

## 55. | Heavier than words



2020, Cast iron balance, arabic calligraphies of steel.  
 Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière.  
 Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

### Collection of Galila's P.O.C, Brussels

La sculpture « Plus lourd que les mots » associe une balance Roberval à deux plateaux, des motifs calligraphiques arabes découpés dans l'acier et une série de poids de différentes tailles. Les calligraphies métalliques sont disposées en tas sur l'un des plateaux. La balance permet d'estimer visuellement la différence de poids entre deux objets. Le fléau de celle-ci oscille autour de son axe et penche toujours du côté le plus lourd. Après un premier regard où tout semble normal, la sculpture donne à observer un balancement paradoxal penchant nettement du côté où le plateau est vide, et ce alors que l'autre plateau est encombré de motifs calligraphiques métalliques.

La déconstruction du langage et de la machine constituent une des préoccupations centrales des œuvres de mounir fatmi. La sculpture « Plus lourd que les mots » interroge ainsi la question du vide d'un point de vue scientifique, le pouvoir de la pensée et les limites du langage. L'interrogation sur le langage menée avec cette sculpture a des allures d'énigme de la physique. Qu'est-ce qui pèse plus lourd que les mots ? Qu'est-ce qui a plus de pouvoir que le langage ? Telle une matière noire, présente, mais invisible, pourquoi ne prenons-nous pas en compte le vide qui nous entoure ? Peut-on d'ailleurs encore parler de vide ?

Tout pèse plus lourd que les mots qui sont par essence immatériels, inefficients, sans autre pouvoir que celui que

The sculpture Heavier Than Words comprises a two-tray Roberval weighing scale, Arab calligraphic motifs cut out in steel and a collection of weights of different sizes. The metallic calligraphies are piled in one of the trays. The scale enables the visual assessment of the weight difference between two objects. Its beam tilts on its axis and always leans toward the heavier side. At first glance, everything seems normal, but the sculpture actually exhibits a paradoxical balance that clearly leans towards the side with the empty tray, whereas the other tray is filled with metallic calligraphic motifs.

The deconstruction of language and machine is one of the main focuses of mounir fatmi's work. The sculpture Heavier Than Words poses the triple question of emptiness from a scientific perspective, of the power of thought and of the limits of language. The interrogation on language brought forth with this sculpture resembles a physics enigma. What weighs more than words? What has more power than language? Like black matter, present yet invisible, why don't we acknowledge the emptiness that surrounds us? Can it even be called emptiness?

Everything is heavier than words, which are immaterial by nature, inefficient, with only as much power as we are willing to grant them, with no effect on the world other than the illusion they project upon us. Looking closely at the sculpture,

nous voulons bien leur accorder, sans autre effet sur le monde que cette illusion qu'ils nous projettent. En regardant attentivement la sculpture, l'œil se penche machinalement vers la partie vide et on voit cette illusion s'évaporer. Puisque selon la science moderne, le vide n'existe pas, l'artiste le voit comme une matière vivante qui nous lie tous d'une manière universelle. En opposant le concept du langage à celui du vide, la sculpture « Plus lourd que les mots » oblige le spectateur à affronter cette réalité qui conditionne notre manière de voir et de penser le monde.

La sculpture « Plus lourd que les mots » exprime un paradoxe linguistique, une insoutenable légèreté de la langue, pour reprendre une expression du romancier Milan Kundera, et matérialise le rêve d'une langue débarrassée du poids de l'Histoire.

Studio Fatmi, Septembre 2020.

the viewer mechanically leans toward the empty side and the illusion dissipates. Since modern science tells us emptiness doesn't exist, the artist sees it as living matter that connects us all in a universal way. By opposing the concept of language to that of emptiness, the sculpture Heavier Than Words forces the viewer to confront the reality that conditions our way of viewing and conceiving the world.

The sculpture Heavier Than Words expresses a linguistic paradox, an "unbearable lightness" of language, to quote novelist Milan Kundera's expression, and materializes the dream of a language freed from of the weight of History.

Studio Fatmi, September 2020.

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Studio Fatmi, September 2020

**exhibitions:**

2022

The Point of No Return - Wilde Gallery, Basel - Solo show

How much is Enough - Ceysson & Bénétière, Saint-Etienne - Solo show

2021

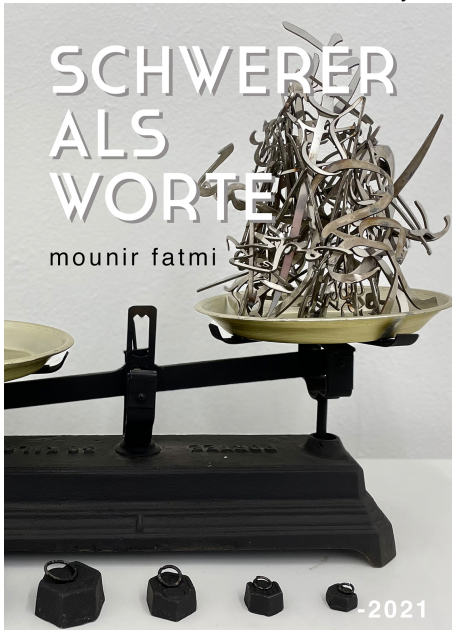
Heavier than words - Conrads Gallery - Solos show

The Age of Consequences - Officine dell'Immagine - Solo Show

The Observer Effect - ADN Galeria - Solo Show

2020

1:54 Marrakech - Goodman Gallery - art fair



Heavier than words, SF Publishing, 2021

In this piece, waterfalls of jumper cables spill from typewriters arranged on a high table. The configuration, with black cables running down one side of the table and red ones down the other, suggests some sort of analogue setup for automated writing, mindless and mechanized.

Rahel Aima, Art in America, May 2017



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