17. | Modern Times 01

2024-2025, ink and acrylic on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Art Front Gallery, Tokyo.

Modern Times est une série de peintures à l'encre et à l'acrylique sur papier, inspirée de l'installation vidéo du même titre de mounir fatmi. La série s'immerge dans le concept de modernité en tant que force écrasante et aliénante, une réflexion sur la vitesse et l'intensité de la production et de la consommation qui caractérisent le monde contemporain.

Dans les peintures, la forme circulaire émerge comme l'élément principal, un rappel visuel des cercles et des engrenages de la machine. Les lignes fluides, souvent entrelacées d'arabesques et de calligraphie arabe, suggèrent la beauté simultanée et le conflit entre l'homme et la machine. La calligraphie, élément récurrent dans le travail de fatmi, n'est plus inscrite à la surface mais découpée, laissant l'espace négatif prendre vie et interagir avec le mouvement et la répétition des motifs. Ces formes circulaires n'évoquent pas seulement le mouvement incessant de la société industrielle et mondialisée, mais rappellent aussi le langage visuel des avant-gardes modernistes, telles que celles de Sonia et Robert Delaunay, qui cherchaient à représenter l'énergie et le dynamisme du monde moderne.

Modern Times explore également le conflit entre la modernité occidentale, née au XIXe siècle, et le développement urbanistique et industriel du Moyen-Orient. Les images projetées et les formes circulaires dans les peintures reflètent un monde qui tourne à une vitesse folle, où la construction des villes dans le désert est aussi rapide qu'elle est dénuée de réflexion sur son impact humain et culturel. L'artiste donne voix au paradoxe de cette croissance qui oublie souvent l'individu dans le processus, semblable à l'aliénation perçue dans le célèbre film de Charlie Chaplin, Modern Times.

Modern Times is a series of ink and acrylic paintings on paper, inspired by mounir fatmi's video installation of the same title. The series delves into the concept of modernity as an overwhelming and alienating force, reflecting on the speed and intensity of production and consumption that characterize the contemporary world.

In the paintings, the circular form emerges as the main element, a visual reference to the circles and cogs of the machine. The fluid lines, often interwoven with arabesques and Arabic calligraphy, suggest the simultaneous beauty and conflict between man and machine. The calligraphy, a recurring element in fatmi's work, is no longer inscribed on the surface but cut out, allowing the negative space to come to life and interact with the movement and repetition of the patterns. These circular forms not only allude to the incessant motion of industrial and globalized society but also echo the visual language of modernist avant-garde artists, such as Sonia and Robert Delaunay, who sought to represent the energy and dynamism of the modern world.

Modern Times also explores the conflict between Western modernity, which emerged in the 19th century, and the urban and industrial development of the Middle East. The projected images and circular forms in the paintings reflect a world spinning at breakneck speed, where the construction of cities in the desert is as rapid as it is devoid of reflection on its human and cultural impact. The artist gives voice to the paradox of growth that often forgets the individual in the process, similar to the alienation depicted in Charlie Chaplin's iconic film, Modern Times.

In this series, mounir fatmi not only examines the tension

Dans cette série, mounir fatmi n'examine pas seulement la tension entre l'Orient et l'Occident, mais se confronte également aux dynamiques d'une société de plus en plus centrée sur la consommation et la production incessante. Ses peintures sont une invitation à réfléchir sur la vitesse et l'instabilité de notre monde contemporain, où l'humanité semble piégée dans un cycle sans fin qui échappe à tout contrôle.

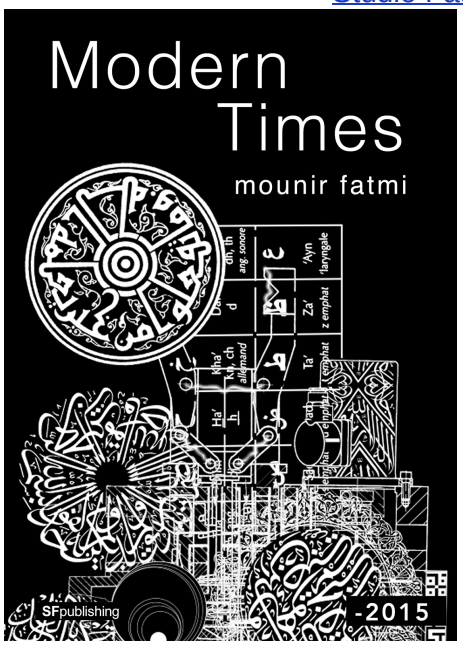
Studio Fatmi, Mars 2025

between East and West but also grapples with the dynamics of a society increasingly centered on consumption and endless production. His paintings invite us to reflect on the speed and instability of our contemporary world, where humanity seems trapped in an endless cycle that slips beyond control.

Studio Fatmi, March 2025

"Modern Times is a constantly moving visual gear, a poetic machine that explores the relationship between humans and technology through the language of art."

Studio Fatmi, December 2017



Modern Times, SFpublishing 2024

Three-dimensional versions of the gears in the animation, they’re beautiful and sinister and suggest an ideological violence. You certainly don't want these circles to kiss they’re beautiful and sinister and suggest an ideological violence. You certainly don't want these circles to kiss.

Sharon Mizota, The Los Angeles Times, 2012

Modern Times

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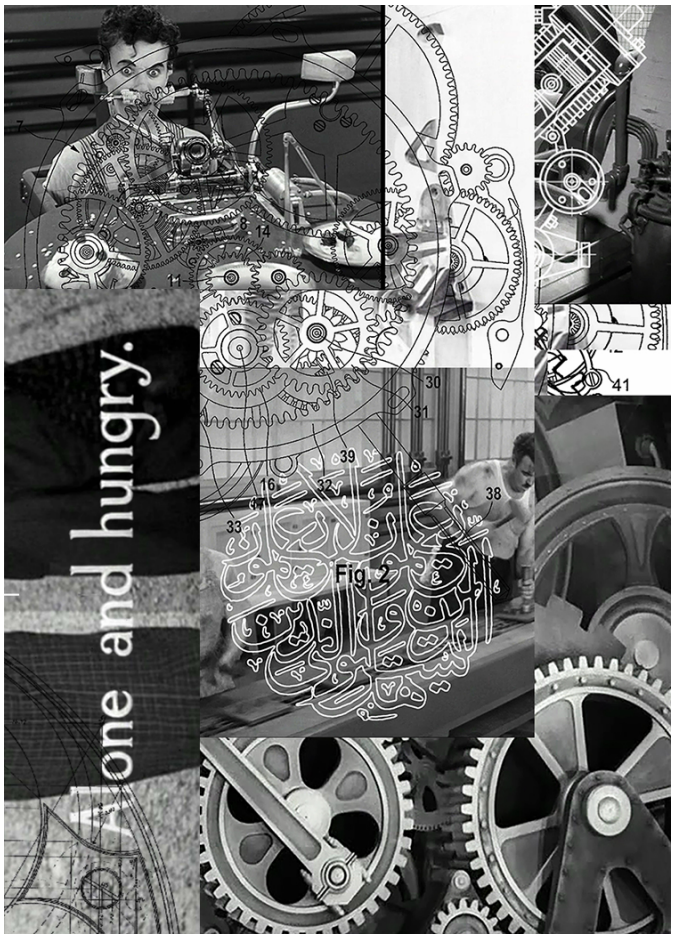
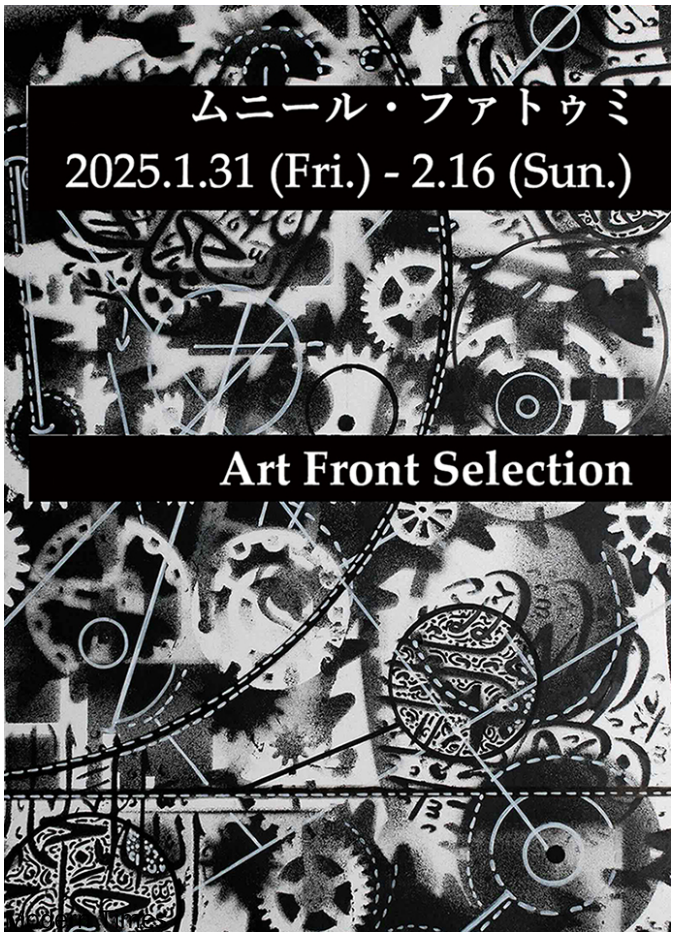


Fig. 2

These circular forms not only allude to the incessant motion of industrial and globalized society but also echo the visual language of modernist avant-garde artists, such as Sonia and Robert Delaunay, who sought to represent the energy and dynamism of the modern world.

Modern Times

Modern Times is a constantly moving visual gear, a poetic machine that explores the relationship between humans and technology through the language of art.



In this series, mounir fatmi not only examines the tension between East and West but also grapples with the dynamics of a society increasingly centered on consumption and endless production.