

## ABDELKADER BENCHAMMA

### RUMORS FROM THE SKIES

September 18 – November 02, 2025

Gallery Isabelle is delighted to announce *Rumors from the Skies*, the third solo exhibition by acclaimed French artist Abdelkader Benchamma. Opening on 18 September 2025, the show unveils a new series of intricate ink drawings and an immersive wall installation that expand his ongoing exploration of celestial phenomena and their terrestrial echoes.

The exhibition draws its title and inspiration from *The Comet Book (Kometenbuch)*, an anonymous 16th-century Flemish treatise filled with extraordinary depictions of comets and *visions fantastiques*. In the Middle Ages, such apparitions in the night sky were interpreted through a prism of myth, omen, and superstition—an impulse that, Benchamma suggests, persists today. Astronomy and astrology, magic and science, physical law and folklore continue to intermingle, mysteriously adapting to our times, each reshaping our understanding of the heavens and of the reality of the world.

In these new works, Benchamma turns his gaze not toward the scientific mapping of the cosmos, but toward its cultural and symbolic resonances on Earth. His colored, full-page landscapes combine boundless, atmospheric structures with surreal, three-dimensional elements—meteorites, crying stones, shooting stars—hovering incongruously over forests, villages, and serene horizons. These elusive forms, rendered with a restrained palette and masterful detail, invite sustained contemplation, lingering between recognition and mystery.

The exhibition also features a monumental mural paired with a projected animation. Here, a painted threshold—suggestive of a gate, *un passage*—opens into a swirling, otherworldly sequence of moving textures, figures, and forms, evoking a celestial maelstrom, inhabited by unknown organisms: fossilizing satellite debris, fragments of planets in transformation. By juxtaposing the tangible and the intangible, Benchamma creates portals into dreamlike worlds, evoking irrational and surrealist traditions while grounding them in the anxieties and challenges of our time.

Benchamma's practice spans finely wrought, engraver-like drawings and sweeping, site-specific wall works. Drawing inspiration from literature, philosophy, astrophysics, and Eastern thought, his works challenge conventional perceptions of space and time. He invites viewers to not simply look at his art, but to sense it—to navigate strata, folds, cracks, and voids, and enter into dimensions beyond the material and the real.

Artist biography:

Born in Mazamet, France, in 1975, Abdelkader Benchamma studied at the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. His major recent solo exhibitions include *Landscape of the Fall* at Het Noordbrabants Museum (HNBM), 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands (2024); *Solastalgia: Archaeologies of Loss* at The Power Plant, Toronto (2023); *Géologie des déluges* at Fondation François Schneider, Wattwiller, France (2023); and *Ni el cielo ni la tierra* at Lago Algo, Mexico City (2023) among others. Previous significant presentations include exhibitions at Collection Lambert, Avignon (2020); Le Centquatre, Paris (2018); The Drawing Center, New York (2015); and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2010).

In the Gulf, he is recognized for *Neither the Sky nor the Earth*, presented at Sharjah Biennial 13 (2017), and *Between Each Sky*, commissioned for the second Islamic Arts Biennale, Jeddah (2025). His work is held in public collections such as the FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, the Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans, France, and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha. Benchamma was nominated for the Prix Marcel Duchamp (2024) and awarded the Occitanie-Médicis Prize (2018).

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