

Material Essence - José Carlos Martinat
N.A.S.A.L

In 19th-century architectural theory, alongside figures like Marc-Antoine Laugier and the myth of the primitive hut, there emerged the proposal of Gottfried Semper, who argued that the origins of the discipline could be traced to the use of textiles. This renowned German architect, celebrated for interpreting Wagnerian ambitions in architecture or designing museum spaces that bridged natural sciences and the arts, also conducted significant studies on textile work. By linking architecture to anthropology, he emphasized the relationship between geometry, braiding, and weaving in defining such productions.

Semper proposed, through the idea of *clothing* in architecture—diverging from the Vitruvian tradition—a biological analogy connecting other manufactured references, such as ceramics and masonry, to explain early structural elements from a primitivist perspective: the platform, the roof, and the envelope in contrast to fabric and the hearth. He drew examples from Assyrian tapestries and tents, coverings that later evolved into stucco, alabaster, or terracotta construction systems, following the original model and design of textiles.

Later, in the 1970s, the Peruvian-Mexican critic Juan Acha revisited Semper's proposal to understand the development of "environments" in Latin American art. As part of his extensive research into the triad of art, design, and craft—and within the framework of non-objectualisms—he closely studied Paleo-Andean textiles, linking them to artists like the poet Jorge Eduardo Eielson and sculptor Marta Palau: *"Truly, innovative tapestry artists start from the peaceful, material reality of weaving to adapt it to modern sensibilities, largely shaped by the visual arts. These, of course, help ensure the tactile-visual effects of tapestries are accepted and appreciated in their true artistic dimension."*

In recent years, particularly following the global paradigm shift brought by the 2020 pandemic, Lima-based artist José Carlos Martinat has taken unexpected turns that also engage with textile work. Known for decades for his installations, mechanical and electronic works, and interest in repurposing elements of public space, Martinat has embarked on a new artistic field of exploration. This work bridges his past and present research, where a novel form of textile design has emerged.

Material Essence represents a body of work that continues to merge two realms: the medical and the spiritual. On one hand, Martinat draws from the SARS-CoV-2 genome, structured by four letters across 33,000 sequences, visualized through a geometric, tiered design. On the other, he integrates traditional medicine and the use of minerals and crystals believed to restore organic balance. Alongside this, he employs natural dyes, initially used to color a set of gauzes. By combining these two spheres, he achieves a new installation format that redefines spatial intervention.

The exhibition features five jute structures dyed with elements like turmeric and palo rosa, or colored powders used in cleansing and healing rituals. These adopt the geometric design of the virus, with chromatic variations tied to its genomic letters. Through research in Mexico, Martinat reinterpreted practices encountered in Mexico City's Sonora Market, incorporating materials with magical-religious potency—such as pigments or Santería herbs—to create an aromatic environment. He also collaborated with healers, including one who uses scissors as a curative tool, inspiring a sound piece accompanying the series. Interwoven through fabric, sound, and scent, these elements unify the space through the idea—or invocation—of healing. The zigzagging hanging structures redefine a preexisting architecture and our experience of a specific environment.

The aforementioned historical references—textiles' ritual and constructive power—situate this installation within that lineage, highlighting its contributions to the contemporary context. If architectural history can be understood through cosmogonies translated into dyes and sacred figures channeled into textiles, this exhibition heralds a return to networked intersections. As Denise Y. Arnold and Elvira Espejo describe in the Bolivian context, ancient textile practices are entwined with land, animals, plants, water, and cycles integral to a tapestry's conception. Martinat follows this path, moving beyond appropriation to embrace disappropriation and symbolic-material restoration through a sensory architecture that engages sight, movement, smell, and sound—all our senses in dialogue with the universe.

Natalia de la Rosa

Jose Carlos Martinat

1974

La obra del artista José Carlos Martinat (n. Lima, Perú) explora las complejas intersecciones entre tecnología, política y existencia humana, analizando cómo las máquinas, los objetos y los sistemas influyen en la cultura. Transforma artefactos cotidianos en profundos y multifacéticos comentarios sobre los mecanismos sociales y la esencia del ser.

La obra de José Carlos Martinat ha formado parte de numerosas exposiciones, entre ellas: Tate (Londres), Bienal de Shanghái (China), MOMA (Nueva York), Saatchi Gallery (Londres), Bienal EVA de Irlanda, Bienal de La Habana, Bienal del Mercosur, Trienal Poligráfica de Puerto Rico, Bienal de Nord Holland, IFA (Alemania), La Laboral (España), Pinacoteca (Sao Paulo), WWVF (Holanda), entre otras.

Sus obras forman parte de importantes colecciones como las del Tate, MOMA, Guggenheim, Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago, MALBA, Saatchi, MALI, entre otras.

The work of Peruvian artist José Carlos Martinat explores the complex intersection between technology, politics, and human existence, analyzing how machines, objects, and systems influence culture. He transforms everyday artifacts into profound, multifaceted commentaries on social mechanisms and the essence of being.

José Carlos Martinat's work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, including Tate (London), Shanghai Biennale (China), MoMA (New York), Saatchi Gallery (London), EVA International (Ireland), Havana Biennial, Mercosur Biennial, Puerto Rico's Poly/Graphic Triennial, North Holland Biennial, IFA (Germany), La Laboral (Spain), Pinacoteca (São Paulo), WWVF (Netherlands), among others.

His works are part of major collections such as those of Tate, MoMA, Guggenheim, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago, MALBA, Saatchi, MALI, and more.

JOSE CARLOS MARTINAT
2000

SOLO SHOWS

2024

Esencia:materica
N.A.S.A.L., CDMX, Mexico

Esencia: Artefacto
Revolver Galería, New York, USA

Ruinophilia
Mayoral gallery, París, Francia

2022

Ruinophilia
Marc Straus Gallery, New York, USA

2019

American Echo Chamber
PAMM, Miami, USA

Distractor #4
Espacio Fundación Telefónica, Lima, Peru

2017

Infografía del Aprendizaje (in collaboration with José Luis Martinat)
Galería Patricia Ready, Santiago de Chile, Chile

Lo que sucede aquí, no se queda aquí
Carmen Araujo Arte, Caracas, Venezuela

Infografía del Aprendizaje (in collaboration with José Luis Martinat)
Revolver Galería, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Art Brussels
Steve Turner Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

2015

Gráfico Sagrado
Revólver Galería, Lima, Perú

¿Cómo Explicar lo Inexplicable?
Sala Siqueiros, CDMX, Mexico

Jose Luis y Jose Carlos Martinat (Collaborative project with Galería Lucía de la Puente & Revólver Galería)
Galería Lucía de la Puente, Lima, Peru

2015

sp-open data, intervención de fachada
Galería Leme, Sao Paulo, Brasil

2014

Pista 1
Revólver Galería, Lima, Peru

2013

Ejercicios Superficiales sobre Dispositivos de Deleite
Galería Leme, São Paulo, Brazil

2012

Galería Baginski, Lisboa, Portugal

2011

Panteón, Intervención de fachada
Museo Carrillo Gil, CDMX, Mexico

2010

Ejercicios de Sustracción para Distracción
Revolver Galería, Lima, Peru

Monumentos vandalizables
Museo de arte de lima, Lima, Peru

Ejercicios para galería
Galería Ignacio Liprandi, Buenos Aires, Argentina

2010

Ejercicios superficiales
Galería Leme, São Paulo, Brazil

2000

Casa, intervención del espacio doméstico
Lima, Peru

GROUP SHOWS

2024

Radicalment singulares
Mayoral Gallery, Barcelona, Spain

Acto de Fe
N.A.S.A.L., CDMX, Mexico

Ride the Lightning
Revolver Galería, New York, USA

Track Oblivion
Mayoral Gallery, Barcelona, Spain

En busca de lo invisible
Revolver Galería, New York, USA

Desire is a spiral
Revolver Galería, New York, USA

2022

High Priestess
Revolver Galería, Lima, Peru

That little thing that counts
Nosco Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

Leme NFT collection
Leme Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil

2021

Le contraddizioni della fragilità
Secci Gallery, Florence, Italy

Janelas para dentro
Leme Gallery + Central Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil

Imaginarios contemporáneos Vol I y Vol II
MALI Museum, Lima, Peru

2020

Non Space
Revolver Galería, Lima, Peru

2019

Prometemos no despertar nunca, in collaboration with José Luis Martinat
Nosco Gallery, Marseille, France

Time for Change
El Espacio 23, Miami, USA

DIstractor #4
Fundación Telefónica, Lima, Peru

JOSE CARLOS MARTINAT
2000

2019
Crónicas Migrantes: Historias comunes entre Perú y Venezuela
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo del Perú, Lima, Peru

Soy La casa que Ladra
Madrid, Spain

En orden de aparición: arte peruano y Latinoamericano de la colección Hochschild
Real Academia de San Fernando, Madrid, Spain

Sin crónicas: Horizontes del arte peruano desde el coleccionismo
El Instante Fundación, Madrid, Spain

2018
Más viejo que Satanás
Galería Germán Krüger Espantoso, ICPNA, Lima, Peru

Extracción
Nosco Gallery, Marseille, France

Cambio de materia
Lamb Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Rumicolqa: El despertar de una cantera
Museo de la Nación, Lima, Peru

2017
Paisaje infinito
Revólver Gallery, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Final de partida
Sagrada Mercancía, Santiago de Chile, Chile

Monumentos, Anti-monumentos y nueva escultura pública
Curated by Pablo León de la Barra, Museo de Arte Zapopan (MAZ), Guadalajara, Mexico

Muestra grupal Revolver Lima
Revolver Gallery, Lima, Peru

Cómo leer el pato Pascual: Disney's Latin America y Latin America's Disney
MAK Center, West Hollywood, California, USA

Próxima parada: Artistas peruanos en la colección Hochschild
Sala Alcalá 31, Madrid, Spain

Inbox: New acquisitions
MOMA, New York, United States

2016
Totemonumento
Leme Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil

Hacer la audición / Antológica de arte sonoro en el Perú
Museum of Contemporary Art of Lima, Peru

Basta
John Jay College, New York, USA

Publicar sin facturas, Muros públicos como estudio y fuente
Neuberger Art Museum, New York, USA

Lo real absoluto
Revólver Gallery, Lima, Peru

Bienal de Cuenca: Impermanencia, la mutación del arte contemporáneo
Cuenca, Ecuador

¡Basta!
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, United States

2015
Gabinete
ArteBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina

XII Bienal de La Habana
La Habana, Cuba

X Bienal del Mercosur
Brazil

2014
Pangaea: New Art from Africa and Latin America
Saatchi Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Dixit
ArteBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Art Basel Miami Beach - Public
Florida, USA

Brutalismo, Exposición de colección
Tate Modern Museum, London, United Kingdom

2014
Panteón, intervención de fachada
Museo Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, Mexico

Difracción
Arróniz Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico

2013
Plata
Revólver Gallery, Lima, Peru

Ruins in Reverse
Tate Modern Museum, London, United Kingdom

City Center: Diankou, Lima, Palermo
Fundación Gervasuti, Venice, Italy

Mente sospechosa
Vermelho Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil

Ruinas al revés
MALI - Museum of Art of Lima, Peru

Somos Libres
Mate, Lima, Peru

2012
Modificar según sea necesario
MOCA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, USA

Bienal Internacional EV+A
Limerick, Ireland

9th Shanghai Biennale, City Pavilions
Shanghai, China

The Collaborative: Moola
Museum of Latin American Art, Los Angeles, USA

JOSE CARLOS MARTINAT
2000

2011

Bruma

20 Hoxton Square Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Colección de arte contemporáneo del Museo de Arte de Lima

Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Brazil

Brutalism, collection exhibition

Tate Modern Museum, London, United Kingdom

Difracción

Arróniz Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico

2010

El fin del principio

Patricia Ready Gallery, Santiago de Chile, Chile

Pasaporte para un artista

CCPUC, Lima, Peru

Pasaporte para un artista

Alliance Française, Piura, Peru

Pruebas de artista

ICPNA, Lima, Peru

Biennale of Noord Holland

Project with Marjolijn Dijkman, Netherlands

Resitrante SESC Pinheiros

São Paulo, Brazil

Nuevas adquisiciones

Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires,
Buenos Aires, Argentina

El fin del comienzo

Patricia Ready Gallery, Santiago de Chile, Chile

2009

Il Triennial Poli/Gráfica of San Juan: Latin America and the Caribbean

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Miceforce

Raúl Anguiano Museum, CDMX, Mexico

Restricción-Restricción

Toronto, Canada

Festival de Arte Electrónico Transitio

CDMX, Mexico

Bienal de Mercosur

Puerto Alegre, Brazil

2008

Construcción del lugar común

Proyecto del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Lima (MAC), Lima, Peru

Tener lugar

Fundación Telefónica, Lima, Peru

Noche en blanco

Lima, Peru

2007

Emergentes: La Laboral

Exposición itinerante, Madrid, Spain

COLLECTIONS

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom

Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, USA

Saatchi Gallery,
London, United Kingdom

Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Florida, USA

Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI), Lima, Peru

Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina