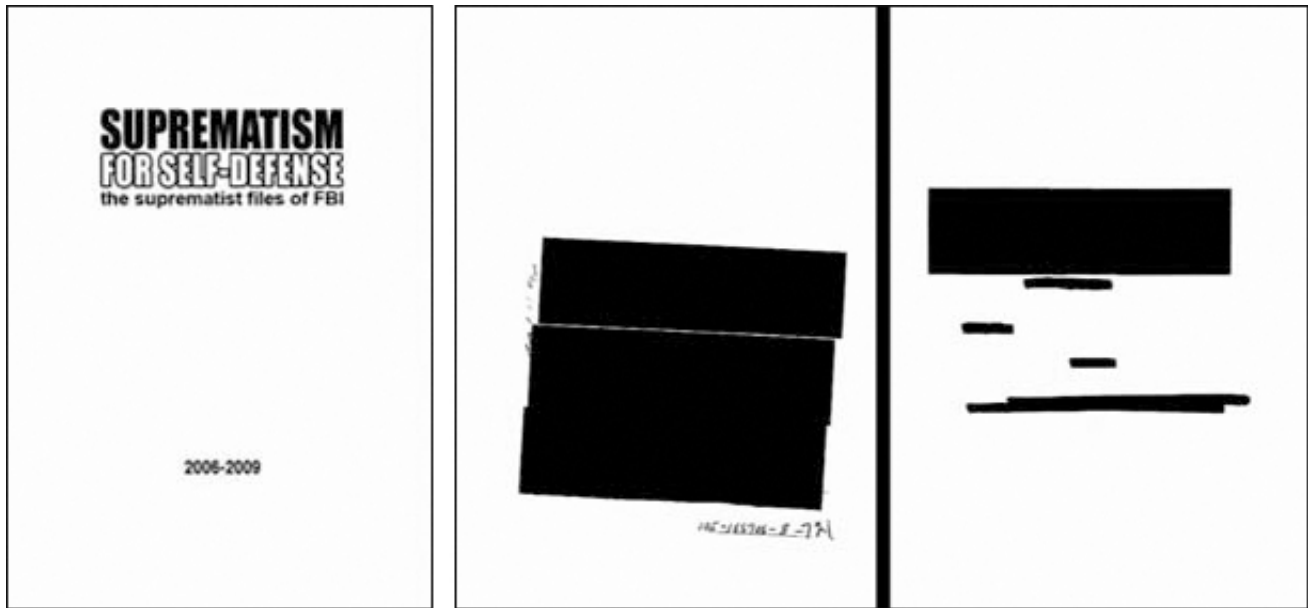


## 31. | Suprematism for self-defense



2006-2009, France, SD, 4/3, 74 min 29, color, no sound.  
 Courtesy of the artist and Conrads, Düsseldorf.  
 Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

En 2006, mounir fatmi débute le projet « Suprématisme pour l'auto-défense » qui a pour point de départ les archives du FBI sur le Black Panther

Les transcriptions des écoutes des leaders du mouvement bien que rendues publiques conservent leurs secrets, les responsables du FBI ayant caché les informations jugées sensibles. A la réception de ces documents, l'artiste décide d'effacer à son tour le texte qui a été considéré comme non dangereux à la diffusion. Ainsi plus de 2 000 fichiers et documents d'archives du FBI concernant le mouvement BPP ont été traités entre 2006 et 2009.

Quel lien peut avoir le suprématisme, mouvement abstrait russe initié par Malevitch en 1915, et le concept politique de «self-defense » des Black Panthers qui naît à Oakland en 1966 ? Le projet « Suprématisme pour l'auto-défense » crée ce lien entre ces deux mouvements l'un artistique et l'autre politique. Mounir Fatmi ne se limite pas à une lecture de l'histoire, c'est l'écriture de l'histoire qui l'intéresse et surtout par qui elle était écrite. Les mêmes mécanismes d'association des idéologies aux mouvements artistiques se retrouvent dans le projet « The dynamic Geography of History ». Cette pièce est constituée de posters sur lesquels le spectateur peut lire : Le minimalisme est capitaliste, le cubisme et colonialiste, le futurisme est fashiste, etc.

Le résultat final de ce travail de quatre ans est un ensemble de formes géométriques qui s'apparentent aux dessins suprématises de Malevitch. Le glissement s'opère dès le processus de création : l'œuvre est faite avec la complicité des censeurs d'information des bureaux du FBI, puisque ce sont eux qui initient l'oeuvre à leur insu.

In 2006, Mounir Fatmi began the project "Suprematism for Self-defense", with the FBI archives on the Black Panther Party as a starting point, as they were made public by the American government under the Freedom of Information Act.

The phone surveillance transcripts of the movement's leaders, although rendered public, keep their secrets, as the FBI decided to withhold information that was deemed too sensitive. Upon receiving these documents, the artist decided he too would erase the text considered as non-dangerous for public distribution. Over 2.000 files and documents from the FBI archives on the BPP movement were processed in this way between 2006 and 2009.

What connection can there be between suprematism, a Russian abstract movement initiated by Malevitch in 1915, and the political concept of "self defense" championed by the Black Panthers, born in Oakland in 1966? The "Suprematism for self defense" project creates that connection between these two movements, one artistic, the other political. Mounir Fatmi doesn't limit himself to an interpretation of history, it's the writing of history that interests him, specifically by whom it is written. The same mechanisms of association between ideologies and artistic movements can be found in the project "The dynamic Geography of History", a piece comprised of posters on which the viewer can read: "Minimalism is capitalist, cubism is colonialist, futurism is fascist, etc."

The final result of this work spanning over four years is a set of geometric shapes that are reminiscent of Malevitch's suprematist drawings. The shift begins at the start of the creative process: the work is created with complicity of the censors of information at the FBI, as they are its unwilling

L'œuvre répond finalement cette question qui revient souvent dans le travail de l'artiste : comment passer d'une question politique à une proposition artistique?

Studio Fatmi, Avril 2009.

vidéo distribuée par Heure exquise ! [www.exquise.org](http://www.exquise.org)

Note: Une première partie de ce travail à été montrée pour la première fois en 2006 à la 7ème biennale de Dakar, puis la même année à l'exposition *black panther party for self defense*, à la bank galerie, Paris. En 2007, ces recherches sont installées à l'exposition *seven installations*, falconer gallery, grinnell college, iowa, en 2009 à l'exposition *America*, à Beirut Art Center au Liban. La version finale a été montrée à l'exposition personnelle *Seeing is believing* que l'artiste a montée en 2010 à la galerie Hussenot à Paris.

initiators. Lastly, the piece answers a question that often comes back in the artist's work: how can the shift be made from a political question to an artistic proposition?

Studio Fatmi, April 2009.

vidéo distributed by Heure exquise ! [www.exquise.org](http://www.exquise.org)

Note: The first part of this work was shown for the first time in 2006 at the 7th Dakar biennale, and then the same year at the exhibit Black Panther Party for Self Defense at the Bank gallery in Paris. In 2007, the research project was shown at the exhibit Seven Installations at the Falconer gallery, Grinnell College, Iowa, and in 2009 at the exhibit America at the Beirut Art Center, Lebanon. The final version was shown in 2010 at the artist's personal exhibit Seeing is Believing, at the Hussenot gallery in Paris.

" Presenting a series of pages from the bureau's intelligence archives on the Black Panthers, fatmi emphasizes the gaps in information by lifting all of the text that is left on the pages so as to leave only the black lines and geometric forms where the American agency deemed language too sensitive to reveal. "

Lillian Davies, June 2010

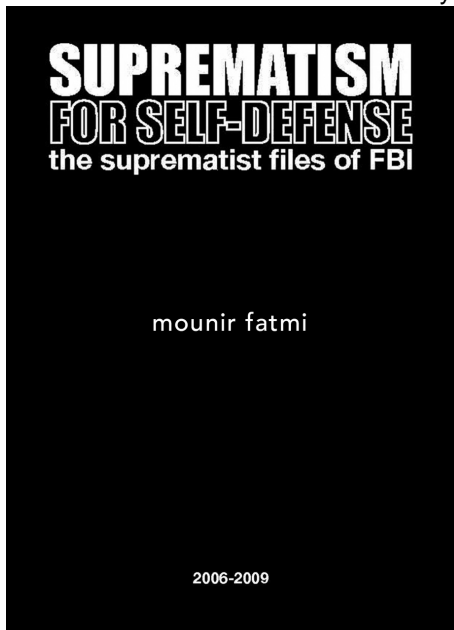
**exhibitions:**

2018

Resist! - Bozar Center for fine arts - Expo collective

2007

Seven installations - Faulconer Gallery - Grinnell College - Expo collective



### Suprematism for self-defense

Presenting a series of pages from the bureau's intelligence archives on the Black Panthers, fatmi emphasizes the gaps in information by lifting all of the text that is left on the pages so as to leave only the black lines and geometric forms where the American agency deemed language too sensitive to reveal.

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Suprematism for self-defense

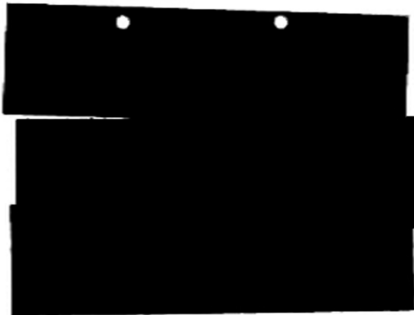
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# Suprematism for self-defense

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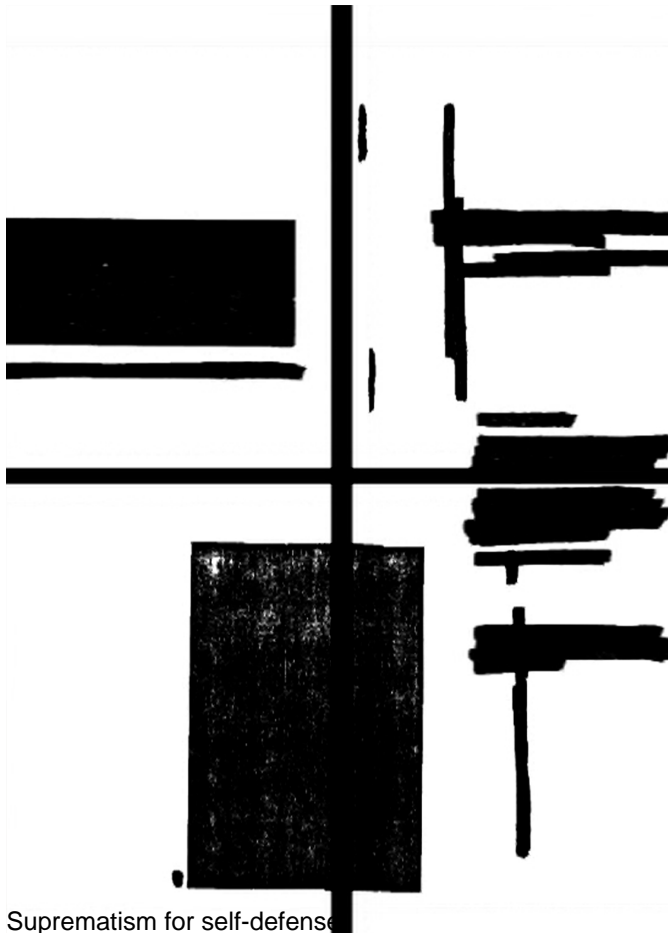
mounir fatmi



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### Suprematism for self-defense

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Suprematism for self-defense

The final result of this work spanning over four years is a set of geometric shapes that are reminiscent of Malevitch's suprematist drawings. The shift begins at the start of the creative process: the work is created with complicity of the censors of information at the FBI, as they are its unwilling initiators.?