

# MARWAN CHAMAA'S UNPLUGGED



*Astor Place, between Lafayette Street & Cooper Square: 2014, mixed media on canvas, 100 x 140 cm (39.37 x 55.12 inch)*

"Everybody ought to have a Lower East Side in their life," said the great Irving Berlin. Chamaa is no exception; but unlike some of us, every now and then he fulfills this obligation. His Lower East Side veers South to China Town, and North to 47<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Its streets are peppered with superheroes caught in flagrante delicto: Wonder Woman flashing her tush at Batman while Superman gawks; Superman comforting a Japanese-speaking Robin in tears; Spiderman detained by Bruce Lee for groping a woman and breaking into a currency exchange; the Flash; Captain America — one half expects to run into Dylan's Shakespeare "in the alley, with his pointed shoes and his bells". And, throughout, he eats, drinks, rides the subway, eats more, drinks more, taking in "the beauty beneath the grime", then brushes his teeth and goes to bed. The real and the unreal merge, all splashed out on Chamaa's canvas that portrays the mysterious promise of a city which is the very "stuff that dreams are made of".

*Saleh Agha, Department of Philosophy, AUB*

**MARWAN CHAMAA'S** New York is devoid of veneer and more flawed than any outsider could ever imagine. The series, "unplugged", is partly based on photographs that Carlos René Pérez took of New York City. René an accomplished photographer was Marwan's neighbor in the East Village of New York City where he spent many years of his adult life. The images chosen for this series from René's collection speak intimately to Marwan. They represent a snapshot of his old neighborhood and are a vignette of spots in and around the city he used to frequent.

The series "unplugged" is as of February 2015 on display at Bel-Air Fine Art gallery in Geneva, Switzerland, Tel.: +41 (0)22 310 16 67

