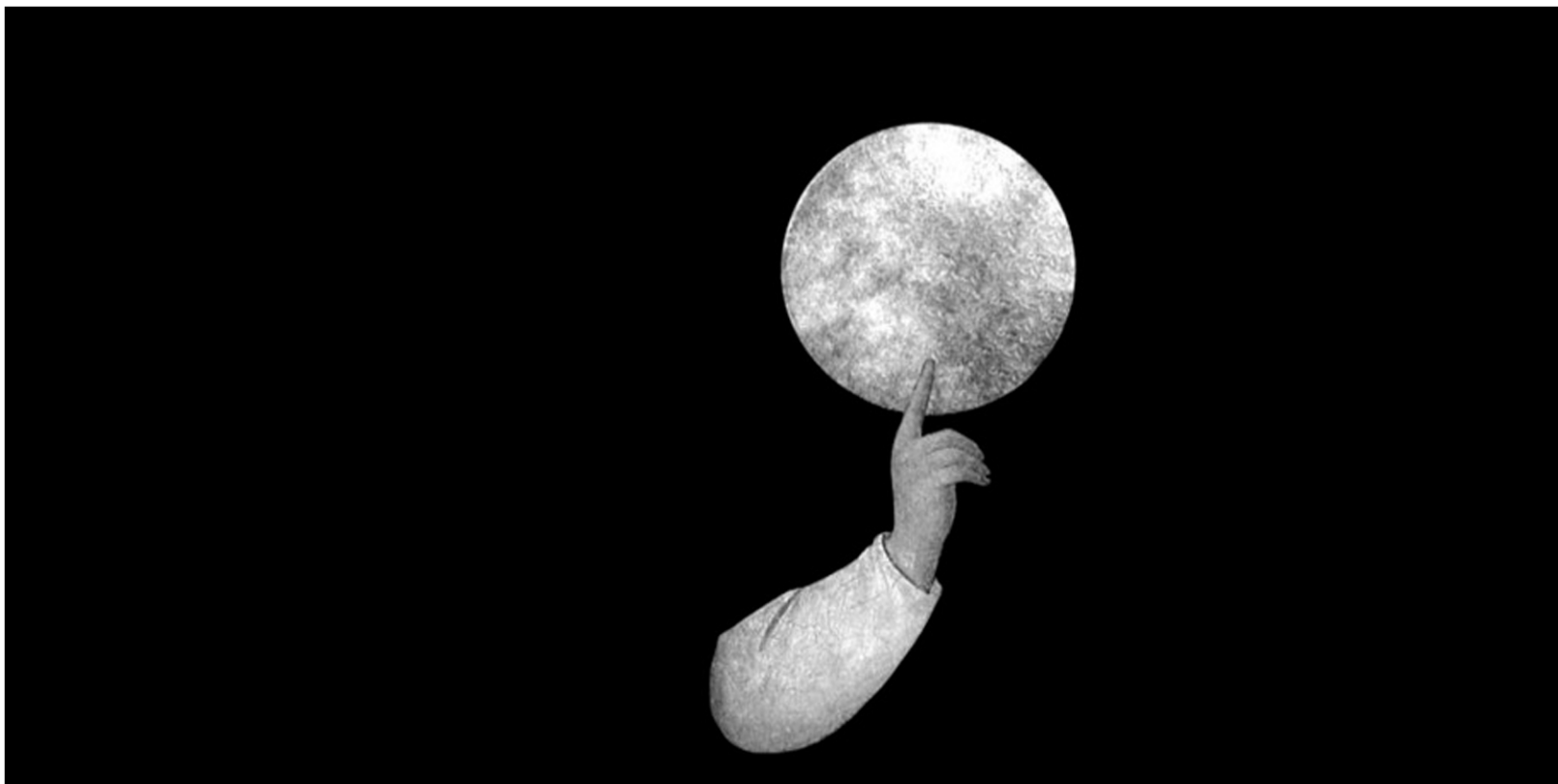


Mounir Fatmi

26 Oct 2017 — 7 Jan 2018 at the Officine dell'Immagine in Milan, Italy

22 SEPTEMBER 2017



mounir fatmi The Silence of Saint Peter Martyr, 2011 video HD in bianco e nero con audio, 5'04" edizione di 5
Courtesy l'artista e Officine dell'Immagine, Milano

From October 26th 2017 to January 7th 2018, Officine dell'Immagine gallery in Milan will inaugurate its new location in Via Carlo Vittadini 11, hosting the largest solo exhibition ever held in Italy dedicated to mounir fatmi (Tangier, Morocco, 1970). Curated by Silvia Cirelli, the exhibition represents an unprecedented opportunity to explore the artistic career of this celebrated key figure.

Internationally very well known, mounir fatmi is among the protagonists of the current Venice Biennale, where he is participating with two extremely fascinating projects, in the Tunisian Pavilion within "The Absence of Paths" exhibition, and in the NSK State Pavilion. Invited to exhibit at prestigious museums such as the Georges Pompidou Centre, the Brooklyn Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo and the MAXXI in Rome, his works are part of large public collections including those at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Louis Vuitton Foundation pour la Création in Paris and the Mathaf, the Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha.

Focusing on topical issues such as identity, multiculturalism and the ambiguity of power and violence, mounir fatmi over the years has managed to constantly reinvent himself, exploring a wide variety of stylistic languages ranging from video to installation, photography and performance. He follows a narrative pathway that in addition to confirming his remarkable lexical ability, combines personal ingredients and actual testimonies, tracing important passages of contemporary history.

The Milanese exhibition entitled Transition State will trace the distinctive features of his vast poetic synthesis, emphasizing the concept of cultural "hybridization": a combination of prejudices and stereotypes which are first revealed and then discredited, reinforcing an overall vision based on dialogue between religion, science, the ambivalence of language and how these transform over the course of history. Martyrs is a clear example of the power of language over the truth: it is a diptych made of black wooden panels whose surface is sliced by a multitude of lines that seem to move like wounds on a body's skin. The emblematic title plays on the semantic variants of this word, whose meaning has transformed through the course of history. From the ancient Greek word martus, which meant "witness", to the definition of a man who sacrifices himself in the name of faith, up to the present definition in which a martyr is improperly compared to the concept of kamikaze.

The theme of martyrdom also returns in the video The Silence of Saint Peter Martyr (2011), with the protagonist St. Peter the Martyr, also known as Pietro da Verona, who was a 13th-century priest of the Dominican Order that was atrociously executed because of his strong opposition to heretics. The calm of the scene, where the subject slowly moves his finger and mimics the peaceful gesture of silence, is violently opposed to the audio of the video itself with a disturbing and aggressive background.

The inspiration he draws from religious material is reconfirmed in the photographic series Blinding Light (2013), a project with both conceptual and visual manipulation of the so-called "Healing of the Justinian Deacon", a miracle that was also immortalized in a famous painting by Fra Angelico. The story tells of two saints who were famous for their medical skills, Cosmas and Damian, who entered Justinian's room one night and exchanged his sick leg with a healthy leg from a recently deceased Ethiopian man. Upon reawakening, Justinian was surprised to find that his leg had healed, but was of a different colour. Playing with superimposition between the ancient painting and modern surgery scenes, mounir fatmi amazes with his versatile lexical ability, which allows him to tackle major issues with surprising cultural sensitivity, including ethnic identity, hybridization and the notion of diversity.

The sensory vision of viewers is then exhorting in the video Technologia from 2010, where the convulsive succession of geometric structures and Arab calligraphic motifs of religious nature give rise to a highly hypnotic process. The spectator struggles to watch while his hearing is also put to the test with harsh noises. The juxtaposition between the object, its use and its cultural significance is central to the installation Civilization (2013): a simple work of art with a pair of black men's shoes placed over a book bearing the inscription "civilization". With these two objects, which are often used to indicate a person's level of civilization, the Moroccan artist questions the seduction of material objects and its deceptive power in contemporary culture.

During the opening ceremony of Thursday, October 26th at 7 pm, a performance at the presence of the artist will be held. It will be built around his installation Constructing Illusions, a participatory work that plays on the equilibrium between imagination and reality: concepts that often mingle with each other until they manage to completely exchange meanings.



1. mounir fatmi The Silence of Saint Peter Martyr, 2011 video HD in bianco e nero con audio, 5'04" edizione di 5
Courtesy l'artista e Officine dell'Immagine, Milano

2. mounir fatmi Blinding Light #5, 2013 stampa inkjet su carta fine art 180x268 cm edizione di 5
Courtesy l'artista e Officine dell'Immagine, Milano

3. mounir fatmi The Silence of Saint Peter Martyr, 2011 video HD in bianco e nero con audio, 5'04" edizione di 5
Courtesy l'artista e Officine dell'Immagine, Milano

Officine dell'Immagine

The gallery works with artists from Europe and Asia with a perceivable connection to the Middle East and Africa. Through a rich exhibition schedule, with fine publications and fair participations, the gallery prides itself on making collaboration a principal of its operations, working closely with artists to create insightful, often provocative, total presentations that challenge the conventions of a contemporary art gallery.