

من تعلق على الفن العام في كاري  
كراشي في لندن للفنانين

# REVIEWS

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suggests rather than spells out any literal meaning. Mehdi Qotbi is a young Moroccan painter of iridescent compositions who has worked in France for some years. He weaves veils of tone in tiny gouache strokes of his brush immediately evocative of Arabic script, but which as he explained to me were as representative of the notation of music in which he is deeply interested. These skeins of detail with their minute intricacies akin to those of woven lace shimmer in bands of movement across the paper. This is his first time in London, and this attractive sampling should assure him of the success he deserves.

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Rachid Koraichi, an Algerian now living in Tunisia, is already well-known from previous exhibitions, some at the Iraqi Cultural Centre, London. In his virile and dynamic two-dimensional structures are ideographic symbols assuming human outlines with their own dramatic tensions. From his native environment in North Africa he has followed the long pedigree of the visual image that predates even the rich mosaics depicting Roman gods, some of which I discovered in 1942 being used as 'hard standing' for British Army ammunition dumps at Bulla Regia in the fertile plain of the Medjerda near the Tunisian front line.

While it would be rash to assume that all Arab art is imbued with overtly religious tones there is no doubt that the proscription on human figuration acknowledges the effectiveness of painted and carved symbols to imply subliminal power in a positive sense. This sense of ritual comes frequently into play in the use of calli-

graphic signs and texts emerging in varied subtle forms, as in the series *Pages from old books* by Iraqi artist Saleh al-Jumaie who now lives in California. His works in mixed media on paper live up to their titles, for here are lines of inscrutable texts some seeming partly obliterated, many showing signs of the erosion of time now seeking preservation even in their incompleteness. Much of the Arab's history lies undiscovered under the sand; the restoration of his ancient history has an unfailing appeal.