

# GALERIE MITTERRAND

## ***The Active Side of Infinity***

**Allan Villavicencio**

“The act of walking always revives our memories” and, according to Don Juan, “the sorcerers of ancient Mexico believed that everything we experience is stored as a sensation on the back of our legs. They considered the back of the legs as the warehouse for a person’s personal history. So, let us set out now and walk in the hills.” (*The Active Side of Infinity*, Carlos Castaneda)

Allan Villavicencio’s work is inspired by the relationship between bodies and landscapes. Regeneration and metamorphosis are stages leading to the ultimate landscape: the only way toward an inner journey, one that allows us to reinvent ourselves immutably. In his work, the artist attempts to represent this moment of absence, a quasi-imperceptible interval that can only exist in our imagination, between our inner and outer landscapes. He loves this contradiction, these varying layers of meaning. He materialises it at Galerie Mitterrand in mural, painting, and ceramic bas-relief, superimposing memorable souvenirs. “On this volatile space we must build the house of our gaze, the house of air and water, where music sleeps, fire keeps watch, and poets paint.” (Octavio Paz)

Allan Villavicencio’s paintings contain few elements. They are nourished by a form he uses as a background and then expands. For him, our body determines our relationship to the world; he has, therefore, drawn inspiration from the photographs by Issey Miyake, influenced by the pleats of the fashion designer Madame Grès, brought to life by Greek statues where clothing dialogues with the body like a second skin. Villavicencio searches for this relationship between body and landscape in the animated feature *Fantastic Planet*, the aesthetic of which is reminiscent of the world of *Rick and Morty*, Alejandro Jodorowsky’s *Dune*, the Surrealist works of Armand Simon, or Michelangelo’s treatment of skin as fabric: something between life and death. Allan Villavicencio manages to create a unique atmosphere.

Where “the exterior is the interior, we enter places we have never been before.” The uniqueness of his paintings: from afar, we can only see one element on the surface, underlined by elements from Aztec art using a green, purple, or dark blue palette. He uses metabolism as a metaphor, skin as a landscape, and maintains an ambiguous relationship between the body and the exterior. He formalises with photographs shot with his mobile phone. “I paint small details on the surface – a simple view from my window from where I see a small volcano – these are successions of windows, of inner windows.”

*The Active Side of Infinity* can be interpreted on different levels. Indeed, Villavicencio’s paintings superimpose elements and forms that, once peeled away, reveal traces of a landscape, a micro-universe. These paintings are themselves part of an organic network of frescoes that take over the gallery’s walls. The use of different textures, spaces, and scales invites visitors on an initiatory journey, an inner meditative journey. It immerses us in our inner selves, “inside the earth ... which is to say, inside matter itself, and at levels so deep as to be the most inaccessible”.

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