



*Phoenix 2 (detail), 2017, Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris*

## Sidival FILA 'Amazonia'

ART BASEL MIAMI

Nova - Booth N10

From December 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> 2019

PRESS KIT  
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## Sidival FILA

'Amazonia', solo show

For its second participation to Art Basel - Miami Beach, Jérôme Poggi is pleased to present a solo project by Brazilian artist Sidival Fila (1962).

Echoing Fila's large-scale installation for the 58<sup>th</sup> edition of the Venice Biennale, this recent body of work features some of his famous monochrome paintings, ritually imprisoning dead wood pieces within its folds.

### ***"Amazonia" - A manifesto***

Entitled *Amazonia*, the project obviously refers to Sidival Fila's native country and culture, as well as to his ecological concerns. It gathers about ten recent works, created in his studio at the Convento San Bonaventura in Rome (Italy).

### ***A ritualized minimalism***

Minimalist and monochromatic, his work is however nurtured by vernacular techniques of sewing, engaging a notion of performance and a certain kind of rituality in its process. Born in the state of Parana, Brazil, in 1962, Sidival Fila's position is at the crossroads between a certain formal minimalism (Fontana, Manzoni, etc) related to the Western history of modernism and a vernacular as well as secular Latin-American obsession with ritual techniques of sewing.

### ***An archeology of Nature***

He has replaced the religious artefacts and ancient ornaments recently used for the Venice Biennial to suture dead wood branches and wine shoots into the folds of his monochrome paintings. Impregnated with ashes and/or pigments, the threads surrounding these foreign bodies in the canvas act as shrouds or bandages, depending on one's interpretation.

### ***Sidival Fila, Brazilian artist and Franciscan monk***

In parallel with an international artistic career, Fila was ordained and joined the Franciscan order, while pursuing his artistic vocation. He currently serves as Minister General of the Convento San Bonaventura, located on Mount Palatin in Roma, where he installed his studio on the last floor of monastery, surrounded by the Roman Forum.

All the profits he makes with his art are donated to charities fighting child poverty and promoting education in developing countries.

*After several recent important exhibitions at Museo Carlo Bilotti of Villa Borghese, Rome (2015), Le Fresnoy, Tourcoing (2016, curated by Dominique Païni) and at Palazzo Ducale di Sassuolo, Sassuolo (2017) in dialogue with the Panza di Biumo collection, an important monographic exhibition was dedicated to his work this fall at the Palazzo Merulana - Cerasi Foundation in Rome last fall. He has been part of the 58th edition of the Venice Biennale (2019), with large-scale installations featured in the Giardini.*

## | AMAZONIA

Following Sidival Fila's large installation presented at the 2019 Venice Biennale, Galerie Poggi dedicates at this year's edition of Art Basel Miami Beach a solo show to the Brazilian artist, who lives and works in the Franciscan monastery church of San Bonaventura al Palatino in Rome. Titled Amazonia, his project gathers together an ensemble of recent minimalist paintings, whose surfaces are no longer solely animated by his signature stitched folds, but objects as well that the artist – and monk – encloses within the pleats in an almost-ritual way.

*Amazonia.* If the exhibition's title immediately evokes the artist's Brazilian origins and the ecological crisis currently hitting the Amazon rainforest, it should further invite us to consider ancestral cultural practices and forms from this part of the world that is still largely spared by the notion of modernity. Sidival Fila's work stands between an explicit take on modernity, which is directly inherited from Italian Spatialism (Piero Manzoni, Lucio Fontana) and Arte Povera, and a spiritual and ritual conception of art, which sometimes verges on animism, and that Sidival Fila draws from his personal history and roots.

Sidival Fila was born in 1962 in the Southern state of Paraná, Brazil, which is known for its famous Iguazu Falls, as well as for being one of the first lands that was intensely deforested for the cultivation of coffee and soy. After travelling to study art in Europe, he permanently moved to Rome at 25 years old, and interrupted his career as an artist for the next 18 years to dedicate himself to a spiritual life instead. He joined the Order of Friars Minor of Saint Francis of Assisi, which he served for a long time in hospitals and jails as a chaplain across Italy. He finally resumed his artistic practice with all his might in 2006, when he installed his studio on the last floor of the Franciscan monastery church of San Bonaventura al Palatino, where he now serves as Minister General.

It is almost by chance that he stitched for the first time two torn pieces of fabrics together in order to fix them. He found in this gesture not only a motif, but also a practice that could be compared to the ethics of care, repairing. Sidival Fila now works with the texture and the tension of the canvas, which he folds, sutures, all the while playing with shadow and light, void and fullness. This is a slow, meditative process that requires him to carefully bend over fabrics – some ancient, some modern – and sculpt them for hours long within their very folds. "Often," he says, "I am the neighbor of matter," driven "by the desire to confer a sense of being to things, to build and not destroy, to give and not take."

Sidival Fila intensifies life in things – those we drop, forget or abandon: household linen, cloths, fabrics of all kinds that he retrieves, whether liturgical or domestic, figurative or abstract, noble or common. For Sidival Fila, an artwork isn't an inanimate object. It brings back to life what was given up on, following a principle of immanence more than transcendence.

Conceiving an artwork like a living thing and not an inert object isn't the only fact of mysticism. It is a philosophical thought that sets on equal footing every element without excluding what doesn't have lungs from the regimen of life. Animist cultures from Central or Latin America, which claim the existence of a soul in stones or wood for example, belong to this trend. In the history of Western art, artists such as Joseph Beuys also rejected the idea of an artwork being still, investing it instead with its own life, some of them even claiming themselves to be like true shamans.

There is perhaps a certain form of atavism too in Sidival Fila's work, more specifically when the Brazilian artist sews within the folds of his canvases objects that are as symbolic and charged as the crucified Christ, bones or stones, or, within the frame of this project, Amazonia, pieces of dead wood. The series 'Phoenix' is a spectacular example of this. In these large-scale works, the artist swathed big vine stocks of Virginia creeper from his monastery within thick canvases, which he further covered not with gray paint, but ashes. He used the same ashes to coat these pieces of dead wood before sewing them into the fabrics, whose surfaces he dabbed until the ash fully penetrated their fibers. This is no longer a superficial pictorial gesture that the artist executes here, but that of an embalmer or a healer who acts at the heart of matter to breath life into it again. Even the title that Sidival Fila has given to these works tells this will of resurrection, the Phoenix referring to the legendary firebird able to arise from its own ashes in many Persian, Greek, Chinese, Roman and Christian cultures. Firmly, methodically sewed within the folds of canvases, knotty pieces of vine thus seem to emerge from what can appear both as their cocoon and shroud, yearning for a new life.

This art of the fold brings to mind the baroque aesthetics that Gilles Deleuze analyzed in his book 'Le Pli' ('The Fold', 1988), which relies on Leibnizian concepts. According to the 17th German philosopher, the soul would be a creased monad, drawing from a dark background all its clear perceptions. It is also tempting to bring up the Spanish ethnographer Pedro Pitarch Ramón's research on the motif of the fold as a crucial notion to the understanding of cosmology in the Mesoamerican indigenous region. According to Tzeltal Maya Indians, the human soul is made of countless folds, which unfold throughout life from birth to death. The fold is thus a relational mode that unites both sides of the cosmos: the solar face of humans and the virtual face of spirits. Finally, this motif brings back to weaving, which has constituted a fundamental source of invention and transformation within Mesoamerican cultures since the beginnings of textile art 3,000 years ago.

This is thus between these two cultures – Western and Amazonian in a broad sense if you will – that Sidival Fila undeniably stands, and renders his oeuvre so contemporary.

Flora Katz and Jérôme Poggi

Translated from French by Violaine Boutet de Monvel

## | BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1962 in the state of Parana in Brazil, Sidival Fila studied art in Sao Paulo. After putting aside his artistic practice to devote himself to religion during twenty years, he resumed it in 2006, using poor or obsolete recovered materials. He now lives and works in Rome in the Franciscan covent of San Bonaventura, on the top of the Mount Palatine.

In 2015, his exhibition at the Bilotti Museum, in the Orangery of the Borghese Villa, marks his reappearance on the significant institutional art scene. His work has caught the attention of the art scene around the world, and his numerous recent exhibitions were hailed as critical and commercial successes.



In 2016, Sidival Fila was the center of a major exhibition at Fresnoy, Centre National d'Art Contemporain (France, 2016), dialoguing with the works of Dan Flavin, Sol Lewitt, François Morellet and Sheila Hicks. He then had an important solo show at the prestigious Palazzo Ducale de Sassuolo (Italia, 2018) alongside the minimalist and monochromatic collection of art collector Panza di Biumo (Ettore Spaletti, Lawrence Carrol, etc). In Autumn 2019, the Cerasi Foundation presented a solo show of Sidival Fila at the Palazzo Merulana in Rome, as did The Museo Diocesano Tridentino, in Trento. He participated to the 58th edition of the Venice Biennale in the Venice Pavillion in the Giardini.

Very active on the art market, Sidival Fila gives the profits of his sales to charitable associations. His works are part of many collections, both public and private, in Europe and in the United States. A number of art critics, writers or movie makers have studied his work, among whom Bruno Racine, Alain Fleischer, Elisa Coletta, Mirta d'Argenzio or Dominique Païni.

The latter considers Sidival Fila's artistic practice between the spatialism of Manzoni, Castellani or Fontana and the obsessive sewing and weaving work of contemporary artists. Sidival Fila also shares with Ernesto Neto and Tomas Saraceno a very contemporary view of the link and network, which alludes to actions almost ritual and shamanic, if not religious in the etymological meaning of the word, re-ligere, which means connect.

## | RECENT NEWS

| La Biennale di Venezia, 58th edition (IT)  
Giardini, 2019

| Vatican Museums, Vatican City (VA)  
Permanent installation, 2019

| Palazzo Merulana, Rome (IT)  
Solo show, 2019

| Palazzo Ducale de Sassuolo, Modena (IT)  
Solo show in dialogue with Panza di Buomo's  
minimal art collection, 2018

**Sidival FILA**

*Phoenix n°2*, 2017

Cementite and wood ash on cotton, wine trunk, sewn, on frame

330 x 180 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$70.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo 25*, 2018

Dry pigments on canvas and painted wine shoot sewn on frame

172 x 90 cm each

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$50.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo* 325, 2018

Ancient linen and wooden stick sewn, frame mounted

250 x 30 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$25.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo 122*, 2019

Dry pigments on canvas with painted and sewn tree trunk, frame mounted

65 x 50 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$10.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo 142*, 2019

Dry pigments on canvas with painted and sewn tree trunk, frame mounted

85 x 75 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$20.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo* 199, 2019

Embroidered antique flowers on linen fabric, stretched and sewn, frame mounted

79 x 58 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$14.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo 342*, 2019

Dry pigments on canvas with painted and sewn tree trunk, frame mounted

185 x 146 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$45.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo Incisione Su Carta 03, 2019*

*Mixed media : 18th century engraving on lined paper, hemp fabric, stitched on frame*

38 x 46 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$7.500,00



**Sidival FILA**

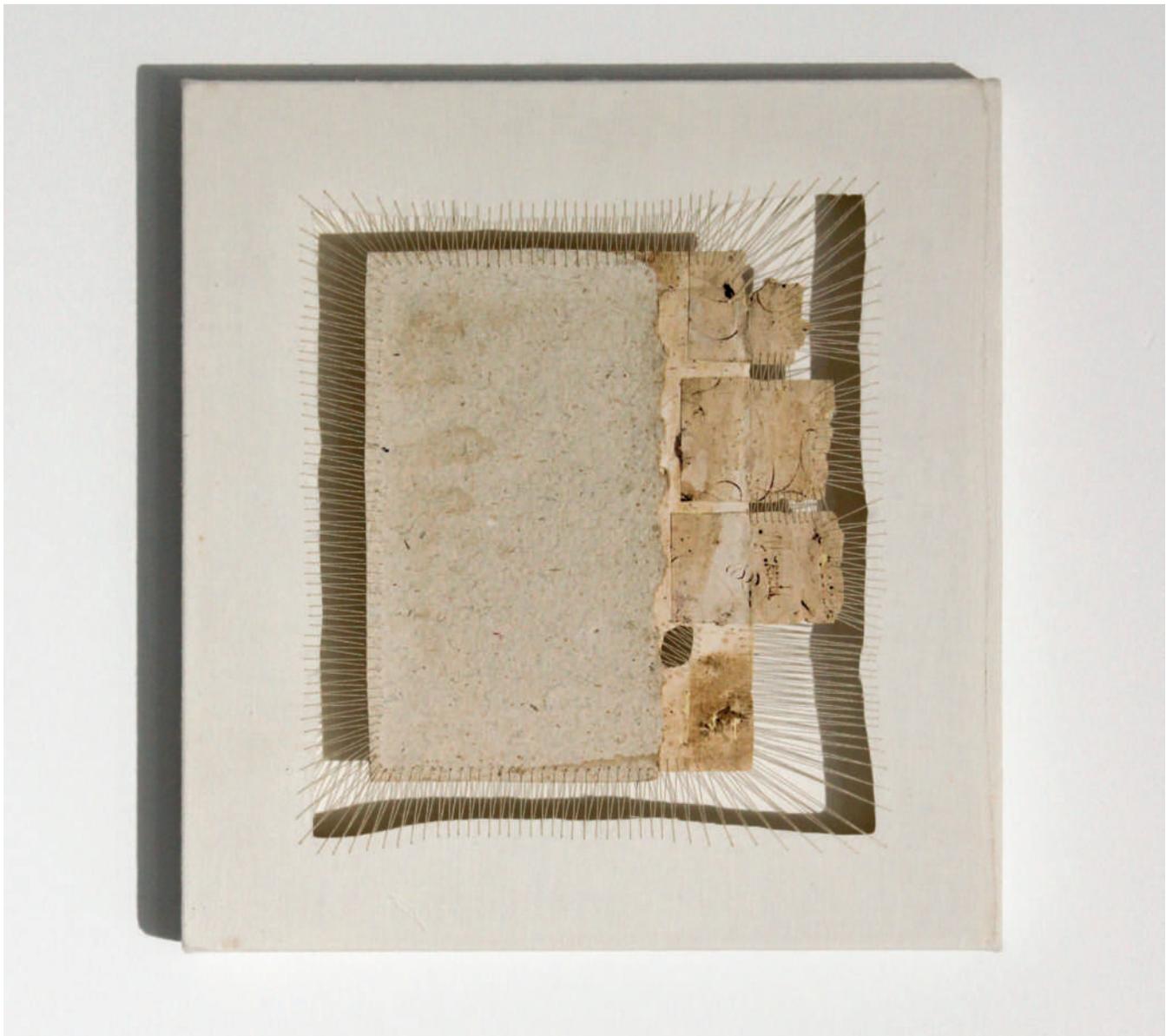
*Senza Titolo Carta Antica 03, 2019*

*Antic paper sewn on fabric, frame mounted*

36 x 34 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$5.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

*Senza Titolo Incisione Su Carta 04, 2019*

*Mixed media : ancient engraving on lined paper, hemp fabric, stitched on frame*

42 x 38 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$7.000,00



**Sidival FILA**

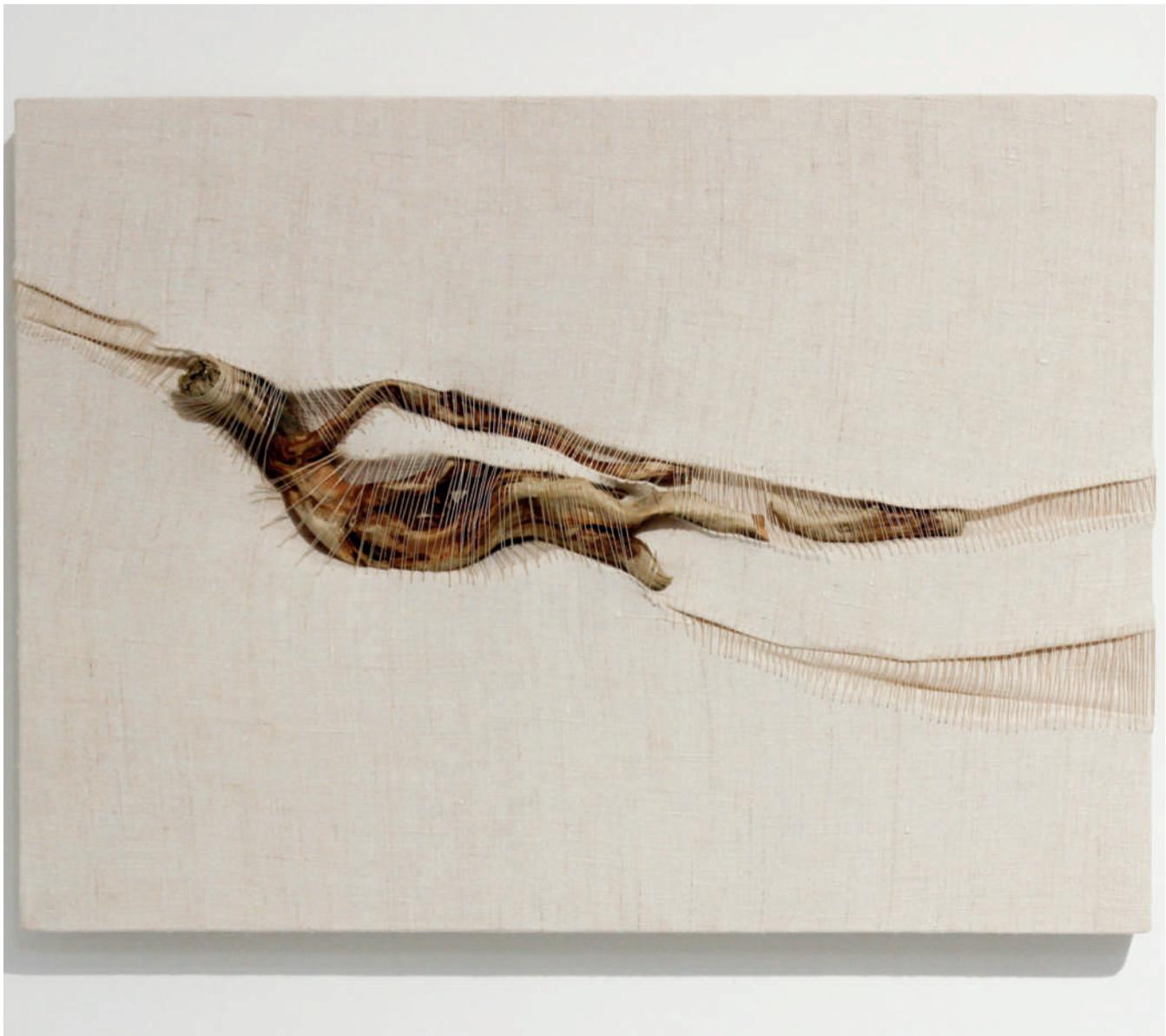
*Senza Titolo 39, 2019*

*Hand-woven 19th century linen, sewn wood*

40 x 55 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

USD \$9.000,00



## GALERIE JEROME POGGI

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Mar. – Sam. 11.00 – 19.00  
Tue. – Sat. 11 am – 07 pm

## EXHIBITIONS

Bertrand Lamarche - solo show  
October - November 2019  
Galerie Jérôme Poggi, Paris

Cape Fear - Luc Bélier collection  
January -February 2020  
Galerie Jérôme Poggi, Paris

## FAIRS

MATERIAL MEXICO  
February 7th to 10th 2020

ARCO MADRID  
February 26th - March 1st 2020

FRIEZE NEW YORK  
April 25th - June 28th 2020

## ARTISTS

Babi Badalov (AZ, 1959)  
Fayçal Baghriche (DZ/FR, 1972)  
Anna-Eva Bergman (NO/FR, 1909–1987)  
Maxime Bondu (FR, 1985)  
Julien Crépieux (FR, 1979)  
Bady Dalloul (FR, 1986)  
Larissa Fassler (CA, 1975)  
Sidival Fila (BR, 1962)  
Yona Friedman (HU, 1923)  
Nikita Kadan (UA, 1982)

Kapwani Kiwanga (CA/FR, 1978)  
Bertrand Lamarche (FR, 1966)  
Paul Mignard (FR, 1989)  
Wesley Meuris (BE, 1977)  
Sophie Ristelhueber (FR, 1949)  
Société Réaliste (FR/HU, 1982/1972)  
Djamel Tatah (FR, 1959)  
Georges Tony Stoll (FR, 1955)  
Marion Verboom (FR, 1983)  
Kees Visser (NL, 1948)