**4.** | Picnic under embargo





2003, table, carpets, tableware, sound system.
Exhibition view from 2nd international contemporary art meeting, 2003, Canary Islands.
Courtesy of the artist.

Performance et installation participative et sonore, Pique-nique sous embargo convie le public à occuper l'espace mis à sa disposition, constitué de tapis orientaux partiellement découpés, de tables et de pièces de mobilier dont les formes s'adaptent aux contours des arbres auxquels elles sont accolées. Sur les tables ont été disposés des assiettes vides ainsi que des fourchettes et couteaux en métal. Un système audio accompagne l'œuvre, consistant en une bande sonore composée de bruits des couverts et de la vaisselle s'entrechoquant.

Pique-nique sous embargo invite à une réflexion sur la sanction de blocage et d'empêchement des échanges commerciaux désignée sous le terme "embargo", mesure qui a touché des pays tels que l'Angola, le Soudan, le Yémen, l'Iran ou l'Irak au cours des dernières décennies. La performance s'inscrit dans une réflexion menée à travers différentes propositions artistiques - sculptures, vidéos et installations, et a pour origine l'observation par Mounir Fatmi des différences de traitement journalistique de la mesure politique et diplomatique selon les pays où ces points de vue s'expriment. Mounir Fatmi focalise quant à lui son attention sur les effets de la disposition - effets observés sur le peuple et la vie en société et surtout sur les corps des individus.

Le titre de l'œuvre associe de manière oxymorique légèreté et gravité. Il exprime en réalité une contradiction impossible à résoudre pour la population des pays où la sanction a cours : comment vivre normalement privé des ressources essentielles ? L'installation constitue la mise en scène de cette contradiction flagrante et choquante dans les termes. Elle participe également à la représentation d'un rapport de l'homme à la nature dont la tonalité confine à l'ironie féroce.

Picnic under Embargo is a performance and a participative and sonic installation that invites the audience to occupy the space at its disposal, made of partially cut oriental carpets, tables and pieces of furniture whose shapes fit the contours of the trees to which they are attached. On the tables, empty plates and metallic silverware have been disposed. An audio system accompanies the piece, playing a soundtrack made of clinking silverware and dishes.

Picnic under Embargo offers a reflection upon the sanction of blockage and interruption of commercial exchanges designated by the term ‘embargo’, a measure that has affected countries such as Angola, Sudan, Yemen, Iran and Iraq over the course of the last decades. The performance is part of a reflection carried out through several different artistic propositions – sculptures, videos and installations – and originating in Mounir Fatmi’s observation of the difference in the way this political and diplomatic measure is treated in the media according to the country where the point of view are expressed. Mounir Fatmi focuses his attention on the effects of the measure, effects that can be observed on the people, on societies and particularly on the bodies of individuals.

The title of the piece associates in an oxymoronic way lightness and gravity. It actually expresses a contradiction that is impossible to solve for the populations of the countries where the sanction is imposed: how can one continue to live a normal life when essential resources are missing? The installation consists in the display of this flagrant and shocking contradiction in terms. It also participates in the representation of a relation between man and nature with a tone akin to fierce irony. This tableau, far from being about describing a harmonious proximity between man and nature,

Ce tableau, loin de relever de la description d'un rapprochement harmonieux de l'homme et de la nature, dépeint en effet un retour à des conditions de vie primitives et précaires.

L'embargo entraîne la soumission absolue des individus à l'injonction "naturelle" qui consiste à se nourrir. Toute la société, toutes les formes d'organisations sociales et tous les usages tournent désormais autour d'une unique inquiétude : l'obsession alimentaire. Toute autre préoccupation, que celle-ci soit d'ordre économique ou culturelle, est évacuée. L'embargo, stratégie diplomatique, apparaît ici dans sa réalité nue et concrète : elle n'est pas la manœuvre politique escomptée, censée viser les dirigeants corrompus ou iniques, mais une peine qui brutalise les populations dans leur chair et détruit les structures sociales des pays.

Studio Fatmi, Août 2017.

actually depicts a return to primitive and precarious living conditions.

The embargo leads to the absolute submission of individuals to the “natural” injunction of having to feed oneself. Society as a whole, all forms of social organization and all practices therefore become focused on one single concern: the obsession of finding food. Any other type of preoccupation, whether economic or cultural, is set aside. The embargo, a diplomatic strategy, is shown here in its stark and concrete reality: it isn’t the expected political maneuver supposed to target corrupt or iniquitous leaders, but a sentence that brutalizes populations in their flesh and destroys the social structures of entire countries.

Studio Fatmi, August 2017.

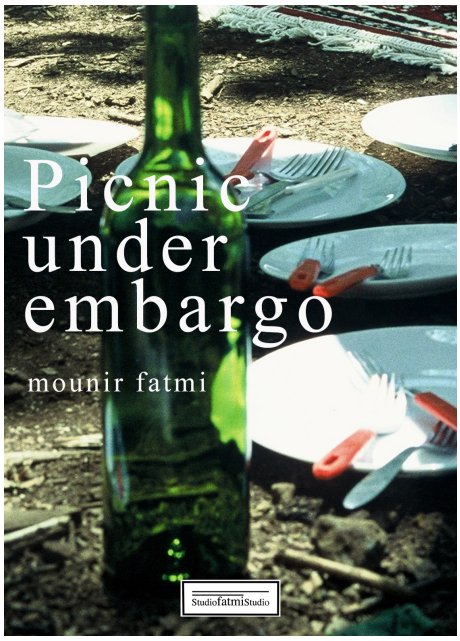
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Studio Fatmi, August 2017

**exhibitions:**

2003

Espacios mestizos - 2ème international contemporary art meeting - Expo collective




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