ALMINE RECH

Joël Andrianomearisoa
MIRACLE

Mar 6 — Apr 19, 2025 | New York, Upper East Side

Almine Rech New York, Upper East Side is pleased to present 'MIRACLE,' Joël Andrianomearisoa's third solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from March 6 to April 19, 2025. The exhibition is exemplary of Joël Andrianomearisoa's practice which has evolved to emotions and materiality: drawing, raphia, textile, and other techniques.

Poetic Materiality

Joël Andrianomearisoa's artistic practice is defined by physical and conceptual movement. Shuttling between his studios in Antananarivo and Paris, he generates a dynamic third space of creativity that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. These two locations—one embedded in the pulse of a global art capital, the other deeply rooted in the rhythms of Madagascar—are not merely physical sites of production but resonant landscapes of memory, material, and making. His practice is an act of translation, not between languages, but between textures, histories, and emotional registers.

Andrianomearisoa's studios in Antananarivo, Madagascar, and Paris, France, have a maison-meets-atelier feel that functions as interconnected laboratories of creativity, where ideas move fluidly across mediums—textiles, paper, sculpture, and installation. Each informs the other through an intricate dialogue of materiality and methodology, yielding works that are at once profoundly personal and expansively universal. "The movement between these spaces is not just about geography," Andrianomearisoa explains. "It's about creating a language that exists between cultures, between moments of making."

This interstitial language begins with writing—a generative act that serves as a conceptual framework for his objects. For Andrianomearisoa, words are not mere inscriptions but the raw material from which his visual language unfolds. They serve as blueprints, structuring a practice that resists easy categorization and transcends the limitations of single geographical or cultural narratives.

Born 1977 in Antananarivo, Andrianomearisoa represents a generation of postcolonial artists who navigate complex cultural landscapes with extraordinary sensitivity. Trained as an architect at the École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris, his work seamlessly integrates spatial awareness with material intelligence, collapsing distinctions between visual art, architecture, textile design, and conceptual exploration.

'MIRACLE' at Almine Rech: A Meditation on the Hand and the Unseen

His upcoming exhibition, 'MIRACLE,' at Almine Rech in New York—his first solo commercial gallery show in the United States—marks a significant moment in his trajectory. Structured in three distinct movements, "*Hands*," "*Figures and Gestures*," and "*Miracle*," the exhibition is not merely a presentation of objects but an invitation into an immersive choreography of touch, form, and presence.

"The word is quite interesting, actually—this word 'miracle,'" he muses. "I think I've had it in mind for two or three years. I have architecture; I have Madagascar; I have many things around." This meditation unfolds as a layered exploration of material, memory, and the unseen forces that shape our existence.

At the heart of 'MIRACLE' is raphia—a material that transcends its function as fiber to become a carrier of history, labor, and cultural resonance. 'The material speaks,' Andrianomearisoa explains. 'It carries the whispers of Madagascar, the touch of generations, the complexity of cultural memory.' Raphia is not merely woven but charged with the weight of hands that have worked it for centuries, connecting past to present, tradition to contemporary expression.

The Power of the Hand: Creation, Resistance, and Ritual

The hand emerges as the exhibition's central motif—an instrument of creation, destruction, healing, and resistance. "It's really the power of the hand—the way it engages with material," Andrianomearisoa reflects. "It's highly technical, but also deeply symbolic. It carries history, ritual, and memory." Some works evoke the delicate precision of braiding and weaving, while others channel the raw urgency of political gestures—the raised fist, the grasp of loss, the tender touch of care.

By foregrounding the hand, Andrianomearisoa collapses the boundaries between craft and contemporary art, labor and gesture, intimacy and monumentality. His practice expands the notion of materiality, revealing its poetic dimensions—where the sensation of touch becomes a language and material a vessel for memory. The hand inscribes history onto the present through each gesture, transforming tradition into an ever-evolving dialogue.

More than a tool, the hand in Andrianomearisoa's work is a site of negotiation between past and future, individual and collective, rooted practice and radical reinvention. Through the hand, ancestral techniques are preserved and reimagined, and the ephemeral gains weight and presence. Whether shaping raphia into intricate forms or tracing the echoes of bodies in motion, his works remind us that every gesture—no matter how small—carries the gravity of cultural inheritance and the potential for transformation.

Beyond Boundaries: A Universal Poetics

"Of course, I'm from Madagascar—my blood, my name, everything," he acknowledges. "But being Malagasy is only the opening chapter. There are many chapters—on life, work, death, joy, pain." This refusal to be bound by singular definitions is at the core of his practice. While deeply informed by his Malagasy heritage, his work is not an ethnographic study but a contemporary poetics—one that speaks across cultures and histories, dissolving rigid boundaries between the local and the global, the personal and the collective.

Visitors are invited into what Andrianomearisoa calls "the playground of all possibilities"—an ephemeral space where light, wind, and human presence animate the work. "Sometimes I try to create an alphabet—one without words, without language," he says. Meaning is not imposed but felt, shifting with the movement of bodies, the passage of time, and the play of light.

Having represented Madagascar at the 2019 Venice Biennale and exhibited at institutions such as the Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo, Andrianomearisoa has established himself as a defining voice in contemporary art. 'MIRACLE' is not simply an exhibition—it is a sensory and conceptual experience that challenges viewers to reconsider the boundaries between material, memory, and artistic expression.

In a world where touch has become politicized and material histories are often erased or overlooked, 'MIRACLE' asks us to see, feel, and recognize the quiet revolutions embedded in the everyday. Through his deft manipulation of form and deep engagement with craft, Andrianomearisoa transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary, reminding us that there is always the potential for something miraculous within the act of making.

— Larry Ossei-Mensah, Curator and Co-founder of ARTNOIR