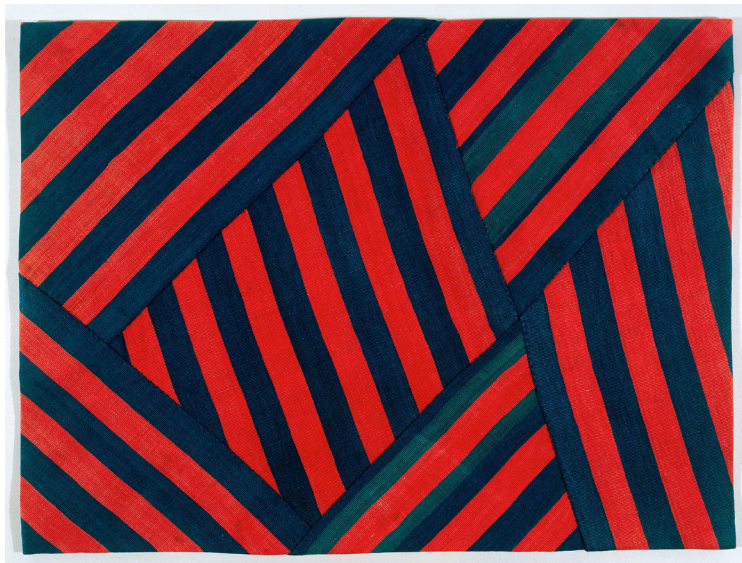


HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

Fabric Works

Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz
9 July – 3 October 2023



'Fabric Works' brings together a selection of artworks by a cross generational group of artists from the gallery's program who have used textiles to push the limits of their respective mediums. Contemporary works by Phyllida Barlow, Frank Bowling and Pipilotti Rist are displayed alongside modern masters, including Louise Bourgeois, Piero Manzoni and Fausto Melotti. The painterly works on view are sewn, patched and haptic, eliciting fundamental questions about the cross-fertilisation of sculpture and painting. Sculptural pieces display unconventional elements of pliability, familiarity and intimacy, challenging associations about the materiality of sculpture.

Exploring emotions, psychological states and memories, the work of Pipilotti Rist and Louise Bourgeois exists in a space between the visual and the sensual. Rist's sculptural installation 'Yayoi, die erleuchtete Enkelin (dunkelblau pink) (Familie Elektrobranche)' (2022) utilises a swimsuit lit-up from within like a hanging lamp. Focusing attention on the torso, with the fabric becoming a translucent skin, the form rounds off into the hips—an area which is believed to be a storage vessel for emotions, from passion to vexation. Rist gives this heavy area of the body a lightness by making it hollow and illuminated. Speaking on her affinity for using recycled objects, the artist says, 'The material has stories in it already, lives from other uses, but the tradition also gives a sense of caring, paying attention, thinking twice.'

A life-long hoarder of clothes and household items, Louise Bourgeois—an artist who had an enduring connection to textile and helped pioneer the sculptural use of fabric—transformed her lived materials into art. Using cloth to draw on her own background, 'Untitled' (2002) harks back to her childhood in her parents' tapestry restoration workshop with its tactility and needlework. Lying supine in a vitrine that enhances its vulnerability, the sculpture's screaming mouth is suggestive of suffering or distress, its colour evocative of a medical bandage, its stitches connoting psychological scarring. 'I always had the fear of being separated and abandoned,' said Bourgeois, 'The sewing is my attempt to keep things together and make things whole.' Interweaving her memories and emotions, the work demonstrates the artist's desire to effect psychological repair and mend the past.

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Conflating art with the tradition of wall hangings, Bourgeois' fabric drawings are abstract, exemplified in 'Untitled' (2003), and heterogeneous, deriving their formal logic from the juxtapositions of patterns printed on their materials. Their designs evolved to explore more intricate geometries and increasingly incorporated collaged elements. Piero Manzoni also employed untransformed materials, using them in his ground-breaking series of Achromes—works without colour. Exploring the logic of the grid, 'Achrome' (1959 – 1960) comprises of canvas squares precisely stitched together using a sewing machine. Creating multiple stitched works—affixed to bases of canvas, burlap or cotton—Manzoni emphasized the textile, and its tactile surface, as the true subject of the work. In doing so, he prompted a radical rethinking of the canvas in relation to artistic production and subverted the mode of painting.

Frank Bowling also plays with canvas, sewing and collaging the material base, exemplified in 'Yonder' (2004). His distinctive, hallmark use of marouflage, which he began using as a structural solution during the 1980s, quite literally frames our view of the colossal central panel, drawing attention to the vivid fabric strips of secondary canvas that form a boarder along the edges of the composition. Bowling also incorporated everyday elements and found objects into the surfaces of his canvas to push the boundaries of painting—most pronounced in 'Beauty Spot' (1983) in the form of an embedded egg carton.



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Likewise, Phyllida Barlow's sculptures celebrate inexpensive, low-grade materials such as fabric, concrete, metal cans, plywood and plaster. Bridging sculpture and painting, 'untitled: littlepaintingonsticks, 1; 2021' (2021) is coated in vibrant colours, the seams of its construction left visible, revealing the means of its making. Similarly defying traditional definitions of sculpture, Fausto Melotti moved freely among mediums, including textiles, ceramics and metal. Part of his series of 'teatrini' (little theatres), 'Ifigenia (Iphigenia)' (1978) draws upon the lightness and tactility of the materials from which it is crafted to create a work poised between abstraction and representation, narrative and symbolism. A recurring element of Melotti's visual language during this period, the fabric sheet symbolically plays with the notion of a fragmented reality, providing a delicate canopy for the whimsical brass landscape beneath. At once still and dynamic, firm and soft, 'Ifigenia (Iphigenia)' marks the artist's subtle redefinition of sculpture. Through the selection of works on view, 'Fabric Works' explores the ways in which textiles provide a haptic base for painterly compositions or are used to form works that celebrate the inherent colour, texture and pattern of the cloth, ultimately confronting traditional expectations about the materiality of painting and sculpture.

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Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz

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Gallery hours:

Tuesday – Sunday
11 am – 7 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy information:

Pipilotti Rist
Yayoi, die erleuchtete Enkelin (dunkelblau pink)
(Familie Elektrobranche)
2022
Swimsuit, round metal lamp shade skeleton, frosted glass spherical lamp, fabric cable and plug, clothes hanger, ribbons
80 x 42.5 x 35 cm / 31 1/2 x 16 3/4 x 13 3/4 in
© Pipilotti Rist / 2023, ProLitteris Zürich
Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring Augustine
Photo: Studio Rist

Louise Bourgeois
Untitled
2003
Fabric
28.2 x 37.4 cm / 11 1/8 x 14 3/4 in
© The Easton Foundation / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich
Courtesy The Easton Foundation and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Christopher Burke

Frank Bowling
Yonder
2004
Acrylic and acrylic gel on canvas with marouflage
132 x 80 cm / 52 x 31 1/2 in
© Frank Bowling. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2023
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Damian Griffiths

Louise Bourgeois
Untitled
2002
Fabric
26.7 x 35.6 x 30.5 cm / 10 1/2 x 14 x 12 in
© The Easton Foundation / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich
Courtesy The Easton Foundation and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Christopher Burke

Fausto Melotti
Ifigenia (Iphigenia)
1978
Brass, fabric and bronze
61 x 110 x 28 cm / 24 x 43 1/4 x 11 in
© Fondazione Fausto Melotti, Milan
Courtesy Fondazione Fausto Melotti and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Damian Griffiths