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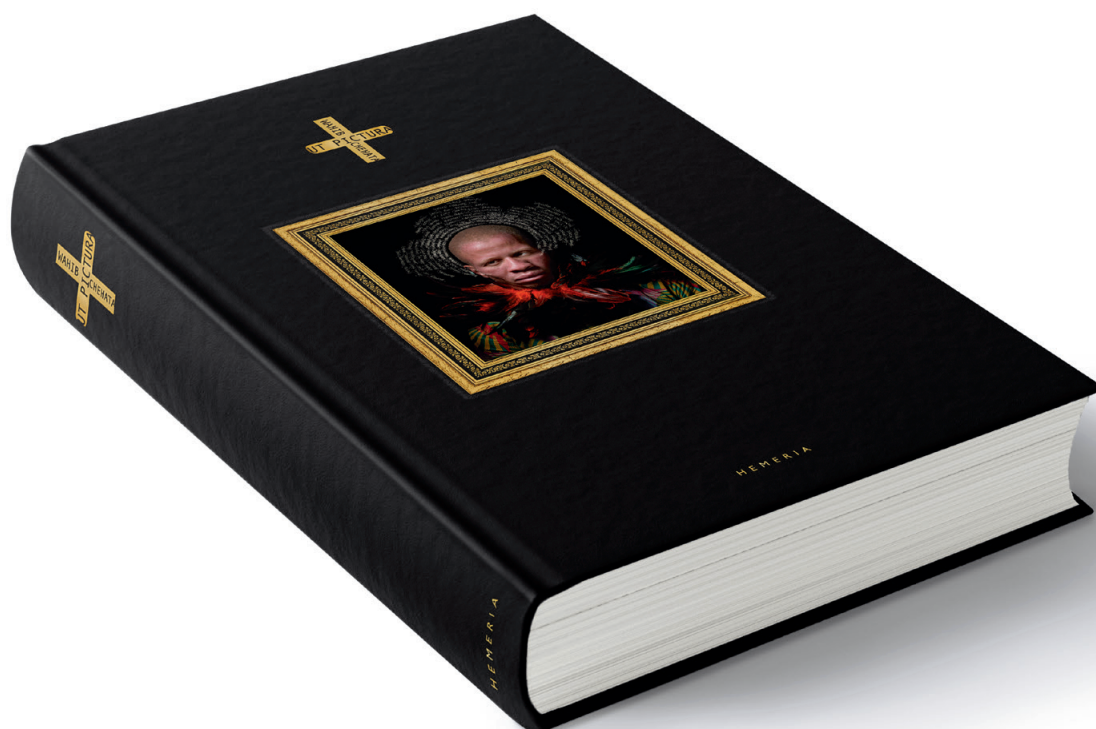
L I V R E S P H O T O D ' E X C E P T I O N
E X C E P T I O N A L P H O T O B O O K S

29 OCTOBER 2019

PRESSE RELEASE

UT PICTURA

WAHIB CHEHATA



UT PICTURA Wahib Chehata
Catalogue raisonné, 384 pages
Limited edition, 300 copies signed & numbered
Certificate of authenticity

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UT PICTURA: BOOK AND EXHIBITION EVENT

WAHIB CHEHATA



Mohammed VI Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rabat / May 2017
Inauguration of the exhibition in the presence of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco and His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan

AFTER HAVING EXHIBITED IN RABAT IN 2017, WAHIB CHEHATA RETURNS TO PARIS TO PRESENT THE UT PICTURA PROJECT, HIS FIRST RETROSPECTIVE, VIA THE PUBLICATION OF AN EPONYMOUS LIMITED EDITION ART BOOK, AND AN EXHIBITION-EVENT IN PARIS AT THE END OF OCTOBER.

HEMERIA

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The Time of Images and Myths

Images are ghosts. Not because they are spectral, although some of Wahib Chehata's photographs could be described as such, like those from his series *Entropie*, for example, taken in the dumps of Bamako, which are bathed in the bronze and surreal light of the Harmattan season. Images are ghosts, rather, because they transform and travel through time. They live, die, and reappear in other guises. They cannot be classified for they tell a much greater story than words, they exhaust meanings and survive definitions. The way images prevail and travel through eras is what makes the beauty of Art History, why imposing a chronological linearization on a body of works is much too simplistic. The discipline was founded on a vision of time that is pure, which often omits from its object of study other trajectories that are made up of multiple layers and legacies. The history of images is obsolete.

ARTIST

**WAHIB
CHEHATA**

TEXT FROM

**CLÉMENT
THIBAUT**

ISBN

978-2-490952-07-6

384 PAGES

22X28 CM

PRICE

300,00 €

THE BOOK

UT PICTURA is
the first retrospective
book of Wahib
Chehata (limited
edition, 300 copies)

THE EXHIBITION

UT PICTURA:
29-30-31 october

Vernissage:

29 october from 6.30 pm

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WAHIB CHEHATA

TEXT FROM **CLÉMENT THIBAUT**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF ART

Who better than the artists to help us understand the world and analyze its upheavals, take a distance and see more clearly? Artists document society, perceive the weak signals of the transformations at work, denounce its faults or testify to abysses or illusions that blind us.

What remains to tell us about the Dutch Golden Age or the Italian Catholic Reformation if not the pictorial power of a Rembrandt or that, then innovative, of Caravaggio?

These artists, or rather the works they leave behind, produce valuable links between past and present, traces. Even today, contemporary artists are constantly questioning the society of the twenty-first century. Among them, photographers have a special role.

When science, almost 200 years ago, imagines this new technique to create images, she does not know that she has just given birth to an «anthropologically new object», as Roland Barthes called it in his *Clear Room*.

After photography, another revolution in the history of humanity has just occurred, with the advent of digital technologies and the Internet, the emergence of mobile and social networks.

The Franco-Tunisian artist Wahib Chehata, prolific, hyperactive, but rare, creates a singular pictorial work of great symbolic power. He presented in 2017 *Renaissance*, the first series extracted from a residence in Bamako, MohammedVI Museum of modern and contemporary art in Rabat, and Art Paris at the Grand Palais.

In Arles, in July, he exhibited some unpublished large format paintings of his new *Entropie* series.

The publication of his first retrospective work, both in the form of an art book and an exhibition, is an event, which the art critic Clément Thibault explains in a very enlightening text. It is an eloquent manifesto to celebrate the power of Wahib Chehata's «paintings», and explains the continuity of the artist's work in terms of art history and the construction of mythologies.



Wahib Chehata, self-portrait

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TEXTS FROM **CLÉMENT THIBAUT** (EXTRACTS)

APPROACH ARTISTIC

PHOTOGRAPHING LIKE A PAINTER

Wahib Chehata makes "paintings"—a term which he particularly fancies over taking "photographs" which speaks vastly about his conception of the medium. His paintings all have the same human centred perspective, head-on, a central or conical perspective, we could say, inclusive in its ideological sense, putting the viewer in the centre of the world. It is only in the last photographs of the series Entropie that we can observe oblique views, with low-angles. It is the sign of an evolution in his work.

For Wahib Chehata, the staging is essential.

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WAHIB CHEHATA IS NOT MILITANT, his images neither, although they can function as a diagnosis of the present. Art works are not a symbol, but symptoms of their time, a manifestation of it. And how is this work symptomatic? It could be that our society is flushed with nostalgia, but it is mostly at a twilight. It is the end of an era. We are at a time of a disillusion and resignation. Our myths are falling apart. The power of rationality, the universality of democracy, the social balance of capitalism, our domination on nature. They are falling apart without being replaced. Because of an absence of benchmarks. More and more, citizens appear as devotees to the new religion of hashtags. But when we think about it, we are reliving the same stories throughout the centuries, collectively and individually: conflicts of power; the predation of one over another; the Ancients versus the Moderns, the useless feeling of existence, of desire, of grief... **Wahib Chehata's answer to these questions, fears and noises is the wisdom of images, on top of their era.**

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IT IS ALMOST METHODOLOGICAL. WAHIB CHEHATA LIKES TO DEBUNK MYTHS,

to turn them over. More specifically, he likes to make them inoperative in their classical dialectic to reintroduce them in a more actual time frame, even though they are still carrying their old attire. With this mask, Wahib Chehata is presenting a Narcissus without a face whose sinful identity is made invisible. It represents nobody as we represent anyone. This Narcissus is looking away from his reflection in the water to indulge in the lens of the camera. The vessel of self-love is changing; it is not manifested through the self-satisfaction experienced in the darkness of the woods anymore, but through what we share with others. **This is Narcissus in the era of selfies.**



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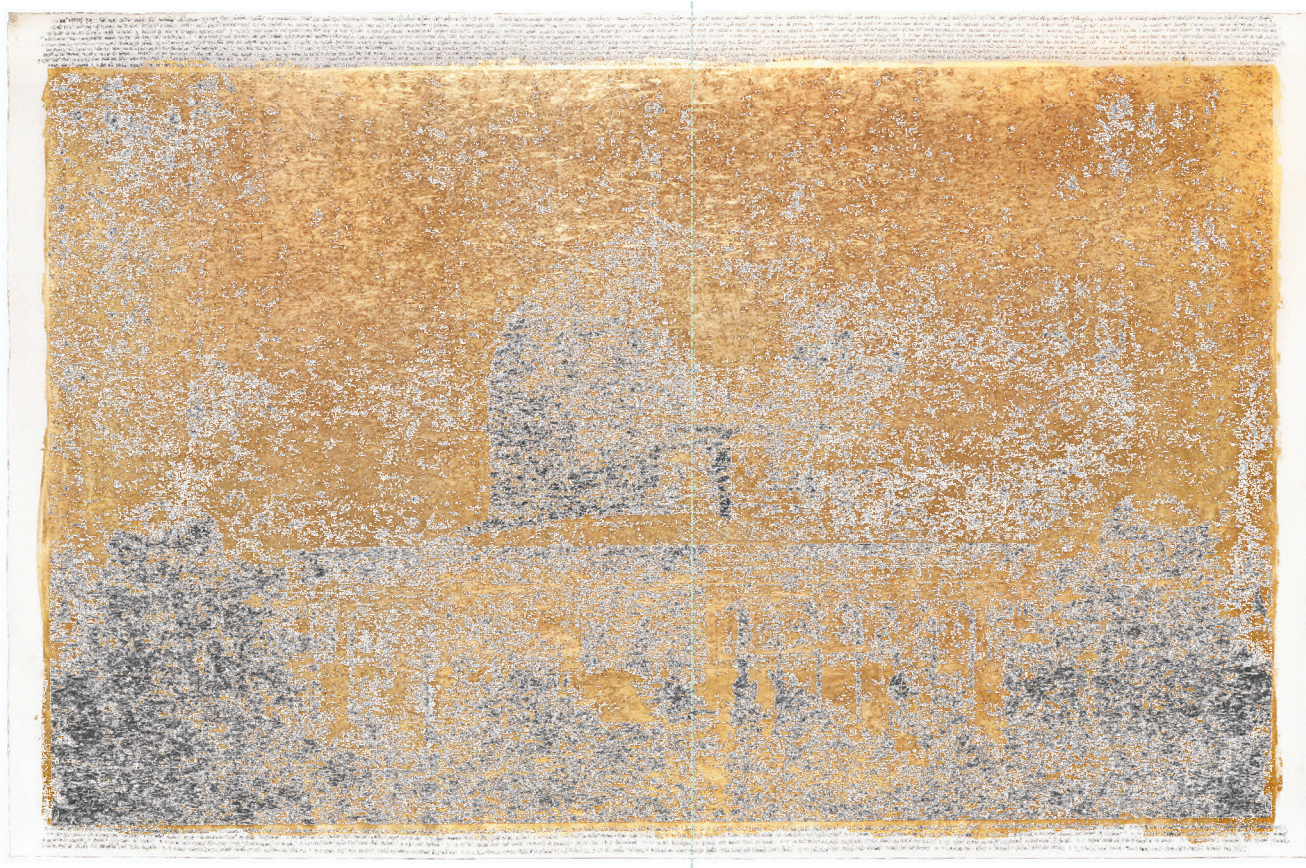


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