7. | Wall Painting - Hard Head





2005-2008, acrylic painting, in situ.
Exhibition view from Traces du sacré, Centre Georges Pompidou, 2008, Paris.
Collection Les Abattoirs ,Musée d'art moderne et contemporain,Toulouse, France.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.

Collection of Les Abattoirs, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Toulouse

This work was part of Altai Biennale -Caves, Catacombs, Ferroconcrete, Terekta, 2020.

Peint à même la paroi du mur, un calligramme noir, dont les entrelacs de courbes et contre-courbes enserrent les chiffres de 1 à 6, s'inscrit en place de cerveau dans le dessin d'un crâne dont le profil est tracé à la peinture noire sur un fond blanc. En dessous figure la libre traduction d'un fragment du verset du Coran en partie calligraphié dans cette *Tête dure* de Mounir Fatmi : *Est-ce qu'ils se ressemblent, ceux qui savent et ceux qui ne savent pas ?*

À la manière de l'ancienne phrénologie, les chiffres arabes de *Tête dure* pourraient désigner, ainsi claustrés dans cet étrange cerveau-écriture, les lieux du désir, de la peur, de l'espoir, de la haine ou de la mélancolie, ou bien les sites régissant la mémoire et la créativité, activant la foi ou l'athéisme, la compassion ou la misanthropie, l'envie de vivre ou celle de préférer ne pas. Ainsi, au tout début du XIXème siècle, Franz Josef Gall s'employait-il à spatialiser l'esprit, localiser dans le cerveau ce qui commande la foi autant que la parole et la marche, à lier le savoir et la croyance à l'anatomie. Après Descartes, qui affirmait déjà que c'est par la glande pinéale que l'âme se trouve unie à toutes les parties du corps, Gall avait répertorié le "centre de l'esprit

Painted on the wall, a black calligramme. The interlaced curves and countercurves encircle the numbers from 1 to 6 forming the brain inside a skull. The profile is drawn with black paint on a white background. Under his Hard Head, mounir fatmi has written the free translation of a Koran verse, partly in calligraphy: “Do those who know and those who don’t know resemble each other?”

Just like in ancient phrenology, the Arabic ciphers in Hard Head, locked up in this strange brain/ writing, might depict zones of desire, fear, hope, hate or melancholy, the ones that control memory and creativity, or that activate faith or atheism, compassion or misanthrophy, the lust for life or the longing to die. At the very beginning of the 19th century, Franz Josef Gall 2 gave the human spirit a spatial division. He considered the brain to command faith, speech and the capacity to walk, linking this knowledge to his belief in anatomy. After Descartes, who already said that ”the soul is united to all the parts of the body by the pineal gland” 3, Gall identified the ”centre of the metaphysical spirit” as the place of the spiritual in the corporal.
With this minimalist, radical mural painting, mounir fatmi skins

métaphysique", identifiant la place du spirituel dans le corporel.
Avec cette peinture murale minimaliste et radicale, Mounir Fatmi décolle jusqu'à l'os les strates de quelques unes des représentations qui constituent nos identités occidentales ou orientales, profanes ou religieuses.
S'il existe une spécificité de l'art critique actuel, ce n'est assurément pas d'être "chrétien", ou "musulman", ou "juif", pas plus qu'africain ou occidental, ou de quelque appartenance identitaire dont l'Art s'est depuis longtemps prévalu. Ce n'est pas non plus de croire que la démarche artistique est identique à la démarche scientifique car il serait aisé de démontrer que le parallèle est peu pertinent. Ce qui pourrait vraiment être la marque de la postmodernité artistique, c'est une certaine capacité à observer les vérités en tant que représentations, en tant que jeux de langage commandant une organisation sociale, politique et religieuse.

Extrait du texte d'Evelyne Toussaint, *Septembre 2006*

certain representations that form our occidental or oriental/profane or religious identities.
If there is something specific about contemporary critical art, then it is certainly not that it is ”Christian”, ”Muslim” or ”Jewish”, african or occidental, or belonging to some identity that Art has claimed for a long time. There is no reason to believe that the artistic evolution is identical to the scientific one, because it would be easy to show that the parallel is little relevant. But what could really be a feature of artistic post-modernity is a certain capacity to observe truths as representations or as language games that steer a social, political and religious organisation.

Excerpt from Evelyne Toussaint's text, September 2006

" With this minimalist, radic
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Evelyne Toussaint, 2006

exhibitions:

2024

La peinture est-elle une arme ? - La Fabrique des Arts, Carcassonne - Expo collective

2020

Traces du vivant - Musée des confluences - Expo collective

2018

180° Behind Me - Göteborgs Konsthall – Solo show

Extensions de graffitis - Fort Saint-André - Expo collective

2016

Al-tiba9 - Bardo National Museum - Expo collective

2014

Memory, Place, Desire: Contemporary Art of the Maghreb and the Maghrebi Diaspora - Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery - Haverford College - Expo collective

2009

Traversées-Crossings - Darb 17 18 - Expo collective

Traversées-Crossings - Bab Rouah - Bab Elkebir - Expo collective

Planète Cerveau - Musée Denys Puech - Expo collective

2008

Fuck architects : Chapter II - Centre d'art contemporain Le Creux de l'Enfer - Solo show

Traces du sacré - Centre Georges Pompidou - Expo collective

2007

In search of paradise - Ferdinand van Dieten Gallery - Expo collective

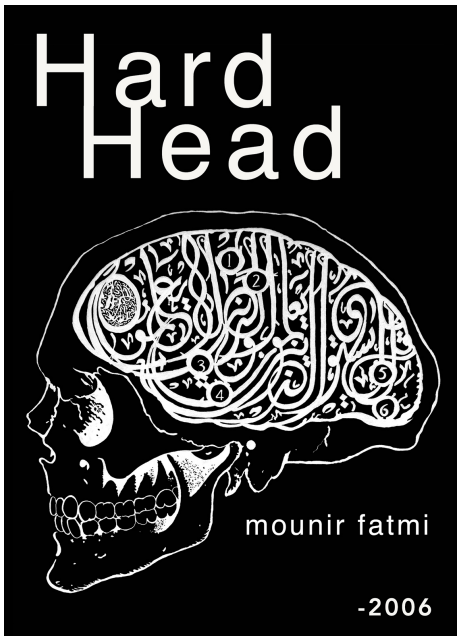
2006

Tête dure / Hard head - Bank Galerie - Solo show

Absolumental, Les Abattoirs - Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain - Expo collective

2005

Ecrans noirs - Centre d'art contemporain intercommunal - Expo collective



Hard Head, SF Publishing, 2021

With this minimalist, radical mural painting, mounir fatmi skins certain representations that form our occidental or oriental/profane or religious identities.

Evelyne Toussaint's, September 2006

Sleep, Perchance to Dream

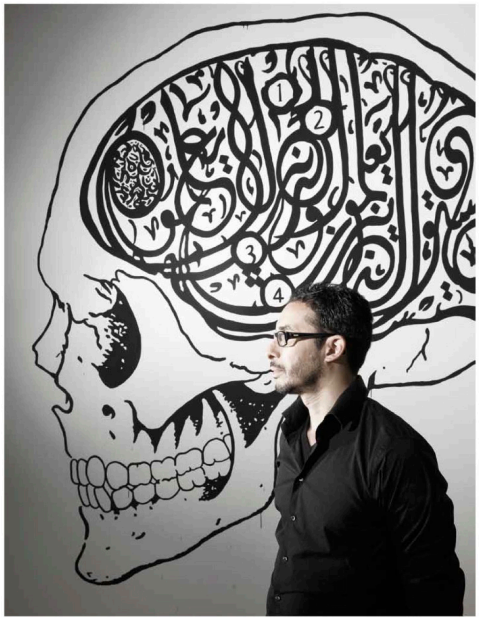
Mounir Fatmi dares to go against the tide

The works of Mounir Fatmi are pregnant with meaning. This is an artist who incorporates the complexities of the world – particularly its cultural and political characteristics – into his life and into each of the pieces he produces. Believing aesthetics to essentially be a trap, he is eager to imbue his artworks with guts, ingredients evoking the real, less-than-beautiful issues of our time. Fatmi's cultural background and international lifestyle bestow on him an openness and a balanced vision that enable him to observe controversies and injustices with clarity and fairness of mind. And it is this that he chooses to make manifest.

ANNA SANSOM

Mounir Fatmi is sitting in a noisy place called Café de Libre Échange in northern Paris. The café's name recalls his performance project, Libre-échange (Free trade), made in 1999, the year he moved to Paris from his native Tangier in Morocco, to participate in an artist's residency. Fatmi offered a white badge to passers-by, onto which he had written his name, thereby circulating his work in the public domain through a simple, innocent gesture. Text, language, and the exchange of ideas still lie at the heart of Mounir Fatmi's work, though now on a more sophisticated and controversial level. Last October, two of his pieces were censored – one from the Printemps de Septembre festival in Toulouse in the south of France, another from the Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute) in Paris.

Dressed in a dark suit, Fatmi is just back from the opening of History Is Not Mine, his exhibition at Paradise Row in London, where Sleep Al Naim, the video of Salman Rushdie slumbering, is being premiered. This is the same piece that was pulled out of an exhibition on 25 years of Arab creativity at the Institut du Monde Arabe just days before the show's inauguration. According to www.france24.com, the French institution claimed that the piece lacked pertinence. Fatmi says it was deemed too sensitive on religious grounds. The six-hour black-and-white video installation appropriates the form of Andy Warhol's film Sleep. Given that a fatwa was issued by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1989, in outrage over Rushdie's novel, The Satanic Verses, the film of Rushdie sleeping has political poignancy. "The idea was to put the public in a position of culpability", says the artist, who divides his time between Paris, Tangier, and Los Angeles. "After one minute of watching somebody sleeping, you start to feel voyeuristic and guilty. Salman Rushdie, and his right to freedom of expression, was not supported enough in the West and in the Arab countries." Fatmi made the video using 3D digital animation, after his request to meet Rushdie in person was declined by the author's



HARD HEAD, 2007
Wall painting
Courtesy of the artist and Paradise Row, London
Photo: Fouad Maarouf



ard Head

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Wall Painting - Hard Head

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Wall Painting

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Wall Painting - Technologia

The optical illusion is obtained here through the loss or the multiplication of the center of the composition. Its impressive effect suggests the idea of a frenetic production of images that violently impress themselves on the viewer’s retina. The work also exercises a visual seduction and its esthetic and geometry constantly appeal to the eye.