



ADN GALERIA

mounir fatmi – *Light & Fire*

From November 22th to January 14th 2015

ADN Galeria presents *Light & Fire*, the first solo show by Mounir Fatmi in Spain. The exhibition brings together a series of works that explore the basis of history and society expressed through the written word and in various forms of language: religious, political, ideological and literary. The title's ambiguity positions us in front of the paradox of these two elements: light and fire. Since Platon's cave myth, these elements are the source of our civilization but have also become the cause of its destruction.

The exhibition begins with the impressive installation *Without History* (2007), consisting of 29 jumping poles strategically spread all over the entrance floor and in which there are inscribed quotations from the book *The Art of War*, by the Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu. fatmi often appeals to these objects in diverse installations and sculptures, which are translated as obstacles, stating that, above all, the obstacle is like an art work: fragile, unstable, vulnerable and always threatened by possible collapse.

Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Walter Benjamin, Albert Camus, Michel Foucault are the builder names of modern and post-modern thinking that appear in *The Monuments (2008-2009)*. Their names inscribed on these construction helmets, spotless, suggest us the idea of construction linked to the concept of the artist as producer and the idea of hard but fragile work; not only do we find this parallelism, but also the suggestion of something that is "under construction", in other words, something that is in perpetual construction, reconstruction or deconstruction. And this brings us to the thinking essence, the feeling of curiosity, to rethink, to constantly question the human condition. This installation reminds us that we are allowed to think, express, speak, listen to and read.

In *The dynamic Geography of History (2006)* mounir fatmi associates political ideologies with artistic movements. Through these equivalencies, the artist proposes a rough link between the political and the aesthetic, such as capitalism with minimalism, futurism with fascism or socialism with constructivism. The viewer is confronted with a series of ironic and humorous pairings that nonetheless ring true of the XX century.

Constructivism

Futurism

Minimalism

Situationism

IS

IS

IS

IS

Socialist

Fascist

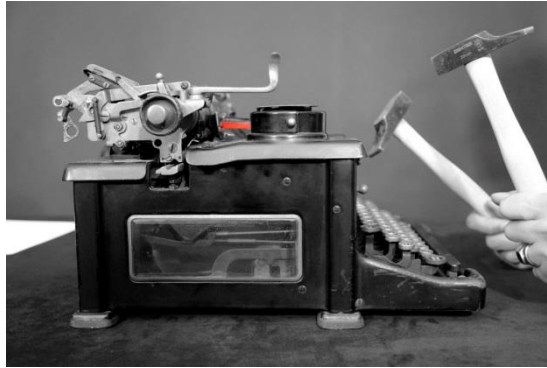
Capitalist

Communist

The dynamic Geography of History, mounir fatmi (2006)

Charlie Hebdo (2011) is a French satirical, ironic and left-wing weekly newspaper that gained international relevance when published some controversial Muhammad cartoons in 2006. In this piece, the artist shows the cover of a 1973 edition in which the viewer can read the Charlie Hebdo's request to the French military authorities to detonate a bomb on the top of the Eiffel Tower. A written demand done 40 years ago that nowadays would cause a big stir and media controversy. Undoubtedly this is both an ironic text about France's correlation with atomic bombs, being one of the countries with the largest nuclear arsenal, and the artist's critique towards the absurdity and cynicism as driving force of military conflicts.

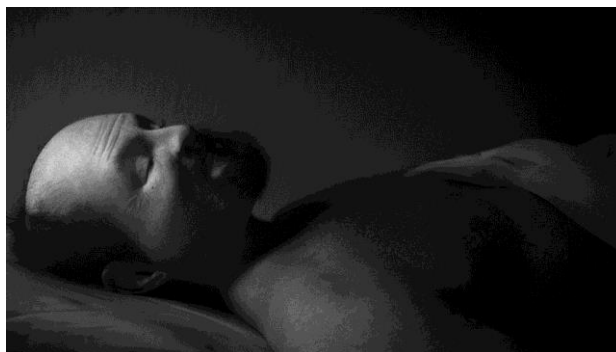
History is not mine (2013-2014) is a black and white video showing the artist's own hand trying to type using hammers. The red tape represents the symbolic load of narrating the violence from the beauty of writing. mounir fatmi could refer not only to blood, to a suppress account or to colonial power mechanisms, but rather speaks of the contemporary art world reality. The video *History is Not Mine* arises from the events happened in 2012, when the artist showed in Toulouse, within the context of the Contemporary Creation Festival Printemps du Septembre, his work *Tecnología*, an installation mixing Coranic verses with Rotoreliefs elements inspired by Marcel Duchamp. Projected onto a ground passed through pedestrians, this installation gave rise to violent protests by some Muslim groups who labeled Fatmi's work blasphemous. This action ended up with the censorship and withdrawal of his work from Festival of Toulouse. Ironically, the work's title plays on the title of the group exhibition *History Is Mine*, staged in Printemps de Septembre Festival, and reflects mounir's direct response and positioning towards this event.



History is not mine, mounir fatmi (2012)

The photomontage *¿Who is Joseph Anton? (2012)* arises after a meeting that took place between the artist and the writer Salman Rushdie in Brussels, on the occasion of the author's autobiography presentation entitled Joseph Anton. This work leads us in the footsteps of Salman Rushdie, who used this pseudonym inspired by two of his favorite writers -Joseph Conrad and Anton Chekhov- to live and write during his period of enforced hiding caused by the numerous threats he received by the religious Iran leader, Ruhollah Khomeini, who accused the writer of conspiring against Islam in *The Satanic Verses*. This work takes as its point of departure the co-existence of three writers, three identities, and three voices, henceforth brought up against one another to draw a new portrait: that of the 'fugitive'.

The writer's identity reappears at the video *Sleep Al Naim (2005-2012)*, showing himself in the sleep ambivalence, both quiet and disturbed, a state of vulnerability mixed with strength. Begun in 2005, *Sleep Al Naim* is a work of fiction in black and white showing the writer sleeping peacefully, his bare chest heaving and falling to the rhythm of his breathing. The full six-hour-long video reinterprets Andy Warhol's groundbreaking *Sleep (1963)*, showing continuous image of the poet and friend John Giorno sleeping, an image that suggests the ambivalence of a physical abandonment, quiet and calm. Taking into account the threats to his life since the publication of his novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988, drifting off to sleep is a way for Salman Rushdie to put himself in a vulnerable position. But at the same time, this moment of unconsciousness expresses strength and confidence. mounir fatmi uses digital and 3D technology to rebuild the writer's face from numerous images in different periods and the artist's own breathing.



Sleep Al Naim, mounir fatmi (2005-2012)

mounir fatmi encourages the visitors to question the history and violence involved in his writing and research. The works presented at ADN Galeria evoke recurring subjects for the artist, such as the border, the object desecration, the role of language and the writing. There is no doubt that beyond his subversive works is both the desire to understand the world in which we live and release it from any indoctrination form.