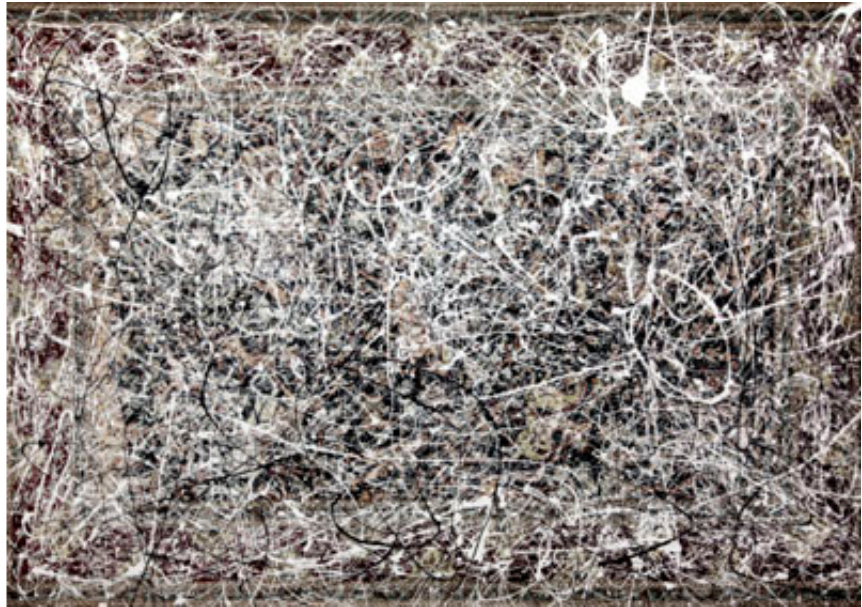


8. | Encounter 01, Hunting scene



2010, Dripping on Persian Carpet, 124 x 185 cm.
Exhibition view from Armory Show, Galerie Hussenot, 2011, New York.
Courtesy of the artist.

Ce qui saute aux yeux avec la série de peintures intitulées Rencontre, c'est qu'il n'y a, à priori, plus rien à voir. Et pourtant, à y regarder d'un peu plus près, les éléments de ces compositions picturales sont innombrables et s'accumulent jusqu'à la surcharge avec l'énergie sauvage d'une œuvre réalisée par un enfant ayant échappé à la surveillance de sa tutelle. Il faut se rapprocher encore pour distinguer la nature du support qui disparaît presque sous les couches de peinture successives et sous les traits blancs, pour la plupart, et noirs, répétés, à savoir un tapis traditionnel oriental. Rencontre, qui semble proclamer qu'il n'y a rien à voir, n'en exige pas moins un haut degré d'attention et de discernement de la part du spectateur.

La série des peintures s'articule autour d'une rencontre, d'un dialogue entre deux pratiques très différentes, issues de cultures distinctes - d'un côté, la technique du dripping et du all over, rapide et individuelle, notamment développée par Jackson Pollock dans certaines de ses œuvres, et de l'autre, celle du tapis traditionnel, longue et collective, issue de l'artisanat oriental - mais qui ont cependant pour point commun de s'être imposées chacune dans leur domaine comme de véritables lieux communs, mondialement connus et reconnus. L'élaboration de la série Rencontre rappelle la série des "Peintures effacées" réalisées en 1997 - où les spectateurs sont invités à voir les toiles avant que l'artiste les efface en les recouvrant d'une couche uniforme de peinture blanche, ou encore le "Tapis du Père" - où cercles et signes géométriques se mêlent aux motifs classiques du tapis de prière. Avec Rencontre, Mounir Fatmi poursuit sa réflexion sur les interactions culturelles en étudiant les effets de la rencontre entre l'art contemporain et la société arabe traditionnelle. Mounir Fatmi pose également la question de l'héritage culturel, et il tente de définir son propre rapport face à celui-ci et face aux stéréotypes culturels.

What is immediately striking with the series of paintings entitled Encounter is that there is apparently nothing to see. Yet, with a closer look, appear countless elements in these pictorial compositions, and they accumulate to excess with the savage energy of a painting made by a child having eluded the surveillance of grownups. One needs to get closer still to distinguish the nature of the support material that almost disappears under successive layers of paint and under repeated lines of white, for the most part, and black: namely a traditional oriental carpet. This Encounter, which seems to claim there is nothing to see, requires nonetheless a high level of attention and discernment on the part of the viewer.

This series of paintings is articulated around an encounter, a dialog between two very different practices from distinct cultures – on one side, the technique of dripping and all-over, quick and individual, developed by Jackson Pollock in some of his works, and on the other, that of the traditional carpet, slow and collective, born from oriental craftsmanship – techniques which nevertheless have in common the fact of having imposed themselves in their respective fields as world-renowned clichés. The elaboration of the Encounters series is reminiscent of the series of "Erased Paintings" created in 1997, where viewers are invited to look at the paintings before the artist erases them by covering them with a uniform layer of white paint, or of the "Father's Carpet", where circles and geometric symbols combine with the classic motifs of the prayer carpet. With Encounter, Mounir Fatmi pursues his reflection on cultural interactions by studying the effects of the encounter between contemporary art and traditional Arab society. Mounir Fatmi also poses the question of cultural heritage and tries to define his own relation to it, while confronted with cultural stereotypes.

Un même processus opère dans les œuvres précédemment citées, et que Mounir Fatmi a désigné par l'expression "réalignement de l'objet" : recouvrement et effacement ont pour effet d'annuler le statut initial de l'objet et de produire une toile vierge. Le tapis, comme lieu commun de la culture orientale et le all over, comme lieu commun de l'expressionnisme abstrait, sont désacralisés d'un même geste, libre et désinvolte, et perdent en charge idéologique. L'artiste a alors éventuellement tout loisir de mettre au point son propre lieu commun pictural, comme dans "Scène de chasse", première peinture de la série Rencontre - et désignée comme telle de manière plutôt ironique ou humoristique dans la mesure où ce qui est chassé ici, ce sont justement le lieu commun, la pensée ou le geste stéréotypés. Confusion et opacité à la fois visuelle et textuelle permettent finalement à leur auteur de mettre à distance les références culturelles et de les faire librement jouer entre elles. L'esthétique énergétique et brutale de la série, très manifeste également, met en évidence la violence des interactions culturelles, celle qu'exercent les stéréotypes culturels sur les individus et enfin celle, nécessaire, des actes individuels qui aspirent à être libres. Rencontre en appelle à nos forces vitales. L'œuvre communique un sentiment de transgression et d'audace et incite à oser toute forme d'expérimentation.

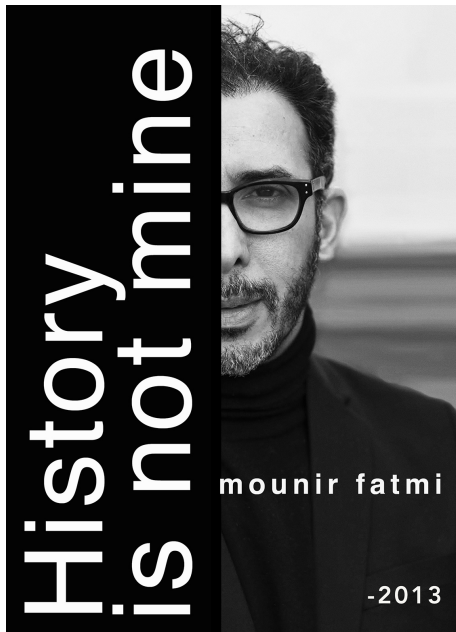
Studio Fatmi, Février 2017.

The same process is at work in his previously cited earlier works. Mounir Fatmi designates it with the expression "object realignment": covering and erasing have the effect of canceling the initial status of the object and producing a blank canvas. The carpet as a cliché of oriental culture and all-over as a cliché of abstract expressionism are desacralized in one same free and careless gesture and lose their ideological charge. From there, he artist is free to develop his own pictorial cliché, such as in "Hunting Scene", the first painting in the Encounter series, with its rather ironic and humorous title since what is being hunted here is precisely the cliché, stereotyped thought and gestures. Confusion and an opacity that is both visual and textual finally enable their author to keep cultural references at a distance and let them interact freely. The energetic and brutal esthetic of the series, which is also quite manifest, puts forward the violence of cultural interactions, as exercised by cultural stereotypes on individuals, and also the necessary violence of individual acts aspiring to be free. Encounter calls upon our vital strengths. The work conveys a feeling of transgression and audacity and prompts us to dare any form of experimentation.

Studio Fatmi, February 2017.

" With Encounter, mounir fatmi pursues his reflection on cultural interactions by studying the effects of the encounter between contemporary art and traditional Arab society. "

Studio Fatmi, February 2017



History is not mine

The show's title plays on the title of a group exhibition, History is Mine staged last year in Toulouse in which a video work by fatmi, Technologia which combines verses of the Qu'ran with elements inspired by Duchamp's Rotoreliefs, was removed from display following violence and rioting from certain local elements in response to the work.

Paradise Row Gallery, April 2013



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