

# Petzel

## ISABELLA DUCROT

### *No Words*

January 10 – February 17, 2024  
35 East 67th Street

*“You can make a drawing of two people in love, but the tenderness doesn’t always come out. I’m trying to make tenderness come out, tenderness and the possibility of touch.”*

—Isabella Ducrot

Petzel is pleased to present *No Words*, an exhibition of new works on paper by Rome-based artist Isabella Ducrot. The show marks Ducrot’s debut solo exhibition with the gallery and will be on view from January 10th to February 17th, 2024, at Petzel’s third floor Upper East Side location at 35 East 67th Street. These works, an extension of her “Flowerpot” and “Tendernesses” series, continue to develop integral threads through Ducrot’s practice: a reverence for sensuality and touch, a sense of respect for textiles and paper, and an obsession with repetition and the quotidian.

Born 1931 in Naples, Italy, Ducrot began her artistic career later in life, and approaches her works foremost with a veneration of the tactile and material. Working with antique papers sourced from over four continents—from South America to China and Japan, via France, Tunisia, Morocco, India, Pakistan, and Tibet, dated from the 9th to the 20th centuries—her compositions bloom from this primary contact with the fibers. Ducrot says of this encounter: *“I cannot be indifferent to the paper: it gives me half the work.”* For these series, Ducrot has selected paper which bears paradoxical qualities: both light in weight, and semi-transparent in appearance, some of these sheets were historically used to preserve medieval manuscripts. Durable yet delicate, strong yet scrim-like, these sheets act as abiding texts, and the pith from which Ducrot grounds her pictures. In revealing the nature of the paper, and centering its hidden contents, Ducrot foregrounds the material, allowing it to become part of the image.

In Ducrot’s “Flowerpot” series, soft pigments fill rounded vases, framed with metallic boundaries, rippled in light and shadow like mountainous terrain. Interested in ceramics and the decorative arts, Ducrot presents a study of volume, color, and texture, through powdery pastels and wispy stems, reaching out like open arms. Her “Tendernesses” offer lyrical portraits of intimacy, her subjects wrapped in polka-dotted fabrics and their own bodies. Under glowing moons and spiked, golden halos, Ducrot’s cocooned subjects crumple under their shared tendernesses, as the paper which gives them skin and breath crumples before the viewer.

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*No Words* offers not only a meditation on “*the possibility of touch*,” but also on the silence of logic in the face of images, particularly that of beauty, as a refuge from pain, despair, and horror. “*The land is ill, nature is ill*,” Ducrot says, “*We are afraid, and we do what we can do, not for eternity, but for today, as long as today is generous with us*.” *No Words* offers a moment of communion with the earth and our bodies. Celebrating the raw, pliable materials from which we create images, Ducrot’s luminous surfaces invoke transformation and regeneration.

Petzel Gallery is located on the parlor floor and third floors of 35 East 67th Street New York, NY 10065. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at [ricky@petzel.com](mailto:ricky@petzel.com), or call (212) 680-9467.