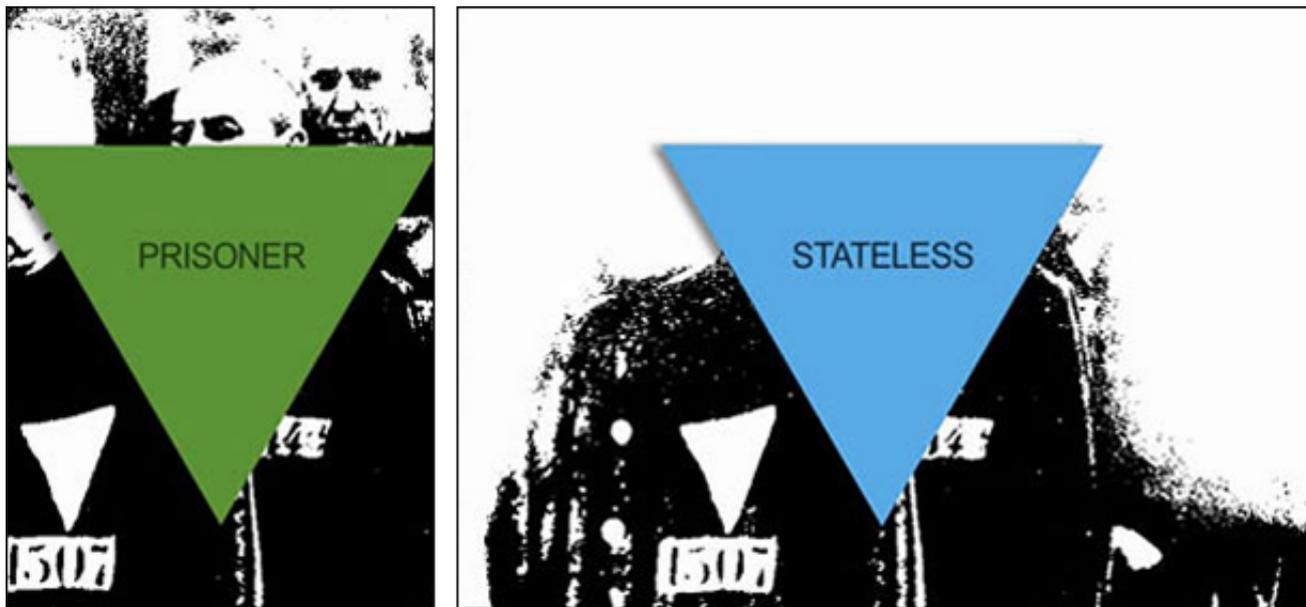


30. | Colors of Deportation



2009, France, 5 min 09, SD, 4/3, color, stereo.
 Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
 Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

Couleurs de déportation est une vidéo réalisée à partir d'une photographie en noir et blanc extraite d'un magazine d'histoire, mettant en scène des prisonniers des camps de concentration de la seconde guerre mondiale. Au premier plan, se succèdent une série de triangles colorés à pointes inversées, tandis qu'au second plan, l'écran blanc se couvre peu à peu de taches noires, faisant apparaître progressivement des personnages en tenue de prisonnier, qui restent en partie masqués par les triangles occupant le centre de l'image. La photographie s'obscurcit ensuite peu à peu, jusqu'à la disparition complète des protagonistes, remplacés par un écran noir, sur lequel finit par apparaître une étoile jaune de David. La bande-son du film est tissée de distorsions acoustiques où nulle voix humaine n'est audible, et pourrait évoquer l'enregistrement sonore et altéré d'un train de l'époque voyageant sur des rails métalliques, ainsi que les débarquements successifs des prisonniers sur les quais.

L'œuvre traite du déplacement forcé de populations au cours de la seconde guerre mondiale et de leur internement dans les camps de concentration, désigné par le terme "déportation". Elle explore en particulier les rapports entre la désignation d'un groupe social par un gouvernement et son exclusion de la société, voire son extermination. Les triangles de différentes couleurs renvoient ainsi au système de marquage des détenus établi par le régime nazi, qui distinguait différentes catégories parmi ceux-ci : prisonniers politiques, inadaptés, homosexuels, juifs, repris de justice etc..., leur associant des traitements et des conditions de détention plus ou moins sévères.

Couleurs de déportation se livre ainsi à une énumération rigoureuse des catégories sociales établies par la doctrine national-socialiste et dont la liste, non exhaustive, semble se

Colors of Deportation is a video created from a black & white photograph taken from a history magazine that shows prisoners in concentration camps during WWII. In the foreground, a series of colored inverted triangles can be seen, and in the background, the white screen is progressively covered with black spots, which lets an image appear little by little, showing characters in prisoner uniforms, although they remain partially covered by the triangles in the center of the screen. The photograph then goes dark, and the people end up disappearing completely, replaced by a black screen on which a yellow Star of David eventually appears. The film's soundtrack mainly comprises acoustic distortions – no human voices can be heard – and could be the altered recording of a train from the 1940s rolling on metallic rails, with the intermittent disembarking of prisoners on the platform.

This artwork is about the forced displacement of populations during the Second World War and their internment in concentration camps, a process designated with the term "deportation". It particularly explores the relationship between the designation of a social group by a government and its exclusion from society, even its extermination. The triangles of different colors refer to the prisoner marking system created by the Nazi regime, which distinguished different categories among them: political prisoners, unadapted people, homosexuals, Jews, convicts, etc., with varying treatments and detention conditions attributed to each category.

Colors of Deportation goes through a rigorous enumeration of the social categories established by the national-socialist doctrine, whose list, never exhaustive, seems to grow longer according to whatever new groups and individuals had to be discriminated against and excluded as they were suspected

compléter en fonction des besoins de discrimination et d'exclusion des groupes et individus soupçonnés d'être opposés au régime politique, ou simplement considérés comme déviants ou inadaptés. Les photographies exhumées accumulent progressivement les personnages représentés, de plus en plus nombreux à l'écran, et suggèrent l'accumulation à peine imaginable des victimes assassinées par millions - les plus touchées appartenant aux catégories des homosexuels, des tziganes et enfin des juifs.

L'œuvre joue sur les contrastes entre abstrait et figuratif, entre le noir et blanc et la couleur, et entre visibilité et occultation des personnages, produisant ainsi un effet de dramatisation qui exprime la violence et l'horreur des camps. La mise en scène du triangle par Mounir Fatmi n'est pas sans rappeler "Qui a besoin d'un dieu triangle ?", bas-relief réalisé par l'artiste qui relie la figure géométrique à une notion d'exercice arbitraire et violent du pouvoir.

Couleurs de déportation alerte finalement le spectateur contre l'établissement de catégories sociales quelles que soient leur nature ou leur origine. L'œuvre met en évidence que celles-ci recouvrent toujours des enjeux de domination politique dont le but est la mise à l'écart, l'exclusion, et parfois l'extermination des populations considérées comme non conformes.

Le titre choisi par Mounir Fatmi évoque les campagnes publicitaires de Toscani pour Benetton dans les années 90, tour à tour considérées comme consensuelles ou provocantes, et qui donnaient à voir la variété des individus et des groupes au sein de nos sociétés contemporaines, et mettait en scène leur acceptation ou non par le reste de la société. Couleurs de déportation, quant à elle, réalise un système d'ancrage mémoriel puissant contre l'oubli des victimes et dénonce en même temps avec force la violence des catégorisations sociales effectuées par les états ou les gouvernements, et exhorte à ne pas s'y laisser enfermer et à se révolter

Studio fatmi, April 2017.

vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

of being opposed to the regime, or simply because they were considered as deviant or unadapted. The photographs progressively show more and more people, filling the screen and suggesting the hardly imaginable number of victims assassinated in the millions – the most severely affected categories being homosexuals, Gypsies and finally Jews.

The work plays on the contrasts between abstract and figurative, black & white and color, and between visible and covered up characters, producing a dramatization effect that expresses the horror of the Nazi camps. The use of the triangle is reminiscent of Mounir Fatmi's "Who needs a triangular God?", a bas-relief created by the artist that links the geometric shape to the notion of the arbitrary and violent exercise of power.

Lastly, Colors of Deportation warns the viewer against the creation of social categories, whatever their nature or origin. The artwork demonstrates that they always go hand in hand with questions of political domination whose objective is to cast aside, exclude and sometime exterminate the populations that are deemed non-compliant.

The title chosen by Mounir Fatmi evokes Toscani's advertising campaigns of the 90s for Benetton, that were considered both consensual and provocative as they showed the diversity of individuals and groups within our contemporary societies, underlining their acceptance, or lack thereof, by the rest of society. As for Colors of Deportation, it creates a strong memorial testimony in order to not forget the victims and at the same time it denounces with great strength the violence of social categorizations created by governments, urging us not to let ourselves be trapped by them and to revolt.

Studio fatmi, April 2017.

Video distributed by Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

" The work plays on the contrasts between abstract and figurative, black & white and color, and between visible and covered up characters, producing a dramatization effect that expresses the horror of the

Nazi camps. "

Studio Fatmi, April 2017

exhibitions:

2018

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

2014

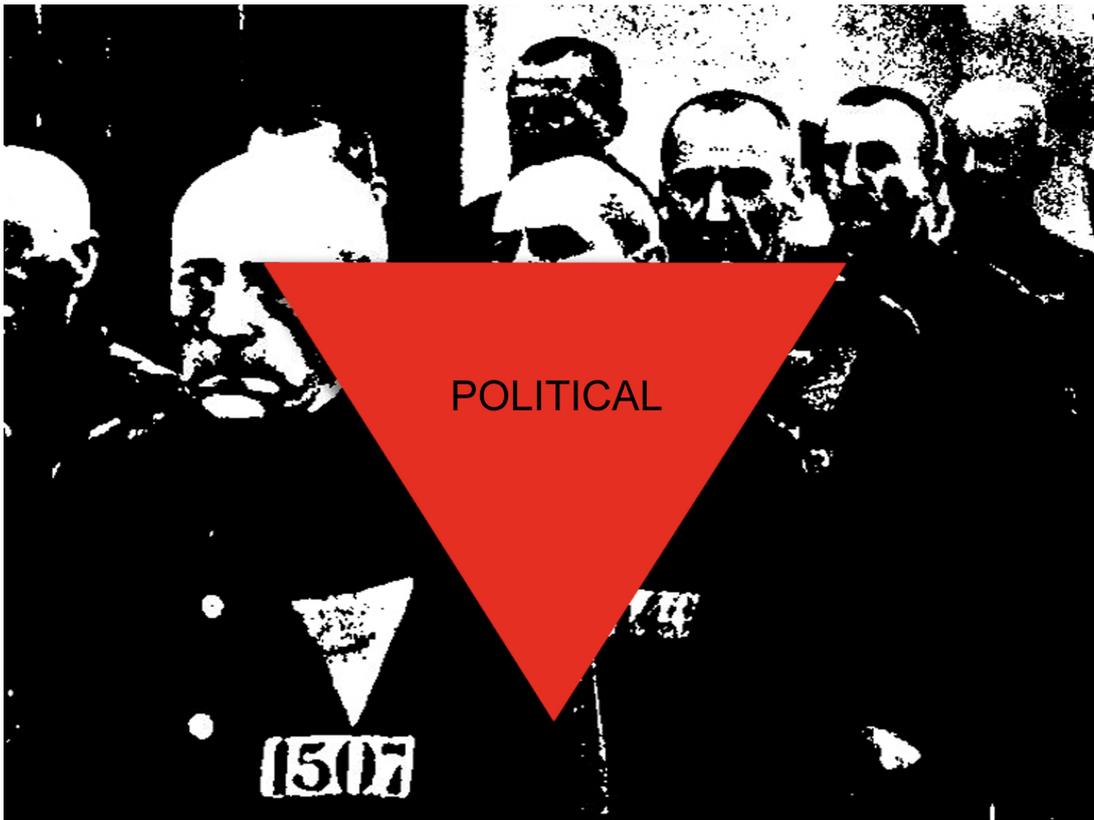
Views from inside - Fotofest Biennial Houston - Biennale



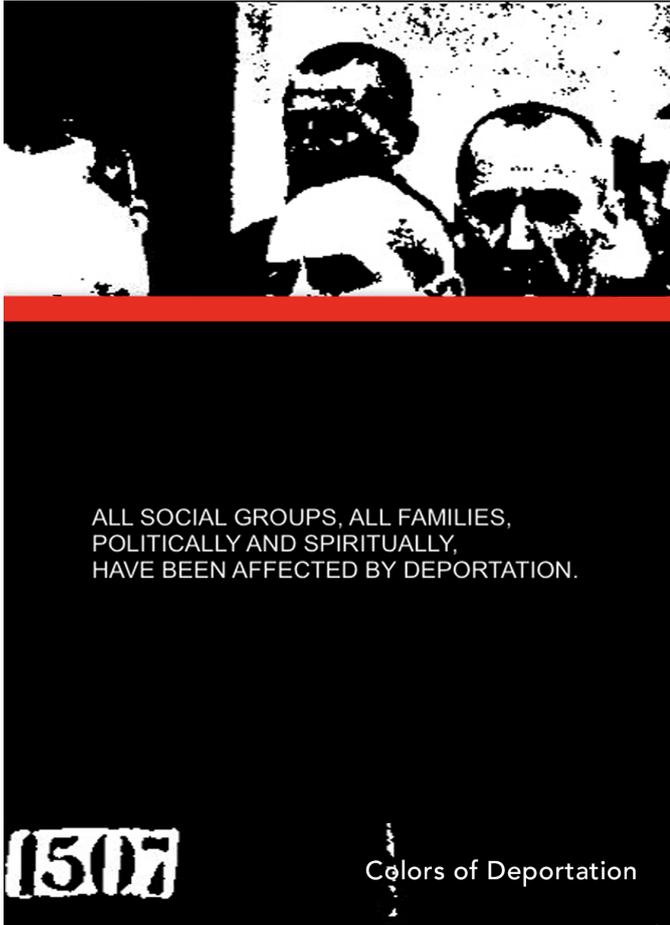
This is my Body, Sf Publishing 2019

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



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This artwork is about the forced displacement of populations during the Second World War and their internment in concentration camps, a process designated with the term deportation. It particularly explores the relationship between the designation of a social group by a government and its exclusion from society, even its extermination.

Colors of Deportation

The triangles of different colors refer to the prisoner marking system created by the Nazi regime, which distinguished different categories among them: political prisoners, unadapted people, homosexuals, Jews, convicts, etc., with varying treatments and detention conditions attributed to each category.



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