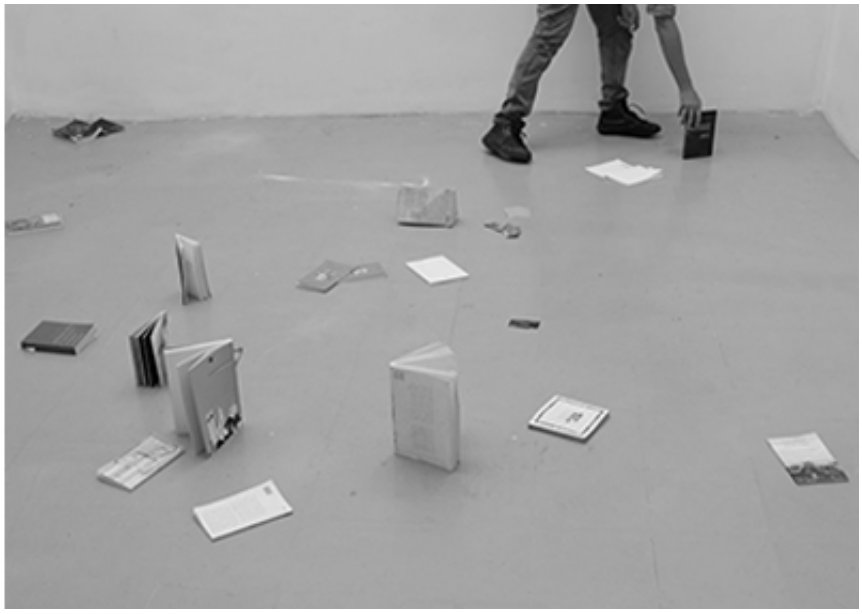
7. | No and First Name





2013, No and First Name, gallery Fatma Jellal, Casablanca.
Exhibition view from La Ligne Droite, Galerie Fatma Jellal, 2013, Casablanca.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.

La performance Non et prénom se déroule dans une pièce vitrée, de surface rectangulaire, aux dimensions réduites et n'offrant aucun angle mort. Un personnage y est enfermé et tente de jongler avec des livres disposés tout autour de lui, ou de les faire tenir contre la surface verticale des murs de la pièce, avant que ceux-ci ne retombent au sol.

Non et prénom questionne le rapport intime de l'artiste au livre. Celui-ci est un matériau récurrent des œuvres de Mounir Fatmi, où ses pouvoirs de mise en circulation des idées mais également de censure, sont étudiés. Il lui permet ensuite d'interroger le lien entre sa biographie et son histoire personnelle avec tout ce qu'elle contient d'expériences passées, de savoirs transmis, d'origines sociales, d'héritage culturel et familial, et la grande histoire des peuples et des civilisations. Recueil de connaissances, le livre constitue enfin pour l'artiste l'occasion d'explorer son rapport à celles-ci et d'établir sa propre stratégie face aux diverses entreprises d'établissement du savoir.

Le titre retenu annonce d'emblée une forme de refus. Le terme de négation se substitue au nom de famille et semble exprimer un rejet des injonctions d'une société patriarcale qui exige des individus de justifier leur existence par la mention de leurs origines, avant même d'exprimer toute prétention ou tout désir dans la vie. Le livre se constitue lui aussi comme une forme d'autorité intellectuelle dont le caractère parfois dogmatique (comme dans le cas de l'ouvrage religieux) peut être mis en relation avec cette forme d'organisation sociale. Le jongleur s'affronte alors à ses pouvoirs et multiplie les manipulations. Il vient contester un rapport de soumission de l'individu à toute forme de tutelle intellectuelle et brave l'interdit en n'hésitant pas à répéter les erreurs. Il affiche

The performance No and First Name takes place in a small rectangular glazed room offering no blind spots. A person is locked inside and tries to juggle with books placed all around him or to hold them up against the vertical walls, but they always fall back to the floor.

No and First Name questions the artist’s intimate relation to books. They are a recurrent material in Mounir Fatmi’s works, which study their power in terms of circulating ideas as well as censorship. They also enable him to question the relation between his biography and personal history – with all the experiences they entail, the knowledge transmitted, social origins, cultural and family heritage – and the great history of peoples and civilizations. Lastly, as a collection of knowledge, books are for the artist an occasion to explore his relation to knowledge and to create his own strategy with regards to various knowledge establishment initiatives.

The chosen title states a form of refusal. The negative term takes the place of the family name and seems to express a rejection of the injunctions of patriarchal societies that force individuals to justify their existence by mentioning their origins, before they can even express any ambition or desire of their own. Books also constitute a form of intellectual authority with an occasionally dogmatic character (for example in the case of religious texts) that can be related to that particular social structure. The juggler is confronted to their power and multiplies his manipulations. He contests a relation of submission of the individual to any form of intellectual dictate and defies their authority by carelessly repeating mistakes. He also demonstrates his intention to multiply literary sources and references and to not settle for one single frame of reference associated to a philosophical or

également ses intentions de multiplier les sources livresques et les références et de ne pas se contenter d'une lecture unique associée à quelque doctrine philosophique ou religieuse.

La chute du livre traduit une difficulté à manier les concepts et à comprendre le monde et délivre un constat d'échec : elle figure l'effondrement perpétuel des échafaudages théoriques, sans cesse contredits par l'expérience, soumis aux lois de la nature et destinés être dressés à nouveau avant la prochaine chute. Et cependant, à partir de cet échec, s'ouvrent paradoxalement de nouvelles voix d'exploration et d'action pour l'artiste. Celui-ci prend le parti-pris du présent contre la soumission à l'histoire ou au passé. Il refuse une vision du destin comme écriture pré établie des existences : "Rien n'est écrit tout est encore à trouver" déclare Mounir Fatmi dans La Lettre à un jeune marocain, et tente de s'harmoniser avec le mouvement naturel de fondation et d'effondrement en accomplissant à son tour le geste de laisser tomber et de laisser derrière soi. L'indépendance d'esprit qu'il s'efforce d'atteindre s'obtient en multipliant les sources d'inspiration et les connexions entre elles. Mounir Fatmi fait le choix d'agir dans une forme d'ivresse du présent, à la fois intense, répétitive, curieuse et obstinée.

Studio fatmi, Février 2017.

religious doctrine.

The fall of the book translates a difficulty to handle concepts and to understand the world, leading to an acknowledgment of failure: it represents the perpetual collapse of theoretical constructions, endlessly contradicted by experience, submitted to the laws of nature and destined to be built up again before their next fall. Nevertheless, paradoxically, new paths of exploration and action stem for the artist from that failure. He chooses the present against the submission to history and the past. He refuses to see destiny as a pre-established course for people’s lives – “Nothing is written and everything still remains to be found”, says Mounir Fatmi in his Letter to a young Moroccan – and he tries to be in harmony with the natural movements of foundation and collapse by making the gestures of dropping and leaving behind himself. The freedom of spirit he tries to attain is reached by multiplying sources of inspiration and connecting them together. Mounir Fatmi chooses to act in an exhilarated present: intense, repetitive, curious and obstinate.

Studio Fatmi, February 2017.

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