

# THE SEEN

CHICAGO'S INTERNATIONAL ONLINE JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY & MODERN ART

[Home](#)
[Art Seen: Chicago](#)
[Art Seen: National](#)
[Art Seen: International](#)
[CURRENT ISSUE](#)
[About](#)


ART SEEN: INTERNATIONAL

## PROFILE OF THE ARTIST // LATIFA ECHAKHCH

by Hiba Ali

Like

Tweet

g+1

PARIS, FR. Latifa Echakhch's installations displace concrete understandings of habituated space. Her most recent exhibition at galerie kamel mennour, *All around fades to a heavy sound*, featured a curtain made of canvas, depicting an archetypal sky. As the fabric rolls out onto the gallery space, the perfect color blue is met with fluffy white clouds to greet the viewer. This installation accompanies two paintings of organically made ink blots, which are entitled *The movement of steps slows down until perfect immobility* and *Arms opened and eyes closed*, referring to a poetic and object constructed narrative. In a review of her exhibition in *Art Daily*, her work is described as, "Only when supposedly known objects have been emptied of their original meaning can they be read in new ways,[1]" which is an apt synopsis of Echakhch's methodology. Echakhch's objects appear as elements that through her translation of usage are able to hold meaning – while at the same time, they defer being understood in a literal manner, in this case, the sky is falling. This notion of story telling is one that she has considered through previous works, her carbon paper installations pointing toward the intersection between abstract art and politics, where the paper in the piece was also the material used to make underground newspapers, once used to pass on messages that would otherwise be intercepted. There is a sense of secrecy that abounds in the work, whether through hidden messages, or skewing familiar forms.



La dépossession, 2014. Theater canvas, painting, steel tube and straps. Variable dimensions, Canvas : 1000 x 1000 cm. View of the exhibition "All around fades to a heavy sound", kamel mennour, Paris, 2014. © Latifa Echakhch, Photo. Fabrice Seixas. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris.

This installation harkens back to one done at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles in 2013, where Echakhch used carbon paper and phalo ink, both mediums in which information is passed on, to create an installation that encompassed the hallway of the museum. The colors are modern referents in art history, but also a widely used color – existing in the space between the expected and the unexpected. The title, *À chaque stencil une révolution (For each stencil a revolution)*, is sourced from a quote by the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat when he spoke of protest movements of the 1960s and the instrumental role that the mimeograph machine served. Echakhch's work discharges these symbolically loaded values through their formal aspects, as nothing besides the color is being communicated to the viewer. Though it *seems* like a didactic display, it also pictures a political history of abstraction. In another piece, entitled *Untitled (Red ball and figure)*, Echakhch reinserts the use of Yves Klein Blue poetically and inadvertently, transforming two familiar symbols in modern art – the red ball and the blue monochrome canvas – as if it were a garment previously worn. As the curator, Anne Ellegood, states, "...in the 1950s, [abstract art] was used as a kind of

propaganda tool to promote American values around the world.[2]" *All around fades to a heavy sound* is no exception; whenever Echakhch uses a form, she uses it in such a way that it resists being understood one dimensionally.



Untitled (Red ball and figure), 2014, Floor installation: Balance ball, costume and slippers, Variable dimensions and The feeling of a discreet mist rises gently between fingers and suddenly freezes all the body, 2014, Ink on canvas, 200 x 150 cm. View of the exhibition "All around fades to a heavy sound", kamel mennour, Paris, 2014. © Latifa Echakhch, Photo.

Fabrice Seixas. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris.

The exhibition stimulates the visual presentation of a circus, but depicts instead the melancholic and emptiness of the spectacle. The "circus" in the *All around fades to a heavy sound* is the sky itself – a space commonly associated with the everlasting or transcendental. However, Echakhch's rendering of the infinite, or the heavenly, offers a conscription of space that destabilizes its present definitions, rendering what exists above us as anything but common.

--

Hiba Ali was born in Karachi, Pakistan and grew up in Chicago, Illinois. She is a graduate of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a dual degree in Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in Film, Video, New Media & Animation and Bachelor of Arts in Visual Critical Studies. She is writer, critic, and new media artist – her work occupies the intersections of architecture, queer

politics, gender and race.

[1] ArtDaily. "French-Moroccan Artist Latifa Echakhch Opens Exhibition at Kunsthaus Zurich." *French-Moroccan Artist Latifa Echakhch Opens Exhibition at Kunsthaus Zurich*. ArtDaily, n.d. Web. 21 Apr. 2014.

[2] Tantemsapya, Susannah "Curator Anne Ellegood Talks Latifa Echakhch at Hammer Projects." *Whitewall Magazine*. Whitewall Magazine, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2014.

May 5, 2014 | Filed under Art Seen: International and tagged with All around fades to a heavy sound, galerie kamel mennour, Hiba Ali, Latifa Echakhch.

Tags: All around fades to a heavy sound, galerie kamel mennour, Hiba Ali, Latifa Echakhch

