20. | The Machinery





2008, saw blade of 80 cm of diameter, calligraphy.
Exhibition view from Art Brussels, Conrads Gallery, 2010, Brussels.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

« Machinery » est constituée d'une lame de scie circulaire de 80 cm de diamètre. Dans une manière récursive dans son travail, mounir fatmi détourne un objet à destination usuelle, ici un outil voué à la construction -ou à la destruction-, et comme souvent, il s'agit d'un détournement à double titre : en tant qu'objet usuel réhabilité en matériau plastique, mais aussi en tant qu'objet signifiant dans son contexte. La plupart de ces lames tranchantes sont couvertes d'inscriptions calligraphiques, de textes issus de Sourate ou de Hadith, évoquant la beauté de Dieu, ou encore la capacité, ou la volonté, de l'homme d' accéder au savoir.

On pourrait penser qu'il importe peu de saisir le sens de ces écritures, pour être frappé par la beauté de la calligraphie, contrastant violemment avec la dimension agressive et dangereuse des scies circulaires. On retrouve ici une des préoccupations majeures de mounir fatmi : montrer la séduction ambiguë, le piège, de la beauté, dont les objets que produit l'art ne sont naturellement pas exclus.Mais, défend l'artiste, les mots ne sont jamais inoffensifs. Et, dissolvant en quelque sorte les frontières entre le support et la surface, entre la matière et le texte, ces lames crantées aux bords plus que menaçants mettent en péril quiconque s'en approcherait de trop près, lui manifestent ainsi sa vulnérabilité absolue, face à l'objet comme face aux mots.

L'installation prend à dessein la forme d'un mécanisme à engrenage. Ces rouages implacables et mortifères semblent signifier un certain ordre du monde. Si cette machinerie peut se mettre en branle, à la manière des « Temps modernes », elle est à la fois pouvoir de détruire, de déchiqueter et d'avaler, et processus de massification et d'aliènation. Mais

« Machinery » is made up of circular saw blade of 80 cm of diameter. In his work, mounir fatmi recursively subverts everyday objects, in this piece a tool dedicated to construction – or destruction. As is often the case, it is subversion on two counts: as an everyday object recreated in plastic, but also as a significant object in the context of the installation. Most of these sharp blades are covered with calligraphy inscriptions of texts from the Surah or Hadith, evoking the beauty of God or man's capacity, or desire, to obtain knowledge.

You may think you don't need to understand the meaning of these writings to be struck by the beauty of the calligraphy, contrasting violently with the aggressive and dangerous nature of the circular saws. This is one of mounir fatmi's major preoccupations: displaying an ambiguous beauty – a trap – which, of course, does not exclude objects produced by art. But, he argues, words are never harmless. And, breaking down the boundaries between the support and the surface, between the material and the text, these more-than-menacing jagged blades put anyone who gets too close in danger. The viewer is made aware of their absolute vulnerability when confronted with the object as when confronted with the words.

The installation deliberately takes the form of a gear mechanism. The unrelenting and fatal wheels seem to signify some sort of world order. If this machinery could be set in motion, it would be both a power to destroy, tear to shreds and devour, and also a process of massification and alienation. But is it the object or the text that is at issue? Is it a declaration of knowledge or, on the contrary, an absence of

ce qui est en cause est-il l'objet ou le texte ? Est-ce l'ordre du savoir ou au contraire l'absence de savoir ?

Quoiqu'il en soit, les lames de « Machinery » tranchent dans le vif, plongent dans la matière du monde, cette masse compacte et confuse, comme s'il fallait pénétrer en force pour la couper, c'est-à-dire y opérer partage et discernements, en démystifier les images, en un mot, apprendre à la critiquer.

Marie Deparis-Yafil.

knowledge?

Regardless, the blades of « Machinery » cut to the heart of the matter and plunge into the substance of the earth. It is as if a penetrative force was needed to cut through this compact and confused mass, to attain openness and wisdom and to demystify images. This force is needed to learn to be critical.

Marie Deparis-Yafil.

Translation: Caroline Rossiter.

" In The Machinery, mounir fatmi stages duality on a number of levels:
spiritual and mechanical, laudatory and condemnatory, traditional and modern, and formal and functional. "

Megan Croutch, 2011

exhibitions:

2025
Art Front: mounir fatmi - Art Front Gallery, Tokyo - Solo show

2023

Art Brussels - Ceysson & Bénétière - Art fair

ARCOmadrid - ADN - Art fair

2022

The Point of No Return - Wilde Gallery, Basel - Solo show

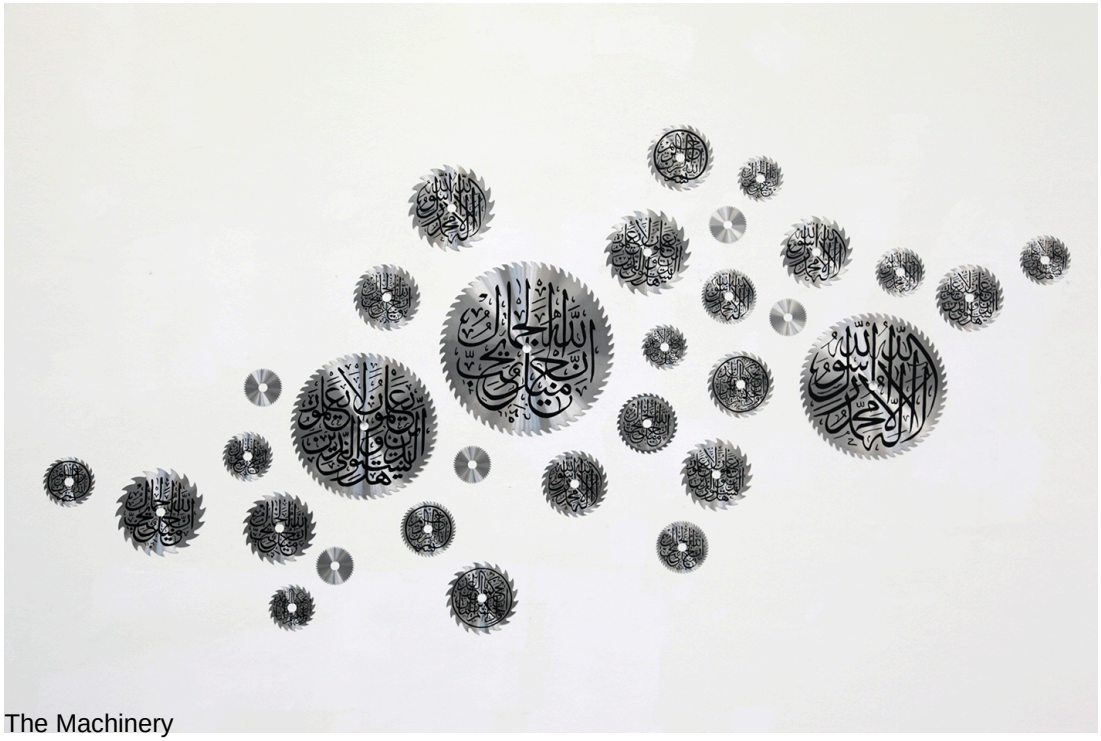
2014

ARCO Madrid - ADN Galeria - Art fair



The Machinery

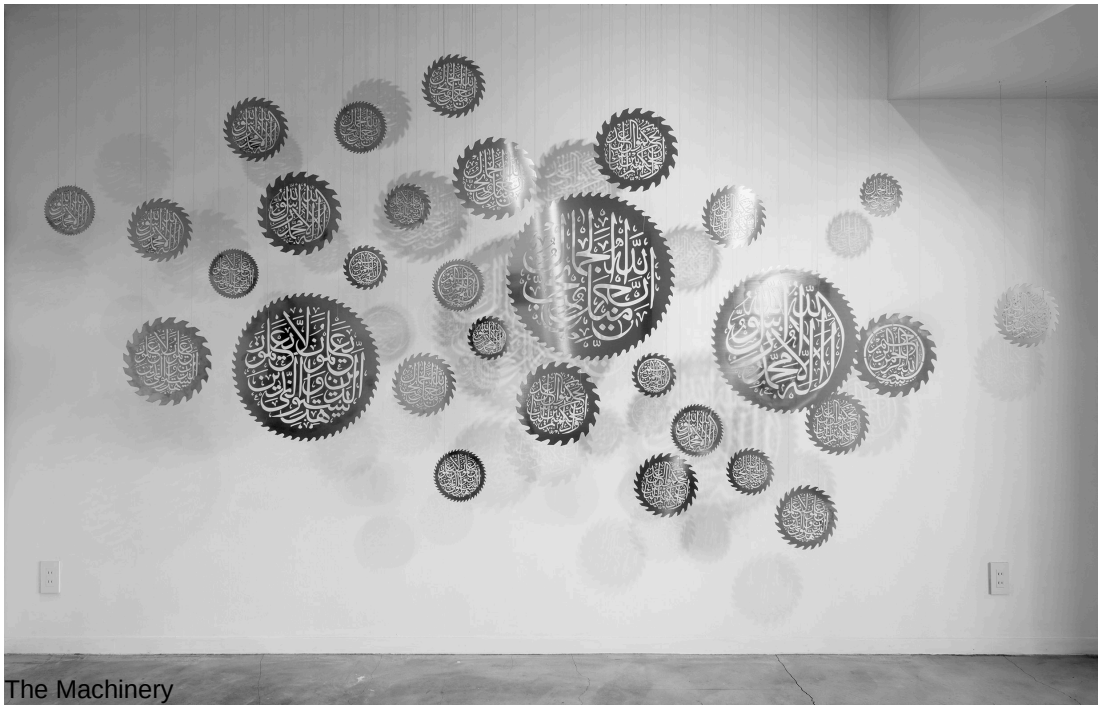
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The Machinery

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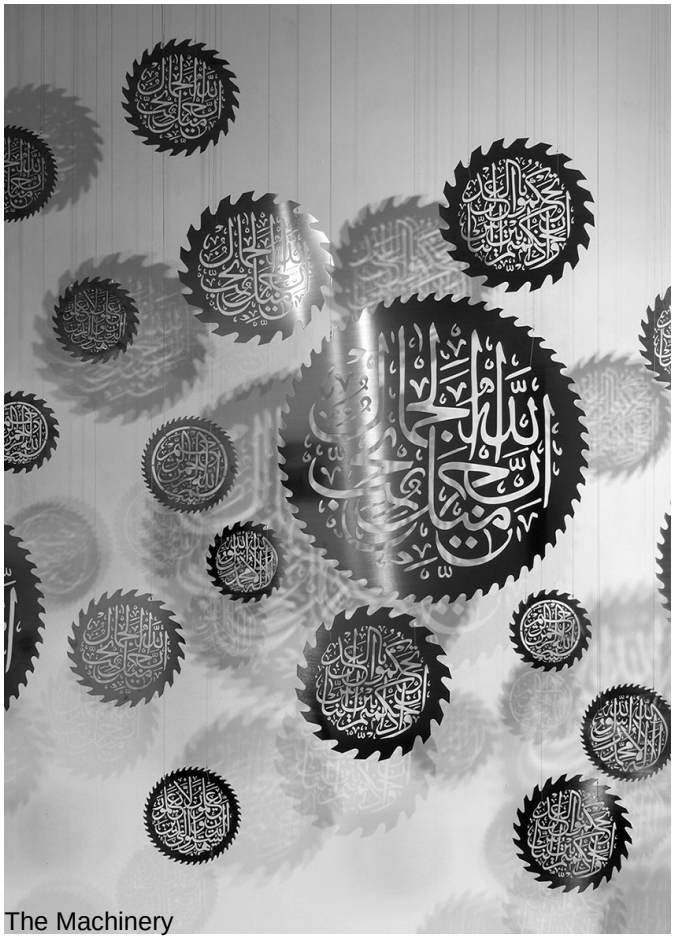


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