

Statement - *Escape Line*

Yayoi Kusama, Sébastien Mettraux

August 26 - October 23, 2021

Special Opening - August 25, 2pm - 10pm

Joint opening Art en Vieille Ville - 29 September, 4pm-9pm

Opening doors Art en Vieille Ville - 2 October, 11am-5pm

On the occasion of the opening of its new space in Geneva, Gowen is delighted to present a special installation. On view across the rooms of the new gallery's space at 23 Grand Rue, the exhibition features significant works by the celebrated Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama from private collections, alongside new works by Swiss artist Sébastien Mettraux.

Strange and astonishing plant, organic or mechanic forms reveal themselves as sources of inspiration, reflection, self-analysis and artistic progression.



a)



b)



c)

Yayoi Kusama

Born in 1929 in Matsumoto City, Japan, she studied painting in Kyoto before moving to New York in the late 1950s becoming, by the mid-1960s, well known in the avant-garde world for her provocative happenings and exhibitions. During her extraordinary artistic career, Kusama's practice spanned painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, performance, film, printmaking, installation and environmental art as well as literature, fashion and product design.

In 2016, Kusama was awarded the Order of Culture by the Emperor of Japan. She also appeared on TIME Magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world and named the world's most popular artist.

The artist's major exhibitions in 2021 include the first large-scale retrospective of her work in Germany, held at the Gropius Bau in Berlin.

Yayoi Kusama's wide ranging practice reflects a lifelong preoccupation with the infinite and sublime, as well as the themes of cosmic infinity and personal obsession, as found in pattern and repetition.

Kusama's recurring Infinity Nets and Pumpkins are among the most iconic artworks of the last decades. The pumpkin occupies a special place in her iconography. Kusama has described her representations of pumpkins as a form of self-portraiture.¹

Sébastien Mettraux

"Unpredictability defines Mettraux's new series *In Silico*. The artist moves away from a 15-year long figurative practice to explore new forms of expression. In observing the essence of nature, he captures a keener sense of truth".²

The artist's new series, started in 2020, focuses on structures: roots, generic forms of plants or fractal objects. "It is fascinating to know that if our civilization were to disappear completely, 300,000 years of existence would soon be erased. The plants would cover the larger cities fairly quickly, leaving little of our passage", says the artist.

¹ Text inspired by Victoria Miro Gallery

² Christel Seurat, Founder of Arteez Magazine

^{a)} Sébastien Mettraux, *Untitled (in silico n°11)*, 2021, oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm

^{b)} photo: Julien Gremaud

^{c)} Yayoi Kusama, *Death of an Illusion (detail)*, 200, mixed media (stuffed cotton fabric, wire), 750 x 200 x 130 cm