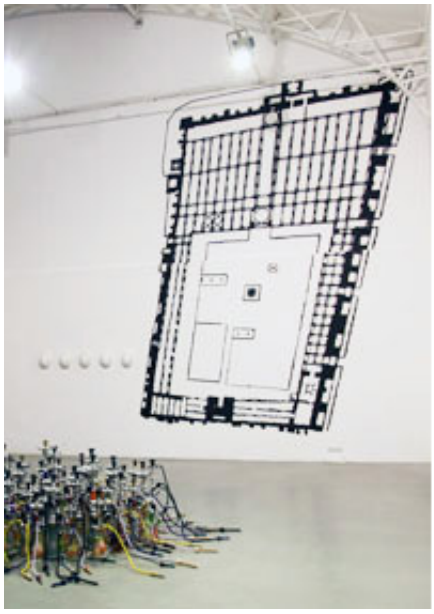
7. | Wall Painting - The Mosque





2009-2010, black acrylic painting, in situ.
Exhibition view from Seeing is believing, Galerie Hussenot, 2010, Paris.
Courtesy of the artist and Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai.

« La Mosquée » est une série de peintures murales qui reproduit en noir et blanc les plans architecturaux des mosquées traditionnelles, combinaison irrégulière de formes rectangulaires et légèrement inclinée par rapport au sol. Son esthétique rappelle celle du projet « Le Changement fondamental", succession graphique et chronologique de différents plans architecturaux, depuis ceux de mosquées construites au 9e siècle, jusqu'au plans des musées apparus dans les années 2000.

L'œuvre est une réflexion sur l'architecture et sur son rôle dans la transformation sociale des pays arabo-musulmans. Celle-ci est au cœur des recherches artistiques de mounir fatmi, menées à travers vidéos, photographies ou installations. L'architecture des pays arabo-musulmans a été marquée ces dernières années par l'apparition de vastes projets architecturaux, tels que le projet urbanistique Downtown Burj Khalifa qui a fait naître un nouveau quartier à Dubaï en innovant sur le plan des techniques du bâtiment. La construction de musées est également devenue prioritaire dans l'agenda culturel des ces pays. Ont ainsi vu le jour le musée national du Qatar, initialement appelé musée d'Art Islamique de Doha, conçu par l'architecte I.M. Pei, inauguré en 2008, ou le Louvre Abu Dhabi, réalisé par l'architecte Jean Nouvel et achevé en 2017.

La peinture murale « La Mosquée » transpose les plans de la mosquée traditionnelle dans le musée. Elle relie l'héritage architectural musulman à l'architecture contemporaine et observe leur dialogue. Une mise en dialogue effectuée également par I.M. Pei lors de l'élaboration du projet de musée d’art islamique au Qatar, désireux d'associer esthétique classique et modernité, dont la source

« The Mosque » is a series of wall paintings reproducing architectural plans of traditional mosques in black & white: an irregular combination of rectangular shapes, slightly inclined compared to the ground. Its esthetic is evocative of that of the project « The Fundamental Change », a graphic and chronological succession of different architectural plans, from those of 9th century mosques to the plans of museums built in the 2000s.

This piece is a reflection on architecture and its role in the social transformation of Arab Muslim countries. This subject is at the heart of mounir fatmi’s artistic research conducted through videos, photographs and installations. Architecture in Arab Muslim countries has been characterized these last few years by the emergence of large-scale architectural projects such as the urban project Downtown Burj Khalifa, that created an entire new neighborhood in Dubai, with innovative construction techniques. Building museums has also become a priority in the cultural agenda of these countries. The National Museum of Qatar, initially called the Doha Museum of Islamic Art, conceived by architect I.M. Pei and inaugurated in 2008, and the Louvre Abu Dhabi, designed by Jean Nouvel and completed in 2017, are two examples of this.?

The wall painting « The Mosque » transposes the plans of a traditional mosque into a museum. It connects the Muslim architectural heritage with contemporary architecture and observes the dialogue between them. This dialogue was also established by I.M. Pei during the elaboration of the Qatar museum of Islamic art, as he wished to associate a classic esthetic with modernity, his main source of inspiration being the Ahmed Ibn Touloun mosque built in the 9th century.

d'inspiration essentielle provient de la mosquée Ahmed Ibn Touloun, édifice dont la construction remonte au 9e siècle. « La Mosquée » multiplie les expérimentations géométriques. La peinture murale retient la simplicité et la pureté des formes de l'architecture traditionnelle. L'efficacité fonctionnelle de ses formes rectangulaires est en effet susceptible de s'associer à l'esthétique de mouvements artistiques modernes, tels que le minimalisme et les courants abstraits. Le plan est inscrit directement sur les murs des salles d'exposition et signale la forte inscription sociale de l'architecture traditionnelle. L'œuvre s'inspire en effet des fonctions du lieu : elle n'est pas seulement un lieu de culte, elle est également un lieu où se tiennent des réunions de quartier, des formations, où se mènent des actions sociales à échelle locale.

L'œuvre de mounir fatmi s'interroge : la tradition peut-elle devenir la base architecturale de projets contemporains, peut-elle participer aux fondements d'une future identité culturelle ? L'inclinaison de la composition rectangulaire confère des allures de tour de Pise à ce plan de mosquée traditionnelle et rappelle peut-être son appartenance à un patrimoine culturel dont la sauvegarde et le renouvellement en sont les enjeux essentiels. La peinture murale « La Mosquée » insiste sur le rôle social des projets architecturaux et sur les enjeux politiques qui sous-tendent la construction des musées dans les pays arabo-musulmans, dont le fonctionnement implique une coopération avec les grands musées internationaux.

Studio Fatmi, Février 2017.

« The Mosque » involves multiple geometric experimentations. The wall painting retains all the simplicity and purity of the shapes of traditional architecture. In fact, the functional efficiency of its rectangular shapes can be associated with the esthetic of modern artistic movements such as minimalism and abstract currents. The plan is drawn directly on the walls of the exhibition space and signals the strong social implication of traditional architecture. Indeed, the piece is inspired by the building’s functions: this not just a place of worship, it’s also a place where neighborhood meetings and training classes are held, and where social actions are conducted on a local scale. ?

mounir fatmi’s work poses the question: can tradition become the architectural foundation of contemporary projects, can it play a part in the foundation of a future cultural identity? The inclination of the rectangular composition gives this plan of a traditional mosque an aspect that is evocative of the tower of Pisa and perhaps reminds us that it belongs to a cultural heritage whose protection and renewal are essential questions. The wall painting « The Mosque » insists on the social role of architectural projects and on the political considerations behind the construction of museums in Arab Muslim countries, which require cooperation with major international museums to function.???

Studio Fatmi, February 2017.

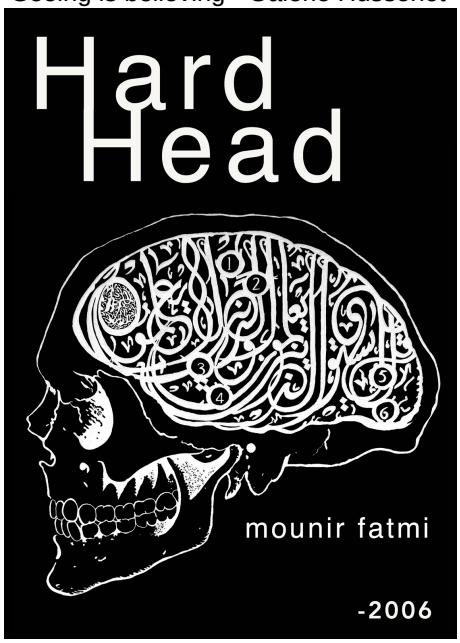
" In fatmi’s wall painting The Mosque, a site of worship has been reduced to its foundations, the architecture leveled. But within the floorplan that fatmi traces on a white gallery wall eternally symbolic forms arise - a black and white grid, a cross, a solid black square. "

Lillian Davies, June 2010

exhibitions:

2010

Seeing is believing - Galerie Hussenot - Solo show



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

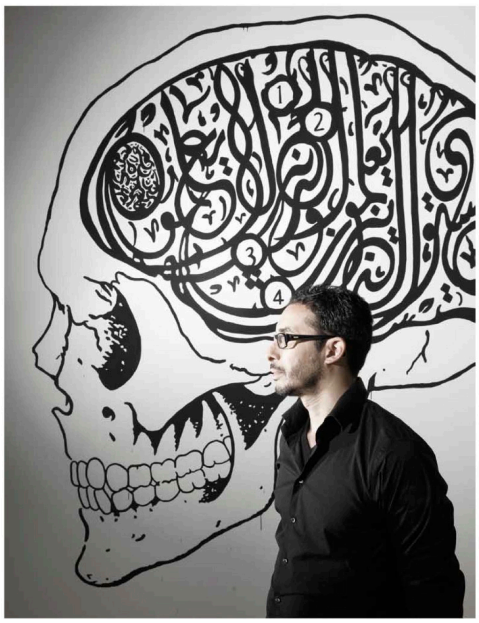
Mounir Fatmi dares to go against the tide

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 Maazouz



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.