

## Los Angeles

### Mounir Fatmi

SHOSHANA WAYNE GALLERY  
2525 Michigan Ave # B1  
July 25, 2013–March 17, 2007

The centerpiece of Moroccan-born Mounir Fatmi's exhibition is *Black Line*, 2007, a forty-eight-foot-long wall-mounted panorama composed of 998 VHS cassettes. From a distance, the simple modular design reads as a clever (if elegant) optical trick, but closer scrutiny reveals a work that is as conceptually polyvalent as it is visually straightforward. Adhered to the gallery wall such that we see only the back of each cassette, the geometric cutouts in the molded plastic casings cohere en masse into a captivating pattern suggestive of a cityscape regularly punctuated by angular spires, or a darkness from which peer many celestial bodies. In Fatmi's hands, a practically obsolete technology is transformed into a fantastically useless object in the Kantian sense, drawing one's attention at once to the wastefulness that is a condition of technological advancement and to the ability of artists to assign such objects a new "use." While Fatmi's other sculptures, installations, and photographs invariably address topical issues, his formal decisions rarely encourage so close a reading, and consequently his ideas often lie dormant. Works such as *Obstacles (Something Is Possible)*, 2003–2007, composed of multicolored equestrian jumping bars, appear ponderous and excessively literal, and *Rosary*, 2007, a floor-bound mess of cut antenna cable, simply fails to seduce the eye. The success of *Black Line* is enabled in large part by the object's ability to beguile the mind by way of the eye.



*Black Line*, 2007, VHS cassettes, tape, and screws, 4 1/2 x 48'.

— Christopher Bedford