

impulses, or in the construction of paths simply stimulated by one of these elements not in any intellectual superstructure.

Paradoxically, during the years when Baruchello emerged onto the scene (more or less the period leading up to and away from the rebellions of 1968), his kind of absolutely individualistic stance, that of a flâneur among images, became emblematic of a patently political position that the artist employed, perhaps despite himself, to suggest a new way of looking at reality—of necessity, an anarchic one. One grasps this above all in his illustrations for the magazines of the counterculture; less refined but perhaps more authentic than his more formal works, they stay close to his observation that, since the world has been atomized into millions of personal stories, to try to give them all a unified meaning would be perhaps useless and even damaging. It would be sufficient to give meaning to each of them separately.

—Marco Meneguzzo

*Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.*

## Latifa Echakhch

KAUFMANN REPETTO

In Italian, the word *verso* has several meanings: a line in poetry (“verse”), the direction of movement (“toward”), and the back side of a sheet of paper (“verso”). As the title of Latifa Echakhch’s recent exhibition, the word reflected the complex and stratified nature of her work. The artist seeks and reveals the polysemic nature of words and things—meanings that slide into one another, sharing some aspects yet elsewhere diverging. *Enluminaire* (Illumination), 2012, a site-specific work the artist prepared for the gallery, was made of black ink that had been dripped down the gallery windows. It was a written account of the space, rhythmic and unstable. The lines became a wall, a curtain, rain, tears. They could be read as arabesques, or one could take them as the manifestation of an aggressive gesture intended to negate the view, obscuring the transparency of the glass, or of an intimate desire

to mark a time and space with one’s own hand. This multiplicity of suggestions was echoed in the title, which could refer to painted manuscripts, to lighting, and to enlightenment. The idea of casting light was contrasted with putting something in the shade, and the idea of revelatory writing countered the black trail delineated on the window in indecipherable fashion.

In relation to the exhibition title, *Enluminaire* was a reminder that the most visible and clearest aspect of things does not always reveal what lies beneath them. Insofar as “*Verso*” alluded to a direction to be taken, one could not tell precisely which one, just as the ink, left to drip, followed various paths dictated by chance. The show’s title also suggested the rhythm of a poem unfolding in the space, embodied not only in the black lines of *Enluminaire*, but also in the series “*Morgenlied*” (Morning Song), 2012–, structures of metal rods with hooks that could serve as a hanging system for paintings—perhaps the

Latifa Echakhch,  
*Enluminaire*  
(Illumination) (detail),  
2012, ink on  
inside of windows,  
dimensions variable.



paintings that were installed on other walls of the gallery. The latter works, from the “*Sans Titre*” series, 2010–12, were as luminous and light as birdsong.

Echakhch’s work often involves removing a thing’s center and leaving its support, frame, or outline—the functional part of the naked and exposed object. Paintings are taken off hooks, and flags off flagpoles (*Fantasia*, 2012). In the “*Sans Titre*” series, canvases are covered with carbon paper without text, just as in “Frames,” 2000– (not in the exhibition), the borders of carpets are shown with their centers cut away. Or Echakhch repositions objects in unexpected webs of references. *Fantôme* (Ghost), 2011, is a small installation made up of a chair, a harmonica, and an abandoned handkerchief. *Skin*, 2012, is a pile of shoes thrown onto the floor. The works always revolve around a void, an absence. The blank carbon paper in the “*Sans Titre*” series makes one think of censorship or, in any case, of some other kind of negation. All Echakhch’s works somehow or other critique the present and reflect on the everyday nature of being in the world.

—Alessandra Pioselli

*Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.*