

PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

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TAHA BELAL

Artist Statement

In recent work I have abstracted the daily newspaper in various ways. I'm drawn to the newspaper, as an everyday tissue of text, images and pulp; that in many ways encapsulates the current age of information. I'm also interested in the process of translation as a form of abstraction. Not only the associations translation has with language and bilingualism, but in particular as an interstitial space where the material undergoes transference, transformation and meaning is dissected.

With the increasingly rapid, chaotic circulation of goods, people and information I'm struck by how reduced and simplified these objects necessarily become. Through the introduction of space and time I intend to undermine the interpretation of the imagery and texts as bearing particular significance. By using patterns imposed onto the surface of the paper or found in the structure of the newspaper I manipulate and re-present the material and the information on its pages as drawings and collages in an attempt to critically intervene and add meaning or propose significance.

This work manifests an urge for something to hold onto, for a sense of bearings and a better grasp of self. In making the work I am consistently confronted with the material's superficiality and meaninglessness, and my grasp begins to slip. I am both drawn to and repulsed by these objects; I hesitate in the instant of seeing something I can relate to and recognize, and I seek to extend and sustain that moment. Simultaneously, however, I am thrown off by its inherent instability, and inevitably all I am left with is image/surface.