

BARÓ

EN

# mounir fatmi

## Breaking the Cycle

8.06.2023 - 15.07.2023

Baró Galeria

Carrer de Can Sanç 13, Palma de Mallorca, 07001

**A P**  
**C**

Art Palma  
Contemporani  
Associació  
de galeristes



**Baró Galeria** is delighted to present “Breaking the Cycle”, mounir fatmi’s first solo exhibition in their gallery in Palma de Mallorca, within the frame of Art Palma Summer on 8 June 2023.

# General Information

## Opening:

**Art Palma Summer**  
**8.06.2023**  
**18:00 - 21:00**

### **Where**

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#### **Baró Galeria**

Space 1

Carrer de Can Sanç  
13, Palma de Mallorca,  
07001, Illes Balears,  
Spain

### **When**

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8.06.2023 -  
15.07.2023

Opening Hours:

**Tuesday to Friday:**

10:30 - 13:30

14:30 - 18:30

**Saturday:**

11:00 - 14:00

**Sunday:** Closed

→ [Art Palma Contemporani](#)

→ [@artpalmacontemporani](#)

# Breaking the Cycle

The exhibition is a reflection on the need to break from pre-established patterns, habits and repetitive cycles that often govern us without our awareness. The pieces presented in “Breaking the Cycle” invite viewers to explore how in breaking conventional cycles, we are rewarded with awareness causing a meaningful change of perspective.

fatmi engages in various ways of breaking cycles, whether by deconstructing symbols and clichés, detaching from norms and conventions, or by highlighting the complexity and ambiguity of our behavior, and our relationships. Part of the works play with the notion of transformation, causing us to question our perception of time and space. Others offer a reflection of the symbiotic relationship between the individual and society, showing how behaviors and attitudes of some influence others.

By breaking this cycle, the artist encourages us to get out of our comfort zone and explore new horizons, to consider different perspectives, to see the world from a new angle. The exhibition is a deep reflection on the contradictions of contemporary society, a call to action, an incentive to reflect on all the events that change our lives daily.

The exhibition opens with a visually impactful installation, **Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil**, made up of black paint-soaked ‘agals’ that fall to the ground. Said installation alludes to a clear sign of rampant consumerism and excessive use of oil that characterizes our society. This installation suggests the idea of a world where accumulation and consumption have become the main objective of existence, to the detriment of the quality of life, the world and the well-being of people. The installation reflects on the need to find sustainable alternatives, begging a reconsideration of our model of economic development and its environmental consequences.

fatmi also addresses the issue of the speed of industrialization and the growth of cities, which is seen today in the rapid development of the Middle East. Cities are being built in the desert, with buildings put up so fast that there is no time to reflect on the changes they cause. In the video **Speed City**, fatmi explores how buildings and public spaces can become tools of oppression. The artist highlights how the design of architecturally spectacular buildings can be used as a political strategy ignoring any ecological considerations.

Referring to September 11, the installation **Save Manhattan**, composed of VHS cassettes, recalls the New York skyline before the collapse of the Twin Towers. This installation highlights the tension that reigned at that time, the fear felt all over the world in the face of terrorist threat. The work is a critical analysis of architecture as a target of attack in times of ideological crisis and invites the audience to consider how fear can condition the way we live and see other human beings.

**Brainteaser for Moderate Muslim** is a series of sculptures inspired by the Rubik’s Cube, that looks at the relationship of a believer to an object of worship. It studies the ritual gesture accomplished by the believer during the pilgrimage to Mecca, namely the circu-

mambulation around the Kaaba (“cube”). The logical game is conceived as a representation of the monument of worship (the Kaaba), emulating its black color and ornamentation on its superior section by a calligraphic frieze expressing the Muslim profession of faith. In this way, fatmi compares, with what can be perceived as humor or even irony, the irrational profession of faith of a believer walking in circles around the cube in Mecca with the rational, logical, and mathematic strategies of a player trying to solve a Rubik’s Cube.

Finally, the black & white self-portraits from the series, **Peripheral Vision**, show the artist’s face partly disappearing behind a large white geometry protractor; but his eyes remain visible thanks to two holes in the center of the measuring instrument. The futuristic aesthetic of this image suggests an avant-garde approach, conceived as a manner of questioning the way we look at what surrounds us, a new awareness of what connects us to the world and of the comprehension of its limits.

“Breaking the Cycle” will take place between June 8th and July 15th 2023.

# About mounir fatmi

B. in Tangiers (Morocco), 1970.

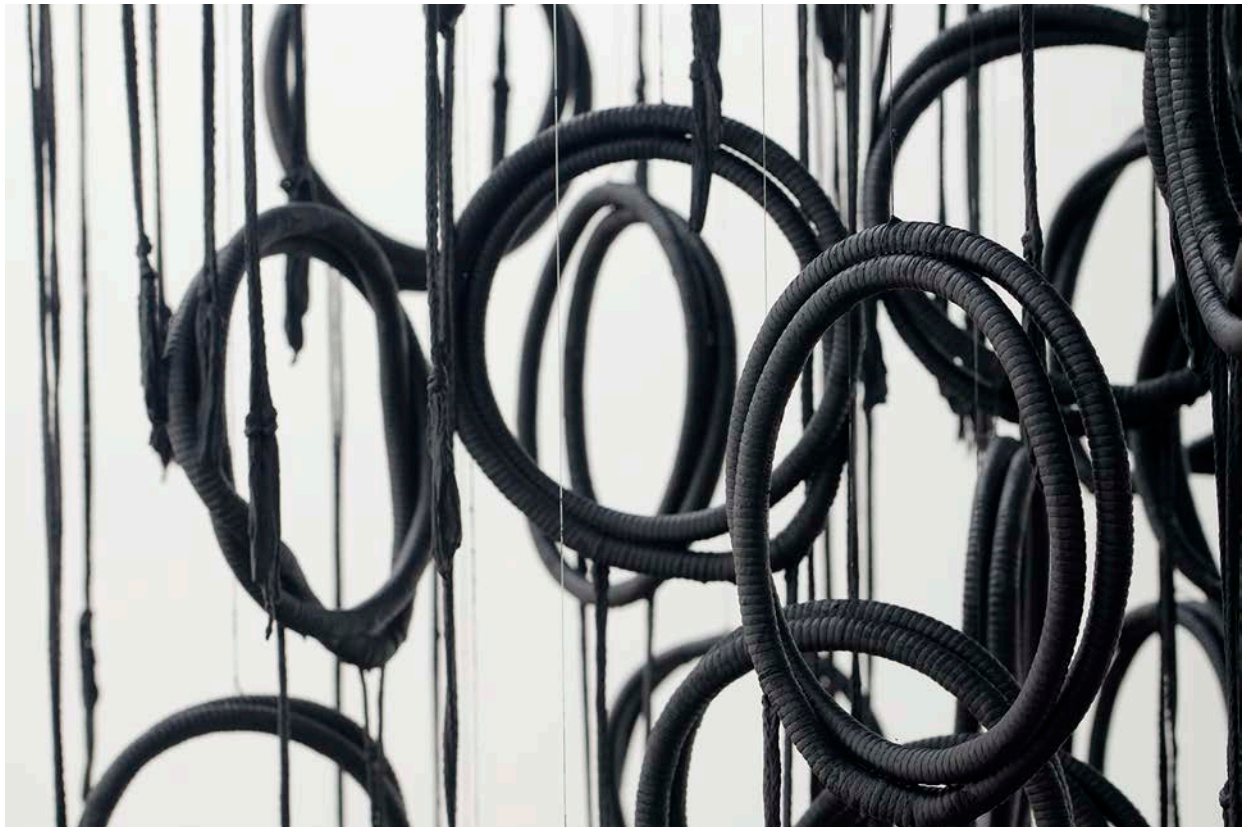


mounir fatmi was born in Tangiers, Morocco, in 1970. When he was four, his family moved to Casablanca. At the age of 17, he traveled to Rome where he studied at the free school of nude drawing and engraving at the Academy of Arts, and then at the Casablanca art school, and finally at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam.

He spent most of his childhood at the flea market of Casabarata, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Tangiers, where his mother sold children's clothes. Such an environment produces vast amounts of waste and worn-out common use objects. The artist now considers this childhood to have been his first form of artistic education, and compares the flea market to a museum in ruin. This vision also serves as a metaphor and expresses the essential aspects of his work. **Influenced by the idea of dead media and the collapse of the industrial and consumerist society, he develops a conception of the status of the artwork located somewhere between Archive and Archeology.**

## About mounir fatmi

By using materials such as antenna cables, typewriters and VHS tapes, mounir fatmi elaborates an experimental archeology that **questions the world and the role of the artist in a society in crisis**. He twists its codes and precepts through the prism of a trinity comprising Architecture, Language and Machine. Thus, he **questions the limits of memory, language and communication** while reflecting upon these obsolescent materials and their uncertain future. fatmi's artistic research consists in a reflection upon the history of technology and its influence on popular culture. Consequently, one can also view fatmi's current works as future archives in the making. Though they represent key moments in our contemporary history, these technical materials also call into question the transmission of knowledge and the suggestive power of images and **criticize the illusory mechanisms that bind us to technology and ideologies**.



[→ mounir fatmi's web](#)

[→ Full CV](#)

## About mounir fatmi

Since 2000, mounir fatmi's installations were selected in several biennials:

- The 52nd and 57th **Venice Biennales**
- The 8th Sharjah Biennale
- The 5th and 7th Dakar Biennales
- The 2nd Seville Biennale
- The 5th Gwangju Biennale
- The 10th Lyon Biennale
- The 5th Auckland Triennial
- The 10th and 11th Bamako Biennales
- The 7th Shenzhen Architecture Biennale
- The Setouchi Triennial and the Echigo-Tsumari Triennial in Japan

His work has been presented in numerous personal exhibits:

- At the Migros Museum, Zurich
- MAMCO, Geneva
- Picasso Museum La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris
- AK Bank Foundation, Istanbul
- Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf and at the Gothenburg Konsthall

He also participated in several collective exhibits:

- Centre Georges Pompidou**, Paris
- Brooklyn Museum, New York
- Palais de Tokyo, Paris
- MAXXI, Rome
- Mori Art Museum, Tokyo
- MMOMA, Moscow
- Mathaf, Doha
- Hayward Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum**, London
- Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven
- Nasher Museum of Art, Durham
- Louvre Abu Dhabi**

He has received several prizes, including the Uriöt prize, Amsterdam, the Grand Prix Léopold Sédar Senghor at the 7th Dakar Biennale in 2006, the Cairo Biennale Prize in 2010, as well as the Silver Plane Prize, Altai Biennale, Moscow in 2020.



## About mounir fatmi



View of "The Exile Pavilion 03", 2017.  
Installation at the 57th Venice Biennale

## About mounir fatmi

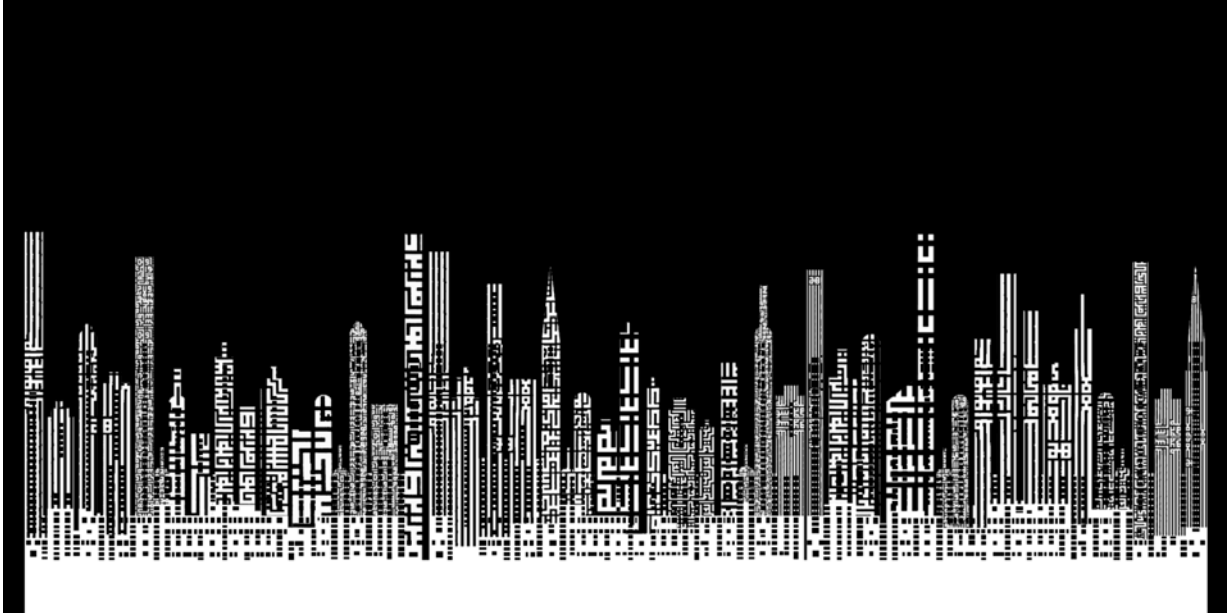


View of "Before the Storm", 2022.  
Solo exhibition at Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i  
Contemporani de Palma (Spain).



# Artworks selected for the exhibition

# Speed City



*Speed City*, 2010  
video installation  
15 min

Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

The speed of industrialization and the growth of cities are reflected today in the rapid development and urbanization of the Middle East. Cities are appearing out of the desert, with buildings thrown up so fast that there is no time to reflect on the changes.

This mental link between Western industrialization and recent Eastern development is reflected in “Speed City”.

This notion of fundamental instability, important to Mounir Fatmi’s work, evokes the imagery associated with the tower of Babel, often represented as incomplete and imminently destructible. This relationship marks the fragility of the construct as opposed to the vain architectural completion indulged in by the architects and backers of world megalopolises. From Dubai to Shanghai, Taipei to Kuala Lumpur, everywhere the standards of power and riches are being built higher and higher: giants with Babylonian pride and feet of clay.

Here we see language literally building the city. Kufik is the oldest Arabic font. The writing is set in motion and this endless movement reminds us of the ticker tape of the Stock Exchange and the news scrolling across our TV screens everyday. The viewer is confronted with the kinetic effect of the installation and “Speed City” experiments with the dizzying effect of its own fall.

*Studio Fatmi, February 2010.*

Artworks

# Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil



***Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil.*** 2019  
200 agals

Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

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## Artworks

*Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil* places the viewer face to face with a piece that tests one's patience and resistance, confronting him or her with the obsessive vision of a composition repeating a single motif. The installation, presented in the Jane Lombard gallery in New York in 2012 and in the Yvon Lambert gallery in 2014, is composed of agals, a traditional Arab clothing accessory made of rope, attached around the keffiyeh to hold it in place. The agals were dipped in black paint before being attached to the white wall in the exhibition space, where they leave long trails of black liquid streaming down to the ground. The agal joins Mounir Fatmi's list of repurposed objects that includes antenna cables, VHS cassette tapes, horse racing barriers, and even brooms.

With its title, the work clearly indicates the purpose of its subject: the question of energy resources. His work endeavors to reproduce a mechanism, or a type of machinery. *Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil* exposes the inner workings of an extraction and production apparatus, and shows a technique that determines an entire economy and the ways of life that accompany it. In a broader sense, with *Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil*, Mounir Fatmi questions the means of art and artists to handle major political, social, environmental, and economic disruptions.

Inspired by minimalism, the use of black circles (commonly recurring motifs in Mounir Fatmi's geometric art), on a white background brings the technique of repetition to mind, and yet the rigidity of shapes presents the following difference: If strictly speaking it is nothing but agals painted black, it is very hard if not impossible for the spectator to avoid engaging in the association of ideas. Simple, rolling black circles transform into Rorschach tests, and after all, their interpretation is the viewer's responsibility... The viewer is given the liberty to imagine that these black curls are reminiscent of the many zeros that are found in the oil industry's bookkeeping as it generates billions, or perhaps they can be seen as greedy mouths from which dark liquid flows as they seem against all reason to cry out for more, "Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil!"

Mounir Fatmi, who states that he is a "post-minimalist," creates "hot", reincarnated Minimalism, in which the geometric motifs are both neutral and laden with multiple possible meanings. In succeeding to say the least by expressing the least, *Oil, Oil, Oil, Oil*, creates a type of understatement that dramatically enhances the work that is part of a coherent and committed artistic approach.

*Studio Fatmi, February 2017.*

## Save Manhattan 02



**Save Manhattan 02, 2005**

VHS, tapes, pedestal  
220 x 80 x 75 cm

Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

The installation "Save Manhattan 02" is created with piled-up VHS tapes whose tapes are unraveled onto the floor. The VHS was a device for recording and transmitting images that was commonly used until the early 2000s, and is a recurrent material in fatmi's work. The artist carries out a reflection on the place of media exposure and information in our societies. This reflection is inspired by philosophical and artistic movements that placed the question of the power of images and of their reproduction at the heart of their preoccupations. The VHS tape accompanied and enabled the democratization of the use of video, the development of journalism and media coverage but also of propaganda. In the artist's sculptures, it becomes an architectural element that participated in the foundation of our societies of information.

## Artworks

The installation “Save Manhattan 02” is part of a series of works initiated in 2003 that explores the relation of the viewer with architecture in relation to the attacks of September 11, 2001. Using photographs, videos, sculptures and installations, Mounir Fatmi questions the viewer’s relation to a memorable event in recent history and reflects upon the psychological, social and political changes it triggered. The works approach the studied phenomenon from an architectural perspective. They trace the skyline of New York, a familiar cultural reference in our collective imagination and explore the deep structure of both social organizations and our thoughts, of our individual perceptions and our relation to the world. Each one of the “Save Manhattan” installations resorts in its own way to projected shadows that reproduce the architecture of Manhattan as it was before the attacks, in other words with the presence of the twin towers of the World Trade Center. These shadows conjure the memory of a place and an event and introduce an exploration of the relations between memory, imagination and reality.

The piles of VHS tapes underline a paradox: the accumulation of images and information constitutes an obstacle to vision and reflection. In a society made up of an accumulation of spectacles where images are all-powerful, they end up becoming an instrument of ideologies that apply themselves to the detriment of the ability to think, travel and communicate freely. Manhattan appears as a place and an architecture that is both external and internal, real and imaginary, associated with movie productions and the physical and memorial trauma of the attacks. The installation “Save Manhattan 02” can be seen as a collective injunction to practice a salutary gesture. Its approach is both structural and sensitive: images of the city are forcibly juxtaposed with archive footage of the collapse of the towers. It creates sufficient distance with the sensorial and the emotional in order to allow the reflection and reconstruction of our relation to the world. The installation “Save Manhattan 02” is at the heart of Guy Debord’s philosophical reflection in his book « The Society of the Spectacle ». It is a work characterized by and developed on the basis of this new culture, which is itself born from recent experiences and events. No one can look at this installation with the same eyes as before, as we all share the heritage of living in a post-9/11 world.

*Studio Fatmi, February 2018.*



## Brainteaser for a moderate Muslim



***Brainteaser for moderate muslim*, 2004**

Acrylic on rubiks cubes  
54 x 11,5 x 13,5 cm

Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

“Brainteaser for a moderate Muslim” is a series of sculptures inspired by the famous game of logic Rubik’s Cube. The piece is part of a larger body of work initiated in 2004 with the video Manipulations and continued with a series of photographs, a sculpture and finally a game. The games created by Mounir Fatmi are composed of cubes with black faces, with the exception of one row of cubes with a white line on their faces. The series of sculptures shows identical Rubik’s cubes in various stages of completion, until the final step, where a continuous white line appears on the upper row.

“Brainteaser for moderate Muslim” looks at the relation of a believer to an object of worship. The work questions his or her relation to religious dogma and rituals. It studies the ritual gesture accomplished by the believer during the pilgrimage to Mecca, namely the circumambulation around the Kaaba (“cube”). The logical game is conceived as a representation of the monument of worship (the Kaaba), emulating its black color and ornamentation

## Artworks

on its superior section by a calligraphic frieze expressing the Muslim profession of faith. In this way, Mounir Fatmi compares, with what can be perceived as humor or even irony, the irrational profession of faith of a believer walking in circles around the cube in Mecca with the rational, logical and mathematical strategies of a player trying to solve a Rubik's Cube.

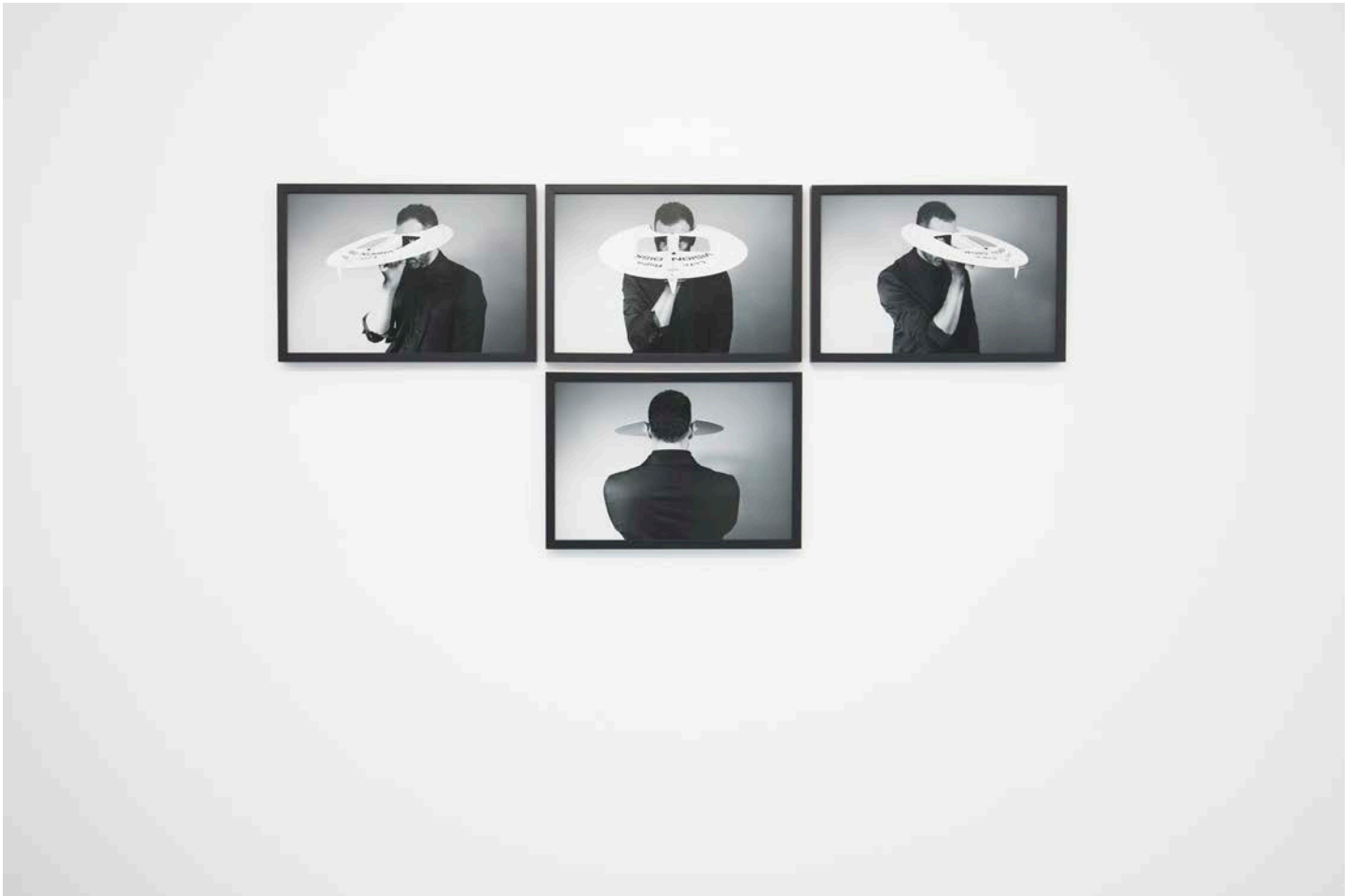
The object of worship is transformed into a deciphering game where reason is present again, encouraging a scientific approach to the divine. Rather than to blindly and endlessly rotate the cube in a vain attempt to try every possible combination to restore an order, perhaps the "brainteaser" invites the viewer to develop a strategy based on the use of reason. The title of the work highlights the difficulty for a so-called "moderate" believer — who authorizes himself a certain critical distance with the dogma of his religion — to consider in a rational way the object of worship and the ritual associated with it. The circumambulation around the Kaaba requires an irrational gesture and attitude on the part of the believer. It pushes him to dismiss thought and to act with devotion. As for the work of art, it expresses the difficulty for reason to apprehend the object of worship and the ritual, a difficulty that is also seen as a problem that needs solving. With "Brainteaser for moderate Muslim", Mounir Fatmi tries to tackle an extremely complex phenomenon with the limited means of art. Resorting to techniques inspired by minimalism enables him to approach complexity with limited means: with a simple and limited geometric shape, he realizes the description of a universe of probabilities that touches on infinity.

Tackling the subject of creation, these sculptures show the artist as an individual who is free to make choices and in competition with God himself. Exposed behind a window, frozen within a museum configuration and shielded from any manipulations by the viewers, the work of art also indicates the precise moment when the object sheds its playful and interactive properties to become artwork subjected to the attention of passive observers. Finally, it illustrates how artistic propositions are akin to a game that would consist in making a selection among a practically infinite universe of possibilities.

*Studio Fatmi, July 2017.*

Artworks

# Peripheral Vision



***Peripheral Vision***, 2017  
Pigment print on fine art  
35 x 52 cm each

Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

Artworks



# About Baró Galeria



BARÓ, founded by María Baró in Sao Paulo in 1999, has become a point of reference for international art in the Brazilian art scene and, at the same time, has crossed borders, bringing Latin American art to all corners of the earth. Baró has also participated in numerous art fairs such as Art Basel Miami, Armory Show, ArtBO, ArtBA, Sp- Arte, ArtRio, MACO-Mexico, Arco-Madrid, ArtDubai, Frieze New York and Frieze Masters.

After twenty years in Brazil, BARÓ set out to expand its activities to the European continent, beginning with the creation of the BARÓ House program (Madrid, Spain) as an experimental space for encounters between creators, thinkers and collectors. In 2021, BARÓ Gallery gave birth to BARÓ Mallorca, inaugurating as a new proposal of space for the rapprochement between Europe and the Americas, in order to establish a dialogue with the wide artistic panorama offered by the Mediterranean.

BARÓ, as a center for the visual arts and from a geo-historical perspective, has always strived to allow the expression and dissemination of contemporary art. BARÓ Mallorca thus forms a new facilitating venue for artists, institutions and collectors connecting Europe and Latin America.

# Gallery Contact

## **Contact**

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→ Follow us on Instagram at [@barogaleria](https://www.instagram.com/barogaleria)

## **Gallery Address**

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**Baró Mallorca**

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Palma de Mallorca, 07001

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