

GALERIE SFEIR-SEMLER

ADMIRALITÄTSTRASSE 71 · D-20459 HAMBURG · TEL +49-40-37 51 99 40 · FAX +49-40-37 51 96 37 ·
galerie@sfeir-semler.com

ETEL ADNAN
new works
&
FLORIAN THOMAS
time after time

Sfeir-Semler Gallery Hamburg opens two new exhibitions in its German spaces: Florian Thomas takes over the first-floor gallery with *time after time*, an exhibition including a series of paintings, while the gallery showcases new works by Etel Adnan in the ground floor space, on the occasion of the Lichtwark Award.

ETEL ADNAN (*1925, lives and works in Paris): On the occasion of the 2021 Lichtwark Prize awarded to Etel Adnan, Sfeir-Semler presents a selection of new paintings, tapestries and leporellos, in celebration of the artist's extraordinary career. The canvases on the walls feel familiar, with Adnan's signature small-format and bright-colored paintings. She has however recently produced a surprising new series in which colors have given way to monochrome, and abstract compositions have turned into figurative natures-mortes, as if themes and expressions usually reserved for her leporellos have crept on canvas. Hung side by side, they reveal the fragility of the 96-year-old artist while at the same time, conveying the strength of her spirit, and the perfection of her work.

FLORIAN THOMAS (*1966, lives and works in Munich): A woman, blinded by the sun, poses next to an African head statue; a girl rides a hippo; an oversized cat majestically sits against a pink background; street scenes, cars, animals, people... the subjects in Thomas' paintings reveal their origins: postcards, personal pictures, analog photos, or digital ones found on the internet. They become templates for the artist's paintings, and not only do they supply him with subjects and themes, but he also details the artificiality of the image, consequently revisiting the old debate on the respective attributes of paintings and photography.

Executed with great precision, the paintings oscillate between representationalism and abstraction. While most of the exhibited works are committed to figuration, the artist's most recent formal expression focuses on the use of opposing movements in a single work, merrily mixing abstraction, and figuration.

The paintings reflect the spirit of times, the behavior of people, their relationship to objects and nature: the monumental painting *Lu-Fu* from 2021 celebrates its subject-cat's natural beauty. But at the same time, it hints at people's treatment of animals, and the entertainment aspect of the presentation of possessions. Thomas also touches on the theme of restitution with ironic detachment: the painting *time after time* from 2021 is based on a tourist photograph, and reflects on numerous appropriations throughout the African continent.

The variety of formats he uses underscore Thomas' flair for pictorial space and composition. His color universe is vibrant and seductive. Florian Thomas' paintings allow the viewer to speculate over stories, and to get lost in a world that is neither reality nor a representation of it, but a world of images that is one's own.