



MAGDA CEBOKLI

THE ESSENCE OF A SPACE

5 MARCH – 9 APRIL 2023

MAGDA CEBOKLI

THE ESSENCE OF A SPACE

NANCY SEVER | GALLERY
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Open: Wed-Sun 11 am – 5 pm



NANCY SEVER | GALLERY

invites you and your guest to the opening of the exhibition

MAGDA CEBOKLI | THE ESSENCE OF A SPACE

Sunday 5 March 2023, 12 - 4 pm

Wed - Sun: 11am - 5pm
E: nancy.sever@inet.net.au
W: nancysevergallery.com.au
Facebook: [nancysevergallery](https://www.facebook.com/nancysevergallery)
Instagram: [@nancysevergallery](https://www.instagram.com/nancysevergallery)

Level 1, 131 City Walk, Civic
(next door to King O'Malley's)
Canberra City ACT 2601
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Exhibition closes on 9 April 2023

Magda Cebokli, Alhambra# 6, 2021 Acrylic on linen, 101.5 x 101.5 cm

MAGDA CEBOKLI | THE ESSENCE OF A SPACE

The Nancy Sever Gallery is pleased to present *Magda Cebokli | The Essence of a Space*, an exhibition of recent work by Magda Cebokli, one of Australia's leading abstract artists.

Magda Cebokli was born in Slovenia and relocated to Australia as a child. She studied Painting and Art History at State University of New York (1988-91) and was later awarded a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Fine Arts (Painting) by RMIT University (1998) and a Master of Arts by Research in Painting from the same University. She received one of the inaugural Siemens Art Prizes in 2000 and has been shortlisted for numerous prizes since.

Prior to becoming an artist, Magda was awarded a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Psychology at the University of NSW and worked in both the clinical and research areas of psychology. Hence her interest in the ways we make meaning and in our inner processes connect her past career with her art.

She says of her artistic practice: "Working with small differences, simplified form, repetition and a restricted palette, I develop series of often nuanced paintings addressing the function of edge, the movement between light and dark and the structure of space. In this analysis of visual experience, I whittle away at irrelevancies to produce series of paintings that appear minimal but whose surfaces are built up layer by meticulous layer."

Magda Cebokli | The Essence of a Space is a series of abstract paintings inspired by the harmonics of the space and the light of the pinnacle of Islamic architecture in Spain, the Alhambra, and of Gaudí's stunning architectural masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia cathedral in Barcelona.

Art historians have established that the system of geometric proportion on which the architecture of the Alhambra is based is a series of ratios using a system of progressive diagonals: $\sqrt{2}$, $\sqrt{3}$, $\sqrt{5}$. Magda has followed through on this idea and used the same proportional system as a strategy for creating a series of work in which she explores the interaction of ratio, shadow and reflection.

The group of white-toned paintings in the exhibition was inspired by the experience of walking through the Sagrada Familia and being impressed by Gaudí's orchestration of light and space together with his use of geometry.

This exhibition is a conversation in three parts, each speaking to a question raised by another, each exploring aspects of the language of space. None of these paintings is an attempt to depict a specific place. Rather they are abstractions and syntheses of thoughts on space. They can be seen as a conceptual mapping of space and of movement through it, an abstraction, rather than a literal depiction of the act of negotiating place.

Magda Cebokli | The Essence of a Space is on show from 5 March to 9 April 2023. Gallery hours: 11am-5pm Wednesday to Sunday. For further information please contact nancy.sever@iinet.net.au or 0416 249 102.

Artist Statement

This exhibition is a conversation in three parts, each exploring aspects of the language of space. The work in each of the parts was inspired by time I have spent in Spain and my response to some of the places I visited.

None of these paintings is an attempt to depict a specific place. Rather they are abstractions and syntheses of thoughts on space.

The Alhambra paintings and the harmonics of space

The Alhambra Series has developed and been added to over a period of time. I visited The Alhambra in Granada in Spain in 2007 and on return to Australia did a number of small studies. These were followed over the years by larger works, based on my response, to and reading about, the site.

The Alhambra is a complex structure made up of inter-related buildings that have been added to and modified over a period ranging from the 9th to the 15th Century. It can broadly be divided into two sections, the earlier Islamic and the later European. It was this Islamic area, developed by the Nasrid architects (1232-1492), that most engaged me with its harmonics of space and light.

Art historian Antonio Fernandez Puertas has written extensively on the Alhambra, identifying the geometric proportional system on which the entire Nasrid architecture is based: a series of ratios rather than fixed units of length, utilising a system of progressive diagonals: $\sqrt{2}$, $\sqrt{3}$, $\sqrt{5}$ (the square roots of 2, 3 and 5).

Wondering about this, I decided to follow through on that idea using the same proportional system as a tool for developing new paintings.

I had intended to return to the Alhambra in 2020 to refresh my experience of the place and to see how this would be reflected in new work. Like for many people, Covid put an end to this plan and so I decided to work from the studies I had already made and from further ideas arising from them since then.

The Alhambra Series is the result. All the paintings in this series are based on that system of progressive diagonals.

La Sagrada Familia and the harmonics of light

Designed by Gaudi, La Sagrada Familia is an exuberant, flamboyant expression of Contemporary Gothic/Catalan Modernism architecture and still, after 140 years, unfinished. Its interior is full of soaring spaces, coloured light and organic references. It's also crowded with people and evidence of ongoing construction. Yet the space, playing so well with the harmonics of light, is serene and meditative. And inspiring.

This group of white-toned paintings was inspired by the experience of walking through the Familia Sagrada in Barcelona and Gaudi's orchestration of light and space together with his use of geometry. Light and colour constantly shift as one progresses through the space and the eye keeps being drawn upwards. The effect is that of moving through a forest composed of stone and light, the visual complexity becoming synthesised into the numinous.

Colour is elusive, arising not from the intrinsic nature of an object but from the way light is reflected or emitted by it. The perception of colour is subjective relying on context, the position of the viewer in space and their capacity to see. The paintings here speak to that shifting relationship.

The Barcelona paintings and movement in space

The paintings in this group can be seen as a conceptual mapping of space and of movement through it, an abstraction, rather than a literal depiction of the act of negotiating place.

The experience of place is dependent on the choice of your direction of movement and the twists and turns of your chosen route. As a short-term visitor (read tourist) to a place, one's experience is mainly superficial. One walks around, looks, grabs what knowledge one can from what one sees, hears, touches and smells. One only occasionally finds out what is behind the facades, the street is the book we most read – and even then, it's only some streets. As travellers, we build our concept of what a place is from these fragments of the overall space.

It is noteworthy that what the locals call the *paseo*, the movement through the street space that is the Spanish ritual evening leisurely stroll, is an important tradition that can be observed not just in Barcelona but throughout Spain.

Movement is both an action and something to be observed. The streets and the skies of Barcelona are filled with both.

Magda Cebokli

Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #3. 2014-21

Acrylic on linen

101.5 x 101.5 cm

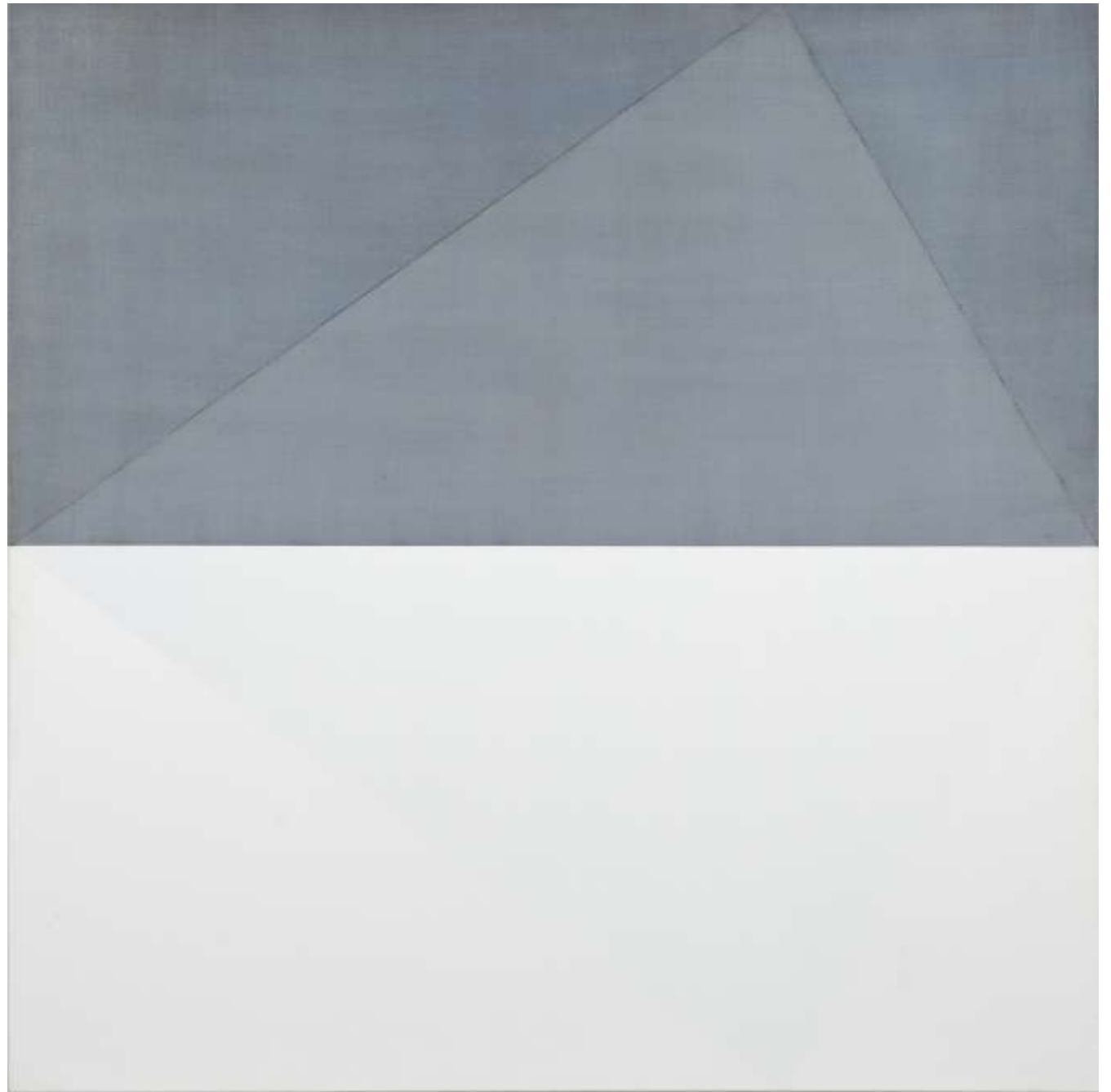


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #4. 2017-21

Acrylic on linen

101.5 x 101.5 cm



Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #5. 2018-21

Acrylic on canvas

101.5 x 101.5 cm



Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #6. 2021

Acrylic on linen

101.5 x 101.5 cm



Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #10. 2023

Acrylic on linen

101.5 x 101.5 cm

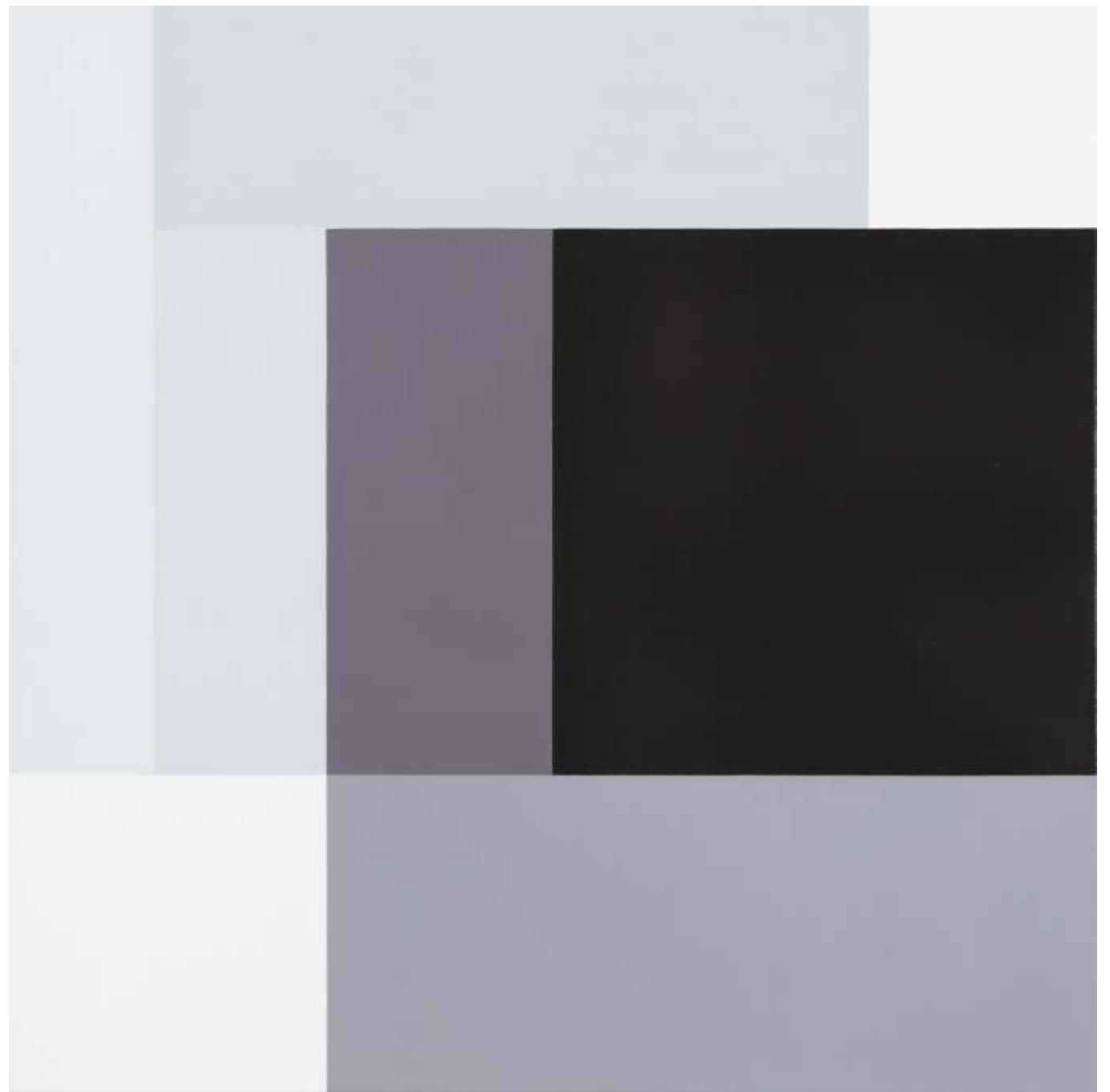


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #11. 2023

Acrylic on linen

101.5 x 101.5 cm

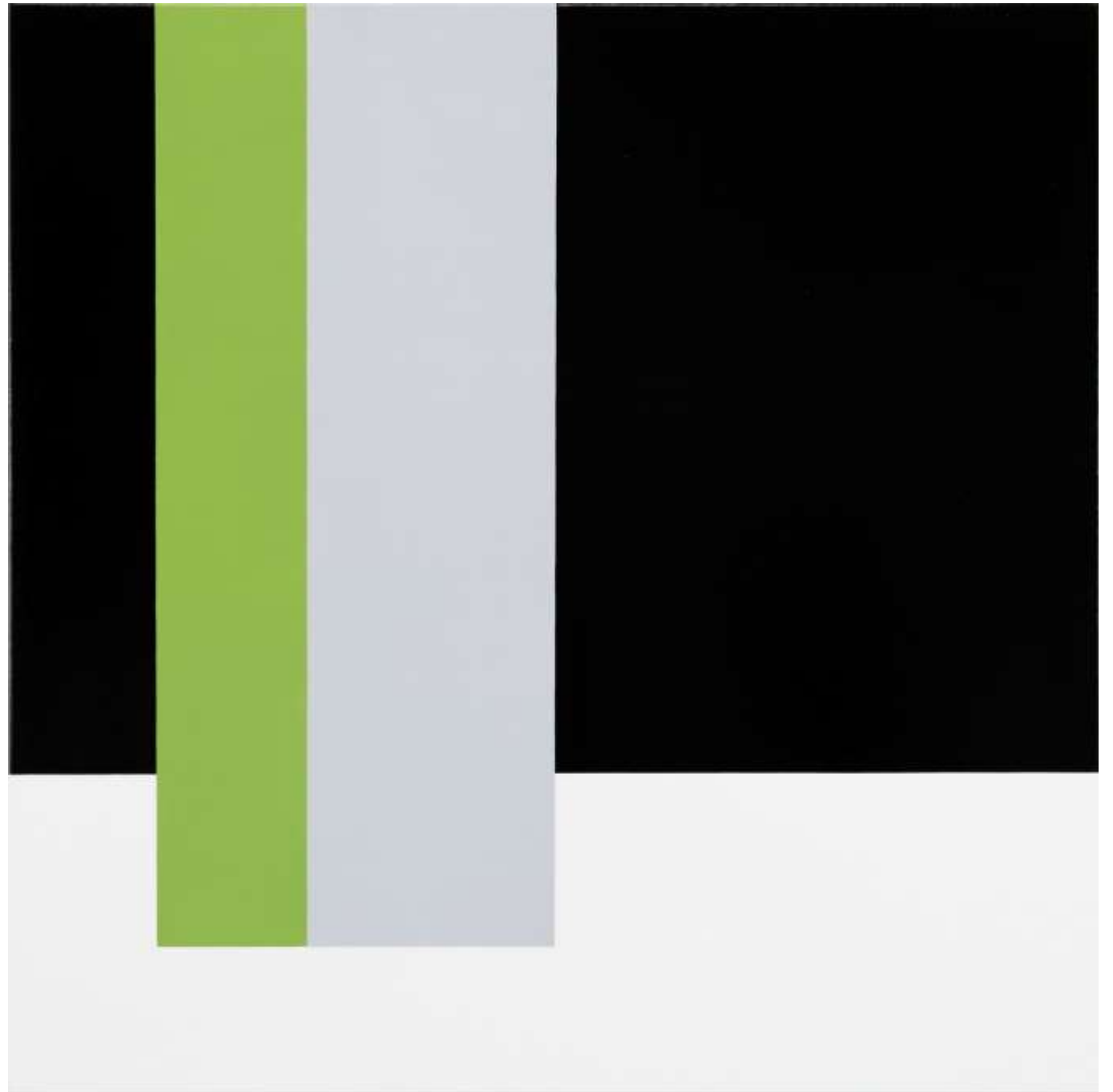


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #12. 2023

Acrylic on linen

101.5 x 101.5 cm

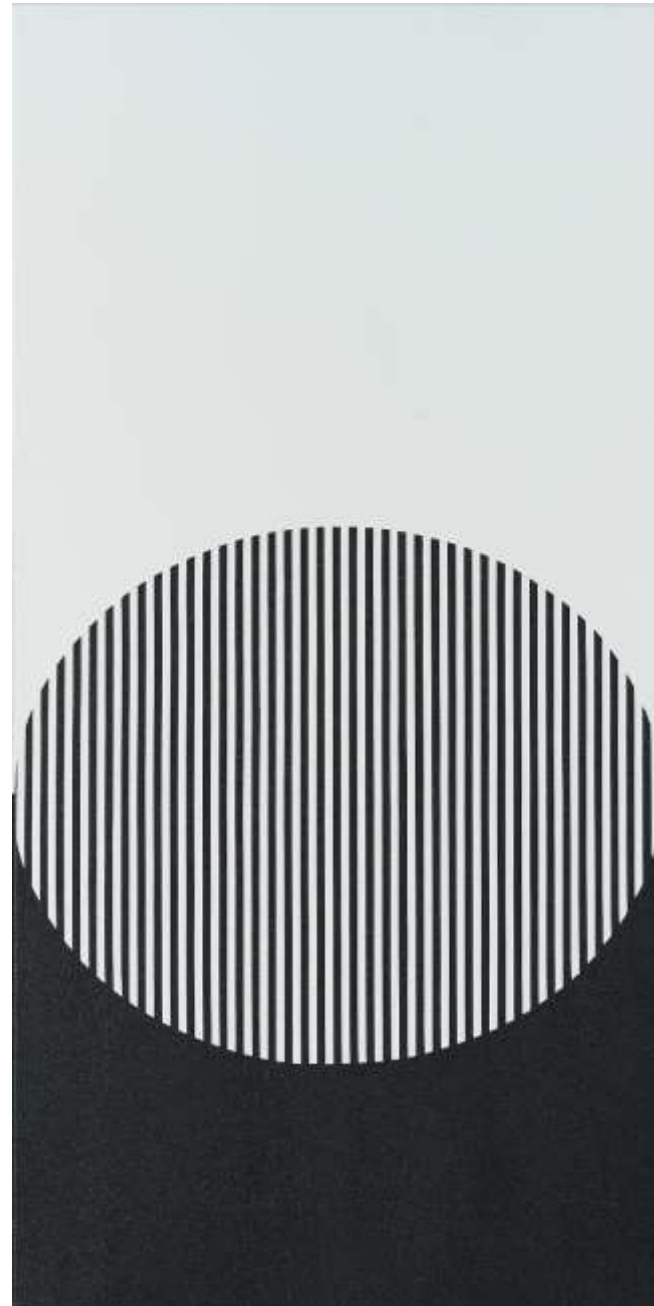


Magda Cebokli

***Alhambra #13 (Puerta de la Sombra).* 2023**

Acrylic on linen

100 x 50 cm

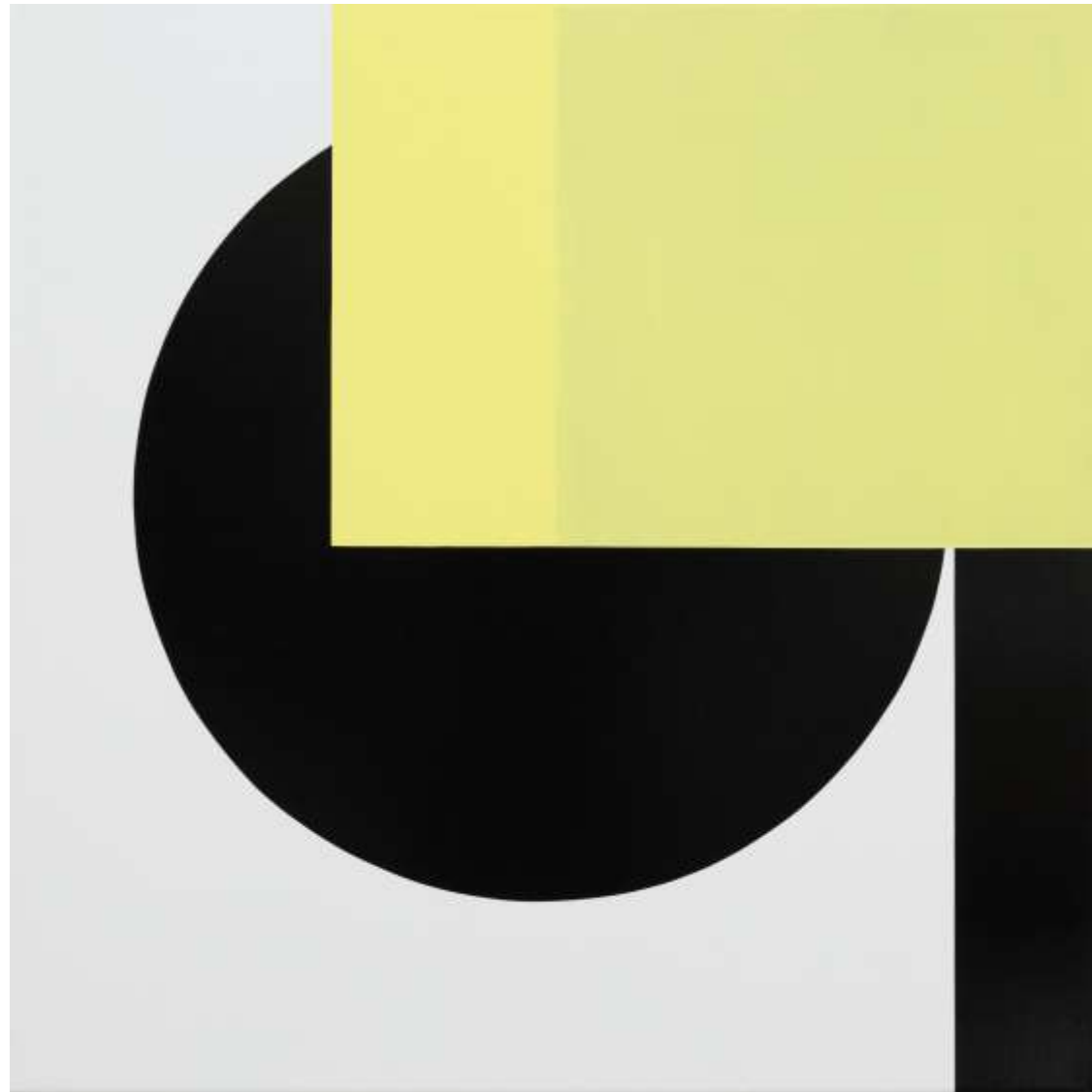


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #7 (Patio del sol) 2021

Acrylic on linen

80 x 80 cm



Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #8 (Puerta de Luz) 2021

Acrylic on linen

80 x 80 cm

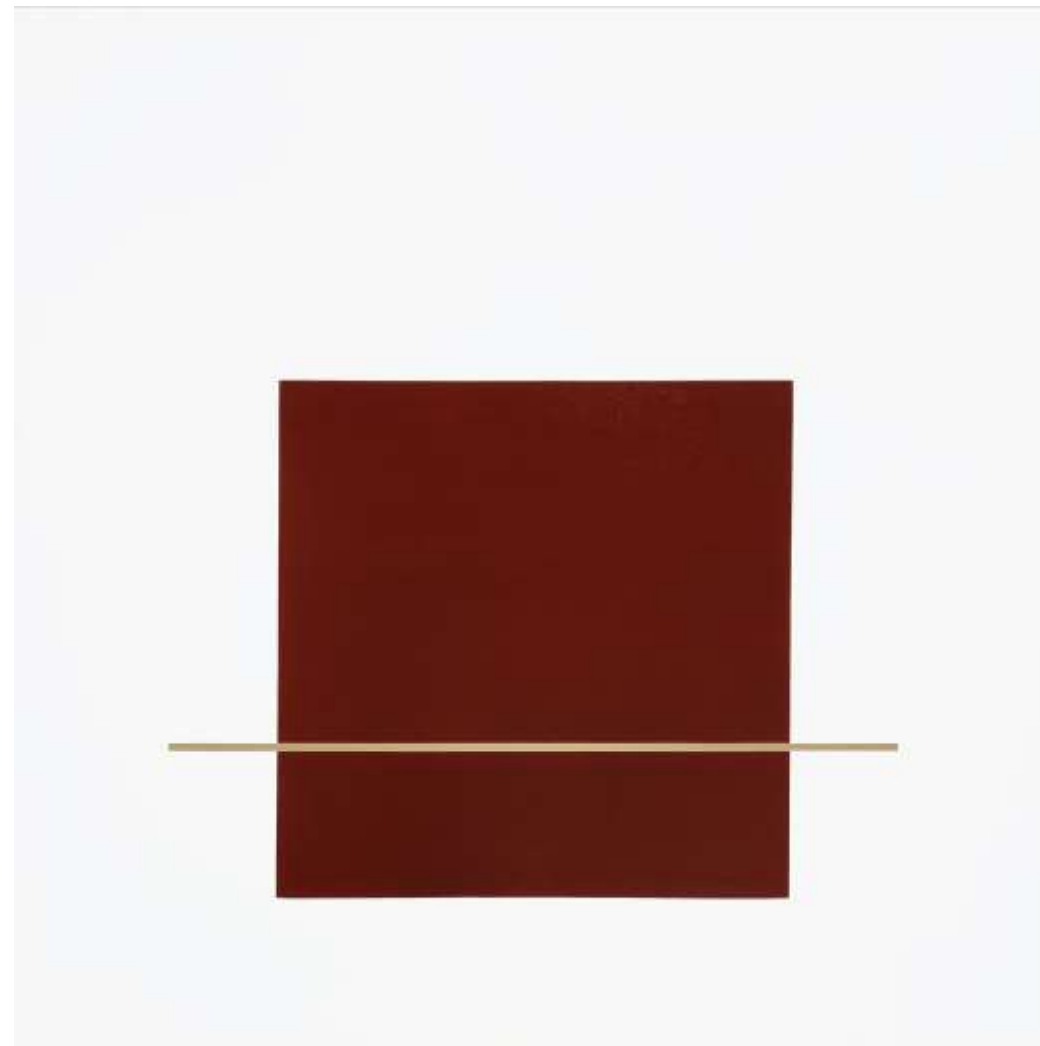


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #14 (The root of the square). 2023

Acrylic on linen

80 x 80 cm

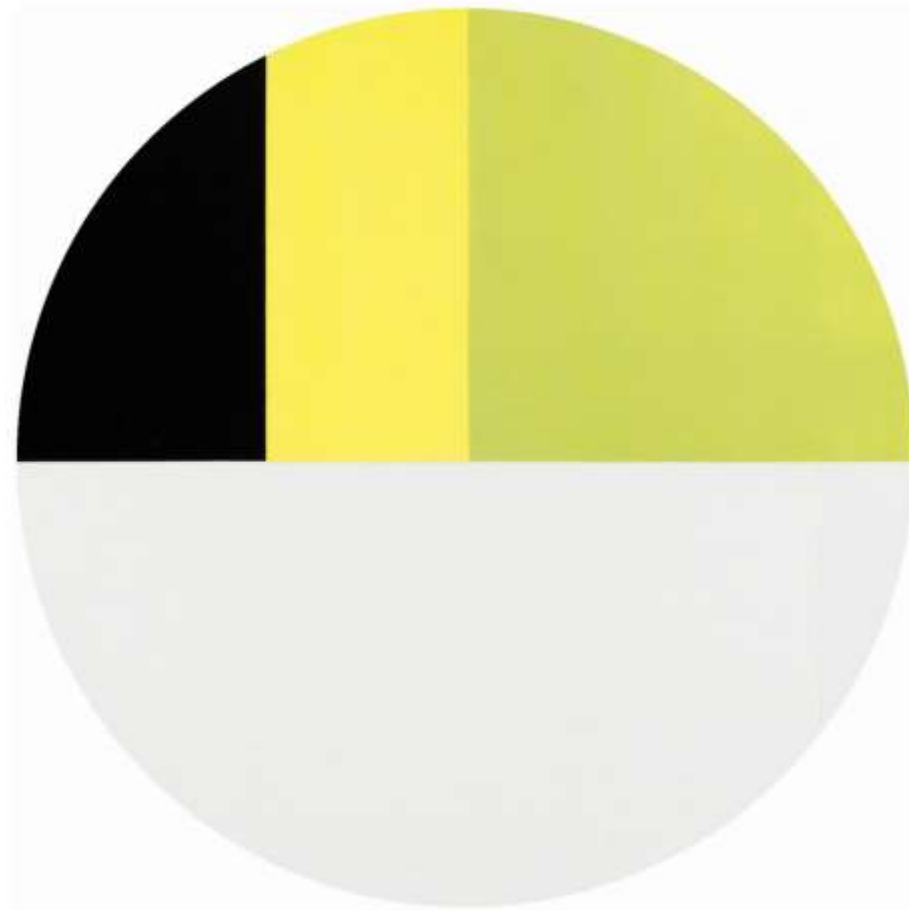


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra #15. (Disco de luz). 2023

Acrylic on wood panel

40 cm. diameter



Magda Cebokli

Alhambra Pequeño #1 c2010

Acrylic on linen

25.5 x 25.5 cm



Magda Cebokli

Alhambra Pequeño #3 2010/21

Acrylic on linen

25.5 x 25.5 cm

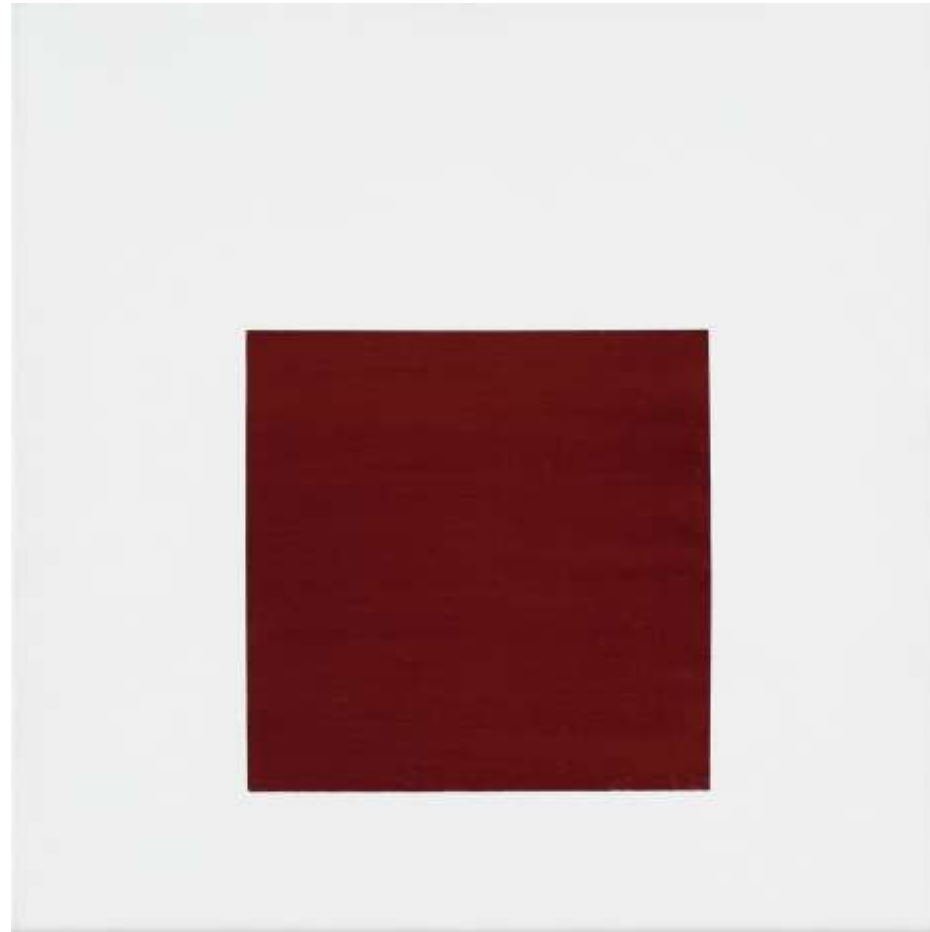


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra Pequeño #4 2021

Acrylic on linen

25.5 x 25.5 cm

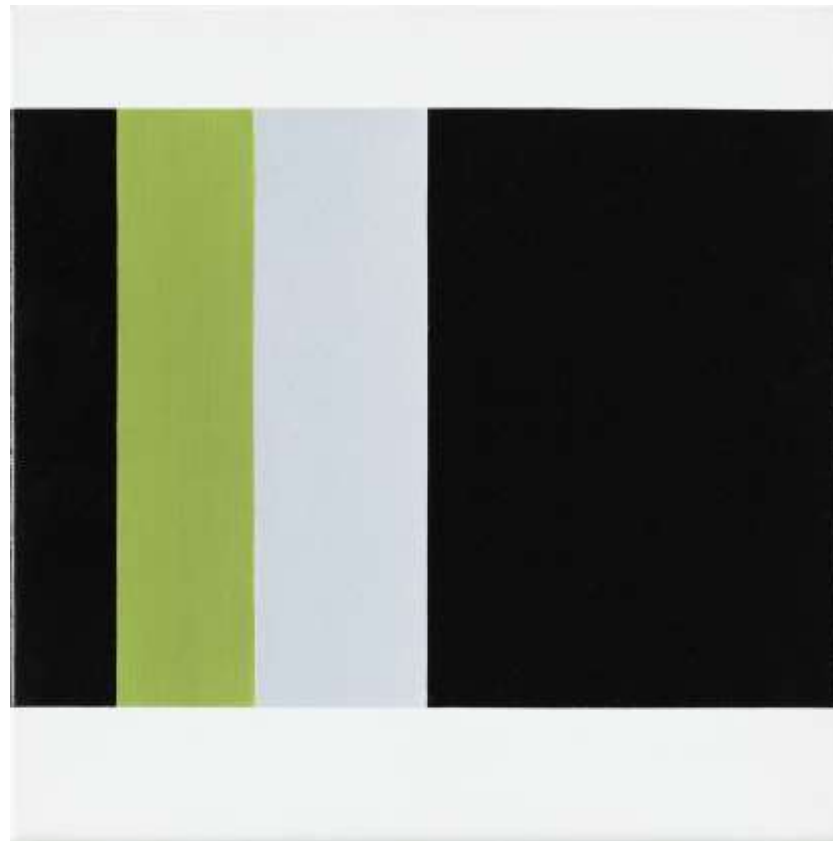


Magda Cebokli

Alhambra Pequeño #5 2021

Acrylic on linen

25.5 x 25.5 cm

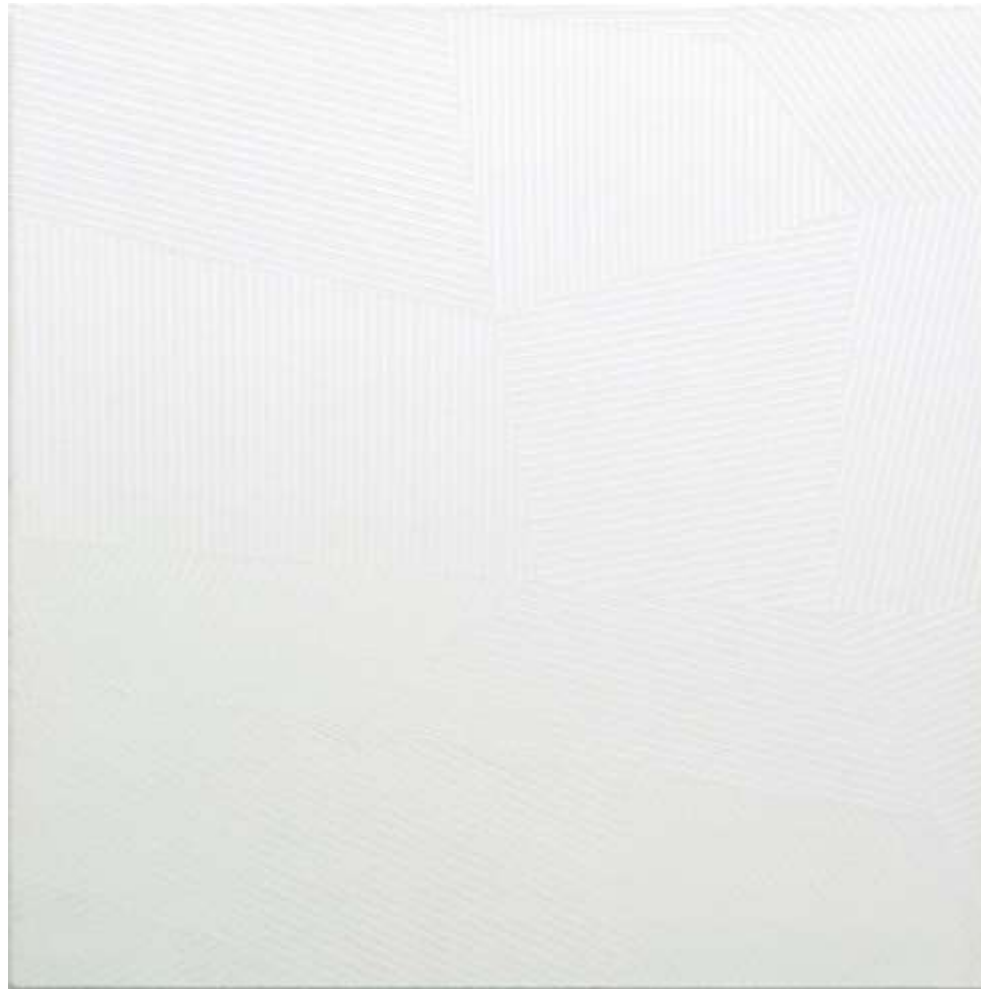


Magda Cebokli

Güell. 2019

Acrylic on canvas

56 x 56 cm



Magda Cebokli

Luz Descendente. 2019

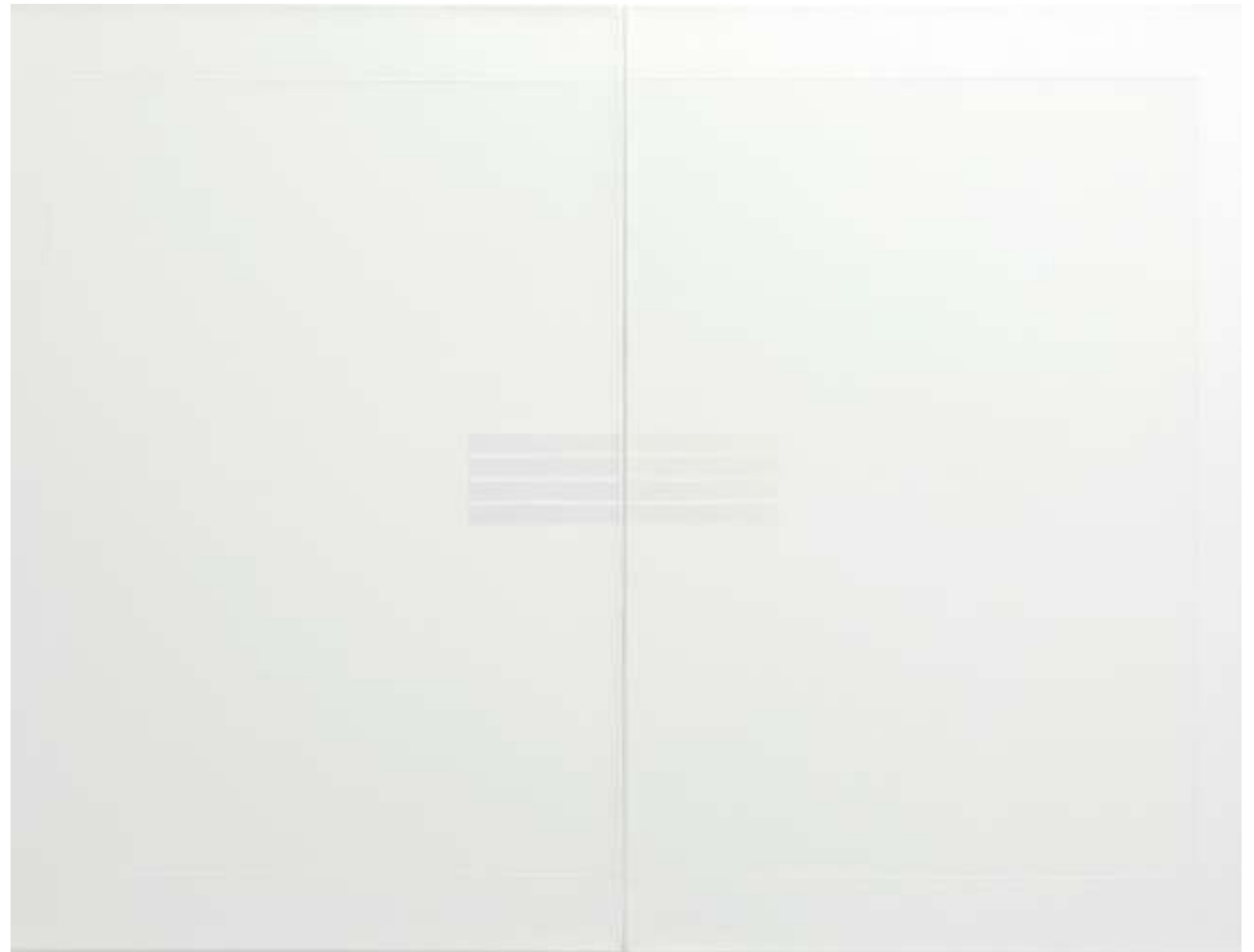
Acrylic on canvas

76 x 76 cm



Magda Cebokli

Corazón de Silencio. 2019
Acrylic on canvas (diptych)
61 x 81 cm



Magda Cebokli

Luz Cambiante. 2019

Acrylic on canvas

30 x 30 x 12 cm.

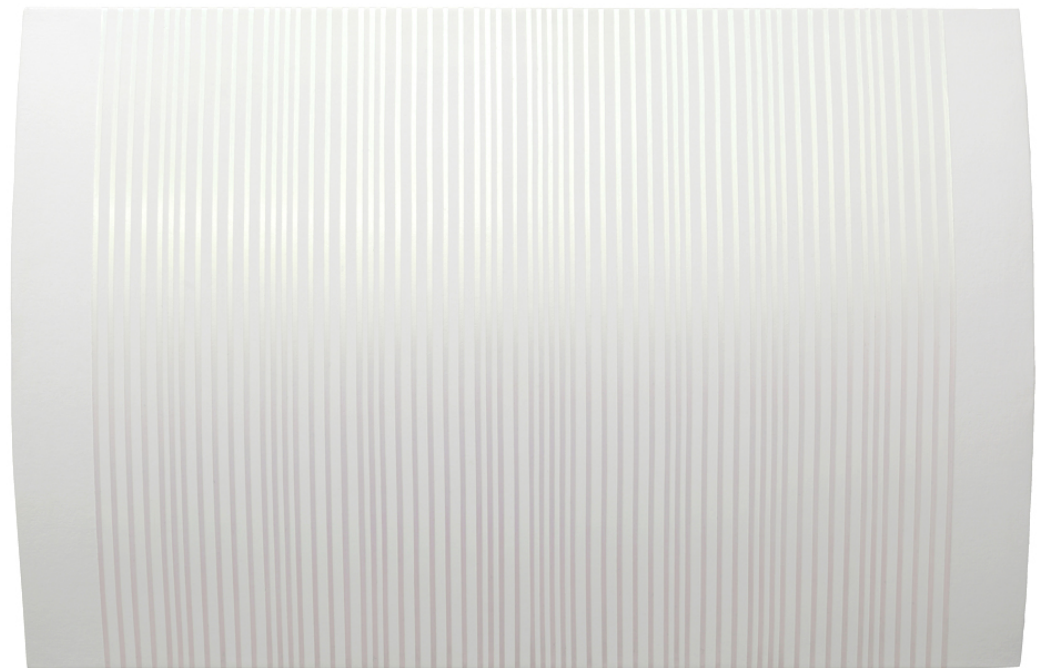


Magda Cebokli

Bosque de Luz (La Sagrada Familia) 2019

Acrylic on canvas and wood

40.5 x 61 cm



Magda Cebokli

Bosque de Luz # 2 (La Sagrada Familia) 2022

Acrylic on canvas

132 x 41 cm

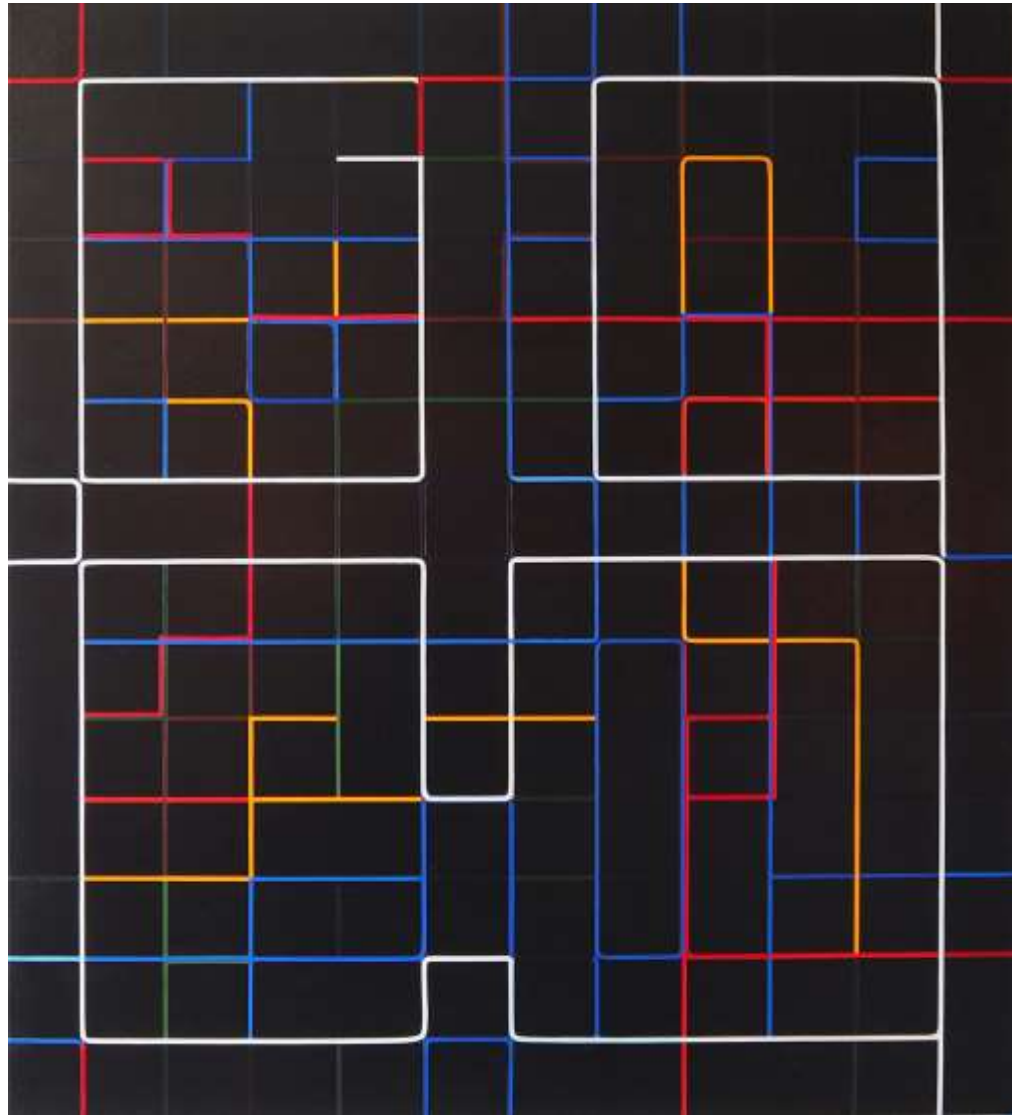


Magda Cebokli

Eixample. 2019

Acrylic on linen

84 x 76 cm

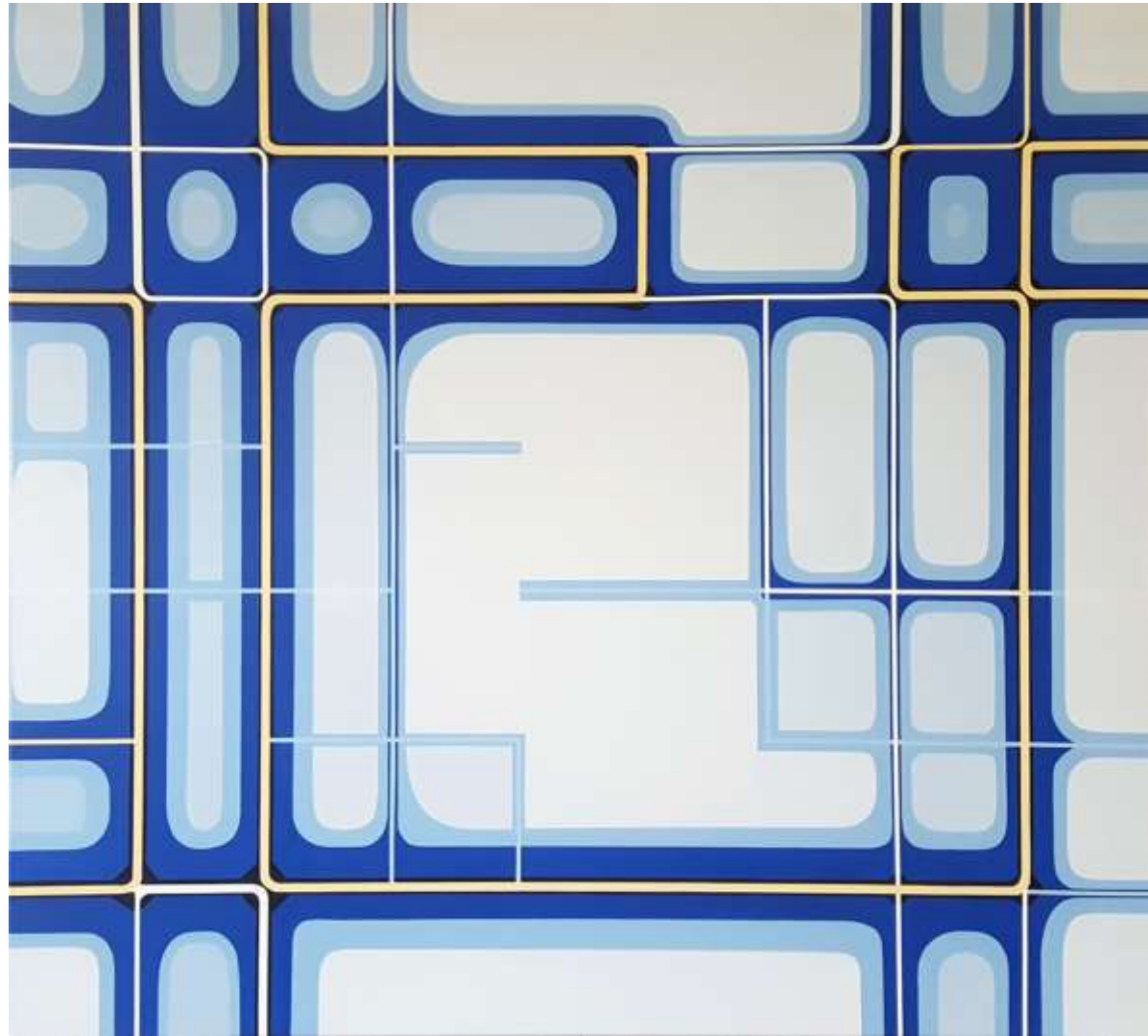


Magda Cebokli

Port Vell. 2022

Acrylic on linen

76 x 86 cm



Magda Cebokli

Los Vencejos (The Swifts). 2019

Acrylic on linen

30 x 30 cm

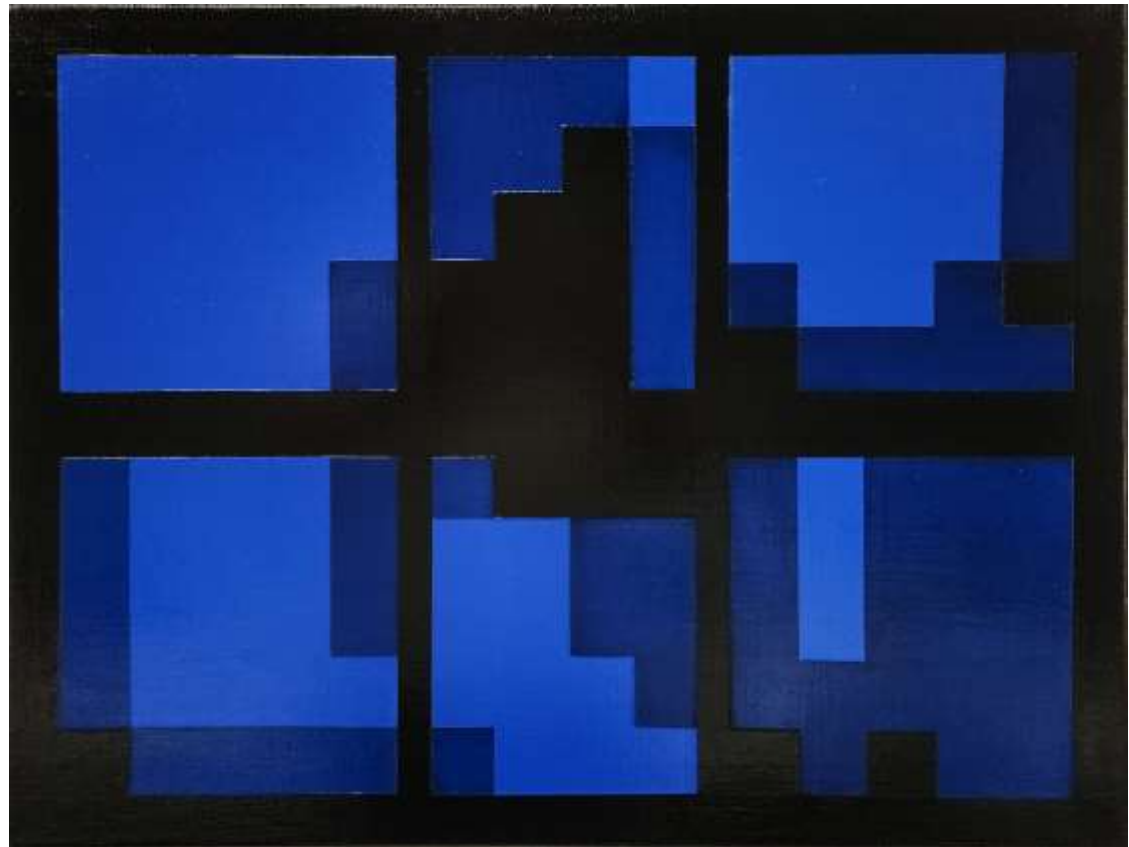


Magda Cebokli

Noche #2. 2023

Acrylic on linen

38 x 50 cm

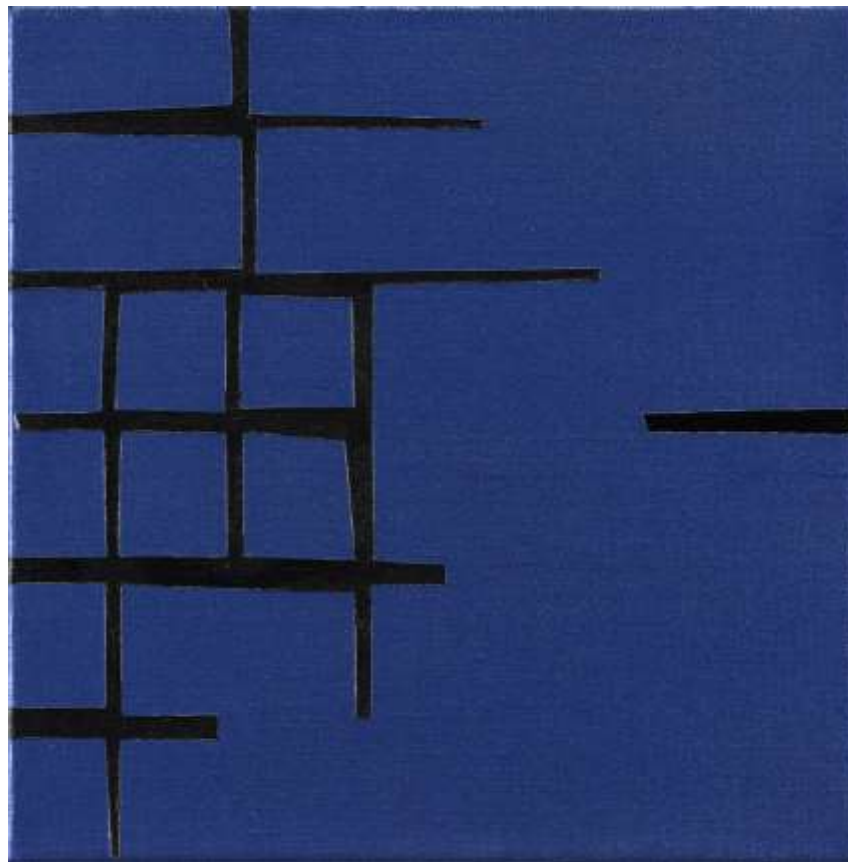


Magda Cebokli

Noche #1. 2019

Acrylic on linen

30.5 x 30 cm

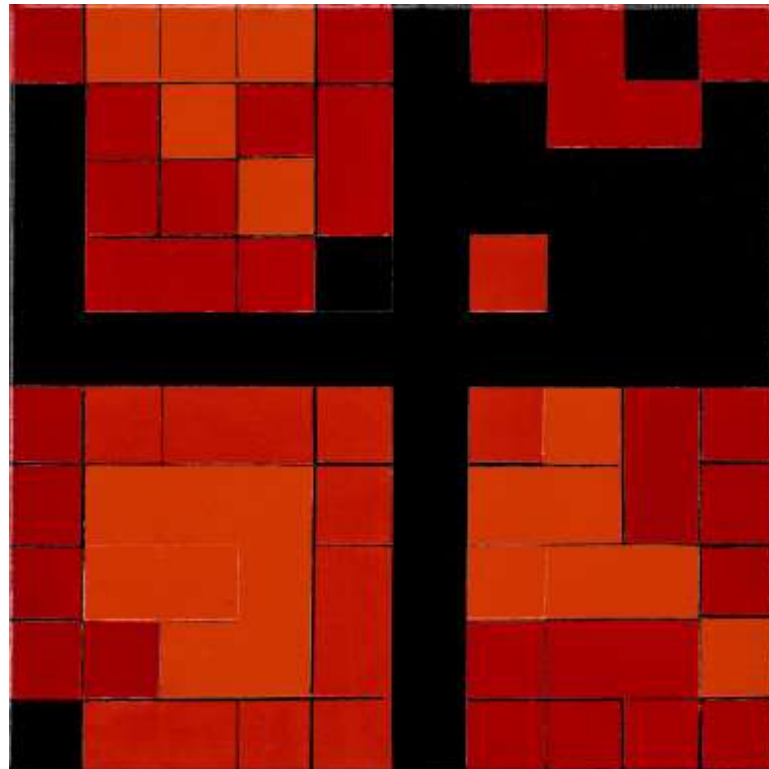


Magda Cebokli

Gràcia 29. 2019

Acrylic on linen

25.5 x 25.5 cm

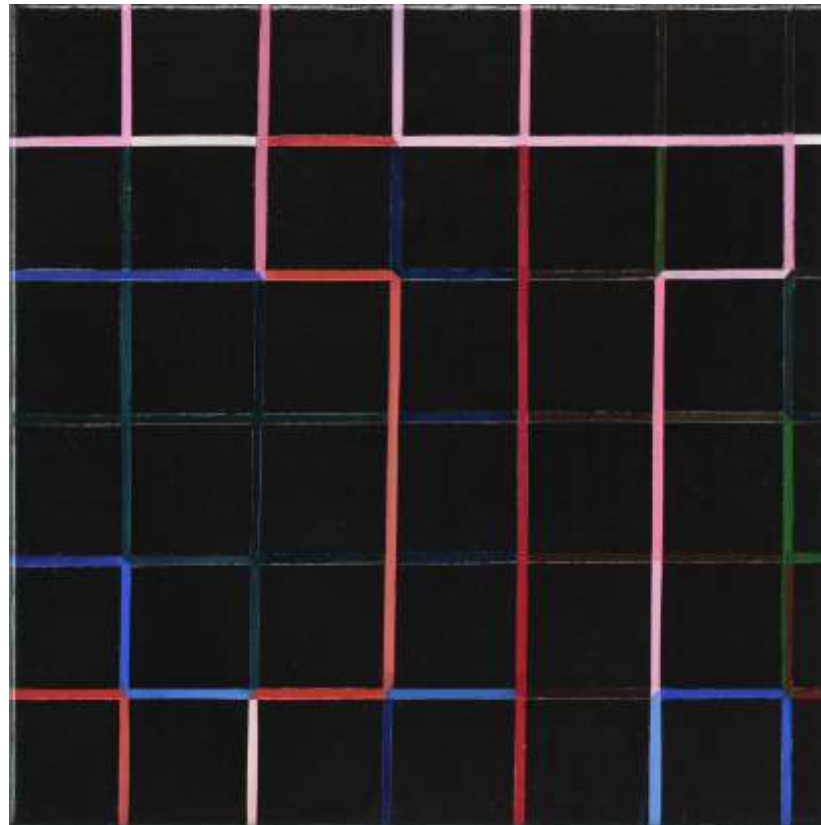


Magda Cebokli

Passeig 2019

Acrylic on linen

25.5 x 25.5 cm



MAGDA CEBOKLI | BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Master of Arts by Research in Painting, RMIT University (2001)
Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Fine Arts (Painting), RMIT University (1998)
Painting and Art History at State University of NY (1988-91)
Also courses at: Hong Kong Arts Centre (1992-4) and Canberra Institute of the Arts (1991)
Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Psychology, University of NSW

AWARDS

MCollection Art Prize: Distinction Award 2014
Siemens Fine Arts Prize (Postgraduate): 2000
Australian Postgraduate Scholarship: 1999-2001

Shortlisted:

Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize (2020), Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize (2017), Alice Prize (2016, 2014), Geelong Contemporary/Fletcher Jones Art Prize (2016, 2012, 2004, 2002),
R & M McGivern Prize (2012), Prometheus Art Award (2011, 2007), City of Albany Art Prize (2010), City of Whyalla Art Prize (2009), DLAP (2009, 2001), Khyats Award for Works on Paper (1995)

SOLO & DUO EXHIBITIONS

2023 *The Essence of Space* Nancy Sever Gallery Canberra ACT
2022 *Proximal* Tacit Art, Collingwood, Melbourne
The Root of the Square Five Walls, Footscray, Melbourne
Lux Mezz55, Adelaide (with Tony Lloyd)
2019 *Ciphering Place* Five Walls, Footscray, Melbourne (with Wendy Kelly)

2018 *Convergence* Hill Smith Gallery, Adelaide (with Matthew Johnson)
2017 *lônes* Langford120, Melbourne
Suite for a Curved Space Factory 49, Sydney
2016 *An Analysis of Variance* Langford 120, Melbourne
2015 *Set Square* Gallerysmith, Melbourne
The Lie of Light Gallery 9, Sydney
2014 *Light Lines* Langford 120, Melbourne
2013 *Drawn Out* Counihan Gallery, Brunswick
2012 *Corner Suite* Factory 49, Sydney
2011 *Ring Cycle* Dianne Tanzer Gallery & Projects, Melbourne
Light Moves Jan Manton Art, Brisbane
2010 *Lineate* Factory 49, Sydney (with Wendy Kelly).
2009 *Square*, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2008 *Light Paintings 08* Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2006 *Nocturnes* Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2005 *Out of Light* Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2004 *of light and edge* Geelong Gallery, Geelong
2003 *Writing the Light* Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2001 *Light and Edge* RMIT Faculty Gallery, Melbourne
2000 *Untitled* Leonardo Gallery, St. Leonard.
1999 *Attention and Abstraction...moments of seeing.* Momenta, Geelong
In the Absence LaTrobe Street Gallery, Melbourne
1998 *Becoming* (Fringe Festival) First Site Gallery, Melbourne

RECENT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Paper: The Permanence of the Temporary* JAHM, Prahran, Melbourne
Bound Pigment Tacit Art, Collingwood, Melbourne
ABSTRACTIØN Five Walls, Footscray
Group Exhibition @Mezzanine 55 Gallery, Adelaide SA
- 2022 *Of Colour & Light 2022 Biennial*, West End Art Space, West Melbourne
Substrate Tacit Art, Collingwood, Melbourne
Five West End Art Space, West Melbourne
TAPE TWENTY TWENTYTWO Five Walls, Footscray, Melbourne
Together Again - 2πr Artists, May 22 Rovay Gallery, Middle Park, Melbourne
- 2021 *Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize 2020/21* Bayside Gallery, Brighton
- 2020 *Of Colour & Light: Women Abstract Artists Biennial* West End Art Space, Melbourne
Moreland Summer Show 2020: Solitude & Solace Counihan Gallery, Brunswick
Image_Object Poimena Gallery, Launceston (MONAFOMA 2020)
- 20[2020] Tacit Gallery, Collingwood, Victoria
- 2019 *Parallel Universe* Stephen McLaughlan Gallery, Melbourne
Abstract Works Hill Smith Gallery, Adelaide
- 2018 *Analogue Art in a Digital World* RMIT Gallery, Melbourne
Support 18 Five Walls Projects, Footscray, Melbourne
Of Colour and Light 2018 West End Space, Melbourne
Abstraction Twenty-Eighteen Five Walls Project, Footscray
Black & White and Red All Over JAHM, Melbourne
Edge Langford 120, Melbourne
- 2017 *Abstraction 16* Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne
First Site Gallery Turns 21! First Site, Melbourne
NotFair NotFair Art Foundation, James St Windsor
Shades of Grey 2017 Tacit Galleries, Collingwood, Melbourne
Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize Centenary Centre, Gordon, NSW
Group 2017 Factory 49, Sydney
- 2016 *Geelong Contemporary Art Prize* Geelong Gallery, Geelong
Sky Lab: Kepler's Dream LaTrobe University VAC, Bendigo
Shades of Grey Tacit Contemporary, Melbourne
Divine Abstraction Justin Art House Museum, Melbourne
39th Alice Prize Araluan Arts Centre, Alice Springs
- 2015 *Sky Lab: Lines of Sight & Forces of Attraction* Counihan Gallery at Brunswick
Black & White Spot 81, Sydney
NEO-0-10 Works on Paper Stephen McLaughlan Gallery, Melbourne
- 2014 *The MCollection Art Prize* Gallerysmith, Melbourne
Render Screen Space Melbourne
Dark More than Black Stephen McLaughlan Gallery, Melbourne
Tangible Trocadero Art Space, Footscray, Melbourne
Perceptions of Space: Justin Collection Glen Eira City Gallery, Melbourne
Fourteen: Trajectories Langford 120, Melbourne
38th Alice Art Prize Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
- 2013 *Sky Lab 2013* Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell
In Line Langford 120, Melbourne
Non-Objective Conversations x 4 VAC La Trobe, Bendigo
The Annual Group Show Factory 49, Marrickville, Sydney
- 2012 *Shelf Life* Delmar Gallery, Sydney
Summer Show Counihan Gallery in Brunswick, Melbourne
Non-Objective Conversations x 4 SNO Marrickville, Sydney
- 2012 *Geelong Contemporary Art Prize* Geelong Gallery, Geelong
R & M McGivern Prize Exhibition Maroondah Art Gallery, Melbourne
- 2011 *Diverse Technieken* Galerie bij de Boeken, Ulft, Netherlands
The Non-Objective Group Show Factory 49, Sydney