10. | Group therapy





2002-2003, France, 18 min 40, SD, 4/3, color, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and Analix Forever, Genova.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

Thérapie de groupe (2002-2003) organise un montage parallèle, dans le temps et dans l'espace, entre des manifestations contre la première guerre du Golfe organisées à Rabat en 1996, et des manifestations contre la guerre en Irak organisées à Paris en 2002. D'une décennie à l'autre, d'un continent à l'autre, d'une ville à l'autre, les temps, les lieux, les foules, les banderoles, les chants, les danses se mêlent. En contre-point à la transe générale, Mounir Fatmi ponctue les plans de ces calmes inscriptions qui caractérisent son œuvre tant vidéographique que plasticienne : « j'ai tellement peur » ; « je me sens perdu » ; « je crois que j'ai attrapé la haine »… Aux peuples inécoutés (marocain et français), au peuple inaudible (les Irakiens), Mounir Fatmi assure un petit site de visibilité et de lisibilité : « Non au silence arabe », proclame une banderole ; « ceux qui peuvent rêver ne dorment plus , dit une inscription du narrateur anonyme ; « Thérapie de groupe », relativise le titre du film.

Mais le montage parallèle fusionnel et la mise au ralenti de certains événements gestuels déchaînent totalement le discours verbal et calligraphique : c'est de la force des peuples qu'il s'agit ici, cette force opprimée par l'appareil économico-militaire, confisquée et refoulée par les pouvoirs politiques, déniée par l'appareil médiatique. La description d'une telle énergie s'avère très neuve, elle ne correspond plus en rien à nos réflexes nés des pages de Michelet ou de Victor Hugo, des plans d'Eisenstein, des photographies d'Akadij Sajchet. On lui trouverait plutôt comme origine les romans factographiques de Victor Chklovski (Voyage sentimental) ou les sérigraphies révolutionnaires mélancoliques de Gérard Fromanger.

Au lieu du triomphalisme habituel, Thérapie de groupe décèle

Thérapie de groupe/Group Therapy (2002-2003) organizes a parallel montage, in time and space, between demonstrations against the first Gulf War, organized in Rabat in 1996, and demonstrations against the war in Iraq organized in Paris in 2002. From one decade to the next, from one continent to another, from one city to another, times, places, crowds, banners, songs and dances all intertwine. As a counterpoint to the general trance, Mounir Fatmi punctuates the shots of these calm slogans which hallmark his work, be it video or visual: "I'm so afraid"; "I'm lost"; "I think people hate me".... To the unlistened-to peoples (Moroccan and French), to the inaudible people (the Iraqis), Mounir Fatmi provides a small site of visibility and readability: "No to Arab silence", proclaims a banner; "those who can dream no longer sleep", runs a slogan by the anonymous narrator; "Group Therapy", relativizes the film's title.

But the parallel, merging montage and the slow-motion of certain gestural events totally releases the verbal and calligraphic discourse. It is the power of peoples that is at issue here, that power oppressed by the military-economic complex, confiscated and repressed by the political powers-that-be, and denied by the media. The description of this kind of energy turns out to be very new, it in no way tallies with our reflexes produced by the pages of Michelet and Victor Hugo, the films of Eisenstein, and the photographs of Akadij Sajchet. It crops up rather as the origin of the factographic novels of Victor Chklovski (Sentimental Journey) and the melancholy revolutionary silkscreened works of Gérard Fromanger.

Instead of the usual triumphalism, Group Therapy points out the crowd within the populace, i.e. the moment of its

la foule dans le peuple, c’est-à-dire le moment de son inorganisation et de son inutilité ; le film affirme la solitude, la peur et la mélancolie en pleine action revendicative collective ; et il ne détourne pas le regard au moment rituel de la haine (brûler le drapeau américain) qui, aux yeux des contradicteurs approximatifs, pourrait confondre la protestation légitime avec n’importe quelle propagande. Mais justement parce que Thérapie de groupe admet de telles composantes (le désordre, l’effroi, la haine), la description de la colère des peuples par Mounir Fatmi débloque une puissance historique qu’avaient retenue les vannes de l’imagerie née d’une sédimentation passéiste et des dénis médiatiques.

Nicole Brenez.

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disorganization and its uselessness; the film asserts solitude, fear and melancholy in the midst of collective protest action; and it does not turn away at the ritual moment of hatred (burning the American flag) which, in the eyes of vague hecklers, might muddle legitimate protest with any old propaganda. But precisely because Group Therapy admits such ingredients (disorder, terror, hatred), the description of the wrath of peoples by Mounir Fatmi releases an historical might that had been held back by the sluicegates of imagery resulting from a backward-looking sedimentation and media denials.

Nicole Brenez.

" Instead of the usual triumphalism, Group Therapy points out the crowd within the populace, i.e. the moment of its disorganization and its uselessness; the film asserts solitude,
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in the eyes of vague hecklers, might muddle legitimate protest with any old propaganda. "

Nicole Brenez, 2005

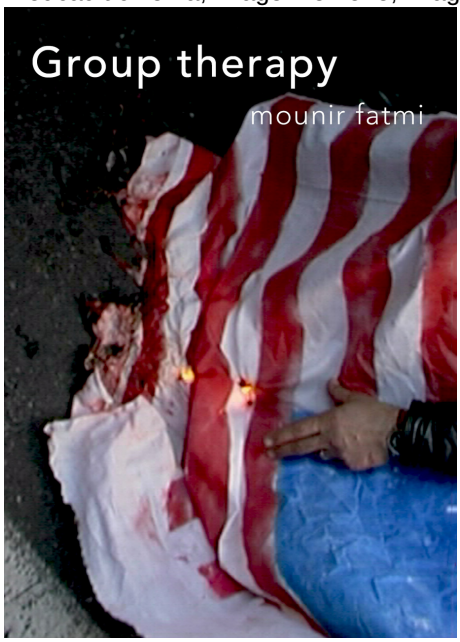
exhibitions:

2018

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

2004

Foucault cinéma, image mémoire, image pouvoir - Cinémathèque française - Expo collective



Group therapy

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CLINTON..et
t'occupes
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