

Phyllis Stephens

The Movement of Material

Jan 12 — Feb 25, 2023 | New York, Upper East Side

Almine Rech New York is excited to host the latest series of tapestries, *The Movement of Material*, by esteemed Atlanta-based quilter and visual artist Phyllis Stephens. The first solo exhibition Stephens will be partaking in with Almine Rech, this collection of ten new works radiates a vibrant joyous energy that will undoubtedly leave audiences feeling inspired.

At the core of this exhibition is an appreciation for the energy of dance. The series alludes to the artist's own history and passion for movement. Dancing has been an integral part of her creative process and life, transforming any time and space into one of happiness and inspiration. Reminiscent of family gatherings, time spent with friends, or embracing one's own self, dance transforms an instinctual part of the human experience into a beautiful performance of life itself.

When reflecting on the series of works Stephens commented, "Dance connects you like nothing else can. Dance has power. It has influence. It has structure. It has everything you want in your life to bring happiness and joy and emotions that we don't even recognize. There's nothing like a slow dance, especially if you love that person. There's nothing like hearing your song and being able to dance to it. Most brides remember their wedding dances; the dance with their father as well as the first dance with their new husband. I'm emotionally connected to the power of dance. There is a freedom to it. Like quilt making. If you get a rhythm to it, you make something."

Stephens speaks to the undeniable parallels between dance and her famed practice of quilt-making. There is intricate attention to detail, like each step and beat matched in a choreographed dance. Stephens meticulously sorts and chooses only the best quality hands-painted fabrics, which are artworks in and of themselves, until she discovers the pieces that speak to her and the message of each quilted work. Vivid colors and dynamic patterns add their own rhythm to the composition. The expressions and body language of each subject seem to erupt before our eyes. Through Stephens's signature use of quilting, fabric transforms into movement. These narratives enliven us, speak to our souls, and stir within us the euphoric emotions of dance in bold new ways.