

Art

Edited by Howard Halle • art@timeoutny.com

Mounir Fatmi, “Oriental Accident”



Lombard Freid Projects, through
Apr 14 (see Chelsea)

Despite a few warmed-over Conceptual works, Moroccan-born French artist Mounir Fatmi's exhibition is a knockout, especially the titular piece—a large Persian carpet on a wheeled platform in the middle of the floor. Festooned with woofers and tweeters, this object blares the sounds of the demonstrations that took place during the Arab Spring throughout the Maghreb (which is to say in the artist's home country, as well as in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya). The upturned speaker parts suggest disembodied mouths roaring an inchoate prayer of protest and rage, but from a downward vantage point, they also conjure minarets blasting a call to action: an abstract spectacle of

revolution in miniature, with loose nails in the vibrating speakers adding an ominously discordant rattle.

Two videos in the back room also meld the traditional with the modern. In *Mixology*, a flatscreen on the floor offers a bird's-eye view of two turntables, as a DJ spins and scratches classical-music LPs painted with beautiful Arabic calligraphy, to produce static-filled techno bleats.

Likewise, a projected animation titled *Modern Times, A History of the Machine* features calligraphic roundels spelling out religious verses as they rotate like gears. Among these Koranic cogs, one can see three of Marcel Duchamp's pulsing *Rotoreliefs* making cameo appearances. While the precise meaning of this mash-up remains somewhat obscure, its endlessly revolving references to Islamic faith and Western art history are gorgeous all by themselves.—*Joseph R. Wolin*

PHOTOGRAPHS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): COLLECTION OF THE FISHER LANDAU CENTER FOR ART; COURTESY LOMBARD FREID PROJECTS



Installation view