

## 64. | Everything Behind Me Suspended



2023, antenna cables.

Exhibition view from *Whispered Stories of Forgotten Wires*, Piero Atchugarry Gallery, 2023, Miami.  
Courtesy of the artist and Piero Atchugarry Gallery, Miami.

Ed. of 1 + 1 A.P.

L'installation «Everything Behind Me» invite le spectateur à un spectacle d'une ampleur considérable. Plusieurs centaines de mètres d'épais câble coaxial blanc, regroupés avec des colliers de serrage, semblent tomber du plafond. Les câbles descendent et occupent l'espace de manière aléatoire, formant un réseau complexe entrelacé, tel un labyrinthe dans les airs, dont le début et la fin se perdent. Depuis 1998, le câble d'antenne est un matériau récurrent des œuvres de l'artiste. Son motif insiste sur la circulation des informations et entre dans une réflexion sur les rapports de l'individu à la société contemporaine, marqués par le pouvoir de l'image et la multiplication vertigineuse des productions culturelles et matérielles ainsi que de la complexité des échanges.

L'œuvre se propose comme un regard rétrospectif de l'artiste sur son parcours. « Everything behind me » opère un retour sur un projet esthétique qui consiste à penser le monde et à explorer les relations entre l'individu et le groupe, ainsi que les rapports entre l'interprète et son propre processus créatif. L'installation se présente comme une tentative pour modéliser un réseau de communication complexe, à savoir celui des interactions entre l'œuvre, l'artiste et le monde. Elle éprouve la capacité de l'artiste et celle du spectateur à appréhender le processus artistique et la réalité à la fois dans leur globalité et dans leur détail.

Effort pour (re)penser le monde, l'œuvre affirme la nécessité de se déplacer et de varier les points de vue. Son esthétique entre dans une stratégie de l'obstacle menée à travers de nombreuses œuvres (notamment celles qui emploient les barres de saut hippique). Elle oblige le spectateur à s'éloigner, à prendre de la distance afin de percevoir

The installation "Everything Behind Me" invites viewers to a spectacle of considerable scale. Several hundred meters of thick white coaxial cable, bundled together with clamping collars appear to fall down from the ceiling. The cables descend and occupy the space in a random way, forming a complex intertwined network, like a labyrinth in the air, of which the beginning and the end are lost. Since 1998, antenna cables have been a recurring material in the artist's work. Its presence symbolizes the circulation of information and is part of a reflection on the relations of individuals to contemporary societies, on which the power of images and the dizzying multiplication of cultural and material productions, as well as the complexity of exchanges, leave their mark.

The piece constitutes the artist's retrospective look on his career. "Everything Behind Me" goes back to an aesthetic project consisting in reflecting upon the world and exploring the relations between the individual and the group, as well as the connections between the artist and his own creative process. The installation represents an attempt to model a complex communications network, namely the interactions between the work of art, the artist and the world. It tests the artist's and the viewer's capacity to apprehend the artistic process and reality at the same time, in their entirety and in all their details simultaneously.

The work constitutes an effort to reflect upon the world, and as such it underlines the necessity to displace oneself and change points of view. Its aesthetic is part of a strategy of obstacles as carried out through many of the artist's pieces (in particular those using horse jumping poles). It forces the

l'ensemble, la forme générale. Elle le contraint par la suite à se rapprocher pour observer les détails et découvrir les connexions entre les différents éléments de la composition, ou pour apercevoir la partie de l'œuvre sous la table. La présence de l'obstacle traduit la nécessité d'un engagement total du sujet, d'une implication du corps et de l'esprit sans distinction dans sa confrontation au réel. Efficace et opérante, elle appelle le spectateur à sortir d'un rôle passif et à ne pas se soumettre aux différents pouvoirs qui s'exercent sur lui : propagande, société des médias et de l'information, idéologies politiques ou religieuses. L'installation livre des effets de structure frappants et spectaculaires, telle que la conjonction presque « classique » du début et de la fin, et surtout une modélisation aboutie des possibilités et des limites de l'art. L'épreuve de réalité mobilise l'ensemble des capacités sensorielles, motrices et réflexives du spectateur.

« Everything behind me » est, de l'aveu de l'artiste, le lieu d'un constat paradoxal : si l'œuvre illustre une réussite sur le plan esthétique, elle révèle également un échec sur le plan personnel. L'espace de création y prend des allures de ruban de Möbius. Les dimensions de la table n'aident guère à voir l'œuvre dans son intégralité : elles rendent impossible la perception simultanée de l'ensemble et des détails, ou encore l'appréhension de toutes les connexions établies entre les divers éléments. L'installation élabore ainsi une phénoménologie du processus créatif et du rapport à la réalité à travers une esthétique du contraste et de l'alliance des contraires : courbes et lignes, désordre et structure, visibilité et invisibilité, « geste libre » et géométrisation, simplicité et complexité, sensualité et rigueur formelle. Elle met en évidence des mécanismes d'apparition et d'occultation des motifs, de perception et d'oubli des éléments. Table d'une Cène paradoxale, l'installation « Everything behind me » fait le constat d'un échec indépassable : toute prise de distance ou vue d'ensemble entraîne inmanquablement un risque d'imprécision et de réduction, tandis que l'analyse et l'attention aux détails tend à perdre de vue le schéma général. Dans les deux cas, l'acte de voir et de penser l'œuvre apparaît comme problématique.

Studio Fatmi, Juin 2018.

viewers to distance themselves in order to see the whole thing, the overall form. It then obliges them to get closer in order to observe the details and discover the connections between the various elements of the composition, or to see the part of it that is under the table. The presence of the obstacle signifies the necessity for the subject to engage completely, to fully implicate body and mind in the confrontation with reality. It efficiently and effectively calls upon the viewers to no longer have a passive role and to no longer submit to the various powers that apply themselves on them: propaganda, the information society, political or religious ideologies. The installation offers striking and spectacular structural effects, such as the almost "classical" conjunction of beginning and end, and above all a complete modeling of the possibilities and limitations of art. The confrontation with reality mobilizes all the viewer's sensory, motor and reflective capacities.

"Everything Behind Me" carries with it, as the artist himself confesses, a paradoxical observation: the work might be a success from an esthetical point of view, but it also reveals a failure on a personal front. It gives the creative space the aspect of a Möbius strip. The size of the table makes it difficult to view the piece in its entirety, and even impossible to perceive in one glance the whole object and its details, or to apprehend all the connections established between the various elements. In this way, the installation elaborates a phenomenology of the creative process and of the relation to reality, by using an esthetic based on contrasts and the combination of opposites: curves and straight lines, disorder and structure, visibility and invisibility, "free gesture" and geometry, simplicity and complexity, sensuality and formal strictness. It highlights mechanisms of revelation and occultation of the motifs, perception and oblivion of the elements. A table for a paradoxical Last Supper, "Everything Behind Me" records an unsurpassable failure: looking at something from a distance to get a full view inevitably leads to the risk of imprecision and reduction, whereas carefully analyzing its details tends to make one lose sight of the overall scheme. In both cases, the act of seeing and reflecting upon the work of art poses a problem. ?

Studio Fatmi, June 2018.

"It is impossible to understand where the rhythm begins or where it ends; the movement is completely lost among intertwining, descents and escapes. In this dizzying

## labyrinth, the observer remains disoriented."

Silvia Cirelli, Art curator, September 2023

### **exhibitions:**

2023

Whispered Stories of Forgotten Wires - Piero Atchugarry Gallery, Miami - Solo show

2021

The Age of Consequences - Officine dell'Immagine - Solo Show

2020

Our world is burning - Palais de Tokyo - Expo collective

2019

The Armory Show - Officine dell'immagine - Art fair

2018

180° Behind Me - Göteborgs Konsthall – Solo show

quotes:

-PRESS QUOTES

"It is impossible to understand where the rhythm begins or where it ends; the movement is completely lost among intertwining, descents and escapes. In this dizzying labyrinth, the observer remains disoriented."

Silvia Cirelli, Art curator, September 2023

"The tangle of cables in 'Everything Behind Me' mirrors the entanglement of our communication, leaving observers both captivated and confounded, a symbol of our struggle to truly connect in an age of overwhelming informational complexity."

“It is impossible to understand where the rhythm begins or where it ends; the movement is completely lost among intertwining, descents and escapes. In this dizzying labyrinth, the observer remains disoriented. If he gets too close, he does not perceive its imposing overall structure; if conversely he moves too far away, he is sure to miss the minute details of the electrical wires. From whichever point he tries to observe it, the viewer will never be able to interact with it in an absolute way.”

Silvia Cirelli, May 2021

“Although cables are the emblem of circulation, sharing, exchange and the table symbolises conviviality, the impossibility of participation decodes mounir fatmi’s renowned “obstacle strategy”, a testimony to the ambivalent nuances of social experience. Affirmation and subtraction, presence and absence, dialogue and silence, are found here in a stylistic mimesis that sees defiguration and indecipherability at the base of the artistic message.”

Silvia Cirelli, May 2021

“Dwelling in particular on the issue of the distribution of information by new media, mounir fatmi seeks to raise questions about our understanding of memory, language and communication with respect to the obsolescence of new technologies. His installation points to the entropy of our societies via knots of cables used for telecommunications.”

Dimitris Lempesis, February 2020

#### -OFFICIAL WEB SITE QUOTES

“Everything Behind Me goes back to an esthetic project consisting in reflecting upon the world and exploring the relations between the individual and the group, as well as the connections between the artist and his own creative process.

The installation represents an attempt to model a complex communications network, namely the interactions between the work of art, the artist and the world.”

Studio Fatmi, June 2018

“The artist’s use of antenna cables signifies more than material—it embodies a reflection on contemporary societies and the power of images in our interconnected world.”

Studio Fatmi, June 2018

“Within the intricacies of this installation lies a paradox—a Möbius strip of creative success and personal struggle, revealing the limitations and vast possibilities of art.”

Studio Fatmi, June 2018