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ALICE MOGABGAB
Beirut · Brussels

March 12 - May 13, 2022

Gallery Alice Mogabgab, Beirut / Brussels, presents the exhibition

Enlightenment!

Painting, sculpture, photography.

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage.

Emmanuel KANT (1724-1804)

Enlightenment! On the occasion of her gallery re-opening, with the light back on her Beirut gallery walls* and March being the month dedicated to the women of this world, Alice Mogabgab presents *Enlightenment!*, an exhibition of recent works by Etel ADNAN, Jeanine COHEN, Houda KASSATLY, Malgorzata PASZKO, Clémence VAN LUNEN and Li WEI.

From the darkness into which 'the country of cedars' was recently plunged, our gaze today quite naturally turns to the light! It turns to the concept of hope as it was epitomised by *The Enlightenment* in the eighteenth century, when this movement gave humanity the principles of modernity, marking the beginning of the path out of obscurantism and arbitrariness. It turns to the *Nahda*, the Arab sister of the Western *Enlightenment*, born in the heart of Mount Lebanon in the middle of the nineteenth century. This cultural movement guided Levantine societies towards the fundamental principles of progress and freedom.

Even though, since 1975, the deadly violence of cannons continuously shatters our hopes, the voices of intellectuals, activists and women continue, against all odds, to denounce the crimes and express their faith in a better future. It is thus with six women artists from Lebanon and elsewhere, bearers of life and hope, in search of light, that the gallery re-opens its doors.

The exhibition starts with Houda KASSATLY's recent photographs, *Flamboyants, rue de Damas*, produced during spring 2020. In the street, deserted because of the lockdown and the crisis, the artist scrutinises with her camera the branches of the jacarandas, these flamboyant trees that illuminate the principal street of Beirut. The tightly framed shots and the use of black-and-white highlight nature's imperturbable perfection, carried by the light, beyond and above the chaos.

In the series *Terrasses* by Malgorzata PASZKO, the sunlight shines through the leafy branches of a chestnut tree and falls upon a figure lying on a floor covered in blue shadows mingled with rose-coloured reflexions. Between gravity and flight, colour and matter, presence and absence, the artist tirelessly explores the elusiveness of light.

The paintings in the series *Discovering the Immediate* by Etel ADNAN, created during autumn 2021, are like windows open onto a world that the writer-and-artist has loved and evoked, both through her pen and with her paint brushes. Still lifes, trees and mountains are drawn with a single stroke of black color and bathe in the brilliant light of the white canvas.

In Li WEI's works, mist envelops the trees' naked branches. *Listening to the Snow*, a series of landscapes painted with black ink applied onto white silk as small dots and dashed lines that dilute into an endless range of grey tones, explores the silence of a landscape or the splendid radiance of winter light.

The luminous installation *Out of Focus* by Jeanine COHEN is a geometric mural structure made with flat wooden sticks, either painted or natural. Hung vertically, the structure, which brings to mind a frame without a canvas or a window without a horizon, casts on to the wall its own coloured shadows, outlining a luminous halo in the subtle hues of the rainbow, like a haloing crown over an imaginary landscape.

Rocailles, Clémence VAN LUNEN's porcelaine sculpture, shows an assemblage of rolled up textiles, studded with badges, trinkets and shells. The iridescent light, reflected by the pearl grey metallic enamel that envelops the drapery like a precious deformed skull, hints at the meanderings of the mind.

Through the changing seasons and reflections, in these times of war without peace, light as a concept continues to be at the heart of many artists' preoccupations. *Enlightenment!* will be followed by a male version: an exhibition of recent works by Samuel COISNE, Alberto CONT, Javier FERNANDEZ, Patrice GIRODA, Philippe DE GOBERT and Samir TABET.

It is with our gaze turned to the hope for a calm, inspired and luminous future, for Lebanon and for the planet, that we are pleased to welcome you between 12.00 and 18.00 on Saturday March 12 2022, the day of the opening - a day of Enlightenment!

The exhibition continues until Friday May 13, 2022. Gallery's opening hours Tuesday - Friday, 12.00 - 19.00, or by appointment.

Alice Mogabgab.

*In July 2021, Electricity of Lebanon abruptly stopped its power generation and plunged the country into total darkness. The Lebanese people were then at the mercy of private providers in their respective neighbourhoods, smugglers operating on behalf of the political castes in power, and for themselves. Accepting to work under such conditions of subservience to corruption, while fueling it, is contrary to the values upheld by the artists and the gallery owner. A temporary closure was therefore necessary, until the installation of a new energy source - from the sun - could illuminate the space and the exhibitions.