

dubai under construction

Dubai under construction at night floated like an abstract vision.

Massimiliano Farina captured these images as a unique portrayal of a city's growth in this new century. The series was taken between August and November 2008, just prior to the economic crash. All of the photographs were shot at night, often from precarious camera locations, in an artificial setting of mostly construction lights. They are a documentation of the making of a city at the peak of financial optimism when the "bubble economy" financed this aggressive and paradoxical urbanization.

Instead of a few isolated building sites, the images show an entire city landscape being created from the ground up. The glow of the construction site lights illuminates the skyscrapers, making them appear like hollow apparitions. Indeed, the images show a ghost city of empty towers and structural skeletons. The artificial lights in the photographs emphasize the dreamlike aspect of the city, while the sheer size of the construction adds to this irrational effect.

Farina portrays a surreal city where buildings are topped by spinning

cranes which swivel like animated antennas beneath the night sky. The onlooker almost wants the city to stay like this, suspended in time as metaphysical landscape. What is especially fascinating in these images is that Dubai appears to be self-generated-- a city which is building itself like a mechanized organism.

Though the majority of the completed buildings might appear to be of conventional modernization, the impression here, in these photographs, is of a futuristic city. The construction lights also reveal an unfinished aesthetic which feels more exciting than the final result. This likely depicts the most poetic state of being for this global effort. In fact, Dubai has been developed with capital from all over the world, and what is most incredible is the amount of work that has been generated from its planning.

Farina has captured a moment in time that cannot be duplicated. His photographs illustrate that the importance of Dubai rests more in the process of its construction than in the city's ultimate completion.

Marcello Pozzi

Massimiliano Farina was born in Milan in 1974. He graduated in Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano in 2000. In 1991 he began working as a photographer, experimenting with different techniques in black and white. In 1997 he had his first solo photography exhibit "Belfast" in Milan. Several other shows followed. Among his publications are the photography books *Sulla mia strada piazze* (1998), *SS9 Via Emilia* (2001), *Casa Spazi Abitanti - La Cooperativa Edilizia Francesco De Grassi a Milano* (2002), *Dentro la Città* (2003). Since 2003 he has been travelling around the world photographing modern cities to document urban transformation.



All images courtesy of Massimiliano Farina









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