

ACHRAF TOULOUB

Born in 1986 in Casablanca (Morocco)

He lives and works in Paris (France)

For Achraf Touloub, forms emerge intuitively during the process of experimentation. Issues relating to the notion of tradition have marked his work since its inception. Trying to “draw time,”¹ he first worked on repetitions of figures and motifs, especially that of the wave, inspired by the art of miniatures. The artist has since sought to go beyond the conventions associated with his medium. His drawing then invests the space outside the frame, which itself becomes sculpture or device. More recently, Achraf Touloub has invited the viewer to become physically involved by showing his works in particular environments. In 2016, in the *cont'd* exhibition in Berlin, he had a stage built that was open to the public, which could climb it at leisure, renewing its perception of the works presented.

In 1816, Hegel wrote that “[tradition] is no motionless statue, but is alive, and swells like a mighty river, which increases in size the further it advances from its source.” The German philosopher reminded us of the perpetual evolution of tradition, which does not remain frozen in an idealized past. Achraf Touloub illustrates this thought, working on a tradition in motion. For *Viva Arte Viva*, his series of mural reliefs, which he calls “skins,” he merges materials such as oil painting, nylon and *gesso*. He presents the variations of the same motif, a multi-faceted figure that is both meditative and melancholic, and which can be found both in his large works and in the smallest black ink drawings.

Stitched, painted, swollen in relief, the large colored “skins” are embellished with metal chains, or even drawings under plastic, creating new decorative networks.

In Achraf Touloub, the work is constructed in a sensitive way. The artist attempts to define the possible definitions of tradition within the context of hyper-connection. He examines legacies and practices. His search for forms leads him to adopt iconographies common to different cultures, evoking medieval illuminations, Italian futurism, Matisse’s modernity, or the rendering of 3D modelling. His work superimposes modes of depiction with a view to tackling the new globalized form of tradition. For Achraf Touloub, the information collected by GAFA² allows them to foresee needs and anticipate desires. In his works, the artist aspires to restore a space for feelings, a new area for freedom.

L. L.

¹ Interview with the Artist, January 2017.

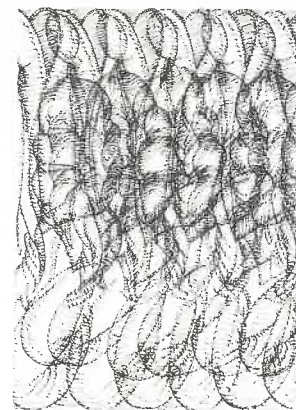
² Acronym of the most well-known IT-based firms: Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon.

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Jean Baudrillard, *Écran Total* (Screened Out), 1997.
René Guenon, *Le Symbolisme de la croix*
(The Symbolism of the Cross), 1931.
Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ad-Doura al-fâkhira*
(The Precious Pearl), 11th-12th century AD.



Achraf Touloub, *Untitled*, 2017. Photo Gilles Puyfagès.
Courtesy the Artist; Plan B, Cluj/Berlin



Achraf Touloub, *Untitled (reflets gravés)*, 2016.
Ink on paper, 45 x 33 cm. Courtesy the Artist;
Plan B, Cluj/Berlin



Achraf Touloub, sketch of the installation for La Biennale di Venezia
2017. Ink and watercolor on paper, 32 x 55 cm. Photo the Artist.
Courtesy the Artist; Plan B, Cluj/Berlin



Screenshot of a video streaming taken on 14 March 2016,
at 13h12'. Photo the Artist



Screenshot of a video streaming taken on 14 March 2016,
at 13h12'10". Photo the Artist

For those two circles
Where perceptions are mise en scène
Beginnings look like *encore*
One on other, transparent and
thin as layers
Real as one again /
Grey horizon for confused bro'
Drawing waves between eyes and
mouth
Extended feelings emerge following
The cycle shadow leaves while
responding

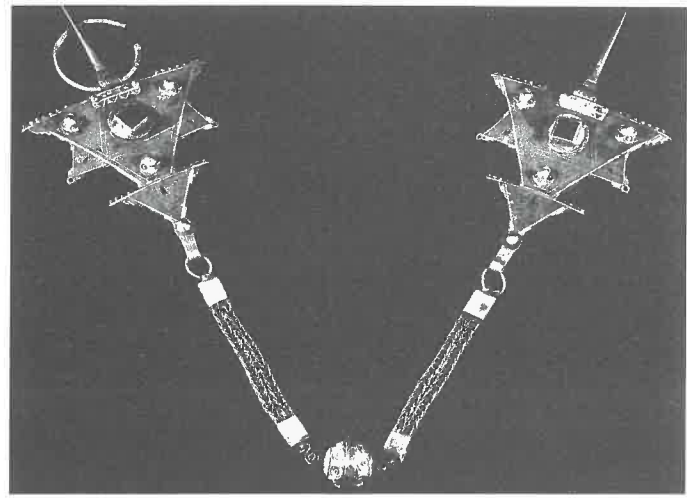
Cause God loves *ironie*
Lets without ending dimensions
On the stage of your eyes
And as expected you show back /
Since the smell of various scenarios
Genes proudly reappearing
By stunned links as those long
and short chains
Then all visions count equally /
Now one is cropping the other
Making *possibles* greater
If you eat your tongue only

So by the European nights
Mixed moods are cutting the road
And a straight-line become fractal /
The new stuff for the news
Like rectangles make squares
Maybe for fifteen minutes or fifteen
years
The tattooed faces will look in advance
This is continued and so on

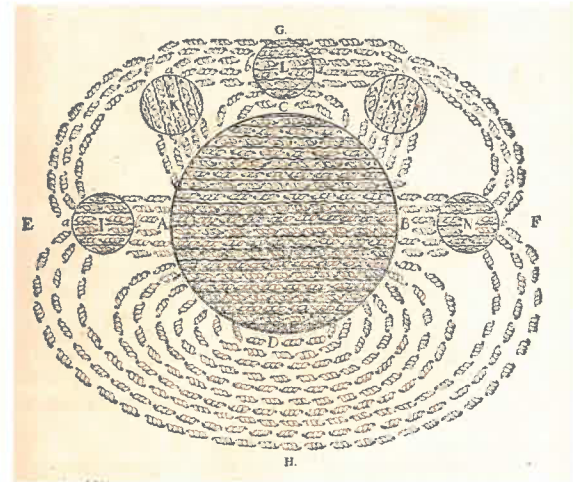
Achraf Touloub



Tile panel with flowers, 1550–1600. Fritware (stonepaste), transparent glaze, painted underglaze on slip, Turkey (Iznik).
Collection Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo Marie-Lan Nguyen



Fibulas from Tiznit, south Morocco. Photo Bozom



Drawing of a magnetic field by René Descartes, from his *Principia Philosophiae*, 1644. Photo the Artist

“This was one of the first drawings of the concept of a magnetic field.” A. T.



Henri Matisse, *Fleur de lys*, 1941. Ink on paper. All rights reserved