33. | Intervention / From the shadows comes the light





2010-2024, 10 saw blades in the wall, 39 cm diameter, 4 mm thickness.
Exhibition view of Future is now, Le Parvis, 2024, Ibos.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 10 + 1 A.P.

Intervention est une installation composée de lames de scies circulaires dont les surfaces métalliques sont recouvertes de motifs tirés de la calligraphie arabe et religieuse peints en noir. Les lames sont fixées au mur de l'espace d'exposition de manière aléatoire et selon différents angles. Enfoncées, fichées dans le mur, celles-ci ne se laissent voir qu'en partie, l'autre partie disparaissant dans le mur.

Intervention étudie les relations entre l'art et la pensée critique d'un côté et de l'autre la religion. L'installation associe des éléments appartenant au discours religieux à des motifs et des techniques propres au domaine artistique. Les lames de scie circulaires font partie des matériaux couramment employés par Mounir Fatmi. On les retrouve dans des installations telles que Le Paradoxe, Entre les lignes ou encore Les Coupes qui expérimentent et mettent en scène les relations entre langue et culture.

Le titre de l'installation évoque l'entrée en action et l'intrusion d'une force tierce au sein dispositif artistique. L'œuvre réalise la mise en présence commune d'éléments hétérogènes et permet d'observer les effets de la rencontre entre l'art contemporain et la pensée dogmatique et religieuse. Elle évoque les dangers de la mise en scène et de l'étude raisonnée de la religion et révèle les rapports difficiles et heurtés entre la pensée critique et l'idéologie religieuse. Elle observe enfin les effets linguistiques de la transposition du discours religieux au sein du dispositif artistique : avec ces lames à moitié enfoncées dans le mur, on peut voir que la langue abandonne en passant une partie de sa charge idéologique et religieuse. L'espace d'exposition a immobilisé les lames pour un temps, permettant leur observation.

Intervention is an installation made of circular saw blades whose metallic surfaces have been covered in motifs borrowed from Arab religious calligraphy, painted in black. The blades are randomly fixed on the wall of the exhibition space, with varying angles. Stuck into the wall, they are only partially visible, as their other half is buried into the wall.

Intervention examines the relation between art and critical thought on one hand and religion on the other. The installation associates elements that belong to religious discourse with motifs and techniques that are specific to the artistic domain. The circular saw blades are a material frequently used by Mounir Fatmi. They can be found in installations such as The Paradox, Between the Lines and The Cuts, installations that experiment with and highlight the relations between language and culture. ?

The installation’s title evokes the action and intrusion of an external force within the artistic context. The piece brings together heterogeneous elements and enables the observation of the effects of the encounter between contemporary art and dogmatic and religious thought. It evokes the danger of putting religion in the spotlight and of submitting it to reasoned scrutiny, and reveals the difficult and chaotic relations between critical thought and religious ideology. It finally also observes the linguistic effect of the transposition of religious discourse into an artistic context: with these blades half sunken into the wall, it appears that language sheds in the process part of its ideological and religious charge. The exhibition space has temporarily immobilized the blades, making it possible to observe them. ?

Le dispositif d'Intervention permet ainsi d'ordonner un certain nombre de remarques. Quant à l'aspect utilitaire des lames tout d'abord : les disques métalliques sont des outils, à l'image des éléments de discours religieux qui constituent les fondements linguistiques de la culture arabo-musulmane. Quant à l'aspect esthétique également : les motifs calligraphiques, avec leurs courbes gracieuses, exercent une séduction visuelle sur le spectateur ; ce qui semble entrer en contradiction d'ailleurs avec la violence qui émane de l'objet aux dents acérées. Intervention vient mettre en lumière l'ambivalence d'un instrument voué à la fois à la construction et à la destruction. La disposition aléatoire des disques sur le mur suggère que le discours religieux exerce une forme de violence aveugle sur tout ce qui s'éloigne de ses dogmes, voire sur ce qui est autre, différent, ou appartenant au domaine profane. Un fait est à relever dans cette scène aux aspects brutaux : les lames paraissent avoir été projetées avec violence contre le mur de l'espace d'exposition dans lequel elles s'enfoncent, comme dans un corps passif et sans défense. Si les murs de l'espace d'expression et d'exposition artistiques s'offrent apparemment comme cible facile et privilégiée, ils acquièrent au passage une fonction essentielle de support et semblent finalement fournir aux armes leur unique raison d'être.

Studio Fatmi, Août 2017.

The configuration of Intervention allows for a few remarks. First of all, regarding the utilitarian aspect of the blades: these metallic disks are tools, like the elements of religious discourse that constitute the linguistic foundation of Arab-Muslim culture. Next, regarding its esthetic aspect: the calligraphic motifs, with their gracious curves, are visually attractive to the viewer, which seems to contradict the violence emanating from these objects equipped with sharp teeth. Intervention highlights the ambivalence of an instrument destined to both construction and destruction. The random placement of the blades on the wall suggests that religious discourse applies a type of blind violence on anything that strays from its dogma, and furthermore on anything that is foreign, different or belonging to the secular world. One fact bears mentioning in this scene of apparent brutality: the blades seem to have been projected onto the walls of the exhibition space; they sink into them, like into a passive and defenseless body. The walls of this space of expressivity and artistic exhibition seem to offer themselves as an easy and favored target, but they also take on an essential function as a support and in the end seem to provide these weapons their only purpose.???

Studio Fatmi, August 2017.

" Several rotary saw blades with black Arabic script cut off of the steel - passages from the Surah or Hadith glorifying the beauty of God slice the gallery wall. “There is nothing but God and Mohammed is his prophet,” one of the silver disks proclaims. Built to cut as it spins, the blade is marked with words that simultaneously encompass and efface all - a time destroying statement that knows no moment but the present, and that moment

eternally. "

Lillian Davies, June 2010

exhibitions:

2024
Art Brussels - Ceysson & Bénétière - Art fair

2023
Arco Madrid - ADN - Art fair

2010

Art Dubai - Solo show - Paradise Row Gallery - Art fair



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