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ALGERIA

Rachid Koraichi: A Complex Language Through Sufi Spirituality



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Internationally renowned Algerian artist Rachid Koraïchi (1947) is known to work with a variety of materials including paint, ceramics, and textiles. With his work he aims to show that the world of Islam, in contrast to contemporary perceptions of crisis and violence, also consists of tolerant and sophisticated writings of great Muslim thinkers such as the Sufi poet and scholar

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As a descendant of one of the oldest Sufi intellectual families in North Africa, Koraïchi grew up surrounded by Koranic writings, mysticism and numerology. The artist has thus a profound knowledge of the mystical aspects of Islam. The Quran and the writings of the philosophers often inspire him. Heavily influenced by numerology and signs, his art is often framed within a tradition of Sufi spirituality. Calligraphy has become a significant backbone of his work. He never literally transcribes sacred texts, but translates them into his own personal script that includes Amazigh and Tuareg letters and mystical figures.

Artwork: 'The Invisible Masters' (2008) ©
Rachid Koraïchi

Koraïchi's alphabets are symbols for revolution and protest. In his creations you can often find a direct political commentary in dialogue with revolutionary and liberation movements. As a supporter of Palestine and the Palestinian people, he notably collaborated with Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. This collaboration resulted in the two series of works entitled *A Nation in Exile* (1981), a homage to the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples' resistance and their fight for independence and nationhood. With its spiritual,