

FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2024, TO FEBRUARY 8, 2025

# ORIGINS

EVI KELLER

OPENING SEPTEMBER 21, 3PM - 7PM



© Evi Keller, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon

## **The Crossing**

*The intense feeling I experience when I approach a work by Evi Keller is first and foremost that of seeing intensified. Strangely enough, I don't see in front of me, but "within me."*

*The light that emerges is formed by eyes that close, open, and close again, creating an inverted gaze as you try to perceive a reality that is not immediately evident. This Matière-Lumière (Light-Matter) comes from within. It is born of a to-and-fro that causes it to radiate from an inner source. It is a mental phenomenon, consistent with the perception and imagination it evokes. Shimmering, swirling surfaces, clarity from one space to another.*

*This inner light is the beginning of an adventure that leads us to a search, a "reverberation," outside the self. Where is it? In this forest, this volcano, this edge of the forest, or in this stirring of the night?*

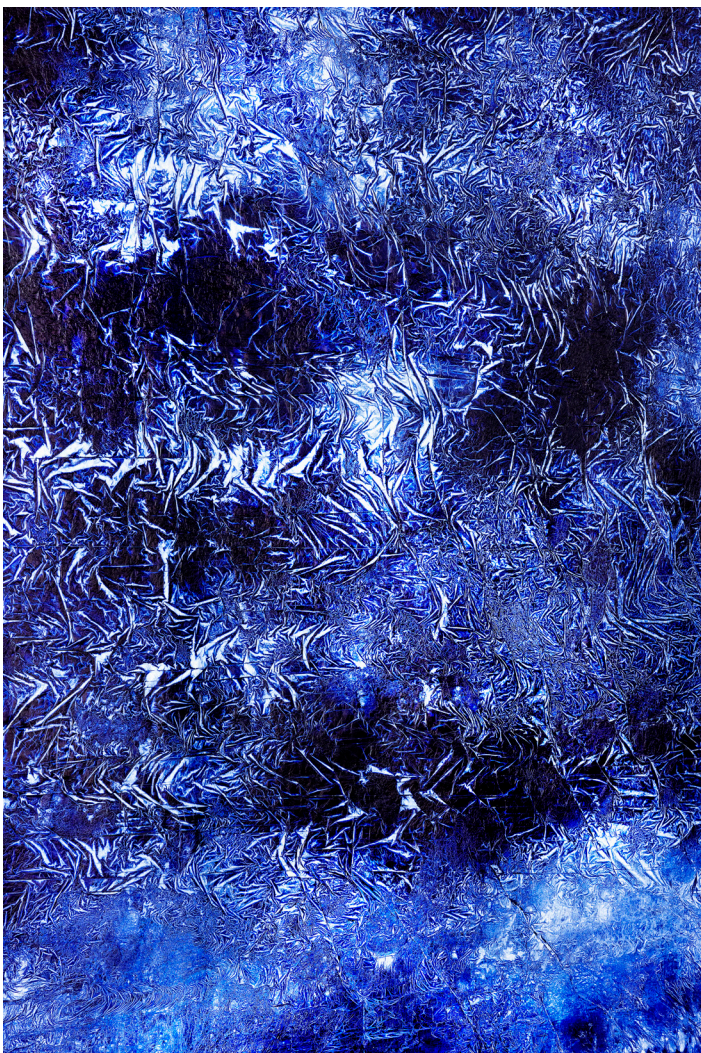
*I am moving toward it, but can I touch it? Isn't this the question with which Evi Keller's work begins? This light within me, like a prize, a treasure, draws me out of myself. I then seize it and share it with others, with the cosmos that surrounds us. It is the vehicle, the anima, of canvas, fabric, a "synthetic" substance that allows me to experience it in its smallest nuances, in the movements of expansion and passage. This light, which is at once at the heart of the work and far beyond it, as one of her films suggests, leads us to the beauty of glimmers, of "fireflies," like the wonder of a sun turned upside down.*

*The nature of the body, then, is this beating, this breathing where the subject is in equilibrium, between the deepest part of the self and the boundless space of the galaxies that cradles us.*

*Evi Keller's works, Matière-Lumière, create vital vibrations similar to those of inseparable membranes, from transparency to transparency. These painting-reliefs or infra-thin substances are a field of torn, pulverized matter within the skin of the surfaces. They are aglow like fire, sumptuous like gold or deep blue: the blue of water and night.*

*Here, as in quantum "poetics," waves and corpuscles are of the same nature. They never cease to make the lands and seas in which we are immersed tremble. This is where light-matter takes on its full dimension. It can only be grasped when the eye, the mind, the body and the emotions receive it, thanks to art, on a stage where every point that lights up is a dancing being. Is this not the light evoked by Rainer Maria Rilke, "that so resembles us, that turns and trembles round such a strange support"? Isn't this support, archaic and yet beckoning to the future, the very work of Evi Keller?*

Olivier Kaepelin, June 2024



## BLUE

*Evi Keller's blue is not the blue of the ocean.*

*No body swims in it. It is immense  
a choir of shapes and lights.*

*In front of us, a door without edges, a call, a promise of  
abundance yet dangerous because the blue is on fire.  
Can we speak of burning water or on the contrary an  
incandescent sky that, if it recognizes the flame in us,  
welcomes us as just another star, lonely, but ready to  
play its part at the call of the choir whose music I hear,  
deep blue, obscure and transparent.*

Olivier Kaepelin

## **“Origins.” Why did you choose this title for your exhibition?**

*The word origins, which is extremely polysemous, has been used many times and is present in all human intellectual activities... But for me, the title “Origins” was an obvious choice.*

*Of course, the title refers first and foremost to the nature of my work, and in particular to the metaphor of the sun, the origin of the world, buried for millions of years, reanimated and transfigured into a work of art by my Matière Lumière voyage. The alchemy of the works embodies an original moment, a return to the source that reveals things specific to each being.*

*But “Origins” also and above all reflects what emerges in the consciousness of the viewer who discovers my work. This title came to me after hearing many testimonies from people with whom I shared my Matière-Lumière creation. It’s this idea of returning to the source, to our origins, that these people often feel and confide in me when they encounter the work. It’s a manifesto, secret, intimate and personal.*

*And what do they say? Sometimes they say little, sometimes more... Some, while looking at the work, go so far as to say that they feel projected elsewhere, into a present moment where we cannot locate time or space. It’s the light that interacts with Matière-Lumière: beyond the creation of a multiple matter, it gives access to immateriality. It’s an intimate experience that can help us accept, or at least become aware of, the universal process of transformation of which we are a part.*

*I was deeply moved by Olivier Schefer’s reaction to my work: “There are works that are rare, painfully beautiful, that create a world above all aesthetic and formal considerations. They challenge our theoretical and historical divisions. In their presence, we don’t ask, ‘Is it beautiful?’ ‘Is it new?’ but rather, ‘Where are we? When are we?’ There’s something here that unsettles our aesthetic habits and our comfort as viewers.”*

*Where are we? When are we? and, I would add, ‘What are we seeing?’ convey the intimacy of encountering the work in a present moment, timeless and original, that brings us back to the fundamental question of the origin of the universe.*

*Approaching my work shapes our personal space-time, organically connecting it to the history of the universe. Ultimately, it’s our awareness of the work that leads us to the next stage of our journey...*

## **What new work have you been created for this exhibition?**

*The materiality of my new work has evolved. I’ve noticed that the marks or imprints that are characteristic of my work have become more intense, deeper (hollowed out), and almost rooted...*

*They are teeming with primitive lines and shapes whose eternal processes of transformation animate ultra-condensed energy fields, worlds of explosions, implosions, home to entire galaxies.*

*Primordial forms and structures emerge, opening up an infinite range of possibilities and allowing us to experience the meaning and protean, multiple dimensions of the exhibition Origins. Questioning the beginning – but which beginning?*

*A large part of my new creations is strongly inhabited by primary colors, and especially by a deep blue... it’s not so much the blue of the oceans, but rather the blue of a cosmic glow, a luminescence, a blue incandescence. It’s the blue of fiery suns in the starry skies of night, where creation begins anew at every moment...*

*These are the mystical imprints of planetary and solar reliefs, of fire, of blue ash, of blue gold, that connect us to the first seconds of the universe.*

*A myriad of small organic beings, exiles, builders and bearers of life, stories and memories... appearing, disappearing, reappearing...*

*From geological genesis to prehistoric caves, these are ruins from another time, exotic landscapes and mystical places, an exploration out of time and space into the depths of infinite origins, of memory and the divine, of the material and the immaterial, of the sensitive and the invisible...*

*These are creations that transport us, that take us to the origin of origins.*

*Is it a universal cosmogony or one that is specific to each of us? Or is it proof of an approach to the invisible that constitutes all matter, including ourselves?*

## What route would you suggest visitors take through the gallery for this exhibition?

I wouldn't suggest a specific route, but I would advise visitors to take the time to approach each work and listen to what the light wants to reveal to them at the moment of their encounter.

The first room is devoted to blue cosmogonies, imprints of planetary reliefs, blue stars, blue fire, ashes, blue...

The other rooms will bring us closer to our world, on and in the bowels of the earth... where spirits appear... stories of distant worlds are told, battles are fought, lost civilizations are reborn... These are often ancestral, knightly worlds, populated by hermits and prophets.

The works are to be discovered from afar but above all, as close as possible to the changing materials and spirits that inhabit them. In fact, it is the light emanating from each work that should inspire and give rhythm to the rest of the journey, which will be unique for each visitor.

Excerpt from an interview with Evi Keller, June 2024



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## The gallery is pleased to present the third solo exhibition of Evi Keller.

German artist Evi Keller was born in 1968 in Bad Kissingen. She lives and works in Paris. From 1989 to 1993, she studied art history at the Ludwig Maximilian University as well as photography and graphic design at the Academy of Photography, both in Munich.

Her artistic approach questions the cosmic principle of the transformation of matter by light, bringing together its complexity under the term *Matière-Lumière*.

*Matière-Lumière* is the only title that Evi Keller has given to her creations over the past 20 years.

The fact that all life on earth is imbued with solar energy inspired the artist with a vision that unites the earth and the sun, leading them to evolve in a perpetual “becoming” over time. It was essential for her to draw on this awareness and find a new artistic form to embody the sun and its constant interaction with us and ultimately, beyond its symbolism, to embody light in its physical and spiritual dimensions. Through her creations, the artist wants to materialize this light, to

preserve it, to heighten it and, above all, to transmit this cosmic force, the energy of the celestial fire. “*Matière-Lumière* is the incarnation of the journey of becoming aware of the power of light, not of external light, but of the revolution of an inner light of which the sun is the mirror, in order to take root in a cosmic existence and become a co-creator of a universal process,” says the artist.

In 2023, Evi Keller received both the first prize of the *Prix Carta Bianca* and the *100 Women of Culture Award*. In the same year, she designed the sets for Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* in collaboration with choreographer Blanca Li and *Les Arts Florissants*, conducted by William Christie (performances were held at the Teatros del Canal in Madrid, the Théâtre Impérial-Opéra in Compiègne, the Opéra Royal in Versailles and the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona). As part of the *Saison d'Art 2022*, the Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, Centre d'Arts et de Nature exhibited one of her major video works, [*Towards the Light - Silent Transformations*], which the gallery sold to the collections of the Maison Européenne de la photographie, as well as a monumental *Matière-Lumière*.