

francesca kaufmann is happy to announce Latifa Echakhch's first solo show in Italy, opening September 18th, in occasion of START 2009.

The work of Latifa Echakhch is based on the deconstruction and representation of identity and cultural symbols. In her multimedia practice, including installation, sculpture, video, interventions and actions, the artist decontextualizes objects loaded with cultural and political saliency and repositions them within a minimalist language: cheap oriental prayer carpets rendered as empty frames, commercial replicas of fine Moroccan tea glassware smashed into a mass of silent violence, flagpoles mounted without their flags. In this dialectical approach, the ghostly echo of the removed object is in fact amplified, revealing post-colonial contradictions and norms.

For her first solo show at francesca kaufmann, Echakhch will present a number of new works, including four new paintings related to her ongoing series, "Dérives". Like the earlier wall and floor drawings from the series, the paintings use ornament motifs of Islamic architecture: a drawn line derived from the form of a star, suggesting both an infinite path, but also, as implied by the title, a Situationist "psycho-geographical drift." According to the artist, "by a process of wandering, I thus revisit this drawing technique, a bit like a bad student: the geometry becomes chaotic, the symmetry is undermined, and the absolute is therefore impossible."

In *Les Petites Lettres [The small letters]* (2009), sheets of paper are folded into triangular forms and then dyed black with Chinese ink. The object's form resembles Breouatte, a popular pastry consumed and prepared in Moroccan homes. Echakhch introduces a semantic inversion in the title of the work, as the Arabic word *Breouatte* in French translates to *petites lettres*. Like in *Dérives*, *Les Petites Lettres*, reformulates and recontextualizes a cultural object, shifting the meaning of these objects as well as their symbolic value.

In the second space of the gallery Echakhch presents four charcoal wall drawing, *Plainte 86, 43, 113, 226* (2009) Each of the four *Plaines*, a double entendre in French meaning both plinth and sorrow, delineate Le Corbusier's ideal measurement for the positions of leaning, sitting, the resting the elbows and, lastly the ideal height of a ceiling. Le Corbusier's rigorous rational order of space is overturned by Echakhch's intervention that presents instead its ironic eulogy to a Modernist past.

In *A chaque stencil une révolution, une après l'autre [For each stencil, a revolution, one after another]* (2009) Echakhch elaborates an earlier work of the same title, taken from a quote by Yasser Arafat in describing the human rights struggles of the late 1960's. Each of the nine pedestals holds a sheet of carbon paper, on which the artist pours alcohol. In this performative gesture the paper is emptied of its rhetorical power, leaving each "stencil" to stand as an eerie monument to revolutions failed.

Latifa Echakhch

born in 1974 al El Khansa (Morocco), lives and works in Paris and Martigny, Switzerland.

Upcoming exhibitions: the Swiss Institute, New York (2009); FRAC Champagne Ardenne, Reims; MACBA, Barcelona; FRI ART, Fribourg, Switzerland; GAMeC, Bergamo (2010).

Selected solo exhibitions: *Les sanglots longs*, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; *Partitas*, Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld; *Speaker's Corner*, Level Two Gallery, Tate Modern, London (2008); *Il m'a fallu tant de chemins pour parvenir jusqu'à toi*, Le Magasin, Grenoble (2007).

Selected group exhibitions: *The Spectacle of the Everyday*, Biennale de Lyon, Lyon (2009); MANIFESTA7, Bolzano; *Shifting Identities – Swiss Art Today*, Kunsthau Zurich; *Flow*, Studio Museum Harlem, New York (2008); *Global Feminisms*, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2007).