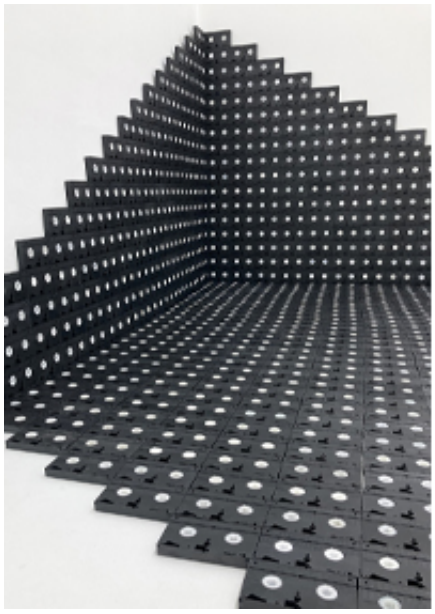
72. | Already Dead 01



2021, VHS, size may vary.
Exhibition view from The Observer Effect, ADN Galleria, 2021, Barcelona.
Courtesy of the artist and ADN Galeria, Barcelona.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

L'installation « Already Dead » est composée de centaines de cassettes VHS qui tapissent les murs et recouvrent le sol de l'espace d'exposition. La multiplication de ces éléments et l'aspect inachevé de l'œuvre donnent au spectateur l'impression d'un processus en cours, d'un recouvrement progressif de l'espace d'exposition. Comme un corps vivant qui se répand sur les murs à la manière d'un blob, forme de vie à la nature incertaine et dont les facultés d'adaptation et de croissance surprennent le monde scientifique.

Le titre de l'installation évoque par un jeu de mot les « ready-made » de Marcel Duchamp, processus artistique qui transpose des objets usuels au sein d'environnements différents de celui où ils apparaissent habituellement, et où leurs qualités esthétiques et plastiques sont exploitées et expérimentées. Il renvoie également à une entreprise d'archéologie des médias menée par Mounir Fatmi, consistant à explorer les enjeux liés aux nouvelles technologies d'information et de communication, et à étudier leurs effets sur les individus. La cassette VHS, support d'enregistrement et de transmission de l'information numérique, des images et du son, qui a connu son heure de gloire dans les années 90 et qui est aujourd'hui totalement tombée en désuétude, y tient le rôle de « média-mort » d'après l'écrivain américain Bruce Sterling. Matériau récurrent des œuvres de l'artiste, la cassette VHS est un moyen d'interroger notre civilisation et sa relation à la technologie.

L'architecture technologique, multipliant les motifs circulaires et brouillant la perspective géométrique et les repères spatiaux, n'en finit pas d'exercer irrésistiblement ses effets

The Already Dead installation is made up of hundreds of VHS tapes that cover up the walls and floor of the exhibition space. The multiplicity of these elements and the work's unfinished aspect give the viewer the impression of an ongoing process, a progressive covering up of the exhibition space. Some sort of living entity spreading across the walls like a blob, this lifeform of uncertain nature whose faculty of adaptation and growth baffles the scientific community.

The installation's title is a pun evocative of Marcel Duchamp's "readymades", an artistic process that transposes trivial objects into an environment that is different than where they can normally be seen, and where their esthetic and plastic qualities are exploited and experimented. It is also evocative of mounir fatmi's endeavor to conduct an archeology of the media consisting in the exploration of the implications of modern information and communication technologies and the study of their effects on individuals. The VHS tape, a digital medium for the recording and transmission of information, images and sound that was in its heyday in the 1990s and is today completely obsolete, plays the role of the "dead media" as described by American author Bruce Sterling. A recurring material in the artist's work, the VHS tape is a way of questioning our civilization and its relation to technology.

This technological architecture, with its multiple circular motifs blurring geometric perspective and spatial markers, irresistibly exercises its hypnotic effects on the viewer. The evolution of information and communication technologies modeled by the Already Dead installation is also given an undeniably ghost-like aspect. Recorded on magnetic tape

hypnotiques sur le spectateur. Le devenir des technologies d'information et de communication ainsi modélisé par l'installation « Already Dead » revêt également un aspect indéniablement fantomatique. Enregistrée sur bandes magnétiques et désormais inaccessibles, l'information se pare d'une aura quelque peu médiumnique et occulte. Au sein d'espaces hyper technologiques et aseptisés, une forme de mystère fait ici un retour inattendu.

De manière plus évidente encore - et donc beaucoup plus difficile à percevoir et à appréhender, l'installation met en scène le devenir des espaces sociaux et leur structuration par les nouvelles technologies d'information et de communication. L'installation « Already Dead » fait éprouver au spectateur le processus de transformation entraîné par le développement frénétique de la technologie. « Medium is the message » : par un renversement similaire à celui que décrit le théoricien des communications Marshall McLuhan, une inversion spatiale s'opère sous les yeux du spectateur. Le contenu devient le contenant et le support technologique finit par constituer le milieu au sein duquel le spectateur évolue.

Studio Fatmi, Mars 2021

and now inaccessible, the information takes on a psychic-like and occult aura. In the midst of hyper-technological and sterilized spaces, a certain form of mystery thus makes an unexpected come-back.

In an even more obvious way – and therefore even harder to perceive and appreciate – the installation displays the evolution of social spaces and their structuring by modern information and communication technologies. The Already Dead installation makes the viewer experience the transformation process caused by the frenetic development of technology. "The medium is the message": in a similar inversion as the one described by communications theorist Marshall McLuhan, a spatial inversion takes places here before the viewer's eyes. The content becomes the container and the technological medium ultimately constitutes the environment in which the viewer circulates.

Studio Fatmi, March 2021

"The VHS tapes that conform this piece, filled with images and sounds, full of information that now stays encrypted given the impossibility of reproducing their content,
due to the practically non-existence of devices to view them, becomes an archaic prefiguration of that contemporary black mirror that, with the force of a black hole,

traps everything inside, dispossessing us of our true essence, leaving us without a clear path of return, absorbing our attention, our lives, our concerns, our desires and all our fears.”

Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta, March 2021

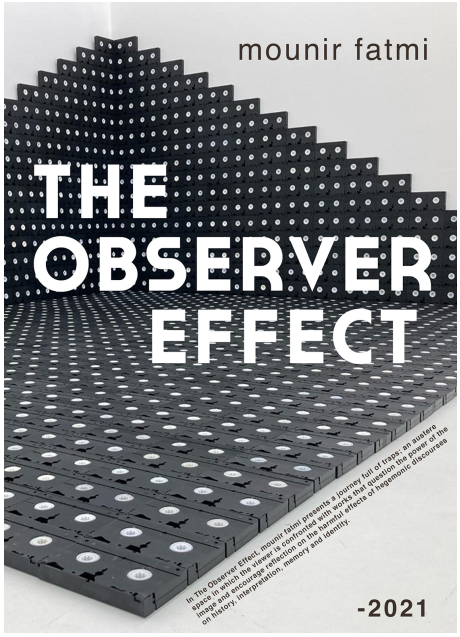
exhibitions:

2022

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

2021

The Observer Effect - ADN Galeria - Solo Show



The Observer Effect, SF Publishing, 2021

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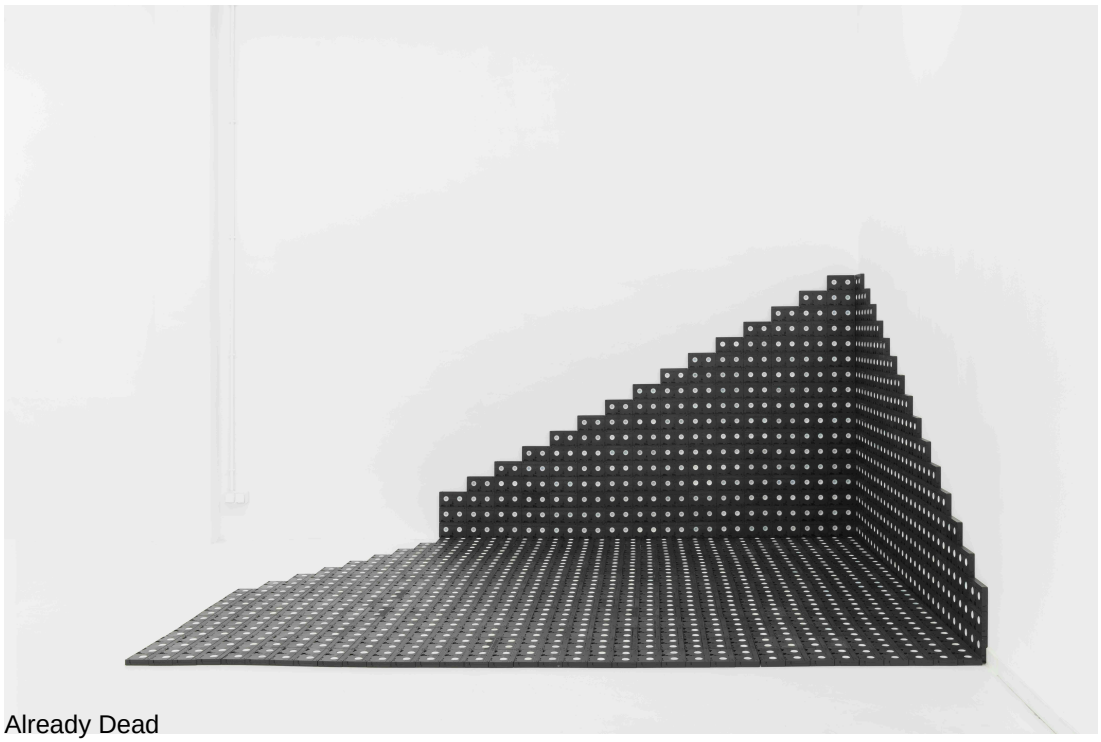

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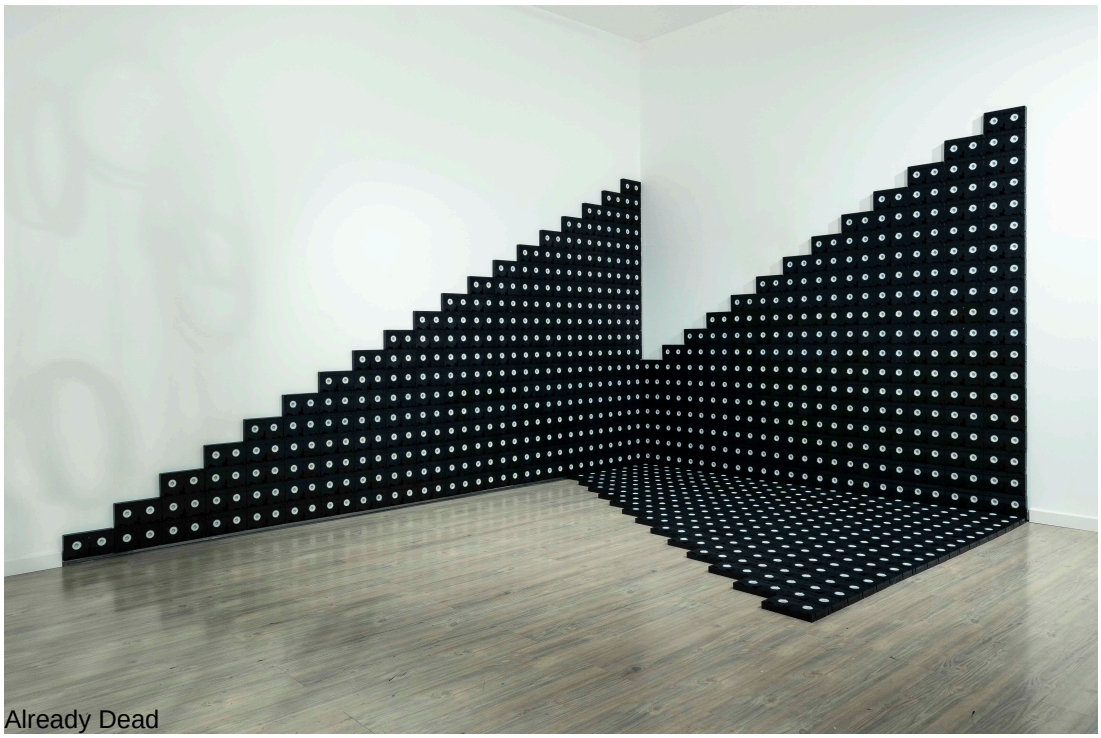

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