

Rachid Koraïchi

Le Chant de l'Ardent Désir | The Song of Burning Desire

Aicon Exhibition: February 3 – March 12, 2022

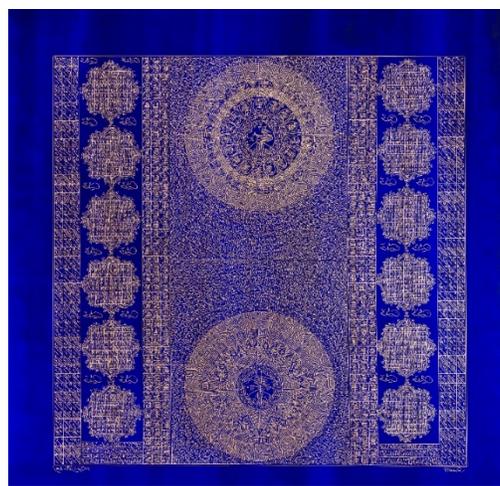
Press Preview & V.I.P. Reception: February 3, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

35 Great Jones St., New York, NY 10012

Aicon New York is proud to present *Le Chant de l'Ardent Désir*, the third major U.S. solo exhibition of Algerian born artist Rachid Koraïchi. The exhibition runs concurrently with the recent opening of *Jardin d'Afrique, Jardin du Paradis*. This UNESCO recognized site in Zarzis, a coastal commune in southeastern Tunisia, is a paradise-like garden conceived by Koraïchi as a final resting place for migrants who died, often anonymously, at sea. Inspiration for the project comes from the parting words of the artist's late grandfather: "He who dies very rich has missed his life because he did not know how to share." Koraïchi is not only a supremely talented artist but also an exceedingly generous human being.

Koraïchi's exhibition *Le Chant de l'Ardent Désir* is comprised of four bodies of work rooted in his ground-breaking interpretations of calligraphic modernism. In continuation with his earlier series, Koraïchi plays with the number seven throughout the exhibition both theoretically and literally. The artworks appear in multiples of seven; there are fourteen canvases, fourteen steel sculptures, and a group of six alabaster tablets lining the path to a monumental tapestry. It is a divine number and omnipresent.

The fourteen canvases are luminous golden-white acrylic paint on a background of vibrant indigo, a color that references Koraïchi's silk banners which have been a constant presence in his artistic practice. Although softer in material and hanging on walls, these paintings are reminiscent of the ceramic tiles that line the floors of mosques as well as the entryway of the Tunisian cemetery. As such, they transform the gallery into an ad-hoc shrine, an inclusive place to worship the beauty and universality of art. Also on display is a room of alabaster tablets on a scale that has not been seen before. Four times as large as his earlier works in the same medium, these new creations with their tombstone-like appearance work in tandem with the woven tapestry depicting the *Jardin d'Afrique*. When lit, the surface of the alabaster takes on a fleshy quality, almost as if they are the skin from the skeletal corten steel sculptures standing as sentinels down the center of the gallery.



Rachid Koraïchi, *La Montagne aux Étoiles IV*, 2021,
acrylic on canvas, 55 x 55 in.

Koraïchi was born in Ain Beida, Algeria in 1947 and now lives and works in Paris with major projects in Algeria, Egypt, Spain, Tunisia, the USA, and Dagestan. His practice extends across an impressive range of media, including ceramics, textiles, bronze sculptures, and canvases. He engages local artists and craftsmen trained in ancient traditions to craft pieces for site-specific installations. Koraïchi won the prestigious Jameel Prize in 2011. The artist presented installations at the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi in 2011 and Marrakech Biennale in 2016. He was included in both the 47th and 49th Venice Biennales. Koraïchi was shown in the inaugural exhibition at the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi in 2015 as well as *The Future of Tradition*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2010; *Word into Art*, The British Museum, 2006; and *Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking*, MoMA, 2006.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (erica@aicongallery.com) for more information.