17. | Out of History





2005-2006, posters, Archives from the FBI, video.
Exhibition view of America, Beirut Art Center, 2009, Beirut.
Courtesy of the artist and ADN galeria, Barcelona.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

This work was part of 7ème Biennale de Dakar - Biennale de l'Art Africain Contemporain, Dakar, 2006.

Sortir de l'Histoire : invitation ? Injonction ? Proposition ?
Un mur écran, sur lequel est projetée en plan serré, l'image d'un homme vieillissant.. Imposant. Il nous parle.
Sur l'image, ses mots défilent, fragiles. Ils inscrivent dans le présent des maux du passé.
Entrer dans l'espace de l'installation pour comprendre à quelle histoire Mounir Fatmi nous convie.
L'homme est David Hilliard, figure majeure du Black Panther Party dont l'Histoire n'a gardé que les initiales BPP.
Que reste-il de ce parti révolutionnaire qui milita activement aux États-Unis pour les droits des Noirs dans les années 1960-1970 ?

Des icônes sont restées. Parfois brandies sur des supports qui les ont vidées de sens.
Des gens sont encore en prison, d'autres sont morts, tués par le sanglant système de répression mis en place par le FBI. David Hilliard raconte, commente,
analyse. Rétrospection de son histoire dans l'Histoire.
Portée du témoignage dans sa relation au collectif et à l'intime. Distanciation avec le passé, que la mémoire d'Hilliard exhume avec les mots d'aujourd'hui. Ce qu'il dit aujourd'hui, aurait-il pu le dire il y a quarante ans ?
Mounir Fatmi le filme, l'écoute.
Vertige des mots, dits, écrits, entendus, qui vont et viennent entre passé et présent.

Out of History: invitation, instruction or proposition?
On a screen wall, the image of an ageing man is projected in close up.. Imposing, he speaks to us.
His fragile words scroll over the image. They inscribe past wrongs onto the present.
Enter into the installation space to understand which history mounir fatmi is inviting us to.
The man is David Hilliard, major figure of the Black Panther Party of which History has kept only the initials BPP.
What remains of this revolutionary party that actively campaigned for black rights in the United States in the 1960s and 70s?

Some icons remain. Sometimes flaunted in ways that make them devoid of meaning.
Some are still in prison, others dead, killed by the bloody system of repression implemented by the FBI.
David Hilliard tells his story, comments and analyses.
A retrospection of his story in History.
Driven by the account of his relationship to the collective and to the intimate. Detachment from the past, which Hilliard's memory unearths with today's words.
Could he say forty years ago what he is saying today?
mounir fatmi films him, listens to him.
Vertiginous words, verbalisation, writing and understanding, which come and go between past and present.

Ils sont nombreux à être cachés, raturés, recouverts par le sceau de la censure, celle des services secrets américains. Celle de l'Histoire qui a oublié le sens premier des combats. Mémoire oublieuse éveillée par la rigueur de l'œuvre.
Invitation à *sortir de l'Histoire* par la porte du détail et par là, à mieux en comprendre les faits, en saisir les enjeux et les ambiguïtés.
Une vieille machine à écrire, anodine, comme un élément du décor.
De son giron, sortent des textes rayés de noir.
Zébrures de l'Histoire imprimées par une machine à détruire. Grise. Anodine.

Impact de l'anodin sur l'Histoire.
Il a détruit des hommes, relégué le BPP aux oubliettes et réduit à néant les espoirs de la communauté noire.
L'Histoire se répète. Les images de combats de rues ont toutes un écho dans le présent.
Jamais très loin de nous.
Mounir Fatmi a recréé un bureau du FBI, dans sa fonctionnalité utilitaire… Destructrice.
Les objets – cassettes, livres, images, documents écrits et sonores – raccordés entre eux, deviennent les matériaux de l'Histoire en (re-construction).
Sortir de l'Histoire amène le spectateur à s'engager physiquement dans son espace.
Certains ne font que passer, osant à peine y pénétrer.
D'autres entrent, touchent, lisent, écoutent, apprennent et se souviennent.
De quel côté de la machine à détruire aurions-nous été ?
Rencontre avec des faits dont nous n'avions retenu qu'un vague écho. Mise à l'épreuve

Comme beaucoup d'autres, aussitôt oubliés après la digestion télévisuelle.
L'artiste opère un branchement avec le présent.
Le spectateur est invité à réfléchir sur ce qu'il a retenu de ces faits précis et à s'interroger sur ce qu'il retiendra de ceux d'aujourd'hui.
Force critique d'une œuvre mise sous tension, nécessairement engagée.

Virginie Andriamirado. Africulture le 23/10/2006
Sortir de l'Histoire, selon Mounir Fatmi

Numerous are those that are hidden, erased and concealed by the stamp of censorship, the censorship of the American secret service. The censorship of History which has forgotten the primary meaning of the struggles. Forgetful memory awakened by the austerity of the work.
An invitation to exit History by interacting with the details and in so doing, to better understand the facts, to grasp the issues and ambiguities therein.
An old typewriter, harmless, like part of the furniture.
From its midst come texts crossed out in black.
Stripes of History printed by a destruction machine. Grey. Harmless.

The impact of the harmless on History.
It destroyed men, relegated the BPP to obscurity and reduced the hopes of the black community to nothing.
History repeats itself. Images of street fights all have a resonance in the present.
Never too far from us.
mounir fatmi has recreated an FBI office, in its utilitarian – and destructive – functionality.
The interconnected objects – cassettes, books, images, written and audio documents – become the materials of History under (re-construction).
Out of History leads the spectator to physically engage with the space.
Some just pass by, hardly daring to enter.
Others enter, touch, read, listen, learn and remember.
Which side of the destruction machine would we be on?
Encounter with the facts, of which we have only retained a vague echo. A litmus test.

Promptly forgotten, like many others, after televisual digestion.
The artist creates a connection with the present.
The spectator is invited to reflect on what he has retained of these specific facts and to wonder what
he will retain of today's.
Critical force of a work put under pressure, necessarily bound.

Virginie Andriamirado. Africulture le 23/10/2006
Sortir de l'Histoire, selon Mounir Fatmi

Translation: Caroline Rossiter.

" Out of History leads the spectator to physically engage with the space. Some just pass by, hardly daring to enter. Others enter, touch, read, listen, learn and remember.

Which side of the destruction machine would we be on? "

Virginie Andriamirado, Africulture, 2006

exhibitions:

2018

The Day of the Awakening - CDAN Museum – Solo show

Resist! - Bozar Center for fine arts - Expo collective

2009

America - Beirut Art Center - Expo collective

2007

Seven installations - Faulconer Gallery, Grinnell College - Expo collective

2006

Black panther party for self defense - Bank Galerie - Expo collective

L'Afrique sous-entendu, mal-entendu - 7th Dakar Biennial - Biennal



The Day of the Awakening, SF Publishing, 2019

The Day of the Awakening is inspired by the title of an installation by mounir fatmi. Its epigraph, simple and enigmatic, acts as a metaphor for an artistic work that constructs visual spaces and linguistic games. In this way, his work offers a view of the world from a different perspective, avoiding the blindness provided by conventions.

Juan Guardiola, December 2019



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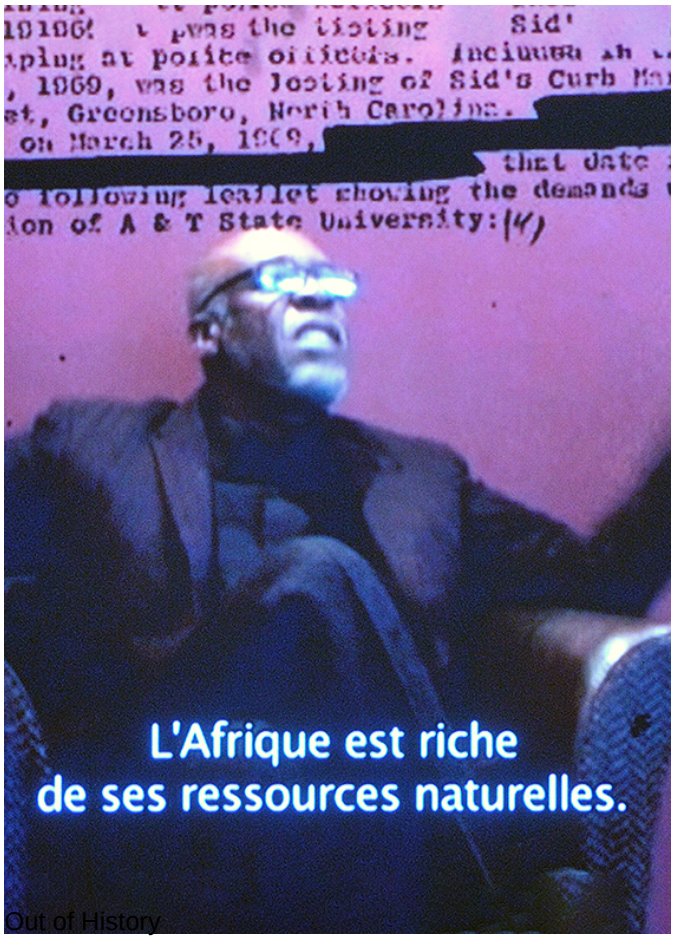


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