

## Edgard Mazigi

Born in Beirut in 1955, Edgard Mazigi holds a degree in textile engineering from ESITL Lyon (1978-1974) and a certificate with an excellence in painting award from the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting & Sculpture, USA (1998-1995). In 1999 he moves back permanently to Lebanon and starts his career as an artist. He now lives and works in Beirut.

He regularly has solo shows in Beirut and participates in group exhibitions, juried shows and art fairs in Lebanon and abroad, including the Sursock Museum where he showed in every Salon d'Automne the museum has had from 2003 to 2016.

He has taught drawing at the Lebanese American University and at the Université Pour Tous at St Joseph University in Beirut,

## Solo Exhibitions

2023	Intermediary Spaces, Art on 56th Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
2017	Untold Stories, Art on 56th Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
2013	Lost and Found, Art on 56th Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
2011	Université Pour Tous, Université Saint Joseph, Beirut, Lebanon
2008	Janine Rubeiz Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
2006	Janine Rubeiz Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
2004	Aida Cherfan Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2023	Art Cairo, Cairo, Egypt
2022	Lift, BEMA Museum / UNESCO, Beirut
2019	Rituals, Palazzo Canardi, Venice, Italy
2003-2016	i Salon d'Automne, Sursock Museum, Beirut
2016	Bitasarrof, the National Library, Beirut
2012-2016	Beirut Art Fair, Beirut, Lebanon
2014	ART 14 Art Fair, London, UK
2013	Contemporary Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey
2010	Selections, the Lebanese Ministry of Culture, exhibition in Doha, Qatar
2009	Art Paris Dubai, Dubai, UAE
2006	Pinceaux pour Plumes, the National Library Sursock Museum, Beirut
2002	Frederieke Gallery, New York - USA

# Art on 56th

## The intermediary spaces of Edgard Mazigi – By Nayla Tamraz

In the early 1950's, when artists and critics partial to abstraction declared figurative painting to be obsolete, Clement Greenberg said to De Kooning: "In today's world, it's impossible to paint a face". "That's right. And it's impossible not to", replied De Kooning. Instead of abandoning figuration, De Kooning reconsiders the subject and takes on the challenge of fusing abstraction with figuration.

In a series we could call "The Lady with the Cat", it is partly in dialogue with the Abstract Expressionists that Edgard Mazigi establishes an approach to painting while revisiting the old masters of the figure and exploring his boundaries. At the interface between abstraction and figuration, The Lady with the Cat finds itself at the junction point where the classic Italian painters of the Renaissance are present: masters such as Piero della Francesca and Titian with whom he feels a strong connection. He borrows the atmosphere, posture and imposing presence that exudes from their work. The portrait of The Lady with The Cat can also be seen as a negotiation between the finished and unfinished, an issue that has been a permanent consideration in the artist's aesthetic for the past two decades. For that reason, this portrait will lead us to the global understanding of the work of the artist in this exhibition.

Early in his career, Edgard Mazigi closely follows Cezanne's belief, that painting from the motif "is about perceiving harmony and rhythm between numerous relationships and transposing them according to a new, original logic". While Cezanne's teachings were paramount in his development, Mazigi nevertheless thought of reversing that process. He felt painting from the motif limited him and made him dependent on objects, persons and places. Instead of discovering those relationships from the motif, why not start by inventing them and then letting them lead him to whatever objects, figures and scenes the painting was to end up with?

Since then, Edgard Mazigi starts with abstraction, with the unknown. The forms and images appear later. They do so gradually because, as he says, "I do not like to find them too quickly, that might lock in the painting". When he starts a painting, he does not intend to pursue figuration nor does

he intend to stay in abstraction. Thus he continues his search. What search? That of exploring paint and its possibilities. It is that tension that he maintains between abstraction and figuration, with forms open to what could become, that leads him to the event which generates that spatial plasticity. In that margin of assumed uncertainty, the forms reveal themselves and become scenes.

There are slices of life and many collective scenes, a conviviality of sorts. These silent and serene settings are built with the rhythm of the gesture, with large dynamic brushwork that gradually define what is while questioning the scene's apparent quietude. The figures seem to withdraw from the real world, they are isolated. Their postures sometimes appear improbable in their suspended gestures. Some look straight at us, inviting us for a dialogue while keeping us at a distance.

They inhabit a time and a space of their own. Spatial plasticity evolves then in a particular space where painting is what matters, the rest is anecdotal, accidental, a pretext to paint.

Why does Edgard Mazigi push towards the figurative only to stay in that intermediary space? Perhaps the answer comes again from Cezanne, who teaches us that painting does not consist in representing the world, but questioning it. The image itself is no longer the issue, the artist is trying to understand what painting is about, its possibilities and its purpose. It becomes a way of comprehending life.

Now that the debate between figuration and abstraction is no longer addressed in the same manner nor for the same reasons, Mazigi goes back to the fundamentals of the figure to question his artistic potentials and limitations: where does it start and where does it end? What is painting today? Unanswered questions that, while allowing him to transcend the debate, let him approach reality while reinventing it. This in-between space is his spatial plasticity, the intermediary space that his figures inhabit.