53. | Archeology





2016, broom, black flag, two skeletons, 300 x 250 x 40 cm.
Exhibition view of Depth of Field, Labanque, 2016, Béthune.
Courtesy of the artist and Art Front Gallery, Tokyo.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

L'installation Archéologie, force le public à se mettre au niveau du sol pour voir les ossements de deux squelettes qui la compose. Ces derniers, ramassés contre le mur par un balai de trois mètres et portant un drapeau noir en étendard se présentent comme un memento mori de notre époque. Alors que l'espérance de vie s'accroit, la violence des conflits a atteint en quelques années une férocité inédite. L'absence de corps, symbolisant le précédent passage de la mort, ne laisse place qu'à des ossements, nous signifiant une bataille perdue d'avance. Dressant un constat amer sur la société contemporaine, cette œuvre, évoquant à la fois le champ de bataille et le champ de fouilles, interpelle par sa brutalité.

C'est bien de l'histoire des hommes dont il s'agit ici. Creuser dans le sol au plus profond, chercher les traces matérielles de son existence, de son passage et constater ce qu'il en reste. À la manière dont Michel Foucault définit dans L'Archéologie du savoir (1968) l'épistémè qualifiant chaque époque culturelle, cette installation présente une façon de penser, de parler et de se représenter le monde. Reprenant cette dialectique, l'installation Archéologie propose d'envisager les conditions d'exister de notre époque comme connaissances. Seulement, le balai met dans un coin ces connaissances, comme si elles n'étaient plus bonnes à connaître.

Vanité désabusée d'un monde à la dérive, l'installation Archéologie insiste sur la perte de sens et de notre matrice culturelle structurante. Ainsi, l'œuvre porte aussi bien dans son titre la tragédie de l'existence humaine, qu'une part de regret et de culpabilité vis-à-vis de la société actuelle.

The Archeology installment forces the public to stand at ground level to see the bones of two skeletons that compose the piece. The bones are swept up against a wall by a three-meter broom that is carrying a black flag as a banner, representing a memento mori of our time. As life expectancy increases, the violence of conflicts has attained unprecedented ferocity in a few years. The absence of bodies, representing the preceding passage of death, leaves only bones that signify a lost battle. In drawing bitter attention to contemporary society, this work, evoking both the battleground and the excavation site, calls out through its brutality.

The history of man is indeed being evoked here. Digging deep into the ground, looking for the material traces of his existence and passage, one sees what remains. In the way that Michel Foucault defines the episteme describing each cultural epoch in L'Archéologie du Savoir (1968) (The Archeology of Knowledge), this installation presents a way of thinking, speaking, and representing the world. Recalling this dialectic, the Archeology installation proposes considering the conditions of existing in our time as knowledge. Even so, the broom sweeps this knowledge into a corner as if it were no longer good to know.

As disenchanted vanity in a drifting world, the Archeology installation insists on the loss of meaning and our cultural, structural matrix. The work's title thus carries the tragedy of human existence as well as regret and guilt in face of today's society. Both fascinating and repulsive, the Archeology installation provokes reflection on the universal evil of a materialistic world. There is only one step between

Fascinante et repoussante, l'installation Archéologie, ouvre la réflexion sur le mal universel d'un monde matérialiste. De la consommation à la consumation il n'y a qu'un pas, qui dans cette œuvre, se retrouvent au même niveau.

Studio Fatmi, Novembre 2016.

consumption and consummation, and in this piece, they are placed at the same level.

Studio Fatmi, November 2016.

Traduit du français par Christina Washington.

"The piece entitled Archaeology, meanwhile, also showcases one of the grim realities of our time. A broom, bones, a black flag... It can be an evocation of the new iconoclasts that destroy ancient archeological sites. It is as though they kill the dead again."

Anti-utopias, January, 2017

exhibitions:

2017

Diaspora Now - Gifu Museum - Expo collective

2016

Depth of Field - Labanque – Solo show

A Savage Mind - Keitelman Gallery - Solo show

Exile Pavilion - Archives Nationales Hôtel de Soubise - Expo collective



Depth of Field, SFpublishing 2025

Through the violent nature of the work on view and its aggressive relationship to the viewer, in Depth of Field, mounir fatmi confronts ideas about the loss of language and the body.

Labanque Bethune, April 2016



Archeology

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Archeology

Both fascinating and repulsive, the Archeology installation provokes reflection on the universal evil of a materialistic world. There is only one step between consumption and consummation, and in this piece, they are placed at the same level.