

## The compass rose or putting paintings in a safe place

The morning after my death, four circles appeared around the sun the moon darkened for three nights before the vernal equinox Arab astronomers turned flowers into the names of constellations.

Etel Adnan, *The Spring Flowers Own*, p. 38.

The compass rose is a star not a flower. With up to thirty- two divisions, it served as a guide on the compasses used by navigators and travellers in days gone by. Najia Mehadji's paintings could be as captivating as distant stars, exoplanets of themselves turning, twirling, dancing and seeking the moment when they could enter this circle without a name and use their own power of attraction to throw them off course. The works are challenging, maybe because the image appears instantly, without completely revealing itself or submitting. In the introduction to the artist's double retrospective in Casablanca and Rabat, Nathalie Galissot rightly highlights the importance of architecture. Critical of large floral compositions, formal fortune may have somewhat obscured or masked this source of inspiration, while such "architectures" testify to the artist's interest "in the line, the plane, the construction and the expansion of space, as well as the symbolism of the cosmos".<sup>1</sup> Domes, cowls, corbels, cupolas and acroteria aren't replicated; they're simplified, transformed into signs and semanticised, so they symbolise the point of contact between the terrestrial and the celestial in the place where they meet. The works with "their perfect lines and rigorous construction soon converge with the plant world, trees and other mysterious growths with their unpredictable regularity; vital blossomings that will not be spared the inevitable end that makes us so close to them. Emerging from the earth, stripped of their biological trappings – stems and leaves – flowers take on a cosmic dimension".<sup>2</sup> No one really followed the trail of architecture, or the view of the domes reduced to their simplest expression, unfolding from below, a synthesis of the inner view. They might represent a ground plan seen from a low angle, while offering the possibility of escaping confinement via the function of a threshold opening up to a world larger than the world itself. Many works like *Dôme végétal* (2000) reunite the two realms, the vegetation of architecture and the architecturalisation of vegetation. The plant and floral motif that has so often been used to adorn or decorate architecture is never used

in this sense. It's not there for decoration, it's there to cover and conceal, to shape in a very small space what separates figuration and abstraction. The Renaissance artists Najia Mehadji loves have a syncretic relationship with architecture and perspective; whether it's Piero della Francesca or Giotto<sup>3</sup>, the hieratic dimension and the influence of geometry are softened by the sacred and perhaps even esoteric dimension because, more than a fresco or an episode of Christian life on a wall or in a building, both Italian artists seem to be searching for a word or voices that have been lost and thus return, in the primal sense of mysticism, in the form of echoes.

Some of these geometric and architectural forms are strangely opaque, covered by an imprint in which the prescience and existence of an after-world and a pre-world create a kind of glare. This paradox is explained by matter vibrating in exactly the same way as in the works of Mark Rothko. Despite the density of the vibrato, the sensation of weightlessness and flight dominates, creating a natural link with the myth of Icarus<sup>4</sup>. It's just the composition itself that evokes the fall, the feeling of imbalance or simply the place where the motif or image tips. This might not be the right word, because Najia Mehadji's work is built around an axis, so it doesn't fall, it rotates. It's like these asteroids observed by certain physicists or astrophysicists and if a painting (made of references and inventions) were a meteor off its axis, then it would have its own force, happening when you don't expect it<sup>5</sup>. In any case, even if the painting doesn't fall, it has vertigo and creates it too. Roger Caillois talks about this in the book he wrote in 1958, *Les jeux et les hommes: Le Masque et le vertige*, where he associates mimicry with vertigo which can "momentarily destroy the stability of perception and inflict a kind of voluptuous panic on lucid consciousness".<sup>6</sup> He salutes the extraordinary effervescence and fluidity of vertigo, which explores the enigma of rhythm but without making a person "a rhythmic being" who, according to André Leroi-Gourhan, materialises disruption in everyday life, the incidental and is as close as possible to the living.

We need figures to decipher this continuous transition between architecture and the plant world. The myth of Daphne could draw a straight and complex line from Najia Mehadji to Henri Matisse and Ellsworth Kelly or even Barnett Newman. The forms are similar because they assemble to the point of melting into each other and finding ways to escape, dissimulate, appear decorative or ornamental, and therefore innocuous. Empedocles is also an important reference. He "was a soothsayer, doctor, naturalist, poet, astronomer and orator in his beautiful city of Agrigento, and one of the very first

defenders of democracy” continues Pascal Amel. For him, nature is governed by two opposing forces (Love and Strife, Eros and Thanatos) controlling

his four primary elements (water, fire, earth, air) which come together and separate to form the stars, minerals, plants and animals.<sup>7</sup> The thinking of Gaston Bachelard and his imagination of the elements is also good and, prior to that, the theme of Leconte de Lisle’s poem *Empedocles’ Sandal*<sup>8</sup>. It’s difficult to reread the poetic and political text without turning it into a kind of ekphrasis of Najia Mehadji’s work. The lexical field used somehow captions the artist’s work. It’s about the heavens, the original flame, quadrigas and flying ships, sighs and breaths and, above all, ambiguities between the solid and the liquid, the place where the earth meets the sea, where it fuses, where it flows back to the exact place where they separated. Leconte de Lisle subtitles the artist’s work by blending the figure of Empedocles with Icarus when “the abyss received him in its burning darkness”, absorbed in the poetics of the elements where water and fire combine, in other words where they meet and, sometimes, even resemble each other, to the point where they have the same quality of imagination, to use a term dear to Bachelard. It’s not impossible that, in inventing his Empedocles, Leconte de Lisle drew on Pieter Breughel’s painting *The Fall of Icarus* (circa 1558), depicting sea, shore and tilled land to represent their role in creation. The separation between land, air and sea, the sharing of the elements, presupposes the nuance between notions of balance and equity. “Never to the divine ploughshare was it rebellious: / The lyre makes it sprout in radiant furrows / Elysium and Eden, angels and gods, / And fertile, in the heat of the eternal solstice / Harmony and love, glory and justice! / A wide river, sweet Lethe of sorrows / Sings under the azure, the rays and the flowers”.<sup>9</sup> So two words form the foundation of the motif: the ray, not the sun’s ray, or not just the sun’s ray, because it’s also a geometric measurement marking the precise course taken by the stars and floral motifs to where they meet. And the real and metaphorical tool, in this case the ploughshare, which traces, draws or simply recognises the different poetic potentialities of space as it passes.

There’s more to say about smooth space and striated space, as conceptualised by Gilles Deleuze, who was particularly favoured by the artist<sup>10</sup> and used by Christine Buci-Glucksmann as a starting point in her analysis of several works<sup>11</sup>. “Smooth space is characterised by proximity and intense emotions, it’s unpolarized and open, unmeasurable, inorganic and populated by events or haecceities while striated space is metric, extensive and hierarchical. The first is associated with nomadism, the future and

haptic art, the second with sedentarism, the metaphysics of subjectivity and optical art.”<sup>12</sup> At the risk of simplifying things, the symbolic nomadism of smooth space is at work in large compositions, with borderless spaces that are unlimited and undefined and therefore, regardless of format, become expanses to be explored. Such compositions are therefore never sedentary, they retain the traces of movement and the memory of its power or magnitude. The expanse induces an effort and a physical imprint that the word space does not really or necessarily arouse. Sometimes both spaces (smooth and striated) merge, in other words decide to meet, notably in the *War Flower* series (2007), where the peacefulness (calming or smooth) of a borderless space, and maybe even the sensation that the space is endlessly unfurling, collides with the striations, interlacing patterns and hatching within the image itself. The *W&W* series (2023) completely overturns Deleuze’s idea of the “affecting image”<sup>13</sup> which he associates with close-ups, no longer limited to the face or body. The close-up focuses less on the photographic image than on the *superimposed* painting covering it. So the creative act protects from the disasters of war, sometimes barely visible, and conversely creates a distancing not from the subject but from its representation. A close-up photographic image would make the subject too visible, which, in a context of war, would make them particularly vulnerable. If these two qualities of space (smooth and striated) merge, it’s because they meet at a precise point, the *plissé* [pleat] (contraction of *pli* (fold) and *lisse* (smooth)). And this is also the name of a series of works, with striations on either side of a line (a seam) like two tectonic plates meeting and creating this special relief. The elegance of the act and the texture attenuate what geographers see as an infinite force. The *Plissé* (no. 3) translates the beribboned delicacy that collides with its own origin, becoming a vortex, or these flocs or cylindrical waves that Leonardo da Vinci liked to both observe and draw, the turgescence around an equivalent formal, abstract and hypnotic obstacle of resistance<sup>14</sup>. In this place, the image and the line have retained the memory of a kind of expressionism, not unrelated to the drawings of Vincent Van Gogh or, to be more precise, the way in which certain motifs rolled up on themselves, caught up in a spiral by their own force. The title given to this series of works is just right, since the French word “le plissé” (pleat) could also be written like this: “le pli c’est” (the fold is). Najia Mehadji’s paintings are a presentation in a sacred or liturgical sense in which the works say ‘this exists’, through equivalences that disregard religions. In this statement, the notion of the ‘pleat’ is clearly distinguished from the drape. *Drapé 1* and *Drapé 2* are devoid of this fault line and this tension, even the force is elsewhere, in the format, in the treatment and in another way of conceiving space. These

drapes are in fact ribbons but, from a strictly iconological point of view, we can still use the different meanings offered by drapery. *Drapé*, the exhibition at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon<sup>15</sup>, showed that this was a legacy Rodin sometimes had to counter so as not to give in to the somewhat easy beauty of the motif. The gown thrown over Balzac's body was the response to the elegant academic drapery taught in painting or sculpture studios. Drapery isn't a phenomenon, it's an adornment placed on the body to reveal its eroticism, shape or beauty, the beginning or continuation of a body. And this is exactly the role of the drapery in Najia Mehadji's work, except its folds and knots don't reveal a body, aside from the imprint of the artist's body during the act of creation, but open onto a space that goes far beyond the human scale. So it loses almost any anthropomorphic dimension to access a much vaster status, floating in space towards an uncertain celestial destination like asteroids or satellites freed from weight. The imagination could do the rest, and the work of interpretation wouldn't necessarily be useful if such representations weren't fleshed out in the equally literal sense of Georges Didi-Huberman's reflections. By this, we mean the nymph and her rags, sometime *ninfa moderna*, sometime *ninfa fluida*. In *La Ninfa fluida: essai sur le drapé-désir*<sup>16</sup>, which explores the idea of desire and drapery, Georges Didi-Huberman follows Erwin Panofsky's fine intuition, drawing on multiple sources of the "almost unlimited flexibility" of certain motifs. This is exactly what we see at work in the drapery or hollows of the folds in Najia Mehadji's paintings. "Given that the springs are simply alluvium, whirlpools and transformations, as clearly shown in Leonardo's sublime river drawings full of turbulence and contrasting flows", they don't strictly describe a nymph but "the surviving remains of an almost mythical world, of models in mourning for visibility"<sup>17</sup> waiting for this return to sight, to the light, whether real or ideal.

Unlike drapery, ribbons haven't always been looked on favourably because there's always a chance they will be seen as a kind of affectation, with the knots sometimes too well tied or when the slightly precious garments corset the body or embellish it in a delightful or disturbing *préciosité* (refinement). However, there's a ribbon that has no gender or, to be more precise, is neither a man's or a woman's; a tautological and monadological ribbon with no beginning or end, exactly like the abstraction created by the image in Najia Mehadji's work, of a painting that is borderless or beyond borders. No more or less than itself, this ribbon is the ribbon of the Möbius strip and seems to be summoned differently in Najia Mehadji's work. This could perhaps start with its destiny in a certain abstraction, constructed art and this type of painting that borders on the

conceptual. And if the *Möbius* strip were the motif for visualising the work of the subconscious of forms, which would be independent of the artist's, they could ultimately return there or resemble them. Some works, such as the *Gnawa Soul* gouaches (2016), make a direct reference to it, while the various versions of the *Rosebud* series (2024) take liberties with the original motif while retaining the signification of the twist, as if the ribbons turn back on themselves, in one piece or one side. Jacques Lacan uses this image of the *Möbius* strip and Borromean knots to interpret the topology of psychoses. Pierre Jamet reexamines their specific nature in *Le nœud de l'inconscient*<sup>18</sup>. It is not so much about getting lost in "psychic causality"<sup>19</sup> but rather trying, while looking at the works, to reconsider the concept of causality, which would only be categorical. So forms with reason seem to express and adopt the Lacanian cogito in their own way, namely in a spatial form. "Where I speak, I am not; where I am, I speak not". Once we have identified and therefore accepted that the creative act can be compared to or resembles the *Möbius* strip, then the psychoanalytic discourse can become the metaphor for the subconscious life of forms. The twisting of the band subverts what they end up telling us, they escape what their appearance might want to give, they don't completely say what they should, because they don't tell us everything, they contradict the creative act in the literal and figurative sense, in a kind of misconception, both in the sense Jacques Lacan might have given this term and even more so in the sense Verlaine then gives it: "You do not have to go somewhere / Choose your words without any misconception: / Nothing is dearer than the grey tune / Where the indecisive and the Precise join."<sup>20</sup> The dance and gyration of these ribbons keep the eccentric or eccentricity at bay, even if it sometimes feels quite good and thrilling to use opposing contrabands that mimic the "ideal identification"<sup>21</sup> or stasis without precisely referring to it. So, there's no more danger in this world, as long as the forms exist on their neutral and yet dense background, in an often dark and monochrome decontextualisation. So, they're no longer in danger of anything serious. They may, at worst, collide with another form even though this depth, which is suggestive of a sky, is free of any rough patches that could disrupt the trajectory and turn the motif into a projectile. So, fluidity guarantees complete peace for this cosmic world, peace ensured by weightlessness and the absence of obstacles. Finally, in the form of an anagrammatic homophone, the French word *ruban* (ribbon) chimed strangely with Najia Mehadji's description of her grandfather in the evening unrolling "his long turban"<sup>22</sup> before going to bed. By adding the letter T, *ruban* becomes *turban* in a poetic and formal

game, like the extra L that turns *voûtes* (arches) into *volute*s (scrolls) or the extra O in *coupoles*.

Many of her works belong to the cosmic universe largely inherited from Sufism and associated rites, mostly based on invocation and the breath which can take the form of a near-imperceptible or imperceptible circle. Even though the association is tempting, it's never about creating an illustration of ceremonies or texts, only the energy or the breath are inspired, the rest is just a surface where a trace remains. There must be a world or an interworld where, once movement is made or given, it never stops, it turns without getting dizzy, to regain its unity, as highlighted in a quote from Rûmi who renounces duality<sup>23</sup>. So, it's essential to observe the dervishes and understand their dance. It would be surprising and very unsettling to think that the viewer standing in front of the work would wait for the moment to enter the round, not the dance, when, with the effect of proxemics or proprioception, they would have the same movement and, in turn, become a spinning top with their head bent. The mystical dances of the eponymous series are not only inspired by dervishes; Loïe Fuller's dance is another important syncretic reference. Many publications and exhibitions have evoked this and the impact in modernity is immense. Although artists have often referred to it, the link this dance had with black and white and silent films is perhaps less significant. The jerks of film still in its infancy and the jolts in the image in no way detract from the fluidity or magnitude of the movements. The costume Loïe Fuller wore helped to give the impression of a painting in space. References linking the dress of a nautch dancer with the sacred choreographies of whirling dervishes are many. She was also fascinated by phosphorescent effects in which she imagined the dance of radium. She already had an intuition of the sound of radiography, of an image progressing and revealing itself by waves. Loïe Fuller's universe is cohabited by an incantatory form evoking spiritual practices and also a chemical and experimental nature. The influence of the famous dancer is not limited to works directly referring to the floral universe. The *Mystic dance* series is also imbued with the serpentine dance and its multiple avatars. However, an element which, in reality, is a precipitate of matter would in itself be worthy of analysis and further developments. In a beautiful text which draws out the metaphor of divers, these rhythmic beings par excellence, Rémy Labrusse distinguishes the deep from the horizon, two structures of the imagination that are almost perpendicular. "Let's imagine that divers, rising from the depths, burst onto the surface and, in the shining foam, scatter the traces of the other, submarine world from which they came. Their bodies, still bathed in the indefinable cohesion of the deep, manifest -

through their breathing, gestures and upwards motion - a power and harmony born of this depth that never ceases to sustain them at the very moment they erase the memory of it, by a single gesture, in the outside air"<sup>24</sup>. Foam is also this literal element as illustrated in *Vague* (2016) as well as in a number of works where matter seems to catch its breath, evaporate in its margins and fringes and emerge from its apnoea. The symbolism of foam, this "almost nothing, and yet: not nothing",<sup>25</sup> contributes enormously to understanding Najia Mehadji's work. First of all, because, according to specialists, foam is the result of opposing driving forces and the combination of elements (mainly air and water) which fleetingly solidifies. However, it's precisely the memory of the artist's creative act that metabolises the opposing driving force between the trace of the act (the body) and its obstacle (the medium). So, the universe describes this meeting of fluid and liquid which is finally fixed. The word foam or froth is used sparingly, perhaps because it hasn't always had a good reputation. It was often a synonym for the superficial, describing what became and remained stuck on the surface of things, it's pointless ostentation. It's precisely because foam makes such a show of things that it's precious; it's breath incarnate. This surface now has a quality since it transforms superficiality into a precious essence, it preserves the primordial breath because it fixes it in its very fragility, thus it can also be interpreted as the symbol of equilibrium. The proximity in German between dream (Traum) and foam (Schaum) has not gone unnoticed by those who have taken an interest in this material and its increase in significance, such as Peter Sloterdijk whose book included foam as one of the new elements of biosophy<sup>26</sup>. Dreams as defined by Sigmund Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) are comparable to the froth of life. While dreams fulfil in our subconscious what's impossible or forbidden in our waking life, then foam is a metaphor for what would be impossible in the material and physical life, thus poetising a revenge on the solid, whose omnipotence borders on tyranny. More than a superficial material, foam is a material that contributes to the poetry of fragile, weakened or shapeless spaces which can then be kept and put in a safe place. These microscopic elements are precipitates or chemical reactions that fix what is vague, ephemeral, peripheral, defects that became the qualities the world of science lends to foam: "a tissue formed of hollow spaces and very thin walls. A real thing and yet, an entity that escapes contact, that gives up and pops at the slightest attempt to seize it"<sup>27</sup>. Incidentally, the elusive nature of foam other than through representation is not unrelated to the myth of Daphne, which acts powerfully in Najia Mehadji's work. Foam doesn't need to be white because it's not just mimetic in the paintings; it occurs where there's a revelation of the atmospheric and, to use Peter Sloterdijk's beautiful expression, reveals



“the revolt of discreet things”. It reiterates the importance of taking “the science of traces” seriously, and of the wake when it becomes a spray, when it precedes what will become the subject in person. The actual word “foam” takes on a special meaning. It offers a safe space “to install the whirlwind of serious relations at the point where it must then remain: foam is fertility. Aphrology – from the Greek *aphros* meaning foam – is the theory of systems affected by co-fragility.”<sup>28</sup>

## EPILOGUE

No one can explain a strange impression, the vanishing lines, the volte-face to escape their condition. Everything suggests that Najia Mehadji’s art speaks of fragility but that’s not what it’s about. The word isn’t quite right, plus its etymology (something breakable) is contradicted by the sensation of continuous lines and flexibility, that of the raised hand, which protects the form from syncopations and disruptions because it dances and is flexible. If it’s not fragile, there must be a better word for it because the universe isn’t as sure of others. Vulnerability is perhaps a bit better because the word is less contingent, more ethical. Najia Mehadji’s work is careful with nuances. She unemphatically imagines the notion that representation itself is strong because it’s powerful; the force that underlies certain waves does not yield to the ease of dexterity or know-how. The unknown towards which the world is heading is not expressed literally; the ellipsis - unless it is understatement - is both a pictorial gesture and ontological position that allows forms to move gently or firmly, not to be deviated from their trajectory, to maintain the same intensity of the act and the hand from one work to another. It would be simple to compare it to the swell or undertow when such a determination may seem more suitable. It’s not the science of decision-making. Following a semantic shift, it’s the poetry of accompaniments, of the nerve endings of the line. The artist accompanies the form to the end, she gives it the necessary tension to breathe strength into it. She knows that the endings are particularly sensitive places (reluctant or vulnerable), which sense the slightest change in light, temperature, altitude, hygrometry or the slightest breeze and which function a bit like a radar, sonar or a seismograph. The line is never broken because it is the breeze and the breath that runs through it along an imaginary spine does not have or no longer has a clear equivalent in this world and in the world that innervates each series. It is almost impossible to talk about subjects. The artist often amputates them from their context, which would end up weakening them, giving them a decorative appearance by depriving them of their real dimension, namely their depth and their resolution, which is

akin to a form of sublimation. Voluptuous and spiritual forms<sup>29</sup> have made a centuries-long comeback, by dint of wandering aimlessly in the limbo where they were left. When they returned to the surface, they'd been almost forgotten and were recognised by few. We were very close to getting used to living without them, to the point of no longer feeling the need to feel them by our side.

## Notes

1 Nathalie Galissot, "A Retrospective in Two Places", in the catalogue for the *Najia Mehadji Retrospective*, Villa(s) des Arts de Rabat et de Casablanca, 8th March to 31 May 2019, 2019, p.7.

2 *Ibid.*

3 "Tracing your life between singularity and universality. Interview with Najia Mehadji by Véronique Rieffel", in *Najia Mehadji. La révélation du geste*, Paris, Somogy, 2014, p. 28.

4 In her interviews, Najia Mehadji repeatedly refers to the myth of Icarus, mentioning the importance of this figure in the cultures of Islam and in Arab countries.

5 "To trace one's life between singularity and universality. Interview with Najia Mehadji by Véronique Rieffel", in *Najia Mehadji. La révélation du geste*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

6 Roger Caillois, *Les jeux et les hommes (Le masque et le vertige)*, Paris, Gallimard, 1958.

7 Pascal Amel, "In the footsteps of Empedocles", in catalogue *Najia Mehadji, le temps de la ligne*, p. 17, exhibition presented at the Musée de Gajac, Villeneuve-sur-Lot, from 5 July to 31 December 2019.

8 *Les sandales d'Empedocles* is a poetic text by Leconte de Lisle published in 1846 in the Fourierist journal *La Phalange*; for the present quotations, pp. 284-286.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Catherine Buci-Glucksmann, "les fleurs du noir", in *Najia Mehadji*, Paris, Somogy, 2008, p. 103.

11 Catherine Buci-Glucksmann, "La voie des fleurs", in catalogue of *Najia Mehadji Retrospective*, Villa(s) des Arts de Rabat et de Casablanca, respectively, for the quote from Georgia O'Keeffe, p. 41, for the image-affection p. 45, on smooth space, p. 42, and the quote from Odilon Redon "La fleur voit", p. 46.

12 Mireille Buydens, "Espace lisse / Espace strié" in *Le vocabulaire de Gilles Deleuze*, Robert Grasso and Arnaud Villani eds, *Les Cahiers de Noesis*, n°3, Spring 2003, p. 130.

13 Gilles Deleuze devotes a large part of his essay on cinema *L'image-mouvement* to what he calls "the affection image", chapters VI and VII. He proposes the now famous thesis that "the close-up is the face" and the affection image is the close-up. Paris, Minuit, (1983), 2003.

14 Leonardo da Vinci, "De la nature de l'eau", in *Les carnets de Léonard de Vinci*, Paris, Gallimard, "Tel", vol. 2, (1942), 2004, p. 7-136.

15 Exhibition at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon from November 30, 2019 to March 8, 2020, entitled *Drapé – Degas, Christo, Michelangelo, Rodin, Man Ray, Dürer...* Scientific curation by Sylvie Ramond and Éric Pagliano.

16 Essay by Georges Didi-Huberman published by Gallimard in the collection "Art et artistes" in 2001.

17 Ginette Michaud, «Forma fluens: à une passante revenante», in *Spirale*, n° 256, Spring, 2016, p. 3 for both citations.

18 Pierre Jamet, *Le nœud de l'inconscient*, Paris, Érés, «Arcanes», 2006, p. 89-104.

19 Jacques Lacan, «Propos sur la causalité psychique», in *Écrits*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1966, p. 172 et seq.

20 Paul Verlaine, *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, Paris, Gallimard, «Bibliothèque de la Pléiade», 1960, p. 540.

21 Jacques Lacan, «Propos sur la causalité psychique», *op. cit.*, p. 172.

22 "To trace one's life between singularity and universality. Interview of Najia Mehadji with Véronique Rieffel", *op. cit.*

cit., p. 28.

23 Quote from the monograph Najia Mehadji. The revelation of the gesture.

24 Rémi Labrusse, «Des nouvelles de l'infini», in *Najia Mehadji. The Revelation of the Gesture*, op. cit. cit., p. 53.

25 Peter Sloterdijk, «Être né de l'écume / Sphères III», in *Multitudes*, 2004, n°19, p. 187-196.

26 *Foams. Plural Spherology* is the third volume of his analysis of the Spheres (volume I is devoted to "bubbles" and the second "to globes" and the third "to foams"). The plural is a way for the author to confirm his thesis that there are several kinds of foam because they have different qualities, which are also linked to a mode of interpretation of this unique material.

27 Peter Sloterdijk, «Être né de l'écume / Sphères III», op. cit. cit.

28 *Ibid.*

29 Words of the artist, in *Najia Méhadji*, op. cit., p. 49.