

# WADDINGTON CUSTOT

PRESS RELEASE

## Fabienne Verdier: *Retables*

11 October–9 November 2024



Waddington Custot presents *Retables*, an exhibition of new work by French painter Fabienne Verdier (b.1962, Paris, France). In this new series, Verdier breaks from the conventional canvas format and adopts the structure of a winged altarpiece, reimagining it outside of a religious context. No longer connected to any liturgical function, Verdier's *Retables* instead employ individual abstract motifs, painted with her iconic large-scale brushes, to evoke individual phenomena of the natural world. Further paintings from the series will be shown in a coinciding exhibition hosted by Galerie Lelong in Paris, bringing to light this remarkable body of work across two cities simultaneously.

Over a career spanning more than three decades, Verdier has been concerned with painting invisible forces that define the natural world, such as the pull of gravity, the movement of wind or the vibrations of sound. Her research takes her deeper into the complex connections between the energies and forms of nature, drawing comparisons between splayed tree branches with forks of lightning, a vortex of water to the spiral of a creature's shell, or the capability of a single line to suggest a landscape or horizon line. Rendered as abstract motifs painted within the altarpiece format, these silent marvels of everyday life are presented as sacred; Verdier's new series is an urgent call to cherish and protect the natural environment.

Verdier consolidates her key ideas within the *Retables* by revisiting motifs from her previous series of paintings. The expressive line of 'Les aiguilles, de nuit et de silence' 2023, brings to mind a craggy mountain side, a motif Verdier first explored in depth while working in a nomadic studio on the side of Montagne Sainte-Victoire, Aix en Provence, France in 2018; 'Aux échelles du vent', 2024, borrows the vortex shape Verdier explored in her eponymous series after working with opera singers at the Juilliard School in New York in 2015. In a number of works including 'Les racines de la terre', 2024 and 'Au chemin des éclairs' 2024 Verdier returns to the technique of the *Walking Paintings*, swapping out her monumental brush for a funnel which, filled with paint, is pulled swiftly across the canvas to create jagged lines reminiscent of lightning strikes or rivers running through a landscape.

The artist's engagement with the altarpiece began in 2022, at the Musée Unterlinden in Colmar, France. In response to a commission from the museum, she created a monumental installation of 76 paintings based on an aura of light featured within Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece, 1516. The following year she made

several trips to Florence, Italy to study Italian altarpieces, as the concept of multi-panelled paintings became the source of a new inspiration. On returning to the studio, Verdier designed her own supporting canvas structure before working on the *Retables*, selecting as her subjects motifs she has developed in recent series. The titles are taken from fragments of poetry from international writers including the Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke, Chilean poet-diplomat Gabriela Mistral and Argentine poet Alejandra Pizarnik.

The exhibition will be supported by a fully illustrated catalogue focussed on the *Retables* series, with an essay by Stephane Lambert who responds to the work on an academic and personal level.



#### NOTES TO EDITORS

##### Credit Line

Fabienne Verdier: *Retables* is at Waddington Custot, 11 October–9 November 2024 [waddingtoncustot.com](http://waddingtoncustot.com)

##### Images from top left

Fabienne Verdier, 'Me promenant par les chemins broussailleux / Walking along scrubby paths', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 55 x 68 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot

Fabienne Verdier, 'Aux échelles du vent / On the wings of the wind', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot

Fabienne Verdier, 'Ode à la vie 1 / Ode to life 1', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot

Fabienne Verdier, 'Au chemin des éclairs / On the path of lightning', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot

##### About Waddington Custot

Waddington Custot was formed through the partnership of French art dealer Stephane Custot and long-time London art dealer Leslie Waddington, in 2010. Located in Cork Street since 1958, formerly as Waddington Galleries, the gallery has a rich heritage and an international reputation for quality and expertise in works by modern and contemporary masters, with a particular focus on monumental sculpture. The gallery has cemented its reputation over several decades for high quality and well-researched exhibitions of significant artists operating in the mid-twentieth century and beyond.

##### Contact

Florence Ritter-Scott

[florence@waddingtoncustot.com](mailto:florence@waddingtoncustot.com)

+44 (0) 20 7851 2200

# WADDINGTON CUSTOT

IMAGE SHEET

## Fabienne Verdier: *Retables*

11 October–9 November 2024



Fabienne Verdier in her studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot



# WADDINGTON CUSTOT



Fabienne Verdier's studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot



# WADDINGTON CUSTOT



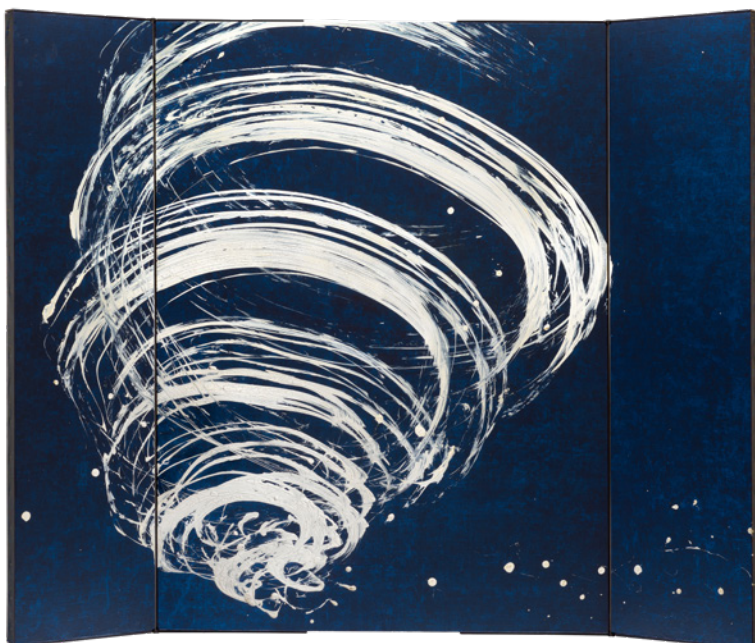
Fabienne Verdier in her studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot



# WADDINGTON CUSTOT



Fabienne Verdier in her studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot



Fabienne Verdier, 'Aux échelles du vent / On the wings of the wind', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot

# WADDINGTON CUSTOT



Fabienne Verdier in her studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot



Fabienne Verdier, 'Aux émois des rencontres / To the excitement of encounters', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot



# WADDINGTON CUSTOT



Fabienne Verdier in her studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot



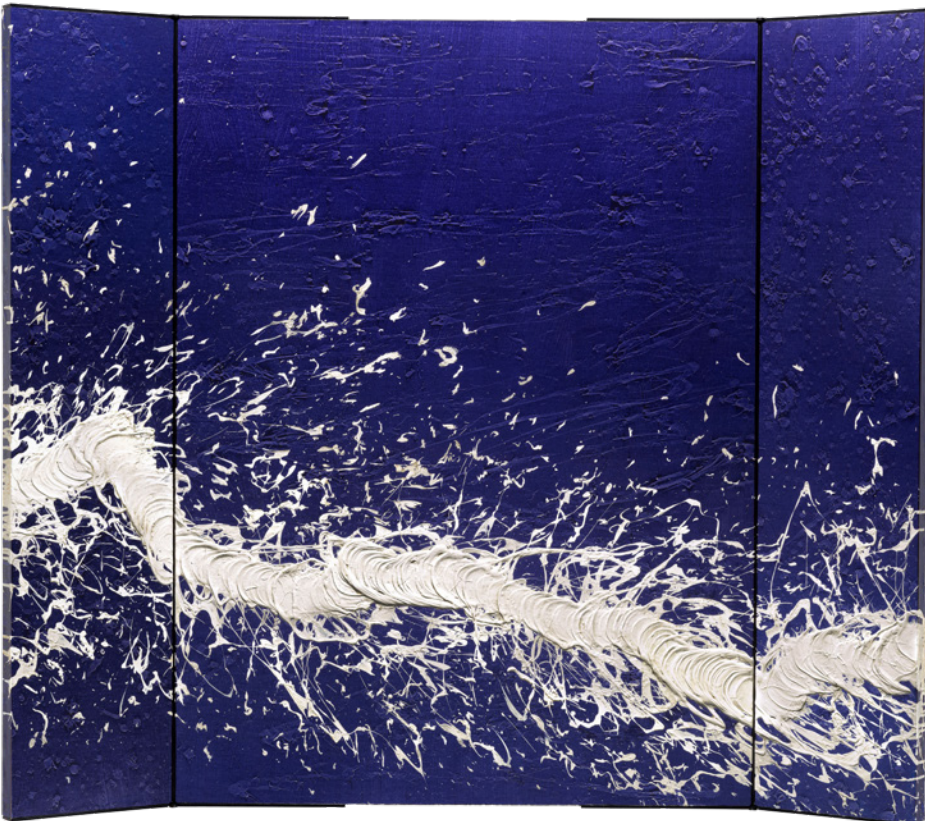
Fabienne Verdier, 'Dans l'air des hautes terres / In the highland air', 2024, acrylic and mixed, media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot



# WADDINGTON CUSTOT



Fabienne Verdier, 'Ode à la vie 1 / Ode to life 1', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm.  
Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot



Fabienne Verdier, 'Au chemin des éclairs / On the path of lightning', 2024, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 183 x 226 cm. Courtesy the artist and Waddington Custot



# WADDINGTON CUSTOT



Fabienne Verdier in her studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot



Fabienne Verdier in her studio, 2024. Photo Benjamin McMahon. Courtesy Waddington Custot