45. | Save Manhattan



2008-2015, Series of 20 prints on baryta, 25x20 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Analix Forever, Geneva.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

Save Manhattan est une série d'impressions en noir et blanc qui mettent en scène des images de la ville de New-York et de son architecture : ses nombreux buildings et gratte-ciels, dont les tours jumelles du World Trade Center, la statue de la liberté, ses ponts (de Brooklyn ou de Manhattan), mais également les moyens de transports maritimes et aériens qui permettent d'accéder à l'île de Manhattan.

L'œuvre revient sur les attentats du 11 septembre 2001 et l'effondrement des tours jumelles et se constitue comme une réflexion sur la ville de New-York en tant que référence culturelle et donc comme une exploration des imaginaires collectifs. Save Manhattan s'interroge sur ce qui en constitue les éléments fondamentaux en explorant le passé de la ville et son devenir. De manière plus générale encore, Save Manhattan est un travail sur la perception et la mémoire. Ce travail sur la ville de New York prend différents aspects dans l'œuvre de Mounir Fatmi, et s'illustre au travers d'installations et vidéos représentant la ville et recourant notamment aux cassettes VHS, aux haut-parleurs et aux livres, matériaux fréquemment utilisés par Mounir Fatmi dans ses œuvres.

Les impressions donnent à voir des éléments architecturaux aisément identifiables. Elles entraînent chez le spectateur une reconnaissance presque immédiate du décor en faisant naître un sentiment de familiarité. Les images mettent ainsi en évidence le fait que New York s'impose dans les imaginaires collectifs comme une référence culturelle. Et cependant, elles soulèvent aussi une inquiétude et un sentiment d'étrangeté face à un décor modifié et recomposé qui met à mal la reconnaissance visuelle. Elles réactivent également le souvenir et la crainte d'un attentat terroriste. Elles expriment ainsi la menace que ces images de la ville se transforment en images d'archives, appartenant à un passé lointain et révolu.

Save Manhattan is a series of black and white prints showing images of New York City and its architecture: its numerous building and skyscrapers, including the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the Statue of Liberty, its bridges (the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan Bridge), as well as marine and aerial means of transportation that enable access to the island of Manhattan.

The work returns to the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the collapse of the twin towers, and consists in a reflection upon the city of New York as a cultural reference, and therefore in an exploration of our collective imagination. Save Manhattan poses the question of what constitutes its fundamental elements by exploring the city’s past and future. In a broader sense, Save Manhattan is also about perception and memory. Work on the city of New York takes on different aspects in Mounir Fatmi’s production and can be seen in installations and videos showing the city resorting to VHS tapes, loudspeakers and books, materials often used by Mounir Fatmi in his work.

The prints show architectural elements that are easily identifiable. They trigger an almost immediate response of recognition of the landscape by the viewer and a feeling of familiarity. The images thus highlight the fact that New York imposes itself in our collective imagination as a cultural reference. Yet they also provoke anxiety and a feeling of strangeness when faced with a landscape that has been modified and recomposed, challenging our visual recognition. They also revive the memory and the fear of a terrorist attack. In this way, they convey the threat that these images of the city could be transformed into archive images belonging to a distant past.

Memory and cognition are affected by a peculiar

La mémoire et la cognition se trouvent frappées d'un phénomène particulier : les avions de ligne associés à la ville de New York sont désormais forcément connotés et perçus non comme de simples moyens de transport et de communication mais comme des instruments potentiellement destinés à commettre un attentat. Or l'insularité de Manhattan fait de la question des communications un élément crucial et même vital pour la ville et ses habitants.

Save Manhattan constitue finalement un appel au secours et une injonction collective à la résistance. L'œuvre en appelle au geste qui sauve, à savoir le montage poétique, l'établissement de relations, de liens, de ponts entre les peuples et les cultures. La recomposition du paysage urbain, le réagencement des éléments architecturaux, des événements sont comme un prélude au sauvetage de ce qui constitue à la fois le cœur de la ville et des imaginaires. L'œuvre appelle à une (re)poétisation du monde et à l'avènement heureux de l'inattendu, comme avec l'apparition de ces montgolfières dans le ciel de la ville, contre le surgissement de la violence. Au traumatisme mémoriel, Save Manhattan oppose les pouvoirs de la poésie et de l'imaginaire.

Studio Fatmi, Juillet 2017

phenomenon: commercial airplanes associated with the city of New York are now necessarily connoted and perceived not as a simple means of transportation and communication but as instruments that can potentially be used to commit a terrorist attack. Yet the insularity of Manhattan makes the question of communications a crucial and even vital element for the city and its inhabitants.

Ultimately, Save Manhattan is an S.O.S. and a collective injunction to resistance. The work calls upon the gestures that can save us: poetic montage, establishing relations, links and bridges between peoples and cultures. The recomposing of the urban landscape, the rearrangement of architectural elements and events are like a prelude to the salvage of what constitutes the heart of both the city and our imaginations. The work calls upon a (re)poetization of the world and the joyful advent of the unexpected, as is the case with these hot air balloons that appear in the city sky, against the sudden surge of violence. To memorial trauma, Save Manhattan opposes the power of poetry and imagination.

Studio Fatmi, July 2017.

" It would seem that Fatmi is looking to the past - in all its imminent contemporary presence - for answers to our current international quandaries. "

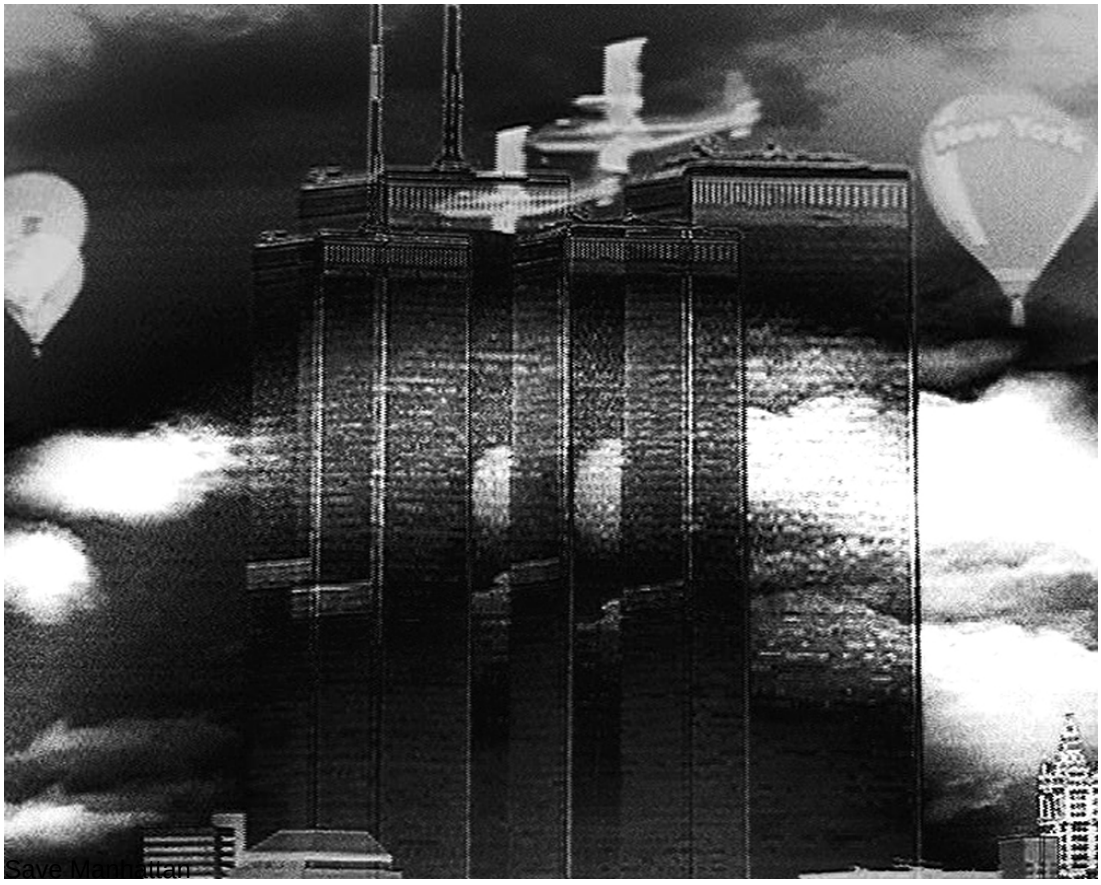
Sotheby's, 2013



Breaking the Cycle, SFpublishing, 2023

My work aims to create spaces for reflection and awareness, deconstruct pre-established patterns, and encourage critical and independent thinking. I believe that new technologies have the potential to generate other new ideologies.

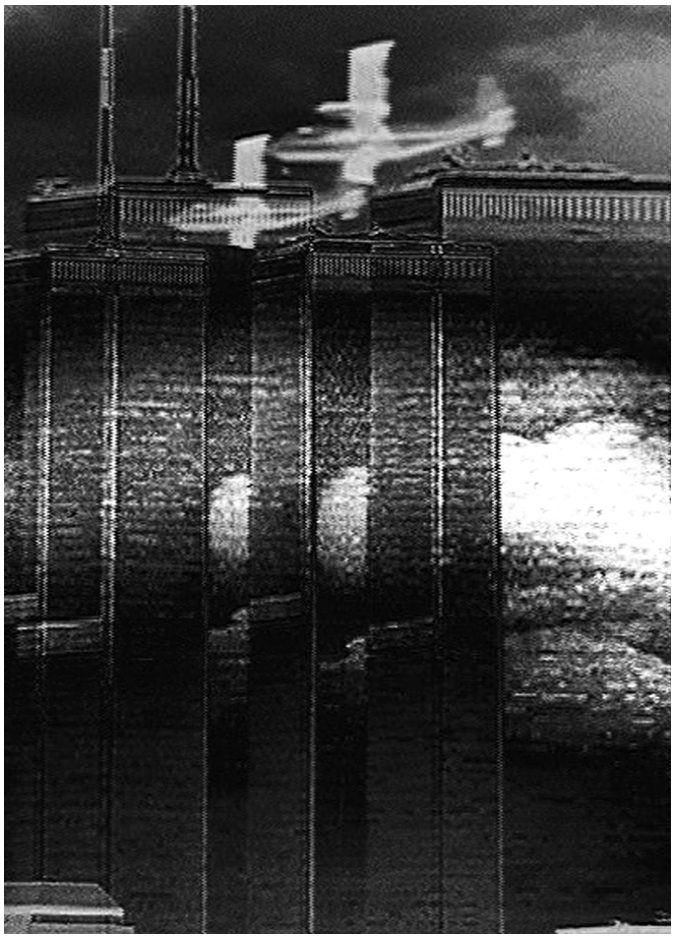
mounir fatmi ITW by Soledad Bescós, 2023

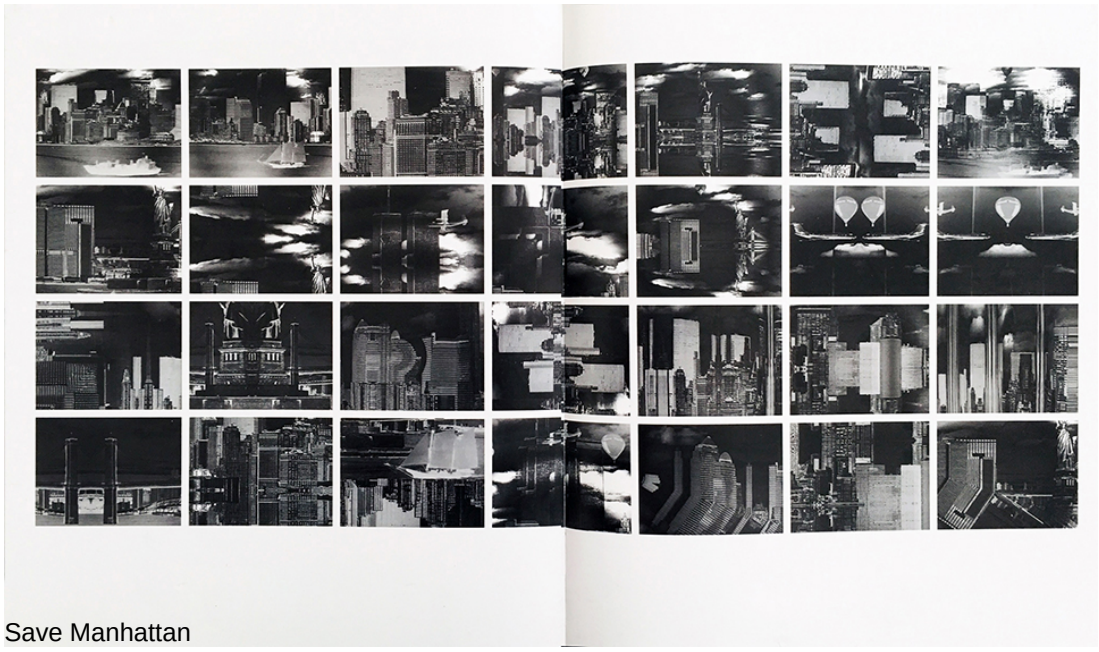


Save Manhattan

Save Manhattan is a series of black and white prints showing images of New York City and its architecture: its numerous building

and skyscrapers, including the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the Statue of Liberty, its bridges (the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan Bridge), as well as marine and aerial means of transportation that enable access to the island of Manhattan.





Save Manhattan

The work returns to the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the collapse of the twin towers, and consists in a reflection upon the city of New York as a cultural reference, and therefore in an exploration of our collective imagination. Save Manhattan poses the question of what constitutes its fundamental elements by exploring the city’s past and future. In a broader sense, Save Manhattan

is also about perception and memory.

Save Manhattan

The prints show architectural elements that are easily identifiable. They trigger an almost immediate response of recognition of the landscape by the viewer and a feeling of familiarity. The images thus highlight the fact that New York imposes itself in our collective imagination as a cultural reference. Yet they also provoke anxiety and a feeling of strangeness when faced with a landscape that has been modified and recomposed, challenging our visual recognition.



Save Manhattan

Memory and cognition are affected by a peculiar phenomenon: commercial airplanes associated with the city of New York are now necessarily connoted and perceived not as a simple means of transportation and communication but as instruments that can potentially be used to commit a terrorist attack.