59. | The song of the children all Gone





Exhibition view from Setouchi Triennale, 2016, Japan.
Courtesy of the artist and Art Front Gallery, Tokyo.
Ed. of 1 + 1 A.P.

This work was part of 3rd Setouchi Triennale, Awashima, 2016.

Pour la Triennale de Setouchi en 2016, on a demandé à Mounir Fatmi de développer un projet en lien avec cette île japonaise isolée. Après une première visite en 2015, Fatmi a trouvé l'inspiration dans une ancienne école élémentaire de deux étages abandonnée depuis longtemps, et a créé plusieurs installations pensées pour le site, à l'extérieur et à l'intérieur du bâtiment. Intitulée « La chanson des enfants partis », l'installation donne une voix à tous les enfants qui ont quitté l'île, ainsi qu'à la petite communauté vieillissante d'environ 200 personnes qui y subsiste.

Ce qui a d'emblée frappé l'artiste à propos de cette école élémentaire abandonnée, c'est l'étrange impression de temps suspendu qui s'en dégageait ; les salles de classe laissées dans la même configuration, les affiches aux murs, quelques livres restés sur les étagères, les chaises et pupitres en place et, particulièrement surprenant, les horloges dans toutes les classes arrêtées à la même heure : 10h45.

fatmi est intervenu dans presque toutes les classes vides, réarrangeant les livres, les cartes, les écriteaux et autres outils pédagogiques restés là. Dans une classe, Fatmi a placé les horloges sur certains des pupitres, mais pas toutes, une référence à ceux qui sont restés et ceux qui sont partis. Dans une autre classe, il a placé tous les trophées

For the 2016 Setouchi Triennale, Mounir Fatmi was asked to develop a project connected to this remote Japanese island. After an initial visit in 2015, Fatmi found inspiration in the former two-floor elementary school, long since abandoned, and created several site specific installations inside and outside the building. Titled The Song of the Children All Gone, the installation gives a voice to all the children who have left the island, as well as to the small, aging community of roughly 200 people, who still remain.

What first struck the artist about this former elementary school was the eerie sense of time stopped; the classrooms left in the same configuration, posters on the wall, some books still on the shelves, desks and chairs in place, and particularly surprising, the clocks in every room all stopped at the same time, 10h45.

fatmi intervened in almost all of the vacant rooms, re-arranging books, maps, signage, and other remaining teaching tools. In one classroom, Fatmi placed the clocks onto some of the desks, but not all, a reference to those who have stayed and those who have gone. In another room he placed all of the remaining trophies on the ground and projected a light from behind, creating an unexpected animated effect. But the installation also served as an act stopping the competition, as if the idea of competition is

abandonnés au sol et les a éclairés par derrière, créant un effet d'animation inattendu. Mais l'installation a aussi servi d'acte pour suspendre la compétition, comme si l'idée de compétition était révolue, qu'elle n'avait plus sa place ici. Dans la salle de musique, le piano a été dépoussiéré et placé au centre de la pièce. À une époque, tous les écoliers japonais prenaient des cours de piano ; à présent il est là, disponible pour que chacun puisse en jouer. La partition de l'hymne de l'école a été placée sur l'étagère à musique. Fatmi a aussi créé une pièce sonore pour cette salle qui mêle trois éléments : des sons de la mer, des sons d'enfants en train de jouer et des sons de voix chantant l'hymne. Combinée au piano, la composition sonore résonne à travers le bâtiment.

Dehors, une installation faite de barres de saut équestre noires et blanches, des « Obstacles », ainsi que les appelle Fatmi, a été placée autour d'une vieille sculpture en bronze qui avait été abandonnée au fond de la cour de l'école. La sculpture a été déplacée sur le devant de l'école et enfermée dans une sorte de cage noire ; elle montre deux garçons et une fille le regard en l'air, les garçons pointant vers le ciel, la fille pointant vers le sol. Dans une interview avec Toshio Kondo, le directeur de la Triennale, Mounir évoque ses impressions de l'île, sa beauté et son isolement. Pour lui, la sculpture en bronze lui a semblé comme une prémonition, avec « la fille montrant du doigt le sol, ses pieds sur la terre, sur son sol natal, tandis que les garçons pointent du doigt le ciel, de nouveaux horizons, vers leur départ à venir. » Les Obstacles sont une métaphore de l'eau, un genre d'obstacle pour les insulaires qui veulent rejoindre le continent, se relier au monde.

La Triennale de Setouchi a été imaginée pour revitaliser cet archipel unique au large des côtes japonaises. Elle rassemble œuvres d'art, performances et projets culinaires répartis sur douze îles dans la mer intérieure de Seto. L'exposition était visible jusqu'en novembre 2016.

Blaire Dessent, Octobre 2016.

done, it no longer serves a purpose here. In the music room, the piano was dusted off and placed in the center of the room. At one time all Japanese students were taught to play the piano and here it is made available for anyone to play. The composition of the school's anthem has been placed on the music rack. Fatmi also created a sound piece for this room that mixes together three elements: sounds of the sea, sounds of children playing, and sounds of voices singing the song. Combined with the piano, the sound piece resonated through the building.

Outside, an installation of black and white horse jumping bars, or Obstacles as Fatmi refers to them, have been placed around an old bronze sculpture that had been left in the back of the school yard. The sculpture moved to the front and placed in a sort of black cage, shows two boys and one girl looking upwards, the boys with fingers pointing to the sky, the girl with a finger pointing to the earth. In an interview with Toshio Kondo, the director of the Triennale, Mounir talks about his impressions of the island, its beauty and its isolation. For him, the bronze sculpture felt like a premonition of sorts with "the girl pointing to the ground, her feet to the earth, to the homeland, while the boys point upwards, towards new frontiers, to their eventual departure." The Obstacles act as a metaphor for water, a kind of obstacle for islanders to get to the mainland, to connect to the world.

The Setouchi Triennale was developed as a way to revitalize this unique island archipelago off the coast of Japan. It brings together artwork, performances and food projects across twelve islands in the Seto Inland Sea. The exhibition will be on view through November 6, 2016.

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Tique.art, October 2020

exhibitions:

2019

Setouchi Triennale - Triennal

2016

Setouchi Triennale - Triennal



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