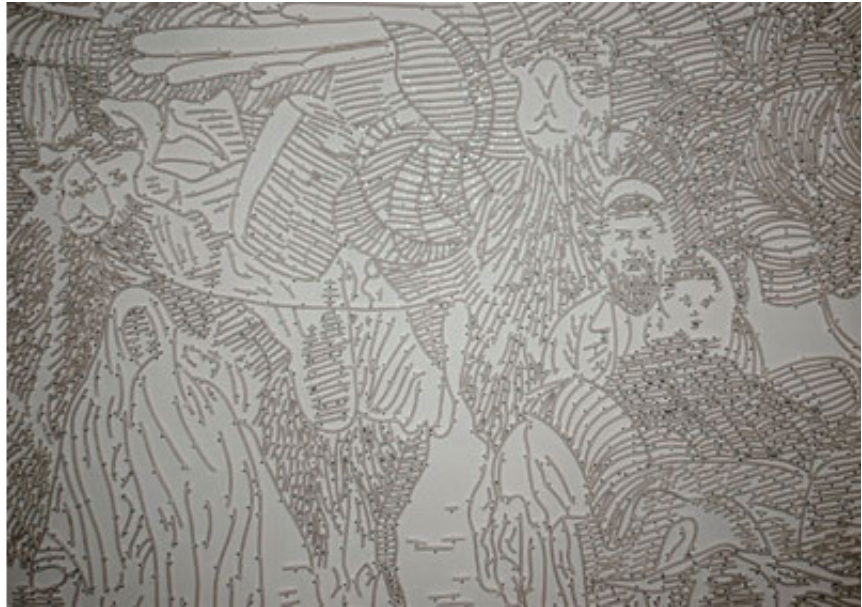


7. | Sculpture sequence : Kabul



2007, coaxial antenna cable on wood panel, staples.
Exhibition view from *Comprendra bien qui comprendra le dernier*, CAC Le Parvis, 2004, Ibos.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

« Kaboul » fait partie d'une série de bas-reliefs composés de câbles coaxiaux blancs, outil de transmission des images et de l'information très utilisé jusqu'à la fin des années 90 et matériau fréquemment utilisé dans les œuvres de mounir fatmi. L'œuvre a été réalisée en 2004 directement sur les murs du Centre d'art contemporain Le Parvis, à Ibos, en France, à l'occasion de l'exposition « Comprendra bien qui comprendra le dernier ». Les câbles, assemblés et fixés sur les murs à l'aide d'épingles recouvrent presque entièrement leur support et forment une image aux motifs difficilement discernables : hommes barbus, femmes voilées, enfants, chameaux et bagages.

L'œuvre questionne les pouvoirs de l'image et les ressorts de nos sociétés de l'information et de la communication, à partir d'un lieu très fréquemment représenté dans les médias, à savoir la ville de Kaboul, capitale de l'Afghanistan, qui a connu plusieurs périodes de guerre et de destructions successives obligeant sa population à l'exode. L'œuvre pose également la question des rapports de la création artistique et du traitement médiatique : comment faire une proposition artistique à partir d'une photo de presse, c'est-à-dire une image de communication? Comment traiter un sujet médiatique comme la guerre et ces ravages dans le contexte d'une exposition artistique. La sculpture « Kaboul » observe les relations entre l'art qui crée la « forme » et les médias qui créent l'« information ».

Le bas-relief traite la scène figurative, le décor et ses personnages, avec des techniques inspirées du all over et de l'abstraction géométrique. La sculpture rend ainsi compte d'une difficulté à voir, à discerner les éléments et les motifs d'une représentation médiatique et mentale. Kaboul est un lieu qui a connu de nombreux traitements journalistiques. Les

« Kaboul » is part of a series of bas-reliefs made with white coaxial cables, a material for the transmission of images and information commonly used until the late 1990s, and a frequently used in mounir fatmi's work. The piece was created in 2004, directly on the walls of Le Parvis, a Center for contemporary art in Ibos, France, as part of the exhibit « Comprendra bien qui comprendra le dernier ». The cables, assembled and fixed on the walls with pins, cover them up almost entirely and form and image with motifs that are hard to decipher: bearded men, veiled women, children, camels and suitcases.

The piece questions the power of images and the functioning of our societies of information and communication through the example of a place that is very frequently represented in the media, the city of Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, which experienced many successive episodes of wars and destruction, forcing its population to leave. The work also poses the question of the relation between artistic creation and media exposure: how can an artistic proposition be made based on a news photography, in other words an image for communication? How can a news subject such as war and its destructions be treated in the context of an art exhibit? The sculpture « Kaboul » looks at the relations between art, which creates the « form », and the media, which create the « information ».

The bas-relief treats the figurative scene, the landscape and the characters with techniques inspired by all-over and geometric abstraction. In doing this, it also acknowledges the difficulty to see and discern the elements and motifs in a media and mental representation. Kabul is a place that has been abundantly documented in the media. The wars, conflicts and fragile episodes of peace the city has

guerres, les conflits et les fragiles périodes de paix qu'a connus la ville ont été mis en image et retransmis à travers le monde. Et pourtant, il s'agit d'un lieu que le spectateur identifie de manière vague, à partir d'indices iconiques difficilement identifiables ou confinant au stéréotype culturel moyen-oriental : foulards, barbes, chameaux... Les visages des personnages de la composition demeurent illisibles et peu identifiables. Ce manque de visibilité fait écho aux destinées individuelles non prises en compte, disparaissant dans une accumulation d'informations. Leur traitement médiatique ne tend pas vers plus de clarté, mais au contraire rend la réalité indistincte, indiscernable. Un regard trop rapidement jeté à la sculpture « Kaboul » fait de celle-ci un écran blanc sur lequel le spectateur projette une vision floue et stéréotypée de la ville et de ses habitants. Cette vision s'est inscrite dans les imaginaires collectifs et elle est la conséquence d'une accumulation d'images et d'informations qui finalement empêchent de voir et de penser le monde et la réalité. L'œuvre traduit certains effets pervers du traitement médiatique qui peuvent conduire à la disparition du sujet traité. Elle appelle surtout à un effort de discernement de la part du spectateur dans le but de se saisir du réel à la fois dans son ensemble et dans ses détails et sa complexité.

Studio Fatmi, Juillet 2017.

experienced were filmed and broadcasted around the world. And yet, it's a place that viewers can only identify with vagueness, based in iconic clues that are hard to identify or that border on Middle Eastern cultural stereotypes: veils, beards, camels... The faces of the characters in the composition remain indiscernible and hardly identifiable. This lack of visibility echoes the individual destinies that aren't taken into account, as they disappear in an accumulation of information. Their treatment in the media doesn't lead to more clarity, but on the contrary renders reality indistinct and indiscernible as well. Looking at the sculpture « Kabul » too quickly, one only sees a white panel on which the viewer projects a blurry and stereotyped vision of the city and its inhabitants. This vision is inscribed in our collective imaginations and is the consequence of an accumulation of images and information that ultimately prevent us from seeing and conceiving the world and reality. This work transcribes certain negative effects of media exposure that can lead to the disappearance of the treated subject. Above all, it calls upon a discernment effort on the part of viewers in order to grasp reality both globally and in the details of its complexity.

Studio Fatmi, July 2017.

" The sculpture « Kabul » looks at the relations between art, which creates the « form », and the media, which create the « information ». "

Studio Fatmi, July 2017



La Pieta

Pieta offers a double re-interpretation of the artistic theme of the religious scene of deploration and of the digital society, and poses an equivalence between religion, etymologically meaning something that connects (people to each other and individuals to the divine) and digital technologies, which connect individuals by offering multiple means of communication and play an important part in the advent of a religion of communication.



Sculpture sequence, La Pieta

The sculpture is a reproduction of the interpretation of the artistic theme of the Pieta, which belongs to Christian iconography – its model is the late 15th century sculpture by Michelangelo, which has become one of the most famous works of art of all time.





Sculpture sequence, Al Jazeera

The work questions the place of communication and media exposure in today's societies and tries to define the relation of contemporary art to images and their power. It is inspired in part by the philosophical notions developed by Guy Debord, Wittgenstein's linguistic concepts on the production of significations and by artistic movements such as Pop Art and Minimalism.

Sculpture sequence, Presumed Innocent

The assemblage of cables forms the portrait of a suffering Christ, his eyes turned to the left and slightly angled down, with a long beard and hair, and a crown of thorns on his head – a crown that religious tradition designates as the one the Romans placed on Christ's head to mock his status as king.



Sculpture sequence, La Pietà

mounir fatmi's La Pietà also explores the relation between the profane and the sacred, between art and religion on one hand, and between religion and today's forms of social organizations on the other hand; information and the communication and media society.