



## Nicola López's Hugely Ominous *Transformation City*

Brooklyn artist conjures a daunting, deadly cityscape

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For her spectacular exhibition at Pace Prints' new Chelsea space, Nicola López has created a 75-foot-long monoprint, *Transformation City*, that leaves viewers feeling as though they're being swallowed by an all-consuming metropolis. The installation is a series of 13 woodcut and linoleum prints, spread over four walls, depicting a fractured cityscape. López's vibrant, multifaceted technique provides an added sense of dimensionality and relief to the ensnaring, highly personal topography, in which the buildings float and collide along the contiguous panels, or else hang precariously in thin air. The multiple vanishing points, brutal inversions, and vertiginous perspectives are daunting, but they're also irresistible—relentlessly sucking in their viewers.

Though 9/11 is never explicitly mentioned, the work in López's show (she received her B.A. and M.F.A. from Columbia and lives in Brooklyn) seems clearly influenced by the notion of massive, unpredictable—if not outright destructive—forces. A truncated, upside-down version of one of the World Trade Center towers is a recurring motif in *Transformation City*. In *Fire*—one of four mixed-media prints from a separate series titled after the elements—skyscrapers are obliterated in a miasma of billowing flames and concrete blocks. The viewer's perspective is that of a pedestrian looking up at the exploding skyline above him, facing his own impending doom. The piece captures that suspended, timeless instant preceding death, demonstrating how effectively López has hijacked traditional woodcut and etching techniques as well as collage to create an organic, highly original vision bursting with almost intimidating graphic power. The elements series has an even greater 3-D virtual-reality quality than *Transformation City*: It feels like primal forces are reclaiming the city in an inexorable, coordinated attack.