

GALERIA MARC DOMÈNECH

Press Release

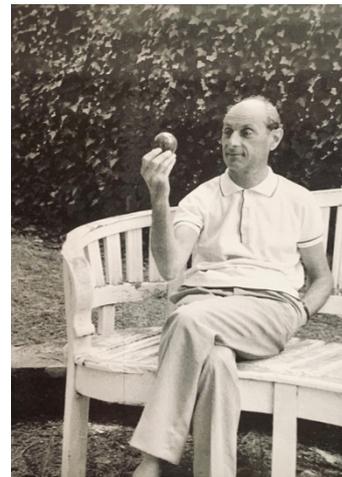
PIC ADRIAN. *Paintings from the 1960s*
12 January – 16 March 2023

- There has been no exhibition focusing solely on Pic Adrian's paintings from the 1960s for over fifty years.
- This is the first analysis of Essentialism, the artistic theory developed by the painter in 1965.
- The exhibition also aims to restore to his rightful place this artist who remains largely unknown to the general public, and to raise awareness of his work on theory and in poetry.
- The exhibits display an unusual balance between geometry and Art informel, the two main trends in European art during the second half of the twentieth century.

'Art reflects the living light of truth in the darkness of human life'
(Pic Adrian, *Réflexions sur l'univers sonore*, Paris, 1955)

The Galeria Marc Domènech is pleased to present the first exhibition devoted to the theorist, poet and painter **Pic Adrian** (Moinești, 1910 – Barcelona, 2008) to be shown in its rooms. This exhibition commemorates the show held in 1962 at the Galeria Syra in Barcelona, the artist's first ever anywhere in the world. His works have only rarely been shown since his death in 2008. The last opportunities to view his work were at the Galeria Marlborough in 2017 and, more recently, at the Galerie Zlotowski in Paris, with which we have jointly organised this project to revive the work of this artist of Rumanian origin.

Pic Adrian. Paintings from the 1960s surveys the entire body of pictorial work produced by the artist during this decade and explores the context behind the theory that he termed 'Essentialism'. This exhibition is the first to focus on this fundamental aspect of his work, one that proved highly important during his pursuit of his artistic career. It was in these works that the artist expressed his obsession with simplicity and succinctness, while seeking to achieve a balance – unusual at that time in the Iberian Peninsula – between the asceticism of geometry and the freedom of Art informel. His paintings from this period have often been described by critics and historians of the day, such as Pierre Restany, Gillo Dorfles, Carlos Areán, Juan Cortés and Àngel Marsà, as silent and austere works in which the artist always incorporates elements that tauten the composition in order to create a sensitive painting with links to the worlds of music and science. This equilibrium between dualities to achieve a much sought-after timeless universality is what he was most interested in and what he always strove to attain: 'Essentialism, as a movement, has a condition of totality', he remarked.



Pic Adrian

An admirer of Brancusi, Arp and Pevsner, about whom he wrote interesting essays, Adrian easily overcame in his work the humble but essential challenge of reproducing the 'beauty of simplicity'. We must situate his paintings on a kind of *invisible island* (the title of one of his poems) in an art scene – the European artistic context of the second half of the twentieth century – dominated by pure geometry, Pop Art, gestural and informal Expressionism and all those trends that grew out of these movements. As Bartomeu

Marí writes in his essay in the accompanying catalogue, 'Even though Adrian, in whose painting we find "trembling" rather than "vibration" (...) is too rational to be Expressionist and too organic to be geometric. (...) Adrian's work "floats" in an aesthetic limbo, framed by Expressionism and Pop Art on the one hand and experimental practices on the other.'



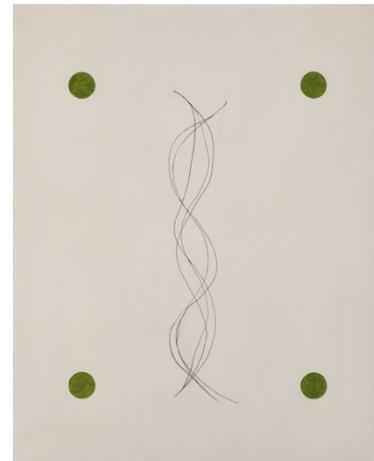
Pic Adrian, Untitled, 1962

Pic Adrian was born in Moinești (Rumania) on 3 September 1910, but his family moved in 1915 to Bucharest, where he studied law. He published his first anthology of poems *Jocuri de lumini în întuneric* (Plays of Light in the Dark) in 1927. Decades later, while in Paris, he published five more: *Œil du ciel: cœur* (1973), *Main planétaire* (1985), *Noyau de l'infini* (1990), *L'île invisible* (1994) and *Transparence* (1990).

Threatened first by Nazism and then Communism, Adrian moved in 1951, after a spell in Paris, to Israel, where he met Alice Rubinstein, his future wife. In 1953, he returned to France, where he encountered leading figures in the world of art and culture of the time, among them Brancusi, Marc Chagall, Fernand Léger and Jean Arp. One of his oldest friends, Pau Casals, suggested that he move to Barcelona. In 1955, he published his book *Réflexions sur l'univers sonore*, as a result of which he came into contact with other important figures such as Gabriel Marcel, Louis de Broglie and Albert Schweitzer. *Goya* magazine published articles by him on Brancusi, Arp and Pevsner.

His first solo show was at the Galeria Syra in Barcelona in 1962. At that time, Adrian also founded the Essentialist Trends group and they showed work in Barcelona in 1967 and Madrid in 1969. During the 1960s, 70s and 80s, he published a number of books on the theory of art and exhibited internationally in France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Norway.

In 1965, he published *Du réalisme naturaliste au réalisme essentialiste* and met Lucio Fontana. The Catalan composer Mestres Quadreny was inspired in 1970 by Adrian's *Synchronicité* series of paintings, produced by the artist in 1968, to compose a piece entitled *Variacions essencials*. In 1973, Adrian published the manifesto *Art principièl* and in 1978 wrote the treatise *Le continuum terrestre humain*. A year later, the Fundació Joan Miró mounted a major retrospective of his work. In 1982, he published *Occident-Orient*, his second text on Art principièl. In 1991, his most important show thus far was organised by the Government of Catalonia in the exhibition rooms of BBVA.



Works by Adrian are held in numerous private and public collections, notable among them the: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Cabinet des estampes, Geneva; MNCARS, Madrid; Stiftung für konstruktive, konkrete Kunst und konzeptuelle Kunst, Zurich; Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo; IVAM, Valencia; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro; Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt; MNAC, Barcelona; MACBA, Barcelona; MoMA, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.