19. | Bad connection

2005, Canada, 15 min 22, SD, 4/3, color, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

Bad Connection est une vidéo très dense où se heurtent et se lient les idées et les images, les couleurs et les sons, associant fonction critique de l'art et inventions poétiques. Les titres ponctuent une construction en trois temps, incluant tout un dispositif de résonances et de variations formelles, de ruptures de linéarité du récit, dans la métamorphose permanente des images et leur entremêlement à la bande-son.

Le jeune garçon photographié par Edward Muybridge court, rit, saute, son déplacement étant restitué par une suite de plans fixes. Il en sera ainsi tout au long de la vidéo, où alternent l'instantané de la vie, du mouvement, du documentaire, et l'immuable du document, de la photographie, du livre et de l'image peinte.
Les mots Bad Connection apparaissent à l'écran, ouvrant la place au doute, à la polysémie, au malentendu. De quoi s'agit-il ? D'une mauvaise connection, d'un défaut de contact, de funestes rencontres ? La photographie d'un homme, un terroriste ceinturé de noirs explosifs, confirme la première inquiétude.

Bad Connection s'efforce de lire entre les lignes de l'ordre des discours et des images. Mounir Fatmi a entrepris de sortir de son histoire, de sa propre culture, de ses propres croyances, de devenir athée le temps de lire Jacques Derrida ou Salman Rushdie. Le seul paradis finalement ici proposé, c'est celui de la lucidité, de la position critique. Les frappes sur le clavier composent une étrange musique, des combats de mots et de mitraille. Une jeune femme, en un geste ample, protecteur, maternel, referme ses bras sur son ventre ceint d'une ceinture explosive. Femme kamikaze, terroriste prête à sacrifier sa vie et celle de son enfant à venir pour

Bad Connection is a highly complex video in which images and ideas, sounds and colours combine and collide, linking poetic invention and the critical function of art. The titles punctuate a three-part structure, which includes a whole system of resonances, formal variations and interruptions to the narrative line, in a perpetual metamorphasis of pictures that intersperse with the soundtrack.

The young boy photographed by Edward Muybridge runs, laughs and jumps, his movements reproduced by a series of still shots. This sets the scene for the rest of the video, where instants of life, movement and documentary alternate with the permanency of documents, photos, books, and paintings. The words “Bad Connexion" appear on the screen, giving way to doubt, polysemy and misunderstanding. What is it about? A bad connection, a faulty contact, sinister encounters? The photo of a man, a terrorist wearing a belt of black explosives, confirms this worry.

Bad Connection endeavours to read between the lines of speech and images. mounir fatmi has tried to shake off his personal history, culture and beliefs to become an atheist in order to read Jacques Derrida or Salman Rushdie. The only paradise finally offered here is that of lucidity and critical stance. The sound of typing on a keyboard offers a strange music, a combat of words and gunshot. A young woman crosses her arms over her body girdled with explosives with a sweeping, protective, maternal movement: a suicide bomber, a terrorist willing to sacrifice her life and that of her unborn child in order to defend fundamentalism? Of course not: here, there is no bomb in the books and no detonator, except for the power of images, words and culture, and the determination to promote intelligence and tolerance.

défendre la cause intégriste ? Evidemment non : ici nulle bombe dans les livres, et nul détonateur, hormis celui du pouvoir des images et des mots, de la culture, de la détermination à privilégier l'intelligence et la tolérance. L'ambivalence de la situation mise en scène par Mounir Fatmi est redoublée par la dangerosité de l'écrit, porteur de libération comme d'enfermement, d'individuation comme de conditionnement. Ici la ceinture devient protection, la culture, le savoir, la conscience, faisant rempart à l'immonde.

Extrait du texte « mounir fatmi, Bad Connection »
Evelyne Toussaint
Maître de conférences en histoire de l'art contemporain, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour. Avril 2006

vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

The ambivalence of the situation staged by mounir fatmi is reinforced by the danger of the written word, conveyor of liberty as well as imprisonment, of individuation as well as mental conditioning. Here, the belt becomes protection, and culture, knowledge and awareness create a barrier against the sordid.

Extract from the text "mounir fatmi, Bad Connexion"
Evelyne Toussaint
Lecturer of Modern Art

History at the University of Pau et des Pays de l'Adour. April 2006

Translation: Julien Castel, Suzan Leclerq.
Editing: Caroline Rossiter.

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Evelyne Toussaint, 2006

exhibitions:

2018

This is My Body - Art Bärtschi & Cie - Solo show

2010

Breaking News - Fondazione Fotografia Modena - Expo collective

This is my Body, Sf Publishing 2019

When hearing the name mounir fatmi, one can’t help but think of his sculptures and installations addressing the issues of free expression and censorship. His works, both material and immaterial, all have in common striking concepts and powerful images. Video is his preferred medium. Contrary to a painting where the image remains motionless and unchanging, a screen always offers the possibility of being turned off, thus making the work disappear, of giving it life or not at any chosen moment.

Barbara Polla, 2019

Bad connection

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