

CILDO MEIRELES

One and Some Chairs / Camouflages

October 28, 2023 - January 27, 2024



Cildo Meireles, *Épura - Cadeira 2* [Épura - Chair 2], 2023.

Galerie Lelong & Co., New York is pleased to announce a new solo exhibition by Cildo Meireles, *One and Some Chairs / Camouflages*, the artist's first show in New York in over eight years and his sixth solo exhibition at the gallery. The exhibition follows the artist's recent award of the 2023 Roswitha Haftmann Prize, becoming the first Latin American artist to do so since its founding in 2001. Presenting projects in installation and painting, *One and Some Chairs / Camouflages* is comprised entirely of works produced in the past two years and is the first exhibition in more than a decade to premiere an entirely new collection of work by Meireles. These projects, conceived in the 1980s and 1990s but only recently realized, revolve around the artist's decades-long exploration of how perception and poetry relate to physical reality.

In the large gallery space, the installation *Uma a sete cadeiras* [One and Seven Chairs], (1997-2023) begins with the structure of a simple kitchen chair, then reconfigures its presence in different materials: acrylic, sawdust, ash, and canvas. In one iteration of the chair, Meireles foregrounds the absence of the object, presenting an acrylic tower with an interior that reveals the emptiness of the chair itself. "I am interested in this evanescent thing, that is, a kind of dissolution of the object. There is a desire to play with the faculty of seeing through a sort of invisibility of invisibility," says the artist of the enduring theme of emptiness throughout his practice. This installation and its title embrace the conceptual nature of abstract thought and its root in objects. As in all of Meireles's installations, there is a quality of transformation, subtle humor, and wonder.

Camouflages continues this investigation of form and perception in the presentation of paintings, marking a return to the practice by Meireles in tribute to masters of the medium such as Jasper Johns, Kazimir Malevich, and the Brazilian modernist Alfredo Volpi. In works from this series, Meireles paints directly on objects, among them umbrellas, chairs, and tents. Meireles selects objects that are comprised of a common formal basis: a structure and fabric. The artist's acrylic on canvas paintings substitute for these fabric components, mirroring their aesthetic conventions. In the words of the artist, the series "basically comprehends paintings on various chassis, which refer to a functionality. Camouflaged paint on benches, chairs, umbrellas, common objects for daily use." Other paintings on view render the three-dimensional chair in two dimensions; two *épuras* draw upon descriptive geometry to present the chair from three vantage points across two perpendicular planes, conveying Meireles's artistic thought through the joining of painting and mathematical rationality. This collection of works asks viewers to question "what is painting?" and "what is the truest representation of an object: the thing itself, or the idea of it?"

About the Artist

One of the most influential conceptual artists today, and widely considered the most significant living artist from Latin America, Cildo Meireles creates complex installations and sculptures that entice the viewer and challenge political, philosophical, and aesthetic precepts. Meireles's artistic practice was shaped by the social and political conditions during the dictatorship of Brazil in the 1960s and '70s, and by the Neo-Concretist and avant-garde movements of the '50s. Like his predecessors, Meireles merges physical, cerebral, and sensorial elements in works that elicit audience participation. While Meireles's works are often created in response to specific political events and situations, they evoke universal themes that are communicated through the viewer's experience in a shared, rigorously designed and defined space.

Meireles's work has been exhibited internationally, including the Biennales of Venice, Italy (1976, 2003, 2005, 2009); São Paulo, Brazil (1981, 1989, 1998, 2010); Documenta, Germany (1992, 2002); and Istanbul, Turkey (2003, 2015). In the past twenty years, the artist has been the subject of several large-scale and traveling solo exhibitions at renowned institutions, including Sesc Pompeia, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2019); Centro Nacional de Arte Contemporaneo Cerrillos, Cerrillos, Chile (2019); Fundação de Serralves, Portugal (2014) HangarBicocca, Milan, Italy (2014); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Spain (2013); Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain (2010); Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico (2010) and Tate Modern, England (2008).

His work is represented in major museums and institutions around the world including the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Inhotim Centro de Arte Contemporânea, Brazil; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Finland; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California; Museo d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain; Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Belgium; and Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom.

Meireles was born in 1948 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he currently lives and works.