

BLACK MATTER

SANTIAGO PARRA

ST. MORITZ, 16 JUL – 12 SEP



Santiago Parra, *Untitled*, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 139 x 203 cm

“I know I am expressing myself when I paint but I can’t explain the source of the resulting gestures. I am not in any way suggesting that black matter is responsible for what I paint, rather I am interested in the relationship between the two unexplained movements, the one observed in the universe and the one traced by my brush.” – Santiago Parra

JD Malat Gallery is proud to present *Black Matter*, a solo exhibition by Colombian artist Santiago Parra in Switzerland’s leading cultural hub St. Moritz, 16 July – 12 September 2021.

Having exhibited in world leading cultural centres such as London, Mexico, Miami and Madrid, Parra is internationally recognised for his powerful black abstract paintings on raw canvas, each made with a single brushstroke. *Black Matter* marks Parra’s very first solo exhibition in St. Moritz at Galerie 10 and seeks to underline his role as a protagonist in the field of abstract painting.

The title of the exhibition presents a poetic play on the world-renowned phenomenon of dark matter. Composed of undetectable particles that do not absorb, reflect, or emit light, dark matter is believed to account for the unexplained motions of stars within galaxies. As an artist who seeks to paint with a single brushstroke governed by the unconscious mind, Parra understands *Black Matter* not only as a reflection of the unexplained motions in our galaxies, but also as a beautiful metaphor for the autonomous movement of his brush when painting.

Yearning to express himself in the freest possible way, Parra produced nine new paintings for this exhibition by following the principles of automatism. Automatism was a technique developed by the Surrealists in the early 20th Century. The Surrealists aimed to express their inner world with complete autonomy and without the control or judgement of social pressures exerted by consciousness. To work purely from the 'unconscious' mind, Parra frees himself of external influences and focuses solely on the canvas and paint in front of him. With a single stroke of the brush, Parra follows his inner voice and only stops once he feels that his consciousness is regaining control. His aim is to empower the natural creative instinct.

Parra's staple medium of a blank canvas and black acrylic paint plays an integral role in his quest for autonomous expression. The simplicity of medium, and the one brush stroke technique present the purest and most seamless channels for his expression and materialisation of the unconscious mind.

"Conceptually I am looking at them [the blank canvas and black paint] as radiographs of my inner self, pictures of my life's pulsions, the images of my inner energy, what constitutes me being alive" – Parra.

Black Matter thus poetically parallels Parra's practise with the inexplicable and unseeable forces that control the stars and galaxies. In this way, *Black Matter* not only heightens the mystery behind automatic painting, but also highlights the importance of the unconscious mind in abstract image-making.

St. Moritz has been a creative centre for many visionaries over the years. From the Giacometti family and the Alpine painter Giovanni Segantini, to intellectuals such as the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and the writer Thomas Mann, St. Moritz has since been widely recognised as a popular meeting point for diverse cultures and traditions. By bringing the work of Parra to the creative audience of St. Moritz, JD Malat Gallery hopes to unveil Parra's expanding audience as well as his ability to embody the creative spirit of the many visionaries of St. Moritz' past.

Santiago Parra is in the collections of the Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), Miami, USA, Jorge Pérez Collection, USA, Jean et Colette Cherqui Collection, France, Tanya C. Brillembourg Collection, USA, Solita Mishaan Collection, Spain, Cesar Gaviria Collection, Colombia, Kehinde Wiley Collection, USA, and Collection Lazaro, Spain.

For interviews, images and comment, please contact: press@jdmalat.com

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Tuesday – Sunday, 12pm - 7 pm