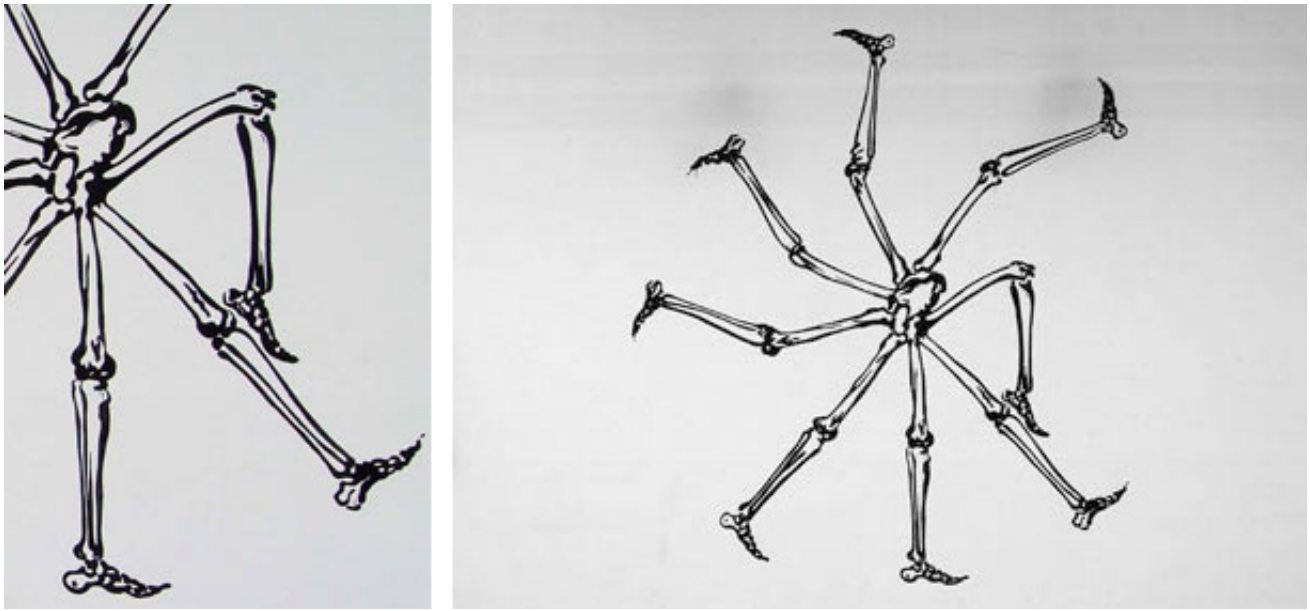
7. | Wall Painting - The Cercle



2007, black acrylic painting, in situ.
Exhibition view from Something is possible, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, 2007, Los Angeles, 2007.
Courtesy of the artist.

Peinture murale circulaire en noir et blanc, « Le Cercle » est une œuvre osseuse et polyjambiste. Elle est réalisée par l'assemblage en étoile de squelettes de jambes humaines réunis au centre de la composition par l'extrémité supérieure du fémur. La peinture circulaire dont le contour est dessiné par des pieds décharnés fait apparaître une des jambes repliée, dont le talon s'appuie sur l'articulation du genou de la précédente.

Le cercle dans l'œuvre de mounir fatmi est une figure privilégiée qui permet l'étude des systèmes de productions d'objets et de significations, tels que la machine, la langue, les formes d'organisation sociales ou les religions. La peinture murale « Le Cercle » fait écho aux nombreuses études géométriques et plastiques menées par l'artiste afin d'élaborer une représentation des rapports de l'individu au sacré, à la religion et aux croyances en s'inspirant de l'iconographie religieuse fortement marquée par le symbolisme.

L'œuvre procède par récupération et détournement de l'iconographie religieuse. La « Roue de la Fortune » : est une métaphore teintée de mysticisme, filée depuis le moyen-âge, qui pointe l'instabilité et la mutabilité permanentes de l'existence humaine et du destin, personnifié et nommé Fortune. Cette représentation symbolique exprime la conception d'un temps circulaire, marquée par l'absence de sens et la répétition. Elle décrit également les revers de la fortune et les incessants passages d'une valeur haute à une valeur basse et inversement de nos positions sociales ou de nos diverses préoccupations. Les principes de circularité et de répétition à l'œuvre dans les rapports au sacré du croyant sont également évoqués dans les œuvres de mounir fatmi,

A circular black & white wall painting, « The Circle » is a bony and multi-legged artwork. It is formed by the star-shaped assemblage of skeletons of human legs joined in the center of the composition by the superior end of the femur. The circular painting, whose outline is drawn by rawboned feet, shows one of the legs folded, its heel resting upon the knee of the leg behind it.

The circle is a much-used shape in mounir fatmi's work, as it enables the study of systems producing objects and significations such as machines, languages, social organizations and religions. The wall painting « The Circle » echoes many geometric and plastic studies conducted by the artist to elaborate a representation of the relation of individuals to the sacred, to religion and to beliefs by drawing inspiration from religious iconography, which is strongly impregnated with symbolism.

The work operates a reclaiming and twisting of religious iconography. The « Wheel of Fortune » is a metaphor tinged with mysticism, extended since medieval times and underlining the constant instability and changeability of human existence and fate, personified under the name Fortune. This symbolic representation expresses a circular conception of time characterized by repetition and the absence of direction. It also describes the reversals of fortune and the constant changes from high value to low value and vice versa in our social positions or our various preoccupations. The principles of circularity and repetition at play in the believer's relation to the sacred are also evoked in mounir fatmi's work, such as with the Rubik's Cube-shaped sculpture « Manipulations », which is evocative, among other things, of the circumambulation of believers

telles que les sculptures en forme de rubik's cube « Manipulations » qui rappellent, entre autres, la circumambulation des fidèles autour de la Kaaba.

Ces mêmes principes fondent l'esthétique post-minimaliste de mounir fatmi appliquée au traitement des systèmes de croyances. On observe cependant une rupture de la circularité dans la peinture murale, avec l'apparition d'une jambe repliée - s'agit-il d'une intervention divine ? La mise en scène de le religion -de sa rhétorique, et de ses rapports à l'individu comporte comme souvent chez l'artiste un élément de séduction. Le détournement de l'iconographie religieuse opéré par « Le Cercle », à la fois stylisé, distancié et teinté d'humour noir, constitue finalement un avertissement : l'aspect de vanité médiévale de l'œuvre n'exprime pas la supériorité de dieu sur l'homme, mais la futilité des croyances humaines et des constructions mentales dogmatiques face à l'existence et la réalité.

Studio Fatmi, Janvier 2018.

around the Kaaba.

The same principles are at the basis of mounir fatmi's post-minimalistic esthetic applied to the observation of systems of belief. Yet an interruption in circularity can be seen in this wall painting, with the appearance of the folded leg – is it a divine intervention? The staging of religion, its rhetoric and its relation to individuals, often contains an element of seduction. The twisting of religious iconography conducted in « The Circle », which is simultaneously stylized, distanced and tinged with black humor, ultimately constitutes a warning: the work's resemblance to a medieval vanity doesn't express the superiority of god over men, but the futility of human beliefs and dogmatic mental constructs in the face of existence and reality.

Studio Fatmi, January 2018.

" This symbolic representation expresses a circular conception of time characterized by repetition and the absence of direction. "

Studio Fatmi, January 2018

exhibitions:

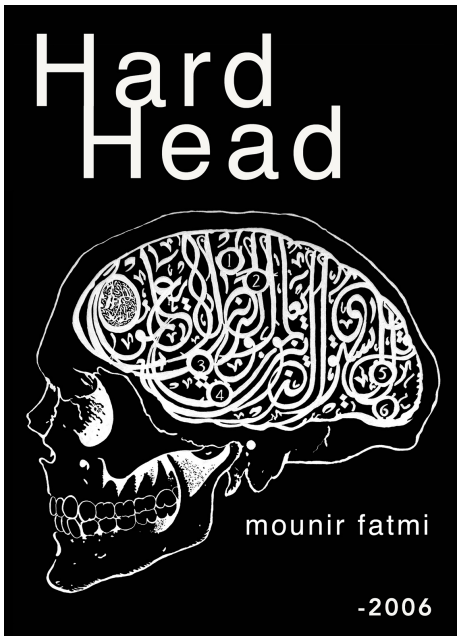
2007

Something is possible - Shoshana Wayne Gallery - Solo show

Africa remix - Contemporary art of a continent - Johannesburg Art Gallery - Expo collective

2006

Africa remix, contemporary art of a continent - Moderna Museet - 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

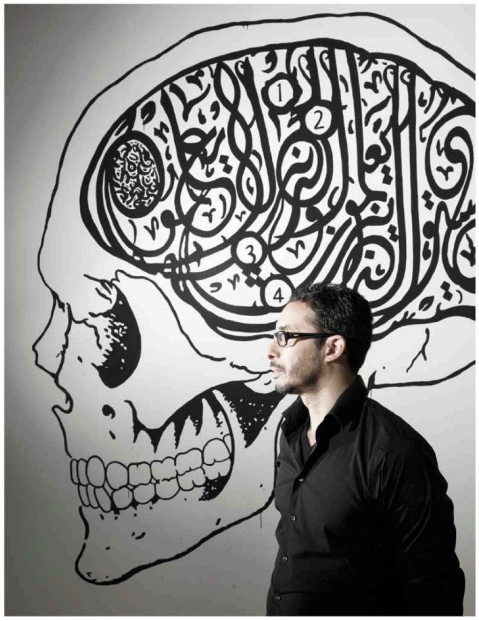
Mounir Fatmi dares to go against the tide

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

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.


Wall Painting - Hard Head

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.

Wall Painting

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.



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.