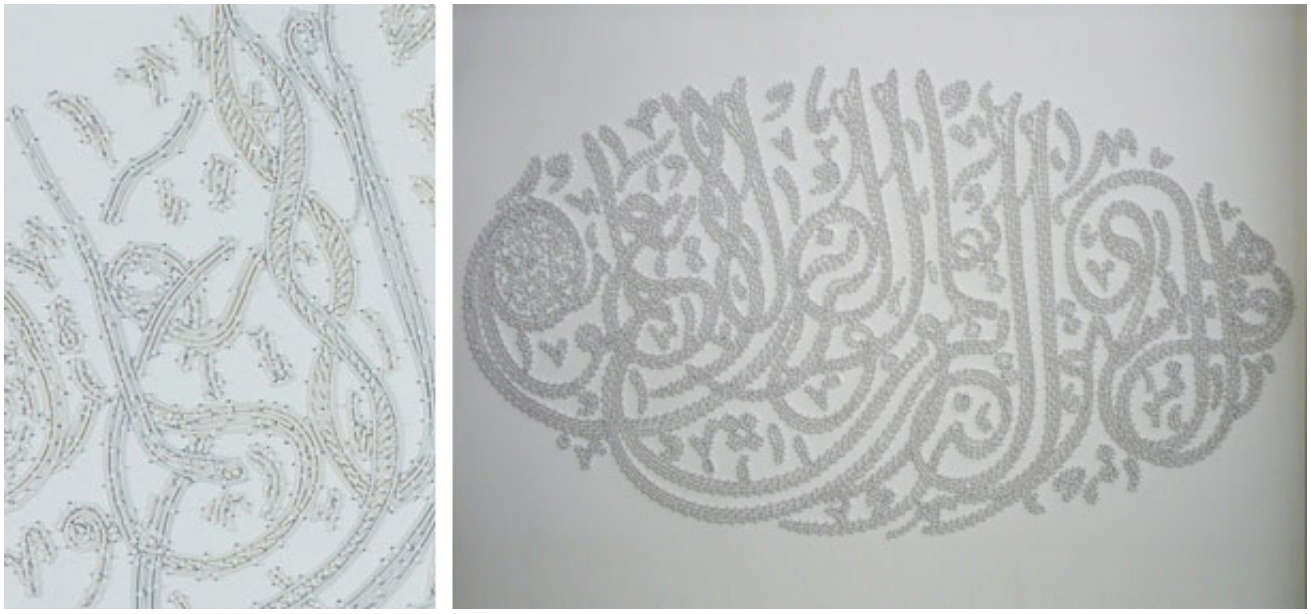
7. | People know, people don't know



2007, coaxial antenna cable on wood panel, staples, 215 x 245 cm.
Exhibition view from Jusqu'au bout de la poussière, Espace des arts, 2004, Colomiers
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

Collection of Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut

Dans son œuvre phare Ceux qui savent, ceux qui ne savent pas, fatmi réutilise avec adresse des câbles coaxiaux pour produire un bas-relief recréant la phrase du Coran de la sourate Az-Zumar 39:7 selon le canon de la calligraphie traditionnelle arabe. La phrase laisse entendre que ceux qui sont instruits sont plus aptes à apprécier le sens de la vie et le sens de la foi que ceux qui ne le sont pas.

L'utilisation de cette phrase spécifique et d'un support quasiment défunt est double : l'usage des câbles traduit un sentiment d'énergie et de flux qui reflète le dynamisme des échanges d'informations grâce au développement de la technologie qui est particulièrement saisissant dans le climat politique actuel.

En cette époque de fibre optique, l'information est plus facile d'accès, mais dans le même temps fatmi estime qu'en conséquence de l'utilisation de ce support, les gens ont perdu la capacité à différencier ce qui est réel de ce qui ne l'est pas, et sont ainsi en quelque sorte devenus moins instruits sur ce qui est vrai et ce qui n'est pas vrai. Par conséquent, les avancées technologiques signifient que les sociétés régressent plutôt qu'elles ne progressent et qu'elles deviennent moins conscientes et donc moins capables d'apprécier la vie et la foi. Cela implique aussi que le progrès technologique a distordu la façon dont les gens

In the seminal work People know, people don't know, Fatmi skillfully reuses coaxial cables to produce a bas-relief that recreates the phrase from the Quran Surat Az-Zumar 39:7 in the canon of traditional Arabic Calligraphy. The phrase implies that those who are knowledgeable are more able to appreciate the meaning of life and the meaning of faith than those who are not.

By using this particular phrase and the use of what has essentially become a defunct medium is two-fold: the use of cables conveys a sense of energy and flux that is reflective of the dynamism in the exchange of information with developments of technology that is particularly poignant in today's political climate.

In this age of fibre-optics, information has become easier to access but at the same time Fatmi believes that as a result of the media, people have lost the ability to differentiate between what is real and what is not real and thus have in some ways become less knowledgeable about what is true and what is not true. Consequently, advances in technology mean societies are moving backward not forward and have become less aware and thus less able to appreciate life and faith. It also implies that the advancement in technology has warped the way people perceive religion - Fatmi makes a clear dig here at the terrorist aspect of Islam that has

perçoivent la religion – fatmi s'en prend ici clairement à l'aspect terroriste de l'Islam qui prédomine dans les médias et à la montée en puissance de ceux qui se disent djihadistes. Les agrafes interrompent la linéarité du câble, créant une image floue, comme un dessin fait de points à relier, suggérant qu'à l'ère médiatique la morale religieuse est difficile à concilier. Ce qui en résulte, c'est un schisme entre le traditionnel et le contemporain, les câbles coaxiaux deviennent des métonymies matérielles de l'information packagée qui construit et contrôle nos vies toujours un peu plus, promettant de réelles connexions, mais ne les délivrant que rarement.

Bien que l'œuvre soit un monochrome, chaque section projette une ombre délicate sur la surface qui se trouve derrière. En choisissant de créer cette composition calligraphique en blanc pur sur un fond blanc, fatmi parvient à donner un sentiment de sérénité correspondant à son intention philosophique. Toutefois, cette technique est double : elle vise aussi à souligner la subtilité sinistre avec laquelle les médias augmentent la réalité et suppriment tout sentiment d'appartenance à une culture ou toute intention spécifique. Chaque fragment de câble contribue à la régulation d'un ordre complexe qui pourrait être complètement lisible si n'importe lequel des éléments quittait cette toile en apparence emmêlée.

En modelant ces câbles pour les forcer à prendre la forme voulue, fatmi élimine par là même leur utilité fonctionnelle. Le public est ainsi forcé à se demander où se trouve la source d'énergie – où elle devrait se trouver. Dans ce sens, les messages et la morale de fatmi sont toujours ambigus, représentant un jeu de compromis indéfini entre Orient et Occident, ou une compréhension générale du monde qui est dynamique et instable, pleine de perceptions et d'opinions en perpétuel mouvement.

Texte de Christie's, Mars 2014.

dominated the media and the rise of those who claim to be Jihadist. The staples interrupt the cable's linearity creating a fuzzy connect-the-dots style image suggesting that in the media age religious morals are hard to resolve. What results is a schism between the traditional and the contemporary, the coaxial cables become material metonyms for the packaged information that increasingly constructs and controls our lives, promising but rarely delivering real connection.

Although the work is monochromatic, each section casts a delicate shadow on the surface behind. By choosing to depict the calligraphic composition in a purist white on a white background, Fatmi manages to impart a sense of serenity that is relevant to his philosophical intention. However, this technique is two-folded, it aims to also highlight the sinister subtlety in which media augments reality and removes a sense of affiliation with a specific culture or agenda. Each cable fragment is part of the regulation of a complex order, which would be completely illegible if any of the elements should leave this seemingly tangled web.

By shaping these cable elements into forced shapes, Fatmi thus eliminates its functional use. The audience is thus forced to wonder where the power source is - or should be - located. In this sense, Fatmi's messages and morals are always ambiguous, representing the undefined game of give-and-take between East and West, or a general understanding of the world that is dynamic and unstable, filled with shifting perceptions and opinions.

Text from Christie's, March 2014.

" fatmi's exercise in variations on pallid hues involves pieces of coaxial cable covered in beige plastic-some long, some short, nesting next to one another in optically pleasing formations-twisting across a cream-colored board. Antiseptic-white cable brackets affix the pieces to the board with

[one silver nail apiece, resulting in a fetching pattern of silver dots. "]

[Sarah Valdez, Art in America, 2008]

exhibitions:

2025

7 Contours, 1 Collection - MACAAL, Marrakech - Group show

2024

If you don't know me by now - Ceysson & Bénétière, Lyon - Solo show

2021

L’art, un jeu sérieux - Musée d'Art Contemporain Africain Al Maaden (MACAAL) - Expo collective

2018

Second Life - Musée d'Art Contemporain Africain Al Maaden (MACAAL) - Expo collective

2017

E-mois - Musée d'Art Contemporain Africain Al Maaden (MACAAL) - Expo collective

2014

They were blind, they only saw images - Galerie Yvon Lambert - Solo show

2011

Maghreb: Dos Orillas - Circulo de Bellas Artes - Expo collective

2010

Born in Dystopia - Rosenblum Collection & Friends - Expo collective

2008

Flow - Studio Museum in Harlem - Expo collective

2007

(Im)postures - Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne - Expo collective

Art Basel - Miami - Art fair

2004

Jusqu'au bout de la poussière - Espace des arts - Solo show



La Pieta

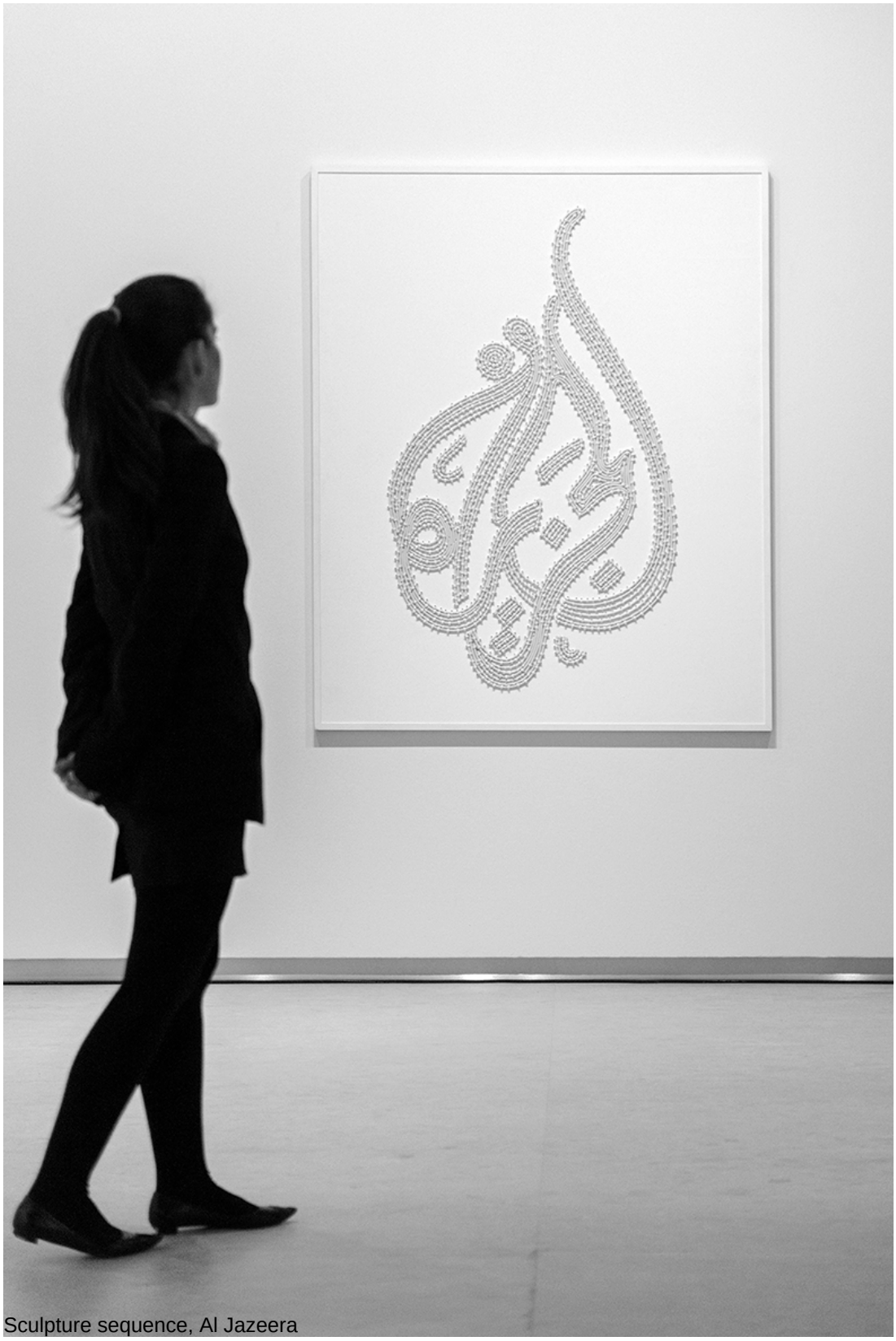
Pieta offers a double re-interpretation of the artistic theme of the religious scene of deploration and of the digital society, and poses an equivalence between religion, etymologically meaning something that connects (people to each other and individuals to the divine) and digital technologies, which 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 Pieta

mounir fatmi's La Pieta 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.