



AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF BEIRUT

# ETEL ADNAN SYMPOSIUM



“ IN THE NIGHT  
IN THE NIGHT  
WE SHALL FIND  
KNOWLEDGE  
LOVE AND PEACE

**FEBRUARY 23–24, 2023**

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT,  
IFI AUDITORIUM**

(BASILE ANTOINE MEGUERDICHE CONFERENCE HALL)

In homage to Etel Adnan (1925–2021), this symposium brings together academic research with personal testimonies and cultural practices to explore her life and work across countries, languages, and exiles. Born in Beirut to a Greek Christian mother from Smyrna and an Arab Muslim father from Damascus who served as an officer in the Ottoman Empire, Etel Adnan's life begins in the aftermath of World War I and spans almost a century. Deeply grounded in humanistic inquiry, her work breaks free of literary and artistic confines and embraces the universe in intimate and critical yet joyful ways.

This symposium is organized with the generous support of the American University of Beirut's Alwaleed Center for American Studies and Research, Sheikh Zayed Chair in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Department of English, and University Libraries.

## DAY ONE

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023**

- 09:30–09:45** **Brief welcome** Sonja Mejcher-Atassi and Simone Fattal
- 09:45–11:00** **KEYNOTE**  
Pierre Caye, Poésie et révolution: La fin de l'Empire ottoman et l'Apocalypse arabe  
Moderated by Sonja Mejcher-Atassi
- 11:00–11:30** Coffee/Tea
- 11:30–13:00** **PANEL 1: ETEL ADNAN IN BEIRUT**  
Fawwaz Traboulsi, To Be a Friend of Etel Adnan  
Elias Khoury, The Fragmentation of the Language of Narrative  
Sara Mourad, For the Love of Marie Rose  
Moderated by Bilal Orfali
- 13:00–14:30** Lunch
- 14:30–16:00** **PANEL 2: ETEL ADNAN'S PERSONAL PAPERS**  
Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, The Unfolding of an Artist's Personal Papers  
Leen Jradi, A Literary Salon in Letters  
Fatima Kassem Moussa, Sitt Marie Rose and Global Modernism  
Moderated by David Currell
- 16:00–16:30** **STAGED READING**  
Doyle Avant, Etel's Suitcase, 2023, play/filmscript, 20. min. (inspired by Etel Adnan and Michael H. Shamberg's film synopsis "Benjamin's Briefcase")
- 17:00–18:00** **EXHIBITION OPENING** at Jafet Library  
**Brief welcome** President Fadlo R. Khuri
- 18:30–20:00** **FILM SCREENING WITH Q&A** at IFI Auditorium  
Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Ismyrna, 2016, HD video, 50 min.

## DAY TWO

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2023**

- 09:30–09:45** **Brief welcome** Dean Farès El Dahdah, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- 09:45–11:00** **KEYNOTE**  
Suad Joseph, Etel Adnan: Journey to America  
Moderated by Livia Wick
- 11:00–11:30** Coffee/Tea
- 11:30–13:00** **PANEL 3: POETRY AND TESTIMONY**  
Francesca Maria Corrao, Etel Adnan's "Dialogue" with the Other in the Other's Country  
Hans-Ulrich Müller-Schwefe, Autofiction before Autofiction  
Steve Dickison, The Last Five Books: Etel Adnan Sounding  
Moderated by Robert Myers
- 13:00–14:30** Lunch
- 14:30–16:00** **PANEL 4: ART AND LIBERATION**  
Nadia von Maltzahn, Journalism, Painting and Friendship  
Dominique Eddé, A Bad Day for Freedom  
Closing remarks by Fawwaz Traboulsi
- 16:00–17:00** **FILM SCREENING**  
Lamia Joreige, Sun & Sea, 2021, HD video, 17 min.  
Deena Charara, Deep Down, 2023, HD video, 30 min.

MUSICAL EVENING AT **AL MADINA THEATER ORGANIZED BY IRTIJAL**

**19:30–21:00** **Jutta Glaser and Claus Boesser-Ferrari, Return & Crossing**

**Rayya Badran** reading with **Sharif Sehnaoui**: guitar

**Fadi Tabbal**: guitar

**Pascal Semerdjian**: drums