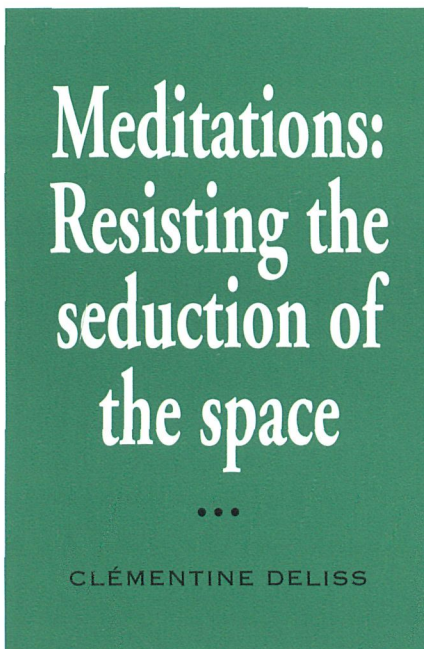
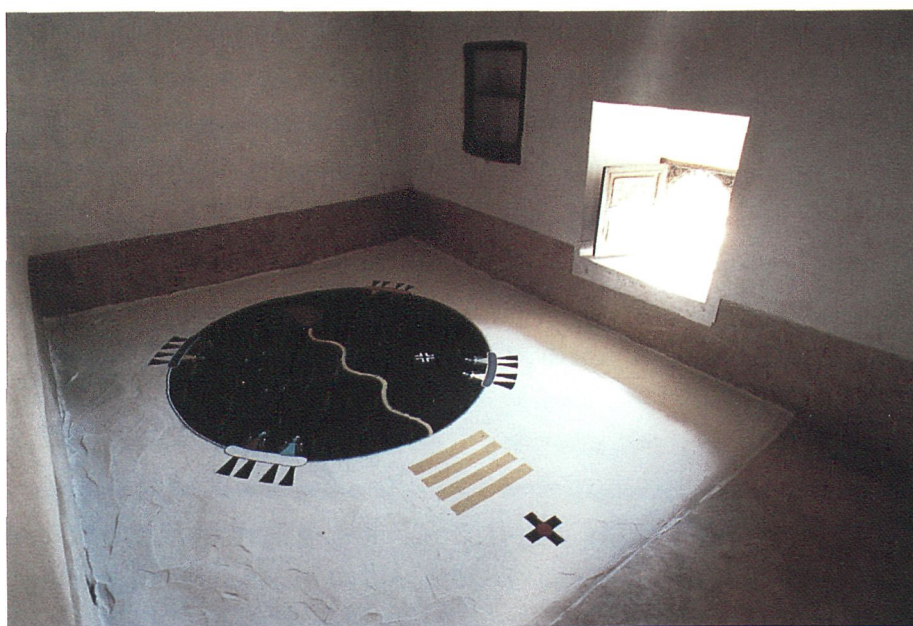


REVIEWS

When Adelina von Fürstenberg chose to curate her latest show *Meditations* in the ancient Koranic university of Marrakesh, she opened the door of a space that in her own words would be “allegorical”, a metaphysical blueprint within an architecture designed for faith. From a loop-like corridor, small cell-like rooms with tall ceiling and changing daylight patterns became the new cocoons of art works, music and poetry. The *Medersa*'s dimensions lent themselves perfectly to this additive constellation of the arts, side by side each accessible only from within the enclosure and intimacy of the single chambers. It was an event which effectively set in motion the desacralisation of the space for the first time in its five hundred year history, and it did so through art works placed



within its interiors. Where there had been nothing but the individually reflective, the white walls inscribed by the spirit, today there were new visual clues or parables, that engaged the viewer within a process of meditation.



Joe Ben, “Untitled”. 1997.

It was this aspect that made the exhibition so compelling - that it had placed the weight on the articulation of the finished piece within this environment, and not succumbed to the temptation of an extensive installation process. The majority of the artist who were invited to the opening event had not seen the magnificent university building until they unpacked their pieces and placed them in their respective cell. The longing to work within the environment over a time-period rather than just hang a painting was expressed retrospectively by some. With others, the reverse happened their piece became the transformatory potential through which one could firstly negotiate a relationship between oneself and the historical, symbolic and religious dimensions of the *Medersa*. The works of Anish Kapoor, Shirazed Houshiary, Chen Zen, El Sy, Ilya Kabakov and Alighiero & Boetti appeared to suspend the act of invasion, creating intermediary moments in the shift of the *Medersa*'s role from religion to art.

Meditations invited reflection on the potential of the art work to redistribute symbolic value within another socio-religious world. With modesty and respect, each exhibit, in its own manner, surrendered itself to a pause, a suspension of the will to engage fully with the seduction of the space, finally returning the actor back to the object.