

TEMPLON

II

CLAUDE VIALLAT

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# What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in April

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*This week in Newly Reviewed, Blake Gopnik covers Richmond Barthé's celebrated sculptures, Claude Viallat's paintings on fabric and Maarten Baas's one-of-a-kind "Sweeper's Clock."*

## Claude Viallat

Through April 27. Templon, 293 10th Avenue, Manhattan; 212-922-3745, [templon.com](https://templon.com).



Installation view of "Claude Viallat: Made in Nîmes" at Templon. Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris; via Claude Viallat and Templon, Paris, Brussels and New York; Photo by Charles Rousset

Although for decades people have talked about the “internationalization” of the art world, movements and heroes from other countries have had little traction in the United States. Claude Viallat, 88, is such a hero, from the French movement called *Supports/Surfaces*. (It’s usually pronounced in French: *suePOOR-sirFASS*.)

Viallat’s career survey, “Made in Nîmes,” at Templon should make him a minor hero over here — if not a Batman, then at least a Robin.

The movement, born in 1970, abandoned the calculated compositions of most abstraction, instead dwelling on the “support” (normally, some kind of textile) and the “surface” that it became once painted. Viallat’s take on the movement has involved sticking with a single shape — a soft-edged lozenge that looks like a half-melted Fig Newton — that could be repeated across different “supports,” from unstretched old tarps to fancy fashion fabrics, thus yielding ever-new surfaces.

If that sounds like the purely formal move of a traditional abstractionist, or even like a mostly decorative conceit, at Templon the results are surprisingly meaningful. As Viallat’s lozenge traverses the different surfaces, it comes off as something almost scary: a schizophrenic’s *idée fixe*, or even a spreading infection. Or there can be an almost militaristic feel to the motif’s march, in perfect lock step, across what might be a fancy tablecloth or a doyenne’s shawl, with no respect for people or property.

But mostly, in 2024, it reminds me of the terrifying march of a meme across our digital culture.