

*Falling, lovely and beautiful* is a new set of works by the French-Moroccan artist Latifa Echakhch (1974, living in Martigny, Switzerland) presented in KIOSK. An installation involving bronze bells, a performative video and a series of drawings in ink. For these works, the objects or texts have been stripped of their original meanings and contexts in order to make new interpretations possible. This method is typical for Echakhch's art practice. Driven by the necessity to counter certain prejudices, contradictions and stereotypes in our society, she isolates and questions materials that are symbolic for these phenomena. By giving them a new setting or a different space, new meanings or unexpected characteristics may arise.

Echakhch appropriates, dismantles and re-represents daily materials and simple objects. Personal memories as well as shared history and cultural heritage like literature, philosophy and music serve as her sources. Her practice repeatedly questions preset notions about identity, nationality, religion and authenticity. She also examines her own fragmented, symbolically charged culture, using a language that is at the same time sensitive and powerful. Politics and poetry come together in installations and environments built up out of personal, historical and cultural references.

All this applies to the exposition *Falling, lovely and beautiful* as well, with the title freely referring to the Nick Cave song *As I sat sadly by her side*.

The monumental shattered bronze bells under the central dome, are exact replicas of the church bells from the destroyed church Lübeck, a German city bombed in 1942. While the church is now fully restored, the bells are left lying exactly where they hit the ground at the time.

While the pieces of fallen bells emphasize silence in terms of stilled notes or muted violence, in the side room piano notes resound amidst huge noise. For this video, Echakhch simultaneously evokes an act of creation and destruction by making someone play the piano while, at the same time, someone else splits the instrument to pieces with a sledgehammer.

In a similar way, Echakhch's series of ink drawings deconstructs Arabic poetry. On sheets of newspaper she 'transcribed' the original texts, but only copying the punctuation or vowels. Traditionally and linguistically though in Arabic poetry, exactly these 'auxiliary signs' essentially define the meaning for the whole sentence or the poem. Here, the sheets of newspaper are largely left blank, the signs as mere unreadable connotations. The text, in other words, becomes an abstract drawing, bearing within it the possibility of a whole new reading.

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