

FADIA HADDAD

face to face

Chorégraphie fiévreuse.
Cheminier, fouiller, détourner, reculer, avancer, continuer,
Baisser la tête dans la figure.
Trouver l'intuition pure.
– Fadia Haddad

Fadia Haddad works compulsively in her studio. She begins by placing a canvas cloth, or a sheet of aged paper, on the floor and circles around it with her blocky brush. Her brushstroke is thick, and she uses it minimally. With acrylic pigments in black, grey, red, green, pink and blue, she paints in single layers from above. This takes her long hours: she walks heavily, ferrets about, ponders, retreats, advances, and gets lost in the work.

Since the late 80s, Haddad has followed a process-based – you can even call it processional – practice of painting, which the art critic Harold Rosenberg first called “action painting” in reference to the gestural strand of abstract expressionism. Action painting was associated almost exclusively with the cult of the masculinist hero-artist Jackson Pollock. His was a consecrated artistic ritual, then profaned by feminist performance artists who incorporated their bodies more forcefully in their work. Neither a feminist, nor strictly speaking, an abstract expressionist, Haddad curiously returns to a medium-specific gestural practice after the historical end of action painting. Her form, inextricable from the content, lends itself well to the mystical character of her work.

Her vast corpus of paintings has revolved around the enigmatic motif of the mask. In the earlier years of her practice, the mask occupied a prominent position in her painting, but has gradually receded into a nearly inconspicuous pencil drawing. Even when it was the central figure of the work, the mask did not hold a representational status. It was, and continues to be treated as a fetish object which now bears little relation to its primitivist progenitors. Haddad does not take a particular place to be the quintessence of semblances. She locates the universal in the mask. The mask summons the contradictory forces of denial and avowal: it is an empty object whose presence is denied by its beholder, but it also carries the material trace of Haddad’s bodily movements, registered in brushstrokes. It at once disappears and returns. The viewer is lured by its double nature, expects to be deceived, and yet engages in its ritual enjoyment.

Natasha Gasparian
Beirut, 2017

MASQUES/PERCUSSIONS

Entre le pendule, le sceptre et le lance-pierre, heureux celui qui pourra dire de quel bois se chauffe la peintre Fadia Haddad face à son ouvrage flamboyant.

Chaque peinture sonne comme la fin de partie – o combien transitoire – entre des forces magnétiques, des vibrations musicales et des présences fantomatiques, toutes plus pénétrantes les unes que les autres.

Le Masque dont nous entretient Fadia de manière presque secrète, tout en réminiscences ésotériques, n'est ni un objet de culte ni un principe de composition ; un principe dynamique plutôt, une boussole que la peintre s'exerce à dompter, dans une expérience qui tient autant de l'ascèse que de l'extase. Le Masque bien qu'il reste ancré dans un imaginaire hautement impur, à la fois moderniste (cubisme, colonialisme...) et postmoderne (simulacre, répétition), devient ici une clé de voûte pour sonder les recoins de notre mémoire dionysiaque, l'instinct animal des dieux échoués sur terre, nos tatouages inconscients. Les allures de talismans telluriques ou de hiéroglyphes futuristes que prennent les partitions de Fadia sont le reflet d'une âme profondément ouverte au déchiffrement. Des variations formelles et chromatiques résulte une sorte de géométrie secrète – minimalisme déguisé en art brut – ou de danse entre des signes animés par une performance d'exorcisme : plongée abyssale dans des images qui tambourinent, dégénèrent et crucifient en même temps. Le mouvement incessant du centre vers l'extérieur et de l'extérieur vers le centre est hypnotique, addictif.

De fait si Fadia ne se contente pas d'habiller la toile, elle l'habite ; et si la peinture ne se contente pas de figurer les gestes du peintre, elle les ritualise à travers une grande partition, dont la peintre nous offre les chapitres interdits : l'instant de concentration maximale avant de jeter son corps dans la lutte, celui de retenir sa respiration pour se sentir happé dans les tréfonds de la conscience.

Pourtant, tout chez Fadia finit par trouver un équilibre et une assurance digne d'un temple inca ou d'une constellation de points astraux reliés par un fil d'argent.

Ce « chiffre » apparaît en majesté, au moment ineffable où les gongs et cymbales tressaillant se résolvent dans un intervalle, une note, un champ de forces ; concentré et projectif à la fois, chaotique et chorégraphique, oscillant à la manière d'un pendule, rutilant comme le sceptre, tendu comme le lance-pierre. Le moment de la parade où le masque touche la peau de l'instrument à percussions. Une étoile nous parle.

M.B.M.
Paris, 2015



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 146x97cm | 2013



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 146x97cm | 2017



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 146x97cm | 2017



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 146x89cm | 2017





Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 162x114cm | 2016



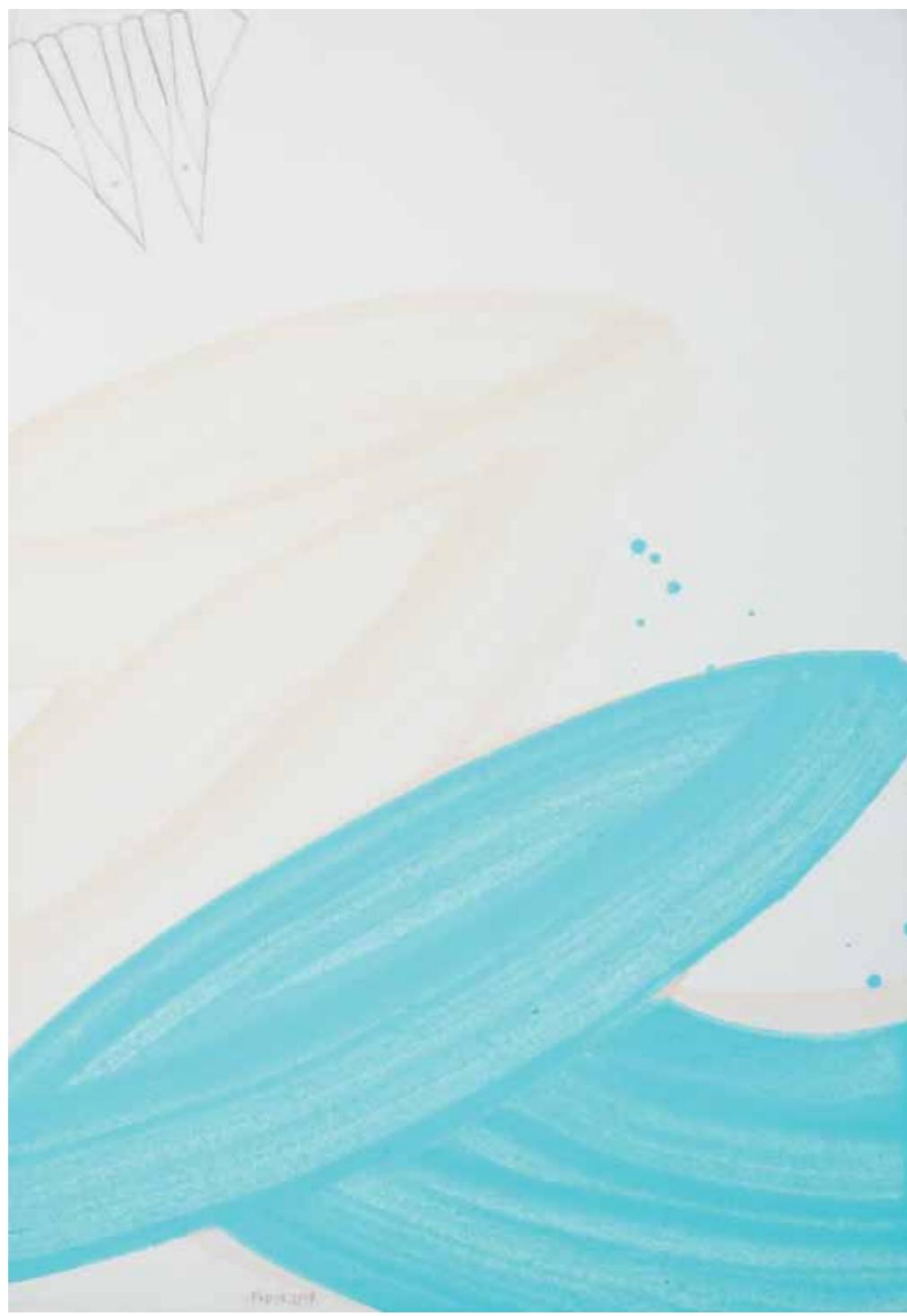
Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 117x89.5cm | 2017



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 55x38cm | 2017



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 55x38cm | 2017



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 55x38cm | 2017





Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 56x46cm | 2017



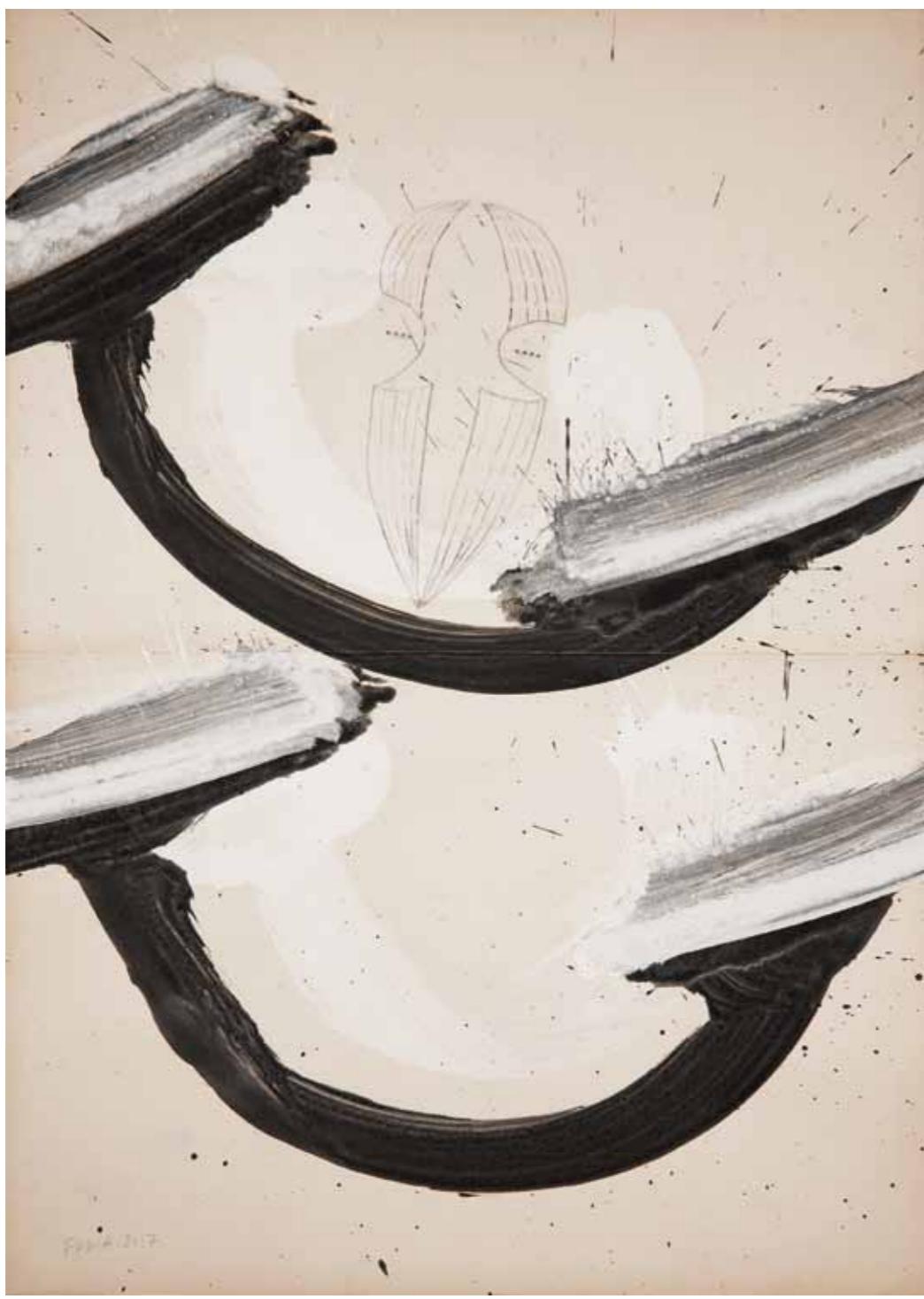
Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 55x38cm | 2017



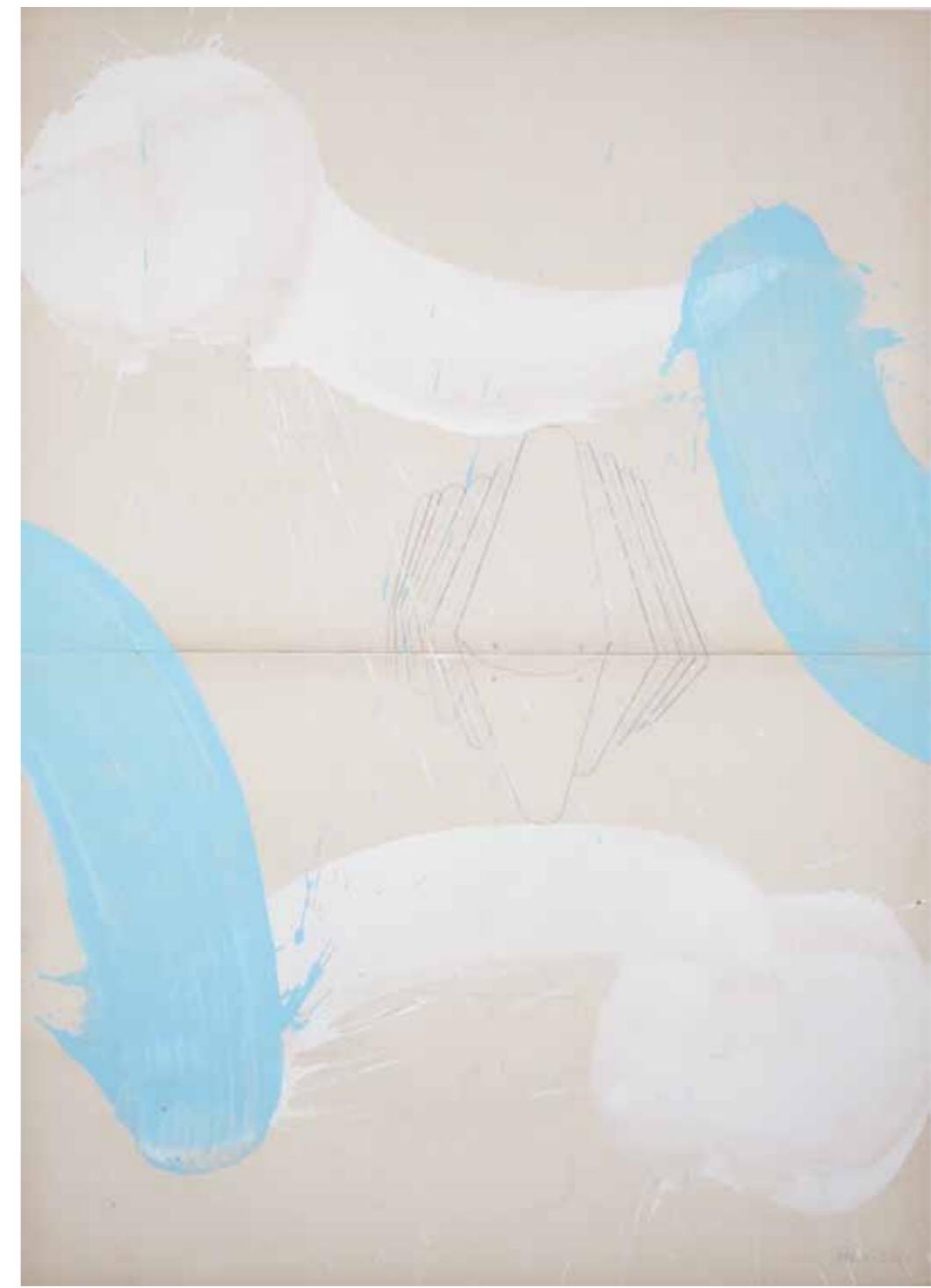
Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 56x46cm | 2017



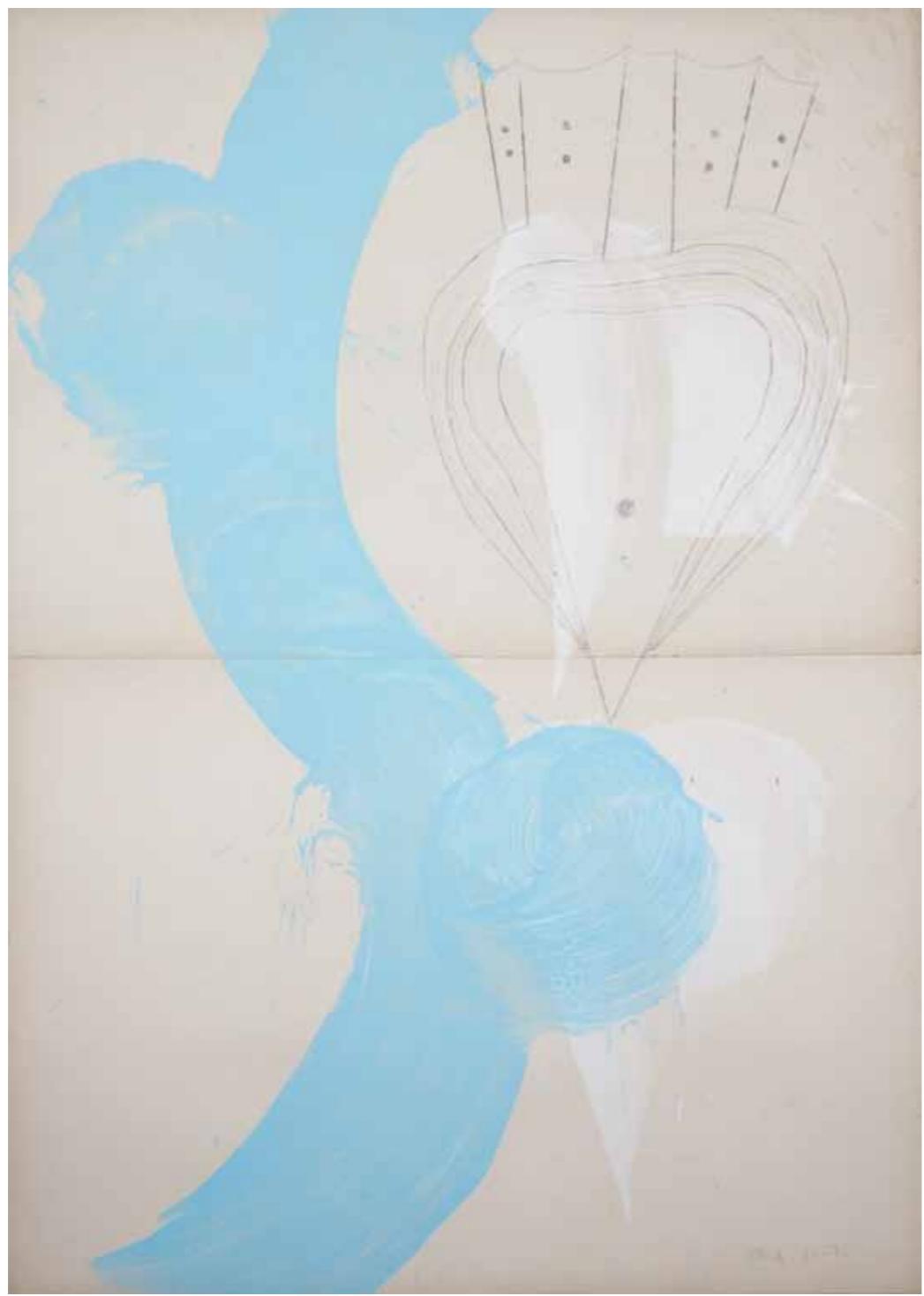
Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 55x38cm | 2017



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 63x45cm | 2017



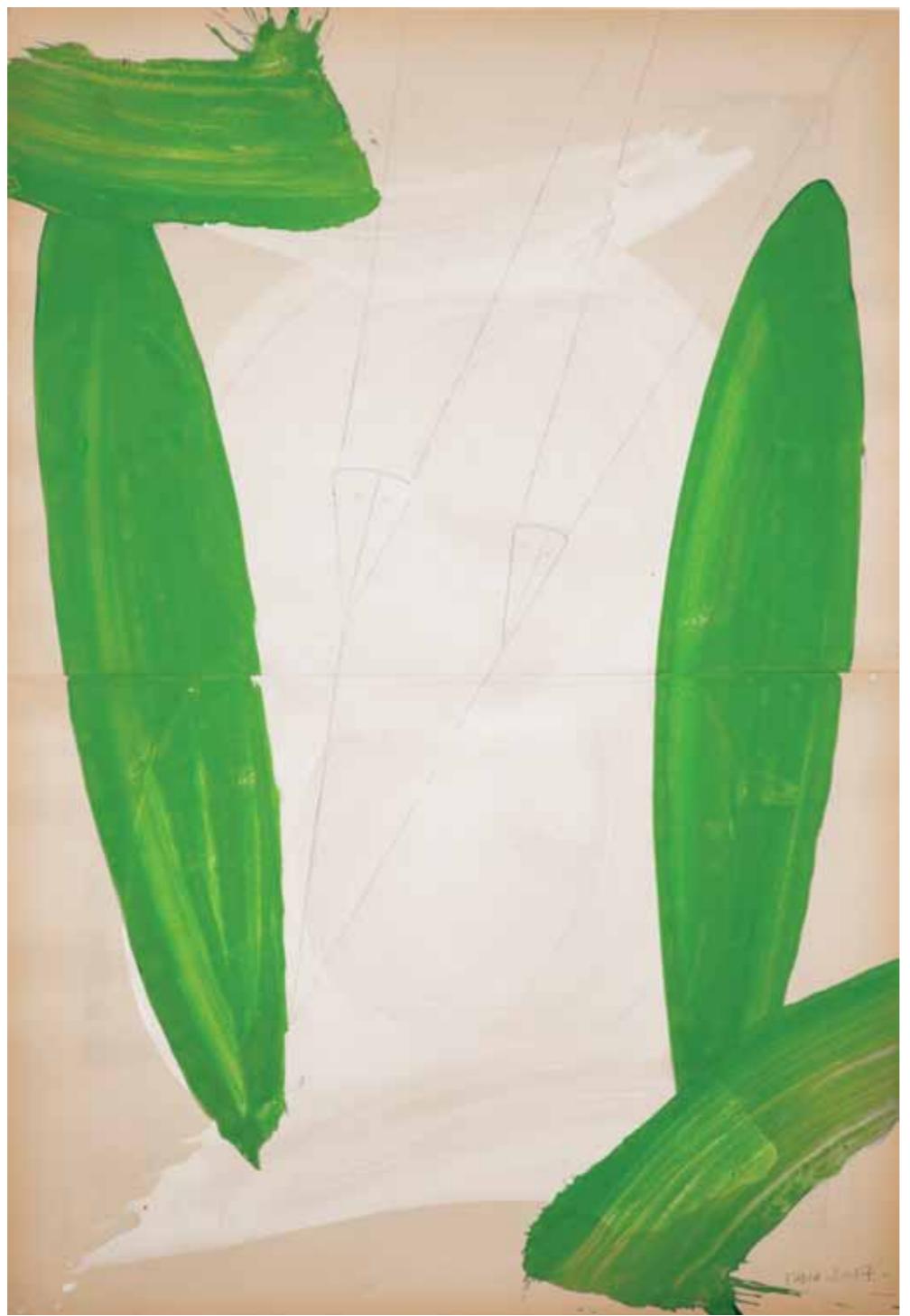
Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 63x45cm | 2017



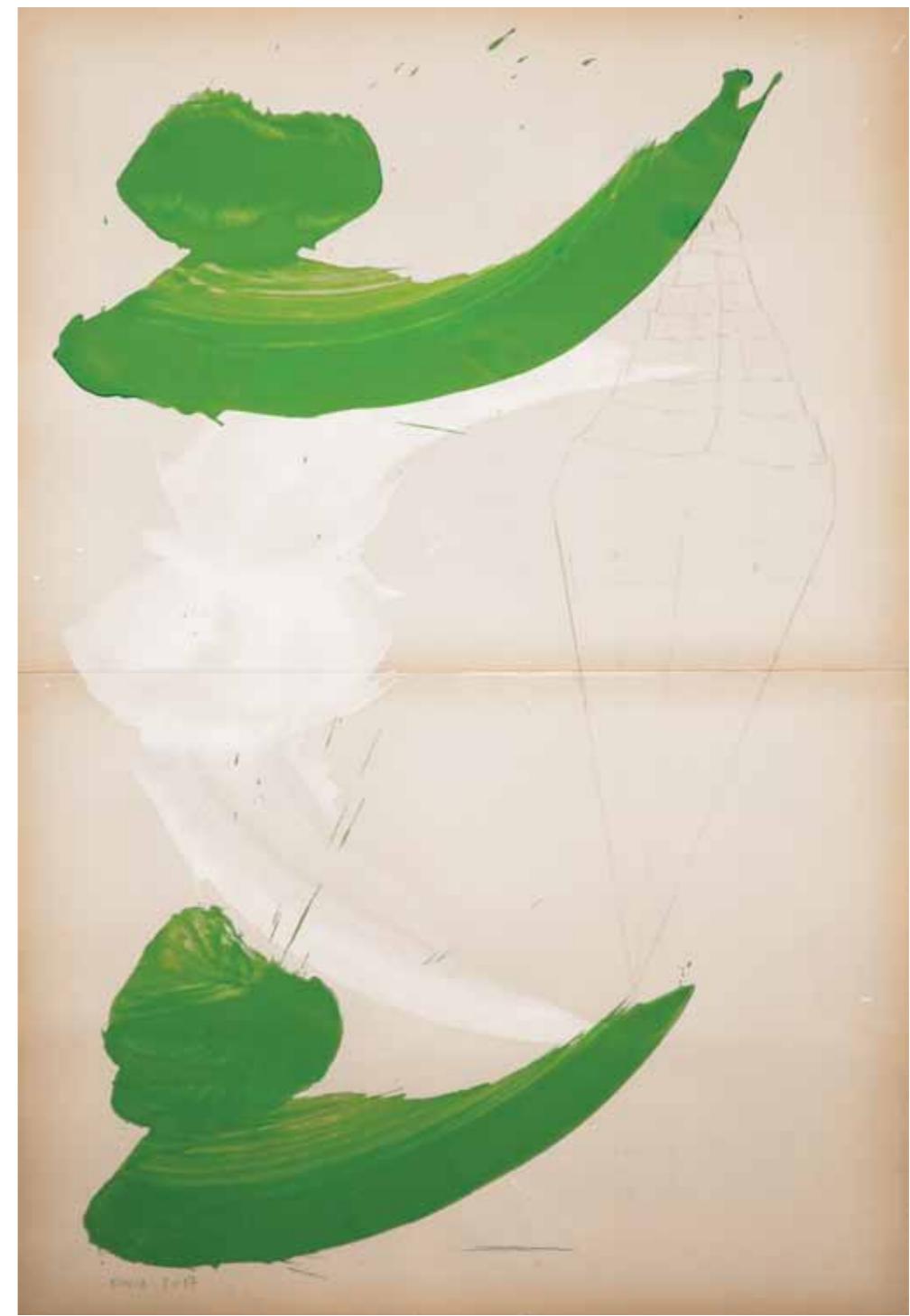
Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 63x45cm | 2017



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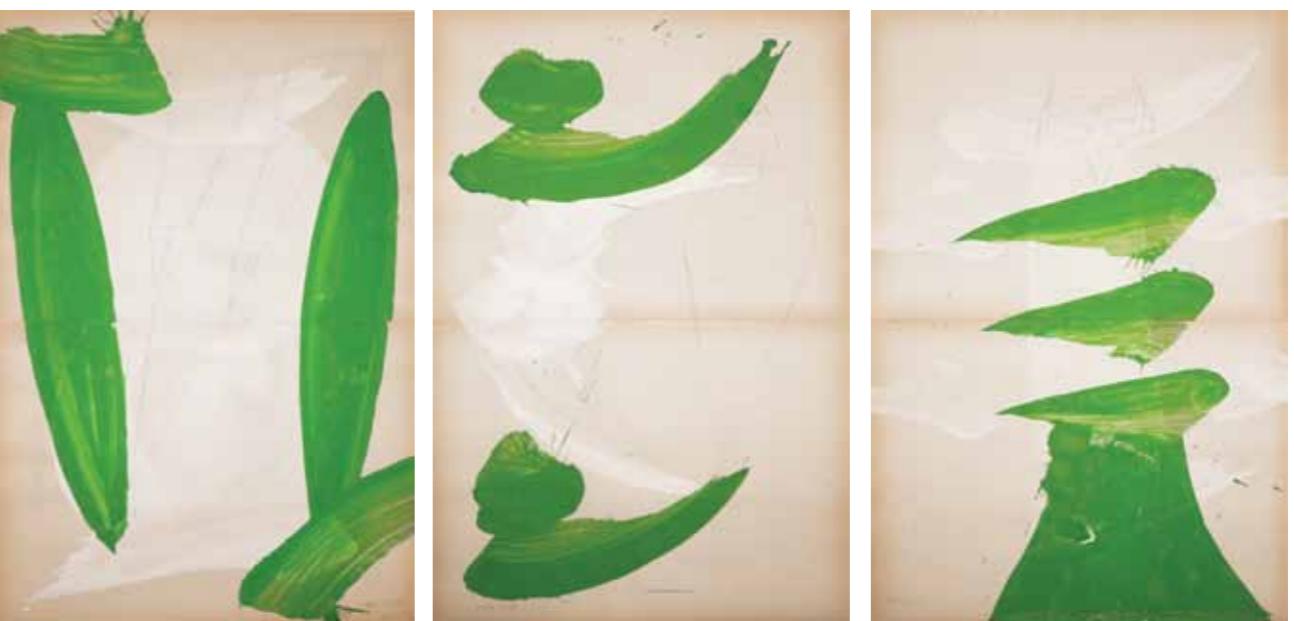
Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 58x39cm | 2017



Acrylic and pigments on canvas | 58x39cm | 2017



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About Fadia Haddad

Fadia Haddad was born in Lebanon in 1959. She graduated from the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) in 1984 and obtained a diploma in Fine Arts from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA) in Paris in 1988. She lives and works in Paris. Haddad has had numerous solo exhibitions in Beirut, Brussels, London, Miami, and Paris. In Beirut, she has had several exhibitions in at Galerie Alice Mogabgab between the years 2002-10, and more recently, at Agial Art Gallery (2012, 2015). In Paris, she has had solo exhibitions at Galerie Taiss (2011), Galerie Aréa (2011), Galerie Sabine Puget (2012), and Galerie Michel Rein (2015, 2016). She has also notably participated in group exhibitions at the Institut du Monde Arabe (1991, 2008, 2017), and Fondation Paul Ricard (1995). Her work is regularly featured in art fairs such as Art Paris, Art Brussels, Art Miami, Art Dubai, Abu Dhabi Art, and FIAC. Her work is part of foundations such as Barjeel Art Foundation, Institut du Monde Arabe and other private collections.

Fadia Haddad is represented by Agial Art Gallery in Beirut and Galerie Michel Rein in Paris/ Bruxelles.

Fadia Haddad in her studio | Paris 2016

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