



FARAH KHELIL

SURFACING

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ARCHEOLOGIE DELLA MEMORIA

di **Silvia Cirelli**

Le opere della giovane e talentuosa Farah Khelil (Tunisia, 1980) nascono da un soffio emotivo, un attraversamento viscerale, prima ancora che mentale. Ritrarre la realtà, così come ci viene proposta ad un primo superficiale sguardo, non sarebbe altro che tradire il proprio inconscio, mascherandolo deliberatamente. La verità oggettiva delle cose, infatti, secondo l'artista non è altro che la riproduzione di una finzione, incapace di sostenere e interpretare appieno il carico dell'animo umano. Essa è irrimediabilmente sorda davanti alla deliberata confusione dell'universo interiore e per questo, deve essere screditata e sostituita dalla sintesi di un nuovo "accadimento". Solo attraverso l'immaginazione, la magia della memoria e la decostruzione della realtà, si ha il potere di colmare quel vuoto, consentendo di raggiungere una dimensione percettiva inedita e per questo, assolutamente umana.

In quest'articolata grammatica stilistica la memoria riveste per Khelil un ruolo di fondamentale importanza, perché rappresenta l'origine dalla quale partire per costruire l'intera struttura narrativa, come se il processo creativo richiedesse una lettura complessiva, dove le opere interpretano un racconto, un racconto che diventa prezioso repertorio sia privato che collettivo.

Ogni singolo lavoro dell'artista, emerge infatti da un procedimento di sovrapposizione di relazioni, associazioni e piani di lettura differenti che confluiscono però nel tentativo di comprendere il presente attraverso il passato. Non mancano dunque riferimenti alla Storia dell'Arte, come nell'installazione *Efet de Surface*; alla filosofia, di Camus, Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari, ripresa nell'opera site specific *Solitude peuplée*; o rimandi letterali come in *Lignes*, dove Khelil riprende non solo l'elaborazione dello scrittore Bachir Majdoub da un punto di vista puramente culturale, ma solleva l'attenzione sul valore familiare del ricordo, Majdoub era infatti anche suo prozio.

Insieme a *Lignes*, sono numerose le occasioni in cui Farah Khelil affida alla componente rievocativa un ruolo indispensabile, come se l'intera esperienza

artistica rappresentasse un mosaico di confessioni ridotte a un'essenza primordiale. Ritratti di famiglia (*Notes de Chevet*), immagini storiche di paesaggi tunisini (*Fouilles*), o residui di tessuti domestici come pizzi e stoffe antiche (il suggestivo comodino *Notes de Chevet*) s'intrecciano nella trama estetica, celebrando l'urgenza di farsi custode di una testimonianza culturale. In quest'ottica è dunque facilmente leggibile la sua volontà di utilizzare come materiale, oggetti che recuperano l'idea di "appropriazione". Cartoline, vecchie foto, articoli di seconda mano vengono riacquisiti dal passato, come se fossero avanzi di vite vissute. La nozione di "ecologia" ci invita a considerare il riuso come il tentativo di un cambiamento di contesto e di ambiente, che affida all'oggetto nuove funzionalità e significati, come se si trattasse di un ecosistema sociale e privato.

L'arte diventa così depositaria del passato, e seppur si giochi con meccanismi di sovrapposizione e cancellazione – chiari esempi sono le opere *Point of view*, *listening point* (*Clichés II*) o *Sphères* – vi è sempre e comunque la volontà di tradurre un'emozione profonda che affonda le proprie radici nella preziosa contaminazione della memoria.

Come frammenti di vita, di profumi, di colori, di tessuti vissuti, le narrazioni private di Farah Khelil hanno costantemente una risonanza collettiva, sono come vere e proprie "scatole dei ricordi" dense d'impliciti rimandi. Sono allegorie lessicali che mostrano la complessa relazione fra ricerca estetica e documentazione storica. Su questo ponte metaforico fra passato e presente, l'artista proietta il proprio spazio culturale, uno spazio vissuto che sul concetto evolutivo della storia costruisce l'autenticità del racconto.

Marzo, 2019

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF MEMORY

by **Silvia Cirelli**

The works of the young and talented Farah Khelil (Tunisia, 1980) are conceived from an emotional breath, from a visceral, even more than mental, crossing point. To portray reality as it appears to us at a first superficial glance would be nothing more than deliberately betraying, blindfolding one's own unconscious. In fact, according to the artist, the objective truth of things is nothing but the reproduction of a fiction, unable to support and fully interpret the weight of the human soul. It is hopelessly deaf to the deliberate confusion of the inner universe, and must therefore be discredited and replaced by the synthesis of a new "happening". Only the imagination, the magic of memory and the deconstruction of reality give us the power to reach an unprecedented perceptual dimension which is, for this reason, absolutely human.

For Khelil, memory plays a fundamental role in this complex stylistic grammar because it represents the origin from which the construction of the entire narrative can begin. It is as if the creative process required a complete reading in which the works interpret a story that becomes a precious repertoire, both private and collective.

Each of the artist's works emerges from a process of overlapping relationships, associations and different levels of reading that flow into the attempt to understand the present through the past. Thus, there are many references to art history, as in the installation *Effet de Surface*; to the philosophy of Camus, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, recovered in the site-specific work *Solitude peuplée*; or literary contexts as in *Lignes*, where Khelil takes up not only the influence of the writer Bachir Majdoub from a purely cultural point of view, but draws our attention to the family value of memory (incidentally, Majdoub was also his great-uncle).

Along with *Lignes*, there are numerous occasions in which Farah Khelil assigns an indispensable role to re-enactment, as if the entire artistic experi-

ence represents a mosaic of confessions reduced to some primordial essence. Family portraits (*Notes de Chevet*), historical images of Tunisian landscapes (*Fouilles*) or traces of domestic fabrics such as laces and ancient cloths (the suggestive bedside table *Notes de Chevet*) intertwine in the aesthetic weave, celebrating the urgency of being the guardian of a cultural testimony. It is also for this reason, that we can better understand her will to use, as materials, objects that reflect the idea of "appropriation". Postcards, old photos, secondhand goods are all taken from the past, they are wastes of previous lives. This notion of "ecology" invites us to consider re-use as a change of context and environment, which gives the appropriate object new functionalities and meanings. Thinking of her artistic practice in the light of a media ecology makes it possible to consider its productions as privileged objects for the study of the media, social and intimate ecosystem.

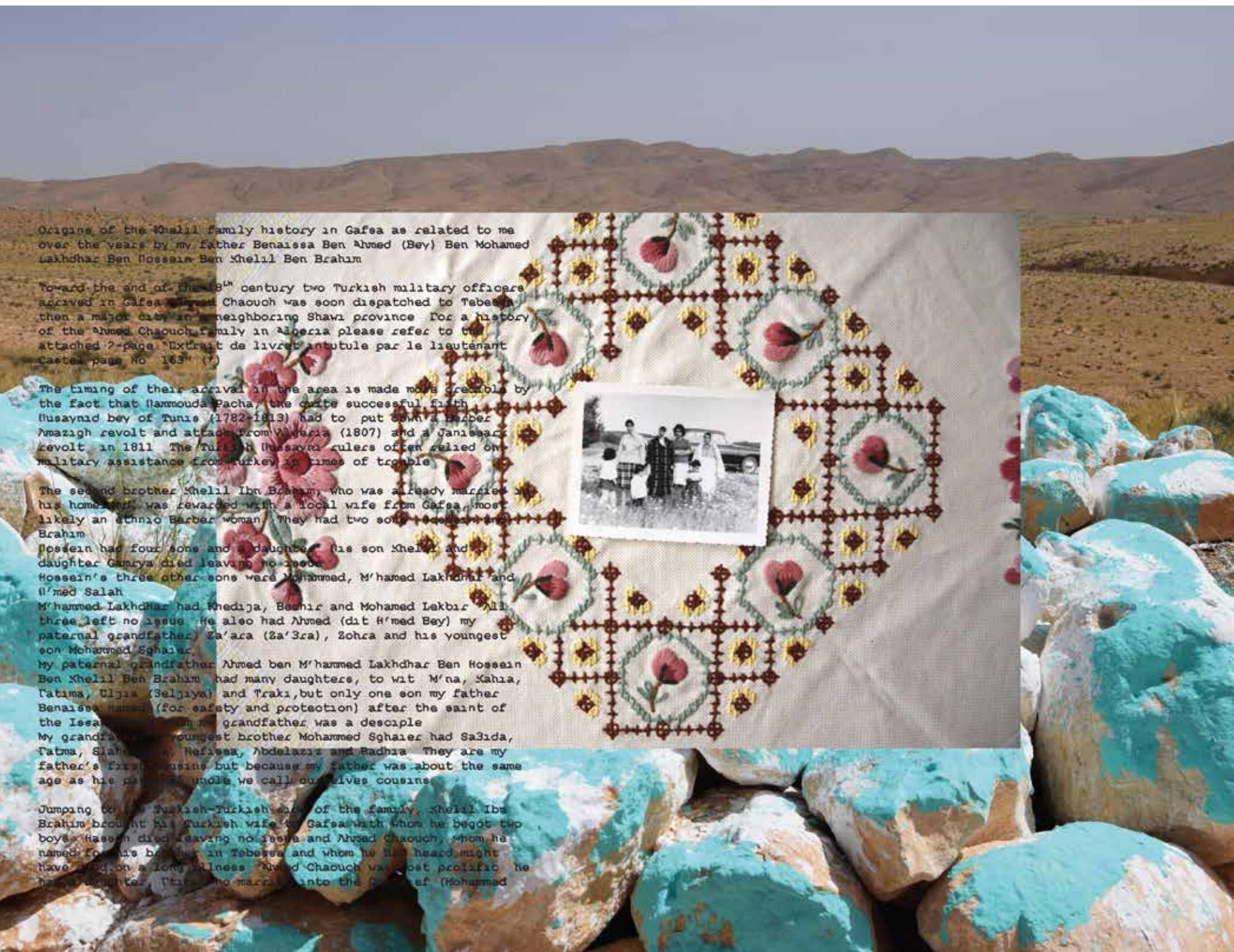
Art thus becomes the repository of the past, and although it plays with the mechanisms of superimposition and erasure – obvious examples include the works *Point of view, listening point* (*Clichés II*) or *Sphères* – there remains the desire to translate a profound emotion that has its roots in the precious contamination of memory.

Like fragments of life, fragrances, colours, lived fabrics, Farah Khelil's private narratives constantly evoke a collective resonance: they are like real "boxes of memories" full of implicit cross-references, or lexical allegories that illustrate the complex relationship between aesthetic research and historical documentation. It is on this metaphorical bridge between past and present that the artist projects his own cultural space, a lived space that constructs the authenticity of the narrative upon the evolutionary concept of history.

March, 2019



Note de Chevet
2019



Note de Chevet
2019



Ben Guetaief Bellil), and five sons They were Mehdi, Mohammed, Héasan, Othman and Youssef

Mehdi had Amor (who married my paternal aunt Fatima), Younes, Sellami, Mohammed, Zina and Bechir

Mohammed Ben Ahmed Chaouch had only one son Ali, all others died Ali is my maternal grandfather Beside my mother Zohra and her sisters Fatma and Souad (my last aunt still living in Gafsa as the matriarch of the Khelils) he had my maternal uncles Ahmed, Mohammed, Hedi (Farah Khelil's paternal grandfather) and

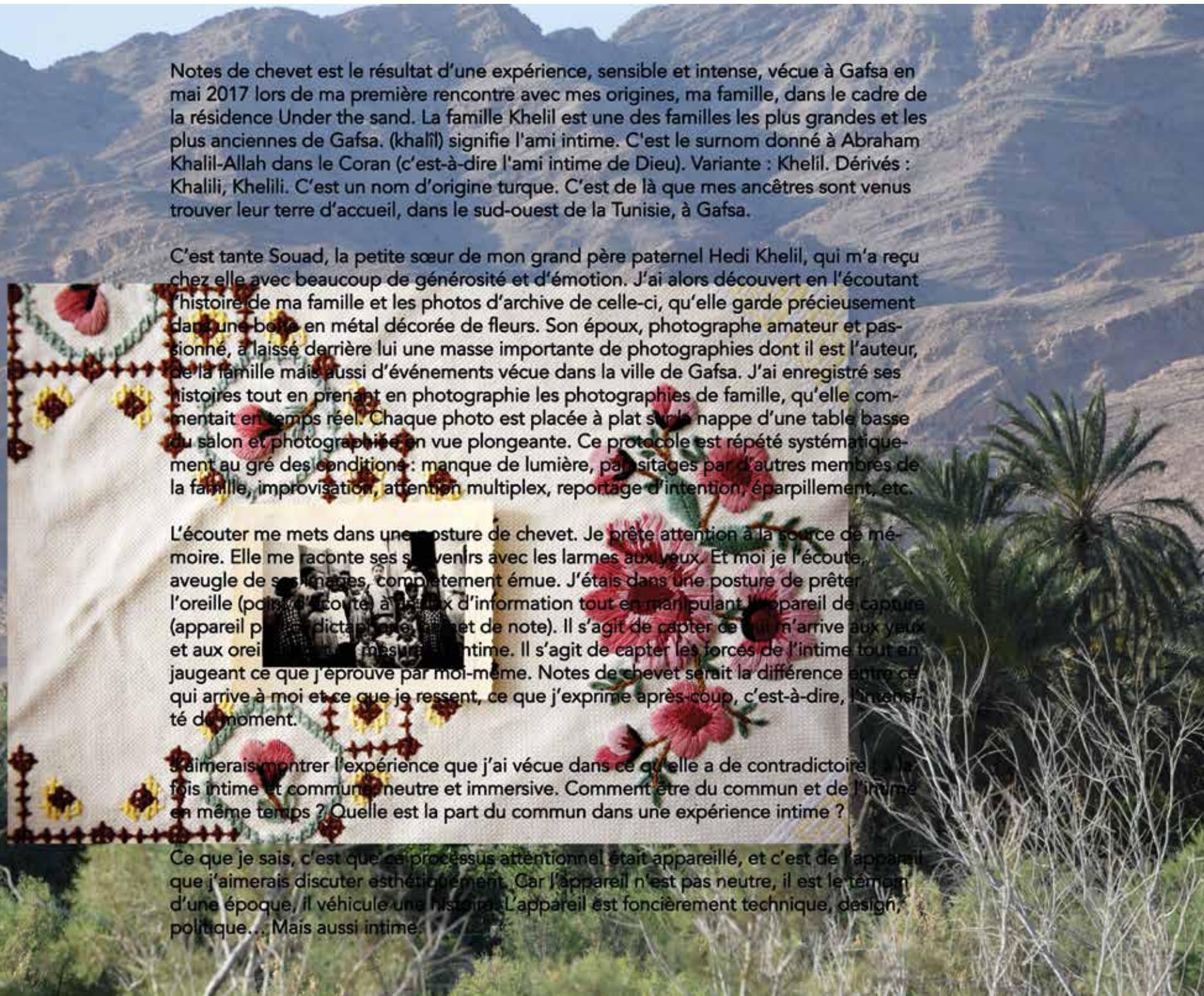
Hassan (H'ssan) had Essebtia, Mohamed, M'hamed, S'adha and Mohsen, Zaineb, Faouzia, Faouzi, Safia, Nejib, Alia (?)

Héasan (H'ssan) had Essebtia, Mohamed, M'hamed, S'adha

Othman had Khelil (who begot Mustafa, Hedi, Ismail, Mohammed, Rachida, Ibrahim, Mohamed & Habiba, Abdessalam (who married my aunt Fatma), Mohamed, Traki, Zohra, Mehria and Abdelmajid)

Youssef Khelil had four boys Mohammed (begot Abdelwahhab and Rachida), Abderrahmane (begot Mohamed, Chedli, Ahmed & Farouk) Ahmed and Mahmoud He had 3 girls aicha, Halima and Mna (my maternal grandmother)

General comments Gafsan families of Turkish descent tended to marry inside their ethnic group Many of the Khelil married into the M'rard (Mourad), Kamerji, Sanikli, Turkey



Note de Chevet
2019







**Point of view,
listening point (Clichés II)**
2019



**Point of view,
listening point (Clichés II)**
2019

DANSEUSES TUNISIENNES.

Tunis, le 28 Décembre 1963,

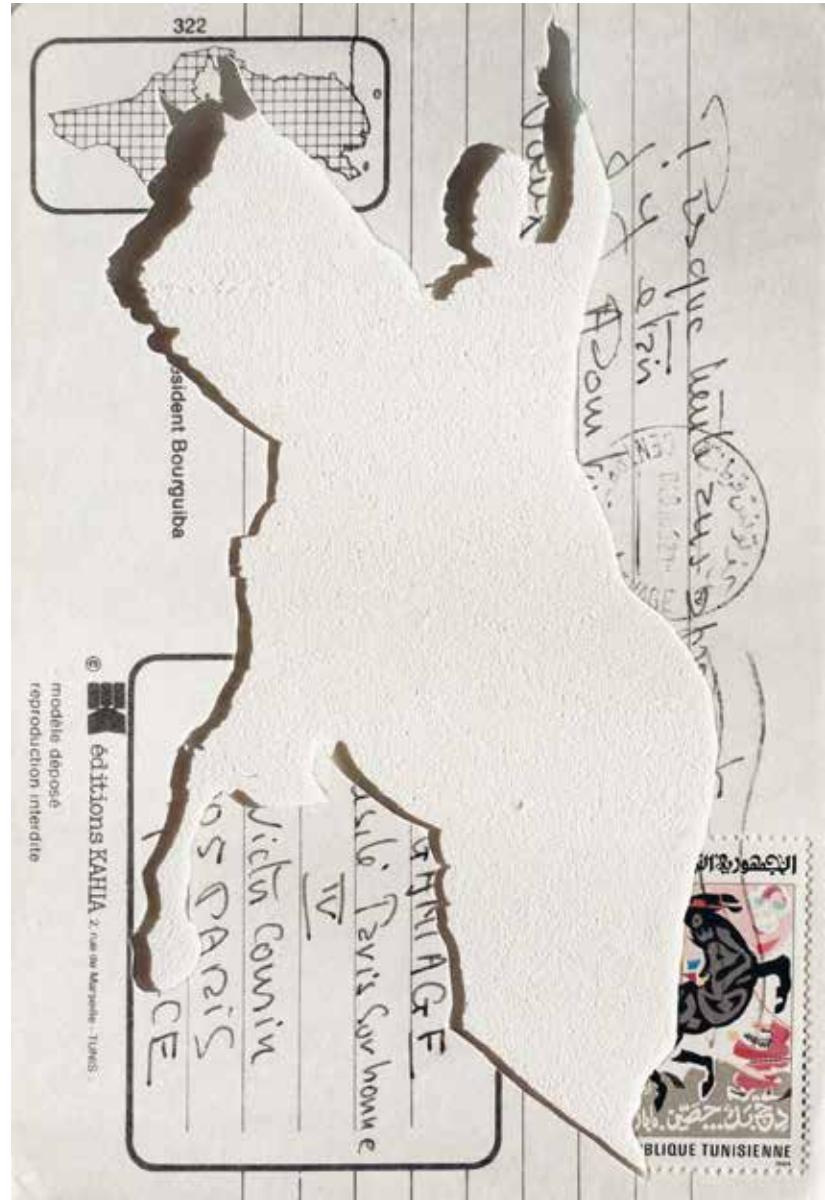
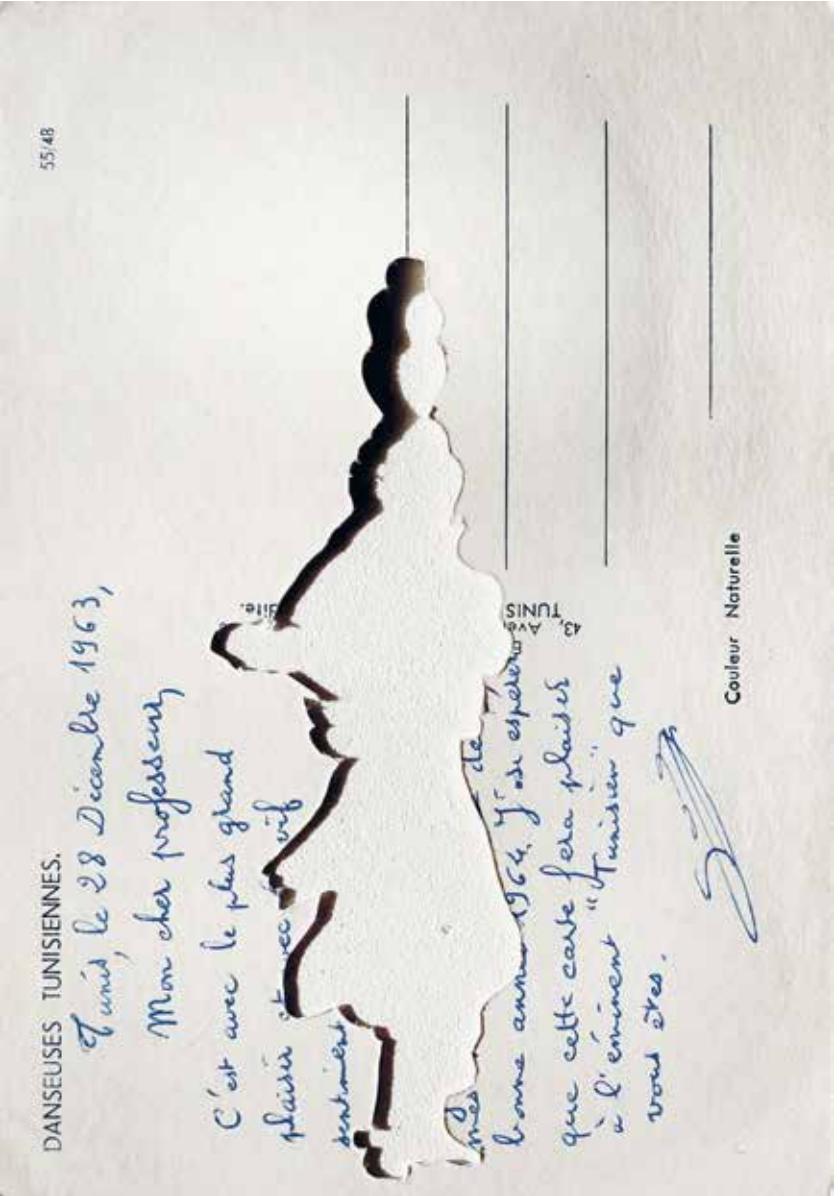
Mon cher professeur,

C'est avec le plus grand plaisir que je vous écris

de bonne année 1964. J'ose espérer que cette carte sera plaisante à l'éminent "Tunisien" que vous êtes.

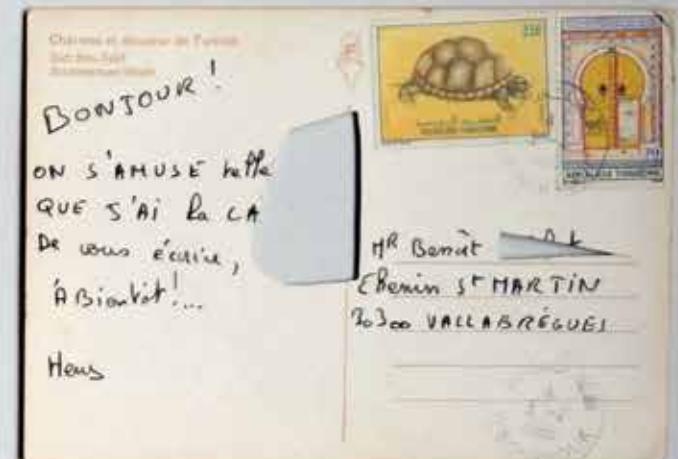
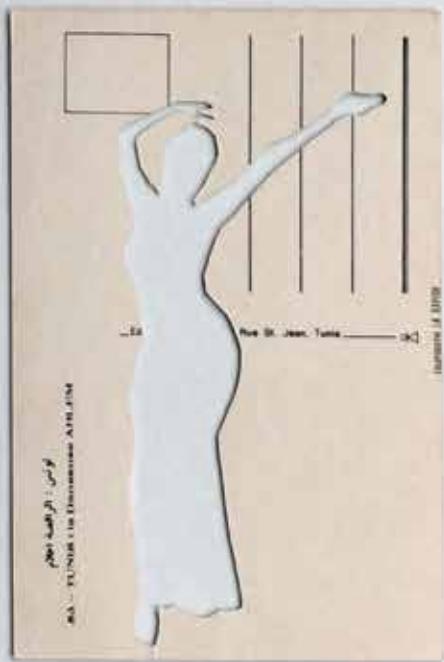
Couleur Naturelle

5548





Point of view,
listening point (*Clichés II*)
2019

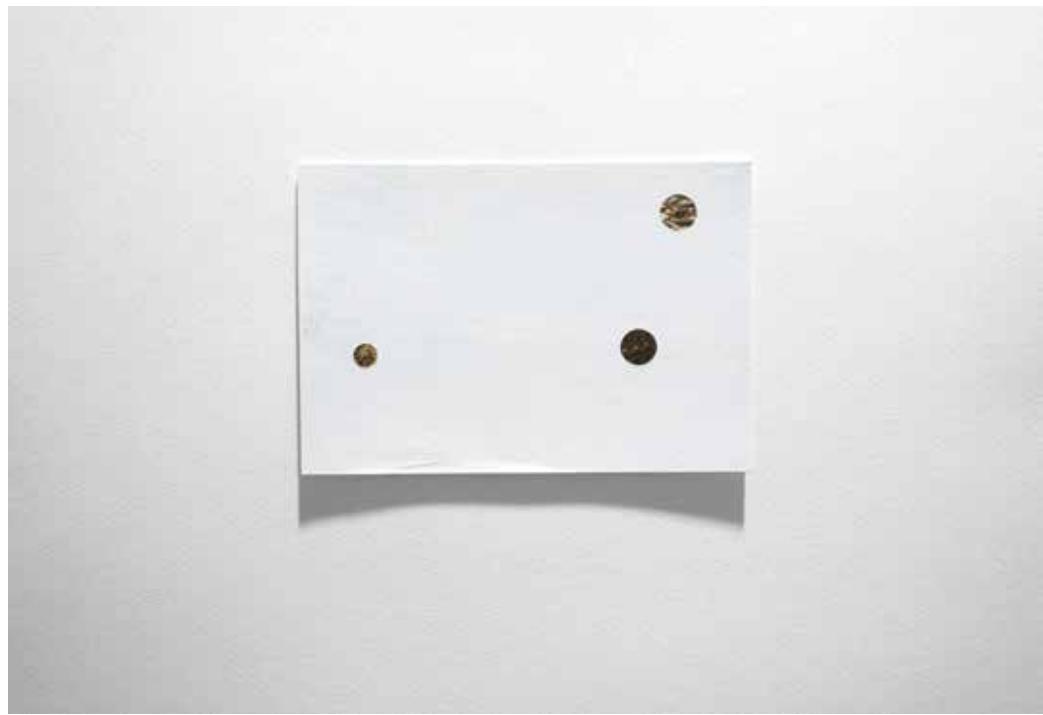




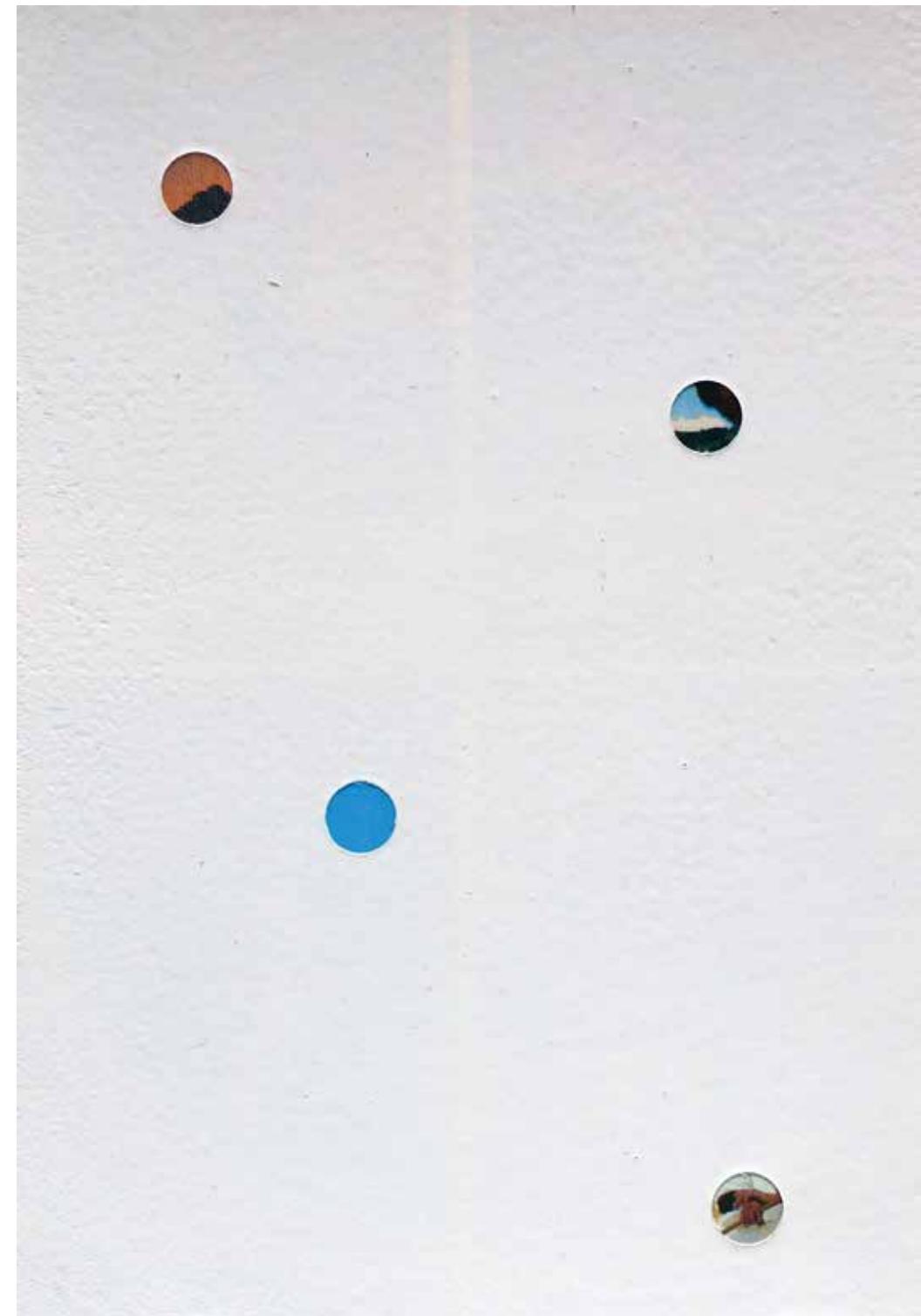
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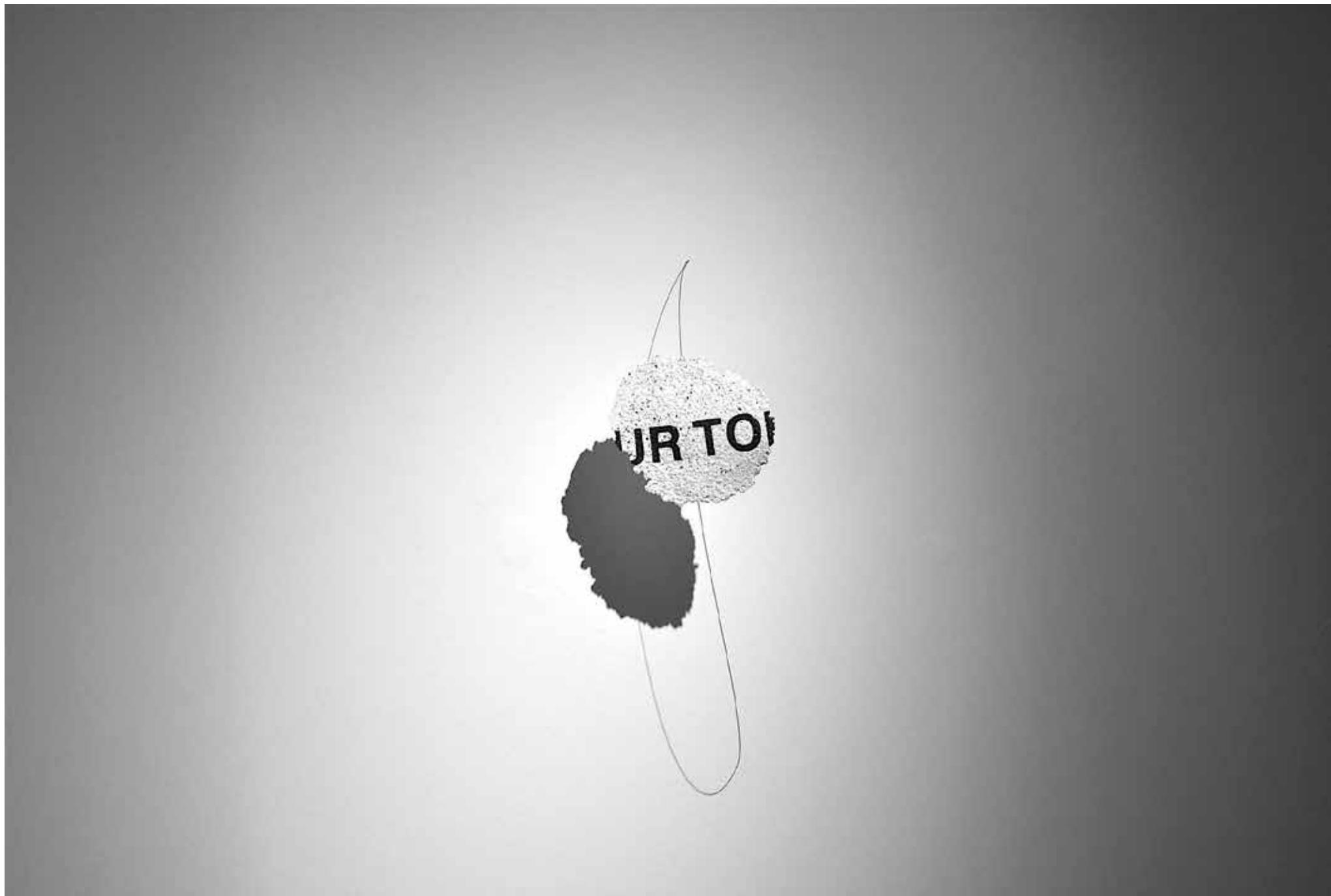
Sphères
2019





DONC VOUS POUVEZ
VOUS RENDRE COMPT
QUE CE N'EST PAS
TROP MAL MAIS IL N'Y
EN A D'AUTRES QUI SO
NT MIEUX. (GEORGES)

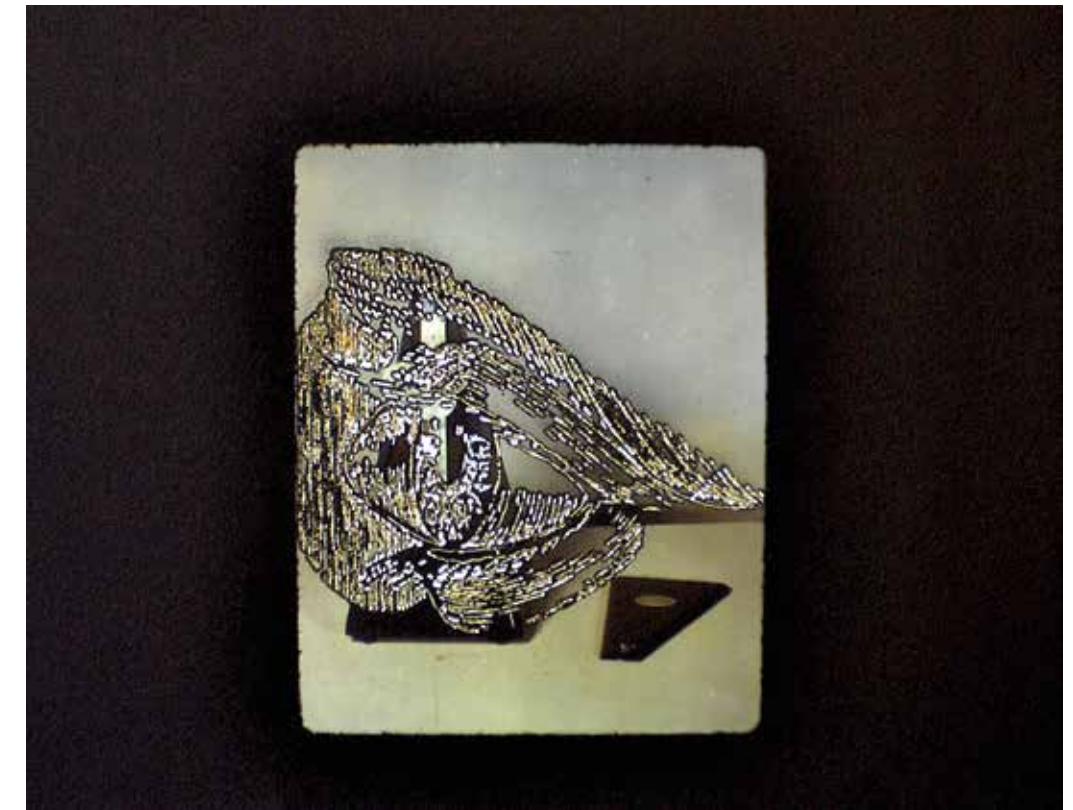
ISÉE EN BÉOUIINE ET
OUS AVONS FAIT DES
ELLES PHOTOS CHEZ
N MARCHAND DE PEA
X DE MOUTONS : ILS
ONT HUIT ENFANTS, ET



Histoire en flottaison
2018



Effet de surface
2018



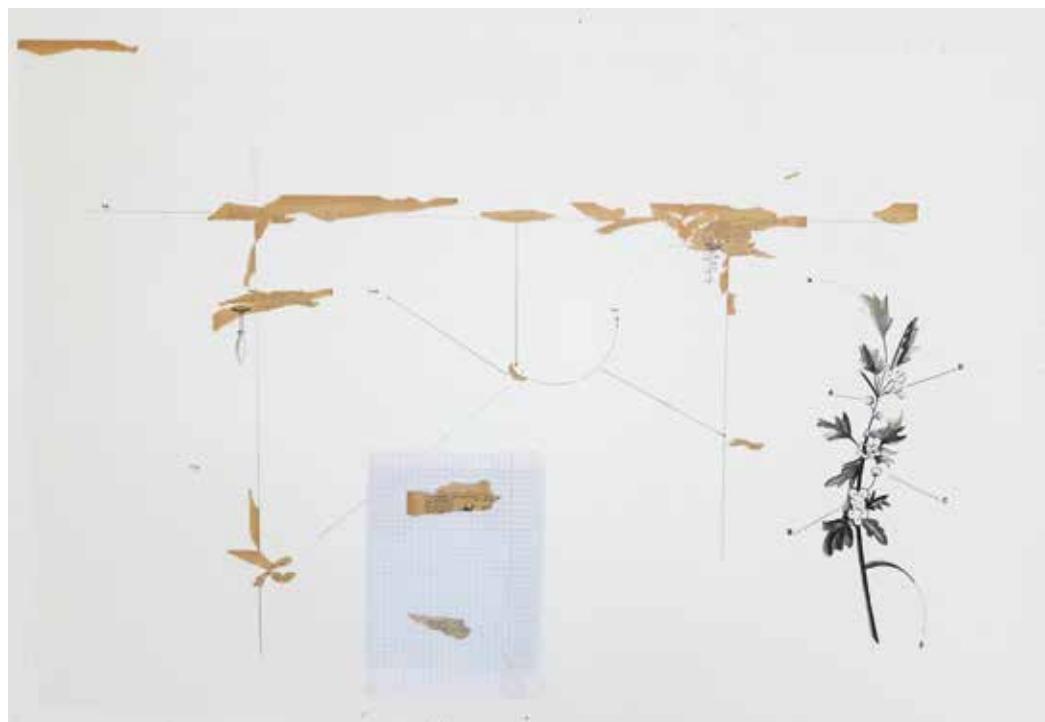
Effet de surface
2018



42

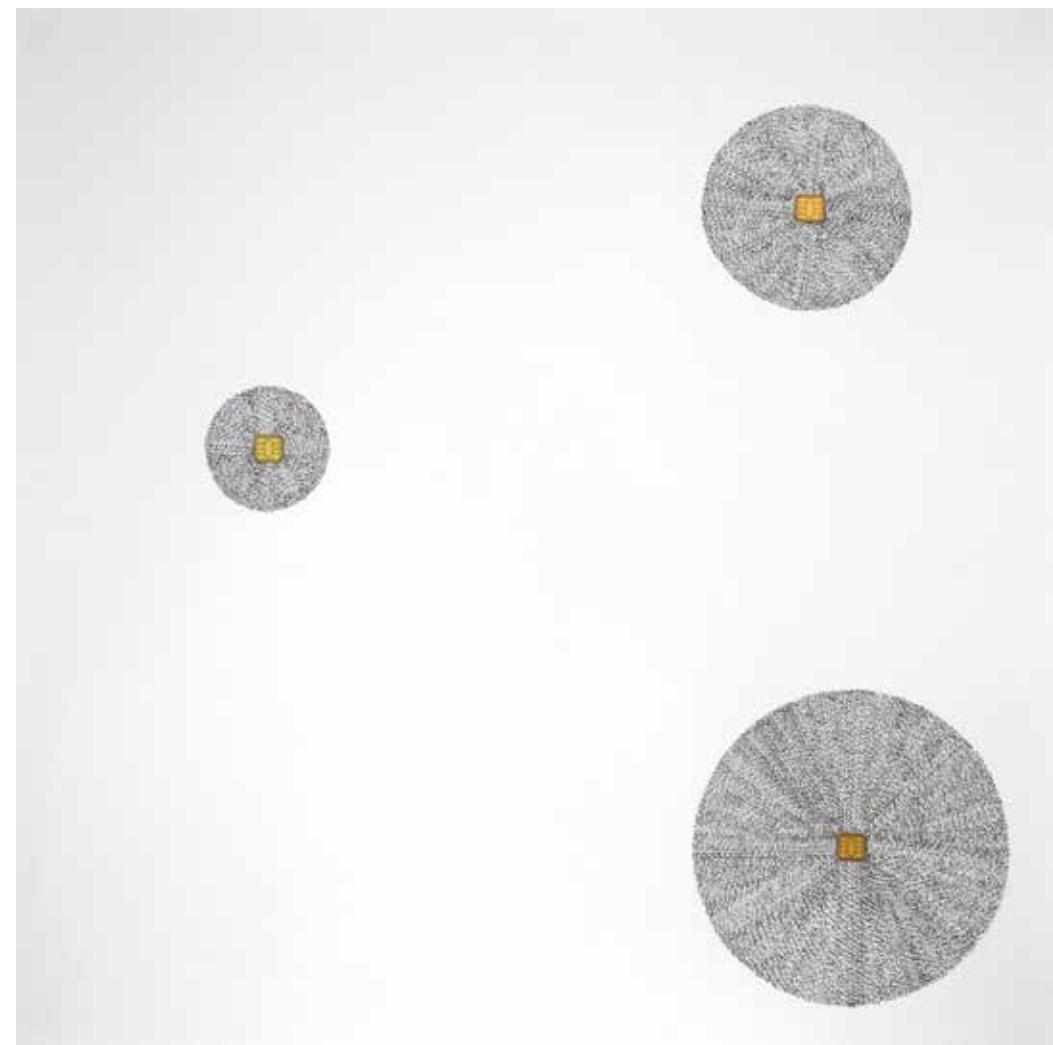
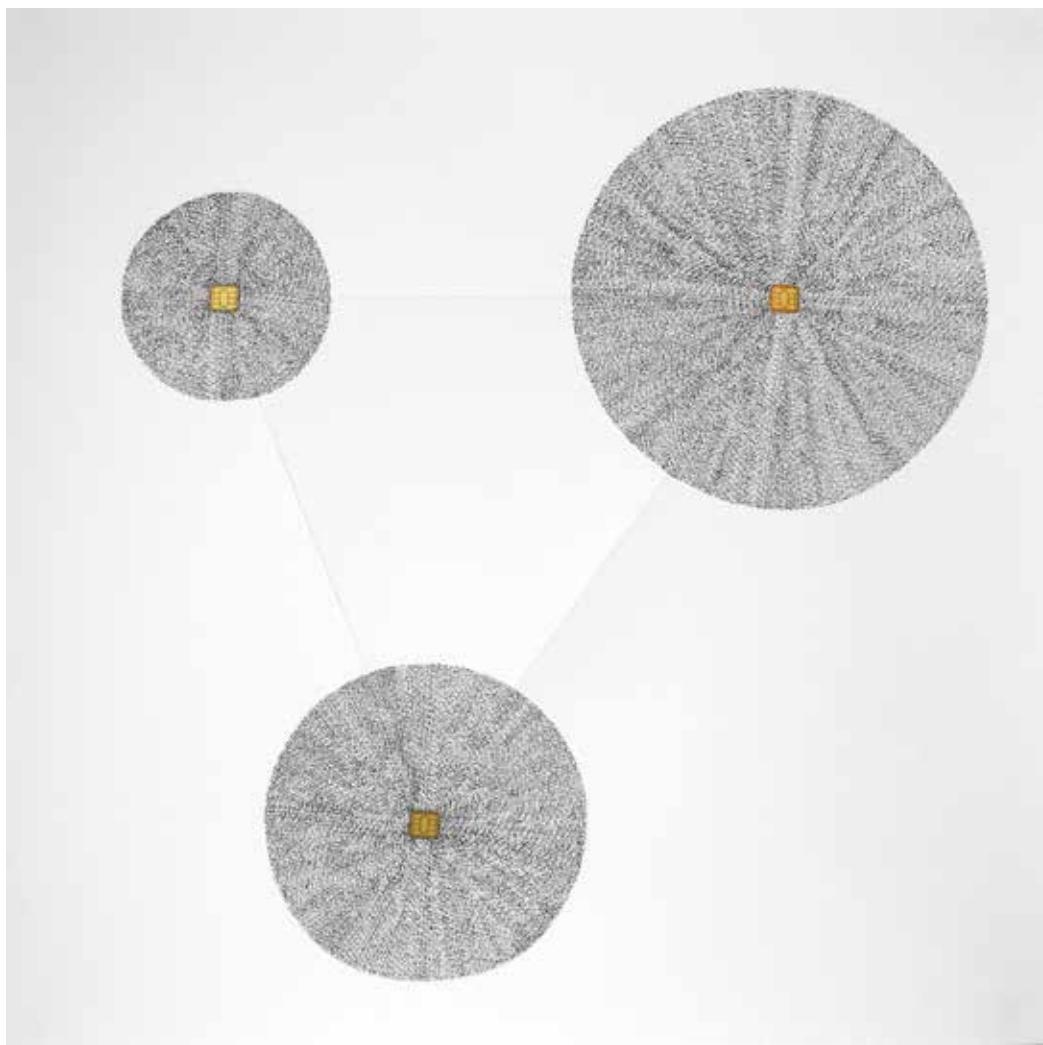


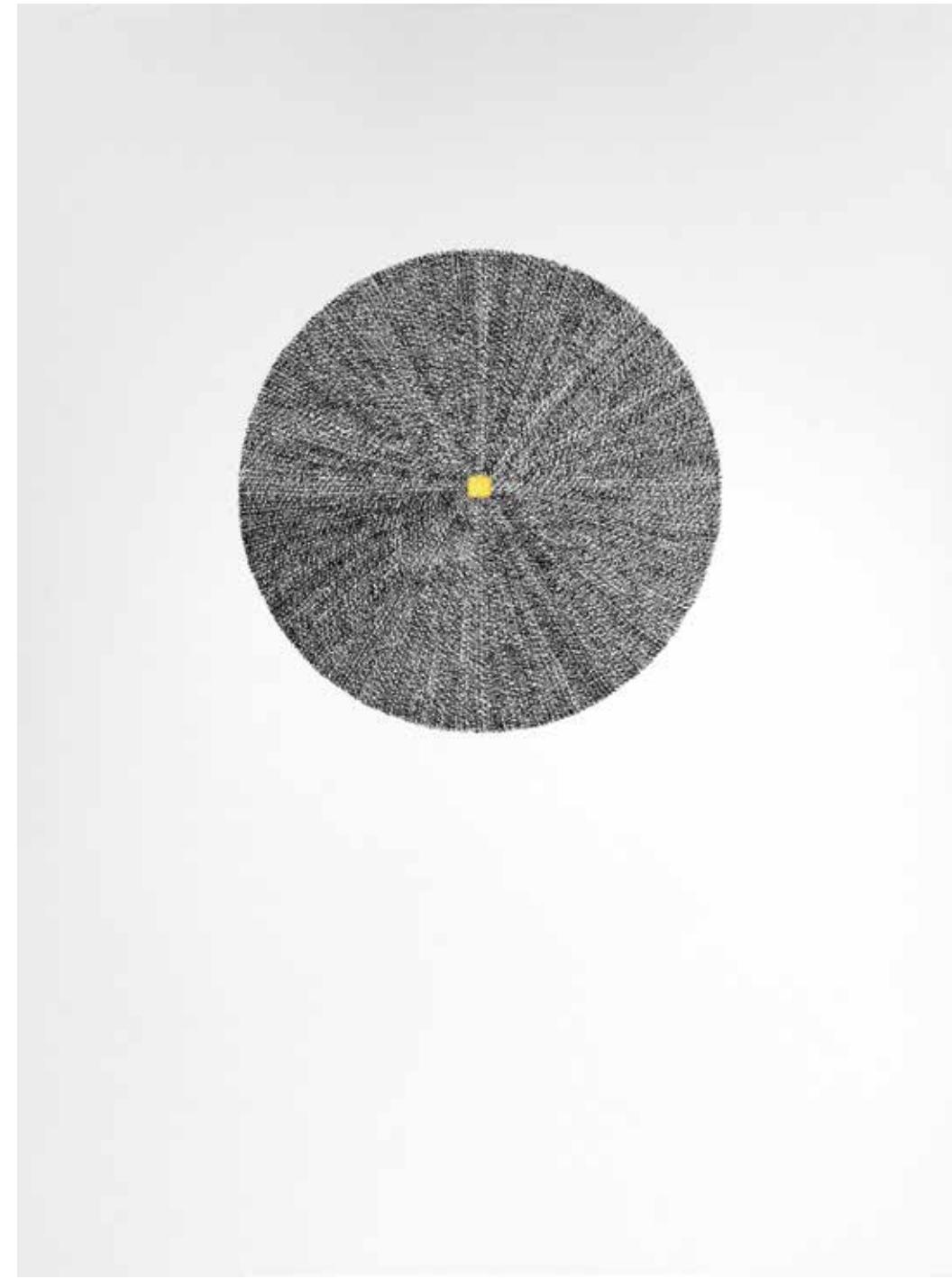
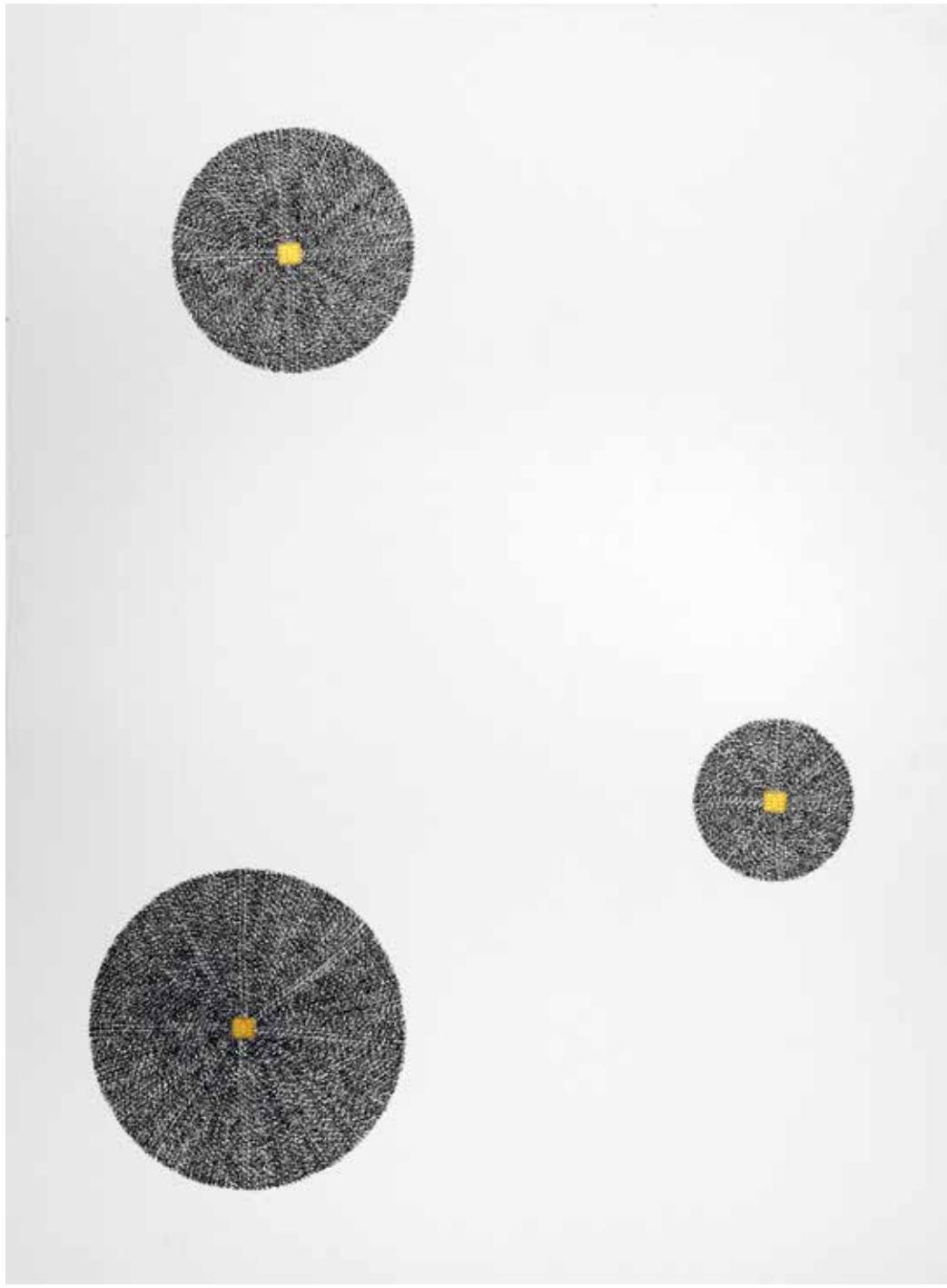
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Encyclopedism
2018









Solitude Peuplée
2017

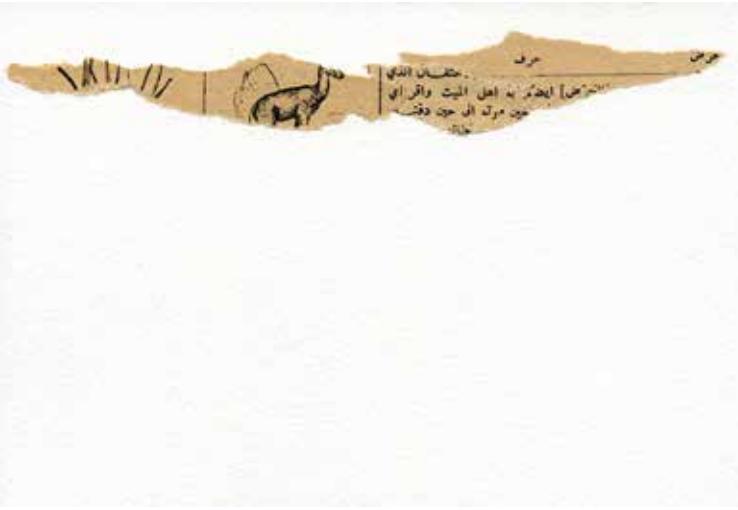
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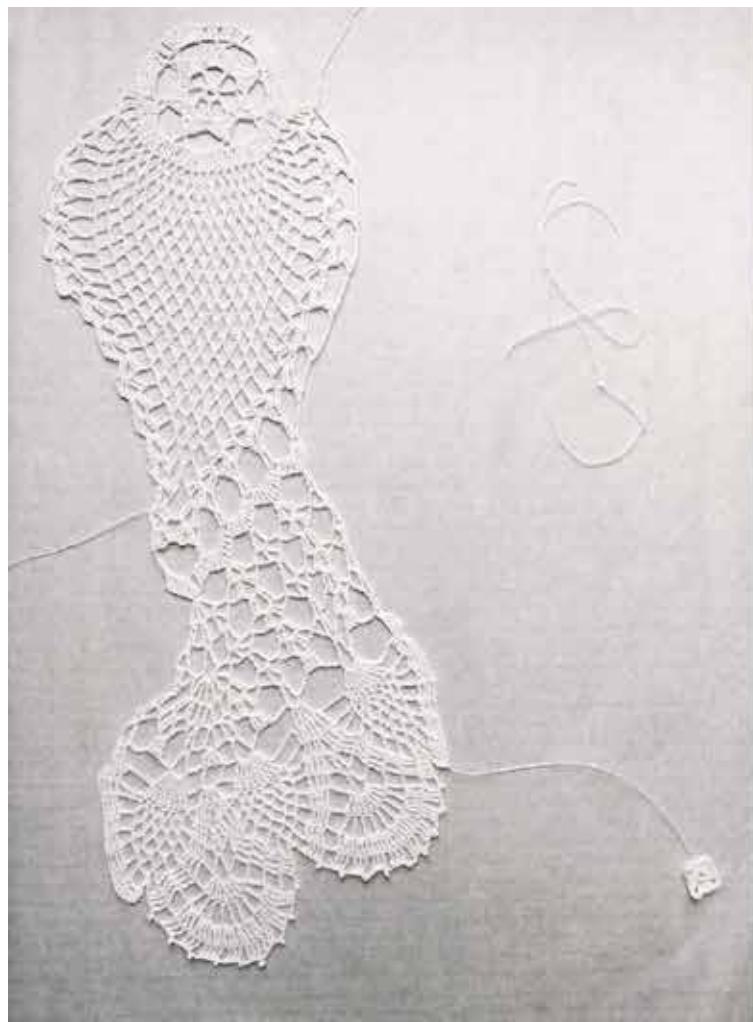


Solitaire
2015

51







Tenir le fil
2011

ARTWORKS INDEX

- 8-17**
Note de Chevet, 2019
photographs, various objects,
glass, fine art print
cm 60x80
unique piece
- 18-21**
Note de Chevet, 2019
bedside table, photographs, video,
various objects and place mat in crochet
variable dimensions
unique piece
- 22-33**
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variable dimensions
unique pieces
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cm 10x15 each
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mm 24x36 (each slides)
variable dimensions installation
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Unique pieces
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Variable dimensions
Unique pieces
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unique piece
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variable dimensions
unique piece
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cm 10x15 each
unique piece
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Tenir le fil, 2011
triptych
crochet, mixed media on paper
and creased paper
cm 59x43
unique piece



FARAH KHELIL

Born 1980, Carthage, Tunisia

PhD in Art and Art Sciences, Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France

MA in Fine Arts, ISBAT, Tunis, Tunisia

Lives and works in Paris, France

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** *Surfacing*, Officine dell'Immagine Gallery, Milan, Italy
- 2018** *Graines de pensée*, Selma Feriani Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia
- 2017** *Solitude peuplée*, Appartement 27 bis, Paris, France
- 2016** *Transduction*, Mamia Bretesche Gallery, Paris, France
- 2015** *Bookworm*, with antoine lefeuvre editions, Aicha Gorgi Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia
L'inspiration a-t-elle des mains ou est-elle somnambule?, La Boîte, Groupe Kilani, Tunis, Tunisia
- 2013** *Punctum*, Espace d'Art Mille Feuilles, Tunis, Tunisia
Point de vue, point d'écoute (Gilbert Simondon), CCIC, Normandie, France

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** *Heartbreak*, Ca' del Duca, Corte del Duca Sforza, Venice, Italy
Climbing Through the Tide, B7L9 Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Tunis, Tunisia
Nomination prix AWARE pour les artistes femmes, France
The World Exists To Be Put On, British Museum, London, UK

- 2018** *Liens de travers*, Institut Français de Sousse & Association Delta, Sousse, Tunisia
Join the Dots, Luciano Benetton Collection, Trieste, Italy
Jaou festival, Earth pavilion, curated by Khadija Hamdi Soussi, Sidi Bou Khrissane, Tunis, Tunisia
Le Pavillon de l'Exil / Escale 03 / Saint-Louis, Institut Français de Saint-Louis - Galerie du Fleuve, Saint-Louis, Sénégal
- 2017** *L'horreur du plein*, Selma Feriani Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia
Copie Machine, ESADHaR Rouen, France
Restitution. Par ce passage infranchi, Galerie deux, Marseille, France
Metaxu. Le séjour des formes, Bchira Art Center, Tunis, Tunisia
Art of The Postcard, 14 Florence Street, London, UK
Jaou. Nation migrante, Dar Kheireddine Tunis, Tunisia
Works on paper, Officine dell'Immagine Gallery, Milan, Italy
Imago Mundi, ART France Collection, Fondazione Luciano Benetton, Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo in Palermo, Italy
- 2016** *Tunisia, The new picture*, Tunisian Embassy, London, UK
Supergravity, Plateforme, Paris, France
Voice of the Border, curated by Fatma Cheffi, Selma Feriani Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia
Publish or Perish. Transmitter. New York, U.S.A.
Safra. Nef de la Halle Roublot. Fontenay-sous-bois, France
Bookworm 2, with antoine lefebvre editions. Undercurrent Projects. New York, USA
- 2015** *Arab Territories. Constantine Capital of Arab Culture*, Constantine, Algeria
CARTE BLANCHE. Young artists from North Africa, Officine dell'Immagine Gallery, Milan, Italy
Un Cabinet de Curiosités Part 3, Paris, France
MOVE, Video night, Karima Célestin, CulturesInterface Gallery, Casablanca, Morocco
Réminiscences, Aicha Gorgi Gallery & Talan group, Tunis, Tunisia
La Mer au Milieu des Terres. Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern I Contemporani, Palma de Mallorca, Spain
- 2014** *Un cabinet de curiosités*. Undercurrent Projects, New York, USA
Restitution, Centre d'Art de Port-de-Bouc, Martigues, France
Mapping', E-FEST, Palais Abdellia, Tunis, Tunisia
Circumambulation, A. Gorgi Gallery & Talan groupe, Tunis, Tunisia
- 2013** *Ce que le sonore fait au visuel*, Château de Servières, Marseille, France
Un phénomène de Bibliothèque, Immanence Gallery, Paris, France
L'objet son, Palais Abdellia, Tunis, Tunisia
- 2012** *Shuffling Cards. Mouvement aléatoire des cartes*, Art-cade Gallery, Marseille, France
Figures du sommeil, Jean Collet Galllery, Vitry-sur-Seine, France
Artistes des insurrections dans le monde arabe, Talmart Gallery, Paris, France
- 2011** *Contours*, Le Violon bleu Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia
- 2010** *International digital culture festival*, Acropolium de Carthage, Tunis, Tunisia
La part du corps, Museum of Tunis city, Tunis, Tunisia
Printemps des Arts Plastiques #08, Palais Abdellia, Tunis, Tunisia
Crea numerica, Casablanca, Morocco
- 2008** *FIAV 08. ESCA*, Nîmes, France
- 2007** *Printemps des Arts Plastiques #06*, Palais Abdellia, Tunis, Tunisia
- 2006** *Perception de la Ciutat*, Centre Cívic Fort Pienc, Barcelona, Spain

RESIDENCIES

- 2017** *Under The Sand*, Gafsa, Tunisia
- 2010** *Pure data & ses librairies multimédia*, Art Sensitif Resources Center, Mains d'œuvres, Paris, France
- 2006** *Perception de la Ciutat*, Centre Cívic Fort Pienc, Barcelona and Saragossa, Spain

