

latifa echakhch

underneath

kaufmann repetto is pleased to announce *Underneath*, Latifa Echakhch's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Echakhch's latest series of circular canvases sees the artist working with fresco, a medium that she has been utilizing over the past year. Echakhch persistently subverts the emblematic associations of objects and cultural mementos; here the circle may be revisited in varied conceptual capacities, be it an art historical reference to tondo painting or a broad symbol of perfection.

The sky also reappears as a thematic throughout Echakhch's practice and is approached each time with diverse outcomes. In her work realized for the Duchamp Prize at the Centre Pompidou in 2014, Echakhch installed a series of sculptural, suspended clouds mimicking the makeshift, one-sided nature of a stage set, simultaneously commenting upon the idealistic and falsified nature of the clouds' promise. In her more recent monumental installation produced for The Power Plant in Toronto in 2016, Echakhch presented a crumbling fresco of a picturesque sky bringing viewers attention to the dramatic beauty that becomes of destruction.

In her new series of works, Echakhch references trompe l'oeil ceiling murals of skies that became popular in the late 15th century with the work of artists like Andrea Mantegna and Melozzo da Forlì. These illusionistic ceiling paintings, generally in fresco, employed a perspective specifically known as "di sotto in sù" (meaning "from below, upward" in Italian). In *Underneath*, the sky is also distorted as if experienced through a peephole, its infinite terrain is forced to the edges of the canvas by an imaginary centrifugal force. The fresco is disfigured, partially scratched off in almost barbed-wire-like gestures, unveiling the copper and the chisel-marked canvas underneath its surface. *Underneath* leaves viewers with the uncanny sensation that something powerful outside of our knowledge and control has just happened. This tension is exacerbated by Echakhch's intentional attempt to mimic the effects and degradation of time.

Echakhch utilizes absence as a constructive element within her work, conceiving of lack as a place of creation. As is often depicted in her practice, a destructive performative act reveals its own productive and liberating potential. The collapse of the sky and the subsequent disorientation coalesce to beg a conscious rereading of reality, one far from stereotype and selective history.

Latifa Echakhch (b. 1974 in El Khnansa, Morocco) lives in Martigny, Switzerland. Solo exhibitions have been held at venues including La Manoir de la Ville de Martigny, France (2017); The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada (2016); Kunstmuseum Linz, Austria (2015); Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2015); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2014); MAC, Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon (2013); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2013); Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (2012); Kunsthaus, Zurich (2012); MACBA, Barcelona (2010); Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel (2009); and Tate Modern, London (2008). Her work has been part of numerous group exhibitions at the 15th Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul (2017); Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt/Main (2017); Villa Medici, Rome (2017); Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (2016); Museo Riso, Palermo (2015); Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China (2014); Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (2013); MoMA PS1, New York (2013); Kunsthalle Basel (2010), Baibakov Art Projects, Moscow (2010); Jerusalem Foundation (2008); and National Gallery of Art, Tirana (2005). She has participated in the Sharjah Biennial 11 (2013); the 18th Biennale of Sydney (2012); 54th Venice Biennale (2011); the 10th Biennale de Lyon (2009) and the Manifesta 7 in Bolzano, Italy (2008). She won the 2015 Zurich Art Prize and the 2013 Marcel Duchamp Prize.