22. | Something is possible





2006, Netherlands, 5 min 35, Sd, 4/3, B&W, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and Analix Forever, Genova.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

Comme dans un écran de fumée qui se dissipe on distingue deux corps, un homme, une femme, nus. Le plan est presque fixe, les mouvements sont lents. Passé en loop, le film, traité en noir et blanc comme un négatif, est hypnotique, dans une suspension du temps, sur fond de musique minimaliste, de stridences laissant parfois la place à des bruits de profondeur, vagues sur les galets ou écho intra-utérins…

L'homme est penché sur la femme, ils s'embrassent longuement. On ne verra pas leurs visages. L'homme caresse la femme, lentement, ses seins, son sexe. Et bientôt au premier plan, on « ne voit plus que » la main de l'homme caressant -et masquant- le sexe de la femme. Enchainement de flous et de fondus. La respiration de la femme. La main de l'homme. Les images sont érotiques bien qu'il n'y ait pas de scénario sexuel, et si « quelque chose est possible », on n'assistera à aucun dénouement. La video s'achève comme elle a commencé…

La question du sexe, du désir est rarement abordée de manière aussi directe par mounir fatmi. Il se dégage d'ailleurs rapidement de cette frontalité en nous mettant esthétiquement à distance, évacuant ainsi la crudité de la vérité nue, empêchant le regard pornographique. Ces images nous placent pourtant en situation de pornographe, au sens employé par Gombrowicz. Comme si Hénia et Karol avait veilli, on observe, on attend ce qui devrait être « possible », saisissant dans ces geste lents l'humain dessein secret, au regard de sa quête d'absolu, de « non-achevé, d'imperfection, de jeunesse… »* les promesses d'espoir et d'une esthétique autre dans un monde au bord de la faillite.

On pense dans ce contexte à l'analyse que Lévinas fait de la

As if in a dissipating cloud of smoke we can make out two bodies: a man and a woman, naked. It is almost a fixed shot, the movements are slow. The film is on a loop and in black and white, like a negative. It is hypnotic, suspended in time, against a backdrop of minimalist music, with the shrillsounds making way sometimes to deep noises, like waves on shingle or intrauterine ultrasounds...

The man is leaning over the woman, they kiss slowly. Their faces can no longer be seen. The man slowly caresses the woman, her breasts, her genitalia. And then, in the foreground, we "only see" the man's hand, caressing – and concealing – the woman's genitalia. Then a series of blurred, molten shots; the woman's breathing; the man's hand. The images are erotic even if there is no sexual scenario, and if "something is possible", we are not going to see any denouement. The video ends as it begun...

The question of sex and desire is rarely tackled in such a direct way by mounir fatmi. He quickly withdraws, in fact, from this frontality and puts us at an aesthetic distance, evacuating the crudeness of the naked truth and preventing the pornographic gaze. These images do, however, place us in a pornographic situation, in the sense employed by Gombrowicz. As if Hénia and Karol had grown old, we observe, we wait for what should be "possible", comprehending, in these slow gestures, the secret human design in reference to its absolute quest for "untouched, imperfection, youth...*", the promises of hope and of an alternative aesthetic in a world on the verge of failure.

In this context, it makes us think of Lévinas' analysis of the caress, which "aims at neither a person nor a thing", but he

caresse, qui ne vise "ni une personne, ni une chose", mais, écrit-il, « le tendre ». Ni projet, ni idée, la caresse évoque le « possible », le « pas encore », elle est « attente de cet avenir pur sans contenu ».**
Elle est aussi, comme semblent le dire les images érotiques de *Quelque chose est possible*, expression de la perdurance du désir, qui, ne se bornant pas à un désir sexuel factuel, s'enracine dans les profondeurs ontologiques de ce perpétuel effort pour « persévérer dans son être »***, dans cet appétit qui ne serait rien d'autre que l'essence même de l'homme.
Pour l'artiste, il s'agissait ici de montrer comment la relation érotique s'inscrit existentiellement à la fois comme *epokhe*, suspension du jugement et puissance d'affirmation en retrait provisoire d'un monde dans lequel chacun, et lui-même, est toujours exhorté à prendre position.

Quelque chose est possible a été réalisée en 2006 dans le cadre de la résidence de l'artiste à la Rijksacademie d'Amsterdam.

Marie Deparis**,** Paris 2007.

*Witold Gombrowicz – Préface de *La pornographie*, 1962 – Coll Folio, Editions Gallimard
**Emmanuel Lévinas- *Totalité et Infini*
***B. Spinoza- *Ethique* – Livre III, Prop. VI

vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! www.exquise.org

writes, "at the tender". Neither a project, nor an idea, the caress evokes the "possible", the "not yet", it is the "expectation of a pure future which lacks the category of substance**". It is also, as the erotic images of Something is possible seem to say, an expression of the perpetuation of desire. This is not limited to a factual sexual desire but entrenched in the ontological depths of the continuous effort to "preserve [one's] own being***", in this hunger which boils down to the very essence of man. For the artist, this piece is about showing how erotic relations are existentially both epokhe - suspension of judgement - and the power of affirmation temporarily set back from a world in which everyone, including himself, is urged to take a position.

Something is possible was created in 2006 during the artist's residence at the Rijksacademie in
Amsterdam.

Marie Deparis, Paris 2007.

Translation: Caroline Rossiter.

*Witold Gombrowicz – Preface to La pornographie, 1962 – Coll Folio, Editions Gallimard

**Emmanuel Lévinas- Totality and Infinity

***B. Spinoza- Ethics – Book III, Prop. VI

" The film is on a loop and in black and white, like a negative.
It is hypnotic, suspended in time, against a backdrop of minimalist music,
with the shrillsounds making way sometimes to deep noises, like waves on shingle or intrauterine ultrasounds... "

Marie Deparis, Paris 2007

exhibitions:

2018

This is My Body - Art Bärtschi & Cie - Solo show

2015

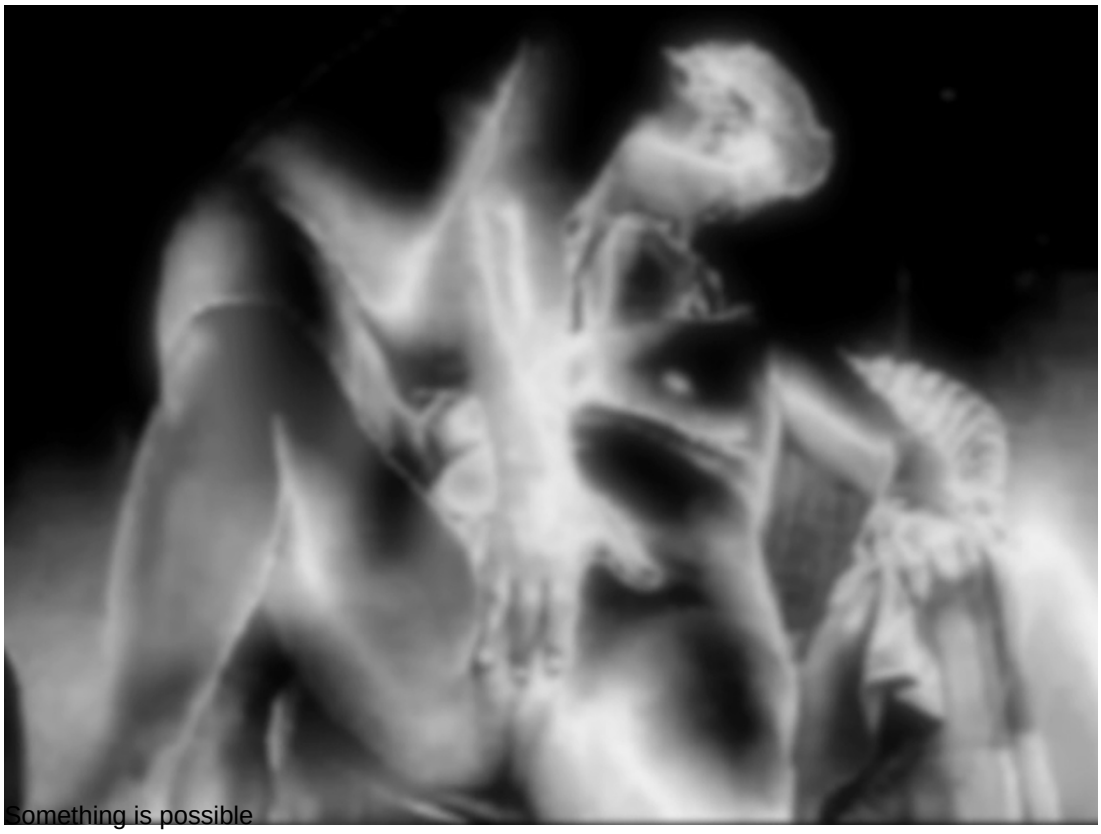
A l'ombre d'Eros, une histoire d'amour et de mort - Monastère Royal de Brou - Expo collective



This is my Body, Sf Publishing 2019

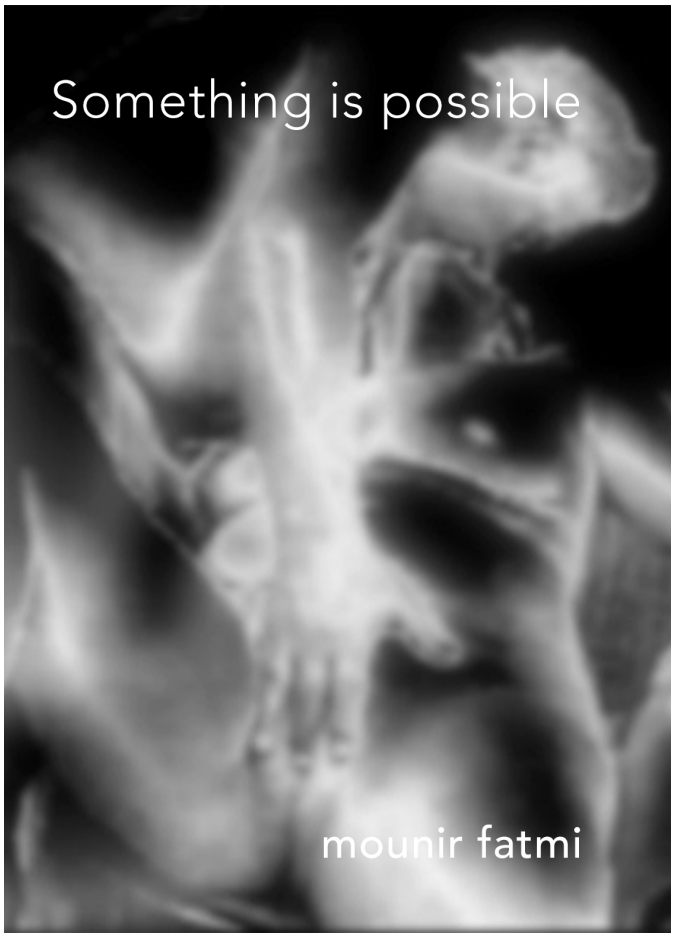
When hearing the name mounir fatmi, one can’t help but think of his sculptures and installations addressing the issues of free expression and censorship. His works, both material and immaterial, all have in common striking concepts and powerful images. Video is his preferred medium. Contrary to a painting where the image remains motionless and unchanging, a screen always offers the possibility of being turned off, thus making the work disappear, of giving it life or not at any chosen moment.

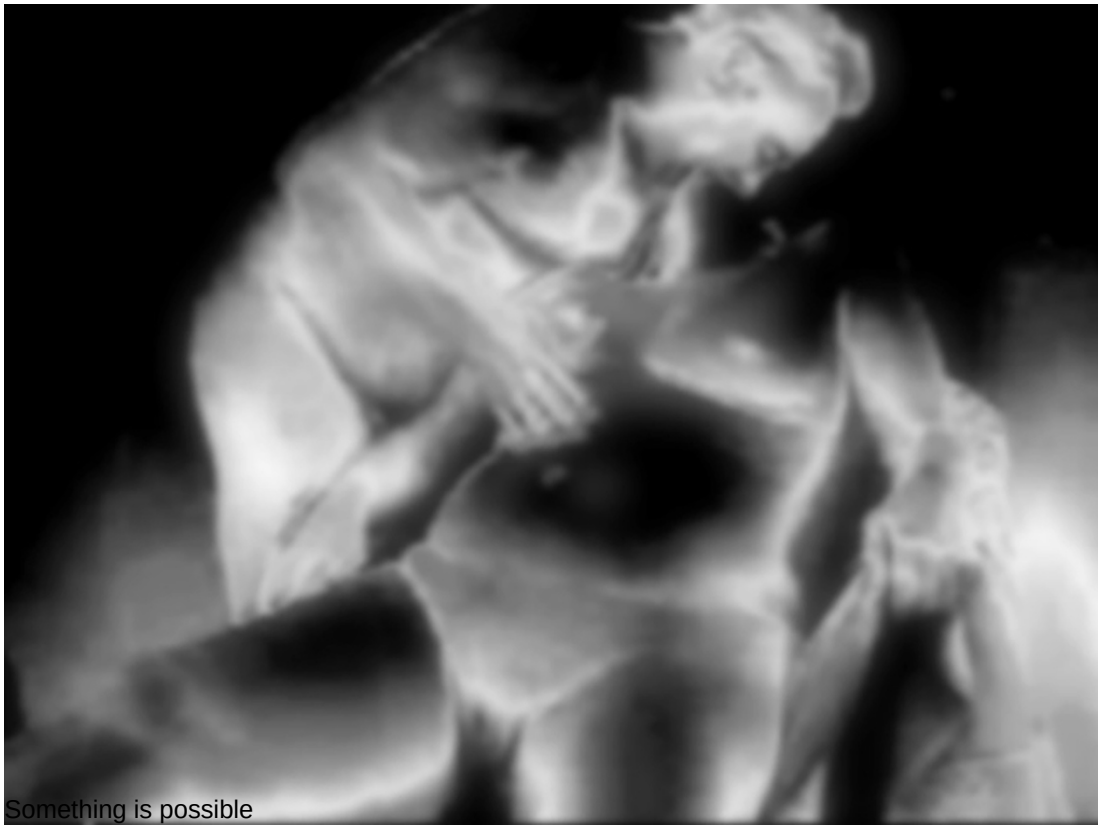
Barbara Polla, 2019



Something is possible

As if in a dissipating cloud of smoke we can make out two bodies: a man and a woman, naked. It is almost a fixed shot, the movements are slow. The film is on a loop and in black and white, like a negative. It is hypnotic, suspended in time, against a backdrop of minimalist music, with the shrillsounds making way sometimes to deep noises, like waves on shingle or intrauterine ultrasounds...



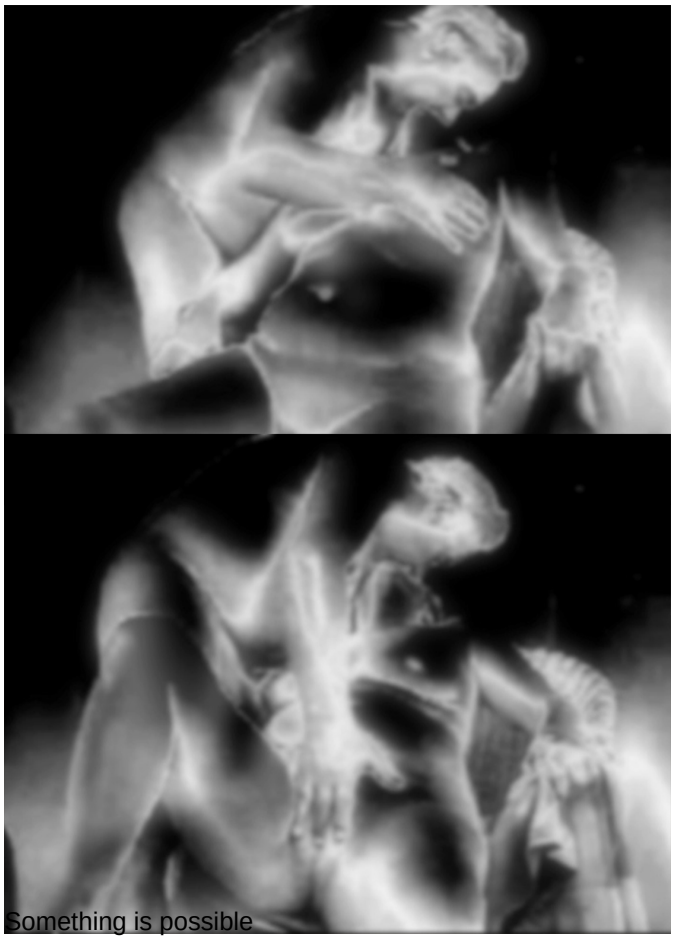


Something is possible

The question of sex and desire is rarely tackled in such a direct way by mounir fatmi. He quickly withdraws, in fact, from this frontality and puts us at an aesthetic distance, evacuating the crudeness of the naked truth and preventing the pornographic gaze.

Something is possible

These images do, however, place us in a pornographic situation, in the sense employed by Gombrowicz. As if Hénia and Karol had grown old, we observe, we wait for what should be 'possible', comprehending, in these slow gestures, the secret human design in reference to its absolute quest for 'untouched, imperfection, youth...*', the promises of hope and of an alternative aesthetic in a world on the verge of failure.



Something is possible

For the artist, this piece is about showing how erotic relations are existentially both epokhe - suspension of judgement - and the power of affirmation temporarily set back from a world in which everyone, including himself, is urged to take a position.