

56. | The Observer Effect 01



2021, Obstacle, pedestal and showcase.
Exhibition view from The Observer Effect, ADN Galleria, 2021, Barcelona.
Courtesy of the artist and ADN Galleria, Barcelona.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

La sculpture « The Observer Effect » provoque la rencontre surprenante entre une vitrine muséale et une barre de saut d'obstacle hippique. D'emblée, la sculpture pose un problème de relation et d'espace : les dimensions des objets représentés semblent en effet mal s'ajuster les uns aux autres. La barre de saut d'obstacle, qui apparaît dans une position dont elle n'est guère coutumière - dressée, verticale - longue de plusieurs mètres, traverse la vitrine de dimensions plus petites.

Le titre retenu pour la sculpture fait directement allusion aux phénomènes connus dans la physique quantique (réduction du paquet d'ondes) et de la psychologie cognitive (effet Hawthorne) et qui rendent compte, chacun à leur manière, de la perturbation et de la modification des objets étudiés par le fait même de leurs observations. « The Observer Effect » place au centre de ses préoccupations le rôle de l'observateur - spectateur, et l'influence de ce dernier sur la nature de l'œuvre artistique, une fois exposée.

La barre de saut d'obstacle est un élément récurrent des sculptures de Mounir Fatmi. Symbolisant un obstacle idéologique, politique ou historique auquel l'individu doit se confronter. La barre d'obstacle met en scène à la fois l'empêchement et la question de son dépassement, ou de son contournement. Cet élément sculptural finit par désigner le processus créatif et artistique lui-même.

« The Observer Effect » interroge donc la relation entre les productions artistiques et leurs dispositifs d'exposition. La sculpture met en évidence une tension entre la structure d'exposition et l'objet exposé. La position d'équilibre dans

The sculpture The Observer Effect causes the surprising encounter between a museum display case and a horse jumping bar. The sculpture instantly poses a problem with regards to relations and space: the dimensions of the presented objects don't seem to be well adjusted to one another. The jumping bar, which appears in a highly unusual position – standing upright, vertically – is several meters long and goes through the window, which is of much smaller size.

The title chosen for the sculpture directly refers to well-known phenomena in quantum physics (wave packet reduction) and cognitive psychology (the Hawthorne effect) that translate, each in their own way, the disturbance and modification of studied objects caused by the very fact they are being studied. At the heart of the preoccupations of The Observer Effect is the role of the observer, or viewer, and the influence he or she might have on the nature of the artistic work once it is exhibited.

The horse jumping bar is a recurring element in mounir fatmi's sculptures symbolizing an ideological, political or historical obstacle the individual must face. The bar represents both the impediment and the question of its overcoming or circumventing. This sculptural element ultimately designates the creative and artistic process itself.

The Observer Effect therefore questions the relation between artistic productions and their exhibition. The sculpture reveals a tension between the exhibiting institution and the exhibited object. The equilibrium in which it finds itself remains uncertain. The risk of collapse is evident: one can imagine that the slightest movement could cause the upright bar to

laquelle elle se trouve demeure incertaine. Le risque d'écroulement est manifeste : on pourrait croire que le moindre mouvement pourrait faire chuter la barre en position verticale et la structure en verre sur laquelle la barre repose paraît singulièrement fragile. Saute également aux yeux, le fait que l'objet exposé a tendance à sortir du cadre d'exposition, à s'en échapper. Ses dimensions et son projet semblent s'étendre au-delà des possibilités d'accueil de l'espace d'exposition.

L'espace d'exposition entraîne-t-il toujours un risque de figement, d'immobilisation, voire d'abolition du geste artistique et de sa vitalité ? Ce dernier est-il voué à sortir du cadre ? L'espace d'exposition, en tant qu'espace régi par des normes, des conventions et protocoles auxquels l'œuvre est étrangère, est-il insuffisant par essence ? La barre se tient droite – rectitude très différente des enchevêtrements complexes où celle-ci apparaît dans une autre œuvre comme « I Love America, Obstacles ».

La barre d'obstacle est en érection cependant. Se jouant avec facilité des limites imposées, elle transforme irrémédiablement le cadre initial et l'espace dans lequel l'observateur évolue. Sans cesse en train de se dépasser elle-même, l'œuvre artistique s'enrichit enfin de significations et d'interprétations que les spectateurs y projettent. Les significations d'une œuvre ne se limitent pas aux catégories établies par l'histoire de l'art, ni même à celles que l'artiste a voulu établir ou suggérer. L'œuvre d'art se déborde, se transforme sous le regard de l'observateur. La sculpture incite le spectateur à participer à l'élaboration de l'œuvre en déjouant éventuellement les conventions, les catégories ou les significations pré établies et en y mêlant sa propre histoire. « The Observer Effect » sort du cadre et invite son spectateur à en faire autant.

Studio Fatmi, Mars 2021

fall, and the glass structure on which it is placed seems terribly fragile. Another thing that is instantly manifest here is the fact the exhibited object extends outside of the exhibition space, as if escaping. Its dimensions and its project seem to go beyond the possibilities offered by the exhibition space.

Does the exhibition space always cause the risk of congealment, immobilization, or even of abolition of the artistic gesture and its vitality? Is that gesture necessarily destined to reach beyond the imposed boundaries? Is the exhibition space, a space regulated by norms, conventions and protocols that are foreign to the artistic work, inadequate by nature? The bar stands upright – a rectitude that is very different from the complex jumble in which it can be seen in a piece such as I Love America, Obstacles.

The bar is erect. Easily transgressing the imposed limits, it irremediably transforms the initial boundary and the space in which the observer circulates. Lastly, the artistic work, constantly surpassing itself, is enriched with the significations and interpretations the viewers project on it. The significations of a work of art aren't limited to the categories established by art history, not even to the ones the artist aimed to establish or suggest. The work of art brims over, transforms itself under the gaze of the observer. The sculpture encourages viewers to participate in the elaboration of the work by evading pre-established conventions, categories and significations and adding to it their own story. The Observer Effect extends outside the frame and encourages the viewer to do as much.

Studio Fatmi, March 2021

“The Observer Effect 01 is a singular piece that is responsible for establishing a double game: on the one hand it raises the barrier of the showjumping contests as an archaic monument, on the other hand, it deactivates it with

its relocation from the base to a
pedestal that disables
its original function.”

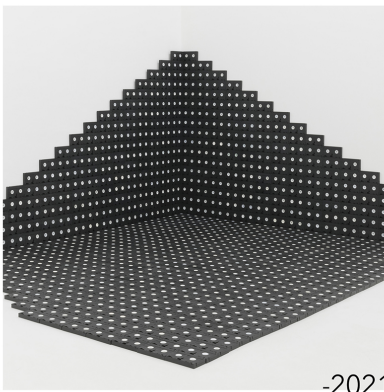
Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta, March 2021

exhibitions:

2021

The Observer Effect - ADN Galeria - Solo Show

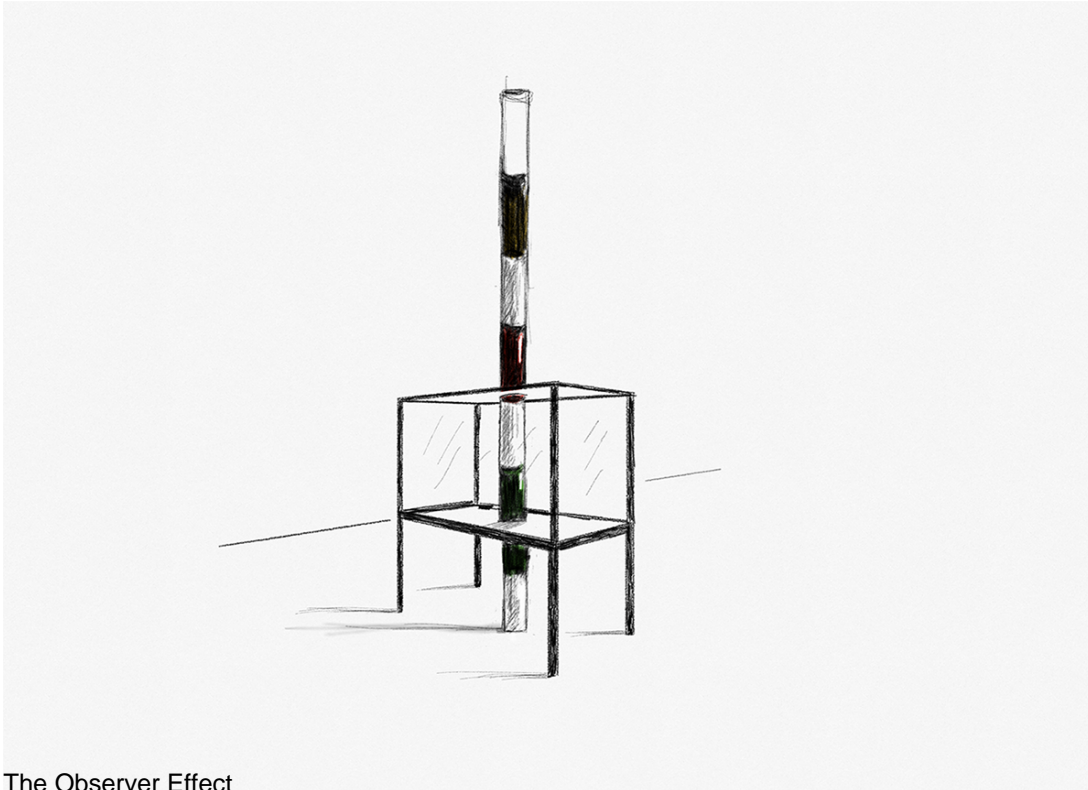
THE
OBSERVER
EFFECT mounir fatmi



-2021

The Observer Effect, SF Publishing, 2021

In The Observer Effect, mounir fatmi presents a journey full of traps; an austere space in which the viewer is confronted with works that question the power of the image and encourage reflection on the harmful effects of hegemonic discourses on history, interpretation, memory and identity.



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