

Matières à penser brings together six artists from distinct cultural and geographical contexts — Lagos, France, Kuwait — whose practices interrogate tactility, the body, and the embodied as well as spiritual experience of spaces and materials. Through painting, photography, and ceramics, they share a heightened attention to surface — skin, pictorial matter, clay — understood as a threshold, a zone of contact.

Far from being a stable form or an identifiable motif, corporeality in the work of **Lucile Boiron** is raw and visceral. It manifests through an extreme, almost invasive proximity. The artist speaks of “digesting the world through images”; through radical zooms, she isolates bodily fragments — umbilical cord, organic tissues — to the point where identification becomes unsettled. Covered with thermoformed glass derived from hand-modeled clay matrices, the photographs from the series *Fricon, Fricasse!* are filtered through a surface that is at once protective and exposing. Oscillating between fascination and discomfort, this excess of visibility never fully reveals, keeping the gaze in a state of sensory instability. This focus on surface finds an echo in the ceramics of **Anneagma**, where the grain of the earth — coarse or smooth, matte or glossy — enters into dialogue with that of the skin. Stoneware, porcelain, and earthenware are worked in a tension between technical mastery and respect for the organic essence of the material, giving rise to sensual, almost anthropomorphic forms.

In the series *This Bridge Called My Back*, **Chidinma Nnoli** makes a decisive shift away from the human figure, long central to her practice, allowing the landscape, saturated with matter and tension, to become the protagonist. The paint bears the marks of inner pressure: it accumulates, cracks, contracts. The surface, dry and scorching, evokes a heat that is both physical and symbolic. The landscape itself becomes body, a site where persistence is inscribed.

By contrast, the hybrid and floating figures in *Speak to Me, My Dear Prophecies* by **Alymamah Rashed** appear freed from gravity. They evolve in liminal states between dream, prayer, and metamorphosis, as if the body, lightened, could finally escape its material constraints.

Moving beyond figuration, **Francis Bacon** does not turn toward abstraction but, as **Gilles Deleuze** emphasizes, toward sensation: “Sensation is what is painted. What is painted in the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is lived as experiencing such-and-such a sensation.”¹ In *Tu dors?*, **Garance Matton** holds her figures in a state of suspended appearance, as though the body could only emerge by accepting its possible disappearance. They inhabit space as much as they are shaped by it, oscillating between dissolution and incarnation.

Erasure, blurring, stratification, and material saturation constitute essential plastic tools. Blur becomes a strategy of perception: as one moves deeper into the forms, they slip away. This shift is evident in Lucile Boiron’s hyper-zooms, which disrupt the identification of the real, as well as in the work of **Marion Artense Gély**, who oscillates between the infinitely small and the infinitely large, from the cellular to the cosmic. Her painting, resolutely oriented toward abstraction, employs the labor-intensive techniques of glazing and sfumato, softening contours to produce atmospheric surfaces. Composed of numerous strata, her works

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon, Logique de la sensation*, Éditions du Seuil, 1981

inscribe time into matter and extend this research into ceramics through the use of glazes. These choices generate ethereal and ambiguous spaces -like landscapes and vibrating surfaces — that resist any immediate reading.

Never illustrative nor dogmatic, the spirituality that runs through the exhibition unfolds as an embodied experience, born from a physical relationship with the world. It manifests in Anneagma's bond with the earth, where artisanal repetition becomes a form of embodied knowledge. It surfaces in the multiple pictorial layers of Marion Artense Gély, whose slow temporalities generate an almost ritual sense of time. In Alymamah Rashed's work, spirituality appears through recurring symbols and personal mythologies. The eye, a recurring motif, acts as a portal opening onto inner and spiritual narratives. Executed in watercolor and mixed media, her fluid corporeal figures transform, fragment, and multiply, evolving in suspended spaces where contours remain unstable.

This approach resonates with **Donna Haraway's** notion of *becoming-with*², according to which bodies do not preexist their relations but emerge through entanglements of materials, narratives, and environments. Embodied spirituality thus aligns with an ecological and holistic understanding of the body as a porous entity. The body never stands in opposition to the world; it extends into it, dissolves within it, or inscribes itself as a trace. In Alymamah Rashed's work, it merges with natural elements — shells, botanical motifs, animals — while in certain series by Chidinma Nnoli, the human figure disappears entirely, absorbed into the landscape. Lucile Boiron's images explore the continuity between human, vegetal, and animal bodies, opening a reflection on birth, decomposition, life, and death as experiences that are both physical and existential. The boundaries between the living and the non-living, between the human and its environment, blur; matter is never inert — it acts and responds.

Finally, the exhibition highlights the emancipatory dimension of these practices, which mobilize the body, intimate history, and subjectivity as materials. Many of the works take the form of an expanded self-portrait. The viewer is invited into a sensory experience in which looking implies being affected. *Matières à penser* thus proposes a journey where perception engages the skin as much as the eyes, and where blur, far from signaling erasure, opens the possibility of an incarnation in continuous becoming.

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² Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008