1. | Fragile





1997, Maroc, 6 min 44, SD, 4/3, B&W, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and Analix Forever, Genova.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

On peut penser qu'une œuvre telle que *Fragile diffère et ne diffère pas* de l'ensemble des recherches formelles menées par Mounir Fatmi, artiste qui ne manque jamais de confronter toute donnée sociale et politique du monde en général et du Maroc en particulier. Pourtant "Fragile" nous place au cœur d'une totale décontextualisation, hors de tout monde possible, sans que ceci nous éloigne un seul instant de l'humain et de ses grandes interrogations existentielles. Avec maîtrise accomplie, l'artiste agit de sorte que nous n'ayons nulle appréhension visuelle exhaustive de scènes en noir et blanc dépouillées, quasi "autistes" que marque un puissant coefficient d'abstraction. Tension électrique et anxieuse aussi, proche de l'asphyxie, entretenant le spectateur en une expectative qui tour à tour l'approche et l'éloigne - tel le mouvement d'un inquiétant métronome - de l'insolite vers le familier et vice versa.

L' "Objet" nodal de ce film (qui, au-delà d'une identité propre au champ de l'art mérite amplement de s'inscrire dans la filiation d'une cinématographie purement expérimentale), esquisse entre deux personnages un enjeu lourd de sens et opaque. Cet "Objet" tangible qui, d'entrée, occupe comme le *centre absent* de l'œuvre, n'est autre qu'une horloge fixée à un arbre, marquant peut-être *l'Heure de la vie*, et dont la corrélation avec un jardin en bataille semble obscure mais non gratuite.

Que vise cette scène maximalisée par ces macro lenteurs et cette insolite densité intérieure ? Un questionnement qui, en vérité, n'est pas étranger aux données sociales, politiques auxquelles je faisais référence, car il ne s'agit de rien moins ici que d'une communication entre humains – et au surplus, d'une communication blessée. Au fond, n'est-ce pas ainsi

One could think that a work like « Fragile » is and isn't different among the corpus of formal researches conducted by mounir fatmi, an artist who is always confronting social and political givens throughout the world and in Morocco in particular. Yet « Fragile » places the viewer in the heart of a complete decontextualization, outside any possible world, without distancing itself one instant from the human element and its great existential interrogations. With great mastery, the artist ensures we have no full visual apprehension of these pared-down black & white scenes, almost « autistic » in their form and marked by a strong sense of abstraction. This is an electrical as well as an anxious tension, close to asphyxia, maintaining the viewers in a state of expectancy that brings them closer and draws them away in turns – like the movement of an ominous metronome – from the unusual to the familiar and vice versa.

The nodal « Object » of this film (which, beyond its identity within the field of art, also fully deserves to be integrated in the tradition of purely experimental cinema) traces the outline of an issue involving two characters that is full of meaning and opaque. This tangible « Object », which instantly occupies what appears to be the absent center of the work, is none other than a clock attached to a tree, perhaps marking the Time of life, and whose correlation with an untidy garden seems obscure but certainly not gratuitous.

What is the aim of this scene, enhanced by its extreme slowness and its bizarre internal density? This question is actually related to the social and political elements I referred to earlier, as this is about nothing less than a type of communication between humans – what's more, a wounded communication. Fundamentally, isn't this the way we know

que nous la connaissons ? A travers codes et rituels convenus, masquant à notre insu nos interactions psychologiques et sociales ? Un authentique échange est aujourd'hui devenu si rare - parallèlement à un climat de surchauffe et d'affolement médiatique - que lorsqu'il nous arrive de le capter, de le vivre, celui-ci semble relever de l'épiphanie.

Mais l'artiste plonge plus loin encore en cette réflexion, en la "décharnant" pour ainsi dire, à travers une dure et poétique algèbre qui nous met en présence d'un "impossible échange", *échange rêvé*, paroxystique, pour le meilleur comme pour le pire, (d'où, aussi, le caractère onirique de ses figures syncopées). Il est rare d'accéder à cette "visibilité" de l'indicible, à cette figuration *sensorielle* d'une telle impasse de la relation. De même, est-il peu fréquent d'en percevoir, en filigrane, l'issue possible. Celle-ci nous est suggérée par l'artiste à travers sa seule confrontation lucide. Ca et là, de vibratiles arbustes, un chaos aux bruitages lointains, une Nature alentour dense et noire, de ternes échappées de ciel hérissé d'antennes feront ainsi de cet insituable verger, le cœur même d'une perception raréfiée où l'« horloge », reliée à sa corde comme un pendu, paraît aussi incongrue que centrale. Or le frisson de cet austère îlot sonore réfère surtout à une secrète Structure du Monde. Structure sémiotique éminemment nue et contrastée, et à ce titre, sans nulle concession possible.

Michèle Cohen Hadria, Juin 2003

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it? Through conventional codes and rituals that unwittingly hide our psychological and social interactions? Authentic exchanges have become so rare today – in contrast to the media-crazy world we live in – that when we happen to capture or experience them, they seem to us like an epiphany.

But the artist's reflection upon this question goes deeper still, as he strips it bare, so to say, through a tough and poetic algebra that puts us face to face with an « impossible exchange », a dreamed exchange, a paroxysmal one, for better and for worse (hence, also, the dreamy quality of its syncopated figures). But it's rare to access this « visibility » of the inexpressible, this sensory figuration of such a doomed relation. Similarly, its possible outcome can rarely be perceived, even implicitly. It is suggested by the artist through his only lucid confrontation. Here and there, a few vibratile shrubs, a form of chaos with distant sounds, a dense and dark surrounding Nature, bleak vistas of a sky crowded with antennas make this unlocalizable orchard the heart of a rarefied perception where the « clock », attached to its rope like the victim of a hanging, seems as incongruous as it is central. As it turns out, the excitement of this austere sonorous object refers mainly to a secret Structure of the World. A semiotic structure that is eminently stark and contrasted, and therefore devoid of any possible concession.

Michèle Cohen Hadria, June 2003

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exhibitions:

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This is My Body - Art Bärtschi & Cie - Solo show



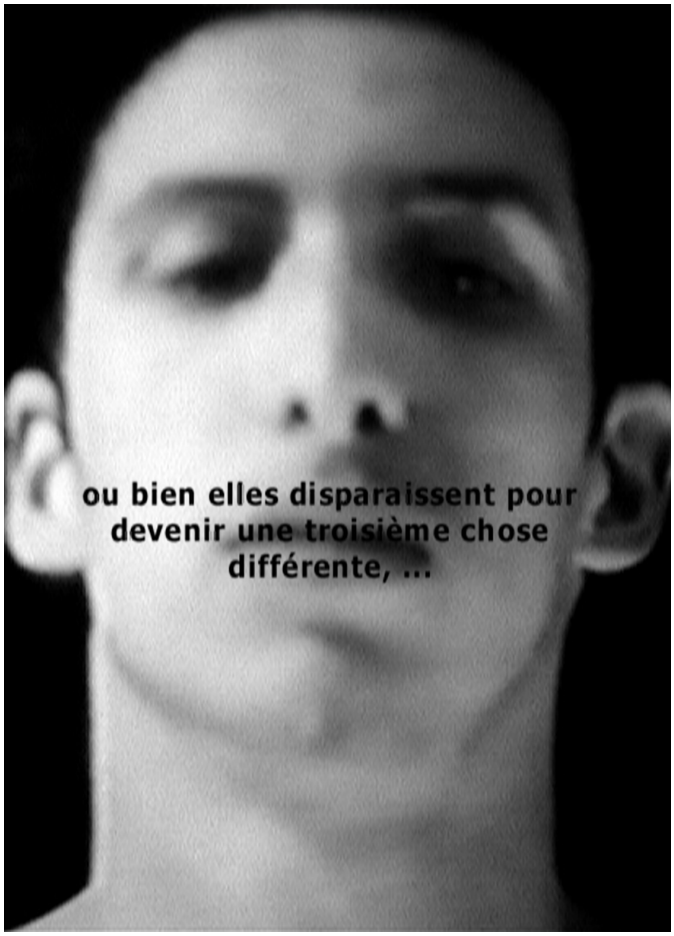
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