

Olga de Amaral

“Tapestry, fibers, strands, units, cords,
all are transparent layers with their
own meanings, revealing each other
to make one presence, one tone that
speaks about the texture of time.”

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*Texture of Time,
Works from 1969–2017*

Art Basel Qatar 2026

Lisson Gallery proudly announces a debut solo presentation for Olga de Amaral (1932, Bogotá) in the Middle East at Art Basel Qatar 2026, showing the Colombian artist's longstanding practice in hand-crafted textiles, through six major works dating from 1969 to 2017.

Trained in architectural drawing in her home country before studying under master weavers at Cranbrook Academy of Art in the US, Amaral returned to begin her career in Bogotá after spending time in the mountains of Colombia learning from the Indigenous tribespeople of the Andes. There, she absorbed ancient techniques and the culture of materials that have been passed down across generations and over many centuries. Through an intimate knowledge of nature and a belief in the spiritual connection bestowed upon these makers by a higher power, Amaral's early colourful and criss-crossing wool works, as seen in the 1969 piece *Cintas entrelazadas*, exhibit a kinship with the transcendental designs of pre-Columbian craftswomen.

Amaral's distinctive, pioneering artistic language combines these ancient traditions with Modernist aspirations of abstraction to create giant woven walls and spatial hangings, which speak to her architectural roots. Highlights of the Amaral display include the shimmering *Lienzo ceremonial III* (1987) described by the artist as intricately woven 'waterfalls' of colour. The loose, draped weave recalls open and complex structures such as a net or latticework, patterns abundant in the natural world. In contrast to this threaded piece, the monumental *Cesta lunar 56* (1994) is a highly complex abstract composition of gold leaf embedded into linen. Taking inspiration from soaring interiors of Catholic churches and the Colombian use of gold for adornment, this piece, like so many of

Amaral's, shows her unique perspective of transforming cultural traditions into something remarkable and new.

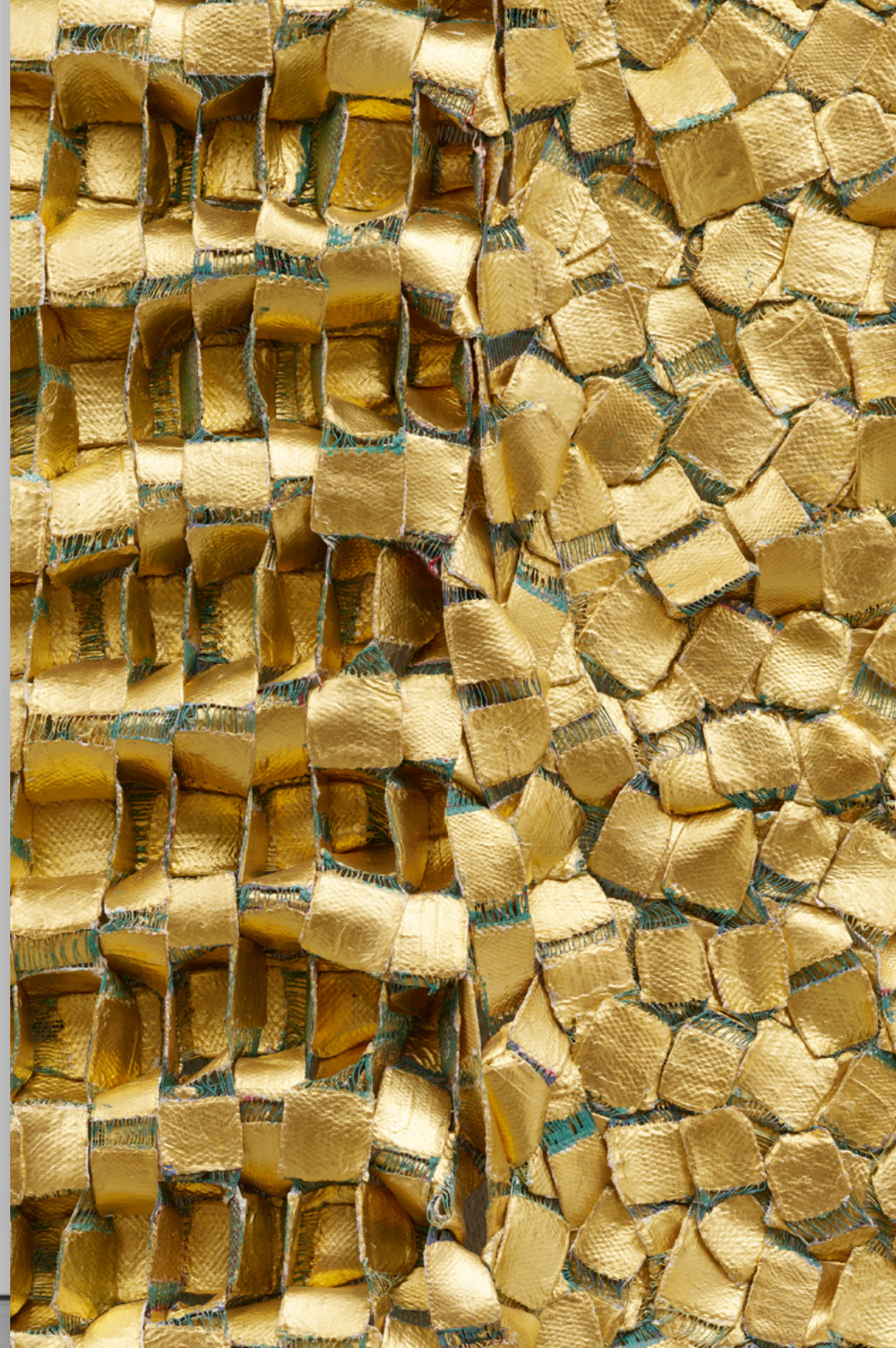
Accompanying these earlier works, three colourful pieces from the 2000s express the depth of Amaral's practice, particularly in regard to her relationship to colour and the profound variety of the techniques she employed for each work. *Policromo IV* (2006–2011) is one work from a rare series where the artist, in a Rothko-esque gesture, vertically bound a single colour between another with a perfect alignment of scale and proportion. The deep red and grey palette, intensified through Amaral's use of small tesserae of linen, sits in contrast to *Cobalto* (2014), which hovers before the eye in mesmerizing concentric square shapes in dazzling cobalt and palladium. This magical piece recalls Amaral's interest in geometric patterns found in architecture, spiritual symbols, and nature, while the blue is emblematic of the rich minerals found in the Colombian landscape. The final work, from 2017, is the elegant *Floresta B*. Derived from the Spanish word for a grove of trees, Amaral only created 5 *Floresta* works, each with a vertical progression from gold to colour, like a branch hanging down into a pool of water.

In alignment with the theme of 'Becoming' at Art Basel Qatar, the work of Amaral can be seen as a lifetime's commitment to expanding the boundaries of the textile medium, continually experimenting with different materials (linen, cotton, horsehair, gesso, goldleaf, palladium) and techniques: weaving, knotting, braiding, and interweaving threads to create spiritually uplifting experiences and enduring monuments from humble and simple origins. Inspired by the heritage of her country, dating back to Pre-Columbian times, Amaral preserves deep-rooted traditions whilst pioneering something totally unique and contemporary in each decade of her career.



Linen, gesso, acrylic, Japanese paper, and gold leaf
210.2 × 269.9 × 4.4 cm / 82¾ × 106¼ × 1¾ in

Cesta lunar 56
1994



Linen, gesso, acrylic, Japanese paper, and gold leaf
210.2 × 269.9 × 4.4 cm / 82¾ × 106¼ × 1¾ in

Cesta lunar 56
1994





Olga de Amaral’s *Cesta lunar* series, (*Moon Basket*) stands among her most evocative and celebrated bodies of work — mainly large in scale and richly textured, these pieces draw directly on the logic, structure, and cultural symbolism of basket weaving. By using the word ‘cesta’ (basket) in the title, Amaral deliberately invokes this tradition, especially in relation to the tightly coiled vessels made by Indigenous communities in Colombia, such as the Yanomami. She translates the intimate, domestic nature of a simple basket into monumental, luminous textiles evoking the presence of moonlight. Preserving the meditative labour of weaving, Amaral transforms it into a contemplative work of art, drawing the viewer towards thoughts of the celestial.

Beyond these works’ aesthetic brilliance, the *Cesta lunar* series is deeply rooted in a dialogue between cultural histories and modernism. By incorporating gold leaf and traditional weaving techniques, yet simultaneously engaging with Modernist theories of space, structure, and abstraction, Amaral transcends conventional distinctions between craft and fine art. She, therefore, positions her textiles within the broader discourse of Modern and Contemporary Art by inviting viewers into engagements with light, memory, and materiality.

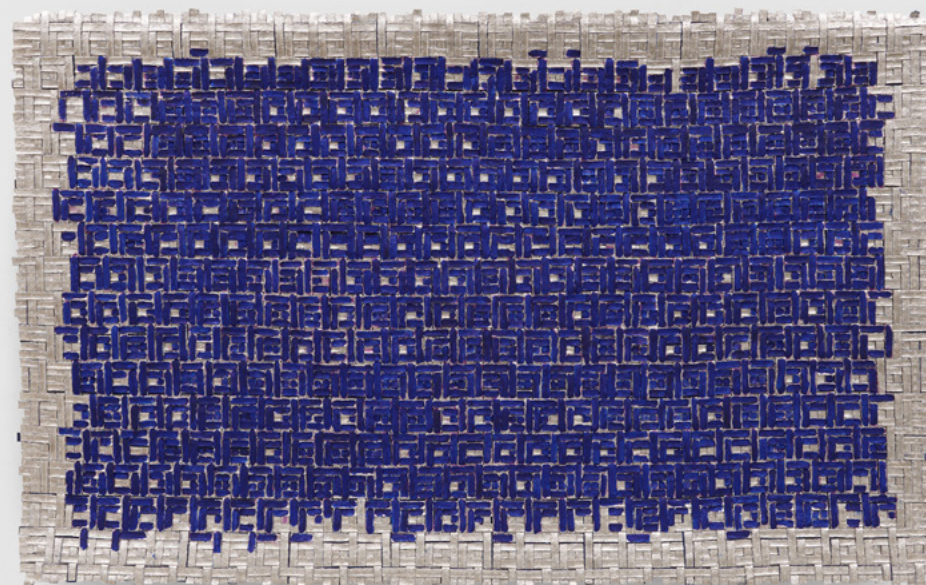
“I consider my *Moon Baskets* (*Cestas lunares*) to be a clear example of thoughts woven into a surface. They express feelings that arose when I saw the baskets made by the Yanomami (or Yanomamo), a tribe in Venezuela known also as the Children of the Moon. I was fascinated by the compact straw basketweave, the elemental enclosing shapes, the achiote-red patina, and, especially by the large, scattered circular motifs with which they decorated their baskets and their bodies. This simple act of adornment revealed to me the unity they perceived between themselves, their objects, and their activities; the unity between their minds and the moon they revere. The plaiting I used to build the *Moon Baskets* was meant to recall the elementary construction of their objects.”

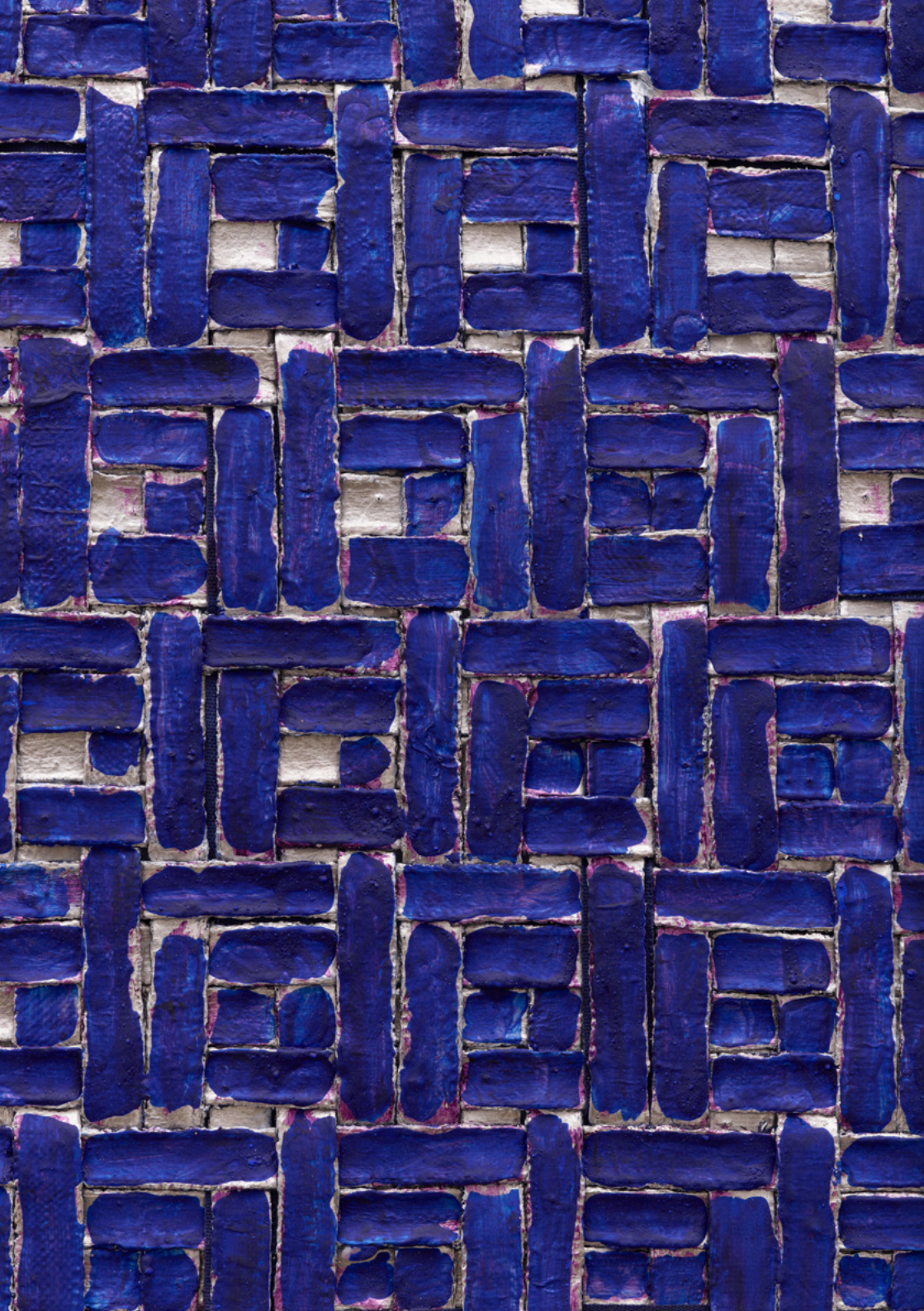
Olga de Amaral, “The House of My Imagination” [lecture], The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2003

PROVENANCE: The Artist | Private Collection
Signed, titled and dated, recto; Cesta “Lunar 56”
(Moon Basket 56) c. 210 × 270, 7 × 9 in
Olga De Amaral April 1994 signed Olga de Amaral

Linen, gesso, acrylic, and palladium leaf
102.9 × 163.2 × 2.5 cm / 40½ × 64¼ × 1 in

Cobalto
2014





The palette of *Cobalto*, with its vivid cobalt blue and luminous palladium, points to Colombia's natural landscapes as well as its art history, with references to both colonial and indigenous art. Amaral's meticulous process begins with gessoed linen woven in strips to create abstract geometric compositions such as grids or swirling forms. Other elements of fabric, thread, paper or organic materials are then incorporated, along with the application of palladium leaf. These textile constructions take on an architectural quality, as scale, surface, light and movement weave together to create works both monumental and intimate. Visually, *Cobalto* recalls Amaral's series *Mementos*. In the *Mementos*, we see the artist embrace thaumaturgy, from the Greek for the working of magic or miracles, by creating an illusion of the infinite within each concentric fragment. Similarly here, the background of *Cobalto* contains an expansive base of silver punctuated by striking blue paint, creating an illusion of movement and depth.

EXHIBITED: *The Light of Spirit*, Galerie La Patinoire Royale/
Valerie Bach, Bruselas, Belgium, 30 March 2018 – 16 June 2018,
p. 25, illustrated

Signed, titled and dated, verso; Olga De Amaral/*Cobalto*/2014

Linen, gesso, acrylic, Japanese paper, and gold leaf
223.5 × 38.1 × 2.5 cm / 88 × 15 × 1 in

Floresta B
2017





In 2017, Amaral created a series of 5 works entitled *Floresta*, meaning a small grove of trees, reflected in the works' narrow, vertical compositions of multicolored gold and painted acrylic surfaces. Resembling branches with leaves cascading down, Amaral combines a sense of the organic with the celestial. Her deft manipulation of materials lends a solid, sculptural weight to these works, which nonetheless maintain a sense movement and ephemerality evocative of the rocky natural landscape of her native Colombia. Her work has been likened to the hermetic practice of alchemy, the transformation of baser metals into gold. The intricate tile-like composition is reminiscent of Byzantine mosaics. Amaral has not shied away from remarking on the spiritual dimensions of her work, which, like the baroque church spaces of her Catholic upbringing, make use of light to invoke a quiet sense of the sacred. The artist states: "As I build these surfaces, I create spaces of meditation, contemplation and reflection."

Signed, titled and dated, recto; 1570 / "FLORESTA B" /
220 x 30 cm / 2017 / Olga de Amaral

Wool
140.3 × 59.7 × 2.5 cm / 55¼ × 23½ × 1 in

Cintas entrelazadas
1969



From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, Amaral made a series of woven wool or wool and cotton works all bearing some variant of the title *Entrelazado* (*Interlaced*), pointing to their method of construction. These works consist of thin vertical strips woven in criss-crossing patterns to create multi-coloured abstract geometric compositions which reflect the influence of Pre-Columbian textiles and stone masonry on Amaral's works from the period. Like her well-known series *Muros tejidos* (*Woven Walls*, 1969–72), large-scale free-floating wool and horsehair compositions, the *Entrelazado* works exhibit the artist's early training in architectural drafting. *Cintas entrelazadas* (*Interlaced Ribbons*, 1969) displays a vibrant palette of pinks, purples, yellow and turquoise green, one of the most colourful in Amaral's entire body of work. This work was featured in the exhibition *Woven Histories: Textiles and Modern Abstraction* alongside work by important fiber artists such as Leonore Tawney, Ruth Asawa, Sheila Hicks and Agnes Martin.

EXHIBITED: *Wandteppiche und Stelen: Zeitgenössische Textilkunst aus Kolumbien*, Kreismuseum Zons, Dormagen, Germany, 3 September 1999 – 3 November 1999 Retrospective, 1965–1996, Musée Jean Lurcat, Angers, France, 25 June 1997 – 9 November 1997, p. 29, illustrated | *Olga de Amaral: Cuatro tiempos*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Colombia, 1 November 1993 – 1 February 1994

Signed, titled and dated, verso; 9.54 1969 / *Cintas entrelazadas* / 138 × 50 / Olga de Amaral





“After 25 years this small intimate process still surprises me. I have to take these strands and weave them together again and again into larger pieces – to reach a recondite understanding.

As I build these surfaces, I create spaces of meditation, contemplation, and reflection. Every small unit that forms the surface is not only significant in itself, but is also deeply resonant of the whole. Likewise, the whole is deeply resonant of each individual element.”

Olga de Amaral

“The House of My Imagination” [lecture],
The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2003

Linen, gesso, and acrylic
160 × 198.1 × 2.5 cm / 63 × 78 × 1 in

Lienzo ceremonial III
1987



Linen, gesso, and acrylic
160×198.1×2.5cm / 63×78×1in

Lienzo ceremonial III
1987





Amaral's use of the word *lienzo*, which in Spanish means canvas, began in 1987 with the *Lienzo ceremonial* series. In the series, Amaral restricts her medium to acrylic paint on linen, leaving dyes behind. The *Lienzo ceremonial* works marked an important point in Amaral's artistic exploration – by simultaneously departing from working exclusively with the language of textile and further contextualizing her work within the painting tradition. Through her deft knowledge of textiles, the artist incorporated the vocabulary of braiding, weaving, and knotting into a unique surface that invites paint to express in ways that the flat canvas cannot.

Structurally, the *Lienzos* are composed of tightly woven cylinders of cotton, bound together into a base. From there, layers of painted threads – sometimes woven into webs – drape down like grass or water, overlapping in carefully calculated ways as to create the sensation of depth and relief along the topography of the artwork. Amaral made the works human scale to invoke a mantle that could be draped over the body. By 1998, Amaral had created more than twenty-seven *Lienzo ceremoniales* and in 2013, the *Lienzos* birthed her *Brumas (Mists)* installations. Works from this series are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, USA; the Tacoma Art Museum, WA, USA; and the Banco de la República, Colombia.

PROVENANCE: The Artist | Juan Montoya, New York | Rena Rowan and Vic damone, Palm Beach | Private Collection, Boca Ratón | Private Collection | Rago/Wright Post War + Contemporary Art, 10 March 2022, lot 108 | Acquired from the above by the present owner

EXHIBITED: *Olga de Amaral*, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France, 12 October 2024 – 16 March 2025, pp.97–99, illustrated | *Olga de Amaral*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, USA, 1 May – 12 October 2025 | Allrich Gallery, San Francisco, USA, 1987

Linen, gesso, and acrylic
78.7 × 50.2 × 1.9 cm / 31 × 19¾ × ¾ in

Policromo IV
2006–2011



Olga de Amaral's interest in geometry and spatial relationships shape the conceptual processes behind her work. In *'The House of My Imagination'*, she elaborates "weaving inherently deals with front and back, between the visible and the concealed surfaces, between outside and inside. From early on a great quantity of my work has been concerned with this fact." This fascination is evident in the sculptural exploration behind *Policromo IV*, in which she creates long cords of linen, and cuts them transversely to produce thousands of circular buttons. These are then covered in gesso and coloured acrylic paint, and sewn back together to form a complex yet harmonious visual plane. Both the individual elements and the whole fabric they form serve as a meditation on time, texture, space and harmony.

Olga de Amaral, "The House of My Imagination" [lecture],
The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2003

EXHIBITED: *VII Pueblos VII Policromos*, Bellas Artes Gallery,
Santa Fe, USA, 2011

Signed and dated, verso; Olga de Amaral / 1158 /
Policromo IV / 2011



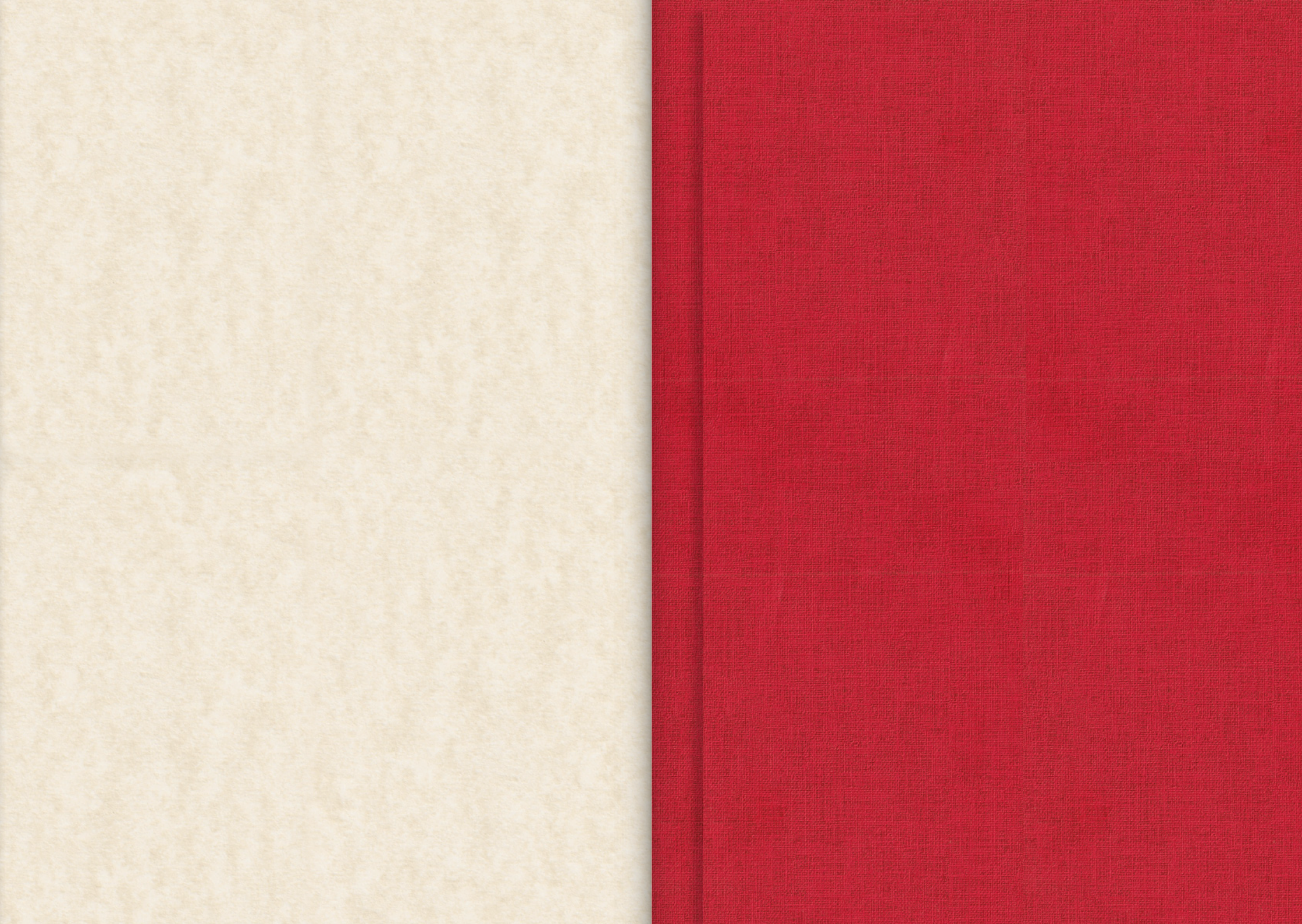


◀ INSTALLATION VIEW: Olga de Amaral, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, 11 October 2024 - 15 March 2025 © Olga de Amaral, courtesy Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain. Photography by Marc Damage. Architecture of the exhibition designed by Lina Ghotmeh.

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