



NEW YORK

Meriem Bennani

MOMA PS1

22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Avenue

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To be a fly on the wall at Meriem Bennani's first institutional solo show is to adopt her perspective of contemporary culture. Her video installation *FLY*, 2016, mimics the mosaic structure of a fly's eyes with a patchwork of projectors, creating an immersive experience. Resembling a concept room that a first-year architecture student might draft in SketchUp, the irregular, multiscreen theater requires the viewer to construct a strategy for digesting the seventeen-minute film. Seating is not a problem; Bennani provides benches.

The story centers around a wedding set in Bennani's native Morocco. A fruit fly that resembles Clippy, the Microsoft Word mascot, serves as a guide for the peripatetic narrative that skips from genre to genre, scene to scene. The insect addresses the audience directly, pausing only to sing a baby-voice ballad hardly recognizable as Rihanna's "Kiss It Better." The short, something like a music video, is a reconstitution of television tropes. The young artist interrupts her Travel Channel-worthy shots of the souk with reality TV-style confessionals, blooper noises, and other cartoonish interventions. Pixelated flames lick unharmed actors—her family and friends—as they dance their way into the night. Reality and the virtual commingle.

A nod to the input streams that compete for our attention both on and offline, the kaleidoscopic installation accepts the oscillating gaze of the metamodern state and builds upon it. Looping in perpetuity, *FLY* invites allusions to Morocco as a developing nation caught between past and present. Bennani has a reverence for high and low culture, and the artist's fluency across media allows her to make something that, though not entirely subversive, is universally enjoyable.

-Kat Herriman