41. | The VF Project





2010-2011, France, 26 min 21, HD, color, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

This work was part of 5th Auckland Triennial - If you were to live here, Auckland, 2013.

http://www.ovalprojet.com/

Le Projet VF est une vidéo qui met en scène une discussion à propos du projet d'urbanisme du Val Fourré. Elle effectue un retour sur plus de cinquante ans de projets d'urbanisme dans la ville de Mantes-la-Jolie et constitue une table ronde faisant intervenir des habitants du quartier et un urbaniste. Le point de vue choisi ne permet d'apercevoir que les mains des participants et la table autour de laquelle ceux-ci sont réunis. Sur cette dernière, sont étalés divers documents en rapport avec les projets d'urbanisme du quartier : plans d'architectes, cartes, photographies en noir et blanc ou en couleurs.

Le projet VF interroge l'urbanisation, ses effets sur les individus et ses enjeux pour l'ensemble de la société française. La vidéo soulève des questions essentielles, telles que la nature du projet à l'origine et celle du public auquel il était destiné, la manière dont ce projet s'est concrétisé et développé, le rapport des habitants à leur quartier et au reste de la société française, le devenir du quartier ou encore le rôle joué par les structures culturelles.

Si le point de vue surplombant offre une vision d'ensemble, il fait également presque disparaître les personnages en ne laissant voir que les cartes et traduit un rapport de

The VF Project is a video showing a conversation about an urban project at Val Fourré, an underprivileged neighborhood near Paris. It retraces over fifty years of urban planning in the suburban city of Mantes-la-Jolie and constitutes a round table involving a few inhabitants and an urban planner. The chosen point of view only reveals the participants' hands and the table around which they are sitting. On that table, documents about the neighborhood's urban projects are strewn about: architectural blueprints, maps, black & white and color photographs.

The VF Project questions urbanization, its effects on individuals and the implications for French society as a whole. The video raises essential questions such as the nature of the project at its inception and the public it was destined to, the way the project materialized and developed, the relation between the inhabitants and their neighborhood as well as with the rest of French society, the future of the neighborhood and the part played by cultural institutions in all of this.

The high angle perspective offers a general view, but it also nearly erases the characters by showing only the maps,

domination. Les individus, confrontés aux rapports d'urbanisme et d'architecture tendent à s'effacer.

La restitution des témoignages permet cependant d'établir une cartographie du quartier bien différente de celle proposée par les organes officiels. Elle trace un plan du quartier tel qu'il est vécu et expérimenté par ses habitants et non tel qu'il a été conçu en théorie. Elle délivre une représentation inédite qui est celle des projections fantasmatiques et des désirs des habitants et du personnel de la mairie de Mantes-la-Jolie.

Lorsque les protagonistes abordent la question du devenir du quartier, ceux-ci relèvent par exemple la suppression des marques caractéristiques originelles du logement social et notent l'exclusion progressive des habitants du quartier par l'augmentation des prix du loyer. Ils évoquent également les structures culturelles (le cinéma, l'école) comme "un autre monde", des lieux hors temps, hors espace qui permettent d'échapper pour un temps aux déterminismes du quartier, structures qui au cours de l'histoire du Val Fourré ont difficilement rencontré leur public, souvent demeuré dans une attitude de méfiance à l'égard des institutions.

Les paroles des habitants mettent en lumière de quelle manière une utopie sociale a fini par se construire au détriment de l'humain. Elles démontrent également que les effets néfastes comme les effets bénéfiques des structures et équipements du quartier ont surgi la plupart du temps de manière tout à fait accidentelle, sans avoir été prévus par les urbanistes, ces effets dépendant finalement essentiellement des usages des habitants et de leurs moyens matériels. Le rapport à la société française et au monde des premiers habitants, issus de l'immigration massive de travailleurs pendant les années 50, est lui aussi évoqué. Leur sentiment d'être étrangers partout, aussi bien dans leur pays d'origine que dans le pays d'accueil peut être mis en lien avec celui de la population actuelle constitué à la fois d'adhésion au quartier et de rejet.

Le projet VF inverse pendant le temps d'une discussion informelle le rapport des forces entre institutions et individus en donnant la parole à ces derniers. La vidéo donne à entendre des points de vue individuels énoncés d'une façon qui peut paraître maladroite ou naïve mais qui pointent les questions essentielles, à côté de points de vue plus officiels ou savants qui peuvent paraître témoigner d'une relative ignorance ou méconnaissance du terrain. Le projet VF rappelle que la carte n'est en rien le territoire.

Studio Fatmi, Juillet 2017.

vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

thereby conveying a certain relationship of dominance. Individuals, when faced with urban planning and architecture reports, tend to disappear.

However, the restitution of the participants' statements makes for a very different cartography of the neighborhood than that proposed by official organisms. It traces a map of the neighborhood as experienced by its inhabitants, instead of as it was theoretically conceived. It offers a new representation stemming from the inhabitants' fantasy projections and desires as well as from Mantes-la-Jolie's municipal staff.

When the participants come to the question of the neighborhood's future, they for instance mention removing the original characteristic stigma of social housing and note the progressive exclusion of its inhabitants due to the rise of rent prices. They also speak of cultural institutions (the movie theater, the school) as "another world", places out of time and space that allow people to temporarily escape the neighborhood's determinisms, structures that met their audiences with difficulty throughout the history of Val Fourré, as people often maintained an attitude of mistrust towards institutions in general.

The inhabitants' words highlight the way in which a social utopia ended up constructing itself to the detriment of the human element. They also show that the negative and the positive effects of the neighborhood's structures and facilities generally arose completely accidentally, without having been anticipated by urban planners, as these effects ultimately depended essentially on the inhabitants' habits and material means. The relation to French society and to the world in general of the first inhabitants, who arrived with the massive labor immigration waves of the 1950s, is also brought up. Their feeling of being foreigners everywhere, in their country of origin as well as in their host country, can be linked to the current population's mixed feelings of belonging and rejection towards their neighborhood.

Over the course of an informal discussion, the VF Project reverses the balance of power between institutions and individuals by letting the voice of the latter be heard. The video offers individual points of view enunciated in a way that can seem awkward or naïve but that bring up essential questions, especially when compared to more official or expert points of view that often seem to demonstrate a certain ignorance or lack of understanding of the field. The VF Project reminds us that the map definitely isn't the territory.

Studio Fatmi, July 2017.

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Studio Fatmi, July 2017

exhibitions:

2018

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



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



The VF Project

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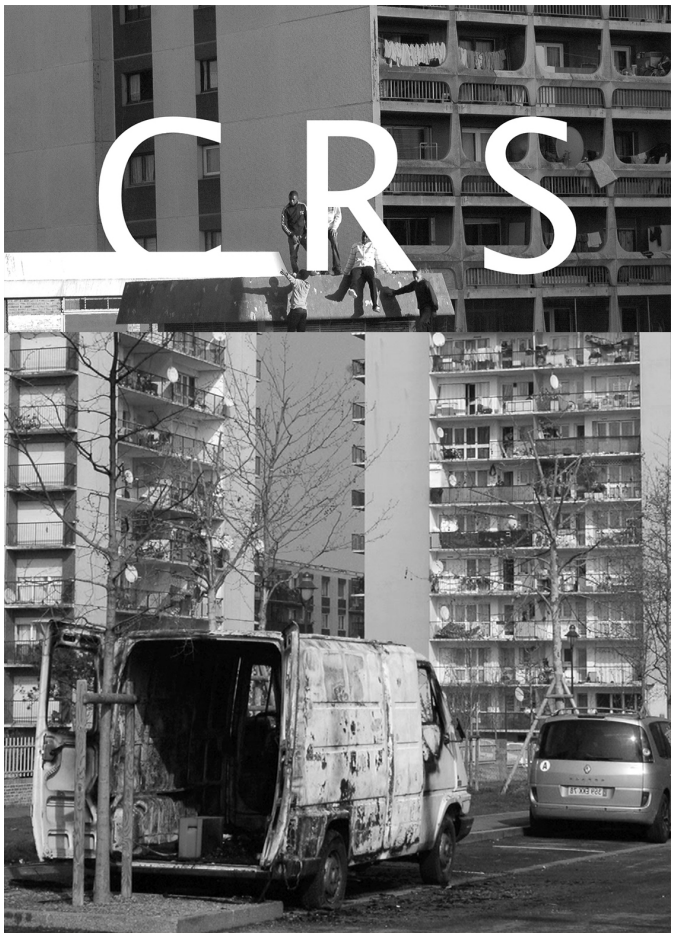



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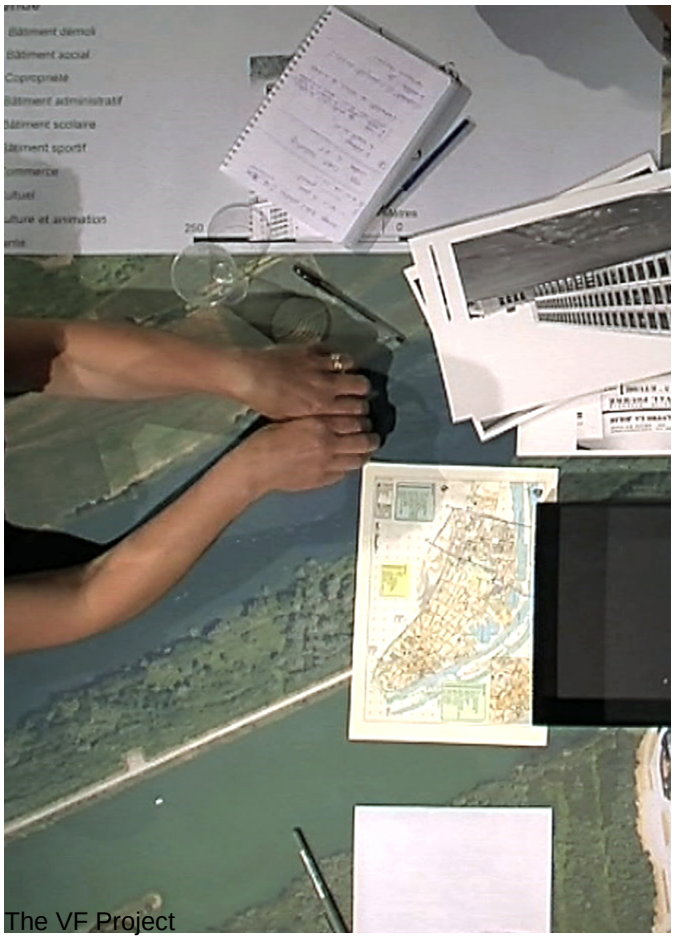

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