

Opening 14.05.2026, 6-9pm

From 14.05.2026 to 10.07.2026

**Eleanor Ekserdjian** (London, 1996) is a painter and film artist whose practice blends moving images with rapid mark-making. This process results in abstract works that combine fluid motion with striking precision, capturing both a sense of calm and dynamic movement. Her paintings and drawings evolve into lyrical landscapes that explore shifting emotional responses to film, creating a visual dialogue between stillness and motion. Pepe Karmel, author of *Abstract Art: A Global History*, defined her work as “poetic, elegant and mysterious — a kinetic, subjective transcription of the world into calligraphy.” She studied Fine Art at The University of Edinburgh and later attended the Royal Drawing School.

Her solo exhibitions include *Interwoven* at Messums London (2025) and *Light Pictures* at Seen Fifteen Gallery, London (2023). Group exhibitions include *Armenia - Diaspora* at the Centre for Contemporary Experimental Art (NPAK), Yerevan (2026), *Land & Source: Memories of Place* presented by Messums London, New York (2025), *Crosscurrents Armenia/London* at Redfern Gallery, London (2024), *Imagined Landscapes* at Yerevan Im Ser Foundation, Armenia (2022), *Light and Line* at Gallery 286, London (2021), and *Emergence* at AMP Gallery, London (2022). She has completed residencies with Hauser & Wirth, Braemar (2024), Sokyō Gallery, Kyoto (2024), and Yerevan Im Ser Foundation, Armenia (2022). Her debut short film *Imagined Landscapes* was shown at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2025) and at the Socially Relevant Film Festival, New York (2026).

**Danish & Maitre** is the collaborative practice of artists Dina Danish and Jean-Baptiste Maitre since 2016. Their work bridges material research, experimental archaeology, and contemporary art. Their recent projects include *Reconstructing Egyptian Blue in Cairo* (2024–2026); *Victor Hugo Was Here*, embroideries and velvet embossing (2018–2022); and *Whatever They Do May It All Turn Out Wrong*, embroideries, velvet embossing and photograms (2017–2019). Recent exhibitions were held at MAMbo in Bologna, American Academy in Rome, Gallery Stijger van Doesburg, Martin van Zomeren in Amsterdam, and Artopia in Milan.

**Artopia** is delighted to present two solo shows, opening to the public at Via Lazzaro Papi 2, in Milan, from Thursday 14 May to Friday 10 July. On the ground floor, ***Simultanea*** by **Eleanor Ekserdjian**, and on the upper floor, ***How to Hold An Ocean with Four Hands*** by the duo **Danish & Maitre**.

Though developed independently, the two exhibitions engage in a dialogue across space. The large volume running along the length of the floor plan divides the gallery into two floors and, together with other distinctive architectural features, facilitates visual communication between the two levels.

The two exhibition projects, which thus coexist harmoniously within the architectural setting, also reveal similarities from a thematic perspective. Eleanor Ekserdjian, a British artist of Armenian heritage, presents a body of work exploring the layered nature of cultural memory. Through painting, camera-less photography and video, she gives form to what she describes as “simultaneous landscape”, in which the scenery of Armenia and the UK meet and intertwine. From the other, the French duo Danish & Maitre pursue a research project into the traces of an ancient knowledge: Egyptian blue, an emblem of a remote understanding that both withdraws and reveals itself in its aura of mystery. What emerges is an almost initiatory journey, gradually unfolding through a series of clue-like works.

On the ground floor, ***Simultanea***, the first solo exhibition in Italy by **Eleanor Ekserdjian** (London, 1996), whose title evokes the core of her artistic practice: a pictorial and filmic approach built upon superimpositions and co-presences. Ekserdjian draws from films she has made in Armenia and the UK, subsequently reworked through a process of painterly translation that retains and at the same time transforms their movement. What emerges is a “**simultaneous landscape**”: spaces where time, place and memory intersect, giving shape to a layered vision under constant redefinition.

Ekserdjian’s practice takes shape as a hybrid language in which painting, drawing, and moving images coexist in a dynamic tension. Through a rapid gesture, the artist records and renders traces, evoking a dimension suspended between presence and dissolution.

Within this same line of research, Ekserdjian’s film *Imagined Landscapes* represents the first direct experience of a landscape long imagined but never lived, developed from a diasporic perspective tied to the artist’s upbringing in the United Kingdom and her interest in her Armenian family origins. The work articulates this tension through a sequence of fixed shots that present landscapes and medieval monasteries as layered spaces, suspended between historical memory and contemporary urgency, alternately perceived as testimonies of the past and as settings marked by current dynamics of conflict.

On the first floor, the exhibition ***How to Hold An Ocean with Four Hands*** by the duo **Danish & Maitre** opens concurrently. The duo, composed of artists Jean-Baptiste Maitre (France, 1978) and Dina Danish (France, 1981), have, since 2016, worked together on specific projects alongside their independent practices. The exhibition presents an initial body of works centered on the artists’ research into Egyptian blue, an ancient and almost mythical pigment that emerged at the dawn of history and then gradually disappeared, leaving behind only traces and hypotheses. A true philological reconstruction began four years ago, following a lead without certainty, guided only by clues.

Emblematic is the film *Egyptian Blue, How to Forge the Skies and the Seas*, which takes the form of both a narrative and hermeneutic device. The film follows the artists on a journey through archives, laboratories, and contemporary landscapes, situating the investigation of the pigment within a broader reflection on different forms of knowledge. Rooted in the principles of experimental archaeology, the work foregrounds a rigorous, process-oriented approach in which historical methods and materials are systematically tested and reactivated. What emerges is a space in which documentation, performance, and scientific reconstruction converge, with a clear emphasis on method, verification, and reproducibility.

In this context, the duo's practice unfolds as a layered experience of seeing and understanding, in which Egyptian blue becomes the symbol of a material that is at once concrete and historically situated. A material capable of expressing the tension between knowledge and process, between acquired understanding and still-open fields of inquiry.

The exhibitions thus resonate with one another through their contrasts and affinities. Whilst Ekserdjian explores the role of landscape and architecture in cultural memory, capturing an immediacy of response in the present, *Danish & Maitre*, with the approach of two archaeologists, reactivate it, bringing it to the surface as a layered experience. The result is a dialogue in which revelation and mystery, the visible and the invisible, coexist and amplify one another. Past and present, memory and matter, intertwine in a shared narrative capable of traversing and connecting the two exhibition levels.

**Artopia** is a contemporary art gallery that presents emerging and mid-career Italian and international artists through a programme of site-specific exhibitions. Embracing multidisciplinary practices, the gallery expresses a sensitivity to the interrelations between geographical, cultural, and emotional ecosystems. In dialogue with the architecture of its Milanese space, Artopia's curatorial programme and artistic collaborations move fluidly between the urban context and decentralized territories, embracing the Apulian landscape through *Nucre*: a residency and exhibition project that animates the summer season. Here, invited artists are encouraged to engage with the local cultural and anthropological heritage, fostering encounters that extend beyond the gallery walls.