

Sfeir-Semler Gallery is proud to announce a solo exhibition of the Lebanese artist, Etel Adnan. The opening will take place on Friday 28 October from 7 to 9 pm. At 8 pm, the Berlin actress, Angela Winkler, will read from the artist's literary work, including excerpts from her most recent book, *Night*, published this year with Nautilus Verlag.

At 91 years, Etel Adnan cannot be defined with a single attribute. Her life's work has spanned into art, literature, poetry, and philosophy. Born in Beirut in 1925 to a Greek mother and Syrian father, Adnan found herself at the intersections of different cultures, languages, nationalities and religions. In 1949, she left Beirut for Paris in order to pursue a philosophy degree at the Sorbonne, only to then to move to Northern California, a place that remained her home and inspiration for many years. Despite the geographical distance, Adnan's literary work was deeply rooted in her native country, especially when Lebanon suffered a devastating 15-year civil war. Her literary works gave a heart wrenching and sincere view of the conflict, making her one of the most prominent voices for peace in the region.

Her prose and poetry were both controversial and cherished, yet it was her painting that brought Adnan to the world's attention. She first became dedicated to painting in the early 60s. Hesitant to identify herself as a painter, Adnan left her early canvases unstretched, creating combinations of colors and forms. Her work evolved to portray more landscapes, yet simplifying the image to its purest state of shapes and contrasting palletes. The small format of the canvas remained constant in her work emphasizing an intimate inner tranquility present in her paintings. Like Cezanne's Mount Victoire, Adnan found her muse in Mount Tamalpais near San Francisco, and later in the sunsets over the Mediterrean. She preoccupied herself with these landscapes, highlighting the honesty and simplicity of nature, when the world around her was in turmoil.

Our current exhibition brings together works by the artist across a wide range of media, which includes new paintings, drawings and tapestries. We will also show a selection of leporellos, Japanese inspired paper concertinas, whereby the artist merges the written word, image, and form. On the ground floor, we are showing an 8mm film shot by the artist in the early 70s of the urban landscapes of New York. Along side the film is a projected interview with artist and Hans Ulrich Obrist, the director of the Serpentine Galleries and a long time supporter of the artist launching her first major solo show in a British institution earlier this year.

Despite being a painter for over four decades, Etel Adnan did not receive recognition until 2012, when at 87 years old, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev exhibited her work at Documeta 13 in Kassel. Since then, the artist's career has soared, making her a sensation in the art world. She has had solo

exhibitions at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London (2016), L'Institut du Monde Arab, Paris (2016), Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2015), Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2014), and Mathaf Museum, Qatar (2015), among others. Adnan has also participated in group shows such as the Sharjah and Istanbul Biennials (2015), The Whitney Biennial, New York (2014), "*Here and Elsewhere*" at the New Museum, New York (2014), Documenta 13, Kassel (2012), and at the British Museum, London (2006). Parallel to this, the artist's literary work has been widely published. Her latest book, *Night*, was launched in 2016. The artist currently lives and works in Paris.

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