

AIDA TOMESCU

WITH THE CRIMSON WORD

21 Cork Street,
London W1S 3LZ

T: +44 (0)20 7436 7766

4th October - 28 October, 2023
Private View, Tuesday 3rd October, 6 - 8 PM

press@flowersgallery.com
www.flowersgallery.com

Flowers Gallery is delighted to announce an exhibition by Sydney-based artist Aida Tomescu, her first solo exhibition in the UK.

One of Australia's foremost abstract painters, Aida Tomescu's career has spanned over 40 years. Her works combine a vital physical presence with a powerful handling of scale, to create what she describes as "*living structures*", self-forming from within.

The title of this exhibition is a quotation from a poem by Paul Celan, underlining the important connection Tomescu sees between the cadence and structure of language and painting. Tomescu's works have long incorporated literary references, generating their rhythm during the journey of their making. They develop connections between multiple sources, always charged by the present. Tomescu describes Celan's verse as "*the poetic frame*" of this series of works, in which associative thinking generates new and often unexpected forms.

Tomescu's works are constructed through a rigorous process of building and veiling with films of pigment, scraping back and excavating the surface of the canvas over long periods of time. Progressively, the paintings develop a clear direction while becoming increasingly complex, a journey in which the painting "*travels the distance*" to achieve unity and resolution. She describes each work as a set of internal relationships, in which each plane of construction, form, and painterly incident is always connected to the ground. Tomescu says, "*The ground is always an active participant in the work. A central character in recent times, the revealed areas of linen, engage with all the other protagonists, from the upper side of my paintings; its presence in stark contrast with the characters building in the work. Yet it can only exist and function through the passages and the spaces in-between, the openings, the pauses between and behind the forms we see.*"

The construction of the most recent paintings has developed in dynamic new ways, expressing lightness and a palpable sense of fluidity. In paintings such as *Vis a Vis*, cascading drips create active transitions between the central white and crimson forms, building a complex structure in which space appears to be both intensified and expanded. In these works, the process of erasure gives way to a sense of dissolving, where underlayers containing flickering yellows and blues are unveiled to create both fullness and depth.

Glimpses of raw linen between congeries of dripped paint appear to invite the eye to weave through space, countering the tension of the paintings' warp-like vertical structures. Tomescu also describes the drips and splatters as allowing forms to become suspended, untethered from their grounds to create a sense of weightlessness. This contrast between oppositional forces can be seen in paintings such as *Chartres* where



With the crimson word II, 2023, oil on belgian linen, 200 x 153 cm

Tomescu activates both the gravitational pull of the painting's ground and a sense of air permeating from their edges.

Drawing is a central component of Tomescu's work, often working into the paint with a scraper and pigments. Tomescu highlights the importance of underlying structure by describing drawing as the *"rawest, purest voice in the painting, leading the image in a surprising new direction and anchoring it at greater depth."*

To achieve the fluidity, clarity and unity of her painting, Tomescu says, *"construction is paramount - yet I unsettle it again and again during the course of the work. I build an image, then blow its construction sky-high, and let it recast in a new unpredictable way, more precarious, more fragile. The structures I am after are never static, never fixed or final; they don't stop when I'm through. There is no closure, yet there has to be resolution, which always comes suddenly and unexpectedly after long stretches of time on the painting."*

For more information please contact Ellie Jeans: ellie.jeans@flowersgallery.com/ +44 (0) 20 7920 7777; or Hannah Hughes: press@flowersgallery.com



The ear in the river and the prayer in the stone, (triptych), 2022, oil on belgian linen, 206 x 480cm

ABOUT AIDA TOMESCU

Born in Bucharest, Romania in 1955, Aida Tomescu has been living and working in Sydney, Australia since 1980. Tomescu studied at the Institute of Arts, Bucharest, was awarded a Diploma of Visual Arts in 1977, and shortly after her arrival to Australia completed a postgraduate degree at the City Art Institute in 1983. Tomescu has exhibited regularly since 1978 with over forty solo shows to date, and has participated in national and international exhibitions and events including *Know My Name*, (2020-22), National Gallery of Australia; *Abstraction*, National Gallery of Australia touring exhibition, (2017-2018); *The Mind's Eye*, Art Gallery of South Australia, (2013); *Out of Australia: Prints and Drawings*, The British Museum, London, (2011); and *Contemporary Encounters*, Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria, (2010). In 2009, a major survey exhibition of Tomescu's works was held at the Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra. Tomescu is represented in all major art museums in Australia and in international collections including the National Gallery of Australia; the National Gallery of Victoria; the Art Gallery of New South Wales; the Art Gallery of South Australia; Queensland Art Gallery; Heide Museum of Modern Art; Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; and the British Museum, London, UK. She is the recipient of the 1996 Sulman Prize; the 2001 Wynne Prize; and the Dobell Prize for Drawing, awarded by the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2003.

Exhibition Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm.
All images © Aida Tomescu, courtesy of Flowers Gallery.

Twitter @FlowersGallery

Facebook @FlowersGalleries

Instagram @FlowersGallery