

TEMPLON

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PRESS RELEASE

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FRANÇOIS ROUAN
RECORDA
9 JANUARY – 1 MARCH 2025



Recorda XII, 2024, oil on braided canvases, 169 × 148 cm

Galerie Templon dedicates its first New York solo show to François Rouan, one of the key figures in the contemporary French art scene. Curated by Alfred Pacquement, Honorary Director, musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, the exhibition features a selection of paintings and photographs drawn from both earlier and recent series, alongside a loan from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation in New York.

From the onset, François Rouan has been associated – though not formally affiliated - with the Supports/Surfaces movement, yet he has charted a distinctive path. Gradually, he has incorporated in his painting work an in-depth research focused on collages, culminating in 1965 with his first weavings. In the 80's he further broadened his practice through the use of different mediums, both

photographic and film-based. By deconstructing the traditional structure of the painting, he has become a pioneer in the exploration of new avenues within the field of contemporary painting in France. As abstract expressionism was flourishing in the USA, abstract art in France renounced lyrical abstraction in favor of a more radical approach to the concept of the painting. Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York first showed the work of the young François Rouan alongside established artists such as Simon Hantaï and Pierre Soulages. His work is included in major American museums including MoMa and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The retrospective exhibition at Galerie Templon features thirty pieces, wax paintings and photographic work in various formats - square, rectangular and oval - all created between 1969 and 2024. Recorda interweaves the artist's brand new eponymous series, created in 2023-2024, with older pieces from the late 1960s, 1980s and 1990s. Together they bear witness, once again, to the artist's insatiable passion for working with the surface. Rouan begins by focusing on strips of canvas dyed in a palette of explosive hues, from canary yellow and brick red to cobalt blue and coal black. He carefully braids them on the painting then plays with the result, boldly shredding, interlacing, reviewing, completing or even breaking up the surface and starting all over again. Behind the seeming simplicity of motifs and colour range lie some of the metaphysical questions that obsess the artist, such as the painting as a work of art, the world's origins, body image, and human existence.

Born in Montpellier, France, in 1943, François Rouan moved to Paris in 1961 to study at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts. He was artist-in-residence at Villa Medici from 1971-1973 and in 1985 was appointed Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres, the highest distinction of the French order of merit. His work has featured in a variety of solo exhibitions and retrospectives, including at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1975, 1983 and 1994; Musée d'Art Moderne in Villeneuve-d'Ascq in 1995; Les Abattoirs in Toulouse in 2006, and Musée Fabre in Montpellier in 2017. His art has been exhibited worldwide at museums such as the Städtische Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf (1979), Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo (1997) and Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing (2000). It was also included in the "Lacan, the Exhibition" group show at Centre Pompidou-Metz from January to May 2024. In June 2024 a travelling exhibition showcased his work creating stained-glass windows for the Royal Fontevraud Abbey. In June 2025, the Lyon Musée des Beaux-Arts will be paying tribute to his work with a retrospective exhibition. His art features in numerous prestigious collections including at the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, France, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA, and MoMA, New York, USA.