

ETEL ADNAN

Discovery of Immediacy

January 6 – February 19, 2022

Opening Thursday, January 6, 2022, 10:00am – 6:00pm



Etel Adnan, *Découverte de l'immédiat 34*, 2021

Galerie Lelong & Co., New York and Paris, are pleased to present *Discovery of Immediacy*, a solo exhibition of the late artist's recent work that will encompass both gallery locations. The exhibition will present new paintings and leporellos, completed in the past year before Adnan passed away on November 14, 2021.

When Adnan participated in Documenta 13 (2012) at the age of 87, she quickly drew acclaim as a master colorist, becoming known for her harmonious abstract landscapes. In 2021, the artist completely stripped her works of saturated color in her new oil on canvas series *Discovery of Immediacy*, using black and white as the primary colors. The works reference the practice of traditional ink painting that rely exclusively on black—and its many gradations through the artist's hand—to distinguish each stroke from another; hints of color remain, recalling

Adnan's oeuvre. The confinement of the pandemic had directed Adnan back to nature—leading to the artist's deep observation of the sky and planets—a pleasure she denotes in her intimate canvases.

A new series of leporellos will be presented. They are named after Erquy, a small commune in Brittany, northwestern France where Adnan and her longtime partner Simone Fattal had spent their summers. In 2021, they were interviewed by Hans Ulrich Obrist from their seaside apartment, with Adnan remarking how the commune is a straight line on the sea from her window. Fattal, in response, had shared how Adnan was so "impregnated by this straight line" that she would make a leporello each day, looking at the rocks, trees, surfers, and other people on the beach. Remarking on her view of the significance of cave paintings as the greatest accomplishment in visual art, the artist had once stated that "to paint is not just a skill, it's a moment of communication with whatever you are painting. And if you have that strength, that deep natural conviction, that the bison is as important, if not more important than you, then you can paint it. But if you think it's just a shape, then you just make a shape." The artist's conviction is similarly demonstrated in her careful depiction of subjects, scenes of nature and everyday objects captured within the frame in the form of a still life.

The title of Adnan's show and series *Discovery of Immediacy* focuses on the "now" in painting as well as in life. The exhibition is accompanied by the publication of a bilingual book, where French philosopher Yves Michaud notes that her paintbrush glides over the surface, seemingly with no time to dip in saturated color. There is an urgency to the work and the images, which relates to her knowledge of the shortness of life ahead. She had stated quite clearly in her last collection of poems: "I know I am going to die soon." In this series which she had completed in the fall of 2021 before her death, Adnan bravely removed color to concentrate on the immediate—the now—the moment in which we are fully present before we disappear.

For press enquiries, please contact Grace Hong, 212.315.0470 or grace@galerielelong.com.

About the Artist

Etel Adnan's career spanned more than six decades and encompassed a wide range of media—including painting, drawing, tapestry, film, ceramics, and leporello artist books—as it did traditions and locations. Adnan was first an author of poetry and prose, often addressing and protesting the turmoil of the Vietnam War and the Lebanese Civil War. Informing her writing and later her artwork as well, was the landscape, its own history and her emotional and physical response to it. For Adnan, the landscape was mingled with memory, especially a sentiment of displacement, as she was born and raised in Lebanon, but had lived, studied, and worked in France and California throughout her life.

Two solo exhibitions featuring Adnan's work are currently on view, *Light's New Measure*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (through January 10, 2022) and *Behind the Horizon Line*, Centro de Creación Contemporánea de Andalucía, Córdoba, Spain (through February 28, 2022). Adnan is also the main artist in the exhibition *Writing is Drawing*, at the Centre Pompidou-Metz where works by other artists from the museum's collection that combine writing and imagery are displayed in juxtaposition (through February 21, 2022) and is part of a group exhibition alongside four artists in the exhibition *Suspension/Stillness* at the Carré d'Art, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes, France (through March 13, 2022).

Adnan's first museum retrospective in the Netherlands, *Color as Language*, will be held at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam from May 20 to September 4, 2022.

In 2012, Adnan was included in Documenta (13) in Germany. Since then, numerous museums have presented solo exhibitions of the artist's work, including Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey (2021); Mudam Luxembourg - Musée d'art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg City (2019); Aspen Museum of Art, Aspen, Colorado (2019); SFMOMA, California (2018); Zentrum Paul Klee, Switzerland (2018); Institute du Monde Arabe, France (2017); the Serpentine Gallery, England (2016); Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Switzerland (2016); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Ireland (2015); Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria (2014-2015); and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Qatar (2014). Adnan's work is included in major public collections such as the British Museum, England; Centre Pompidou, France; Institut du Monde Arabe, France; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; M+, Hong Kong, China; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, Tunisia; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The artist was awarded the Lichtwark Prize in 2021.

Adnan was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1925 and died in Paris, France, in 2021.



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