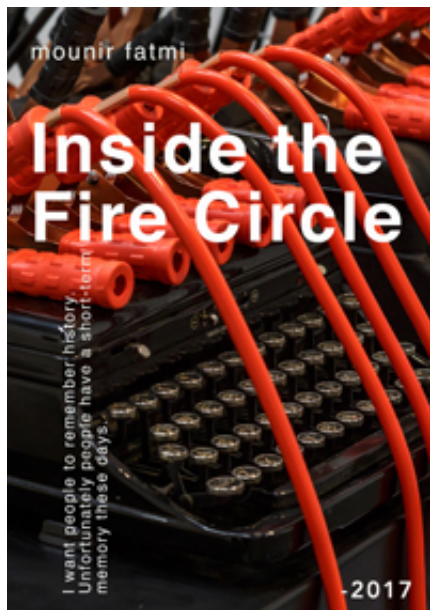


18. Inside the Fire Circle



Inside the fire circle, mounir fatmi, SF Publishing, 2020

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Inside the Fire Circle uses obsolete objects to help reinforce the idea of history repeating itself and of the power of art to make a difference. The central installation of Mounir Fatmi's new exhibition gives the show its name. Inside the Fire Circle features a row of old-fashioned typewriters on an iron frame. From these obsolete objects, black and red jump leads spill out, the ends clipped to a page of plain, white paper. Initially this might seem to question the transfer of information and provide a visual representation of the development of digital and future technologies – but it is also about the past.

"With this installation, I want people to remember history," says Fatmi, a French-Moroccan artist, of his first solo show in Dubai. "Unfortunately people have a short-term memory these days." Fatmi describes the work as an aesthetic trap that draws viewers in but throws them into a circular motion of repetition. "All these materials are going to disappear, so they are historical, but there is the notion of archive, which is constantly present," he says. "We see history repeating itself over and over again, like a palimpsest." Palimpsest is a word for a manuscript or other writing surface that has been reused or altered but which still has visible traces of its original form. This installation then, reflects the artist's preoccupation with the circle, a recurring symbol throughout his practice.

On the wall are several pieces made with coaxial antennae cables – another largely obsolete object – arranged and fixed

in partly-circular and geometric patterns, encased in glass boxes. Again, they draw the viewer in to the idea of repetition and infinity but also pick up the theme of physical material that is now part of history, soon to be discarded from use and, perhaps, even from memory.

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Anna Seaman, The National, April 30th, 2017

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