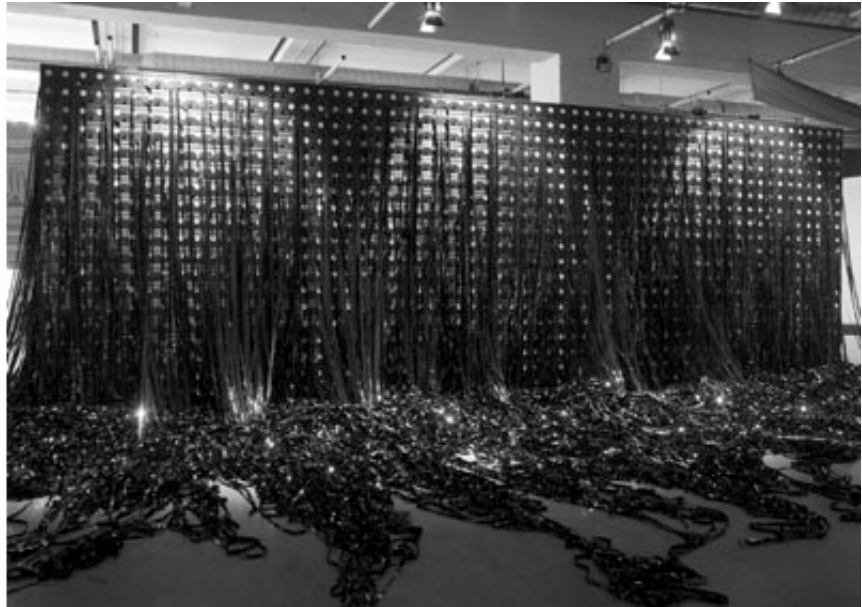


## 40. | The Wall



2011, 56,5cm x 598cm x 207cm, VHS tape.  
Exhibition view of The Great Babylon Circus, Mu, 2011, Eindhoven.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.  
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

Le Mur est une solution de continuité brutale dans l'espace où le spectateur évolue. Sa verticalité monumentale et quelque peu menaçante se dresse sur son passage et le contraint à s'arrêter et à se confronter à la vision rigoureuse et formelle d'une structure composée de centaines de cassettes VHS, obsolètes instruments de communication de copies et de transmissions des images, dont les bandes magnétiques se déroulent en longues traînées depuis le mur jusqu'à ses pieds.

Dans ce travail sur la structure, Mounir Fatmi explore les fondements de nos sociétés et interroge notre rapport aux pouvoirs et aux images. Son dispositif s'inspire de courants philosophiques et de pratiques artistiques qui placent tous le rapport aux images au centre de leurs préoccupations. L'installation renvoie à la fois aux notions de médiatisation et de reproduction en masse développées par Debord dans la Société du Spectacle, et aux techniques de reproduction et de répétition employées par le pop art et le minimalisme. Le Mur questionne les moyens de l'art contemporain pour traiter des rapports entre image et société, et il tente également de définir son rapport aux images et à leur pouvoir.

L'installation donne à observer une construction sociale, une métamorphose plutôt paradoxale à vrai dire : la transformation d'un outil de communication - la cassette VHS - en instrument qui interrompt la communication - le mur. Dans une société composée d'une accumulation de spectacles où les images ont tout pouvoir, celles-ci deviennent finalement l'instrument de pouvoirs et d'idéologies s'exerçant au détriment des libertés de penser, de circuler et de communiquer. Pause, interruption, Le Mur est d'abord une

The Wall is an abrupt discontinuity of the space in which the viewer moves about. Its monumental and somewhat menacing verticality imposes itself in the middle of his way and forces him to stop and be confronted with the rigorous and formal vision of a structure made up of hundreds of VHS tapes, an obsolete means of communication for copying and transmitting images, whose magnetic tapes unravel from the wall to the viewer's feet.

In this study of structure, Mounir Fatmi explores the fundamentals of our societies and questions our relation to figures of power and to images. His installation is inspired by philosophical currents and artistic practices that center their approach on our relation to images. The installation is connected with the notions of media exposure and mass reproduction developed by Guy Debord in his book "The Society of the Spectacle", and to techniques of reproduction and repetition used by movements such as pop art and minimalism. The Wall questions contemporary art's ways of examining the relation between images and society, and also tries to define art's relation to images and their power.

The installation exhibits a social construct, a rather paradoxical metamorphosis: the transformation of a means of communication – the VHS tape – into an element that interrupts communication – the wall. In a society made up of an accumulation of spectacles where the image reigns supreme, it actually becomes an instrument for incarnations of power and ideologies that apply themselves to the detriment of the freedom to think, travel and communicate. A pause, an interruption, The Wall is above all an invitation to consider the profound architecture of our societies, what

invitation à méditer sur l'architecture profonde de nos sociétés, sur ce qui en constitue les éléments fondamentaux : murs et briques dont la matière est extraite des nouvelles technologies de communication. Cependant, si Le Mur produit un effet de saturation sur le spectateur en mimant au moyen de la répétition les excès de la société de consommation qu'il expérimente au quotidien, l'œuvre n'entend pas que celui-ci se soumette à son pouvoir, ni qu'il cède à la paralysie, à la passivité imposée ou à la fascination de l'image...

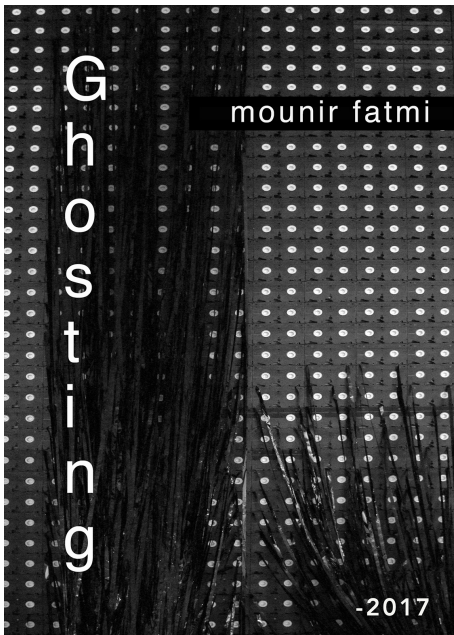
Studio fatmi, Février 2017.

constitute its fundamental elements: walls and bricks whose material is extracted from modern communication technologies. Nevertheless, The Wall may produce an overwhelming effect on the viewer by mimicking repetitively the excesses of the consumer society he experiences on a daily basis, but it doesn't imply that said viewer will submit to its power, nor that he should give in to paralysis, apathy or the fascination for images...

Studio Fatmi, February 2017.

" Why are these emasculated  
VHS cassettes — splendid in their  
luminous blackness, spread out  
by the dozen on the floor — all  
blank?  
Because they are forgotten  
memories whose ambivalent  
quality carries the complexity of  
the relationships fatmi instills  
between the past and the  
present. "

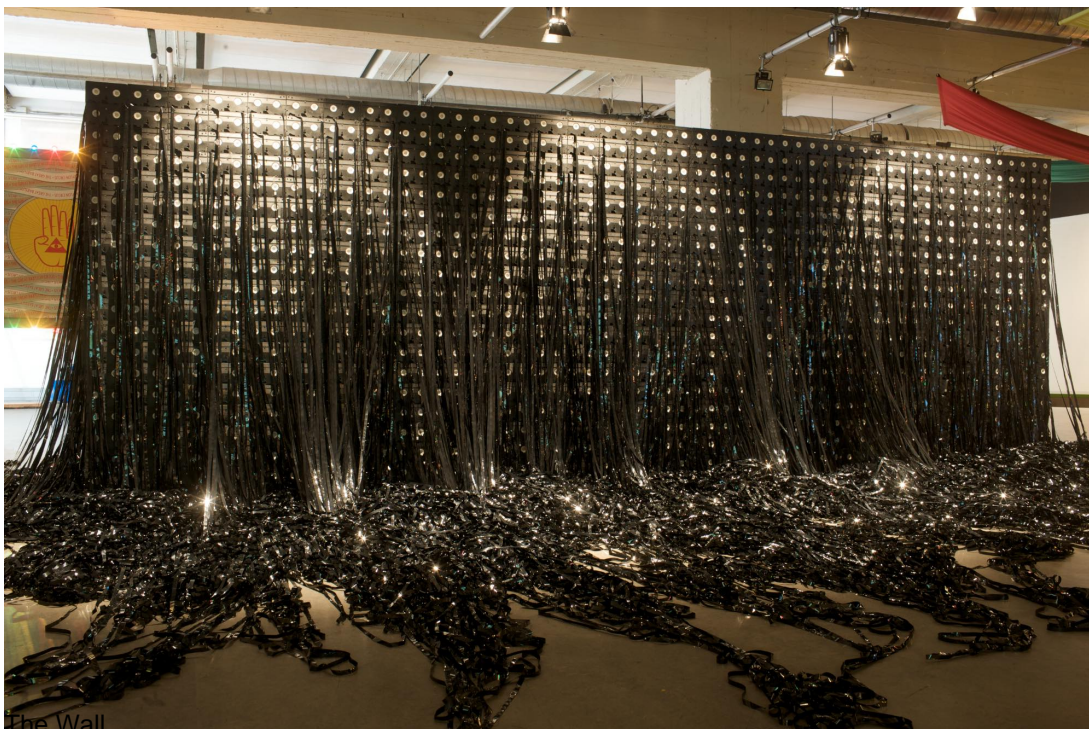
Thierry Raspail, 2011



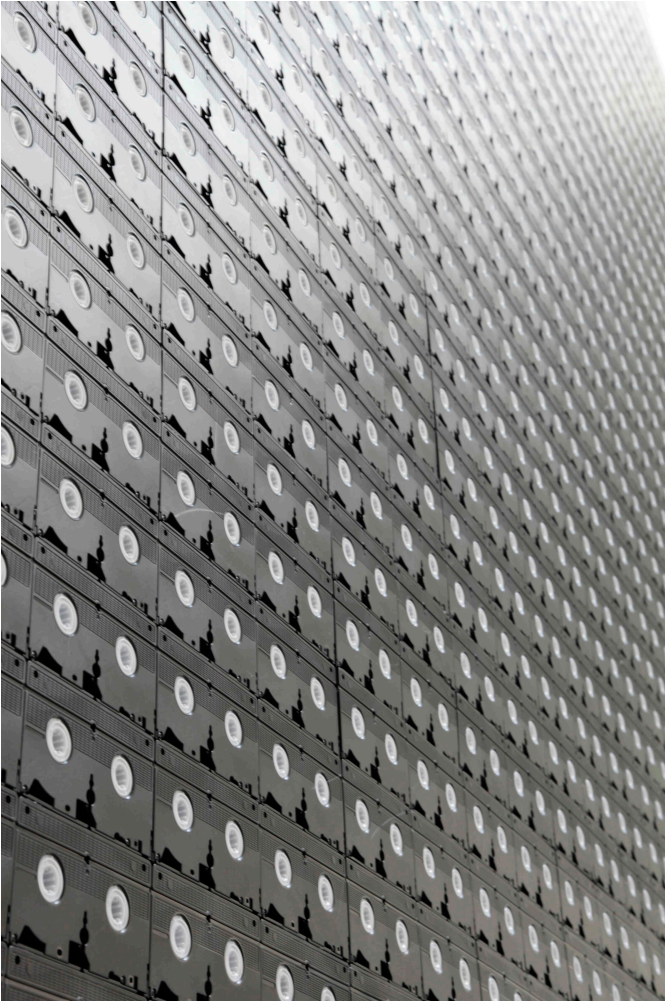
Ghosting, SF Publishing, 2020

mounir fatmi comes up against time, the issue of the past and, of course, that of the subsequent future, and he does so as if he were laden with memory.

Thierry Raspail, Ghosting, 2011



The Wall is an abrupt discontinuity of the space in which the viewer moves about. Its monumental and somewhat menacing verticality imposes itself in the middle of his way and forces him to stop and be confronted with the rigorous and formal vision of a structure made up of hundreds of VHS tapes, an obsolete means of communication for copying and transmitting images, whose magnetic tapes unravel from the wall to the viewer's feet.



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### The Wall

A pause, an interruption, The Wall is above all an invitation to consider the profound architecture of our societies, what constitute its fundamental elements: walls and bricks whose material is extracted from modern communication technologies.



Nevertheless, The Wall may produce an overwhelming effect on the viewer by mimicking repetitively the excesses of the consumer society he experiences on a daily basis, but it doesn't imply that said viewer will submit to its power, nor that he should give in to paralysis, apathy or the fascination for images...