31. | Casablanca Circles 01



2012, print on baryte paper, 90 x 120 cm.
Exhibition view from Kissing Circles, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, 2012, Santa Monica.
Courtesy Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Santa Monica.
Unique Piece + 2 A.P.

Read the text by Régis Durand : *A continuous building up*, 2014

Read the text by Barbara Polla: *This kiss is more than a kiss*, 2014

mounir fatmi a réalisé la série de photomontages Casablanca Circles à partir de photographies extraites du film Casablanca. Les cercles tangents de Descartes et des figures géométriques sont appliqués sur les images des deux personnages principaux alors qu'ils se rapprochent pour s'embrasser.

Cette infinité de cercles augmente le désir du spectateur et projette notre espoir de voir les deux personnages unis.
Bien que le film fait référence à la ville marocaine de Casablanca, occupée par le gouvernement français de Vichy pendant la seconde guerre mondiale, tous les décors du film ont été construits à Hollywood. Ces deux antagonismes, le réel et le fictif, de la ville désorientent même les Marocains et poussent les touristes à la recherche du Rick's café et des autres lieux du tournage au cours de leur séjour au Maroc.
L'histoire du film est celle d'un amour impossible inscrit dans les clichés de l'espionnage et de l'exotisme .
Pendant la guerre, un couple échappe aux nazis et arrive au Maroc afin d'obtenir les papiers pour rejoindre les Etats-Unis. Leur seul contact et leur seul espoir est l'ancien amant de l'épouse. Au-delà de la fiction et des mathématiques, Mounir Fatmi veut nous faire croire que quelque chose est encore possible.

Casablanca Circles is a series of drawings done on photographs taken from an excerpt from the movie Casablanca of the final kiss Bogart and Bergman. The tangent circles of Descartes and Soddy are drawn on the pictures of the two main characters as they move closer to kiss.

This infinity of circles raises the viewer's desire and at the same time, project our hope to see both actors united.
Although the movie refers to the Moroccan city Casablanca, occupied by the french government of Vichy during the WWII, all the sets have been built in Hollywood. Those two lives, the real and the fictional, of the city disorient even the Moroccans and push the tourists to look for the Rick's Café and the other locations of the movie during their stay.
The story of the movie is about an impossible love surrounded in clichés of spying and exoticism.
During the war, a couple escape the Nazis and land in Morocco in order to get the papers to join the United States. Their only contact and their only hope is the former lover of the woman. Beyond fiction and maths, mounir fatmi wants to make us believe that something is still possible.

«(...) There is something analogous to this scientific and ficti onal proliferation in fatmi's work, in his use of different

«(...) Il y a quelque chose d'analogue à cette prolifération à la fois scientifique et fictionnelle chez mounir fatmi, avec son usage de différents supports, ses allers et retours entre différentes thématiques, ses esquisses de récit reprises et abandonnées. D'une certaine manière, on peut dire qu'il reprend à son compte l'énigme que constituent la découverte et la maîtrise d'une énergie en apparence inépuisable, mais aussi incontrôlable – à la différence qu'il ne s'agit pas chez lui de nucléaire mais de ce qui se pose ici en équivalent métaphorique, c'est-à-dire le désir et l'attraction irrésistible qu'il déclenche. Mais la différence est-elle si grande ? Ce qui compte en effet, dans chacun des deux termes, c'est l'instant où cela se déclenche, l'instant qui n'en est pas un, entre un avant et un après -- une imminence si l'on veut, c'est-à-dire un espace de temps sans consistance, sans véritable durée. Ce qui ad- vient ensuite est de l'ordre du déroulement, avec ses options et ses trajets narratifs possibles. Avant que la réac- tion ne s'enclenche, avant que les lèvres ne se touchent et que plus rien ne soit comme avant. Le baiser, dans les œuvres de la série « Casablanca Circles », est de cet ordre. C'est une catastrophe, une rupture, l'instant quasiment inassignable qui fait que tout bascule. La beauté de la chose est que sur cet impalpable, ce non-instant, autant d'attentes et de possibles narratifs viennent se précipiter. Apparaissent d'innombrables connexions souterraines, croisements, coïncidences secrètes, si bien qu'il flotte parfois dans l'œuvre comme un léger parfum de paranoïa.(...)»

Régis Durand, Mars 2014.

supports, in his back and forth movements between different themes, his outlined, reprised or abandoned narratives. In a way, we could say that he appropriates the enigmatic discovery of a form of energy that seems inexhaustible but also uncontrollable – except that in his case the subject is a metaphorical equivalent of the nuclear, namely, desire and the irresistible attraction that it triggers. But then is the difference really so great? What matters, indeed, in both instances, is the moment of unleashing, the moment that is not a moment, between the before and the after – an imminence, you might say, that is to say, a time-space without real consistency, without real duration. What comes next is a form of unfolding, with its options and possible narrative trajectories. Before the reaction is triggered, before the lips touch and nothing is the same as before. Such is the kiss in the works of the “Casablanca Circles” series. It is a catastrophe, a rupture, the almost unassignable moment whereby everything changes. The beauty of the thing is that this around this impalpable non-moment so many expectations and narrative possibilities are precipi- tated. Countless underground connections appear, crossovers, secret coincidences, so that in this work there hovers a subtle perfume of paranoia.(...)"

Régis Durand, March 2014.

" The diagrams seem to follow the heads of Bogey and Bergman toward the inevitable consummation, progressing from relative chaos to a kind of balance where their eyes lock: a geometry of love. "

Sharon Mizota, The Los Angeles Times, 2012

exhibitions:

2019

SILENT PEACE - Atelier AMI - Expo collective

MOVING ART - Analix Forever - Expo collective

2017

Altiba9 - Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona - Expo collective

Independently - Keitelman Gallery - Expo collective

Dallas Art Fair - Lawrie Shabibi - Art fair

2016

Love Stories - Les Photaumnales - Expo collective

2015

A l'ombre d'Eros, une histoire d'amour et de mort - Monastère Royal de Brou - Expo collective

Measuring the unmeasurable - Sabrina Amrani Gallery - Expo collective

2014

The Kissing Circles - Analix Forever - Solo show

Artissima - Analix Forever - Art fair

Art Brussels - ADN Galeria - Art fair

2013

Intersections - Keitelman Gallery - Solo show

Paris Photo - Analix Forever - Art fair

Art Cologne - Galerie Conrads - Art fair

2012

Kissing Circles - Shoshana Wayne Gallery - Solo show

Untold Stories - Johan Deumens Gallery - Expo collective

Paris Photo - Conrads - Art fair

press articles:

Mizota, Sharon, Mounir Fatmi smartly connects , The Los Angeles Times, April 20th, 2012

Los Angeles Times

FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 2012

AROUND THE GALLERIES

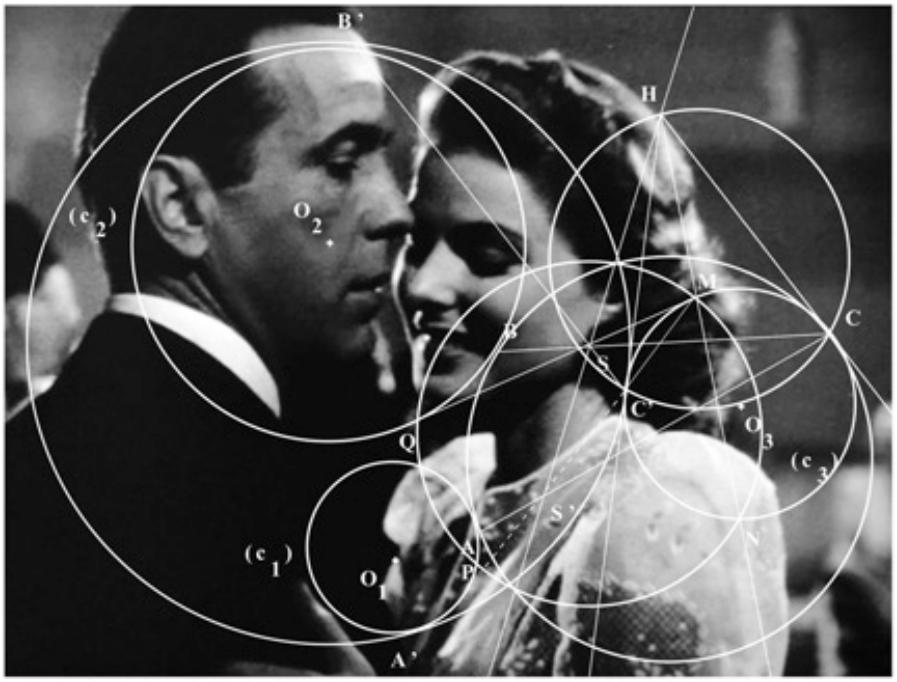
'Circles' connect, transfix

BY SHARON MIZOTA

"Kissing Circles," Mounir Fatmi's latest exhibition at Shoshana Wayne Gallery, consists of altered photographs, animated video projections, custom metal saw blades, and abstract images made out of coaxial cables. It all seems a bit random at first, but the puzzle pieces eventually come together, resulting in an intriguing dissection of Hollywood cinema as a nexus of romance and mechanization.

The most compelling element is a sequence of stills of Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman in "Casablanca." They are inclining their heads toward each other, about to kiss. Superimposed on these images are various geometric diagrams of circles and lines annotated with letters and numbers.

Fatmi was inspired by "The Kissing Precise," a poem by Frederick Soddy that limns the points at which circles "kiss," or touch one another in a Cartesian geometric theorem. The diagrams seem to follow the heads of Bogey and Bergman toward the inevitable consummation, progressing from relative chaos to a kind of balance where their eyes lock: a geometry of love.



MOUNIR FATMI adds a geometrical spin on the classic film "Casablanca," diagraming the leading stars' relationship with a series of circles and lines.

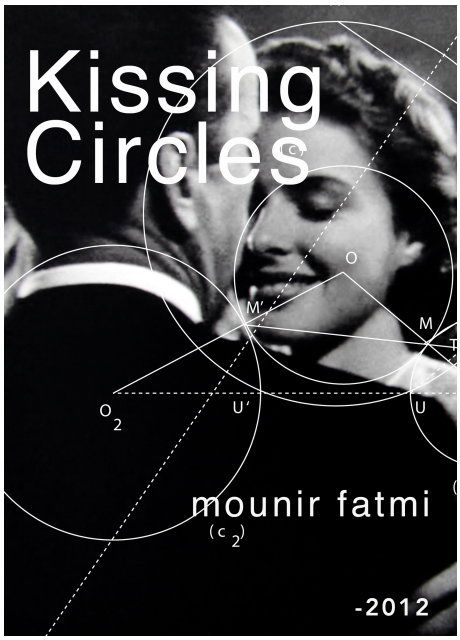
This conceit suggests — surprise surprise — a certain predictability in cinematic romance. As much as it tugs at our heartstrings, it's a calculated formula. Fatmi emphasizes this aspect in a video projection of animated gears and other machine parts endlessly turning. The piece is a homage to Charlie Chaplin's "Modern Times," in which the star clowned (and lamented) the dehumanization of factory labor.

Adding another layer of complexity, many of the gears are decorated with Arabic calligraphy. It seems like a non sequitur until we remember that "Casablanca" takes place in Morocco. The exotic Arabic world is the silent backdrop for "the problems of three little people" that transfix us so.

Yet with Fatmi's large metal saw blades riddled with calligraphic cutouts, perhaps it is silent no longer. Three-dimensional versions of the gears in the animation, they're beautiful and sinister and suggest an ideological violence. You certainly don't want these circles to kiss. Still, displayed across from the video in vitrines, they are also reminiscent of film projectors. These circles may cut, but they also evoke the mechanism by which fantasies unfold.

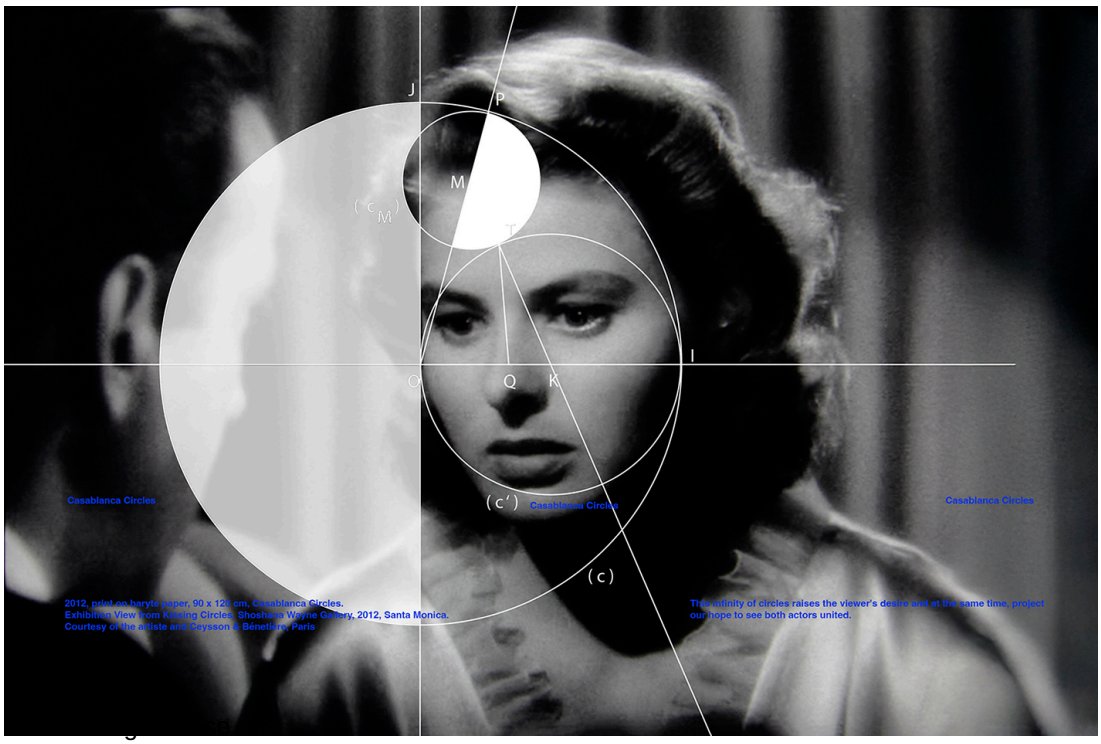
Fatmi goes perhaps one step too far with the show's fourth component: compositions of circles made from coaxial cables. Although lovely, they feel a bit tangential. Still, the show smartly unearths the dual nature of cinema — and by extension, media culture —how it simultaneously circumscribes and enables almost everything we feel.

Shoshana Wayne Gallery, 2525 Michigan Ave., B1, Santa Monica, (310) 453-7535, through May 5. Closed Sundays and Mondays. *www.shoshanawayne.com*



Kissing Circles, mounir fatmi, SF Publishing, 2020

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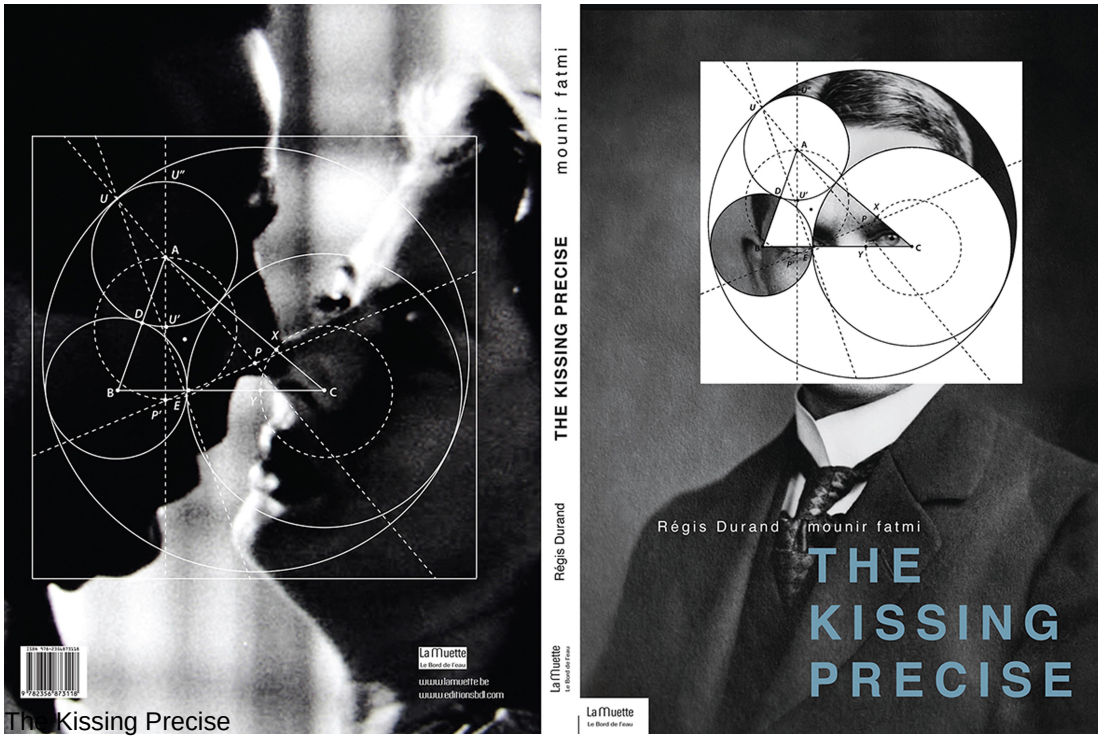
For pairs of lips to kiss maybe Involves no trigonometry. 'Tis not so when four circles kiss Each one the other three. To bring this off the four must be As three in one or one in three. If one in three, beyond a doubt Each gets three kisses from without. If three in one, then is that one Thrice kissed internally.





The Kissing Precise

Four circles to the kissing come. The smaller are the benter. The bend is just the inverse of The distance from the center. Though their intrigue left Euclid dumb There's now no need for rule of thumb. Since zero bend's a dead straight line And concave bends have minus sign, The sum of the squares of all four bends Is half the square of their sum.



The Kissing Precise

To spy out spherical affairs An oscular surveyor Might find the task laborious, The sphere is much the gayer, And now besides the

pair of pairs A fifth sphere in the kissing shares. Yet, signs and zero as before, For each to kiss the other four The square of the sum of all five bends Is thrice the sum of their squares.

The Kissing Precise

Frederick Soddy, British radio-chemist, Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1921 In Nature, June 20, 1936

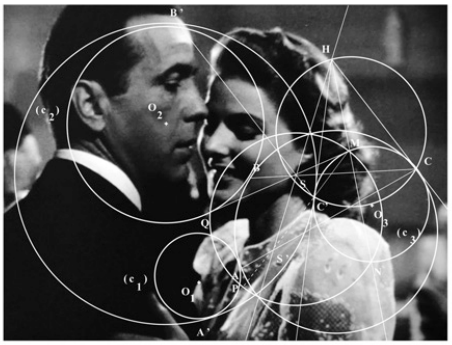
Los Angeles Times

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AROUND THE GALLERIES

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