the recent lockdowns, is anchored for the first time in a reflection on the notion of junction. Fabrics with unusual contours and textures are assembled, as if “sutured” by strips of fabric with floral patterns. These sutures, simultaneously friezes and bandages, are laid loose, carefully folded, and assembled by the artist. The wall can be seen through their gaps, thus revealing the artifice of the combinations.

In Viallat's work, intuition creates the canvas. The artist explains his approach: “I can never predict how the work will turn out, and even after several decades of artistic practice, I'm still surprised by the result. Yet I always accept it as it is. It is almost a human-to-human relationship I have with the work. I do what I can with it until it no longer wants me...”

The bold, intuitive, spontaneous dialogue between industrial canvases and household linens, suddenly metamorphosed by their verticality and the painter's intervention, marks a further step in the artist's reflection on the status of the artwork. Is it possible to move away from the conventional framework of a picture while creating a work of art that is, resolutely, a “painting”? How to bring out the expressive power from such heterogeneous, worn-out materials, already replete with motifs and patterns? Fresher and more creative than ever, these new works bear witness to the complex

explorations of an artist who, at nearly 85 years of age, has never ceased to question the physical experience of art, its relationship to space and the formal limits of the “picture”.

Claude Viallat was born in 1936 in Nîmes, France, where he continues to live and work. The Supports/Surfaces group, to which his name remains closely associated, called for art to renew itself through a deconstruction of traditional materials. His work features in a great many museum collections, such as at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou (Paris), and MoMA (New York). It has also been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Venet Foundation in the French village of Le Muy (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). In 1988, he represented France at the 43rd Venice Biennale in Italy. In 2018, a large installation from 1982 was exhibited at Art Basel, in the Unlimited sector. *Sutures et Varia* is the artist's 10th exhibition at the gallery, a new chapter in a collaboration with Daniel Templon stretching back to the 1970s.