

The GAMeC – Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo presents the first solo show in an Italian institution of the artist Latifa Echakhch (1974, El Khnansa, Morocco. Lives and works in Martigny, Switzerland).

The exhibition '*Le rappel des oiseaux*' is part of GAMeC's exhibition program *Eldorado* dedicated to the most interesting emerging artists on the international scene who are invited to create an original project for the museum's spaces.

The exhibition at GAMeC is realized in collaboration with the FRAC Champagne-Ardenne of Reims, where it was presented last April; however, the overall project – as always happens in Echakhch's work – has been redesigned in close relationship with the exhibition space at GAMeC.

Through an extreme variety of expressive means ranging from installation to video, and painting to photography, Latifa Echakhch explores the dimensions of the individual and collective identity, the concept of culture and feelings of belonging and uprooting. Her work is realized out of commonplace objects that the artist present as such or after modifying them through simple actions: flagpoles without flags, prayer rugs whose interior has been cut out so only the border remains, geographic maps crunched up into small hemispheres, microphones with no amplification mechanism.

But corresponding to the economy of means that characterizes the artistic language of Latifa Echakhch is an equally radical expressive power: hers are, in fact, sober but extremely intense metaphors that are able to evoke a universal human condition, or rather the position of the individual in the face of history, memory, politics and religion. All the work of this artist leads back to the dimension of the subjectivity and the individual experience and the major themes of the contemporary world: the violence of nationalist and religious fundamentalisms, the lapses of the colonialist past back into the present, the implications of modernist ideology in everyday life. In Echakhch's works what was once grandiose and monumental today becomes a residue or a ruin, while the symbols that are still able to move the collective conscience are deconstructed and presented in their fallibility.

The conceptual matrix that lies at the basis of Latifa Echakhch's artistic practice goes hand in hand with a remarkable poetic sensibility. In the formal sense, the artist often refers to Minimalist Art, Conceptual Art, Process Art and Arte Povera, and these references are transformed by a simultaneously lyrical and critical use of a whole series of symbols and objects that refer to specific cultural contexts, both Eastern and Western.

At the heart of Echakhch's work lies a subtle corrosive action on all that is perceived as immutable and out of reach of the passing of time and the historic dialectic and that, inevitably, lies at the heart of conflicts: the concepts of national integrity and cultural identity as mythologies of purity, the ideological counter-positions and absolute convictions about the political and religious destiny of mankind.

The show will be documented by a monographic catalogue published by JRP I Ringier and that will be available in the second half of 2011. The book will constitute the first complete monograph on the artist, and it will be realized in collaboration with the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel, the Kunstverein in Bielefeld, the FRAC Campagne-Ardenne in Reims and the FRI-ART in Freiburg, all international institutions that have recently hosted solo shows of the artist's work.

The exhibition has been realized with the support of Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council.

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The show is part of a series honoring Arturo Toffetti.

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