

Artist: **Adelheid de Witte**

Exhibition:

Dates: **26th April - 27th May**

**Cadogan Gallery**

**87 Old Brompton Road, London, SW3 7LD**

Adelheid de Witte is an autodidact, painting behind closed doors for five years before beginning to show her paintings in exhibitions in recent years. Representation proving too restrictive, her works have become progressively more abstract as her practice has developed. De Witte's works on canvas, combining atmospheric explorations of light and shadow with calligraphic lines in bursts of colour, will be shown for the first time by Cadogan in April 2023.

Her abstract landscapes delegate figuration to the background. With elements that vaguely recall real objects or phenomena in the natural world, she pushed the boundaries of the two-dimensional space provided by the canvas further away. The landscape evoked by her cloud-like structures and mysterious planes, fades out and eventually evaporates. It is left to the viewer to project their own notions of landscape onto the incidence of light represented.

Adelheid De Witte's way of working is characterised by an intuitive process, a quest in which the artist allows herself to be surprised by the rawness of her materials, the emptiness and an unpredictable jumble of movements. De Witte works layer by layer, with alternating dark and light paint applied, scratched, rubbed and reapplied. Line figures are imposed on top of this base, applied in one movement using different materials, from pastel and chalk to crayon and charcoal. Bright colours frame muted landscapes or flash in and out of the paintings. The result is intriguing but also melancholy, drawing the viewer in.

De Witte has exhibited regularly in Europe, in particular in her home-country of Belgium including regular solo shows since she began exhibiting in 2014. Her show with Cadogan will be her first solo show in London.

### **About the Artist**

Adelheid de Witte is a self taught artist. Taking inspiration from her time living and working in Barcelona, her works have been exhibited regularly across Europe and her works are held in numerous private collections.

### **About the Gallery**

Cadogan is an independent contemporary art gallery with spaces in London, Hampshire and Milan. For over forty years our mission has been to represent, support and curate the work of a diverse roster of emerging and mid-career artists. Since joining the gallery in 2014, Freddie Burness has added a new international perspective to the rich history and distinctive approach of the gallery's programme.

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Representation turned out to be too restrictive for De Witte and so figuration disappeared into the background to finally dissolve into cloudy structures and vibrating line figures.

From her research into light and shadow effects as well as colour creation, abstract landscapes emerged in which occasionally elements appear that vaguely recall objects.

De Witte's fascination with materials, but also to her urge to break out into space. Today she pushes the boundaries of the two-dimensional surface further and further away with her often larger-format canvases. The landscape fades out and eventually evaporates. It is up to the viewer to project a landscape in the clouds and the incidence of light.

Contrasting shapes and colours, the confrontation between old and new, West and East intrigue the artist. Sources of inspiration include antique art, pietas, wooden statues of saints condemned to abstraction by the hands of time, paintings from the Romantic period, objects from De Witte's childhood, prints of Japanese woodcuts and Japanese pattern books. In these Japanese art forms it is mainly the use of two contrasting colours within one monochrome movement that fascinates and inspires the artist.

De Witte works layer by layer, wet in wet. Dark layers are alternated with various transparent lighter layers. Line figures in different materials (wasco, pastel chalk, charcoal, ...), always in one movement, are applied in between and on top. Paint is rubbed or scratched away again. The result are slightly estranging works in magical-realistic colours, rather opaque, as if they were closed off by a 'dirty' layer of varnish, though clearing up here and there. De Witte's more recent works are remarkably lighter in tonality. Bright colours frame abstract landscapes or flash by like fireworks. The works have something festive: calligraphic lines dance gracefully up and down in the air, like the rhythmic ribbon of a gymnast.

De Witte does not necessarily apply colour with a brush or not even with a binder mixed into paint for that matter. She also rubs pure pigment into canvas, puts it into tubes and lets colour light up in neon sculptures.

Adelheid De Witte's way of working is characterised by an intuitive process, a quest in which the artist allows herself to be surprised by the rawness of her materials, the emptiness and an unpredictable jumble of movements. Something happens. Rather out of time, or somewhere in a twilight zone. De Witte's work is crackling. She surprises with a stunning window on reality.