52. | Spherical Affairs





2012-2015, two pigment prints 90 x 120cm each, 10 poems 29,7 x 21 cm, 5'10min.
Exhibition view of Les Fragments de l'amour, CAC La Traverse, 2015, Alfortville.
Courtesy of the artist and Analix Forever, Geneva.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

Les affaires des sphères est une installation associant des photomontages, des poèmes imprimés et encadrés et une pièce sonore. Les photomontages sont réalisés à partir de photographies extraites du film Casablanca, auxquelles ont été appliqués des figures géométriques. Elles mettent en scène les amants de face, lorsqu'ils s'approchent l'un de l'autre pour s'embrasser, puis le mari et la femme, observés par un troisième personnage, l'amant platonique. Les poèmes sélectionnés sont tirées de l'œuvre de Soddy (prix Nobel de chimie et mathématicien) intitulée "Le baiser précis" qui s'inspire des cercles tangents de Descartes. La pièce sonore, quant à elle, est à écouter au casque audio et mêle une voix robotique récitant un poème à une voix humaine prononçant et répétant certaines phrases comme des mantras.

L'installation aborde la question du désir défini comme tendance vers un objet connu ou imaginé. Elle constitue une double tentative de modélisation et d'expérimentation des mécanismes (manifestes ou éventuellement inconscients) et des effets du désir. Elle s'inscrit enfin dans la recherche d'une esthétique propre à rendre compte d'un phénomène difficile à décrire et qui se trouve pourtant au cœur des relations amoureuses, du processus créatif et de toute action humaine en général.

L'installation multiplie les points de vue et les approches : plastiques et poétiques, abstraites et figuratives, biographique et universelle. La série photographique Casablanca circles fait en effet le lien entre la biographie de l'artiste et son enfance à Casablanca d'un côté et de l'autre l'imaginaire et l'univers fictionnel où agissent désirs et sources d'inspiration. Pratique et théorique enfin : le titre semble poser la question de savoir ce qu'il advient quand le

Spherical Affairs is an installation combining photomontages, printed and framed poems and a sound creation. The photomontages are made from stills from the movie Casablanca, on which geometric figures were applied. They show the lovers face to face as they move closer to each other to kiss, then the husband and wife observed by a third character, the platonic lover. The selected poems are taken from a book by Soddy, a chemistry Nobel Prize winner and mathematician, entitled “The Kiss Precise”, which was inspired by Descartes’ tangent circles. As for the sound piece, designed to be listened to with headphones, it combines a robotic voice reciting a poem with a human voice repeating certain sentences like mantras.

The installation focuses on the question of desire as an attraction towards a known or imagined object. It constitutes a double attempt for the modeling and experimentation of the mechanisms (whether manifest or possibly unconscious) and effects of desire. It is also part of the search for an esthetic that could transcribe a phenomenon that is difficult to describe although it’s at the heart of romantic relationships, of the creative process and generally of any human endeavor.

The installation creates multiple points of view and approaches: plastic and poetic, abstract and figurative, biographic and universal. The series of photographs Casablanca Circles creates a connection between the artist’s biography on one hand, as he spent his childhood in Casablanca, and the fictional universe where desire and sources of inspiration are at play, on the other hand. Finally, it combines practice and theory: the title seems to ask what happens when the circle becomes a sphere – when it becomes incarnate, so to speak.

cercle devient sphère - lorsqu'il s'incarne en quelque sorte.

L'œuvre établit une esthétique de la diversité et de la profusion. Elle multiplie les figures géométriques, les éléments plastiques et graphiques, les voix, les protagonistes engagés dans le commerce amoureux : elle aborde la complexe géométrie du "trouple" (forme de couple augmentée) ou des amours triangulaires. Elle rend ainsi compte par une série de séductions et d'étourdissements de la nature profondément vertigineuse du désir.

Elle met surtout en scène le corps. L'association d'une voix robotique et à une voix humaine met en relation le discours sur la structure et le discours sur le corps. Elle tient unis le charnel et l'abstraction, la sensualité et la géométrie. La voix humaine qui se fait entendre comme un appel, un avertissement - et bien qu'elle soit difficilement audible, constitue le surgissement discret et pourtant obsédant du corps comme élément essentiel dans l'économie du désir. Elle se caractérise également comme une mise à l'épreuve du spectateur par le réel dans ce qu'il a de plus intime.

L'installation participe finalement à la fondation d'une esthétique du baiser, entendu comme figure de la rencontre, des correspondances artistiques, du dialogue des arts et de la science, de la double approche théorique et pratique, de l'association de la sensualité et de la rigueur formelle.

Studio Fatmi, Aout 2017.

The piece establishes an esthetic of diversity and profusion. It combines multiple geometric figures, plastic and graphic elements, voices, protagonists engaged in romantic congress, and addresses the complex geometry of the “trouple”, a type of augmented couple, and triangular relationships. In this way, through a series of seductions and exhilarations, it touches upon the deeply vertiginous nature of desire.

Above all, it features the body. The association of a robotic voice with a human voice connects the discourse on structure with the discourse on the body. It binds together carnality and abstraction, sensuality and geometry. The human voice can be heard as a call, a warning – and though it’s hardly audible, it represents the discreet yet haunting emergence of the body as the essential element in the economy of desire. It also establishes itself as a confrontation of the viewer with reality in its most intimate aspects.

Finally, the installation also participates in the foundation of an esthetic of the kiss, seen as a representation of encounters, artistic correspondences, the dialogue between arts and science, theoretical and practical approaches, the association of sensuality and formal precision.

Studio Fatmi, August 2017.

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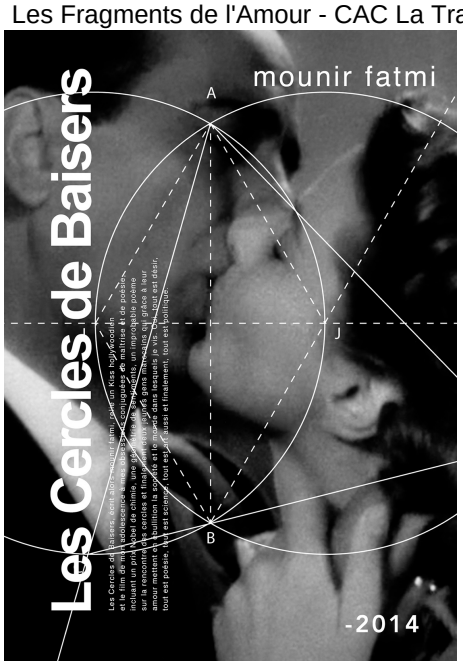
vertiginous nature of desire.

Studio Fatmi, August 2017

exhibitions:

2015

Les Fragments de l'Amour - CAC La Traverse - Expo collective



Les Cercles de Baisers, SF Publishing, 2021

Are a kiss and its representation to be condemned? Should they be censored? And a thousand obsessions, too: fatmi's obsession with beauty, with black and white, with archives, science and poetry.

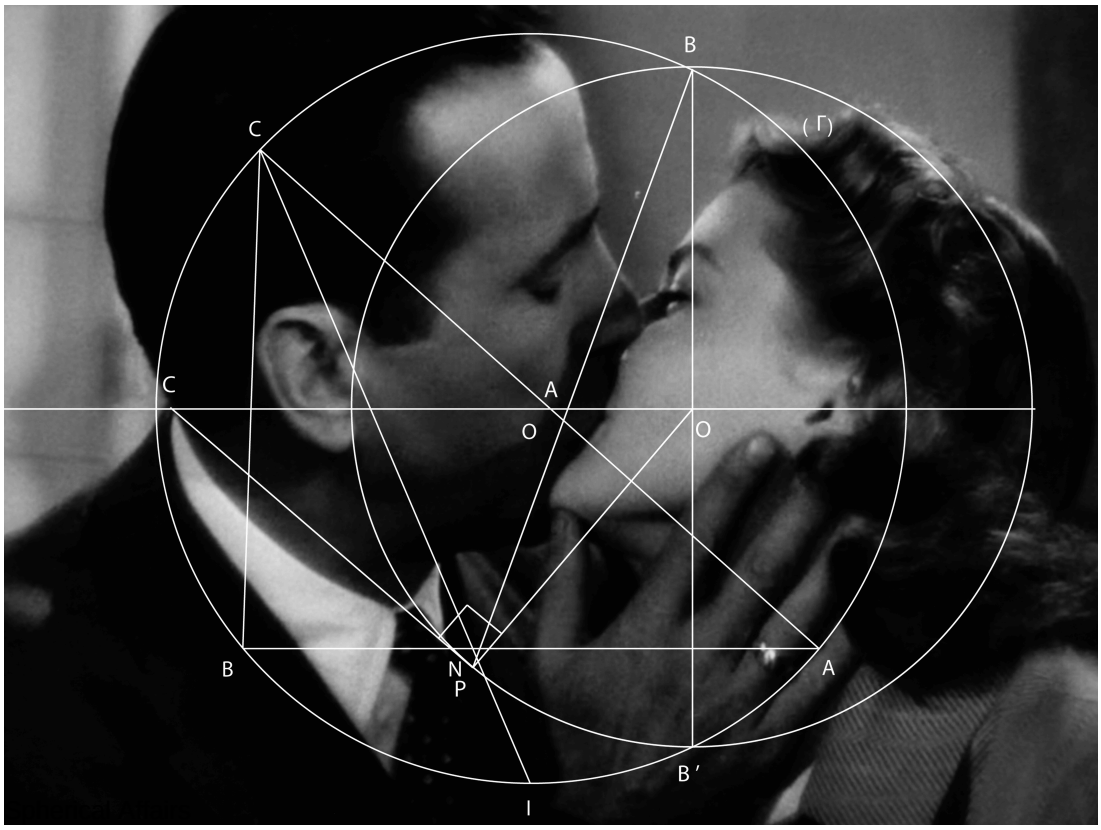
Barbara Polla, May 2014



Spherical Affairs

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The Kissing Precise

For pairs of lips to kiss maybe	For pairs ~~of lips to kiss maybe~~
Involves no trigonometry.	~~Involves~~ no trigonometry.
'Tis not so when four circles kiss	~~'Tis not so when~~ four circles kiss
Each one the other three.	Each one ~~the other three.~~
To bring this off the four must be	~~To bring this off the four~~ must be
As three in one or one in three.	~~As three in one~~ or one in three.
If one in three, beyond a doubt	~~If one in three~~, beyond a doubt
Each gets three kisses from without.	~~Each gets three~~ kisses from without.
If three in one, then is that one	~~If three in one~~, then is that one
Thrice kissed internally.	~~Thrice kissed internally.~~
Four circles to the kissing come.	Four circles ~~to the kissing come.~~
The smaller are the benter.	The smaller are ~~the benter.~~
The bend is just the inverse of	~~The bend is~~ just the inverse of
The distance from the center.	The distance from the center.
Though their intrigue left Euclid dumb	Though their intrigue left ~~Euclid dumb~~
There's now no need for rule of thumb.	~~There's now~~ no need for rule of thumb.
Since zero bend's a dead straight line	~~Since zero bend's~~ a dead straight line
And concave bends have minus sign,	~~And concave bends~~ have minus sign,
The sum of the squares of all four bends	The sum ~~of the squares~~ of all four bends
Is half the square of their sum.	Is half ~~the square~~ of their sum.
To spy out spherical affairs	~~To spy out~~ spherical affairs
An oscular surveyor	~~An oscular~~ surveyor
Might find the task laborious,	~~Might find~~ the task laborious,
The sphere is much the gayer,	~~The sphere~~ is much the gayer,
And now besides the pair of pairs	And now besides ~~the pair of pairs~~
A fifth sphere in the kissing shares.	~~A fifth sphere~~ in the kissing shares.
Yet, signs and zero as before,	~~Yet, signs and~~ zero as before,
For each to kiss the other four	~~For each~~ to kiss the other four
The square of the sum of all five bends	The square ~~of the sum~~ of all five bends
Is thrice the sum of their squares.	Is thrice the sum of their squares.

Frederick Soddy, British radio-chemist, Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1921, In Nature, June 20, 1936

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