

An abstract painting by Assadour, featuring a complex composition of geometric shapes, lines, and colors. The palette is dominated by warm tones like ochre, yellow, and brown, contrasted with cooler tones like grey, black, and white. The style is reminiscent of Cubism or Constructivism, with sharp angles and fragmented forms. A prominent feature is a large, dark, curved shape in the lower right, and a smaller, similar shape in the upper right. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and spatial complexity.

5 - 9 June 2024

Viewing Room 1
4 Cromwell Place
London, SW7

Time in Motion
Assadour Solo Exhibition

Janet Rady
Fine Art



artscoops



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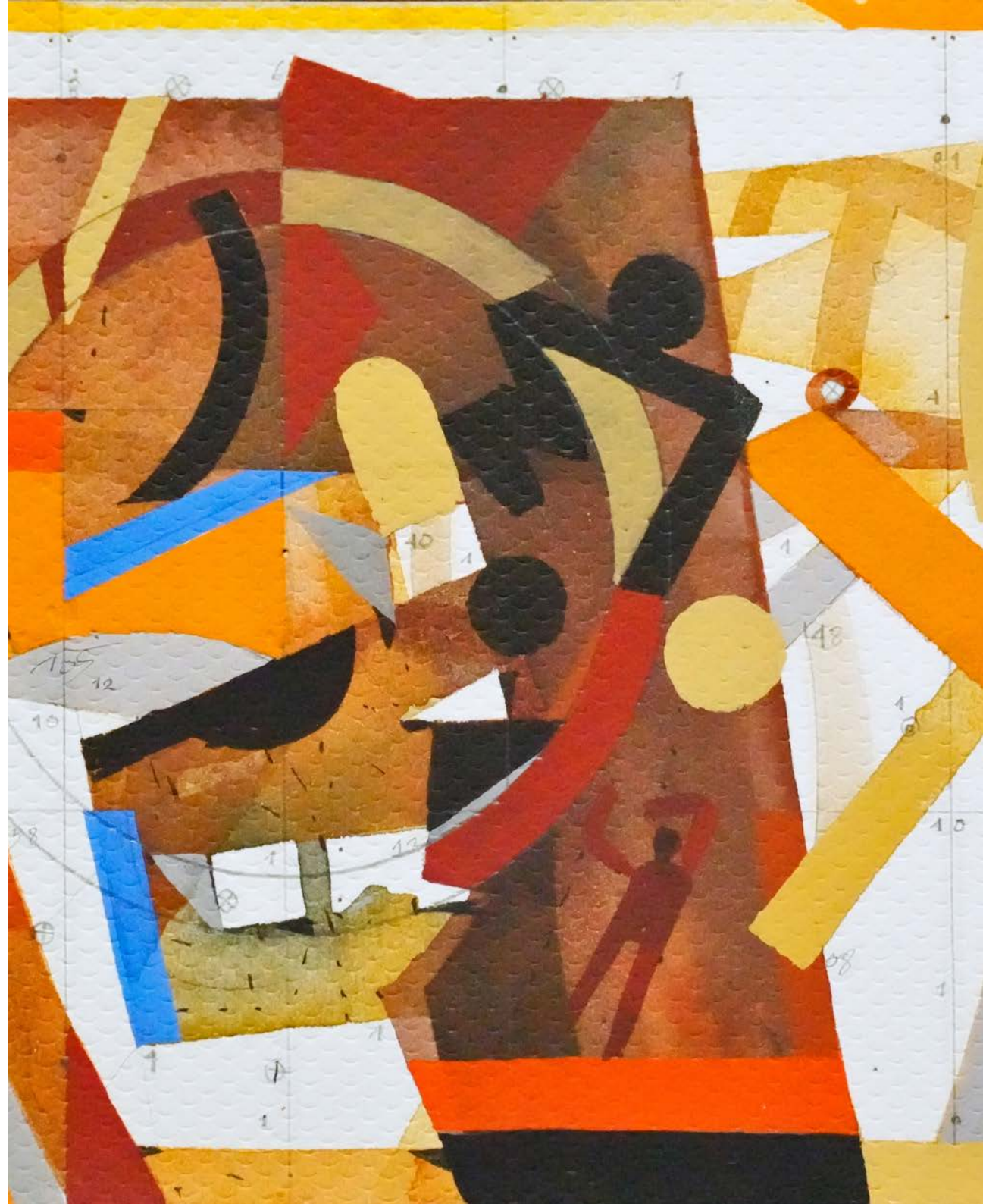
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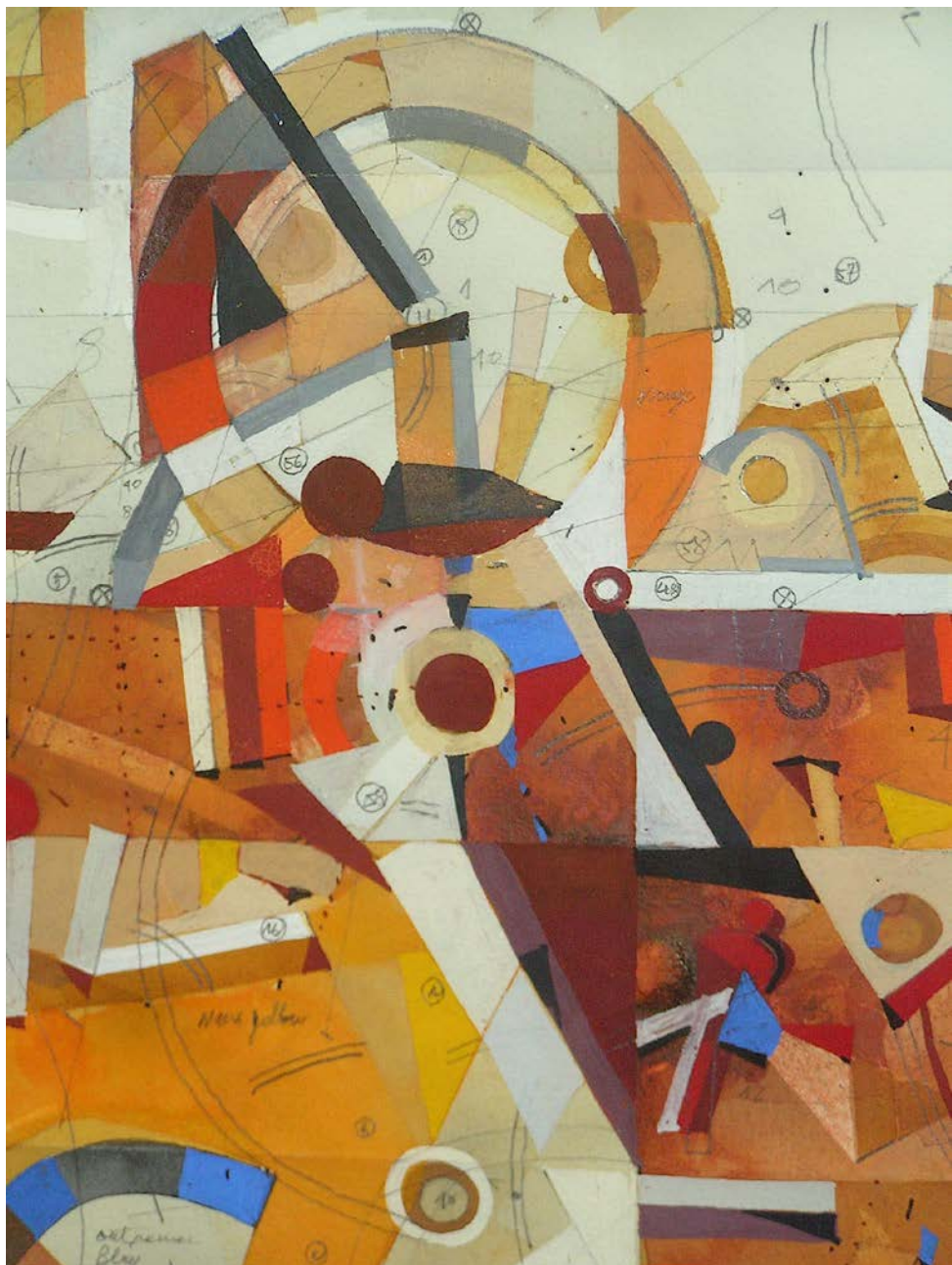
Janet Rady Fine Art

Based between London and the United Arab Emirates, Janet Rady expresses her creative talents as a specialist in contemporary art. Highly educated in the field, Janet holds a Masters Degree in Islamic Art History from the University of Melbourne, and a BA from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

As well as expert knowledge of art history, Janet has extensive industry experience, spanning over thirty five years.

In collaboration with:





VIEWING:

Wednesday 5 June - Saturday 8 June : 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

Sunday 9 June : 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

out of hours by appointment only

Janet Rady

+44 (0)7957 284 370

art@janetradyfineart.com

janetradyfineart.com

@janetrady

May Mamarbachi

+44 (0)7880 646 640

may@artscoops.com

Raya Mamarbachi

+44 (0)7398 198 850

raya@artscoops.com

artscoops.com

@art_scoops

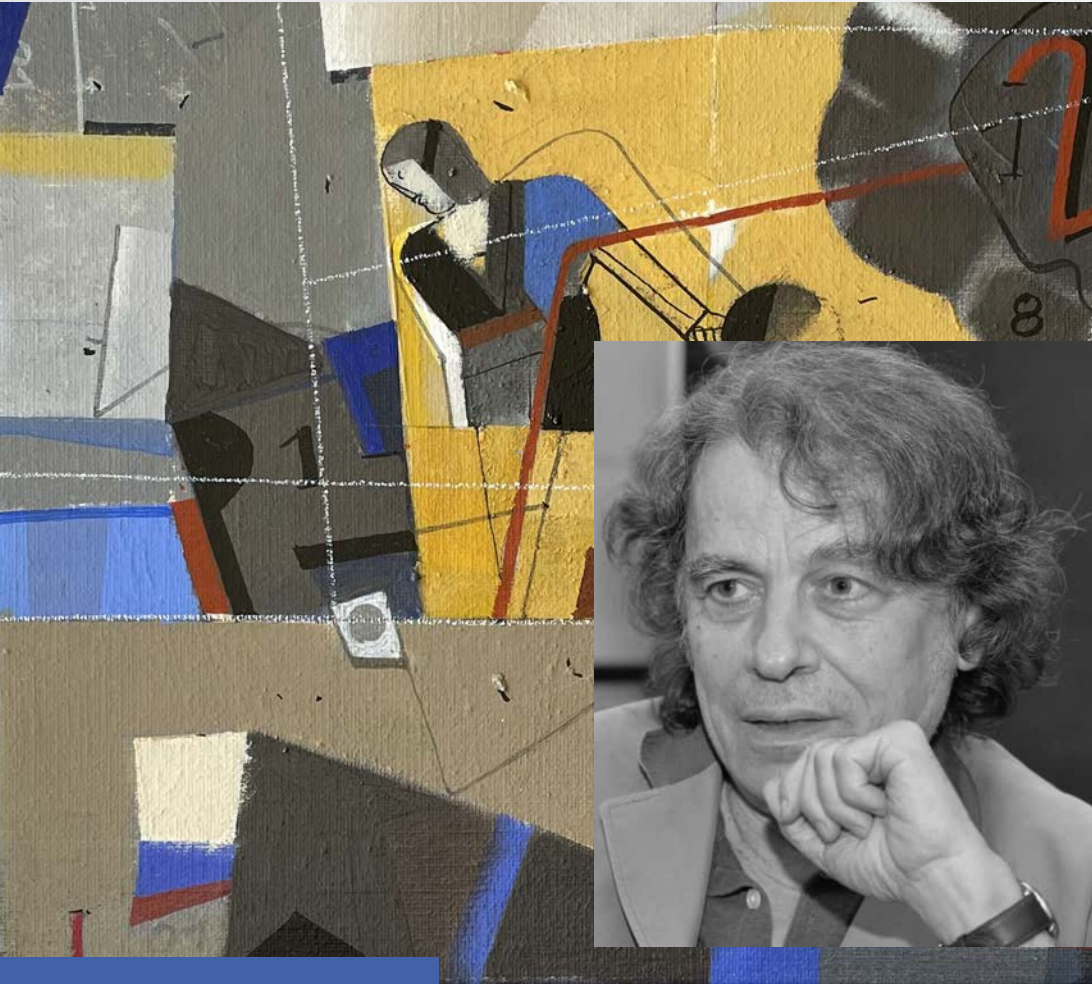
Writer & Editor: Carine Chelhot Lemyre

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About the Artist

Born in Beirut into a Lebanese-Armenian family in the suburb of Burj Hammoud, Assadour Bezdikian, known as Assadour, took interest in drawing at a very young age. His exceptional talent gave him the chance to pursue his practices in engraving and painting, funded by scholarships supported by the Italian Cultural Centre in Beirut and the Lebanese Ministry of Culture. His first training abroad, debuted at eighteen, was at the Pietro Vannucci Academy in Perugia, where he spent the summer months of 1962 to 1964, followed by a continuous period of study from 1964 to 1970 under the painter and engraver Lucien Coutaud (1904-1977) at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, where he has been established since.

Bezdikian is recognised for his engravings, despite having also developed a renowned œuvre composed of gouache and watercolour on paper, as well as tempera and oil on canvas. Overall, his works create a realm that flirts with Surrealism, in many ways, much like that of his mentor Coutaud, where extremely complex and detailed imagined landscapes are punctuated by objects dislocated in space, or by other minuscule ones suspended in the air. This results in a world composed of various disarticulations. At times, the objects in his compositions emerge from human heads, emblematic of the nature of Assadour's complex imagination. His palette is composed of discrete colours that are applied flatly, although he occasionally simulates three dimensional surfaces with a play of light and shadow that creates a delicate sense of translucence.



ASSADOUR BEZDIKIAN

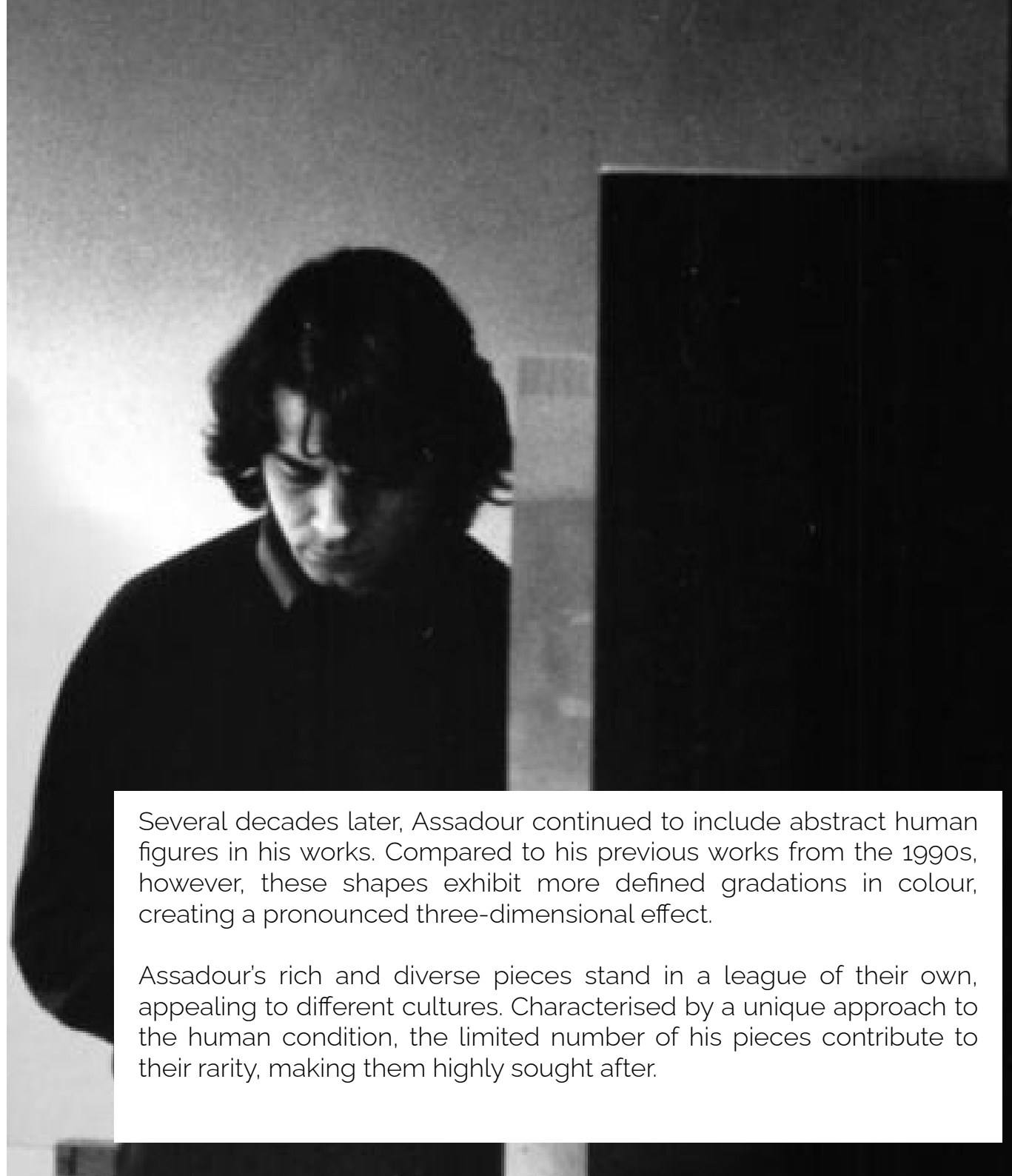
(B. 1943)

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Time in Motion features works by Assadour Bezdikian (b. 1943), a renowned Lebanese-Armenian figure, born in Beirut, who departed Lebanon at eighteen to pursue his artistic training supported by scholarships from the Italian Cultural Centre in Beirut and the Lebanese Ministry of Culture. Initially recognised for his engravings, Assadour also crafted a distinguished collection of gouaches on paper and oils on canvas. This exhibition, held from June 4th to 9th at Cromwell Place, London, marks the first exclusive showcase of Assadour's works in the United Kingdom spanning over four decades.

Assadour's oeuvre is emblematic of his exploration of the modern condition, touched by alienation. Drawing inspiration primarily from the Constructivist movement, Assadour's works utilise geometric abstraction to create rationally produced compositions. The melange of geometric shapes, letters and even numbers create diagrams, revealing a rational system of thinking and design that refers to clockwork and the passage of time.

In the 1980s, Assadour began exploring landscapes filled with geometric shapes illustrating fragmented cities. A decade later, the exploration of such themes persisted with the inclusion of human silhouettes, questioning the construction of identity, our relationship with time and the uprootedness caused by war. Other works from this period also drew influences from East Asian aesthetics, to which he was exposed during frequent stays in the region.



Several decades later, Assadour continued to include abstract human figures in his works. Compared to his previous works from the 1990s, however, these shapes exhibit more defined gradations in colour, creating a pronounced three-dimensional effect.

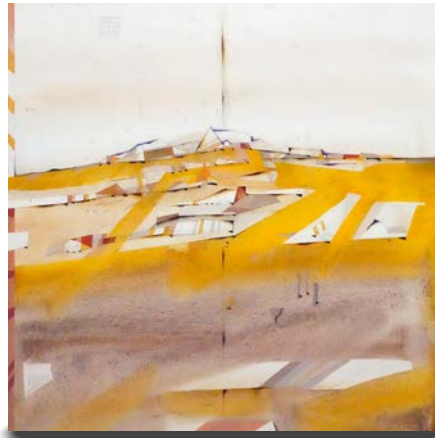
Assadour's rich and diverse pieces stand in a league of their own, appealing to different cultures. Characterised by a unique approach to the human condition, the limited number of his pieces contribute to their rarity, making them highly sought after.

Timeline



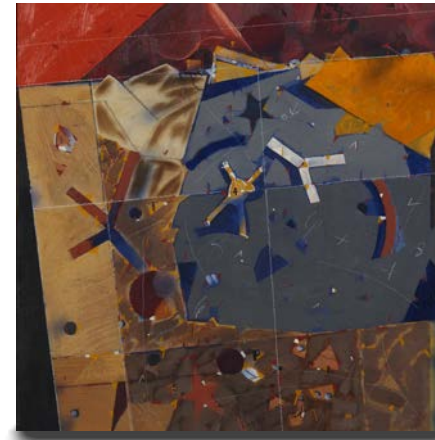
The 1970s

- 1975** Alex Monogian Art Center, Beirut, Lebanon
- 1977** 1st New York International Drawing Biennial, Bronx Museum of Art, New York, US
- 1979** 1st European Biennial of Etching, Heidelberg, Germany



The 1980s

- 1982** Galerie Vivant, Tokyo, Japan
- 1985** New Aspect Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1986** Norwegian International Print Biennale, Fredrikstad, Norway



The 1990s

- 1990** Vico Arte 90, 2nd International Biennial of Graphic Art, Bamberino Val d'Elsa, Italy
- 1995** Keum San Gallery, Seoul, South Korea
- 1997** Artgraph Gallery, Nagoya, Japan



The 2000s

- 2001** Galerie d'Art Contemporain, Chamalières, France
- 2016** Assadour: Landscape in Motion, Sursock Museum, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2023** Spuren Und Wege, Museum, Hagen, Germany.

The 1970s



Titled "August" in French, this piece is rendered in oil on canvas, distinguishing itself from Assadour's typical style primarily through the incorporation of a non-geometrical figure positioned at the centre, enclosed within a circle. Surrounding this central figure are shapes resembling two tears, suspended in space amidst abstract forms. Like many of his other works, the composition is divided into two distinct parts: a depiction of the sky or cosmos above, and a landscape below. These shapes are meticulously crafted from multiple lines, painted with a consistent palette. Placing this piece created in the early 1970s adjacent to more recent works highlights the evolution of Assadour's work with time.

Août

oil on canvas

55 x 65 cm

signed

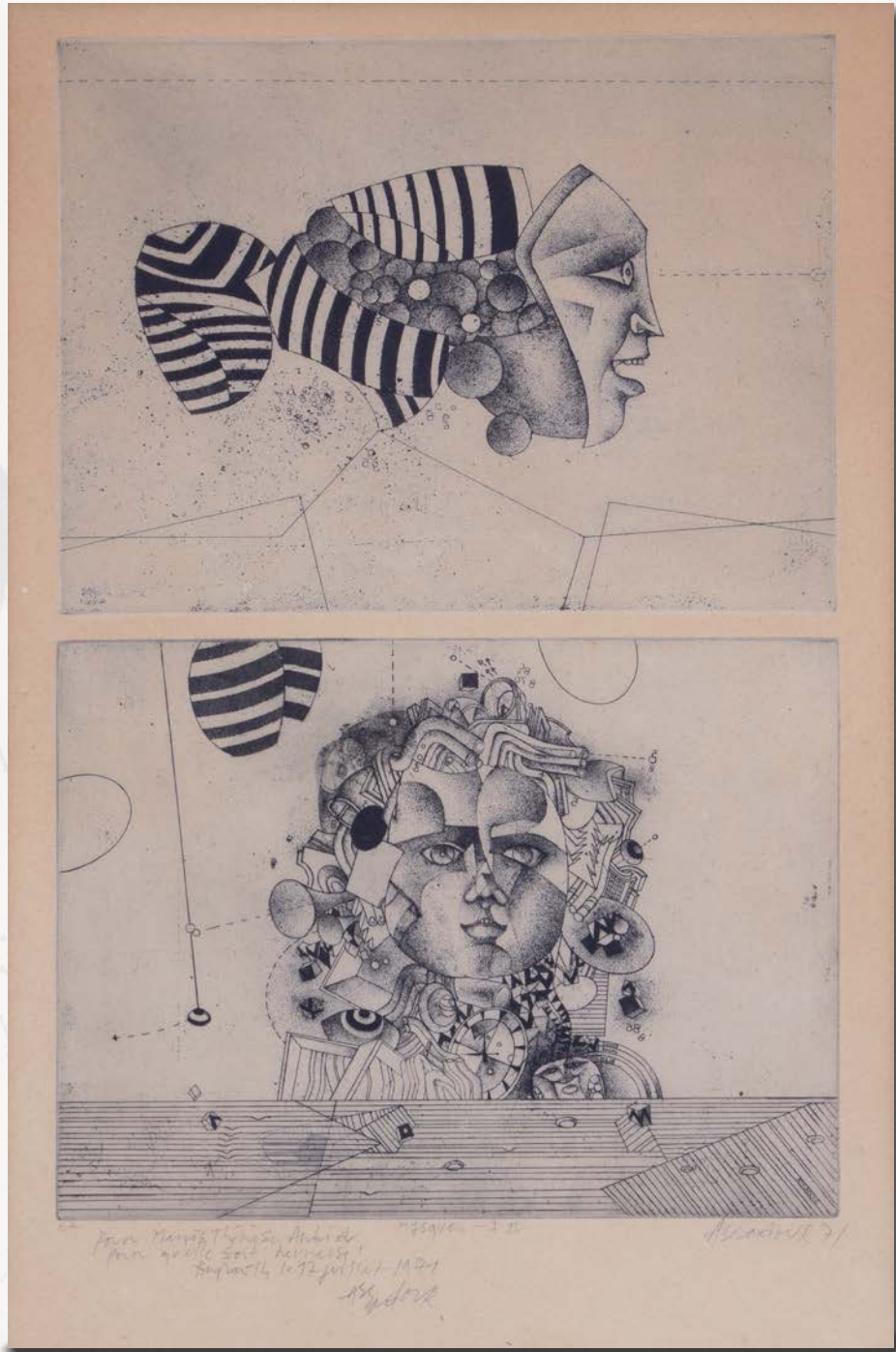
Painted in 1972-1974.

Initially recognized for his expertise in prints and engraving, Assadour apprenticed under the esteemed engraver Lucien Coutaud in Paris. The composition of this print is centred around a circular shape, serving as the primary focal point of the piece. A human figure, resembling a wooden figurine or mannequin commonly used for anatomical studies, is positioned amidst straight lines, suggestive of analytical thought, appearing to be part of a study. Numbers on the left side of the piece are mirrored. Additionally, the notation "98/200" likely alludes to the piece's number, part of a series of 200 pieces. The overall impression conveyed by the artwork suggests humans grappling with the effects of rapid industrialization, which often leads to feelings of alienation.

Untitled I

etching on paper
18 x 15 cm
edition 98/200
signed.





Inspired and influenced by African tribal masks, Assadour's creativity is evident in this print, which echoes this influence. Comprising two pieces, as indicated by its title, this artwork is unique for its inclusion of faces with intricate facial details, a departure from Assadour's usual style. The faces are constructed from multiple blocks, reminiscent of cubism, while the prints maintain a monochrome palette. One face is depicted from a side angle, while the other is shown from the front, skilfully capturing the effects of light and shadow, with straight lines traversing the composition.

MASQUES - I II

etching on paper

65.6 x 49.3 cm

e.a (artist proof)

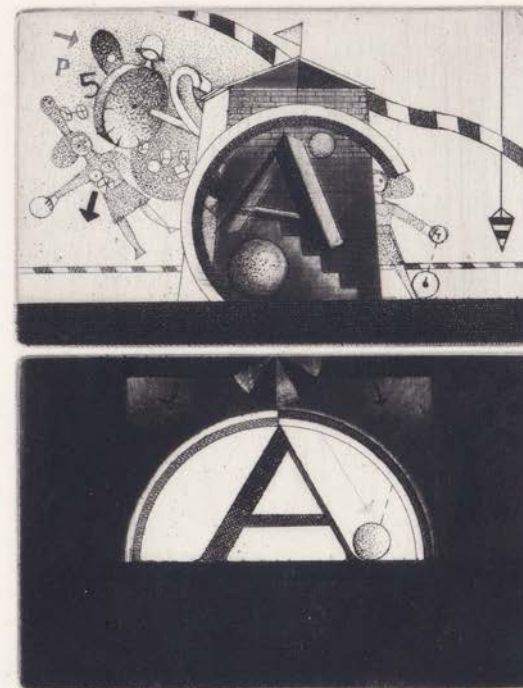
signed

Executed in 1971.

This monochrome print featuring a capitalized letter A, symbolizing Assadour, is divided into two sections, with the letter A dominating the entire composition. Positioned in the upper part are two female figures, reminiscent of the mannequin depicted in another print, albeit clothed and with minimal detail. This portrayal evokes the recurring motif of humanity amidst machinery, industrialization, progress and time.

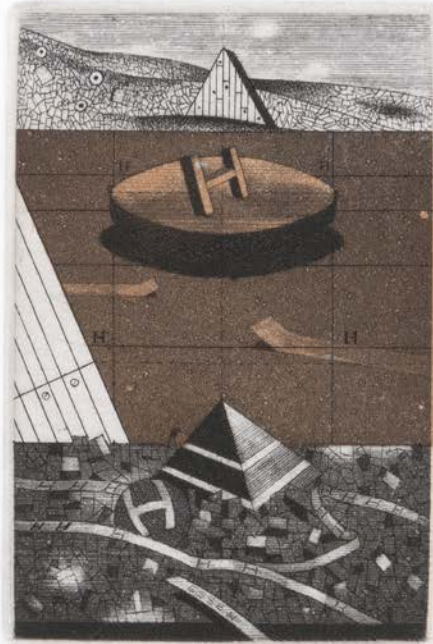
Untitled II

etching on paper
25 x 17 cm
signed
Executed in 1975.



Dr. from Bijan

Kyoto 75



The letter H, representing humanity, is prominently displayed in uppercase. Positioned at the centre of the composition on a raised circular platform, humanity is symbolically elevated. Pyramids serve as a representation of ancient Egypt, one of the most significant civilizations, with the capital letter H recurring in various parts of the piece, along with "Essen", a city in Germany, capitalized at the bottom.

Untitled III

etching on paper
20 x 14 cm
signed
edition 46/60
Executed in 1982.

Executed in tempera on paper in 1982, this piece also stands out from Assadour's usual body of work. While geometric shapes are present, they are smaller and arranged in a mosaic-like fashion to create a unified shape. Similarly, there is a clear division between two primary sections of the composition. One section, where the mosaic pieces are densely clustered, appears to depict a cityscape. The character is almost indistinguishable from the background due to its closely matched coloration, as well as being rendered abstractly and depicted from a side angle.

Untitled

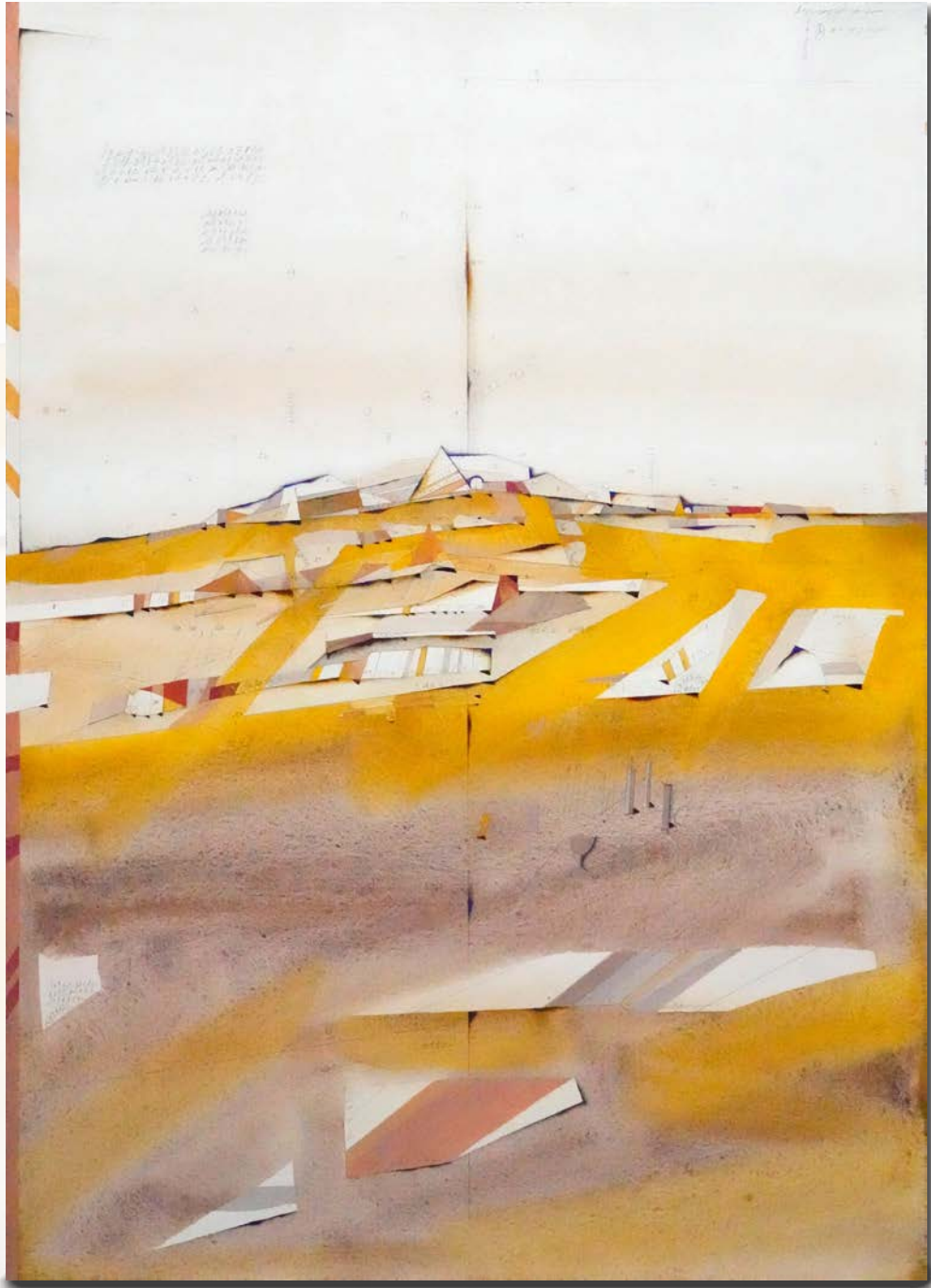
tempera on paper

56 x 76 cm

signed

Painted in 1982.





The piece's title implies a focus on a pyramid, yet it comprises numerous triangular and rectangular shapes. Positioned atop a mountain, the pyramid is the primary focus of the composition. While yellow dominates the colour scheme, white linear and sharp forms contrast with warm-coloured shapes. The artwork is divided in half, with a distinct horizon

Pyramid

tempera and watercolour on
paper

48.3 x 35.6 cm

signed

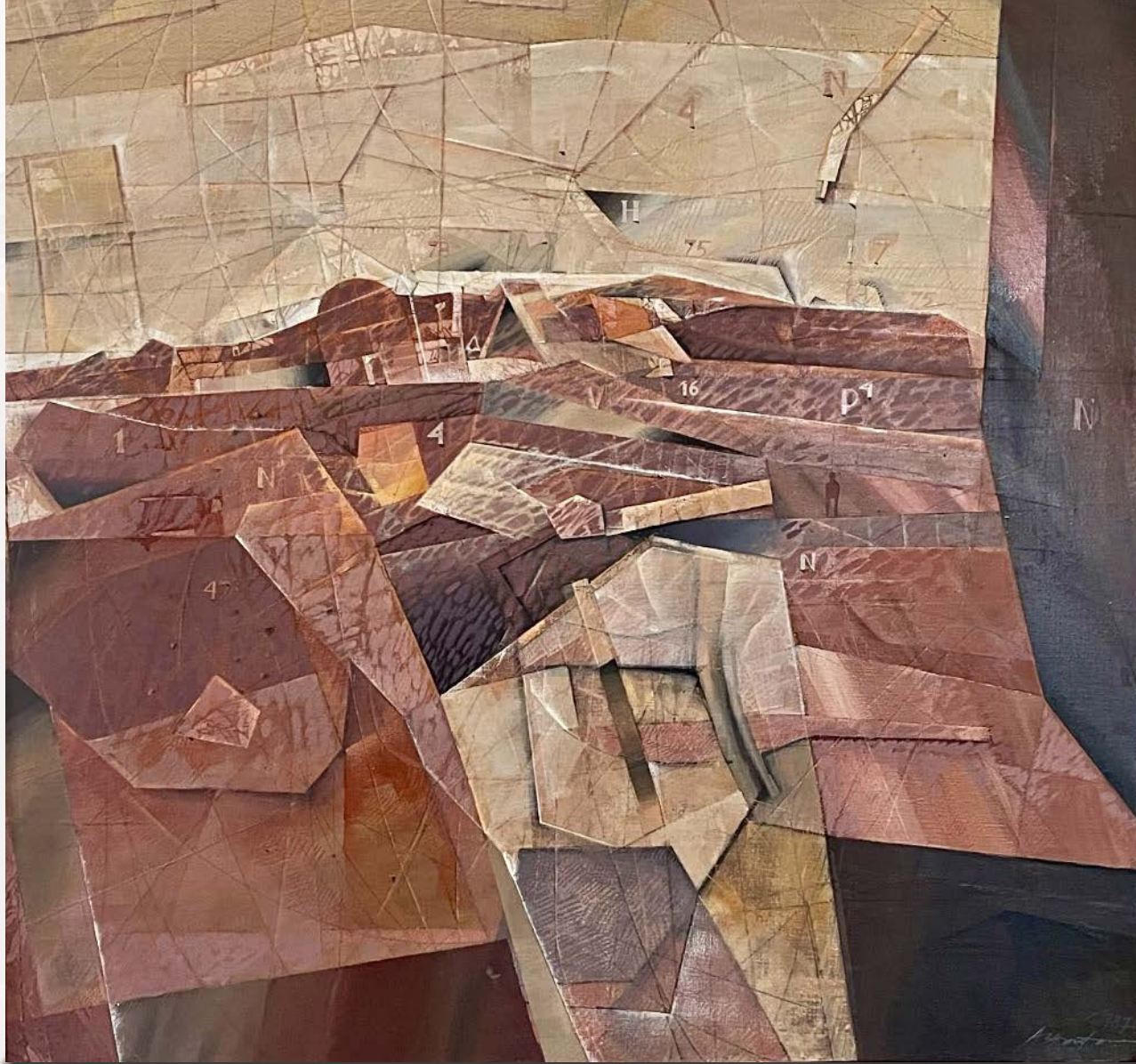
Painted in 1983.

This piece was produced using tempera and watercolour on paper in 1986. It depicts a city labelled as XVG. Like other urban landscapes featured in Assadour's body of work, this city appears fragmented. The composition is divided into two distinct sections: a sky and a landscape featuring a mountain. The artwork is densely packed, with minimal negative space aside from the lighter tones representing the sky. The landscape is composed of angular blocks, rendered in Assadour's typical colour palette of earthy tones, such as brown, dark brown and burgundy. Overall, the piece suggests themes of destruction.

Cité No XVG et Objets non Numérotés

tempera and watercolour
on paper
32 x 24 cm
signed
Painted in 1986.





While the shapes of this piece remain geometrical, they appear much more condensed, with minimal negative space between them. Titled "Coupole et Polygones" in French, the artwork features a solitary male figure positioned on the right, contemplating existence. This theme of humanity's position amidst time, chaos and destruction recurs frequently throughout Assadour's body of work. The landscape depicted seems to have endured a cataclysmic event, as the land is divided into several fragmented parts. The composition is predominantly marked by even numbers, particularly the number 4, with occasional letters such as N and V interspersed throughout.

Coupole et Polygones

oil on canvas

80 x 80 cm

signed

Painted in 1987.

In this chaotic landscape, shapes are dispersed throughout, accompanied by printed and pencilled letters. Amidst the destruction below, a human figure stands at the top right, gazing down. Despite the chaos, there is a discernible logic revealed through straight lines painted in multiple colours. Within this abstraction, order emerges, showcasing the prevalence of geometry.

No Man's Land

tempera and watercolour
on paper
40.6 x 61 cm
signed
Painted in 1988.



The 1990s



Carefully divided into numerous squares and rectangles, this piece features delineations with a thin white line. The overall composition consists of multiple blocks of paint, employing Assadour's typical colour palette, except for one block rendered in various shades of blue. Like in his other works, Assadour incorporates even numbers, presented either in white or a printed font, alongside a star positioned on the left, serving as a cosmological reference.

Horizons

oil on canvas

55 x 46 cm

signed

Painted in 1990 - 1994.

The presence of a protea in a landscape with two characters is indicated by the title. "Protea" refers to a genus of flowering plants native to the Southern Hemisphere, abundant in South Africa. These plants are renowned for their distinctive and variedly sized flowers, often symbolizing diversity, courage and change. This piece incorporates several elements resembling paper cut-outs, evoking themes of displacement caused by war and uprootedness. It features male and female figures alongside various domestic objects like a vase and a wine glass. Above them hover machine-like shapes, also rendered in a cut-out fashion. This work stands out from Assa-dour's contemporary style, having been produced over three decades ago.

Protée, Paysage avec deux Personnages

tempera on paper

78.7 x 58.5 cm

signed

Painted in 1993.





In this landscape, human male figures intertwine with technology, symbolizing rebuilding. Chaos reigns amidst meticulously painted elements and details. A circle, likely to have been drawn with a compass, adds a focal point. Pencil-jotted numbers accompany several blocks of warm colours, characteristic of Assadour's palette.

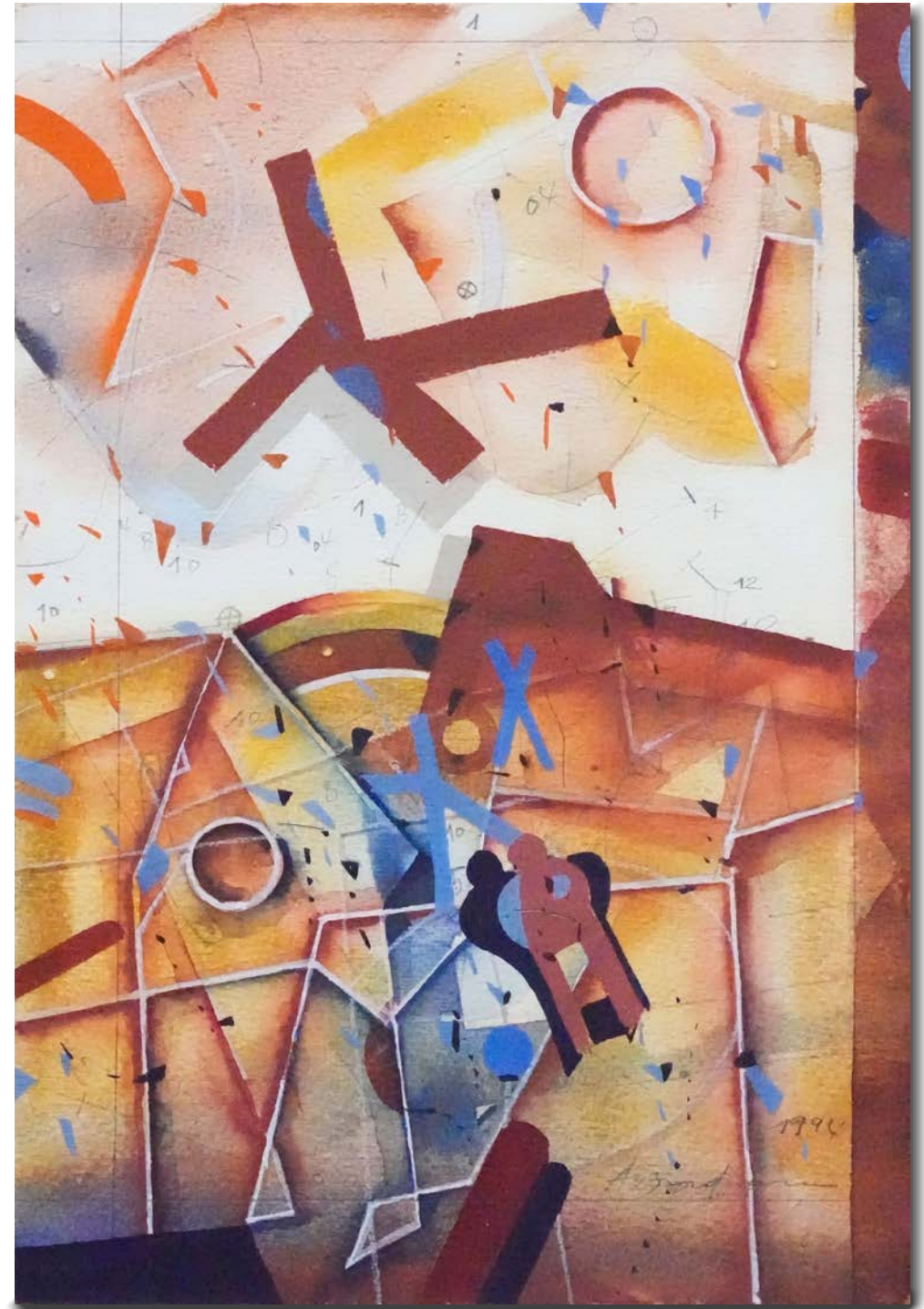
Golden Landscape

tempera and gouache
on paper
33.7 x 24 cm
signed
Painted in 1993.

Assadour spent time in several East Asian locations, including extended periods in Songkla, a city in Thailand. This piece, as indicated by its title, serves as a reference to his stay there. It features abundant geometrical shapes, yet its composition appears bifurcated. The upper part evokes the sky, while the lower part suggests the land, where human-like forms populate the right side.

Suite Songkla I

tempera and watercolour
on paper
25.5 x 17.5 cm
signed
Painted in 1994.





Emblematic of Assadour's inclination, this piece reflects his penchant for disassembling landscapes and infusing them with utter chaos. The small shapes, crafted from straight lines and adorned with hues of red, blue, teal and orange, ignite a kinetic energy, instigating disorder within the scene. Here, a human figure confronts a triangle in the landscape, symbolizing a mountain.

Paysage avec un Personnage à Droite

tempera and gouache on paper

38 x 27 cm

signed

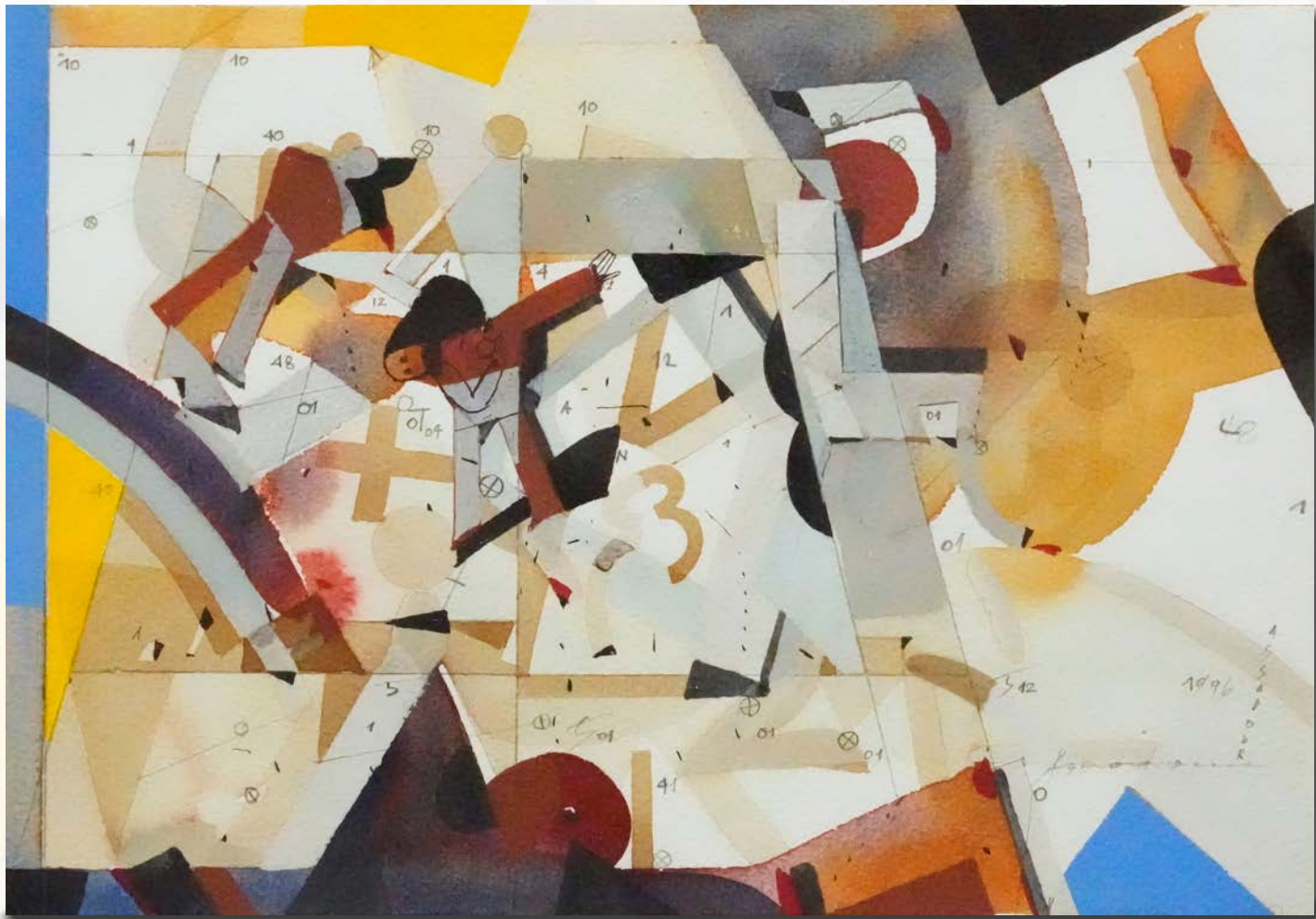
Painted in 1994.

Two primary blocks dominate this piece produced in 1995, set in Matera, a city in southern Italy: one rectangular and the other a fusion of circular and geometric shapes. Human forms and silhouettes hover in uncertainty within the composition. Warm colours, likely reminiscent of Assadour's experiences in Italy, permeate the artwork. Carefully outlined shapes exhibit geometric abstraction, characteristic of his 1990s' style. Translucence in the colours is achieved through watercolour, while coloured lines frame the paper's contours.

Suite Matera I

gouache and watercolour
on paper
18 x 26 cm
Painted in 1995.





Sensitive to themes of war, violence and uprootedness, Assadour explores these subjects in this work. As indicated by the piece's title, the depicted scene captures a moment frozen in time, where two human figures—male and female—hover in mid-air, resembling the arrows of a clock, evoking the way war thrusts individuals into a state of limbo. The numerical elements symbolize the passage of time halted by the impact of war.

19H52 GMT

tempera watercolour
and gouache on paper
18 x 25.4 cm
signed
Painted in 1996.

Warm colours prevail in this landscape, with stars strewn throughout the piece. Delicately painted with watercolour, even numbers provide a nuanced touch. Depth is achieved through translucence in the brushstrokes. Colour blocks are clearly defined, meticulously divided on the paper's surface. Arrows, pointing in multiple directions, contribute to the dynamic, yet logical nature of the composition.

Paysage avec deux Personnages à Droite

tempera and watercolour on paper

26 x 36 cm

signed

Painted in 1996.





Part of the series set in Matera, the artwork features prominent large circular shapes painted in various colours, serving as its focal point. Like many of Assa-dour's other works, a clear demarcation exists between two primary sections: one representing the sky or cosmos, and the other symbolizing the earthly landscape. Disorder pervades the lower portion, depicting the landscape cluttered with numerous squares, lines and dark-coloured geometric shapes. A star, positioned in the middle left, further alludes to the cosmos. Additionally, numbers are pencilled onto the canvas, illustrating an order within chaos.

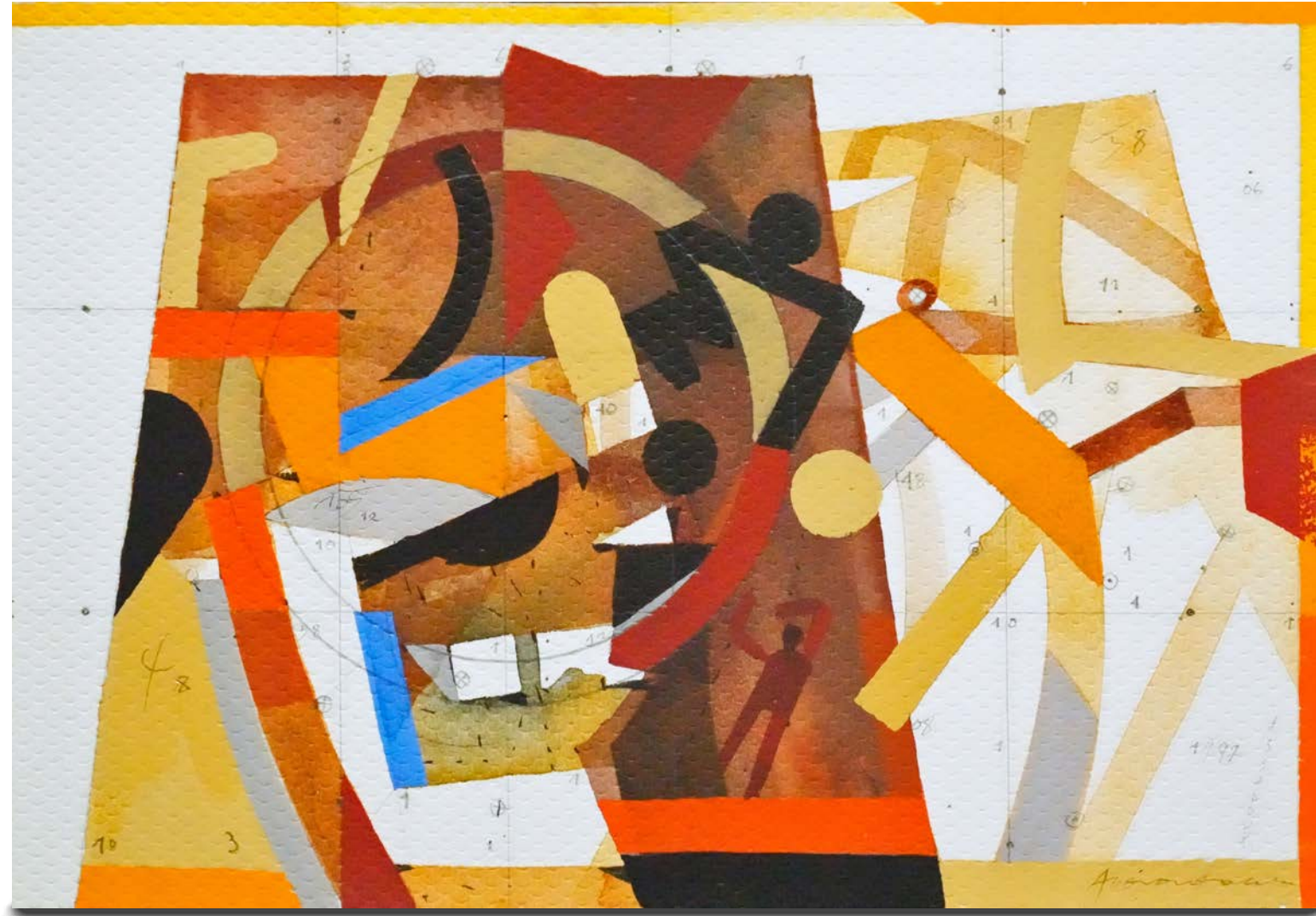
Suite Matera IV

gouache and watercolour
on paper
26 x 18 cm
signed
Painted in 1996.

The portrayal depicts the small village of Manera, situated in Italy's Piedmont region. Watercolour and gouache adorn a paper affixed to the canvas. Central to the artwork is a circle seamlessly integrated into a trapezoid shape. Clearly defined blocks of colour enhance the composition. Throughout the painting, numbers are inscribed in pencil, predominantly even. Additionally, human figures are incorporated, with one on the right resembling a shadow.

Suite Matera II

watercolour and
gouache on paper
mounted on board
18 x 25.4 cm
signed
Painted in 1997.





The piece's title, also referencing Matera, contains the acronym GMT denoting its time zone. A clear division emerges between the earthly scenery and the celestial domain, distinguished by an empty space wherein a meticulously drawn circle, possibly symbolizing a planet or cosmological entity, is situated. The landscape is divided into two distinct sections: one densely populated, while the other depicts a solitary male figure moving through emptiness. This organization exemplifies an order within abstraction, a hallmark of Assadour's style.

Matera 5HGMT

gouache and watercolour
on paper

23.5 x 31.5 cm

signed

Painted in 1997-1998.

Assadour's artistic phase in Italy involved the incorporation of warm hues like reds, oranges and yellows. Positioned centrally within the artwork is a trapezoid, serving as the focal point. Human figures populate the disarrayed scene, comprising of cylindrical blocks. Throughout the piece, a star - a cosmological symbol - is meticulously sketched in pencil, while the letter A in printed form, likely standing for Assadour, occupies the upper-left corner.

Suite Matera III

watercolour and
gouache on paper
mounted on board
18 x 25.4 cm
signed
Painted in 1998.





A significant portion of the composition created using tempera and watercolour on paper is dominated by a circle. It serves as a prime example of Assadour's geometrical abstraction and his ability to find order within disorder. While predominantly abstract, the shapes are well-contained, along with their respective colours. The lines are straight, and the elements are meticulously delineated. This adherence to order is reminiscent of Suprematism, an early twentieth-century art movement characterized by basic geometric forms painted in a limited range of colours, a term coined by Kazimir Malevich. Assadour adds his own personal touch by including pencilled numbers and the names of colours such as yellow and blue. The character referenced in the title of the piece is depicted abstractly, devoid of a discernible identity.

Paysage avec un Personnage à Droite

tempera and watercolour on paper

79 x 53.3 cm

signed

Painted in 1998.

The piece's title indicates another moment captured instantaneously, precisely at 10 pm, 6 minutes. Executed in oil on canvas, the piece is predominantly shaped like a trapezoid, occupying almost its entirety. This form is composed of multiple blocks painted in shades of brown and dark yellow, reminiscent of wood. Within the trapezoid, circular shapes are scattered. The artwork is filled with numerous abstract lines, circular in nature, distinctly separated and delineated, each painted in various colours. Despite the diversity of hues, the overall composition maintains a cohesive colour scheme, primarily consisting of blues, with hints of burgundy, yellow and brown. This arrangement reflects some order within disorder, characteristic of Assadour's style.

22H06GMT

oil on canvas

54.5 x 45.5 cm

signed

Painted in 1998.



The 2000s



Two characters find themselves within a landscape, as indicated by the piece's title in French. The scene features two arcades containing various shapes, some linear and others circular, alongside the number two. Notably, two figures are painted in light brown. Despite the overall geometric and chaotic composition, the arrangement of shapes imparts a sense of order within the chaos, evoking the style reminiscent of Kazimir Malevich, a Russian avant-garde artist of the twentieth century.

Deux Personnages dans un Paysage

gouache and watercolour on paper

28 x 38 cm

signed

Painted in 2000.

At the heart of the artwork lie two symmetrical triangles. The piece evokes a mechanical sensation, evoking the connection between humans and industrialization, along with the transformations it brings. Human figures navigate amidst these rapid changes, portrayed through silhouettes alongside floating numbers within a dynamically charged scene filled with lines and geometrical shapes.

Deux Constructions Polychromes

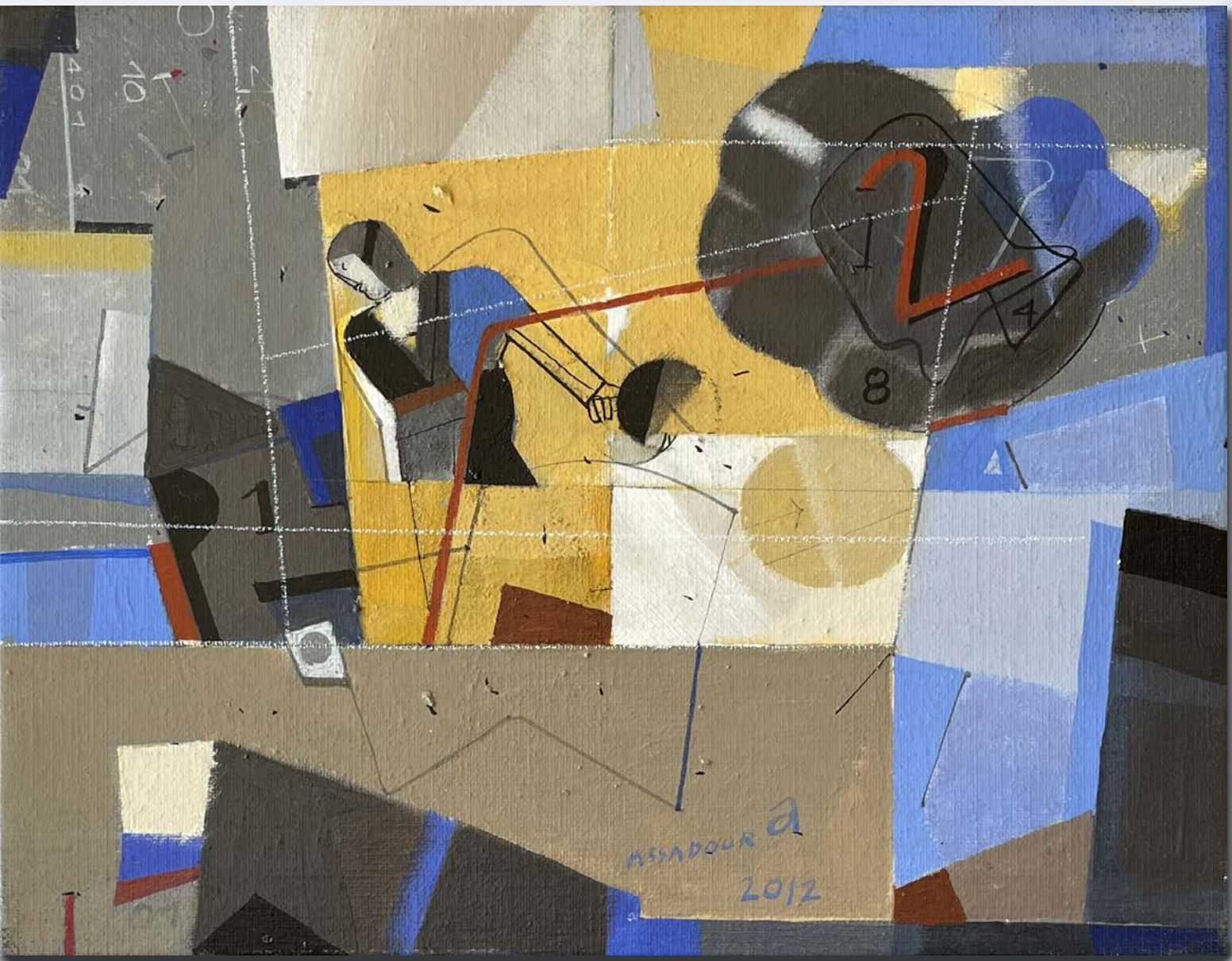
oil on canvas

80 x 100 cm

signed

Painted in 1999-2003.





As time passed, Assadour's palette grew darker, incorporating colder colours. Nevertheless, his primary visual traits endured. Here, geometrical shapes divide the canvas, with surfaces delineated and separated effectively by white lines reminiscent of chalk. The overall appearance resembles the map of a thought process, with a male figure positioned at the centre amidst numbers, geometrical shapes and straight lines.

Untitled

oil on canvas

27 x 35 cm

signed

Painted in 2012-2013.

Assadour, through oil, facilitated the accentuation of shapes' three-dimensional aspect in his paintings, a process more challenging with watercolour, gouache and tempera. Breaking away from his typical warm palette, Assadour inserted darker colours onto this piece. A mechanical aspect is conveyed by the grey hues, implying that the depicted surfaces are metallic. Geometric abstraction remains predominant, emphasizing the connection of our world to everyday technology, industrialization and machinery.

Sunny in the South

oil on canvas

45 x 55 cm

signed

Painted in 2017.





Janet Rady
Fine Art



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