

## 'Materiality and Language: Explorations in Form and Meaning Curated by Esthella Provas'

Stefan Brüggemann / Jose Dávila / Rirkrit Tiravanija / Michael Rikio Ming Hee Ho /  
Amadour



KOTARO NUKAGA, Roppongi is pleased to present 'Materiality and Language: Explorations in Form and Meaning Curated by Esthella Provas' a group exhibition themed around materiality and language which features five international artists, from June 8 (Sat) to July 31 (Wed). The exhibition is curated by Esthella Provas, who is considered one of the world's most influential art advisors and known for her crucial role in establishing the Museo Jumex in Mexico City, which holds the largest collection of contemporary art in Latin America.

In contemporary art, materiality emerges as a pivotal conduit for the aesthetic experience, transcending mere physicality to engage with temporal and situational contexts. This exhibition that invites viewers to delve into the multifaceted relationship between art and its material essence. Each artist challenges traditional boundaries, creating dialogues that span the visual, textual, and spatial dimensions. Through a curated selection of works by Stefan Brüggemann, Jose Dávila, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Michael Rikio Ming Hee Ho, and Amadour, we explore how materiality is not just about substance but time, perception, and the human experience.

In an era where societal perceptions and narratives are continually in flux, the materiality of these artworks serves as a mirror to our collective consciousness, challenging and reshaping how content is perceived and informed. The use of textual elements, gold leaf, and architectural forms, highlight how materials and language serve as more than mere mediums; they are dynamic participants in the dialogue between the viewer and the viewed. These facets become an invitation to see how the selected works inform, influence, and interact as a sensory experience, where the materiality of each piece is not a static entity but a vibrant, living extension of the human condition.

Rirkrit Tiravanija often incorporates elements that blend traditional artistic materials with modern, sometimes industrial, components. This fusion not only blurs the lines between classic and contemporary art forms but also reflects the complex, layered nature of our current social environment.

Tiravanija's newspaper paintings become a medium to explore how the material world around us—constantly in flux and shaped by external forces—influences and is influenced by our collective and individual experiences.

Tiravanija's use of newspapers in his work extends the discourse on materiality to the realm of information and its transient nature, reflecting on how ephemeral materials capture the zeitgeist of the information age. This integration of newspapers in his art not only recontextualizes the material but also invites the viewer to ponder the role of media and information in shaping our perception of reality.

Jose Dávila's approach to materiality often involves a dialogue balance and tension, mirroring the precarious nature of our current social and political climate. His work frequently engages with themes of evoking the natural and the industrial worlds by questioning properties of the ephemeral and the enduring.

Dávila incorporates spatial perception by using essential elements like points, lines, and planes to create constructions that challenge notions of stability and permanence. Dávila's sculptures often feature a precarious equilibrium of materials, such as stone, ceramics, glass, metal, and concrete, which he uses to explore the tension between harmony and disorder, fragility and resistance.

Stefan Brüggemann's exploration of text and language as material elements challenges our perceptions of space and communication. His gold leaf and spray-paint works often confront and reflect the barrage of information in our digital age, prompting a reconsideration of how language becomes political, and the deeper complexities of truth, misinformation, and the impact of media on public perception. His headlines from various media outlets were spray-painted on gold leaf-coated canvases, highlighting the interplay between reality and fiction in shaping societal narratives.

Brüggemann's integration of media headlines into his artworks on gold leaf-coated canvases adds a layer of socio-political commentary to the concept of materiality. His work probes the complex relationship between material, message, and medium, particularly in the context of truth and misinformation.

Ho often integrates symbolic imagery with bold-type texts, which, when viewed individually, are provocative or confrontational but become ambiguously complex when combined. This unique blend results in a form of social commentary that is both absurdist and comical, placing the viewer in a position of interpretation.

Ho's use of trompe l'oeil canvases and illusion in his artworks disrupts conventional spatial narratives, prompting a reevaluation of the materiality of the exhibition space itself and the viewers' sense of physicality. Ho's use of text and imagery, combined with physical materials like spray paint, clear gesso, inkjet printer ink, paint, and resin, underscores the notion of materiality by examining how different mediums and physical illusions can be used to convey complex social and cultural narratives. Ho's art, with its emphasis on interpretation and viewer engagement, resonates with the exhibition's exploration of how materiality in art shapes and is shaped by our perceptions and interactions with the contemporary world.

Amadour's gold leafed hard-edged paintings introduces a synesthetic perspective to the theme, where the materiality of paint and canvas interweaves with the immateriality of sound and space, thereby expanding the sensory dimensions of materiality. The gold leaf symbolizes the California sun and reflects on the deep-rooted history of the American West with gold as a form of expansion. Their works channel the various line strokes in sound vibrations and light emitted over classical architecture and the surrounding landscape.

The exhibition inquires into how materiality and language function as core elements of expression and perception in contemporary art, in a society that is very rapidly becoming more information-oriented. Through each artist's individual approach, the exhibition reveals the extent to which our experiences and perception are shaped by not just the static nature of substances, but also the dialogues formed on linguistic and visual levels. This intersectional approach provides a valuable opportunity to consider how "materiality and language" influence one another, and how this interaction functions within the cultural and social contexts of our contemporary society.