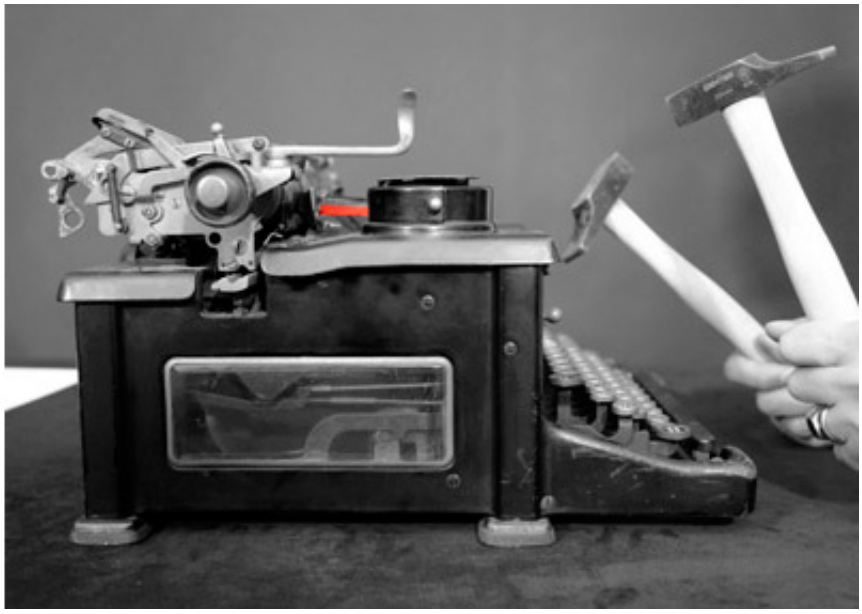
47. | History is not mine





2013, France, 5 min, HD, colour, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and ADN galeria, Barcelona.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

This work was part of 10ème Biennale Africaine de la Photographie - Telling Time, Bamako, 2015.

La vidéo «l'histoire n'est pas à moi» peut être considérée comme une réponse directe au festival d'art le « Printemps de Septembre de Toulouse (2012), dont le titre était L'Histoire est à moi. À cette occasion, l'installation Technologia, mêlant des versets coraniques circulaires à des éléments inspirés des Rotoreliefs de Marcel Duchamp, avait été retirée après une décision prise par l'organisation du festival et l'artiste suite à des incidents provoqués par le public. Le fait que les versets du Coran aient été projetés sur la chaussée d'un pont et que le spectateur puisse marcher dans l'installation avait conduit à de violentes protestations de la part de groupes musulmans. La même année la vidéo Sleep Al Naïm hommage à Salman Rushdie est censurée à son tour à l'Institut du Monde Arabe à Paris, à l'occasion de l'exposition 25 ans de créativité arabe. Ces événements ont marqué le plasticien et engendré tant une prise de conscience qu'une grande déception.

La vidéo en noir et blanc montre un homme, dont le visage n'est jamais visible, frappant sur une machine à écrire avec deux marteaux. Seul le ruban de la machine est coloré d'un rouge vif, sanglant, dans un télescopage de la beauté de la phrase à écrire avec la violence et la difficulté de sa réalisation. La vidéo nous plonge à la fois dans le rôle de témoins et puis celui de complices, ainsi le spectateur, est presque partie prenante de l'écriture de cette histoire. Le geste simple et banal de frapper sur un clavier devient écrasant par l'utilisation des marteaux. Ce poids s'abattant sur les touches provoque une intonation grave et violente.

The History is not Mine video can be seen as a direct response to Printemps de Septembre de Toulouse (2012) (Toulouse's Spring of September) art festival which bore the title L'Histoire est à moi (History is Mine). On this occasion, Technologia, an installation that combined circular Koranic verses with elements inspired by Marcel Duchamp's Rotoreliefs, had been withdrawn by the organization following incidents provoked by the public. The fact that verses from the Quran had been projected on the walkway of a bridge that allowed viewers to walk upon them led to violent protests from Muslim groups. In the same year, the Sleep Al Naïm tribute to Salman Rushdie was censored on the occasion of 25 Years of Arab Creativity at the Arab World Institute in Paris. These events left a mark on the visual artist and engendered an awareness as well as a disappointment.

The black and white video depicts a man whose face remains concealed as he strikes a typewriter with two hammers. Only the typewriter's ribbon bears a brilliant red the color of blood; a collision of the written sentence's beauty and the violence and difficulty of its creation. The video plunges us into the role of a witness and that of an accomplice, and the spectator is almost a part of this story's writing process. The simple and mundane gesture of striking the keys becomes crushing with the use of hammers. The weight that falls on the keys causes a deep, violent intonation. These effects, accentuated by the characteristic sound of a typewriter, also evoke the ticking of a clock or shots fired from a sub-machine gun. The time that passes and the history that escapes us is thus

Ces effets, accentués par le son caractéristique de la machine à écrire, rappellent aussi le tic-tac d'une horloge ou les tirs d'une mitraillette. Symbolisant ainsi le temps qui passe et l'histoire qui nous échappent.

L'artiste donne à réfléchir sur la posture de chacun à adopter vis-à-vis de l'histoire. Si par le titre de l'œuvre, il est évident qu'un sentiment d'impuissance se dégage, les prises de vues en plongée récurrente mettent en avant un sentiment de domination. De ce fait, en ne montrant jamais le visage de l'homme tapant à la machine, mounir fatmi encourage le spectateur à s'identifier à sa propre expérience. Tout à chacun étant à la fois partie prenante de cette histoire en train de s'écrire mais aussi de la violence des marteaux et de l'impossibilité d'écrire quelque chose de cohérent avec.

Studio Fatmi, Novembre 2014.

vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

symbolized.

The artist urges the viewer to become aware of his or her stance vis-à-vis history. As evidenced by the title of the work, a feeling of hopelessness clearly emerges. The repetitive, angled shots overlooking the scene highlight a feeling of domination. By never showing the man's face as he strikes the machine, mounir fatmi encourages the viewer to identify with his or her own experience. Everyone is a part of this story being written, the violence of the hammers, and the impossibility of writing something coherent with this method.

Studio Fatmi, November 2014.

" In the video mounir fatmi addresses the difficulties of language and communication through an irritating action in which a man interacts violently with a typewriter. Within its context, this action involves a deep reflection on the human inability to learn from history, condemning itself to repeat the failed schemes and stubbornness of assigning nationalities to those who inhabit specific territories. "

lar-magazine.com, 2017

exhibitions:

2023

PUSH 2.0 - CAPV, Lille - Group show

2022

While the Storm Arrives - Es Baluard Museum, Palma - Solo show

Yesterday Was a Terrible Day - Casa Conti, Oletta - Solo show

Cape Town Art Fair - Goodman Gallery - Art fair

2021

Heavier than words - Conrads Gallery, Berlin - Solos show

Les Orages - ISELP - Expo Collective

2020

Rock me Baby - CACY - Expo collective

La Vague Blanche - Galerie 38 - Expo collective

2019

Precaria - EAC - Expo collective

2018

The Day of the Awakening - CDAN Museum – Solo show

180° Behind Me - Göteborgs Konsthall – Solo show

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

2017

Survival Signs - Jane Lombard Gallery - Solo show

Inside the Fire Circle - Lawrie Shabibi - Solo show

In Friction with Fiction - Conrads Gallery - Expo collective

57th Venice Bienale 2017, NSK State Pavilion - Expo collective

1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair London - Goodman Gallery - Art fair

2016

Art Verona - Analix Forever - Art fair

2015

Modern Times - Miami Beach Urban Studios Gallery - Solo show

History is not mine - Metavilla - Solo show

Je me souviens du génocide arménien - Galerie Sobering - Expo collective

Créer c'est résister - Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon - Expo collective

Global Control and Censorship - ZKM - Expo collective

Je me souviens - La Traverse, centre d'art contemporain d'Alfortville - Expo collective

2014

They were blind, they only saw images - Galerie Yvon Lambert - Solo show

Walking on the light - CCC - Solo show

Ne pas se séparer du monde - 5ème Orient'art express - Expo collective

Giving Contours to Shadows - N.B.K - Expo collective

Memory, Place, Desire: Contemporary Art of the Maghreb and the Maghrebi Diaspora - Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery - Expo collective

2013

Intersections - Keitelman Gallery - Solo show

History is not mine - Paradise Row Gallery - Solo show

La Ligne Droite - Galerie Fatma Jellal - Solo show

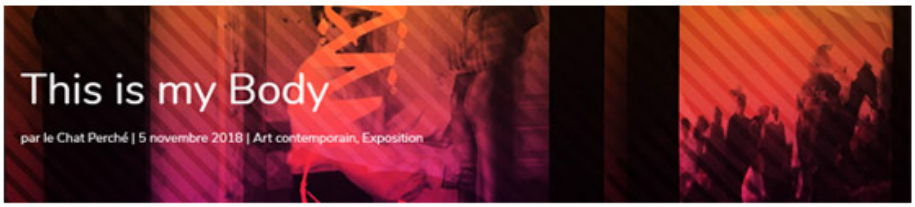
ArtInternational Istanbul - ADN Galeria - Art fair

press articles:

This is my Body, Le Chat Perché, November 5th, 2018

Mounir Fatmi 7 Sep - 21 Oct 2017 at the Jane Lombard Gallery in New York, United States, Wall Street

International Art, September 12th, 2017



Cet automne, venez découvrir This is my Body, un projet exceptionnel regroupant 50 vidéos de l'artiste pluridisciplinaire mounir fatmi. Né d'une collaboration entre les galeries Analix Forever et Art Bärtschi & Cie, cette exposition réunit pour la première fois la quasi totalité des vidéos de l'artiste. 20 ans de création – de 1997 à 2007 – sont à visionner au Loft durant 1 mois.



Quand on évoque mounir fatmi, on ne peut s'empêcher de penser à ses sculptures et installations sur le thème de la liberté d'expression et de la censure. Ses oeuvres, qu'elle soient matérielles ou immatérielles ont pour point commun des concepts percutants et des images fortes. La vidéo est son médium de prédilection. Au contraire d'un tableau dont l'image reste fixe, immuable, un écran laisse toujours la possibilité d'être éteint et donc, d'en faire disparaître l'oeuvre, de lui donner vie ou non à un moment choisi. Avec la vidéo, il peut affirmer que la réalité n'existe pas, qu'elle n'est qu'une illusion, un piège esthétique qui se referme sur le spectateur mais qui disparaît à la fin du film.
Un concept qui séduit l'artiste et qu'on retrouve dans son choix de matériaux pour ses oeuvres palpables: câbles d'antennes, cassettes vhs et autres objets qui commencent à se faire rares dans le paysage numérique actuel.
On retrouve dans Save Manhattan (2008-2009) l'idée de l'illusion. Manhattan se dessine grâce à l'ombre d'objets électroniques disposés de manière à créer la silhouette de sa skyline avant le 11 septembre. Les enceintes diffusent des sons créant un sentiment d'insecurité, ponctué de messages radio présageant un danger imminent. Les bruit d'hélicoptères nous donnent l'illusion que l'on survole la ville. Ils renforcent ainsi l'ambiance chaotique qui règne sur la ville.
Le langage et la calligraphie sont très présents dans le travail de mounir fatmi. Les mots utilisés nous poussent à une interprétation métaphorique tandis que les phrases évoquent toujours un concept sous-jacent. Dans Les temps modernes, une histoire de la machine (2010), l'artiste met en lumière la révolution qui s'opère depuis 2011 dans la monde arabe. Il a créé une machine qui rappelle celle de Charlie Chaplin, qui se veut belle mais aussi violente et dangereuse. On retrouve à plusieurs reprises ces roues calligraphiques dans son travail. Imprégné par la philosophie de Ludwig Wittgenstein et ses Jeux de langage, l'artiste considère qu'inventer un langage équivaut à créer un jeu et une machine. Les lettres deviennent donc les rouages d'une machine destructrice.

Prônant la non-idéologie, mounir fatmi aime jouer avec les symboles. Dans Manipulation (2004), on découvre des mains qui manipulent un Rubik's Cube représentant la Kaaba. La profession de foi irrationnelle des croyants les poussant à marcher autour de l'edifice est ici comparé aux stratégies rationnelles de joueurs résolvant le célèbre casse-tête. Le thème de la religion et des objets de culte est récurrent dans le travail de fatmi. Est-ce dû à son enfance dans la maison de son père à Tanger? L'artiste confie avoir eu pour seuls objets culturels des calligraphies, le Coran et un portrait du roi Mohamed V qu'il croyait être membre de la famille. Ces objets étaient si sacrés qu'il n'était pas en droit de les toucher, ses mains considérées comme n'étant jamais assez propres. Cela a mené l'artiste à se poser des questions sur le monde et sur le rapport qu'entretient l'homme avec la foi. Qu'avons-nous le droit de faire? Peut-on faire sortir des versets d'un livre sacré et les déplacer dans un autre lieu comme le musée? Peut-on les présenter sous une autre forme?
Les oeuvres de mounir fatmi poussent le public à réfléchir et aller plus loin que ce qu'il voit. La liberté d'expression est l'un des thèmes principaux de son travail. Dans Les ciseaux (2003), l'artiste dévoile les scènes d'amour coupées du film Une minute de soleil en moins. La notion de mémoire et d'archive est présente dans cette vidéo, en écho aux matériaux utilisés dans les installations, mais c'est avant tout une critique frontale de la censure. Dans Sleep – Al Naim (2005-2012), l'artiste remet à nouveau en question ce qui existe ou pas. Sleep, la vidéo originale d'Andy Warhol, présente le poète John Giorno endormi. Dans un remake, fatmi décide de présenter Salman Rushdie, figure de la liberté d'expression. N'ayant pu obtenir son contact, il décide de le représenter dans un état de sommeil en images de synthèse. Au début de la vidéo, on ignore si l'écrivain est vivant ou mort. Une manière d'évoquer sa situation difficile, de la comparer, alors qu'il utilisait pour se protéger le pseudonyme Joseph Anton, à celle d'un fantôme.
A l'instar de Salman Rushdie et de ses versets sataniques, l'art de mourir fatmi à aussi été jugé comme blasphématoire par certains. Alors qu'il présentait Technologia (2010) au printemps de Septembre à Toulouse en 2012 qui avait pour thème L'Histoire est à moi, l'artiste s'est retrouvé contraint de retirer son installation. L'histoire n'est pas à moi (2013) est une réponse à cet incident où l'on découvre un secrétaire s'échinant à taper un texte sur machine à écrire avec deux marteaux. L'artiste considère d'ailleurs que lorsqu'une oeuvre est censurée, elle devient en partie l'oeuvre de ses censeurs: on ne la voit plus qu'à travers le voile de la censure.
Parmi les 50 vidéos présentées, on découvre aussi des films plus proches du documentaire où l'artiste montre ce que l'on essaie de cacher. Embargo, (1997), traite de la souffrance des peuples tandis que Thérapie de groupe, (2002-2003) compare deux manifestations organisées respectivement à Paris et à Rabat. Dans les vidéos de mounir fatmi, les travers de nos sociétés et l'absurdité de la condition humaine sont critiquées mais aussi sublimées.

This is my Body, jusqu'au 30 novembre, au LOFT:
Route des Jeunes 43, Genève

W ART

Mounir Fatmi

7 Sep — 21 Oct 2017 at the Jane Lombard Gallery in New York, United States

12 SEPTEMBER 2017



Mounir Fatmi. Courtesy of Jane Lombard Gallery

Jane Lombard Gallery is pleased to present "Survival Signs," Mounir Fatmi's third solo exhibition with the gallery. His work directly addresses the current events in our world and speaks to those whose lives are affected by restrictive political climates. "Survival signs" can also be seen as cultural signs, images, objects, experiences, and their connections and relationships to our everyday life. Is our society fluid, open and accepting, or the opposite? Several of the works in the exhibition teeter along a fine line of interpretation; are they revealing moments of construction or destruction, lightness or darkness? The artist presents his works as signs of survival; elements that allow him to resist and understand the world and its changes. The focal point of the exhibition, "Inside the Fire Circle," 2017, is a large, interactive floor installation consisting of jumper cables, obsolete typewriters, and blank sheets of paper on which visitors are encouraged to write, symbolizing a "jumpstart" to their own story or history. For Fatmi, "the installation is like a palimpsest of the modern age; the rhythmic flow between the paper and the cables seem as if they are sending signals back and forth, but at each stop the information is erased and the process begins again. This is a reflection of the tendency of history to repeat itself. The recent rise in nationalism across Europe, from Brexit in the UK, the rise of the National Front in France, Holland, Hungary, to the United States, and the state of affairs in Russia, Turkey and elsewhere, all reaffirm this fear." The artist wants the cables to symbolically jumpstart people out of their apathy so they can learn from the past and become actively involved in writing a new and different story on the blank pages.

Fatmi's wall sculpture, "Défense," 2016, is both an architectural object and readymade. In many parts of the world, these spiraled, pointed bars of metal function as security bars, installed to protect from intruders. It is aggressive and dangerous, but when placed within the context of an exhibition it takes on an added visual appeal, as a minimal sculpture that casts radiant shadows across the wall. The viewer must work around it in order to engage with the rest of the exhibition. Even in the distant past, these bars have been aesthetic and utilitarian, aggressive and attractive.

Another central work on view is a large photograph from "The Blinding Light," 2013 - ongoing, a series of work inspired by a 15th century painting by Fra Angelico entitled "The Healing of Deacon Justinian." The original painting depicts two saints, Cosmas and his brother Damian, grafting a black leg onto the deacon Justinian. Born in Syria, Cosmas and Damian were Arab by birth and later converted to Christianity. Fatmi's photograph superimposes an image of the painting with an image from a contemporary surgical room. The transparency of images essentially fuses science and religion, present and past. Fatmi first saw this painting when he moved to Rome at age 17 to attend art school. He saw in himself a connection to being like that black leg, existing in a world that was not his own, in his case as a cultural transplant.

Calligraphy of Fire, 2015, is a set of three black and white photographs. The images are enigmatic, as if offering a glimpse into a private ritual or an uncertain moment. For Fatmi, books and knowledge represent a means of survival, of opportunity, a path to independence, and a greater understanding of life. Calligraphy of Fire presents a set of situations, each of which links the idea of knowledge with light, and its absence, as darkness, a void. If the burning candle is symbolic of life, illumination, and knowledge, as it is throughout much of art history, in the left hand image the snuffed candle could suggest an impending opaqueness, the possible smudges as a form of censorship. On the right, the burning candle offers the possibility of light, yet if left unattended, the results will be destruction. In the center, the portrait of the artist suggests a movement from darkness into light, perhaps a path to self-awareness, growth, and even survival.

A small photo titled, "Walking on the Light," 2012 - ongoing, shows a man at night, standing on the edge of circular light projection made by the artist titled, "Technologia," which was a part of a 2012 exhibition in France. Fatmi took the photograph the night of the opening and it is only one of a few that exist as a few days later his installation was censored and removed from the exhibition. The light projection included verses from the Koran written out in beautiful calligraphy and combined into a swirling Marcel Duchamp inspired rotorelief. The controversy stemmed from the belief that the viewers would walk onto verses of the Koran, a sacred text, and as such considered destructive. But for Fatmi the work was about light and beauty, modernism and abstraction, and of course, no one could walk on those lines from the Koran as they were fleeting light, the shadow of the figure crossing onto the projection would in any case have blocked out the imagery under their feet.

At first glance, "Roots," 2015-16, a triptych made from white antenna cable seems to be simply an elegant work, but in fact the artist seeks to confront a more philosophical question: Just how deep can roots go? At a time when issues of identity and borders are increasingly in the news and being taken up by the extremes, the sculpture "Roots," defends the idea of harmony and stability through its interlacing composition, a metaphor for the possibility of eventual union. The antenna cable serves as both core material and valuable archive in the sense that it is quickly becoming an obsolete material. As such, the work itself and this archive find themselves in a similar position and create a sort of dialogue. The archive creates the work and the work stores the archive.

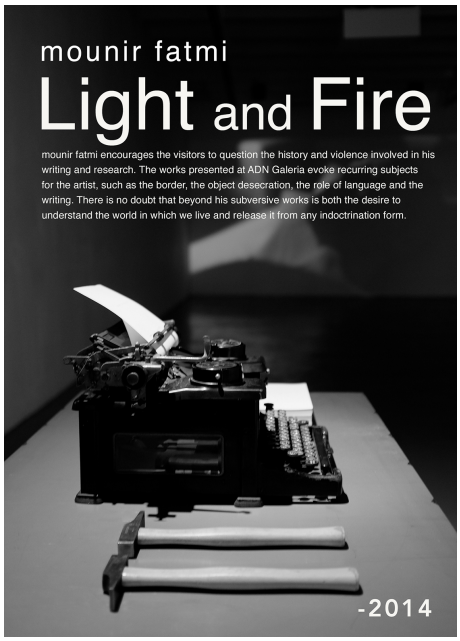
The video, "History is not mine," 2013, is a piece made partially in response to censorship. The black and white video depicts a man whose face remains concealed as he strikes a typewriter with two hammers. The only color comes from the typewriter's ribbon, a brilliant red, the color of blood; a collision of the beauty of the written sentence and the violence and difficulty of its creation. The video plunges us into the role of witness and accomplice, as if we are almost a part of this story's writing process. The simple and mundane gesture of striking the keys becomes crushing with the use of hammers. The weight that falls on the keys causes a deep, violent intonation. These effects, accentuated by the characteristic sound of a typewriter, also evoke the ticking of a clock or shots fired from a sub-machine gun. The artist urges the viewer to become aware of his or her stance vis-à-vis history. As evidenced by the title of the work, a feeling of hopelessness clearly emerges. The repetitive, angled shots overlooking the scene highlight a feeling of domination. By never showing the man's face as he strikes the machine, Mounir Fatmi encourages the viewer to identify with his or her own experience. Everyone is a part of this story being written, the violence of the hammers, and the impossibility of writing something coherent with this method.

"Alif," 2015 - ongoing, is a series of photographs showing a man's forearm, grasping a slightly curved and elongated shape like a dagger, and is a work in progress that is to be developed into a set of photographs, videos, and installations. This shape known as the "Alif," is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet. Alif is one of the six so-called "unrelated letters" or "isolated letters," meaning that it is never attached to the letter that follows.

Mounir Fatmi was born in 1970 in Tangier, Morocco and lives and works between Paris and Tangier. Since leaving Morocco in 1999, he is particularly interested in issues of exile, and the role of the artist in a society in crisis. Fatmi views himself as an immigrant worker: "My job is to question what it means to be an artist. Even when I feel outside of my own cultural context." He has participated in the 52nd and the 57th Venice Biennale, the 7th Dakar Biennial, the 2nd Seville Biennial, the 5th Gwangju Biennial, the 10th Lyon Biennial, and the 5th Auckland Triennial. Recent solo exhibitions include "Spot On: Mounir Fatmi," Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf, Germany; "Permanent Exiles," MAMCO, Geneva, Switzerland; "Darkening Process," The MMPV Museum, Marrakech, Morocco.



Mounir Fatmi. Courtesy of Jane Lombard Gallery



Light and fire, SF Publishing, 2021

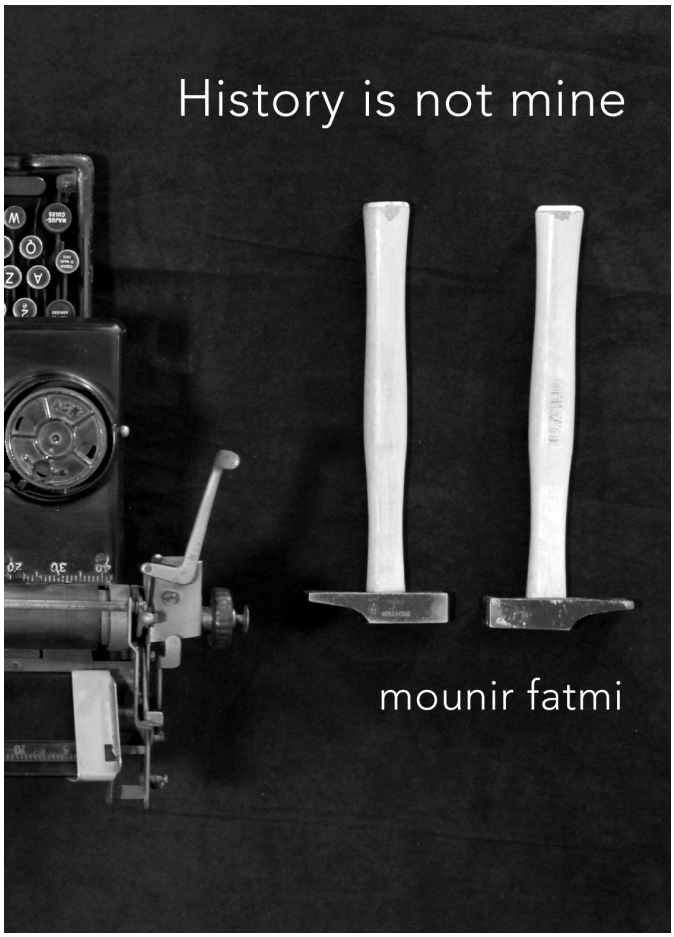
Just as ideas are part of a city being constructed passing through and beyond modern or postmodern thought; while ideas themselves are metaphorically an architectural construction; the helmets not only refer to the configuration of the city planning approach of the new postmodern megalopolises, they also evoke the inherent risks therein.

Ali Akay, 2011



History is not mine

The History is not Mine video can be seen as a direct response to Printemps de Septembre de Toulouse (2012) (Toulouse's Spring of September) art festival which bore the title L'Histoire est à moi (History is Mine). On this occasion, Technologia, an installation that combined circular Koranic verses with elements inspired by Marcel Duchamp's Rotoreliefs, had been withdrawn by the organization following incidents provoked by the public.





History is not mine

The black and white video depicts a man whose face remains concealed as he strikes a typewriter with two hammers. Only the typewriter’s ribbon bears a brilliant red the color of blood; a collision of the written sentence’s beauty and the violence and difficulty of its creation.

History is not mine

The simple and mundane gesture of striking the keys becomes crushing with the use of hammers. The weight that falls on the keys

causes a deep, violent intonation. These effects, accentuated by the characteristic sound of a typewriter, also evoke the ticking of a clock or shots fired from a sub-machine gun. The time that passes and the history that escapes us is thus symbolized.



history is not mine

By never showing the man’s face as he strikes the machine, mounir fatmi encourages the viewer to identify with his or her own experience. Everyone is a part of this story being written, the violence of the hammers, and the impossibility of writing something coherent with this method.