19. | Contamination



Serie started in 2009, 60cm x 45cm.
Courtesy of the artist and ADN Galeria, Barcelona.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

« Contamination » est un work in progress photographique initié en 2009 qui intègre dans ses compositions deux éléments récurrents des œuvres de mounir fatmi : le livre et la lame de scie circulaire ornée de motifs calligraphiques à caractère religieux ou poétique. Le livre est employé dans l'étude de ses pouvoirs de transmission ou de censure des informations et des connaissances tandis que la lame de scie circulaire est utilisée dans l'examen des rapports entre la pensée religieuse et dogmatique et la pensée critique. Un troisième thème fait le lien entre ces deux séries de questionnements : le langage, pour lequel les œuvres de mounir fatmi témoignent d'un intérêt constant. La contamination, au sens premier, désigne l'envahissement d'un organisme vivant par une substance pathogène et l'altération de ses réactions biologiques. Le titre de la série photographique s'inspire d'une conception virale de la langue exprimée en son temps par William Burroughs : « Language is a virus ».

Les photographies de la série « Contamination » exposent plusieurs ouvrages aux côtés de scies circulaires. L'une d'elle donne à voir un livre à couverture rouge, dont le titre, Le Grand Dictionnaire de l'art, est inscrit en lettres d'or. Une autre offre aux regards un diwan, recueil de poésies composées par Husayn ibn Mansur (9e et 10e siècle), mystique persan du soufisme d'expression arabe, plus connu sous le surnom de Hallaj, qui fut condamné pour hérésie et supplicié en 922. L'exemplaire, rédigé en arabe classique et richement ornementé fait également apparaître son titre dans un lettrage doré. Dans les tranches de chacun de ces livres s'est glissée une lame de scie circulaire dont les inscriptions disparaissent en partie entre leurs pages.

"Contamination" is a photographic work in progress initiated in 2009 that integrates in its compositions two recurrent elements in Mounir Fatmi's work: books and circular saw blades adorned with religious or poetic calligraphic motifs. The book is employed in order to study its power of transmission and censorship of information and knowledge, while the circular saw blade is used to examine the relations between religious and dogmatic thought and critical thinking. There is a third theme that connects these two sets of issues: language, for which Mounir Fatmi's work manifests a constant interest. Contamination, in the primal sense, designates the invasion of a living organism by a pathogenic substance and the alteration of its biological reactions. The title of this photographic series is inspired by the viral conception of language as expressed in his time by William Burroughs: "Language is a virus".

The photographs in the "Contamination" series present several books next to circular saws. One of them has a red cover, and its title "The Great Dictionary of Art", is written in golden letters. Another shows a diwan, a collection of poems written by Husayn ibn Mansur (9th-10th century), a Persian Sufi mystic who wrote in Arabic, better known under the name of Hallaj, who was convicted of heresy and tortured to death in 922. The book, written in classic Arabic and richly ornamented, also features a title in golden letters. Circular saw blades have been slipped into the section of each book, the inscriptions on them partly disappearing between the pages.

The work examines the relations between the "great tales" that contribute to the foundations of the societies they belong to – prescriptive stories that claim to indicate what's good

L'œuvre étudie les relations entre les « grands récits » qui participent aux fondements des sociétés auxquelles ils appartiennent - récits prescriptifs qui prétendent dire ce qui est bien et ce qui ne l'est pas, ce qui relève d'une conception juste de l'art ou de la vie, ou ce qui s'en éloigne - récits qui affirment leur vision de l'histoire, du monde et de l'humain dans une relation étroite aux pouvoirs institutionnels. Elle observe également la contagion linguistique du discours sur l'art par le discours religieux et inversement.

Les « grands récits » de la civilisation et leur discours se manifestent par leur aspect essentiellement ambivalent : celui-ci est mentionné sous la forme d'un instrument voué à la fois à la construction et à la destruction, la lame de scie circulaire. Le discours religieux et dogmatique ou le discours officiel sur l'art se conçoivent comme des machineries linguistiques puissantes qui participent à l'édification de civilisations, mais qui entraînent également des querelles, des guerres, des excommunications et des crimes. L'aspect du discours religieux est à la fois extrêmement séduisant, se manifestant par l'élégance et la beauté des motifs calligraphiques, et très menaçant : dents acérées des scies se tiennent prêtes à couper, lacérer, déchiqueter ses concurrents linguistiques. Il renvoie à une violence textuelle bien réelle, au fondement même du discours religieux, et que la précieuse stylisation de la rhétorique ou de la calligraphie dissimulent. A ce titre, « Contamination » participe à l'élaboration par mounir fatmi d'une stratégie artistique du « piège esthétique », entendue comme représentation à la séduction ambigüe. L'œuvre constitue ainsi une mise en garde contre des séductions - de la langue, de la religion, de la société de consommation ou autre - aussi belles que dangereuses.

Studio Fatmi, février 2017.

and what's not, what belongs to the correct conceptions of art and life and what strays from them – stories that establish their vision of history, the world and humanity, with a close proximity to institutional powers. It also observes the linguistic contagion of the discourse on art by the religious discourse, and reversely.

The "great tales" of civilization and their discourse manifest themselves through an essentially ambivalent aspect: they are alluded to under the form of an instrument that is used for both construction and destruction: the circular saw blade. Religious and dogmatic discourses, as well as official discourses on art, are perceived as powerful linguistic devices that play a part in the construction of civilizations, yet they also generate conflicts, wars, excommunications and crimes. The aspect of the religious discourse is extremely attractive, as it presents itself with the elegance and beauty of calligraphic motifs, but also very threatening: the saw's sharp teeth are ready to cut, tear and shred to pieces any potential linguistic competitor. This reflects a very concrete textual violence that is at the heart of the religious discourse, though concealed by the crafty stylizations of rhetoric and calligraphy. In that sense, "Contamination" is part of the elaboration by Mounir Fatmi of an artistic strategy based on "esthetic traps", in other words ambiguously seductive representations. In fact, the work acts as a warning against these seductions – language, religion, the consumer society, etc. – that are as beautiful as they are dangerous.

Studio Fatmi, February 2017.

" The work examines the relations between the "great tales" that contribute to the foundations of the societies they belong to – prescriptive stories that claim to indicate what's good and what's not, what belongs to the correct conceptions of art and life and what strays from them – stories that establish their vision of

history, the world and humanity, with a close proximity to institutional powers. "

Studio Fatmi, February 2017

exhibitions:

2019

ARCO Madrid - ADN Galeria - Art fair

2018

1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair London - ADN Galeria - Art fair



Contamination

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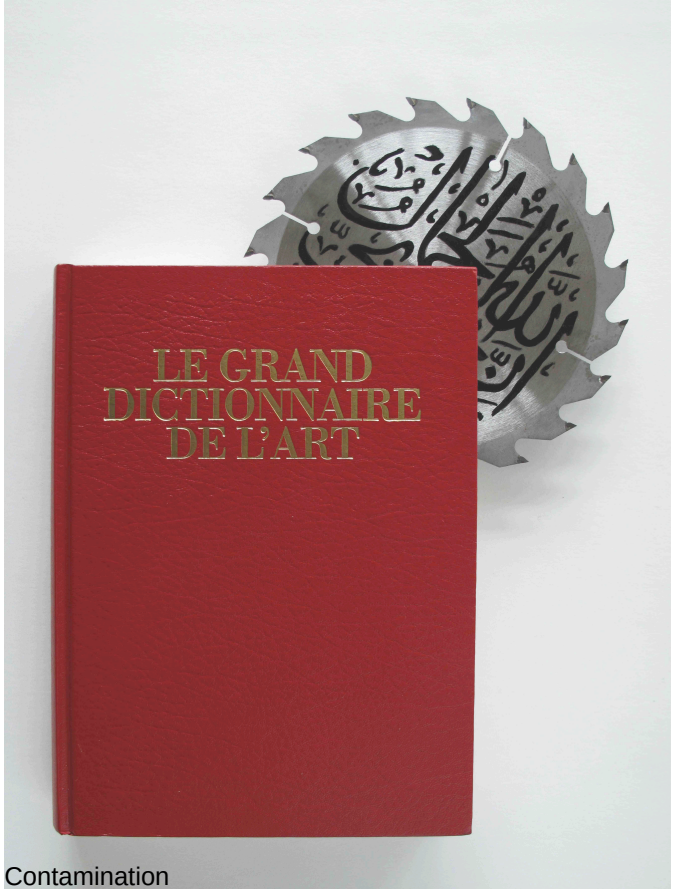


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