

3. | Enemy and friend



2003, model, prayer carpets, bandage, wall painting, size may vary.
Exhibition view of H+M, centre culturel De Warande, 2003, Turnhout.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

Installation réalisée en 2003, *Ami et Ennemi* met en scène des mannequins de femmes en plastique en partie recouverts par un grand tapis de prière, et dont seuls les bas des jambes et les pieds dépassent. Une des jambes du mannequin apparaît grossièrement enroulée dans un bandage qui se défait et une inquiétante citation accompagne l'œuvre, sonnante comme une mise en garde, une menace : "Si tu es un ennemi, je te tuerai pour de l'argent. Si tu es un ami, je te tuerai gratuitement".

La citation fait référence à une phrase absurde et agressive, souvent entendue par Mounir Fatmi dans le quartier de Casabarata où il a grandi. L'installation *Ami et ennemi* se constitue comme une certaine histoire de la violence. Elle explore le lien entre son expérience personnelle d'un côté, telle que l'artiste l'a vécue, et son histoire universelle, s'illustrant à travers toutes les cultures et toutes les époques. *Ami et ennemi* s'interroge sur les origines sociales du phénomène et sur ses cibles et examine la très mince frontière entre violence verbale et physique.

En soustrayant en partie les mannequins à l'observation du public, l'installation recourt à une esthétique de la dissimulation et du refoulement dont la tonalité communique en premier lieu une impression de danger et un sentiment de peur au spectateur : l'acte violent à l'origine de la scène exposée n'est pas montré et on ne peut qu'en supposer l'extrême brutalité à la vue de la représentation dramatique de ses conséquences. Dans sa nature même, la violence est décrite comme un phénomène à la fois manifeste et refoulé, nié par la société. Elle constitue une forme d'aveuglement volontaire qui se prolonge jusque dans le traitement de ses

Enemy and Friend is an installation created in 2003 showing female plastic mannequins partly covered with a large prayer rug, with nothing more than their legs and feet sticking out. One of the legs on a mannequin is coarsely wrapped in a bandage that is coming undone and an ominous quote accompanies the piece, resonating like a warning or a threat: "If you are an enemy, I will kill you for money. If you are a friend, I will kill you for free."

This quote references an absurd and aggressive sentence often heard by Mounir Fatmi in the Casabarata neighborhood where he grew up. As an installation, *Enemy and Friend* constitutes a certain history of violence. It explores the link between the artist's personal experience and universal history as illustrated across all cultures and all eras. *Enemy and Friend* questions the social origins of the phenomenon and its targets, and examines the thin line between verbal and physical violence.

By partly removing the mannequins from the viewers' gaze, the installation resorts to an aesthetic of dissimulation and repression whose tone initially conveys to the public an impression of danger and a feeling of fear: the violent act at the origin of the displayed scene isn't shown and one can only imagine its extreme brutality upon seeing the dramatic representation of its consequences. In its very nature, violence is described as a phenomenon that is both manifest and repressed, denied by society. This constitutes a type of voluntary blindness that extends to the treatment of the violence's fatal consequences, with the denial of the fact it is a chronic evil and the negation of each and everyone's right to live freely. The committed crime isn't just the act of one

suites fatales, avec sa négation en tant que mal chronique et la négation de l'autre et de ses droits à vivre librement. Le crime commis n'est pas seulement le fait d'un individu, mais une forme de barbarie autorisée car exercée par la société dans son ensemble. Pour le corps féminin, dont la place pose problème dans la société traditionnelle, cette dernière, symbolisée par le tapis, ne se constitue pas comme un espace de repos mais bien comme un linceul. La jambe est blessée et mal soignée : ce qui fait lien entre l'individu et la société est mis à mal. Par-dessus tout, Ami et Ennemi communique au spectateur le sentiment d'arbitraire de la violence. Celle-ci constitue une menace à laquelle il semble impossible d'échapper. Elle constitue, à l'image de la citation, une impasse logique et une absurdité aux terribles conséquences.

Studio Fatmi, Août 2017.

individual, but a type of brutality that is authorized because it is applied by society as a whole. For the female body, whose place is a problem within traditional societies, that place, symbolized by the rug, is not to be considered as a place of rest but as a burial shroud. The wounded leg hasn't been properly treated: the link between the individual and society is jeopardized. More than anything, Enemy and Friend conveys to the viewer the arbitrariness of violence, a seemingly inescapable threat. Just like the exhibited quote, it represents a logical dead end and an absurdity with terrible consequences.

Studio Fatmi, August 2017.

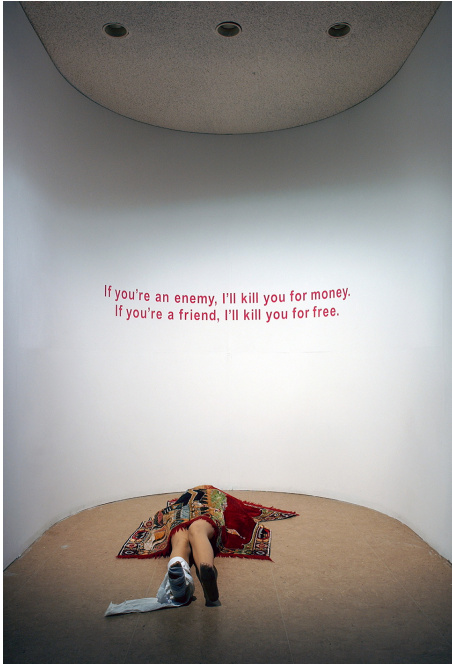
" Enemy and Friend questions the social origins of the phenomenon and its targets, and examines the thin line between verbal and physical violence. "

Studio Fatmi, August 2017

exhibitions:

2003

H+M - Centre culturel De Warande - Expo collective



Enemy and friend

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The committed crime isn't just the act of one individual, but a type of brutality that is authorized because it is applied by society as a whole. For the female body, whose place is a problem within traditional societies, that place, symbolized by the rug, is not to be considered as a place of rest but as a burial shroud.

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