

MATERIALITY

Ernesto Burgos / Christo / Thomas McDonell / Larry Poons



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Larry Poons, Installation View, 2025

Materials are often understood as passive substances, tools in service of an artist's ideas. Yet the works gathered in MATERIALITY suggest a different possibility. Across painting, sculpture, and installation, these artists treat materials not merely as a means to an end, but as active participants in the creation of meaning. Through processes of transformation, manipulation, and recontextualization, they reveal how material itself can alter perception, inviting us to see both art and the world around us in new and unexpected ways.

The exhibition brings together four artists whose practices are united by a deep engagement with the physical properties of their chosen media. Whether working with paint, fabric, resin, cardboard, or canvas, each artist pushes materials beyond their conventional roles. Familiar substances become unfamiliar. Objects we believe we understand are reimagined through acts of concealment, accumulation, compression, wrapping, cutting, or preservation. In each case, material is not simply a vehicle for expression, it becomes the subject itself.

In **Larry Poons'** works, the relationship between action and object unfolds on an expansive scale. Returning to the paintbrush after decades of experimentation, Poons works across massive rolls of canvas circling the artist in a make-shift environment that envelopes him in the creative process. Moving rapidly and intuitively, he builds thick accumulations of pigment across the canvas in energetic layers, emphasizing paint as a tangible substance with weight, texture, and physical force. The canvases initially function as a circular continuum of action, and only later does Poons isolate individual sections, cropping portions of the larger field that "declare themselves" as finished works. The final paintings reveal the unpredictable behavior of materials, the controlled transformation of them, all the while demonstrating their capacity to transcend the broader context in which they were created.



Thomas McDonell's studio
Los Angeles, 2026

Thomas McDonell's paintings emerge from an intensely physical relationship with both paint and support. Working from a former fabric warehouse, he incorporates forgotten and abandoned textiles into his recent works, often stitching disparate pieces together to create the surfaces upon which he paints. The histories embedded within these fabrics, together with their patterns, textures, and signs of use, remain partially visible beneath layers of pigment, creating a dialogue between concealment and revelation. Applying paint directly with his hands, McDonell builds dense, tactile surfaces that preserve traces of touch, movement, and pressure. The resulting works exist at the intersection of painting, textile, and object, where material histories are neither erased nor fully exposed.



Thomas McDonell installation view
New York, 2026



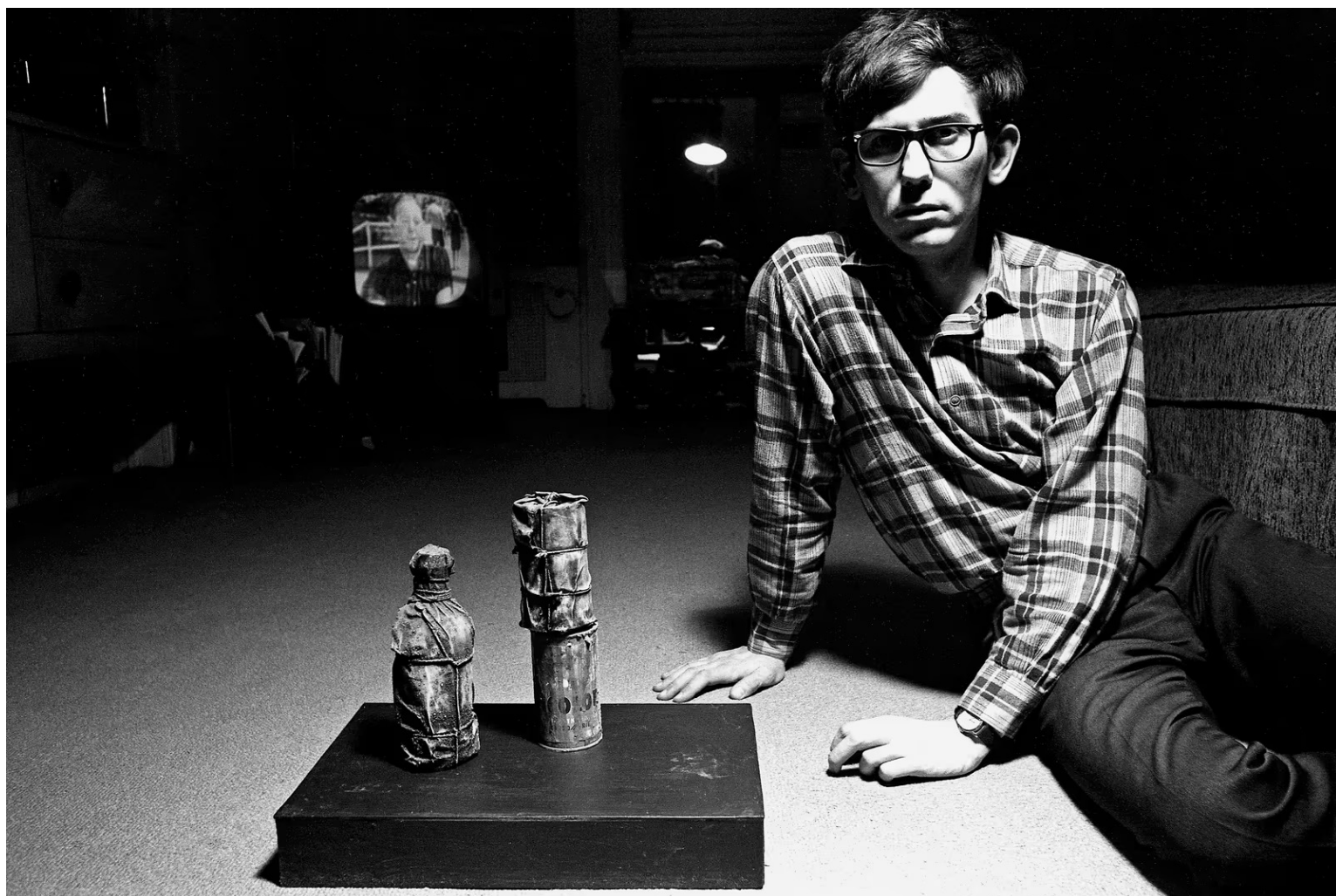
Ernesto Burgos' studio
New York, 2025

The sculptural works of **Ernesto Burgos** begin with materials often overlooked or discarded. Cardboard, fiberglass, and industrial substances are transformed through processes of reinforcement and preservation, becoming forms that seem suspended between construction and collapse. By hardening fragile structures with resin and responding to them with gestural painting, Burgos elevates the provisional and the temporary into something enduring. His works challenge conventional hierarchies of material value, demonstrating how humble substances can possess unexpected complexity, beauty, and expressive power.



Ernesto Burgos
Caligo, 2023
Fiberglass, resin, wood,
cardboard, oil paint
47 x 35 x 6

Few artists have demonstrated the transformative power of material more profoundly than **Christo**. Throughout his career, he employed fabric not as decoration or covering, but as a tool for reimagining perception itself. By wrapping everyday objects, monuments, and landscapes, Christo temporarily suspended their familiar identities, inviting viewers to encounter them anew. The fabric altered not only how these forms appeared, but how they were understood, shifting attention from function and symbolism to shape, volume, texture, and presence. Through a simple act of material intervention, objects that had become visually commonplace were rendered unfamiliar and newly visible. Christo's work reveals how dramatically our experience of the world can be shaped by material conditions, demonstrating that transformation often occurs not through changing an object itself, but through changing the material lens through which it is seen.



Christo, New York City, 1964

Photo: Ugo Mulas

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Christo
Bouteille Empaquetée, 1964
Signed and dated underneath
Fabric, rope, and twine on a wooden base
covered with plastic foil
11 x 4 inches
27.9 x 10.2 cm
Base: 5 ½ x 5 ½ inches | 14 x 14 cm

Taken together, the works in MATERIALITY demonstrate that materials are never neutral. They shape perception, influence meaning, and determine how we experience the world. Paint can become atmosphere or object. Fabric can conceal in order to reveal. Discarded materials can assume new significance. Through their investigations of matter and process, these artists invite us to reconsider the physical world not as something fixed and familiar, but as something fluid, dynamic, and open to reinterpretation.

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