

Christine Safa

*These are the days I (have) love(d)*

3 May–8 Jun 2024

The Upstairs

---

Bortolami Gallery is pleased to present *These are the days I (have) love(d)*, a solo show by French-Lebanese artist Christine Safa. The exhibition includes a series of new paintings; the physical manifestations of recollections, sensations, and remembrances past.

Painted from the memories of time spent in and around the Mediterranean, Safa returns to the studio, distilling these instances, rendering intimate landscapes, portraits of friends, lovers, and reminisced occasions. At certain moments, the human body sublimates into landscape—a shoulder becomes a mountain, or the horizon blends with a profile—moving in and out of one another. In Safa's words:

*"I see my paintings as tributes, fragments of memories, that which remains. That's what I paint, what's left. As I paint, I give birth to the silhouette, the shape of the ruins of memories which both greet and are the victims of time; which for me means my experience of these interior landscapes."*

Layered imagery adjoins distinct recollections as Safa refracts them through her body and mind in her attempt to record them as precisely as she can. Each title furthers our understanding of the artist as both painter and poet, acting as poems unto themselves, enhancing the meaning she seeks through paint and pigment.

Safa's use of color and texture play a pivotal role in achieving the dreamy poeticism in her work and harken back to the influence of 15th century Italian painting and its relation to frescoes. She achieves her vibrant pallet by mixing pure pigment with oil, and creates plaster-like surfaces with rabbit skin glue and marble powder. This chalky, thickened substrate allows her to probe the canvas, to carve and scrape in her search for the image. The process is rightfully a slow one, as Safa forever encapsulates these fleeting moments into canvas, and her practice thus reveals itself as the poetic investigation and recollection of time passed.

Christine Safa (b. 1994, Le Chesnay, France) lives and works in Paris. She received the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts Diploma. In 2021 she was invited by Etel Adnan to participate in a group exhibition at Levy Gorvy Gallery in Paris. Solo exhibitions include Frac Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France, 2022; Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France, 2022; and ICA Milano, Milan, Italy, 2022.