

ARTFORUM

By Adina Glickstein
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Achraf Touloub, *Discord venue*, 2020, watercolor and acrylic on paper, 29 7/8 × 23 5/8".

Like snowflakes, Harm van den Dorpel's light exposure prints bear an organic geometry, internally harmonious and each one unique. Like snapshots, their patterns register moments in time, fixed in place by technological means. Van den Dorpel, an OG in Berlin's cryptoart scene, makes software that gives way to colorful sets of nested squircles—see *Blush Array II* and *Modular Mind* (both 2022), their vibrant palettes and soft beveled edges recalling the gentle contours of a user interface.

Interspersed between them are delicate watercolor works by Achraf Touloub. At first glance purely analog, these too eventually reveal themselves to be in dialogue with the digital. The title of *Egregore Rising*, 2022, sounds like it could describe the onset of a Twitter swarm, with its gesture toward emergent groupthink. *Discord Venue*, 2020, conjures the name of the platform where crypto traders type “gm” in the chat and seek fresh alpha. Touloub's works on paper are so intricate that they might be described as data-rich, with tight twirls of miniscule petals expanding outward to the borders of the frame.

In the back of the gallery, a grid of infinite, algorithmically generated animations—van den Dorpel's *Mutant Garden Autobreeder*, 2021—iterates hypnotically on an LED screen. High-tech as these artworks may well be, they feel—especially in conversation with Touloub's mandala-like illustrations—nothing short of meditative. One artist works in zeroes and ones; the other, in the opposition between line and negative space; mark versus blankness here becomes its own kind of binary code. Against the relentless pace of the doomscroll, both embody a vision of the digital where, mercifully, there's room to breathe.

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