

Fabrice Gygi
MINN ĒĪNAIYA

January 16 – February 28 1999

The Chantal Crousel Gallery is pleased to present the Swiss artist Fabrice Gygi (born in Geneva, 1965 and living in Zurich) for his first solo exhibition in Paris with a recent body of works and installations.

"Gygi is thirty-three years old, has tattoo all over his arms, the face of an old lag and a difficult and quite delinquent boyhood behind him, between fugues and restriction houses : he is hanging on all the signs of a rebel and hard life. He seems to be always repressing an inside violence and an irremediable opposition to any kind of order, discipline and authority. *"Referring to the way I've been living, it seemed to me more reasonable and comfortable to attend an art school. For me art is like resisting. It helps me to survive in a society despite the fact that I completely disagree with it."*

However, nothing in the work of Fabrice Gygi does take the way of disorder and confusion. Every installation is very rigorously composed and shaped, definitively made of order and coldness, far from a shout or a stroke, and no out burst of violence is tolerated. But contradiction is only in semblance : what Gygi is trying to do is not only to express his own anger but also to denounce the nature of things, to put in evidence the reign of authority and discipline in our "democratic dictatorships".

In the Gallery, Gygi transformed the ground floor into a kind of strangely sporting Mosque, with metallic loud-speakers hanging from the ceiling and diffusing an arabic music mixed by the "muezzin" DJ Sid - Sidney Stucki therefore the floor is covered with orange gymnastic carpets like a prayer room, as to flank the immigrant population. *"The inspiration for this installation came from an event which happened last year in Zurich, the city where I live. The local population violently refused the construction of a muslim cemetery. Immigrants are working for us but we don't accept their own deads. With this hybrid installation, between mosque and sport room, I tried to make people facing their fears and masked racism. And I also wanted to mix the two cultures, to explain it in a really multiracial way."*

Jean-Max Colard, extrait de "La Force de l'ordre", *Les Inrockuptibles*, n°184

Please note that Fabrice Gygi will represent Switzerland for the next Venice Biennale.

Description of the works

- *Minn ĒĪnaiya** is made of a number of orange gymnastic carpets covering the floor, to be seen behind two barriers supporting racks for one of them, where followers are supposed to leave their shoes to cross the carpets. Two large loud-speakers hanging from the ceiling are diffusing arabic music by Fairouz, mixed by DJ Sid Sidney Stucki and a chair or supervision post are the elements of this installation, an adaptation of a first version showned in the Gallery Bob Van Orsouw in Zurich. The installation can be disposed differently according to any other space.

- *Arabatt Al-Woudour* is a metallic rolling and foldings fountain, very easy to move. It has been

designed after memory on the pattern of the bagels and bretzels barrows in New York. It welcomes the visitors and allows them to wash their feet before going to *Minn Ēinaiya*.

- *Paravents* - five draught-screen made of tubular frames and covers describing an arabesque between the pillars of the arched cellar, introducing here beauty and lyricism despite the materials they are made of. They have two different and symbolic functions : in front of them you can imagine a closed and protecting space and behind them the impression you have is defensive, with flying-buttress, like a double controlling-gear. The draught-screen can be set into any other disposition according to the place where they have to stay.

- *Puits de voeux Wishes well* is a sort of bag containing water, in which visitors throw coins, evocative of the devout or superstitious offers made in the churches or public monuments where you wish to come back soon. It is made of colored vinyl attached with straps over a metallic structure, like a kitbag over a garbage can you could take and carry away.

* *I could tear out my eyes for you*