

**EXHIBITION**  
from September 14th to October 15th 2023

**ALAIN VEINSTEIN**  
*Attempt the impossible*

*Curated by Olivier Kaepelin*

**OPENING**  
Thursday, September 14th from 6 to 9 pm

**Thursday Nocturne at the Beaux-Arts**  
Thursday 5 October from 6pm to 9pm

**A Sunday at the gallery**  
Sunday 15 October from 2pm to 6pm



Alain Veinstein, *Untitled*, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 15 cm, 2023

**PRESS CONTACT**

Virginie Boissière  
virginie.boissiere@galerielaforestdivonne.com  
+ 33 (0)6 74 49 35 83

*In his work, Alain Veinstein has always established, clearly or furtively, a relationship with the earth. In his paintings over the last few years, there has been a mountain in front of us. Whether the mountain was real or abstract, I had the ambivalent feeling that it was both facing us and including us in its space. It wasn't a landscape, but a dialogue of fascination and strangeness. Today, this distance between us and the subject, this situation of difference and immobility, has disappeared to make way for «movement that moves the lines». «movement that shifts the lines». We are entering a stage where composition and colour are the actors in a saraband between forms and kingdoms. Their theatre is nothing if not the theatre itself. As with Piero Di Cosimo, whether it's a braid, a hill, a snake, a fruit, a hare, a cloud... Alain Veinstein arranges figures that seek their dance step, their place, their rhythm in the reality of painting. The whimsical responds to the moment of balance and forces the gravity and weight of the world to debate with the critical power of fantasy.*

Olivier Kaepelin, June 2023

## ATTEMPT THE IMPOSSIBLE

*An illness I'd never heard of before left my head empty and cut off my hands for months in a row. My armchair had never been happier: we never left each other's side all day. I thought I'd given up painting. I had given it up the first time forty years ago, but this time everything led me to believe that it would be the right one.*

*However, as time went by, I was torn between the desire to carry on, to move forward, and the awareness of my condition, which unfortunately didn't give me much hope. The proof of this was when I was commissioned to do a series of black and white paintings. It didn't work. I had lost my touch.*

*I had to face the fact that painting, for me, was well and truly finished.*

*All I had to do was cross my arms in my armchair.*

*Fortunately, as if nothing had happened, desire finally took over. With one demand: to try the impossible. That I not try to carry on as before, but that I try to face painting as if it were the first time. That's how I got into pastels. And the two hundred drawings that resulted got the ball rolling again. They were followed by canvases of various sizes, which interpret the principle of reality in my own way and, like me, have rediscovered colour. I hope that some of them will surprise you as they surprised me.*

Alain Veinstein, May 2023

# CONTENT

1. Press release	p. 1
2. Bio of Alain Veinstein	p. 2
3. The curator	p.3
4. Resume	p. 4
5. Practical informations	p. 6



Alain Veinstein, *Untitled*, pastel on paper, 20x 15 cm, 2023

# 1. PRESS RELEASE

## ALAIN VEINSTEIN *Attempt the impossible*

from 14 September to 15 October 2023

Galerie La Forest Divonne is delighted to present a new solo exhibition of paintings by Alain Veinstein, curated by Olivier Kaepelin.

Alain Veinstein is a writer and poet, a key figure on France Culture, and also a painter. When he left Radio France in 2014, he plunged back into painting, his first vocation. He exhibited for the first time at Galerie La Forest Divonne in 2017, then in Aix-en-Provence, Arles, Marseille...

*Attempt the impossible* is the third solo exhibition that the Galerie La Forest Divonne has devoted to Alain Veinstein in Paris. In the world he paints, between figuration and abstraction, colour becomes the subject. A great conversationalist, he creates a dialogue between forms and landscapes in an imaginary world populated by allusions and enigmas. The exhibition features acrylics on canvas and pastels on paper, in bright colours and animal or almost human forms.

To evoke his quest as a painter, Veinstein quotes the poet Etty Hillesum, who wrote in *Une vie bouleversée*: «*You have to start from the space you are given, however small, and immediately envisage all its possibilities and make a modest reality of them*».

These words echo perfectly the formal outcome of Alain Veinstein's work, but also the difficult period he has been going through in recent years, marked by illness.

Hence the title «*Tenter l'impossible*» («*Attempt the impossible*»), and that's how he once again «*confronted painting*», much to our delight.

*«I manipulate shapes to which I give colours, throwing myself off the cliff each time, worried about the result at the end. There's no time for procrastination; all my strength has to yield to my desires. It's up to me to multiply the fragments in the hope that one day, perhaps, they will form a whole, bearing witness to what agitates and upsets me, an anthology of my distress, far from the mere display of splendour. I can't claim, like Picasso, that my canvases paint themselves. An aggravating circumstance: I'm a self-taught man, a sort of warrior sent to the front without ever having handled a weapon. I'm throwing myself into the adventure, so to speak, without ammunition, like an orphan thrown abruptly into life (...).»*

- Alain Veinstein, «*The village idiot*», letter dated 17 March 2023

## 2. BIOGRAPHY

Writer, journalist and poet, winner of the Prix Mallarmé, Alain Veinstein was host and producer of the radio programmes «Les Nuits Magnétiques» and «Du jour au lendemain» on France Culture for 35 years. Painting and drawing were his first passions.

After studying law and political science, Alain Veinstein joined the ORTF in 1969, and became head of programmes in 1972, in charge of radio and literary and artistic television programmes. When ORTF broke up in 1975, he chose to move to Radio France as adviser to the director of France Culture. In 1978, he created Les Nuits magnétiques. At the same time, from 1985 until 2014, he presented Du jour au lendemain, a daily appointment with the author of a book.

As a writer, Alain Veinstein has published numerous books, poems and novels. His most recent publications include *Le Désir que j'ai*, Points 2021 and *Poursuivre*, Le Seuil, 2022. He was awarded the Prix Mallarmé and the Grand Prix de poésie by the Académie française in 2003, the Prix de la langue française in 2010 for his literary work as a whole, and the Grand Prix de la SCAM (Société civile des auteurs multimédia) in 2014 for his radio work as a whole.

Since 2015, he has been painting and exhibiting regularly.



Alain Veinstein, *Untitled*, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, 2023

*«Painting, like writing, means opening your eyes wider, observing more closely, bringing to the fore what you don't normally see.»*

- Alain Veinstein

### 3. THE CURATOR



Olivier Kaepelin

Olivier Kaepelin was the Delegate for the Visual Arts at the French Ministry of Culture and Communication from 2004 to 2012, and Head of Projects at the Palais de Tokyo from 2009 to 2011. He has designed a number of exhibitions and events devoted to contemporary art in France. He has initiated large-scale events such as the triennial «La Force de l'art», first held at the Grand Palais in 2006. He is also behind «Monumenta», an event that invites an internationally renowned artist to take over the Nave of the Grand Palais, and was director of the Maeght Foundation from 2011 to the end of 2017.

Radio man, he was deputy director in charge of programmes at France Culture and then adviser to the chairman of Radio France on cultural programmes and the development of the group's cultural policy from 1999 to 2004. He has given life to numerous programmes on literature and, alongside Alain Veinstein, helped to create Nuits Magnétiques from 1979 onwards.

Art critic and writer, he was the creator of the magazines *Exit* and *Le Grand 8*, and a contributor to various literary and artistic journals such as *Art Press*, *Beaux Arts magazine* and *Change*. He is also the author of books of poetry published by various publishers and numerous books and texts on art and artists, as well as on the equestrian theatre *Zingaro*, notably for Éditions Flammarion, Actes Sud and La Différence.

### 3. CV

**Alain Veinstein**

**Born in 1942 in Cannes – Lives and works in Paris.**



#### PERSONAL EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Trying the impossible*, solo show from 14 Sept to 14 Oct 2023, Galerie la Forest Divonne, Paris  
La Non-Maison, Aix-en-Provence
- 2022 *One more reason*, avec Bernard Plossu, La Non-Maison, Aix-en-Provence  
*A world apart*, Galerie XXI, Paris
- 2020 *Mountains, wonders and small pleasures*, Galerie la Forest Divonne, Paris  
*Black papers*, Cipm - centre international de poésie, Marseille
- 2019 Pointtopoint galerie, Nîmes
- 2017 *Painted papers*, Galerie la Forest Divonne, Paris

#### CATALOGS

*Painted papers*, text by Alain Veinstein, afterword by Bernard Comment, Le Seuil, 2017

#### BIOGRAPHY

- 1969 Joined ORTF
- 1972 Head of programmes at ORTF, responsible for literary and artistic programmes on radio and television.
- 1978 *The Magnetic Nights*, then *Surprised by the night*, France Culture.
- 1985-2014 *From One Day to the Next*, dialogue with the author of a book.
- 1989 Founded the magazine *l'Éphémère* with Yves Bonnefoy.
- 2001 Prix Mallarmé for *Tout se passe comme si*.
- 2003 Grand Prix for poetry from the Académie Française.
- 2010 Prix de la langue française for his body of work.
- 2014 Grand Prix de la SCAM for the whole of his radio work.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY (selection)

### NOVELS AND POETRY, BOOKS OF INTERVIEWS

*Répétition sur les amas*, Mercure de France, 1974  
*Recherche des dispositions anciennes*, Maeght, 1977  
*Vers l'absence de soutien*, Gallimard, 1978  
*Corps en dessous*, Clivages, 1979  
*Ébauche du féminin*, Maeght, 1981  
*Même un enfant*, Le Collet de Buffle, 1988  
*Bras ouverts*, Mercure de France, 1989  
*Une seule fois, un jour*, Mercure de France, 1989  
*L'Accordeur*, Calmann-Lévy, 1996 et « Folio », n. 3086  
*Violante*, Mercure de France, 1999 et « Folio » n.3527  
*Tout se passe comme si*, Mercure de France, 2001  
*Bonnes Soirées*, Farrago, 2001  
*L'Intervieweur*, Calmann-Lévy, 2002  
*Les Heures lentes*, entretien avec Henri Thomas, Arléa, 2004  
*La Partition*, Grasset, 2004 et « Folio », n.4414  
*Dancing*, Seuil, 2006  
*Le Développement des lignes*, Seuil, 2009  
*Radio sauvage*, Seuil, 2010  
*Voix seule*, Seuil, 2011  
*Scène tournante*, Seuil, 2012  
*Entretiens*, avec Sam Szafran, Flammarion, 2013  
*Cent Quarante Signes*, Grasset, 2013  
*Du jour sans lendemain*, Seuil, 2014  
*L'Introduction de la pelle*, poèmes 1967-1989, Seuil, 2014  
*Les Ravisseurs*, Grasset, 2015  
*Entretiens*, avec André du Bouchet, L'Atelier contemporain, 2016  
*Venise, aller simple*, Seuil, 2016  
*À n'en plus finir*, Le Seuil, 2019  
*Poursuivre*, Le Seuil, 2022



## 4. PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

**ALAIN VEINSTEIN**  
*Attempt the impossible*

from 14 September to 15 October 2023

### Opening

Thursday 14 September from 6pm to 9pm

### Events



**Thursday Nocturne at the Beaux-Arts**  
Thursday 5 October from 6pm to 9pm



**A Sunday at the gallery**  
Sunday 15 October from 2pm to 6pm



Alain Veinstein, *Untitled*, acrilic on canvas, 20 x 15 cm, 2023



Alain Veinstein, *Untitled*, acrilic on canvas, 20 x 15 cm, 2023

**Galerie La Forest Divonne**  
12, rue des Beaux-Arts - 75006 Paris  
Tuesday - Saturday 11am - 7pm  
+33 (0)1 40 29 97 52

### Press contact

Virginie Boissière  
virginie.boissiere@galerielaforestdivonne.com + 33 (0)6 74 49 35 83