8. | Forget





2006-2009, France, 3 min 17, SD, 4/3, B&W, stereo. Size may vary, video projection.
Exhibition view from Narracje 4, Gdanska Galeria Miejska, 2012, Gdansk.
Courtesy of the artist.

Alors que nombre des théories, systèmes économiques et idéologies sur lesquelles le monde actuel s'est construit sont en crise, la question doit se poser de ce qui doit être préservé et ce qui doit être oublié. Les bâtiments – en tant que manifestations physiques des valeurs et aspirations sociétales – incarnent cette question. Des plus hauts gratte-ciel au plus humbles habitations, ces structures existent en tant que témoignages d'actions passées et tombeaux pour celles qui ont été effacées. Dans un cycle d'arasement et de reconstruction qui semble perpétuel (souvent en tant que conséquence de la guerre), Fatmi postule que – en termes de coûts économique et humain – « si vous voulez oublier, c'est gratuit… Si vous voulez vous souvenir, cela peut se révéler cher… »

La vidéo Forget se situe quelque part entre ces deux extrêmes, montrant en boucle des images d'archives de tours jumelles Melchiorre démolies par détonations coordonnées. Elles s'effondrent sans tambour ni trompette, donnant une fin sans gloire à des structures construites à la hâte dans la France des années 60 pour loger des travailleurs immigrés alors que les fils de la nation étaient engagés dans la guerre. Ces immeubles étaient des ghettos habités par des travailleurs sans visage, mais malgré leur qualité médiocre et leur pauvreté architecturale, les Melchiorre étaient devenus le ciment d'une communauté en marge de l'opinion publique et à l'écart du rêve moderniste. Leur offrant un dernier répit, bien qu'ostensiblement perpétuel, Fatmi prolonge leur souvenir fugace en montant les images en avant et en arrière – montrant les Melchiorre s'élever et s'effondrer au son du bip d'un moniteur cardiaque.

When many of the theories, economic systems and ideologies from which the world was built are now in crisis, one must ask what should be preserved, and what should be forgotten? Buildings – as the physical manifestation of societal values and aspirations – embody this question. From the tallest high rises to the most humble dwellings, these structures live as the evidence of actions, and tombstones to those which have been erased. In a seemingly endless cycle of being razed and rebuilt (often as the consequence of war), Fatmi argues that – in human and economic cost – "If you want to forget, it is free…If you want to remember, that can prove expensive…"

The video Forget lingers somewhere between these poles, looping historical black & white footage of paired Melchiorre buildings being toppled by controlled detonation. They collapse with little fanfare, providing an inglorious end to structures built hurriedly in 1960s France to house immigrant workers as the country's first sons were engaged in war. These buildings were ghettos for faceless workers to inhabit; yet despite their middling status and architectural failings, the Melchiorre became the foundation of a community outside popular attention, and outside modernism's dream. As a last, but ostensibly perpetual respite, Fatmi prolongs their fleeting memory by forwarding and reversing the footage – having the Melchiorre rise and fall to the sound of a beeping heart rate monitor.

Beating faintly but steadily in an infinite state of life, "They seem," in the words of the artist, "to breathe, to resist the destruction, the loss, the memory. They are becoming monuments…" They are human, and in a pock-faced park adjacent to a hospital (with clear visual association to the

Battant faiblement mais continument dans un souffle de vie se maintenant perpétuellement, « ils semblent, selon les mots de l'artiste, respirer, résister à la destruction, à l'oubli, à la mémoire. Ils deviennent progressivement des monuments… » Ils sont humains, et dans un petit parc vérolé jouxtant un hôpital (et dans une association visuelle manifeste avec les tours du World Trade Center), Forget nous exhorte à nous rappeler du lien tenace entre être(s) et bâtiment(s).

Steven Matijcio

Vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

World Trade Center towers), Forget compels us to remember the enduring link between being/s and building/s.

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They are human, and in a pock-faced park adjacent to a hospital (with clear visual association to the World Trade Center towers), Forget compels us to remember the enduring link between being-s and building-s.