

# ALBERT BITRAN

## *Intérieur-Extérieur*

OPENING: THURSDAY MAY 21 - 7-9 PM

EXHIBITION: MAY 21 - JULY 4, 2026

GALERIE DIANE DE POLIGNAC - 2BIS RUE DE GRIBEAUVAL 75007 PARIS



Albert Bitran in his studio, rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, Paris, France, 1973. Photo : Frédéric Barzilay

Albert Bitran (1931-2018), born in Istanbul, moved to Paris in 1948 to study architecture. It was in the artistic excitement of post-war Montparnasse that he developed his work as a painter.

Diane de Polignac Gallery, in collaboration with the Albert Bitran Archives, dedicates its first exhibition to the artist's *Intérieur-Extérieur* period, covering the years 1970 to the early 2000s. At the peak of his art, Bitran explores the relationship between form and colour to create a space that is at once complex, open, and fragmented.

The works from this period are characterized by a resonance between geometric rigor and the dynamism of the gesture. Fundamental

structures – shapes, obliques, lines, and circles – are complemented by the suppleness of the lines and coloured textures. The planes intersect, cut across, and overlap, generating constant movement, a play of contrast and duality.

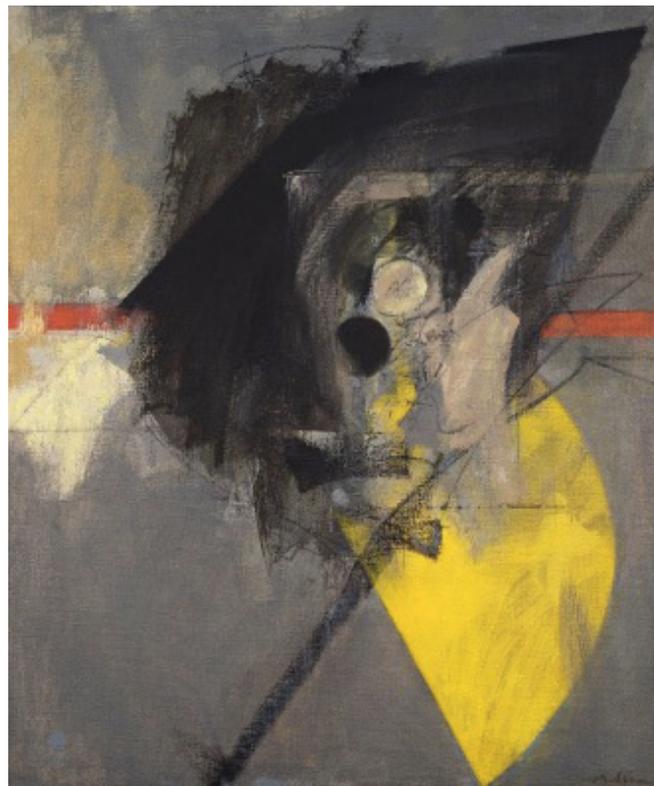
The titles of the artworks presented evoke this confrontation between form/colour, rigour/freedom in space: *Suppression ocre* (Ochre Suppression), *Passage de bleu* (Passage of Blue), *Linéaire long* (Long Linear), *Verticale jaune* (Yellow Vertical), *A côté du blanc* (Next to White), *Gris instable* (Unstable Grey)... In Albert Bitran's works, the painter's inner vision welcomes the gaze of the attentive spectator.

DIANE DE POLIGNAC - PRESS RELEASE - EXHIBITION



VERTICALE, 1985

Oil on canvas - 149 x 74,5 cm - 58 1/16 x 29 5/16 in.



JAUNE, 1989

Oil on canvas - 72 x 59 cm - 28 3/8 x 23 1/4 in.



GRIS INSTABLE, 1995

Oil on canvas - 65 x 82 cm - 25 5/16 x 32 1/4 in.



PASSAGE DE BLEU, 1982

Oil on canvas - 158 x 107 cm - 62 3/16 x 42 1/8 in.

## ALBERT BITRAN (1931-2018)

Albert Bitran was born in Istanbul in 1931. From the age of 15, he became interested in painting, copying masters (Cézanne, Manet) at the French Institute. In 1948, he arrived in Paris to study architecture, but quickly devoted himself to painting. He frequented Montparnasse and met many artists there: Soto, Poliakoff, Damian, Koskas...

His early work was characterized by geometric abstraction. In 1950, he exhibited at the Salon de l'Art libre. The art dealer Jean-Robert Arnaud (Galerie Arnaud, *Cimaise* journal) discovered him in 1951. He met his patron Henri-Pierre Roché and exhibited at Denise René's in 1954. He regularly participated in the Salons des Réalités Nouvelles (1952-1965) and de Mai (1956-1975). In 1955, he abandoned the geometric vein for abstract landscapes.

In 1956, he met the art dealer Jean Pollak (Galerie Ariel) who immediately supported him. In 1957, the actress Jacqueline Delubac began collecting his works (donation to the Lyon Museum in 1998).

In 1958, Bitran obtained French nationality and married Claude Ledoux. They lived on rue des Plantes (14<sup>th</sup> arrondissement) where he began his "Ateliers" series. In early 1960, the couple set up a painting and ceramics studio in Rigny-le-Ferron, in the Aube region. Bitran also created ceramics in Albisola, Italy in 1967 and began engraving with Fernand Mourlot.

From the 1960s, Bitran gained international recognition, particularly in Northern European countries (Galerie Birch in Copenhagen, Galerie Nord in Randers, Nova Spectra in The Hague, Galerie de Boer in Amsterdam, and Galerie Johannes Schilling in Cologne). He traveled to Italy and exhibited at Studio Erre in Milan. In 1967, invited by Wifredo Lam, he went to Cuba for the Salon de Mai. In 1968, he moved to rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs (6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement) in Paris.

The 1970s saw the emergence of the "Doubles" diptychs exhibited abroad and analyzed by Claude Lefort (*Bitran ou la question de l'œil*, 1975). In 1976, he created "Sextuor", an ensemble of six canvases preserved at Les Abattoirs in Toulouse. In 1979, he was appointed professor at the Summer Academy in Salzburg. He then developed the theme of "Grandes Formes" (exhibited in 1987 at the Galerie Louis Carré).

In parallel, he explored sculpture (small models, large wooden pieces). The 1990s were marked by numerous international exhibitions and the publication of a monograph by Georges Borgeaud (1992). He became interested in the arcade motif, inspired by Istanbul. He



Albert Bitran, rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, Paris, France, 1975

Photo: Marie-Paule Nègre

participated in group exhibitions in Turkey around the turn of the 2000s.

In the late 1990s, Bitran set up a large studio in Montrouge. In the early 2000s, he explored the theme of "Noirs" (*Érosion des noirs*, 2012). In 2004, his wife Claude Bitran, assisted by Clotilde Scordia, began archiving his work for the Catalogue raisonné. This work continues with their daughters Héléne de Panafieu-Bitran and Mariane Spang-Hanssen-Bitran and the art historian Clotilde Scordia.

In 2010, during a visit to the Courtauld Gallery, he rediscovered the work of Degas which echoed his own vocabulary, leading to the exhibition *Affinités en Noir majeur. Retrouver Degas* in 2017.

Albert Bitran died in Paris on November 9, 2018. A posthumous monograph was published in 2019, bringing together two fundamental texts: *Bitran ou la question de l'œil* by Claude Lefort and *La Traversée de la peinture* by Jean-Luc Chalumeau.

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## DIANE DE POLIGNAC - PRESS RELEASE - BIOGRAPHY

### COLLECTIONS (SELECTED)

#### AUSTRIA

Salzburg, Rupertinum - Museum der Moderne  
Vienna, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts

#### CUBA

Havana, Collection de l'État cubain

#### BELGIUM

Brussels, Fondation Roi Baudoin

#### DENMARK

Charlottenlund, Gentofte Radhus  
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsbergfondet  
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst  
Randers, Randers Kunstmuseum

#### FRANCE

Lyon, Musée des beaux-arts  
Montpellier, Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (FRAC)  
Occitanie  
Nantes, Musée d'Arts  
Paris La Défense, Fonds national d'art contemporain (Cnap)  
Paris, Musée d'art moderne  
Paris, Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou  
Perpignan, Musée d'art Hyacinthe-Rigaud  
Saint-Dié, Musée municipal  
Toulouse, Les Abattoirs

#### NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum  
Curaçao, Fondation Bloemhof  
The Hague, Gemeentemuseum  
Utrecht, Centraal Museum

#### NEW ZEALAND

Wellington, National Art Gallery of New Zealand

#### NORWAY

Oslo, Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter

#### SWEDEN

Lund, Lunds Konsthall

#### SWITZERLAND

Geneva, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art

#### TÜRKIYE

Istanbul, Istanbul Modern  
Istanbul, Istanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi

#### UNITED KINGDOM

London, Contemporary Art Society

#### USA

Berkeley, CA, University Museum  
Los Angeles, CA, Grunewald Foundation for Graphic Arts  
Providence, RI, Museum of Rhode Island School of Design  
San Francisco, CA, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

Galerie Arnaud, Paris, France, 1951, 1952

*Baertling. Breer. Bitran*, group exhibition, Galerie Denise René, Paris, France, 1954

Galerie Ariel, Paris, France, 1957, 1958, 1961, 1963, 1966, 1975

*Paris 1959*, Galerie Blanche, Stockholm, Sweden, 1959

Stephen Hahn Gallery, New York, NY, USA, 1960

Birch Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1961

Nova Spectra Gallery, The Hague, Netherlands, 1964

Galleria d'Arte La Lanterna, Trieste, Italy, 1972, 1978

*Les Doubles*, de Boer Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1975

*Bitran ou la question de l'œil*, about the book by Claude Lefort, Galerie La Hune, Paris, France, 1975

Nord Gallery, Randers, Denmark, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1986

*Graphiques*, New York International Art Exhibition, NY, USA, 1979

*Sekstet, paintings*, Trondhjems Kunstforening, Norway, 1979

*Bitran*, Traklhaus Museum, Salzburg, Austria, 1979

*Bitran. Peintures, dessins, graphiques*, Musée de Saint-Dié, France, 1981

*Bitran dans les collections danoises*, Randers Kunstmuseum, Denmark, 1982

*Bitran. Abidin*, group exhibition, Praestegarden Gallery, Rubjerg, Denmark, 1982

Galerie Louis Carré, Paris, France, 1987, 1990, 1992 (Paris and Art Basel)

*Bitran*, Brix Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1988

Johannes Schilling Gallery, Cologne, Germany, 1990, 1993

*Albert Bitran*, Art Point Gallery, Tokyo, Japan, 1990

Rupertinum Museum, Salzburg, Austria, 1993

*Albert Bitran. Peintures, dessins 1980-1992*, Maison des Arts Georges-Pompidou, Cjarc, France, 1993

Louis Stern Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA, 1993

*Bitran*, Frahm Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1997

*Albert Bitran, Kemerler. Arcades*, Aksanat, Istanbul, Türkiye, 1997

*Albert Bitran, Kemerler*, Nev Gallery, Istanbul, Türkiye, 1997, 1998

*Albert Bitran. 1955-2005*, Nev Gallery, Ankara, Türkiye, 2008

Grosvenor Gallery, London, United Kingdom, 2010, 2011

*Albert Bitran. Huiles sur papier*, Galerie Convergences, Paris, France, 2015

*Regard sur Albert Bitran*, Elfebeen Mansion, Luxembourg, 2016

*Affinités en noir majeur*, Galerie Convergences et Gratadou-Intuiti, Paris, France, 2017

*Albert Bitran*, Galerie Bertrand Trocmez, Clermont-Ferrand, France, 2019

*Terre d'ombres Terre de Ciel*, Dirimart, Istanbul, Türkiye, 2024

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- Henri-Pierre Roché (foreword), *Baertling, Breer, Bitran*, ex. cat., Galerie Denise René, Paris, 1954
- Charles Estienne, (foreword), ex. cat., Galerie Ariel, Paris, 1957
- Michel Seuphor, *Dictionnaire de la peinture abstraite*, Hazan, Paris, 1957
- Ulf Linde (foreword), ex. cat., Galerie Blanche, Stockholm, 1959
- Michel Courtois, *Bitran*, ex. cat., Galerie Ariel, Paris, 1961
- Karl K. Ringström, (foreword), *Trois peintres de l'École de Paris à Oslo*, ex. cat., Bernsten Gallery, Oslo, 1961
- Michel Ragon, Michel Seuphor, *L'Art abstrait*, Maeght, Paris, 1971, t. 3 & 4
- Ed Wingen (foreword), *Bitran, Nallard, Geer van Velde*, ex. cat., de Boer Gallery, Amsterdam, 1974
- Claude Lefort, *Bitran ou la question de l'œil*, monograph, SMI, Paris, « L'art se raconte » collection, 1975
- Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Charles Estienne et l'art à Paris, 1945-1966*, Fondation nationale des arts graphiques et plastiques, Paris, 1984
- Jean-Dominique Rey, *Albert Bitran, peintures*, ex. cat., Galerie Louis Carré, Paris, 1987
- Jean-Dominique Rey, *Albert Bitran*, ex. cat., Gallery Art Point, Tokyo, 1990
- Georges Borgeaud, *Albert Bitran. L'Œuvre 1949-1992*, monograph, Ides et Calendes, Neuchâtel, 1992
- Lydia Harambourg, *L'École de Paris, 1945-1965, Dictionnaire des peintres*, Ides et Calendes, Neuchâtel, 1993, p. 58-59, (updates by Clotilde Scordia, Ides et Calendes, Neuchâtel, 2010)
- Dora Vallier and Claire Stoullig, *Albert Bitran. Peintures, dessins, 1980-1992*, ex. cat., Arts et Dialogues Européens, Cahors, 1993
- Amélie Edgü, *L'École de Paris et les peintres turcs: 1945-1960. Paris Okulu ve Türk Ressamlari Paris: 1945-1960*, ex. cat., YPK, Istanbul, 2000
- Lydia Harambourg, *50 ans de peinture. Une galerie, une collection*, ex. cat., Musée Henri-Martin, Cahors, 2005
- Gaye Petek, (under the direction of), *Une école de Paris turque dans la peinture turque*, cat. expo., ELELE, Istanbul, 2005
- Patrick-Gilles Persin (under the direction of), *L'Envolée lyrique. Paris 1945-1956*, ex. cat., Skira, Milan, 2006
- Fulya Erdemci, Semra Germaner, Orhan Koçak, *Modern ve Ötesi: 1950-2000. Modern and Beyond: 1950-2000*, ex. cat., Santrallstanbul, Istanbul, 2008
- Gérard-Georges Lemaire, *Albert Bitran. Paintings & Drawings. Obliques*, cat. expo., Galerie Grosvenor, Londres, 2010
- Catherine Grenier, (under the direction of), *Modernités plurielles, 1905-1970*, ex. cat., new hanging of the permanent collections, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2013
- Christian Briend, *Le Geste et la matière. Une abstraction « autre »*. Paris, 1945-1965, ex. act., Somogy, Paris, 2017
- Jean-Luc Chalumeau, Claude Lefort, *Albert Bitran*, monograph, Liénart, Paris, 2019
- Clotilde Scordia, *Istanbul-Montparnasse. Les Peintres Turcs de l'École de Paris*, Déclinaison, Paris, 2021
- Laure Cambau and Clotilde Scordia, *Gölge topraklar, Gök topraklar, Land of Shadows, Lanf of Sky, Terre d'ombres, terre de ciel*, ex. act., Dirimart, Istanbul, 2024