35. | Maximum Sensation suspended





2019, 14 skateboards, prayer rugs.
Exhibition view of Tradition Interrupted, Bedford Gallery, 2019, Walnut Creek.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

Collection of Brooklyn Museum, New York

Collection of Fondation Louis Vuitton, France

Maximum Sensation, une installation de Mounir Fatmi, où le Moyen-Orient rencontre l'Occident. Un ensemble de quatorze skateboards est suspendu au plafond dans un mouvement de kickflip, chacun est recouvert d'un morceau de tapis de prière musulman. Les tapis sont colorés, composés avec des motifs ; certains sont abstraits, d'autres arborent des images de la Kaaba ou d'une mosquée. Ensemble, ils rendent une belle impression diversifiée, presque florale.

Fatmi a déjà utilisé les tapis de prière dans ses œuvres, dans une série de collages appelée Father's Carpet's, mais c'est la première fois qu'il les appose à un objet du quotidien ; dans ce cas un symbole du mode de vie et de l'indépendance des adolescents. Mais l'association des skateboards aux tapis de prière n'est pas aussi divergente qu'elle le paraît. Que ce soit un fervent croyant en Dieu ou un skater passionné, tous deux partagent un désir de parvenir à une condition plus élevée, d'atteindre un moment de transformation qui vous transcende vers quelque chose de magique, d'un maximum de sensations.

Les skaters inconditionnels sont souvent aussi fanatiques de leur sport que si c'était une secte. Le sport a son propre style et ses propres marques, avec des industries de vêtements et d'accessoires qui se sont développées autour de lui. Une

Maximum Sensation, an installation by Mounir Fatmi, is like a Middle East meets West cultural mash-up. Fourteen skateboards are suspended from the ceiling in a kickflip movement. A fragment of a Muslim prayer rug covers the top of each board. The carpets are colorful, graphic, patterned; some are abstract, some have images of the Kaaba or a mosque. Together they give a beautiful, diverse, almost ornate impression.

Fatmi has used prayer rugs in his work before, in a series of collages called Father's Carpet's, but it's the first time they are applied onto an everyday object, in this case a symbol of teenage lifestyle and independence. But the association between skateboards and prayer rug are not so divergent as might first appear. Whether a devout believer in God or a passionate skateboarder, the two share a desire to achieve a heightened state of being, to reach a moment of transformation that makes you feel closer to something magical, to a maximum sensation.

There is often what can be called a cult like following among hardcore skaters. The sport has its own style and its own brands, with clothing and accessories industries that have developed around it. There is an attitude that fits with the skater, which is one of freedom and anti-establishment, and often a strong devotion to the professionals (gods), and to the

certaine attitude de liberté, d'opposition au pouvoir correspond au skater, et souvent un fort dévouement aux professionnels (dieux), et aux compétitions. Ce mode de vie tel une religion peut représenter un sanctuaire, une forme d'évasion d'une réalité décevante.

Mais plus particulièrement, Maximum Sensation parle directement de la pollinisation croisée qu'est la mondialisation. Notre connectivité toujours croissante, que ce soit numériquement, culturellement ou physiquement a nourri une réalité dans laquelle un skater de Californie du Sud peut facilement connaître les graffitis révolutionnaires égyptiens et un étudiant marocain porte un t-shirt Stussy à la prière du matin. Bien sûr, cela dépasse largement Fatmi, qui, tout au long de son œuvre nourrit ce qu'on peut appeler une obsession mineure pour les connexions dans et entre nos cadres sociétaux, qu'ils soient politique, religieux, philosophique, culturel ou scientifique. Fatmi vise à éclairer un peu ces relations souvent inattendues qui rendent ce monde beaucoup plus petit qu'il ne paraît. Dans le cas de Maximum Sensation, il nous rappelle que les codes culturels ont changé. L'identité ne peut pas être définie avec un seul concept. Les stéréotypes doivent être vérifiés et les hypothèses reconsidérées.

Blaire Dessent, avril 2014.

competitions. It’s lifestyle, it’s religion, and it can be a sanctuary, a form of escape from a disappointing reality.

But more specifically, Maximum Sensation speaks directly to the cross-pollination that is globalization. Our ever increasing connectivity, whether digitally, culturally, or physically has nurtured a reality in which a Southern California skater can easily know about Egyptian revolutionary graffiti and a Moroccan student wears a Stussy t-shirt to morning prayers. Of course it goes way beyond that for Fatmi, who, throughout his work has what may be called a minor obsession with the connections within and between our societal frameworks, whether political, religious, philosophical, cultural or scientific. Fatmi seeks to shed a bit of light onto these often-unexpected relationships that make this world much smaller then it seems. In the case of Maximum Sensation, it’s a reminder that cultural codes have shifted. Identity cannot be defined by only one construct. Stereotypes need to be checked and assumptions reconsidered.

Blaire Dessent, april 2014.

" The rug implies quietness, concentration and meditation, whereas the skateboard represents speed, urban life and fun. Both objects share a sense of mobility, as they are meant to accompany their users. Yet once reunited, their specificities cancel each other out. "

Julie Crenn, Africultures, 2011

exhibitions:

2024

Tradition Interrupted - Marion Art Gallery, Fredonia - Group show

Tradition Interrupted - The Baker Museum, Naples - Group show

Art Front Selection : Summer - Art Front Gallery, Tokyo - Group show

2023

Dystopia: Transition from Memory - Art Front Gallery, Tokyo - Group show

Tradition Interrupted - Oklahoma State University Museum of Art - Group show

Tradition Interrupted - Museum of Texas Tech University - Group show

Tradition Interrupted - Springfield Art Museum - Group show

Mondes perméables - Centre d’art contemporain de Vienne - Group show

KIAF - Seoul - Art Fair

2022

African Voices - Officine dell'Immagine - Group show

Tradition Interrupted - Katonah Museum of Art - Group show

Tradition Interrupted - Lamont Gallery - Group show

Tradition Interrupted - Marshall M. Fredericks Museum - Group show

Art Basel Miami - Ceysson & Bénétière - Art fair

2021

The Slipstream: Reflection, Resilience, and Resistance in the Art of Our Time - Brooklyn Museum - Group Show

Tradition Interrupted - Susquehanna Art Museum - Group Show

Tradition Interrupted - Juliet Art Museum, Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences - Group Show

The Winter Show - Wilde Gallery - Group Show

ARCO Madrid - ADN Galeria - Art Fair

1-54 Paris at Christie’s - Wilde Gallery - Art Fair

2019

Collecting in the 21st century, If an accumulation reflects a life - Collection Lambert - Expo collective

Tradition Interrupted - Bedford Gallery - Expo collective

Elective Affinities - Keitelman Gallery - Expo collective

Camera Camera - Analix Forever - Art fair

2018

40 ans de collection et un film documentaire de 60 min - Fondation Fernet-Branca - Expo collective

MOVING ART - Analix Forever - Expo collective

2017

1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair London - Lawrie Shabibi - Art fair

2016

Le temps de l'audace et de l'engagement - De leur temps (5) - Institut d’Art Contemporain - Expo collective

Setouchi Art - Isetan Mitsukoshi - Expo collective

Art Genève - Keitelman Gallery - Art fair

2015

Diverse works: Director's Choice, 1997-2015 - The Brooklyn Museum - Expo collective

Street Culture - Ecole Municipale des Beaux-Arts de Châteauroux - Expo collective

ArtInternational - ADN Galeria - Art fair

Art Brussels - Keitelman Gallery - Art fair

2014

Untitled Art - ADN Galeria - Art fair

Artissima - Analix Forever - Art fair

2013

Artissima - Analix Forever - Art fair

Art Brussels - ADN Galeria - Art fair

2011

Unfolding Tales - Brooklyn Museum - Expo collective

2010

Art Basel Miami beach - Lombard-Freid Projects - Art fair

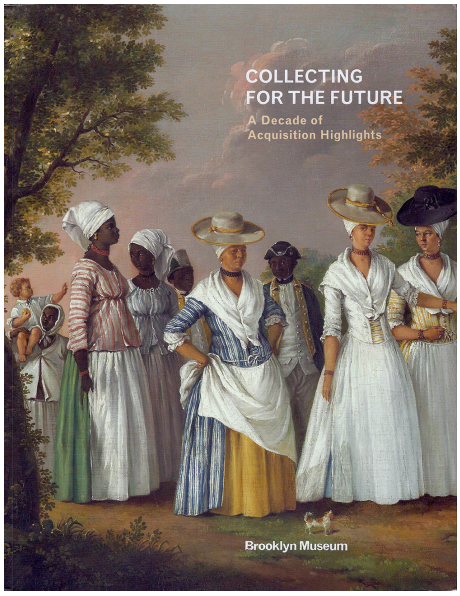
FIAC - Lombard-Freid Projects - Galerie Hussenot - Art fair

Public collections:

Collection Brooklyn Museum - New York
Collection Fondation Louis Vuitton pour la création - France

Private collections:

UAE
France
Spain
Belgium
Germany
Switzerland



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mounir fatmi (Moroccan, b. 1970). *Maximum Sensation*, 2010.
Plastic, metal, and textile; fifty skateboards, 5 x 8 x 31 1/16 in. (12.7 x 20.3 x 80.5 cm) each; overall dimensions variable. Purchased with funds given by John and Barbara Vogelstein and Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, 2010.67.
© mounir fatmi

In mounir fatmi's striking installation *Maximum Sensation*, fifty skateboards carpet the floor, each covered with a colorful patchwork collage pieced together from cut-up prayer rugs. Referring simultaneously to the devout Muslim act of prayer and to the freewheeling pastime of skateboarding, two divergent cultural practices whose reach has expanded well beyond their original roots, *Maximum Sensation* examines the collisions that occur with greater frequency in this era of globalization. The piece, suggesting both a sense of displacement and the phenomenon of cultural hybridity, seems to reflect fatmi's own experience as a Moroccan-born artist living in Paris. As he remarked in a recent interview, "I am Moroccan, Arab, Muslim geographically, Mediterranean, African," acknowledging that one's identity is a construct that shifts depending on the context. Like *Save Manhattan*, his much-admired piece in the 2007 Venice Biennale that utilized stereo speakers to re-create the pre–September 11, 2001, skyline of Lower Manhattan, *Maximum Sensation* employs strategies of defamiliarization to challenge fixed points of view. —*ET*

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