

Christine Safa and Nathan Bertet

Opening night: Wednesday 9 March, 6-8 pm

Exhibition dates: 10 March - 9 April 2022



Sapling is pleased to present *Christine Safa and Nathan Bertet*, an exhibition curated by Elie de Gourcuff.

Christine and Nathan are two artists in love, who thrive while making art alongside one another. This exhibition explores the balance Safa and Bertet have discovered in developing their practice while nurturing romantic love. Driven by personal conceptual aims, each artist's work speaks to their internal world, while the context of their creation bears witness to their togetherness.

The couple met while studying at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, in James Reilly's workshop. They shared ground on painting techniques, literature, and philosophy. When Christine - having started the course a few years earlier - graduated before Nathan, they missed working side-by-side. So when Le Marais offered a residency to both of them, they headed to the French countryside from September to December 2021. Surrounded by trees on historic grounds, they shared a studio again, this time as artists out in the world. The exhibition draws together a group of works made during this time.

Christine Safa is a French artist born to Lebanese parents. She graduated in 2018 from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and continues to live and work in the city. Her practice is informed by her Lebanese roots, and more specifically by her connection to Beirut, where she spent long periods during her childhood and where she frequently returns to visit.

Her paintings speak of family and home from a distance. Conveying remembered sensations and stories retold orally by her parents, Safa integrates family memories with extensive research into the historical period of those memories. She draws from geopolitical texts, poetry, essays, and her own travels in the Middle East. In addition to capturing a sense of home, Safa seeks to represent unique elements of the landscape and atmosphere encountered in Lebanon, focusing light and air as it envelops faces and bodies, and as it is reflected by, or submerged in, the Mediterranean Sea.

Christine Safa's first institutional solo exhibition is currently on show at the ICA Milano (*C'era l'acqua, ed io da sola*, 18th January- 6th March 2022). She comes to Sapling for her first showcase in London after a first solo exhibition at Praz-Delavallade in Paris (*L'habitude du ciel*, 6 Nov 2021-15 January 2022). In 2021, Safa was also included in *Horizons*, a group exhibition curated by Etel Adnan at Lévy Gorvy gallery, in Paris.

Nathan Bertet is a French artist completing his final year at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He lives and works in Palaiseau, France.

Bertet arrives at this deep colour by layering dozens of hues across the colour spectrum and then overlaying them with a deep burgundy-purple. Colour reaches out from under the surface, the eye detecting light beneath darkness. It can take weeks to build the layers. The final resulting monochrome contains the marks of a moment, built like a standing stone on a windy beach, gathering sand on one side as the wind blows. Inspired by textual philosophical and literary references, including the writings of Vladimir Jankélévitch and Henri Bergson, Nathan Bertet's paintings and works on paper open a space between pure abstraction and figuration, where the analytical idea and sympathetic emotion can coexist.

In 2021, Bertet exhibited deep purple monochromes in his first degree show, titled *Remonter la pente (Moving up the slope)*. This is his first show in London.

Get in touch:

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