

RAFFAELLA CORTESE ~

Edi Hila Biography

Edi Hila was born in Shkodër, Albania, in 1944. He lives and works in Tirana, Albania.

As an important figure of the Balkan art scene, Edi Hila has borne witness to the social and political history of Albania. Through his life experience, sensitivity and painting he reached peaks of great poignancy.

In spite of the intellectual isolation caused by the regime of Enver Hoxha, he attended the National Academy of Art in Tirana and managed to gain extensive knowledge of the art of XX century. After his artistic debut, during the seventies and eighties, he was forced by the regime to work in a government-run poultry processing factory as part of a reformation program. Only in the nineties - after the fall of communism in Albania - he returned to painting; defining the style and contents that still today distinguish his research. In his practice, time - historical and personal, photographic and pictorial - encounters space - exhibiting and personal, geographical and political.

Hila's creative process is comprised of multiple sessions over which the artist reworks details, parts of the composition, layering, passages. Each of his works becomes a "pictorial palimpsest" embracing, in a formal and chromatic synthesis, various stages of his life that led him to create a specific work.

He has held teaching positions at the Fine Art Academy in Tirana for several decades since 1988. Hila received the Onufri Award in 1993 and 1998; in 2019 he was awarded the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program fellowship.

Recent solo shows include: *EDI HILA | THEA DJORDJADZE*, Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2025); *Edi Hila*, Moderna Museet, Malmö (2025); *Experienced Territo-*

ries, Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan (2023); *Territore te pervojave te jetuara*, Center for Openness and Dialogue, Tirana (2023); *The Sound of the Tuba*, Secession, Wien (2020); *Edi Hila: Painter of Transformation*, which originated at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and travelled to the National Gallery of Arts, Tirana (2018); and *Mirages of a Boulevard*, Center of Openness and Dialogue, Tirana (2016).

The artist has participated in a number of international exhibitions including: *SOUS L'AZUR*, Art Explora Foundations, France (2023); *Life without buildings*, gta Exhibitions, ETH, Zurich (2022); *Learning from Athens*, documenta 14, Kassel and Athens (2017); *Potential Monuments of Unrealised Futures* (with Adrian Paci), Architectural Association, London, travelled to Albanian Pavillion at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Biennale (2014); *The Desire for Freedom, Art in Europe from 1945 to the present day*, Historical Museum, Berlin; travelled to Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy and Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn (2013); *Touched*, Liverpool Biennial (2010); *Blood and Honey - The Future's Balkan*, Essl Museum, Wien (2003); *After the Wall. Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1999); travelled to Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin and Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, and Ludwig Museum, Budapest (2000); and the Albanian Pavillion at the 48th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale (1999).

His work is represented in collections of museums such as: Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw; Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Fonds Municipal d'Art Contemporain de la Ville de Paris; FRAC Pays de la Loire; FRAC Auvergne and the National Gallery of Arts, Tirana.