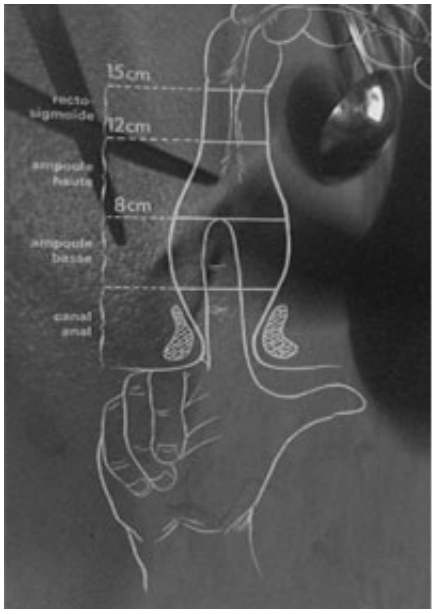
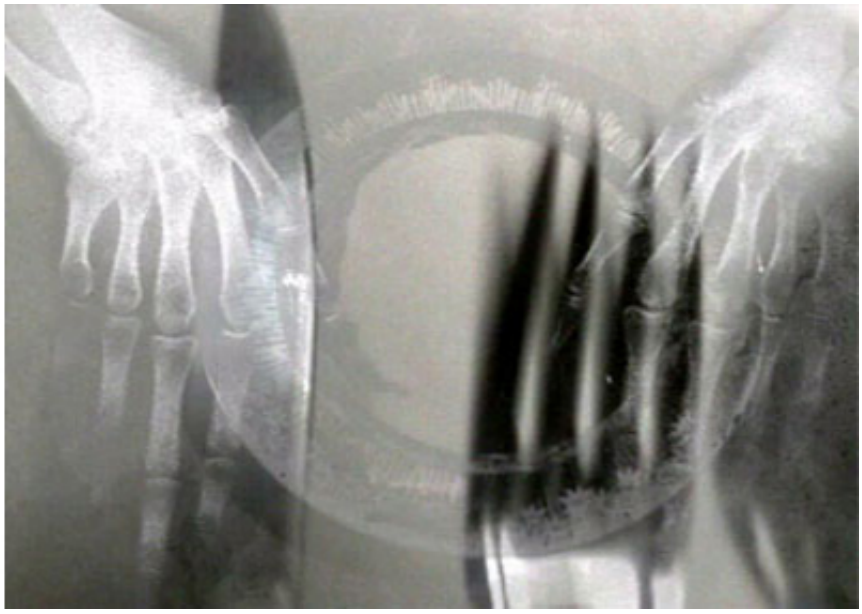
3. | Embargo





1997, France, Morocco, 6 min 42, SD, 4/3, color, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

En 1997, Embargo affirmait en images et en son la souffrance charnelle du peuple irakien qui subit seul le châtiment politique adressé à ses dirigeants, le terrorisme dont font preuve les institutions internationales responsables d'un tel décret, le règne de l'injustice élevé au rang de stratégie politique, la corruption morale dont l'embargo s'engendre. Mounir Fatmi écrivait alors : « Comment vit un corps privé de nourriture ? Embargo est une vidéo autopsie, une fibroscopie qui traverse le corps du cerveau jusqu'à l'anus, montrant que l'embargo est la vraie frappe chirurgicale, que l'embargo est un serial killer. En effet, la communauté internationale ne voit pas les dégâts que l'embargo peut causer dans une population. Vingt-sept pays ont subi ou subissent encore différentes sortes d'embargos : de l'Angola à Cuba, de Chypre au Soudan, du Vietnam au Yémen, etc... Aujourd'hui en Irak, un enfant de moins de cinq ans meurt toutes les huit minutes de maladie ou de malnutrition faute de nourriture et de médicaments. Depuis des années, des peuples supportent cette "fatwa" internationale imposée au nom de la condamnation de leurs régimes qu'ils n'ont pas choisis. Une mesure qui n'a fait que renforcer le pouvoir des dictateurs qui contrôlent la distribution des vivres. »

Embargo décrit exactement ce qu'est un corps politique : celui de l'exploitation intégrale au point de s'apparenter à une forme d'anthropophagie différée. La surimpression de l'imagerie médicale avec les plans de fourchettes et d'assiette vide concentre en une initiative visuelle l'exploitation intégrale du Tiers-Monde par le Premier. Le film de Mounir Fatmi nous rappelle la vision de Louise Michel en 1890, dans un manifeste intitulé Prise de possession : « N'est-ce pas un crime d'attendre pendant que des millions

In 1997, Embargo confirmed in images and sound the bodily suffering of the Iraqi people, undergoing alone the political chastisement addressed to their rulers, the terrorism experienced by the international institutions responsible for such a decree, the reign of injustice elevated to the rank of political strategy, and the moral corruption engendered by the embargo. Mounir Fatmi then wrote: "How does a body deprived of food live? Embargo is an autopsy video, a fibre-optic endoscopy which passes through the body from brain to anus, showing that the embargo is a real surgical strike, and a serial killer. In fact, the international community doesn't see the damage that the embargo can cause in a population. Twenty-seven countries have undergone or are still undergoing different sorts of embargo: from Angola to Cuba, Cyprus to Sudan, Vietnam to Yemen, etc.... Today, in Iraq, a child under five dies every eight minutes either of disease or malnutrition, for want of food and medicines. For years peoples have been putting up with this international "fatwa" imposed in the name of a condemnation of their regimes, which they did not choose. A measure which has merely reinforced the power of the dictators who control the distribution of foodstuffs."

Embargo precisely describes what a political body is: something to do with comprehensive exploitation to the point of being akin to a form of deferred cannibalism. The superimposition of medical imagery with shots of forks and empty plates squeezes the overall exploitation of the Third World by the Old World into a visual piece. Mounir Fatmi's film reminds us of the vision of Louise Michel in 1890, in a manifesto titled Prise de possession: "Is it not a crime to wait while millions of human beings are crushed beneath the millstone of wretchedness like so much human wheat, like

d’êtres sont écrasés sous la meule de misère comme un froment humain, comme les grappes au pressoir ; c’est sous cette forme que le monde bourgeois mange son pain et boit son vin. »

Presque dix ans après le film, en 2005, les journaux rapportèrent publiquement les faits qui président à l’anthropophagie économique en quoi consiste l’embargo, telle que Mounir Fatmi l’avait déjà argumentée en images. Rappelons ces faits, affichons-les à côté du film, ils constituent le sous-texte local dont le film assure la généralisation allégorique. « Le scandale autour du programme "Pétrole contre nourriture" des Nations unies est entré dans une phase judiciaire, jeudi 14 avril. La justice fédérale américaine a annoncé, à New York, l'inculpation de plusieurs personnes dont trois dirigeants de la société texane Bayoil, soupçonnés d'avoir payé des millions de dollars de pots-de-vin au régime de Saddam Hussein. L'Américain David Chalmers et le Bulgare Ludmil Dionissiev ont été arrêtés à leur domicile à Houston au Texas et le département de la justice a demandé l'extradition du troisième associé, le Britannique John Irving.
Selon le procureur fédéral de Manhattan, David Kelley, qui a donné une conférence de presse, les trois hommes ont aidé le gouvernement irakien à corrompre le programme "Pétrole contre nourriture" en payant des pots-de-vin aux entreprises et aux banques contrôlées par le régime de Saddam Hussein. Selon les enquêteurs, Bayoil a joué un rôle "pivot" en fixant des prix très bas au pétrole acheté, ce qui permettait de reverser ensuite discrètement des commissions à Bagdad et de réaliser encore des profits substantiels. "Au lieu de faire parvenir l'aide aux personnes qui en avaient le plus besoin, ce qui était l'objectif du programme, les accusés ont facilité le transfert d'argent à des sociétés écrans créées par le régime de Saddam", a expliqué M. Kelley. »

En 1997, hormis les intéressés, personne ne connaissait le moindre de ces faits. Ils se trouvent tous dans Embargo. Ils s’y trouvent sous d’autres formes que les mots et les chiffres, mais dans la limpidité des images et des sons, dans la certitude critique qui préside à l’acte de création chez Mounir Fatmi. Contrairement à ce que l’on voudrait nous faire croire, l’art ne reflète pas le monde, il anticipe les vérités, y compris les plus factuelles, qui ne peuvent pas s’y dire.

Nicole Brenez, Août 2005.

vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

bunches of grapes in the press; it is in this form that the bourgeois world eats its bread and drinks its wine.(5)"

Almost ten years after the film, in 2005, newspapers publicly reported the facts governing the economic cannibalism which is what the embargo consists of, just as Mounir Fatmi had already reasoned in images. Let us remember these facts, let us display them alongside the film; they are the local subtext whose allegorical generalization is provided by the film. "The scandal around the UN "Oil for Food" programme entered a legal phase on 14 April. The US federal justice system announced, in New York, the indictment of several people including three directors of the Texan company, Bayoil, suspected of having paid millions of dollars in bribes to the Saddam Hussein government. The American David Chalmers and the Bulgarian Ldmil Dionissiev were arrested in their homes in Houston, Texas, and the Department of Justice requested the extradition of the third associate, the Briton John Irving.
According to the federal public prosecutor of Manhattan, David Kelley, who gave a press conference, the three men helped the Iraqi government to corrupt the "Oil for Food" programme by paying kickbacks to companies and banks controlled by the Saddam Hussein government. According to the investigators, Bayoil played a "pivotal" role by setting the prices of the oil purchased very low, which made it possible to then discreetly pay commissions to Baghdad and make further substantial profits. "Instead of getting help to the people who most needed it, which was the aim of the programme, the accused facilitated the transfer of money to front companies set up by the Saddam regime", explained M. Kelley(6).

In 1997, apart from the various interested parties, nobody knew anything whatsoever about all this. They all turn up in Embargo. They come in forms other than words and numbers, but in the limpid clarity of images and sounds, in the critical certainty governing the act of creation in the work of Mounir Fatmi. Contrary to what people would have us believe, art does not reflect the world, it anticipates truths, including the most factual varieties, which are unable to express themselves.

Nicole Brenez, August 2005.

" How does a body deprived of food live? Embargo is an autopsy video, a fibre-optic endoscopy

[which passes through the body from brain to anus, showing that the embargo is a real surgical strike, and a serial killer. "]

[Nicole Brenez, Panic, 2005]

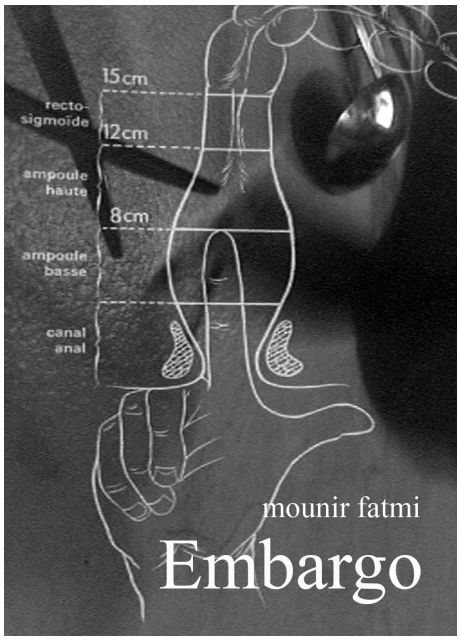
exhibitions:

2018

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

2008

Paradise Now ! - Essential French avant-Garde Cinema 1890-2008 - Tate modern - Expo collective



Embargo

In 1997, Embargo confirmed in images and sound the bodily suffering of the Iraqi people, undergoing alone the political chastisement addressed to their rulers, the terrorism experienced by the international institutions responsible for such a decree, the reign of injustice elevated to the rank of political strategy, and the moral corruption engendered by the embargo.



Embargo

Mounir Fatmi then wrote: How does a body deprived of food live? Embargo is an autopsy video, a fibre-optic endoscopy which passes through the body from brain to anus, showing that the embargo is a real surgical strike, and a serial killer. In fact, the international community doesn't see the damage that the embargo can cause in a population. Twenty-seven countries have undergone or are still undergoing different sorts of embargo: from Angola to Cuba, Cyprus to Sudan, Vietnam to Yemen





Embargo

Embargo precisely describes what a political body is: something to do with comprehensive exploitation to the point of being akin to a form of deferred cannibalism. The superimposition of medical imagery with shots of forks and empty plates squeezes the overall exploitation of the Third World by the Old World into a visual piece.

Nicole Brenez, August 2005.

In 1997, apart from the various interested parties, nobody knew anything whatsoever about all this. They all turn up in Embargo. They come in forms other than words and numbers, but in the limpid clarity of images and sounds, in the critical certainty governing the act of creation in the work of Mounir Fatmi. Contrary to what people would have us believe, art does not reflect the world, it anticipates truths, including the most factual varieties, which are unable to express themselves.



Embargo

Almost ten years after the film, in 2005, newspapers publicly reported the facts governing the economic cannibalism which is what the embargo consists of, just as Mounir Fatmi had already reasoned in images. Let us remember these facts, let us display them alongside the film; they are the local subtext whose allegorical generalization is provided by the film. The scandal around the UN Oil for Food, programme entered a legal phase on 14 April.