

**Carole Benzaken**

*Éclats*

**March 16 - May 18, 2024**

91, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris 8<sup>e</sup>



© Carole Benzaken  
200 x 150 cm

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present *Éclats*, Carole Benzaken's tenth solo exhibition since their collaboration began in 1993. This exhibition brings together a previously unseen selection of paintings and drawings on laminated glass, in line with her ongoing research into image and representation. For over thirty years, the artist has chosen a resolutely "modern" approach: she invents solutions involving a renewal of the timeless medium of painting, oscillating between figuration and abstraction, erasure and unveiling of images.

Looking at the exhibited works – which could be described as abstract, imbued with intense vitality and chromatism – we are surprised to learn that Carole Benzaken's early years were marked by figurative imagery. After studying at the *École nationale supérieure* in Paris, from 1985 to 1990, she began her career painting colorful, frontally arranged tulips, covering each canvas with their petals. At a time when conceptual art dominated the international art scene, the artist was already taking a bold stance by choosing as her subject an image in its simplest signifier. Despite her early success and wanting to avoid being "put in a box", the artist decided to abandon this highly codified motif in favor of what would become the essential vector of her practice: a quest for a free painting style, one that she likes to call "nomadic", entailing constant technical (India ink, acrylic, pencil, oil) and stylistic shifts.

Carole Benzaken first experienced this mobility by broadening her geographical horizons: she went to live in the United States, in Los Angeles, for seven years. "Over there, everything was wide open. There was no hierarchy between different mediums," she said. Since then, the artist has sought to surpass representation in painting by questioning its limits. She collects a wealth of images, which she interprets and juxtaposes in subtle compositions. In a close relationship between earth and flesh, the artist – who paints on the ground – digs into the image, looks for the crack, explores the surface

and depth to create geometrical impacts. All chromatic ranges merge in this optical vacillation, the bodies, the places, "landscape being a type of flesh, a space made of fluid interplay and structuring geometries," declares the artist. A pictorial earthquake thus emerges from the fragmented landscape.

Carole Benzaken's œuvre follows in the footsteps of "les modernes", playing as much with folk art as with the deconstruction of representations, by questioning the very materiality of painting. While they are sometimes distant in their compositions, each work exhibited has the characteristic of containing "all this, all at once". These internal movements also extend beyond the pictorial field, the viewer's eye bouncing from one painting to the next between different worlds, from the most abstract to the most representative. Visual echoes circulate from one work to another within the exhibition space, like particularly vital music, offering no respite.

Each composition asserts itself as it slips away in a complex woven interplay, like a recomposed mosaic crafted from broken mirror fragments. In these *Éclats* made of light and geometry, she gives us both *the skin and the skeleton of a plural world*, between elusive mobility and depth: the vibration of the present.

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**Born in Grenoble in 1964, Carole Benzaken lives and works in Paris (France).**

A 1990 graduate of the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Carole Benzaken made a remarkable entrance on the art scene with her exhibition at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in 1994.

Winner of the 2004 Marcel Duchamp Prize, she presented the exhibition Search for the New Land at the Centre Pompidou's Espace 315. Carole Benzaken's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including a solo show at the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme in Paris in 2011, at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nancy in spring 2014 and at the BWA Contemporary Art Gallery in Katowice, Poland in autumn 2015. More recently, she has also had a solo exhibition at the prestigious Carré Saint-Anne in Montpellier and at the Museum Slaskie in Katowice, Poland in 2016. The Musée de Louviers devoted a major solo exhibition to her in 2017. In 2019, her work will be the subject of solo exhibitions in the spring at the Abbaye de Cluny - invited by the Centre des Monuments Nationaux, and during the summer at the Château de Tournon in Tournon-sur-Rhône. In 2024, Carole Benzaken will be the guest artist at the eighth edition of Dialogues Inattendus at the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris.

She has recently had significant exhibitions in prestigious institutions, including *Invitation au Voyage - 15 ans du Prix Marcel Duchamp* in 2015 at La Centrale (Belgium), *Miss Dior* in 2015 (Beijing, China), *Une spiritualité au féminin* in 2013 at the Musée d'Art Sacré (Dijon, Musée du Hiéron, Paray-le Monial, France), *Palmiers, palmes et palmettes* in 2013 at the Musée Masséna (Nice, France), *Elles@centrepompidou* in 2009 at the Centre Pompidou (Paris, France), *Contemporary Cool and Collected in 2007* at the Mint Museum of Art, (Charlotte, USA), *Eye on Europe: Prints, books and multiples, 1960 to now* in 2007 at MOMA (New-York, USA).

Carole Benzaken's work can be found in prestigious public and private collections, including the Royal Academy of Arts (London, UK), the Museum of Modern Art (New York, USA), the Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val de Marne (MAC VAL-Vitry, France), the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (Alsace, France), le Musée national d'art moderne (Paris, France), le Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (France), le Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (Midi-Pyrénées, France), la Fondation Cartier (Paris, France), le Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain d'Ile de France (France), Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (Auvergne, France), la Collection Fondation LVMH (France).

His work has also been the subject of a number of public commissions, including a tapestry for the Mobilier National in 1998, stained glass windows for the Church of Saint-Sulpice in Varennes-Jarcy in 1997-2001, and a monumental backlit glass polyptych for the hall at 32, rue Blanche in Paris, scheduled for 2009-2012.

Carole Benzaken has won numerous awards and distinctions, including the Albert Rocheron Prize in 1991, the Chevalier des Arts et Lettres in 1998, the Officier des Arts et des Lettres in 2008, the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 2011 and the Officier de l'ordre national du Mérite in 2023.

Carole Benzaken has been represented by Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels, since 1993.

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March 16 - May 18, 2024

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March 2 - April 6, 2024

**Brussels**

**Eugene James Martin**

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**Romana Londi**

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