

## Etel Adnan

### *Au cœur du silence*

*Works on paper*  
1960–2021

March 19<sup>th</sup> – May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026

38 avenue Matignon  
75008 Paris



*California*, 1982  
Watercolor on paper, 22.5 × 30 cm  
© The Estate of Etel Adnan. Courtesy Galerie Lelong

*“Perhaps it is because of my early studies in literature and my intense interest in poetry that I have always been drawn to drawings, watercolours and works on paper in the field of art. I would even say that there is a certain mystery associated with the apparent fragility of a medium that can convey powerful flashes of inspiration.”*

Etel Adnan

Etel Adnan began drawing in California in the autumn of 1959 on small scraps of paper, using leftover pastels and coloured pencils. Her friend Ann O’Hanlon, a colleague and art teacher at Dominican College in San Rafael, had practically ordered her to take up drawing if she wanted to continue teaching aesthetics. When she saw the first results, Ann was full of admiration, and told Etel that she ultimately had nothing to teach her and that she could embark on a career as an artist.

For 60 years, Etel Adnan has continued to work on paper. Using Indian ink, pencils, oil pastels, watercolours and gouache, she has experimented with numerous techniques, applying them to white or coloured sheets, leporellos, and even Asian papers. Mountains, of course, but also cosmic abstractions, bowls of fruit, flowers, horizons, geometric collages... Subjects abound in this essential part of her work, which has been relatively little shown, particularly the works produced during her first stay in America.

Two tapestries are also included in the exhibition, since it is important to remember that they were made by craftsmen based on a “cartoon” produced on paper by the artist in preparation for weaving.

To mark Etel Adnan's centenary last year, Galerie Lelong in New York organised the first retrospective of her work on paper in the United States. This new exhibition in Paris offers visitors the chance to discover some works that have never been exhibited before.

The Lebanese-American artist, poet and essayist Etel Adnan was born in Beirut in 1925. Since documented in 2012, her pictorial work has gained international recognition. Etel Adnan's works feature in numerous collections, including the MNAM – Centre Pompidou, Paris; Mathaf, Doha, Qatar; MoMA, New York; M+, Hong Kong; Royal Jordanian Museum, Amman; MACAM Tunis; Sursock Museum, Beirut; Institut du monde arabe, Paris; British Museum, London; Tate Gallery, London; World Bank Collection, Washington D.C.; National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; SFMOMA, San Francisco; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

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