

LATIFA ECHAKHCH Horizon

8 February - 26 March 2022

6 rue du Pont de Lodi
Paris 6

As she prepares *The Concert* for the Swiss Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale, on the occasion of her seventh solo at kamel mennour, Latifa Echakhch invites us to experience a show that is equal parts melancholic and cathartic.

A continuation of the *Sun set down* series, the truly monumental polyptych will be majestically presented at No. 6 Rue du Pont de Lodi. Here Echakhch has openly decided to dramatise the space, using theatrical mechanisms and devices in order to provoke a strong emotional response from the visitor.

After referring to the classical representation of the sky in Italian Renaissance frescos for *Sun set down*, Echakhch has borrowed the saturated aesthetic of twentieth century technicolour films, using the 'very luminous, very generic, even slightly naïve colours' we know from mass-produced postcards with hackneyed images.

The gallery has been immersed in darkness, with at one end the rubicund landscape of a setting sun on the banks of the Riviera. From dark blue to red, from orange to gold, the vivid colours of this series of eight paintings seem to radiate through the theatrical night, an effect reinforced by the lower section of the painting with its dark horizon line.

It's an almost mystic vision, a grandiose setting that somehow seems to have been weakened. In fact, only certain fragments of the painted image are still intact, while there are large sections missing. Echakhch has made use of a cherished technique here, one that is close to fresco. After laying down a base of black paint, she has applied a fine, rugged layer of cement, 'with a trowel, like when one prepares a wall'. She has then painted the landscape with a palette of saturated acrylic colours, only to destroy it by vigorously scrapping against the cement. 'I was interested in making the viewer feel the different gestures and stages in the fabrication of the work,' she says. Our attention is held as much by the representation of the sunset as by the grey sections where the colour has been forcefully removed. *Sun set down* deconstructs representation to the point where the viewer can and must complete the image. For some viewers, it's a crumbling landscape, or rather the representation of a landscape that is crumbling. For others, it's an idyllic image emerging from under a layer of cement. The deconstructive process clashes brutally with the initially Romantic subject. The dichotomy between the violent gesture of scraping off and the formal harmony echoes the tension that exists between exaltation and menace. The destruction of the crepuscular landscape is in contradiction with the natural sublime, which in turn seems imbued with nostalgia.

This is the narrow precipice along which Latifa Echakhch walks, between gesture and form, representation and abstraction, destruction and creation, in a virtuosic attempt to link the past to the future, the world's end to the promise of a new dawn.

The exhibition "Horizon" is accessible from Tuesday to Saturday from 11 am to 7 pm at 6 rue du Pont de Lodi, Paris 6.

For further information, please contact:
Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin
Jessy Mansuy
+33 1 56 24 03 63
galerie@kamelmennour.com

Press contacts:
Margaux Alexandre
Pierre-Maël Dalle
communication@kamelmennour.com

'The finished painting, says the artist, leaves us with a flattening of all these temporalities, all these mixed feelings, contemplation and dislocation, the calmness of a naïve landscape and the violence of the gestures that alter it. I wanted to reproduce this paradoxical Romanticism, because this whole palette of tonality, equilibrium, and dissonance is what I feel when I look at the horizon.'

Born in 1974 in El Khnansa (Morocco), Latifa Echakhch lives and works in Vevey and Martigny (Switzerland). Driven by the necessity to counter certain prejudices, contradictions, and stereotypes in our society, she isolates and questions materials that symbolize these phenomena. In 2007, Echakhch presented "À chaque stencil une révolution" at Le Magasin, Grenoble, as part of her first solo museum exhibition. Latifa Echakhch's work has since been presented around the world in numerous solo exhibitions: at Kunsthaus in Zurich, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the New National Museum of Monaco, Memmo Foundation in Rome, KIOSK in Ghent, the maLYON in Lyon, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, Portikus in Frankfurt, Columbus museum of Art in Ohio, MACBA in Barcelona, FRI ART in Fribourg, Frac Champagne-Ardenne in Reims, Swiss Institute in New York, Tate Modern in London, Le Magasin in Grenoble; as well as in group exhibitions. They have also been exhibited at the Istanbul Biennial, the 54th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, the 11th Sharjah Biennial, the Jerusalem Art Focus Biennial and the Manifesta 7 in Bolzano. Echakhch won the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2013. As Alfred Pacquement, then-Director of the Centre Pompidou and head of the jury for the award, said of the artist at the time: "Her work, between surrealism and conceptualism, questions with economy and precision the importance of symbols and reflects the fragility of modernism." In 2015, Echakhch presented *Screen Shot* at the Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, and was awarded the Zurich Art Prize.

Latifa Echakhch will exhibit at the Swiss Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. The exhibition is commissioned by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.