

Christine Safa

La forme rêvée d'une forme vue

10 May - 13 July 2023

Opening on Wednesday 10 May at 6pm

38 avenue Matignon & 13 rue de Téhéran
75008 Paris



Visage aimé (Venise), 2023
Oil on canvas, 22 x 16 cm

The bursting onto the contemporary art scene of the Franco-Lebanese artist Christine Safa in 2021 and 2022 has drawn great notice in France and abroad. She joined the Galerie Lelong & Co. when she was 27, where she quickly found a promising position.

Safa's paintings, with their juxtaposition of colours and forms, bear witness to a distant and nostalgic memory and aim to convey recalled feelings. The artist grinds her own colours and prepares her canvas according to a precise alchemy, obtaining a quality of flatness and light that is all her own. She gives life to indefinable and evanescent images, which appear to us as if in a dream. And so, from a seen form is born a marriage of forms revealing a mountain, a tree, a horizon, with fragments of the human figure mixed in: a face, a shoulder, a silhouette.

The exhibition presents a group of recent and never-before-seen oil paintings. Most of them come from her stays in Greece, Spain, and Lebanon, during which Safa observes and immerses herself in the landscape. She then allows her memories to settle, before finally, once back in the studio, putting the image to canvas. These works, painted from memory, translate the fervour of a feeling with the help of a warm palette, proof of her Mediterranean roots. What it's like to be there, simply but fully, is what these sober and powerful paintings express with obvious empathy. A selection of works on paper made by Safa during her travels rounds out the exhibition.

"I see my paintings as tributes, fragments of memories: that which remains. And that which remains is what I paint. As I paint, I generate the outline, the shape of ruins of memories that both welcome time and are subject to it. For me, this is ultimately my experience of these inner landscapes. On the canvas, the figures settle down, fade away, and become a layer of paint. The colour becomes saturated or lets the light shine through. A discernment of emotional states, dictated by the search for a familiar light." - Christine Safa

Christine Safa lives and works in Paris. She was born in 1994 in Le Chesnay (France) of Lebanese parents. In 2018, she graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 2021 she participated in a group exhibition, invited by Etel Adnan at the Levy Gorvy gallery in Paris. In the same year she presented her first solo exhibition in Paris at the Praz Delavallade gallery. In 2022 she had a solo exhibition at the ICA in Milan (Italy), participated in a group exhibition at the Pernod Ricard Foundation in Paris curated by Anaël Pigeat and Sophie Vigourous, and in a group exhibition at the Mucem in Marseille. In 2023, Safa's paintings are exhibited at the MO.CO. in Montpellier, at the Fondation Carmignac in Porquerolles, at the FRAC Auvergne in Clermont-Ferrand, as well as at Bortolami gallery in New York.



Christine Safa in her studio. Paris 2022. Photography: Fabrice Gibert.

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