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SI

DEC 01 2009 – FEB 13 2010

Latifah Echakhch Movement and Complication

Latifa Echakhch is one of the most successful protagonists of a new European generation. The installations of the French-Moroccan artist (born 1974, lives in Martigny) address issues of social life with striking elegance. She has received international attention with her solo shows at Tate Modern, London and Fridericianum in Kassel.

The exhibition's title *Movement and Complication* borrows terms from horology. In this field, a movement indicates a simple watch. The term complication, however, refers to any feature beyond the basic display of hours, minutes, and seconds. The more complications, the more difficult it is to design, create, assemble, and eventually repair the watch.

Latifa Echakhch applies these terms to question urbanism, related theories and eventually social movement and complication. She uses her own experience to unmask pre-conceived ideas about nationality, culture, and history. Intellectually challenging, but at once sensual, the artist's work explores society in an increasingly globalized world.

In her first institutional solo exhibition in the United States, the artist presents a new body of work. The site-specific installation *Plaintes* (complaints) is inspired by *The Modulor*, a system of measurements developed by Swiss architect Le Corbusier. Using charcoal, Echakhch applies each of the architect's eight measures to individual walls. The resulting hand made black strips, at varying heights, create an obscure pattern throughout the gallery. The units, having been isolated, abstracted, and applied, bind a theoretical concept back on human scale, giving it an auratic presence.

In allusion to the ancient discovery that planet earth is not a flat surface, Echakhch nonchalantly wrinkles up the flat map into a rounded shape to create sculptures entitled *Globus*. This physical act, of man manipulating theory into object, reverberates throughout the exhibition.

Completing the installation, the large windows on Broadway are painted in a bright yellow. The pigment is comprised of the substance Gaya (E102), a food coloring used as an inexpensive substitute for saffron in Asian cooking. Echakhch unveils the ethnic marketing aim of the color as sheer effect.

Placing an emphasis on modernist models of architecture, Echakhch also includes sculptures of small wooden brainteasers on pedestals. Titled *HLM*, each sculpture is named after a subsidized housing development in the *banlieue* of Aix-les-bains, where Echakhch grew up. The game, shown in various stages of completion, on one hand refers to the inadequacy of modernism all the while highlighting a near-unsolvable riddle of urbanism.

With kind support of kamel mennour, Paris and Galerie Francesca Kaufmann, Milan