11. | Black screens / The Rectangle





2004-2005, blank VHS, 240, 35 cm x 432,40 cm.
Exhibition view of Shard history/Decolonising the image, Espace Arti, 2006, Amsterdam.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

Collection of Nadour, Krefeld

Vaste composition murale, Ecrans noirs se présente comme un tableau de grand format, réalisé à partir de cassettes VHS. Ces cassettes, détournées de leur usage usuel, se voient transformées en éléments décoratifs, dont le motif itératif trouve résonance dans la rigueur des compositions géométriques de l'art concret ou de l'art minimal. Noir profond du plastique ponctué de manière régulière des ronds blancs des pivots de rembobinage des cassettes, ce tableau offre un effet à la Niele Toroni, « degré zéro » de la représentation picturale.
Mais si Ecrans noirs semble s'accorder sur le plan formel avec les principes de répétition du motif et de l'économie du moyen, sur l'idée d'une indistincte épure esthétique, l'installation se détourne cependant de cette neutralité, cherchant à évoquer un sens là où l'art concret « ne symbolise » rien, n'est rien d'autre que ce que l'on voit, comme aurait pu le dire Frank Stella du minimalisme, ne reposant que sur la seule logique interne de ce qui est visible.

Ecrans noirs induit en effet clairement une ambiguïté entre l'utilisation d'un vocabulaire plastique emprunté au minimalisme et le choix signifiant des cassettes VHS. Placées les unes à côté des autres, objets ordinaires apparemment inoffensifs, elles donnent aussi à voir en filigrane une étrange collection, un mur d'objets hier

Black screens, a vast mural composition, appears as a large format painting made from VHS cassettes.
These cassettes, with their everyday use subverted, are transformed into decorative elements, whose repetitive motif finds resonance in the rigorous geometric compositions of concrete art or minimal art. The deep black of the plastic punctuated at regular intervals by the white circles of the winding pivots of the tapes, creates a Niele Toroni-esque effect, a "degree zero" of pictorial representation.
But although Black Screens seems to agree with the principles of thematic repetition and the economy of means, and on the idea of an indistinct aesthetic sketch, on a formal level, the installation moves away from this neutrality, looking to evoke meaning where concrete art "does not symbolise anything". It is nothing other than what we see, as Frank Stella could have said of Minimalism, it is based only on the internal logic of what is visible.

Indeed Black Screens clearly infers an ambiguity between the use of a formal vocabulary borrowed from Minimalism and the significant choice of VHS cassettes. Placed beside each other, the apparently inoffensive ordinary objects also show a strange lattice collection, a wall of yesterday's technology that is obsolete today. They convey images and sounds, transmit information, and remain the support for archaic communication, as well as being known as a tool for

technologiques, aujourd'hui obsolètes, véhiculant images et sons, transmettant des informations, et qui restent aujourd'hui les supports d'une communication archaïque, connus comme outil de propagande et de menaces extrémistes. Aussi combien de violences promises et de terreurs sont-elles cachées dans ce mur d'images que l'on ne voit pas, que l'on imagine ou que l'on craint, signes inquiétants de quelqu'arrière-monde, comme aurait dit Nietzsche, dont l'insaisissable contenu, fantasmagorique peut-être, contraste avec le minimalisme apaisant de son apparence?

Sur l'écran éteint des Ecrans noirs, chacun projette son propre cinéma, ses propres angoisses, ses peurs séculaires, ses fantasmes.... C'est donc aussi une remise une cause critique du pouvoir des images, de celles que l'on a vu ou que l'on croit avoir vu, de celles que l'on nous montre, de celles que l'on interprète et de celles qui nous restent cachées… A la valeur sémiotique de ce mur d'objets se signifiant en mur d'images, s'ajoute alors la suspicion que l'image médiatique puisse n'être le plus souvent qu'image-leurre, simulacre visuel, renforçant les interrogations de l'artiste quant aux degrés de réalité, et au-delà, de vérité, de l'image.

Marie Deparis, Paris 2007.

propaganda and extremist threats. Also how much intended violence and terror, that we don't see, are hidden in this wall of images? We imagine or fear these unseen terrors, worrying signs of some Nietzschean back-world, whose elusive, perhaps even phantasmagorical, content contrasts with the soothing Minimalism of the wall's appearance.

On the blank screen of Black Screens, everyone projects their own cinema, their own anxieties, their secular fears and fantasies... Thus it is also a critical reconsideration of the power of images, of those that we have seen, or think we have seen, of those that we are shown, of those that are interpreted and of those that stay hidden... Added to the semiotic value of this wall of objects - signifying a wall of images - is the suspicion that the media image can often only be an image-illusion, a visual simulacrum, reinforcing the artist's exploration of degrees of reality and beyond that, degrees of truth and of the image.

Marie Deparis, Paris 2007.

Translation: Caroline Rossiter.

" What secrets does this black screen hold? Beyond this extremely esthetic work, a reflection emerges
on the meaning we give to images we capture, keep, erase and project. On this black screen, the viewer can project his own images, hopes and fears. "

Julie Crenn, Africultures, 2011

exhibitions:

2020

How to disappear - Goodman Gallery Johannesburg - Expo collective

2011

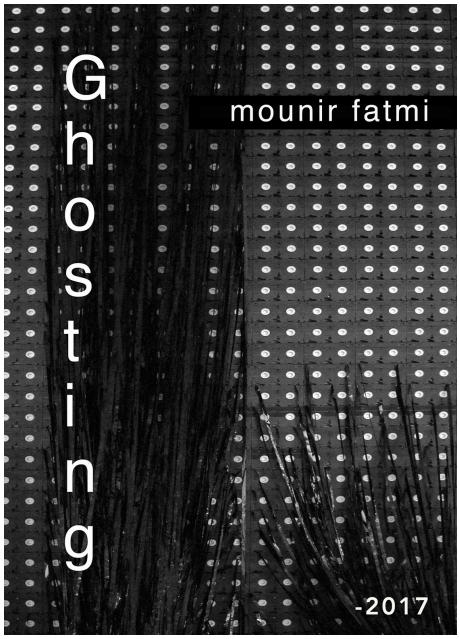
Megalopolis - AKBank Sanat - Solo show

2006

Shard history/Decolonising the image - Espace Arti et w139 - Expo collective

2005

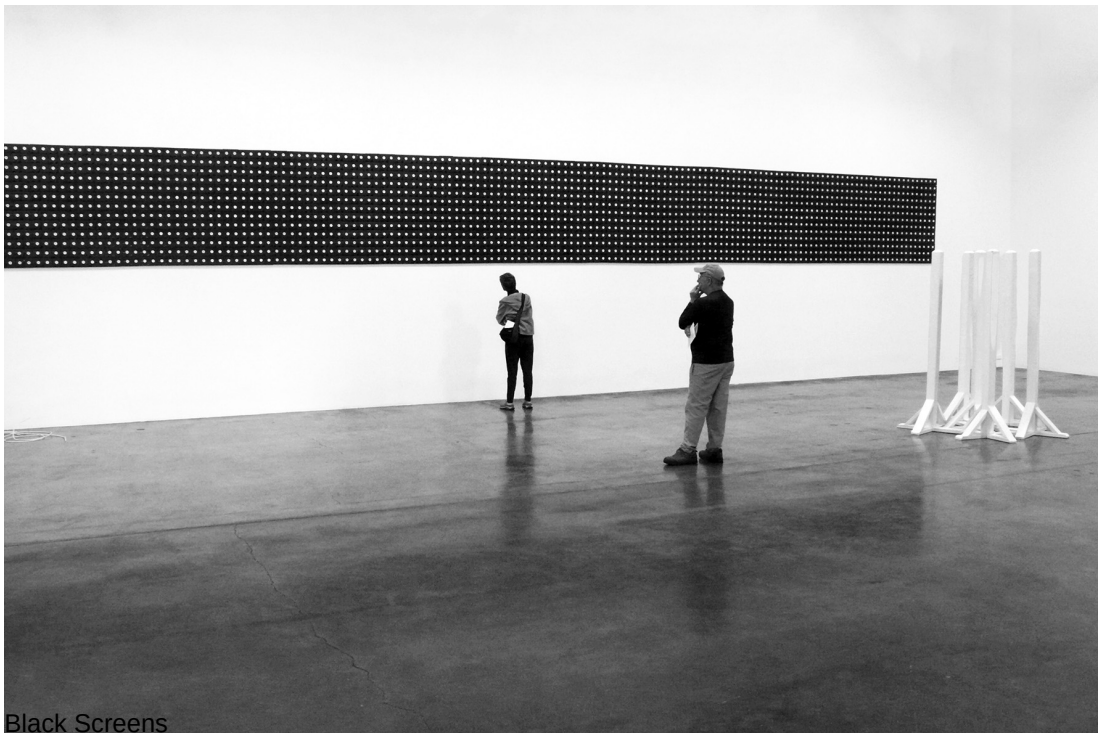
Ecrans noirs - Centre d'art contemporain intercommunal - Solo show



Ghosting, SF Publishing, 2020

mounir fatmi comes up against time, the issue of the past and, of course, that of the subsequent future, and he does so as if he were laden with memory.

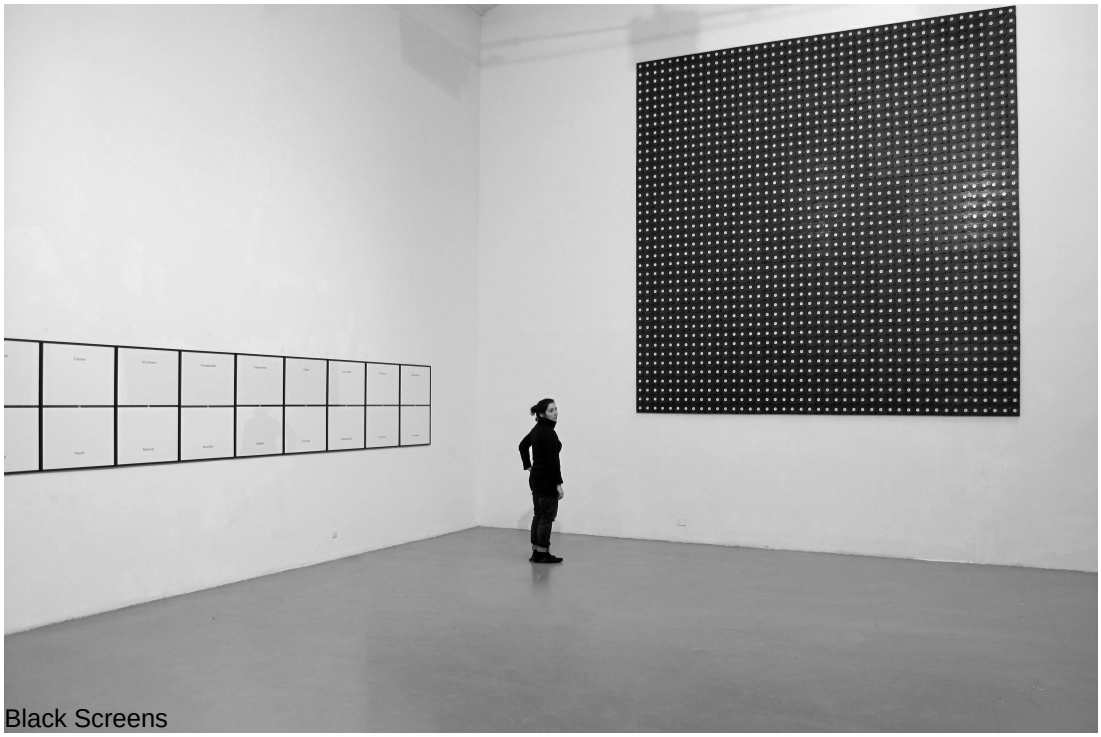
Thierry Raspail, Ghosting, 2011



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