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Textual Body Landscapes and Scripture's Visual Form

“The brains of men are under the points of their pens”

Ishmail b. Sabih al-Thakafi, Baghdad, 10th century

Atelier Work with Jewish and Islamic Sources

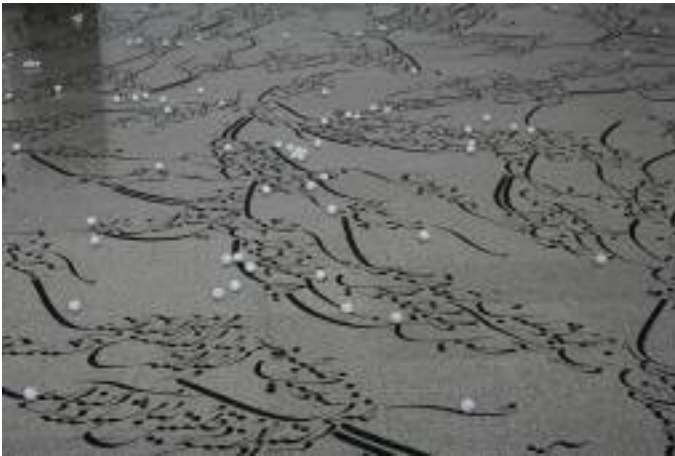


Fig. 1: Parastou Foroubar, Schriftraum 2006.

In order to circumvent the fatal entanglement with the questions of collective identity that is tied to any textual commentary in an ancient tradition, this essay takes visual images as its point of departure rather than textual sources. The assumption is that the visual field, as well as the morphology of human gestures, gives rise to a hermeneutical perspective that is more open to multi-faceted readings than that of texts which stand in a socio-religious history defined by collective boundaries. I treat classical Jewish and Islamic sources in a phenomenological manner, turning to textual and visual sources in equal measure, tracing their material in diachronic ways through different temporalities up to the present