



الفن الآن في لبنان هو معرض للفن اللبناني المعاصر.

ظلت أعمال الفنانين اللبنانيين في القرن العشرين، وحتى سنة ١٩٧٠ تابعة لتقاليد الفن الغربي. لم يكن هناك ملامح محددة أو أسلوب معين مؤصل لتقاليد فن لبناني. ثم أصبح هناك فراغ في تطوير وإنتاج الفن في لبنان أثناء الحرب اللبنانية. في التسعينيات بدأ الفنانون المتميزون يَظهرون ويطورون أساليبهم الخاصة، بما أوجد ما يمكننا وصفه بأسلوب فني لبناني مميز.

هؤلاء الفنانون اليوم كلهم في أواخر الثلاثينيات من أعمارهم، ويعرفون بعضهم البعض، يجتمعون، يتناقشون، ويتواصلون، لكن كل واحد منهم يعمل بمفرده ويطور أسلوبه الخاص. كلهم فنانون تركز أعمالهم الفنية على الأفكار، وعندهم موضوع مشترك يبحثون فيه: يشغلون على الذاكرة الجمعية للبلاد، وعلى الأرشيفيات؛ أرشيفيات صحفية، وأرشيفيات فوتوغرافية، وقصص محكية.. كلهم مهتمون بالتاريخ الثقافي والجغرافي والسياسي لهذا الجزء من العالم وبؤرته لبنان.

لذا فإن إنتاجهم الفني له طابع وثائقي في أغلب الأحيان. إن قِطْعَهم الفنية

شهادات على ماضينا، وهاتف الوحي لمستقبلنا. هؤلاء الفنانون يكتبون التاريخ الإنساني.

الموضوعات التي يهتمون بها تفرض عليهم الأدوات التي يستخدمونها: يكتبون، يستخدمون الفيديو، والصور الفوتوغرافية، والصور الرقمية المركبة بالاستناد إلى مواد أرشيفية، أو يصنعون تجهيزات نحتية. لا أحد منهم يرسم أو يصور بالألوان.

هؤلاء الفنانون هم: مجموعة أطلس/ وليد رعد، خليل جريج وجوانا حاجي توماس، لميا جريج، ربيع مروة، مروان رشماوي، وليد صادق، جلال توفيق، باولا يعقوب، أكرم زعتري. وأعمالهم معروضة في المبنى الرئيسي.

وقد قدمت دعوة لأربعة فنانين شباب من الجيل الناشئ، وهم في العشرينيات من العمر، ليبدعوا ويستمرروا في إبداع رؤى جديدة. هؤلاء هم: زياد عنتر، مازن كرباج، رندا ميرزا، ريان تابت. وأعمالهم معروضة في البيت الأزرق.

أندرية صفير زملر، هامبورغ وبيروت



## الفن الآن في لبنان

### تنظيم

أندريه صفيّر زملر

جاليري صفيّر زملر

هامبورغ – بيروت

### الفنانون المشاركون

ريان تابت

جلال توفيق

لميا جريج

جوانا حاجي توماس وخليل جريج

مروان ر شماوي

وليد رعد

مجموعة أطلس / وليد رعد

أكرم زعتري

وليد صادق

زياد عنتر

مازن كريباج

رندا ميرزا

باولا يعقوب

النصوص الواردة في هذا الكتيب

مأخوذة بتصرف من نصوص

شخصية للفنانين أو من مقالات

نشرت عن أعمالهم.



ريان تابت



جلال توفيق



لميا جريج



جوانا حاجي توماس وخليل جريج



مروان ر شماوي



وليد رعد

ولد وليد رعد في لبنان سنة ١٩٦٧،

وهو فنان يعمل بتقنيات حديثة

ومتعددة، وأستاذ فنون في

The Cooper Union School of Art

(نيويورك). تتضمن أعمال رعد حتى

الآن تجهيزات إنشائية بمواد متنوعة،

أداءات، فيديو، صور، ومقالات أدبية.

عرضت أعماله الفنية في معرض

«دوكومنتا ١١»، في مدينة كاسيل

بألمانيا، وفي بينالي فينسيا بإيطاليا،

وبينالي ويتي بنيويورك، وملتقى

هووم وورك في بيروت. يتساءل وليد

رعد عن تمثيل الأحداث التاريخية،

وعن كيفية استخدام الفيلم والفيديو

والتصوير الفوتوغرافي كوثائق

تسجل حلقات العنف.

ولد مروان ر شماوي في بيروت سنة

١٩٦٤، درس التصوير والنحت في

الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، يعيش

ويعمل حالياً في بيروت. تستكشف

منحوتات ر شماوي طبيعة السكن

والمسكن، وما معنى العيش بمدينة

مثل بيروت.

ولد ثنائي الفن جوانا حاجي

توماس، وخليل جريج، في بيروت

سنة ١٩٦٩، وهما يعملان معا

على استكشاف المناظر الطبيعية

التي دُمّرت، لينظرا إلى ما يختبئ

تحت السطح، وإلى التحديات

التي يواجهها الذين يعيشون

في الحاضر والذين يفكرون في

الماضي، والطرق التي يمكن

من خلالها التعبير عن الحرب،

وخصوصاً في الجانب البصري.



مجموعة أطلس / وليد رعد

«مجموعة أطلس» مشروع أُسس في بيروت سنة ١٩٩٩، للبحث في التاريخ المعاصر للبنان وتوثيقه. تهدف المجموعة إلى البحث عن المتعلّقات التي تسلط الضوء على هذا التاريخ، ومن ثم دراستها والحفاظ عليها، بالإضافة إلى إنتاج متعلقات جديدة. هذه الوثائق محفوظة في أرشيف المجموعة ببيروت ونيويورك. تم تصنيف الأرشيف إلى ثلاثة أنواع من المتعلقات: نوع «أي» (يعود لأفراد معروفين)، نوع «أف» دي» (يتضمن الوثائق التي تم العثور عليها)، ونوع «أي، جي، بي» (ينسب لمجموعة أطلس).



أكرم زعتري

ولد أكرم زعتري في لبنان سنة ١٩٦٦، وهو فنان فيديو ومنظم معارض يعيش ويعمل في بيروت. أنجز أكثر من ٣٠ عملاً بالفيديو وتجهيزات فيديو. وهو أحد الأعضاء المؤسسين لـ«المؤسسة العربية للصورة»، وهي مؤسسة غير ربحية تهدف إلى ترويج التصوير في الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا عن طريق تسجيل وتوثيق تراث المنطقة الفوتوغرافي وتجميعه والحفاظ عليه، ومؤخراً، طور زعتري مشاريع أساسها البحث تتعامل مع الصورة كشهادة على الذاكرة.



وليد صادق

ولد وليد صادق في بيروت سنة ١٩٦٦، وهو كاتب وفتان يعيش ويعمل في بيروت. يحاول وليد صادق استكشاف ظروف الحياة المعاشة ضمن البيئة المغلقة للحرب الأهلية.



زياد عنتر

ولد زياد عنتر في لبنان سنة ١٩٧٨، يعيش متنقلاً بين لبنان وفرنسا، وهو يعمل بالتصوير الفوتوغرافي والفيديو منذ سنة ٢٠٠٢. ورغم أنه نشأ في الجنوب خلال الحرب الأهلية، وكان يشهد يوماً للاقتتال الدائر على أرضه، إلا أن ثيمة أعماله المثيرة للجدل تقدم بطريقة موضوعية لا مبالية، تاركة للمشاهد اختيار المعنى الذي يريد، واتخاذ الموقف الذي يختار تجاه العمل.



مازن كرباج

ولد كرباج في بيروت سنة ١٩٧٥، وهو مصور، ورّسام، وموسيقي أيضاً، أطلق موقعه الإلكتروني، بعد «سنتين من الكسل»، وذلك عندما بدأت إسرائيل حربها الأخيرة على لبنان.



ربيع مروة

ولد مروة في بيروت سنة ١٩٦٧، في أعماله شبه الوثائقية (المسرحية، وأعمال الفيديو والأداءات المنجزة بمواد مختلطة)، يستخدم مروة وثائق وصوراً وأشياء موجودة للتأشير على الحالة السياسية والاقتصادية الأوسع لبيروت المعاصرة.



رندا ميرزا

ولدت ميرزا في بيروت سنة ١٩٧٨، وهي متخصصة بالفنون البصرية، وتعمل بالتصوير الرقمي وفن تسويق الفيديو المباشر، باحثة في الظواهر البارزة والمستترة للحرب.



باولا يعقوب

ولدت يعقوب في بيروت سنة ١٩٦٦، عملت بالتشارك مع الفنان ميشيل لاسيير منذ العام ١٩٩٦. يتحرى الاثنان الدلالات الجمالية والسياسية للمكان وقدرته على التعبير.



## ريان ثابت

### متحجرات

متحجرات ريان ثابت مستلهمة من طفولته في بيروت، المدينة المعذبة نتيجة الحرب والخوف والموت. في هذا التركيب المكون من مواد مختلطة، تمثل الحقائق المتحجرة، الحالة الدائمة لقابلية الحركة التي يجد اللبنانيون في الوقت الحاضر أنفسهم فيها. تشير أمتعة ثابت المتبسة إلى كيف أن طبيعة الحياة وتقلباتها في لبنان أثناء الحرب الأهلية؛ حيث الاستعداد الدائم لإخلاء بيتك في أية لحظة، وإبقاء الحقائق محزومة، أثرت على طريقة ترتيب اللبنانيين لحياتهم وبيوتهم، فهم مستعدون دائماً، وبشكل غير واع، للهروب. هنا، تبدو الحقيبة المغطاة بالإسمنت والتي حُوت من حاوية نقالة إلى بناية معمارية مهندسة بديلاً للبيت. المتحجرات هي نُصَبٌ تذكر بفقدان المسكن.



## Rayyane Tabet

### *Fossils*

Rayyane Tabet's *Fossils* is inspired from his childhood in Beirut, a city tormented by war, fear and death. In this mixed-media installation, petrified suitcases literally represent the permanent state of constant mobility that the Lebanese at present find themselves in. Tabet's solidified luggage seems to suggest that the unpredictable nature of life in Lebanon during the civil war, with the enduring possibility of having to evacuate your home at any given moment and the compulsive outlook of having your bags packed just in case, became normalized in the way the Lebanese organize their lives and their habitats today; this normalization manifests itself in a perpetually overwhelming, unconscious urge, perhaps even readiness, to escape. In Tabet's work, the suitcases, which are encased in concrete and which have been transformed from mobile containers into architectural buildings, stand as substitutes for the home. *Fossils* is a memorial, then, to the dwelling no more.

*Fossils* | 2006 | Installation: 8 cement suitcases. The Khalid Shoman Private Collection





# Au hasard Balthazar

A FILM BY ROBERT BRESSON

## بطولة جمال ساطي

(Leading Role: Jamāl Sātī; literally: the heroism of Jamāl Sātī)

"Some eyewitnesses say that the martyr Jamāl was riding a donkey on which was placed, in two balanced baskets, a large quantity of explosives; and that he was donning the clothes of a local sheikh so as not to draw attention to himself."

## Models:

Anne Wiazemsky

François Lafarge

Philippe Asselin

Nathalie Joyaut

Walter Green (I)

Jean-Claude Guilbert

Pierre Klossowski

François Sullerot

M.C. Fremont

Jean Rémignard



Directed by Alfred Hitchcock

# Rear Window Vertigo

(1954-1958)

DOUBLE  
FEATURE

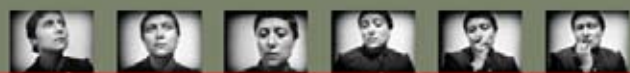


جلال توفيق

فيديو وملصقات

صمم جلال توفيق هذه الملصقات المعروضة لأفلام مشهورة مثل: «آلام جوان دارك» لكارل دريبر، و«أبدية ويوم» لثيو أنجلو بولز، بالإضافة لأعماله الخاصة بالفيديو مثل: «تأثير خاص يُسمى (وقت)؛ أي تصوير الموت في العمل»، و«سلسلة الرثاء: الليلة التاسعة ويومها». ملصقات توفيق هي مقالات نقدية لأفلام وفيديوهات، وهي في الوقت نفسه، قطع فنية تهدف إلى إبراز جوهر موضوعات الأفلام. في كلماته: «أنا أفضل الملصقات التي تحتوي فكرة كمقدمات، بدلاً من العروض الأولية التي تسبق الفيلم»، كما يشير توفيق إلى كيف يجب أن تُصنع هذه الملصقات لتخلق أفلاماً. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتناول توفيق في جميع أعماله الفنية موضوع اللاميت في الميت والميت في اللاميت، خصوصاً في الأفلام، فجميع الموضوعات التي طرحتها ملصقاته تدور، بشكل أو بآخر، حول الموت، سواء من خلال القتل، الانتحار، الاستشهاد، الحداد، الاستحواذ، أو حلول الأرواح في الأماكن.

فيديو وملصقات | ٢٠٠٠ - ٢٠٠٧ | تصوير فوتوغرافي | ٥٠ سم × ٨٠ سم. © جلال توفيق



## The Passion of Joan of Arc CARL DREYER



كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

Each thing is perishing except His face (Qur'an 28:88)

## (Groundhog) Eternity and a Day



Sils-Maria?  
August 1881

DOUBLE  
FEATURE!

Groundhog Day

"One day I had asked you: 'Tomorrow, what is tomorrow, Anna?'"

Eternity and a Day

Directed by Harold Ramis, 1993

Story: Danny Rubin, screenplay: Harold Ramis and Danny Rubin

Directed by Theo Angelopoulos, 1998

## Eternity and a Day (1998)

A film by  
Theo Angelopoulos



"Alexander!"



لا حياة لمن تنادي  
"Alexander!"



"Alexander!"

"Shuddering, Hamilton grasped the railing and began to climb back upstairs. He had gone only two steps when his legs, of their own volition, refused to carry him farther. His body comprehended what his mind refused to accept. He was going back down..." (Philip K. Dick, Eye in the Sky, 1957). Hamilton was taken aback ("aback adv. 1. By surprise: He was taken aback by her caustic remarks. 2. New England Southern U.S. Behind: aback of the house. 5. Archaic Back; backward, adj. New England 1. Being at a standstill; unable to move: 'You run your business that way and first thing you know you're all' aback." Dialect Notes" [American Heritage Dictionary]). "Is—there anything I can do? Won't you turn toward me? Must you have your back to me?" Hamilton laughed wildly. "Sure I'll turn toward you." Gripping the railing, he made a cautious about face—and found himself still facing the gloomy cave..." (Eye in the Sky).

REPRODUCTION  
PROHIBITED  
MAGRITTE 1937

## أنا الرفيق الشهيد

Magritte's Perspective III

## جمال ساطي



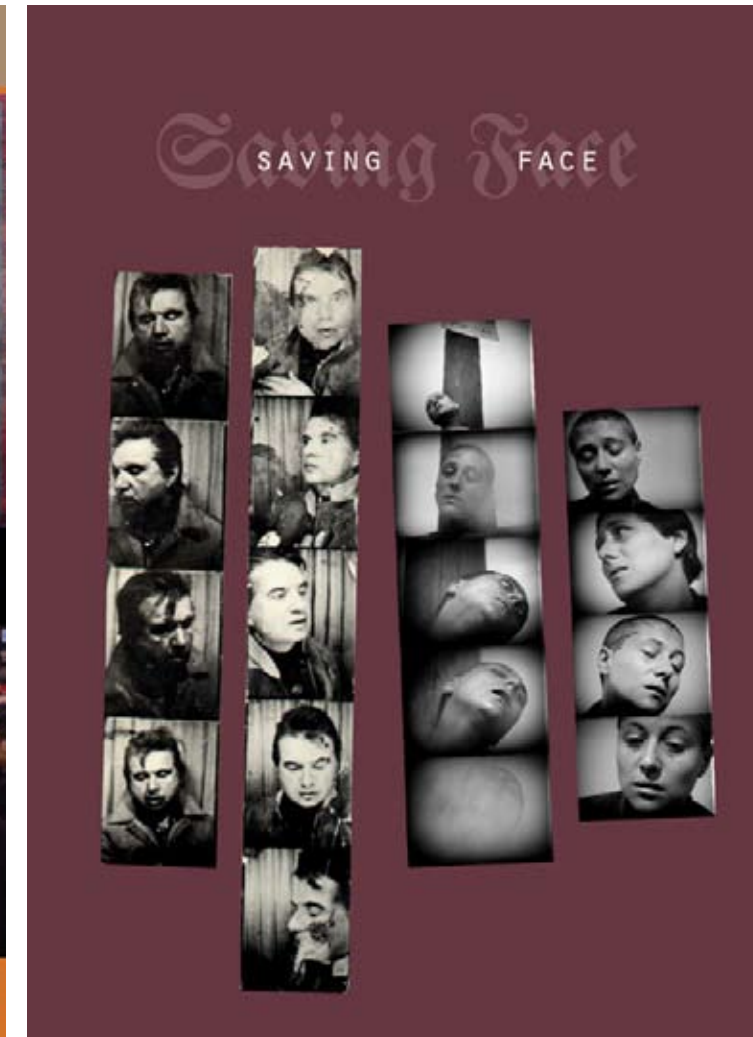
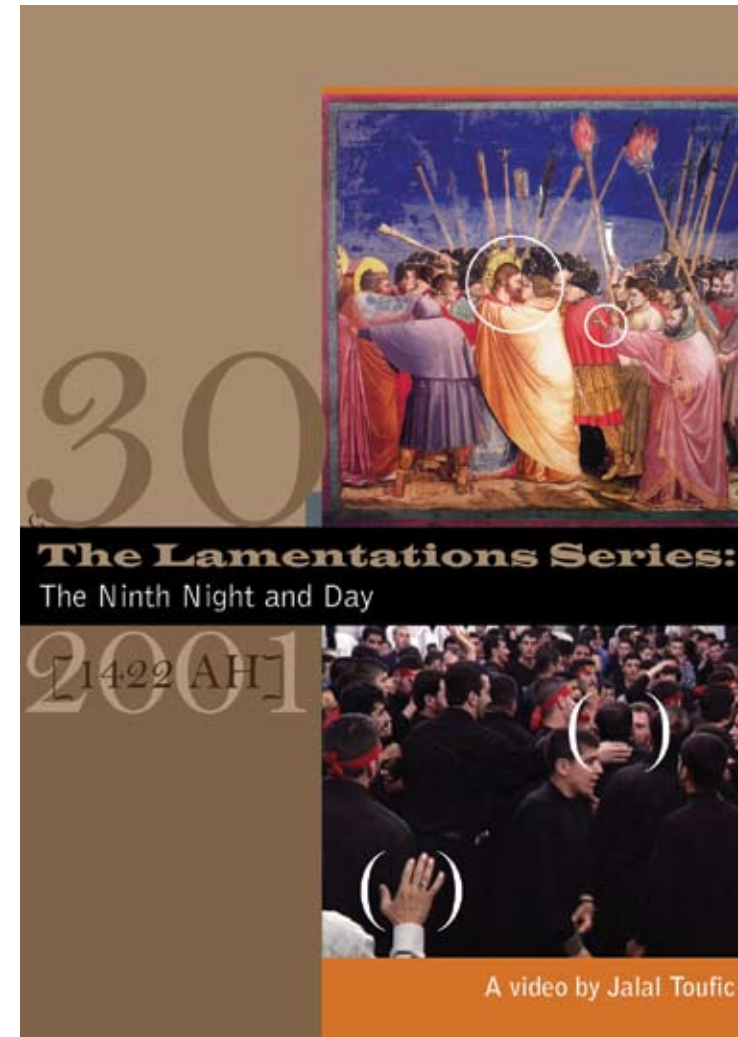


## Jalal Toufic

### Conceptual Film and Video Posters

On view are a set of conceptual posters designed by Toufic for renowned films such as Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and Theo Angelopoulos's *Eternity and a Day* as well as for his own videos like *A Special Effect Termed "Time" Or, Filming Death at Work* and *The Lamentations Series: The Ninth Night and Day*. Toufic's posters are at once critical essays on films and videos and works of art, in and of themselves, which aim to capture the essence of their subject matter. In his words: "I much prefer conceptual film posters, as preambles, to previews of the film." Toufic even talks about how conceptual film posters should be made so as to beget films. Befitting of his fixation with the subject of the undead in the dead and the dead in the undead, especially in film, all of the works featured in his conceptual posters revolve, in some way, around the topic of death, in the form, for instance, of murder, suicide, martyrdom, mourning, possession, or haunting presences.

Conceptual Film and Video Posters | 2000 – 2007 | Inkjet on paper | 80 x 50 cm. © Jalal Toufic



## لميا جريج

النهاية..

جميع هذه الصور من سلسلة «النهاية..»، أنشئت من خلال المونتاج الفوتوغرافي أو التلاعب الفني. اعتمدت لميا جريج في إنتاج هذه الطباعات على أفلام وفيديو، وعلى مذكرات مكتوبة أيضاً، وقد تم تجميعها على مدى سنوات عدة، وكانت النتيجة عملاً فنياً يستدعي ذكرى مليئة بالفجوات. تم إبراز القدرة المحدودة للذاكرة واستحضارها للأحداث بشكل مرتبك من خلال القوام المُغْبِش للصور. هذه الصور هي أجزاء من صور انتُخبت من الأرشيف، اجْتُثَّت من أصولها وأُعيد إنتاجها بشكل مُصَبَّب ضمن سياقات جديدة. تدعو الصور الشاعرية وغير الواقعية والتي يبدو أنها في تلاش، إلى التأمل بمفهومي العنف والخسارة. وبدلاً من الاشتغال على بيان سياسي محدد فهي تعبر عن الشعور باليأس وخيبة الأمل من جميع الأيديولوجيات السائدة حالياً.

النهاية.. | ٢٠٠٧ | تصوير فوتوغرافي | ٨٠ سم X ١٢٠ سم. © لميا جريج

Lamia Joreige

*The end of...*

The prints in the series *The end of...* have been created through photomontage or the manipulation of single photographs. To produce them, Lamia Joreige has drawn on films and videos as well as written notes that have been collected over numerous years. The result is a work of art that reflects a recollection of a history which suffers from great gaps. Here, the nature of memory, with its limited ability of recording traces and its inclination to be erased and become confounded, is made visible through the murky appearance of the images. These images are fragments of pictures that have been dug up from archives; they have been removed from their origins and hazily reproduced in new geographies (contexts). The non-realistic, poetic scenes of Joreige's series, which seem as though to be vanishing, are, in fact, a meditation on violence and loss. Rather than engaging in any political statement, the photographs express a sense of despair and disillusion that is critical of all current ideologies.

*The end of...* | 2007 | C- prints mounted on Diasac | 80 x 120 cm. © Lamia Joreige





جوانا حاجي توماس وخلييل جريج

مناظر طبيعية من الخيام

هذه الصور من سلسلة «مناظر طبيعية من الخيام» التُقطت في معتقل الخيام جنوب لبنان. كان المعتقل تحت سيطرة الجيش الإسرائيلي المحتل وما يُسمى «جيش لبنان الجنوبي». بعد انسحاب الجيش الإسرائيلي من الجنوب في أيار/ مايو ٢٠٠٠، تم إخلاء المعتقل وتحويله إلى متحف. وأثناء حرب تموز/ يوليو ٢٠٠٦، حُطّم بالكامل. عند زيارة موقع المعتقل يتفاجأ الزائر بمقدار الدمار، وكيف يظهر بشكل تقخيمي استثنائي. وتبرز من بين الأطلال، حيث المباني المهتمة، ألواح نصبتها السلطات المحلية تحمل صوراً للمعتقل أثناء استخدامه. تبرز هذه الألواح من الخراب الجديد وتحوّل الموقع مرة أخرى إلى متحف. تتساءل الصور في «مناظر طبيعية من الخيام» عن علاقة الذاكرة بالتاريخ والصور.



مناظر طبيعية من الخيام | ٢٠٠٦ - ٢٠٠٧ | تصوير فوتوغرافي | ٨٩ سم X ١٢٠ سم. © جوانا حاجي توماس وخلييل جريج

**Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige**  
*Landscapes of Kham*

The photographs in the series *Landscapes of Kham* were taken at the detention camp of Kham in southern Lebanon. The camp was run by the occupying Israeli army and the South Lebanon Army (SLA), a local Lebanese militia. Following the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the south in May 2000, the camp was dismantled and turned into a museum. During the war of July 2006, it was completely destroyed. When visiting the camp's site, one is surprised by the extent of the damage, but also by the extraordinary dramatization of the destruction. Protruding from the ruins, where the buildings that once stood are now razed, are boards that bear photographs of the camp as it was when it was still in use. These boards, which were erected by the local authorities, transform the site once more into a museum. In the nuanced set-up captured in the photographs of *Landscapes of Kham*, memory's connection to history and to the image is put into question.

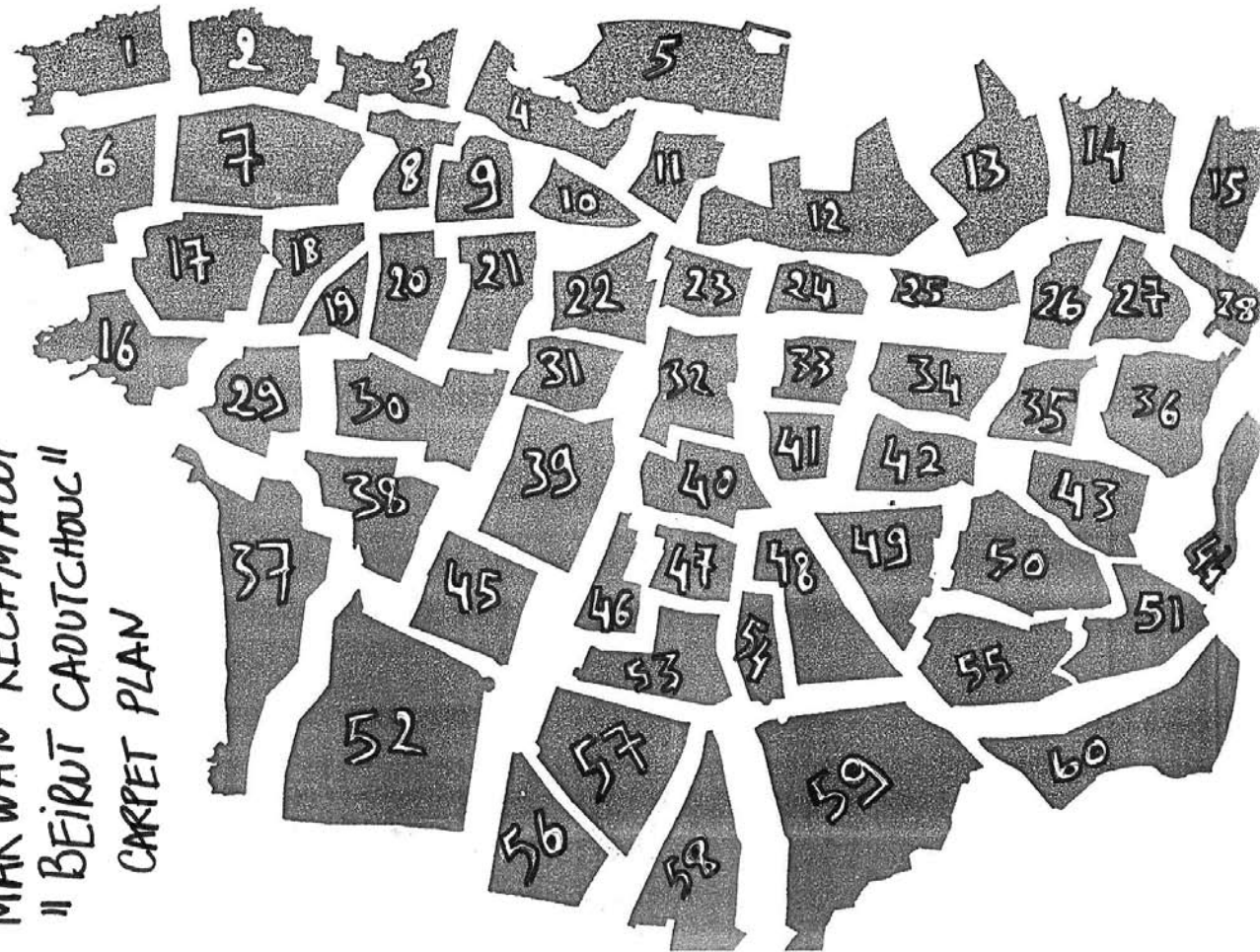
*Landscapes of Kham* | 2006 - 2007 | C-prints mounted on aluminum dibond | 89 x 120 cm. © Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige





نَحَتَ مروان ر شماوي بعناية خريطة مسطحة لمدينة بيروت على شكل أحجية مكونة من ٦٠ قطعة مطاطية سميكة، تُطابق كلّ واحدة منها جغرافية إحدى المناطق الستين في المدينة. ورغم ما نراه في كتلة ر شماوي القائمة والغامضة من طرق وشوارع خُفرت عليها بدقة لتحديد الأحياء والأماكن المختلفة، إلا أن الهدف الأساسي ليس رسم تخطيطي لمدينة بيروت، وإنما محاولة طرح أسئلة حول الشكل التنظيمي الحالي للمدينة، ومنها: أين يسكن مَنْ فيها، وما الذي يُحدد هذه التقسيمات؟ من خلال عمله «بيروت كاوتشوك»، وهو عبارة عن تخطيط أنجزه الفنان للتوزيع الاجتماعي الجغرافي لبيروت، يبحث ر شماوي في التاريخ المعقد لهذه المدينة وأثره على التوزيع السكاني فيها.

MARWAN RECHMAOUI  
"BEIRUT CAOUTCHOUK"  
CARPET PLAN



**Marwan Rechmaoui**  
*Beirut Caoutchouc*

Marwan Rechmaoui has meticulously sculpted a flattened floor map of Beirut in the form of a puzzle composed of 60 thick rubber pieces that correspond to the city's 60 distinct quarters. While Rechmaoui's mysterious blackened mass shows roads and highways that have been precisely etched into it and that mark off different neighborhoods and areas, its primary concern is not to delineate Beirut as it is but rather to subtly raise questions about its present layout like who lives where and what has determined these divisions. Through *Beirut Caoutchouc*, the product of the artist's mapping of the city's socio-geographical distribution, Rechmaoui negotiates Beirut's complex history and the urban schisms that have resulted.

*Beirut Caoutchouc* | 2004 -2006 | Rubber, milled out | 500 x 400 x 2 cm. © Marwan Rechmaoui



وليد رعد

الخدش على أشياء يمكنني أن أتخلى عنها

«الخدش على أشياء يمكنني أن أتخلى عنها» سلسلة من الصور الفوتوغرافية لذخائر أُطلقت أثناء الحروب التي عاشها لبنان. رصاص وقنابل وشظايا صورها الفنان بعد جمعها من مصادر مختلفة. المجموعة هنا مقدّمة من خلال قصاصات تتضمن معلومات يقترح الفنان من خلالها أحداثاً تشير إلى قصص ما أو تدور حولها.



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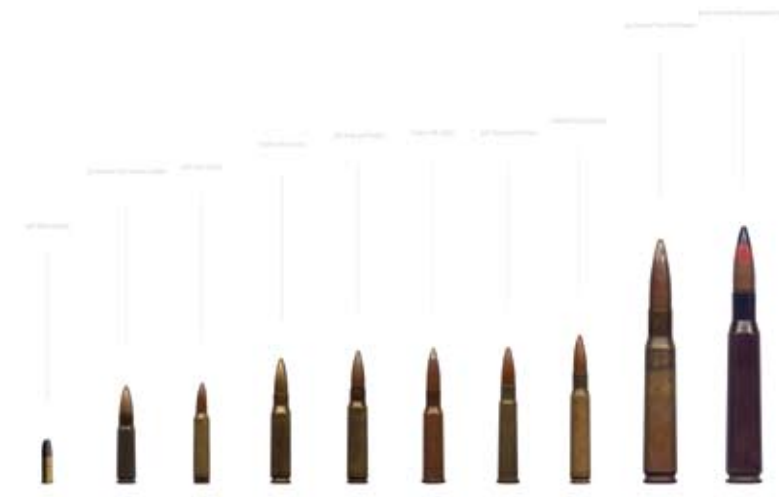
الخدش على أشياء يمكنني أن أتخلى عنها | ١٩٨٩ | تصوير فوتوغرافي | ١١٠ سم X ١٥١ سم. مجموعة خالد شومان الخاصة



## Walid Raad

### *Scratching On Things I Could Disavow*

*Scratching On Things I Could Disavow* is a series of photographs of a collection of ammunition that was fired during the Lebanese civil war. The pictured bullets, missile shells, and shrapnel pieces were gathered by the artist from different sources. The collection is presented here with snippets of information that give some insight into the stories that [possibly] surround it.



*Scratching On Things I Could Disavow* | 1989 | Archival inkjet on paper mounted on aluminum dibond | 110 x 151cm. The Khalid Shoman Private Collection





مجموعة أطلس / وليد رعد

أتمنى لو أستطيع البكاء

تُسبب هذه الوثيقة إلى ضابط استخبارات في الجيش اللبناني، العميل ١٧ الذي تم تعيينه لمراقبة الكورنيش، وهو شارع قريب من شاطئ البحر وموازي له. منذ سنة ١٩٩٦، ولأسباب غير معروفة، قرر هذا الضابط أن يسجل على شريط الفيديو مشهد غروب الشمس بدلاً من تتبّع «الأهداف» التي كُلف بها. هذا هو شريط الفيديو الذي تبرع به العميل ١٧ لمجموعة «أطلس» سنة ١٩٩٨.

أتمنى لو أستطيع البكاء | ١٩٩٦ - ٢٠٠٢ | فيديو صامت | ٧,٣٦ دقائق. مجموعة خالد شومان الخاصة





**The Atlas Group / Walid Raad**  
*I Only Wish That I Could Weep*

This 'document' is attributed to a Lebanese Army intelligence officer, Operator #17, who was assigned to monitor the Corniche, a seaside boardwalk in Beirut. From 1996 onwards, and for some unknown reasons, the officer decided to videotape the sunset instead of his assigned targets. The videotape was donated by Operator #17 to The Atlas Group in 1998.

*I Only Wish That I Could Weep* | 1996 - 2003 | Video, mute | 7'36". The Khalid Shoman Private Collection



## تذكارات من الجبهة

«تذكارات من الجبهة» هو جزء من مشروع يقوم على جمع الوثائق الشخصية التي تشهد على الحرب والبحث فيها، مبرزة أوجعها المتعددة، وخصوصاً تأثير الحرب على ذاكرة أولئك الذين عايشوها وشهدوا عليها. يُعرض ضمن هذا المشروع صور لنباتات ذابلة وأحجار متنوعة جمعها عضو سابق في المقاومة اللبنانية يُدعى «علي حشيشو» أثناء عمله، مع فريقه العسكري الذي نفذ عمليات، ولسنوات، ضد الجيش الإسرائيلي الذي كان يحتل الجنوب. جلب حشيشو معه الأحجار والنباتات المجففة المصورة من الجبهة واحتفظ بها تذكراً من ماضيه كمحارب في صفوف المقاومة.

صيدا ٦ حزيران ١٩٨٢

## أرض الأسرار اللانهائية

يعود الفنان ثانياً إلى صوره الأولى التي التقطها عندما كان يتعلم كيف يستعمل آلة التصوير الخاصة بأبيه. في السادسة عشرة من عمره التقط زعتري، وبشكل تلقائي، صوراً فوتوغرافية تظهر التفجيرات والعمليات العسكرية التي قام بها الجيش الإسرائيلي أثناء احتلال لبنان سنة ١٩٨٢. ومنها صور مقتنصة وبالصدف لغارة جوية حدثت في اليوم الأول من الاحتلال. أعاد الفنان بناء هذه الصورة المركبة بالاستناد إلى ست صور من صور التفجيرات التي تسببت بها تلك الغارة. اندماج الصور معاً يعبر عن الرغبة في إظهار حقيقة الانفجارات ومدلولاتها، وهو ما تشهد عليه الكثافة المثيرة للألوان وأصوات الألعاب النارية الواقعية. وبالإضافة لهذه الطبعة الضخمة، يوجد فيديو متواصل من صور زعتري بمرافقة أصوات انفجارات. وبينما يتناول «صيدا ٦ حزيران ١٩٨٢» تجربة الحرب، فإن «أرض الأسرار اللانهائية» يدور حول آثار الحرب، حيث يُشجّع الزوار لاقتناء ملصق عليه صورة لتذيفة كتذكارات يذكرهم بالحرب.





صيدا ٦ حزيران ١٩٨٢

١٩٨٢ - ٢٠٠٦

إنشاء: تصوير فوتوغرافي ١٢٥ X ٢٥٠ سم

فيديو، صوت: ٤ دقائق

مجموعة خالد شومان الخاصة

*Saida, June 6th 1982*

1982 - 2006 | Installation: Composite image:

C- print mounted on aluminum dibond, 125 x 250 cm

Video, sound, 4 minute loop

The Khalid Shoman Private Collection

## Akram Zaatari

*Saida, June 6th 1982*  
*Earth of Endless Secrets*

*Saida, June 6th 1982* revisits the first pictures taken by the artist while learning to use his father's Kiev camera. Only sixteen years of age then, Zaatari's debut into photography began with his spontaneous shooting of the explosions and military operations of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. On the very first day of the invasion, Akram Zaatari captured, by chance, photographs of a formidable air raid. This composite image is a reconstruction based on six photographs of the blasts that took place during that raid. Their compounding into one picture communicates the desire to seize the essence of the explosions – the urge to bear witness to the dramatic intensity of the colour and sound of real-life fireworks. Accompanying the massive print is a loop video of Zaatari's camera roving over these photographs overlaid with the deafening sound of fierce explosions. Whereas *Saida, June 6th 1982* revolves around the experience of war, *Earth of Endless Secrets* deals with its remnants in the present. Viewers are encouraged to take home with them a poster of a missile shell as a keepsake to remember the war with.

### *Souvenirs from the Front*

*Souvenirs from the Front* is part of a project that involves the collecting of and researching into personal documents which testify to war and which convey its multiple facets, most notably the imprints left by war on the memory of those who witness it. Included in this project are photographs of a variety of stones and withered plants. These were collected by a former member of the secular Lebanese resistance named Ali Hashisho, who, for many years, along with his military group carried out operations against the Israeli army occupying the South. Hashisho brought the pictured stones and plants back with him from the front as mementos, reminders of his past as a resistance fighter.

*Earth of Endless Secrets* | 2006 | Stack of 4000 posters: offset print on paper | 60 x 75 x 55 cm. The Khalid Shoman Private Collection





وليد صادق

جَدَاد في حضور الجَنَّة

يقترح «جَدَاد في حضور الجَنَّة» وصفاً للشروط التي تحكم الحياة اليومية خلال حرب أهلية استمرت طويلاً. يفترض العمل أن الحوار الذي يجري بين الباقين على قيد الحياة مجبور على العبور من خلال الأجسام المتعلقة بالعنف المستمر؛ أي من خلال الجثث الموجودة بيننا.



Dear Fernando,

When un-inhuned a corpse conditions dialogue. Dialogue cannot happen aside. It must pass through the corpse. Accordingly, a corpse is not mere remains. Rather, it is an object in excess which preoccupies every exchange with a demand: That we work at waking it.

The questions you asked having read *Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse* urge me to write one side of an unequal dialogue; Write questions that are answered with long unquiet silences. The questions are mine to author while the silences are Kozo Okamoto's. You may not be familiar with this name but Okamoto is one of five members of the Japanese Red Army arrested in Lebanon in February 1997. Okamoto is known for having launched a bloody attack with assault rifles and grenades along with three other Red Army guerrillas on Lod Airport in Tel Aviv on May 30 1972. The only survivor, he was imprisoned and tortured in Israeli prisons then released in 1985 in an exchange of prisoners between the Israeli government and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Okamoto had been living furtively in Lebanon since. Apprehended in 1997, he spent another three years in a Lebanese prison before being granted political asylum by the Lebanese government in recognition of his role in the struggle against Israel.

I do not know where Okamoto currently resides. But judging from his physical and mental condition during the trials of February and March 1997, it is certain that he is indelibly wrecked by years of incarceration and gravely debilitated by repeated bouts of torture.

Okamoto has died twice, once at Lod Airport along with his three companions and then again in Israeli prisons. He should have been

buried twice, a person lost and a name forgotten. When on the night of March 17<sup>th</sup> 2000, it was announced that only he would be granted political asylum and not his four companions, who were hastily flown to Jordan and inevitably extradited to Japan, a crowd of protesters, gathered close to the residence of Prime Minister Selim El Hoss, wept. They wept not only for the four, but for Okamoto as well who, alone, would now die for the third time. Yet Okamoto is present and does more than remain. He is finally a corpse, vividly not here and not fully lost. Finally, Okamoto is now a matter of corpse and as such he confounds and defers. In his presence, dialogue is set in the present tense, from which we can neither point backward and remember nor address a future and move forward. The present tense of the corpse is the only available lull in wars. For as the work of remembrance is blocked, so is a vengeful future deferred. Un-inhuned, revenge can only start after burial.

I ought to dialogue with his silence rather than seek an interview with his person. In the presence of his silence he, an object in excess, can make a demand on me. And it is my task to speak the questions that defend the meaning of his silence. Questions I must ask which *overhear* Okamoto's silence as a silence of the corpse: Not the remains of a past event, not a withered end but a demand that I work at waking the corpse, at keeping it awake.

Walid Sadek  
Café Casablanca, Beirut, 10 January 2008.

*Al Turk* building on *Tareek Al Jadeedah* Street in Beirut where on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, members of the Japanese Red Army were allegedly apprehended on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1997; or how to retract the accusatory finger and learn to hear the other's demand.



**Walid Sadek**

*Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse*

*Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse* attempts to articulate some of the conditions which govern quotidian living in protracted civil-war. It posits that dialogue among survivors must necessarily pass through the objects of unfinished violence, namely through the corpses that linger in our midst.

*Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse* | 2007 | Installation. © Walid Sadek





## منتجات من الحرب

«منتجات من الحرب» سلسلة من الصور تُسجل طبيعة الحياة اليومية في ظل الحرب من خلال جَرْدِ للمواد الأساسية للبقاء على قيد الحياة. جمع عنتر هذه المواد أثناء العدوان الإسرائيلي على لبنان سنة ٢٠٠٦. واختار، بشكل لافت، عرض معلبات الغذاء النباتي التي تركها جنود الاحتلال الإسرائيلي، والتي وجدها عنتر في بلدة عيتا الشعب بجنوب لبنان عندما زارها في اليوم نفسه الذي انتهت فيه الحرب.

## مجموعة غطاء الرأس

تقارب «مجموعة غطاء الرأس» ظاهرةً التطرف الديني الذي انتشر في الآونة الأخيرة، وازدادت شعبيته. أمضى زياد عنتر شهراً وهو يعمل في مشروع فني مع فتيات من مخيم عين الحلوة قرب صيدا. طُلب من الفتيات أن يُحضرن غطاءات للرأس معهن من بيوتهن ويشكّلن منها أي شكل يقترحنه. «مجموعة غطاء الرأس» المعروضة هي صور لنتاج هذه التجربة.





## Ziad Antar

### *Products of War*

*Products of War* is a series of photographs that record the actuality of everyday life in a war situation by taking stock of basic items that are integral to survival. Antar collected these products both during and in the aftermath of the 2006 war; they include cans of vegetarian spread left over by Israeli soldiers, which the artist found in the southern town of Ayta El Chaab on the day the war ended.

### *Veil Series*

*Veil Series* touches on the recent phenomenon of religious radicalism and the surge in the popularity of the headscarf or veil. Ziad Antar spent a month working on an art project with young girls from the Ein al-Hilwé camp near Saida. The girls were asked to bring headscarves with them from their homes and to create any shape they desired using them. *Veil Series* is a photographic exposé of the end products of this art venture.

*Products of War* | 2006 | C-prints mounted on aluminum dibond | 49 x 72 cm. © Ziad Antar  
next page: *Veil Series* | 2007 | C-prints mounted on aluminum dibond | 32 x 50 cm. © Ziad Antar





## مازن كرباح

أخبار حقيقية من بيروت

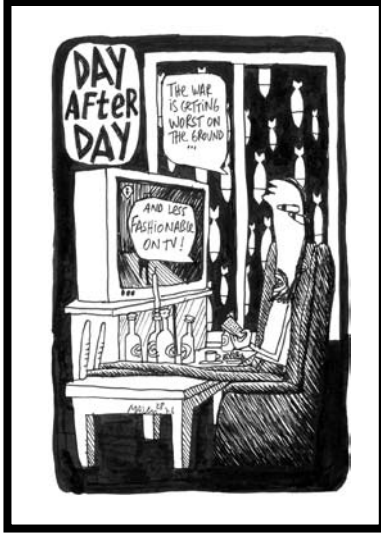
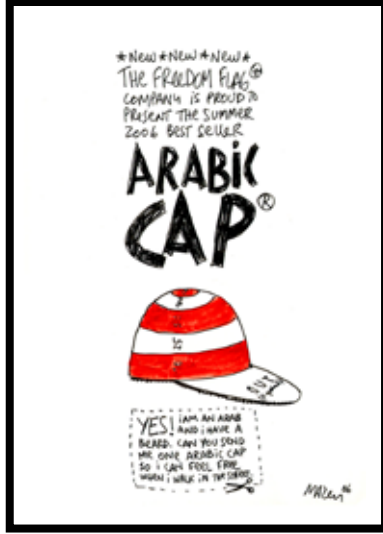
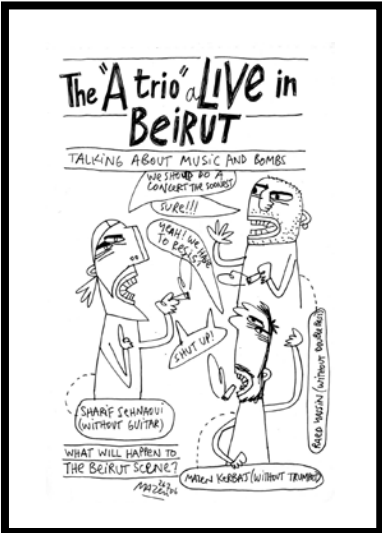
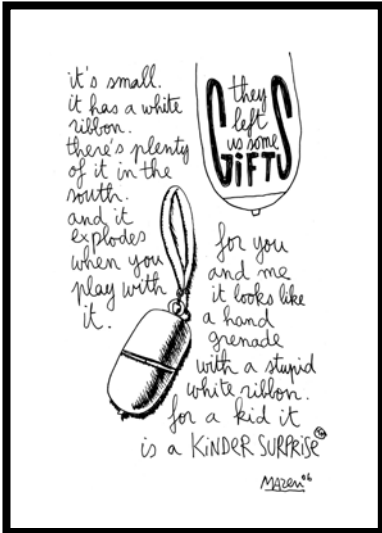
نُشرت هذه الرسومات الصغيرة على الموقع الإلكتروني لكرباج أولاً. تخطيطات كرباج وكتابات المشغولة باندفاع وبالتزامن مع أحداث الحرب، تُقرأ كيوميّات حميمة تتناول أوضاع الأمة وكذلك حال الفنان خلال الاعتداء الإسرائيلي الأخير على لبنان سنة ٢٠٠٦، والذي استمر ٣٣ يوماً.

اتخذ رد فعل كرباج العفوي تجاه الحرب شكلاً تخطيطات سهلة التنفيذ، تحتوي تراكيب غير منسّقة لأشكال أولية، كاشفةً مزيجاً من اليأس، الذكاء، التصميم والمثابرة.

أخبار حقيقية من بيروت | ٢٠٠٦ | رسوم بقلم الحبر والرصاص والألوان المائية على ورق | ٢٩ سم X ٢١ سم. © مازن كرباج







Mazen Kerbaj  
Real News from Beirut

These drawings were first posted on Mazen Kerbaj's blog. Kerbaj's illustrations and writings, which were made impulsively and on the spot, read like an intimate diary that follows the trials and tribulations of the nation as well as the artist throughout Israel's 33-day war on Lebanon in 2006. His spontaneous reaction to the war in the form of homemade graphic works which display un-orchestrated compositions of raw images reveals a heady mix of despair, wit, and determination to persevere.

Real News from Beirut | 2006 | Pen, pencil and watercolor on paper | 29 x 21 cm. © Mazen Kerbaj









**Rabih Mroué**

*I, the Undersigned*

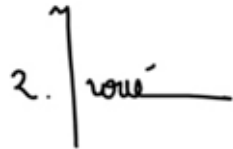
I, the undersigned, Rabih Mroué, present a public and sincere apology to all of you and to all the Lebanese people. But before I begin, I don't wish my position to be understood as a reaction, or even an action. Since the end of the war, I have been possessed by this idea and this feeling but...

Officially, the Lebanese civil war ended in 1990, and until now, none of those responsible that are still today in positions of power, has presented an apology to the Lebanese people for what they have committed. With the exception of one person, who counts among those who lost the war, his name is A.S.. His apology was a small text he published in a newspaper in 2002. That is, around 12 years after the war ended. Almost nobody took this apology seriously. Regardless, it remains registered as the first official apology given.

Like many Lebanese citizens, I have waited for apologies from many of those responsible but in fact nothing appeared. This is why I decided to make this step and apologize for what I had committed during the civil war. And to clarify, this is not a confession; actually there is a big difference between confession and apology. I, personally, care not for confession.

Why this apology now? In fact, I hadn't until this day gathered the necessary courage to make this step. Perhaps cowardice and fear stopped me from fulfilling this desire. Now the time has come to proclaim my apologies to you brothers and sisters, friends, comrades, companions and enemies.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by the name 'Mroué'.

*I, the Undersigned* | 2007 | 2 videos on 2 monitors, sound | 3'50"; 4'10" © Rabih Mroué

**I apologise to all those who were my victims,  
whether they knew it or not, whether I knew them or not,  
whether I had hurt them directly or through mediators.**

رندا ميرزا

غرف مهجورة

في سلسلة الصور الفوتوغرافية «غرف مهجورة» تواجه رندا ميرزا ذكريات مكبوتة، فتتجول داخل مواقع جرى تشويهها خلال الحرب الأهلية، وصُودرت بعد وضع اليد عليها، وكثير من هذه البيوت ما يزال حتى اليوم في حالة خراب، رغم تسارع وتيرة إعادة الإعمار بعد الحرب، لتترك جراحاً دامية مستقرة في الذاكرة الجمعية للبنانيين، ولتظل شاهدة على عنف الماضي ومذكّرة بالصراع المستمر.

«غرف مهجورة» هي شهادة شاعرية على الدمار والحرب، صُنعت من خلال الصور المطبوعة التي تتجنب الاتكاء على أسلوب التصوير السطحي للدمار، متناولة الأماكن بطريقة تثير مشاعر التعاطف والإحساس بالانتماء إليها.

صور ميرزا تتحدث عن الماضي في الحاضر، عن الحضور في الغياب، عن الموت في ظل الحياة، وعن المنسي والمتبقي في الذاكرة.

غرف مهجورة | ٢٠٠٦ | تصوير فوتوغرافي | ١٠٠ سم X ١٥٠ سم. مجموعة خالد شومان الخاصة



*Abandoned Rooms: Details* | 2006 | C-prints mounted on aluminum dibond | 29 x 44 cm. The Khalid Shoman Private Collection

غرف مهجورة: تفاصيل | ٢٠٠٦ | تصوير فوتوغرافي | ٢٩ سم X ٤٤ سم. مجموعة خالد شومان الخاصة



Randa Mirza

*Abandoned Rooms*

In *Abandoned Rooms*, Randa Mirza confronts repressed memories, entering into scarred spaces that were occupied by squatters during Lebanon's civil war (1975 – 1990). Today, many of these once confiscated dwellings remain in ruins – un-nursed wounds left gaping in Lebanon's collective memory – in spite of the country's post-war reconstruction frenzy. Such traces of violence endure as witnesses to the hostilities of the past and reminders of an overhanging conflict. *Abandoned Rooms* is a poetic testimony on destruction and war made through painterly images that sensitively avoid reverting to voyeuristic practices; instead, these images stir in their viewers a sense of sympathy and deep connection. Mirza's photographs speak of the past in the present, of presence in absence, of death and survival, and of what is forgotten and what lingers.

*Abandoned Rooms* | 2006 | C-prints mounted on aluminum dibond | 100 x 150 cm. The Khalid Shoman Private Collection





## باولا يعقوب

صيف ٨٨

الصور بالأبيض الناصع والأسود الحالك بـ«صيف ٨٨» التُقطت في ذروة الحرب الأهلية اللبنانية؛ أخذت هذه الصور من دون هدف محدد، عندما كانت يعقوب تساعد مصوراً صحفياً كان يعمل على توثيق عمليات القتال في وسط بيروت. الصور منتجة بطريقة تبتعد عن الشكل التقليدي للتصوير الفوتوغرافي الوثائقي. فبدلاً من أن تركز يعقوب على الأحداث أو على تأثيرات الحرب، قامت بالتقاط صور لما هو عادي، من وسط الخراب وكما تراه بعيونها. سلسلة باولا لا تهدف إلى عرض الخراب أو الهياكل المعمارية. إنها مجموعة لقطات جاءت نتيجة للخوف وإظهار تأثيراته في مدينة في حالة حرب. صورها التي تقشع منها الأبدان، تُظهر أنه من غير المحتمل أن يستطيع المرء تصوير الدمار بشكل محايد، فهي تنتقل عبر خط رفيع يفصل بين الموضوعي والذاتي.

صيف ٨٨ | ٢٠٠٦ | تصوير فوتوغرافي | ٤٢.٥ سم X ٥٦ سم. © باولا يعقوب



**Paola Yacoub**

*Summer 88*

The stark and grainy black and white photographs of *Summer 88* were shot at the height of the civil war; they were taken with no particular aim as Yacoub assisted a photojournalist who was documenting surveillance operations and fighting in down town Beirut. The pictures are the product of an unreserved departure from the conventional practices of documentary photography. Instead of focusing on the events or on the effects of the war, Yacoub captured photographs of the ordinary amid devastation as seen through her eyes. Paola Yacoub's series is not an exposé on ruins or on architecture. It is an anthology of snapshots procured as a consequence of fear and a rendering of the effects of fright on a city at war. Her chilling images reveal the impossibility of representing destruction neutrally as they criss-cross the fine line that separates objective documentation from subjective viewpoint.

*Summer 88* | 2006 | Black and white photographs | 42.5 x 56 cm. © Paola Yacoub







The Atlas Group / Walid Raad

The Atlas Group is a project established in Beirut in 1999 to research and document the contemporary history of Lebanon. The Group locates, preserves, studies and produces audio, visual, literary and other documents that shed light on this history. The documents are stored in The Atlas Group Archive which is located in Beirut and New York.

The archive is organized into three file categories: Type A (attributed to an identified individual), Type FD (found documents), and Type AGP (attributed to The Atlas Group).

[www.theatlasgroup.org](http://www.theatlasgroup.org)



Akram Zaatari

Born in Lebanon in 1966, Akram Zaatari is an artist and curator who lives and works in Beirut. He is the author of more than 30 videos and video installations. Zaatari is a founding member of the Arab Image Foundation, a non-profit association which aims to promote photography in the Middle East and North Africa by locating, collecting, and preserving the region's photographic heritage. Recently, he has been developing his own research-based projects which deal with the photograph as a testament to memory.



Walid Sadek

Born in Beirut in 1966, Walid Sadek is an artist and writer who lives and works in Beirut. Walid Sadek explores the conditions of living in a closed environment of civil-war.



Ziad Antar

Born in Lebanon in 1978, Ziad Antar, who lives between Lebanon and France, has been working in photography and video since 2002. Although Antar grew up in the south during the civil war, where he observed what was happening on the ground on a daily basis, his works exhibit a nonchalant objectivity towards their divisive subject matter, leaving it up to the viewer to find meaning and take a position.



Mazen Kerbaj

Born in Beirut in 1975, Mazen Kerbaj is an illustrator, painter, and musician who was prompted to start his 'Kerblog' after 'two years of laziness' when Israel began to bomb the Lebanese territories, including Beirut, in Lebanon's most recent war.

<http://mazenkerblog.blogspot.com>



Rabih Mroué

Born in Beirut in 1967, Rabih Mroué's semi-documentary plays, videos and mixed-media performances use documents, photographs and found objects to draw attention to the broader political and economic contexts of contemporary Beirut.



Randa Mirza

Born in Beirut in 1978, Randa Mirza is a visual artist who works with digital photography and live video editing to investigate the visible and invisible manifestations of war.

[www.randamirza.com](http://www.randamirza.com)



Paola Yacoub

Born in Beirut in 1966, Paola Yacoub has worked with the artist Michel Lassere as her associate since 1996. The two investigate the expressive potential of spaces via their articulation of embedded aesthetic and political meanings.

**Art Now in Lebanon**

**Curated by:**  
Andree Sfeir Semler  
Galleries Sfeir Semler  
Hamburg – Beirut

**Participating artists:**  
Rayyane Tabet  
Jalal Toufic  
Lamia Joreige  
Joana Hadjithomas  
& Khalil Joreige  
Marwan Rechmaoui  
Walid Raad  
The Atlas Group / Walid Raad  
Akram Zaatari  
Walid Sadek  
Ziad Antar  
Mazen Kerbaj  
Rabih Mroué  
Randa Mirza  
Paola Yacoub

The texts in this brochure are based on personal statements provided by the artists or reviews published on their work.



Rayyane Tabet

Born in Lebanon in 1983, Rayyane Tabet is an artist and architect who lives and works in New York. In his installations, Thabet utilizes everyday objects such as mattresses, soap bars and suitcases in surreal ways, investing them with symbolic meanings.



Jalal Toufic

Born in Beirut in 1962 to an Iraqi father and a Palestinian mother, Jalal Toufic is a thinker, writer, and artist. Although much of his work has political overtones, philosophical reflections on and humor and curiosity about all facets of life are its most distinctive features.

[www.jalaltoufic.com](http://www.jalaltoufic.com)



Lamia Joreige

Born in Beirut in 1972, Lamia Joreige is a painter and video artist who lives and works in Beirut. She combines archival documents with fictitious elements in order to delve into the possibilities for representation of the Lebanese wars and their aftermaths. Joreige's work essentially revolves around the traces of Time and in particular its effect on memory.

[www.lamiajoreige.com](http://www.lamiajoreige.com)



Joana Hadjithomas  
& Khalil Joreige

Born in Beirut in 1969, the art duo Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige explore landscapes that have been destroyed to look at what lies hidden beneath the surface, the challenges faced in living in the present and in thinking about the past, and the relationship we have to representation, especially visual.

[www.hadjithomasjoreige.com](http://www.hadjithomasjoreige.com)



Marwan Rechmaoui

Born in Beirut in 1964, Marwan Rechmaoui studied painting and sculpture in the United States and currently lives and works in Beirut. Rechmaoui's sculptural productions explore the nature of dwelling and dwellings or what it means to live in a city like Beirut.



Walid Raad

Born in Lebanon in 1967, Walid Raad is a multimedia artist and a Professor of Art at The Cooper Union School of Art (New York, USA). Raad's productions to date include mixed media installations, performances, videos, inkjet prints, and literary essays. His artworks have been shown at The Venice Biennale (Venice, Italy), Documenta 11 (Kassel, Germany), The Whitney Biennial (New York, USA), and Homeworks (Beirut, Lebanon). Walid Raad questions representations of historical events and the ways in which film, video, and photography are employed to record episodes of violence.





Lamia Joreige's evocative photographs from the 2007 series entitled *The End Of* are, in fact, images from Super-8 film and video that appear to have been corroded by chemical agents or the passage of time. Joreige describes these works as "mental images," as "reminiscences of a history" and a reflection on "violence, loss and disillusion." "They are not ... beautiful landscapes," she writes in an accompanying text, "but carry within them ... all the tensions, conflicts and political turmoil I/we experience."

One work depicts two figures in a sun-splashed sea, but the edges of the image seem to be breaking up and turning to rust, as if one's recollection of a day at the beach was fading fast from memory. Another, with a title referencing Iraq, features faintly discernable helicopters. Arguably the most beautiful image in the series, with a title referencing South Lebanon, shows a grainy view onto a gorgeous, winding country road that runs beneath a slightly sickening pink sky.

Joreige's images deal with the elision of memory and the stunting of narrative possibilities. There are no complete stories in her series. Other works in the exhibition that do not narrate specific accounts delve instead into strange phenomena, such as the photographs of Khiam by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, which capture the cycles of destruction and memorial on the site of Israel's notorious former detention center in South Lebanon.

After the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, Khiam was turned into a museum. Then it was destroyed by Israel in the summer of 2006. Then anonymous billboards appeared on the site, carrying images of the center when it was a prison. This historical confusion and collapsing of time into the instant Hadjithomas and Joreige capture in each photograph, is symptomatic not only of Lebanon's experience but anyplace where history is revised and rewritten after episodes of contention and strife.



Randa Mirza | *Abandoned Rooms* (detail)

Randa Mirza's photographs in the *Abandoned Rooms* series, meanwhile, delve into the phenomenon of urban centers emptied not only by destruction but also by reconstruction, economic fluctuation and uneven development. The traces left behind on the walls of Mirza's abandoned rooms tell the secret histories

of lives long forgotten. Much like Tabet's reflection on always-packed suitcases, the compulsion to explore these derelict spaces, be they mental or physical, is vital in a place like Lebanon where remembrance is so often bulldozed by amnesia.

Tabet was born in 1983. He should have had no memory of Israeli invasion. He was seven when Lebanon's civil war came to a close. *Fossils* reaches back into his childhood to what should have been the limit of his memory – the experience of going to sleep every night with a bag packed with bare necessities and placed at the foot of his bed, ready to go in the event that escalating hostilities would force he and his family to flee. Sadly, that experience persists to this day, if not due to outright war than because of economic and political stagnation.

As Andrée Sfeir-Semler described it on the eve of the war in 2006, Tabet's piece explores the paradoxical relationship between heaviness and lightness, the pain of living through war and the need to be nimble and able to move. The placement of each suitcase suggests at once an arrangement of graves in a cemetery, a broken grid of urban buildings, and the division of families thrust into exile. The material references the building stock of Beirut itself.

*Fossils*, writes Tabet in his artist's statement, "is a reflection on erratic war scenarios as they become normalized. Our infatuation

with the idea of having to leave our homes at any given moment during the civil war – and the fact that we had to have our bags packed beforehand in case of emergencies – grew to become [habit] ... In a way, the concrete transforms the suitcases into fossils or monuments that bear within them the tragedy of a given instant. They become the object of studies and act as reference points in the lives of a country."

For fifteen years, artists in Beirut have probed and kneaded the history and experience of Lebanon's wars to create works that are, by turns, critical, provocative, and poignant. The point is not to make meaning of war, but rather to recover the faculty of meaning after its complete foreclosure.

The division of "Art Now in Lebanon" into the Blue House and the Main Building is, in many ways, a fiction. The generational split between the emerging and established artists is not as strong as it seems. One could easily imagine an alternative arrangement in which Tabet's and Rechmaoui's sculptures, or Antar's and Zaatari's photographs, of Mirza and Yacoub's series would resonate well off of one another. But the jump amplifies the extent to which the younger artists are somehow more carefree, loose and emotive. Perhaps the careful, studious and serious work of the artists who came before them has paid off.

Kaelen Wilson-Goldie

newspaper headlines and 24-hour news feeds so often get it wrong, and how the consequences of political violence stretch far beyond the numbers of dead or wounded to include the collective disillusionment of an entire generation, the one, of course, to which the artist belongs.



Ziad Antar | The Veil Series (documentary image)

An interesting counterbalance to the frustration of Kerbaj's drawings is Ziad Antar's series of photographs produced for a workshop in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp. Each image is a portrait, in a sense, of a scarf arranged into an elaborate soft sculpture. The girls participating in the workshop, which Antar led with the writer and curator Rasha Salti, would arrange their veils on a white sheet and then leave the room. Antar would then enter

and document their creations. In the context of an educational exchange meant to foster critical thinking and artistic expression, the images capture the creative sparks that fire when youngsters take hold of the tools of self-representation. The artist's role is minimal here. The substance of each photograph is the color, pattern and manipulation of each scarf.

As the Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury once said: "The victorious write history and the defeated stories." If one scratches beneath the surface of the works included in "Art Now in Lebanon," or if one lingers before them long enough to engage the many critical strategies at stake, one finds that what appear on the surface to be straightforward symptoms of trauma eventually yield additional layers of meaning and material underneath.

Perhaps because no one has ever been victorious in Lebanon's wars – despite many competing claims to the contrary, everyone has been defeated in one way or another – the country's contemporary cultural producers (including writers and filmmakers as well as visual artists) tend to concern themselves most with dismantling the mechanisms by which history is written, and with reconfiguring stories that are born of lived experience instead.

The objects in "Art Now in Lebanon" may tell of war, or, more productively, they may function as narrative triggers that lead somewhere else entirely. As mnemonic devices, they may be

tethered to painful memories, but they also fire the imagination with stories that are intensely literary, ranging from the fabulist to the fantastic and shot through with dark humor and delicate poignancy.



The Atlas Group | I Only With That I Could Weep

Walid Raad's video *I Only With That I Could Weep*, from the artist's work under the Atlas Group's name, introduces Operator #17, a former Lebanese intelligence agent, completely fictional, who was supposed to record suspicious activity along Beirut's seaside corniche but got distracted, day after day, by a deep orange sun dunking down into the Mediterranean at dusk. Raad's photograph *Scratching On Things I Could Disavow, Part 2*, features stray

bullets the artist collected in 1989. More so than remnants of war, these objects are records of relationships, acquired as gifts from old girlfriends or trades with his sister.

Rabih Mroué's powerful, two-screen video installation *I, the Undersigned*, draws on the story of a former militiaman who made a public apology for his actions during the civil war, albeit twelve years after the conflict came to a close. Nobody took the apology seriously, notes Mroué in the wall text next to the work. The installation juxtaposes the artist's nearly catatonic face, filmed in slow motion, and the text of an imagined letter that is neither apology nor confession but a biting condemnation of amnesty and amnesia, and an uproarious critique of art and language.

Walid Sadek's *Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse*, an installation made from a stack of texts on a platform with a tiny pencil drawing hung high on the wall above, strings together the story of a family funeral, Sigmund Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* and an account of a statue retired from its pedestal in Downtown Beirut. The piece also links up to another story – which is absent from the exhibition but present in this catalogue – about Kozo Okamoto, a curious, entirely real and all but forgotten figure from the days when the Japanese Red Army teamed up with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine for operations against Israel, and the only person ever granted political asylum in Lebanon.



for example, which have been instrumental in redefining the role and purpose of contemporary art in Lebanon from decorative accoutrement to critical tool.

That said, a number of Beirut-centric exhibitions has been shown outside of the region, including Catherine David's "Contemporary Arab Representations" and Suzanne Cotter's "Out of Beirut." In the absence of an existing institutional infrastructure for contemporary art in the Arab world, exhibitions like these are crucial for writing the region's art history, and for establishing its canon.

"Art Now in Lebanon" brings to the art-going public in Amman examples of how and why Beirut's contemporary art scene has come to wield so much influence. Over the past five years, several of the artists in the exhibition have participated in international biennials, gallery shows and festivals for film, theater, video and performance. Numerous art journals have devoted special issues to Beirut. Lebanon inaugurated its first national pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2007, one of very few Arab states to do so. As the critic T.J. Demos noted in the Summer 2007 issue of *Art Journal*: "Distant though it may be geographically from European and American cultural capitals, Beirut nevertheless emerges ... as fully central to the most pressing questions – political, aesthetic, ethical, institutional – that animate artistic and curatorial practices today."

Since the early 1990s, independent organizations such as Ashkal Alwan, the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut DC, Irtijal, Ne a Beyrouth and more have created an alternative infrastructure for artistic expression and developed intriguing new channels for the production and presentation of new work. The artists present in "Art Now in Lebanon" have, for the most part, worked with them all. In doing so, they have been able to experiment in an atmosphere relatively free, at least at the outset, from market pressures. As a result, they have shifted away from paintings and sculptures and toward videos and installations. They have left the formalism of their predecessors behind and developed their own. And perhaps most pointedly, they have used their art to explore some of the more urgent questions confronting those who live in Lebanon today, questions concerning history, identity, memory, amnesia, trauma, hysteria, the ways in which wars and conflicts have shaped lived experience and the precarious nature of individuality, citizenship, the life of the mind and an imagined community of peers (linked by social and intellectual though rather than patronage or fealty) in a weak, sectarian state that is, in many ways, a crucible for the region's intractable political issues.

When walking through the spaces that comprise "Art Now in Lebanon," it is tempting to take note of the bombed-out buildings, the stray bullets, armored tanks and buried mortar casings, and to conclude that the objects in the exhibition are all implements of

war. So they seem. But the show's most successful twist is that it both reinforces and unravels the notion that contemporary art practice in Lebanon is obsessed with political conflict.

Some may criticize the exhibition for being fraught with politics at the expense of aesthetics, where every artwork boils down to reportage or a sociological study of war, be it Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war, the summer 2006 war or the untold stretches of so-called "cold" civil war that have intermittently collapsed or paralyzed the Lebanese state and welcomed foreign meddling everywhere in between and since. Some may say this art is tough and offers little visual succor.



Akram Zaatari | *Saïda, June 6th 1982* (detail)

The poster advertising the exhibition bolsters that view, with the title of the show writ large across a detail from Akram Zaatari's photograph *Saïda, June 6th 1982*, which frames six explosions on a scrappy hillside above Lebanon's second largest city.

But Zaatari's work is in fact a clever digital composite. These six particular explosions, which eerily mirror the white clouds in the blue sky above, did not occur simultaneously. Rather, the artist pieced them together from photographs he took with his father's Kiev camera when he was sixteen. The image does not represent reality but rather reconstitutes a teenager's desire to capture what he remembers calling "real fireworks." Zaatari's photograph does not dutifully report facts. Instead, it condenses those facts into a fiction that is intimately, emotionally tied to his first memory of making images.

Likewise, Paola Yacoub's high-contrast black-and-white photographs of buildings scarred by shelling and sniper-fire, from the series *Summer 88*, relate to a time when she ran around Beirut with a photojournalist and former boyfriend. More so than the horror of war, her images document the stomping ground of young lovers who were feeling for the edges of artistic competition and romantic impulse.

Mazen Kerbaj's diary-like drawings, uproarious and tender at once, epitomize how life goes on during times of war, how

## "Art Now in Lebanon"

By Kaelen Wilson-Goldie

Rayyane Tabet's *Fossils* is an installation of vintage suitcases covered in concrete. In formal terms, it fuses the immediacy of Mona Hatoum's *Traffic* (a 2002 sculpture featuring two suitcases with human hair spilling out the sides and connecting one to the other) with the solemnity of Rachel Whiteread's *Untitled (Pair)* (a 1999 installation of 18 cast bronze mortuary slabs, painted white and coupled, one convex, one concave).

The installation was exhibited for the first time in Beirut during the summer of 2006. It framed the entrance to the exhibition "Moving Home(s)," which opened on July 6 at Galerie Sfeir-Semler in Karantina. Tabet placed his different-sized suitcases on the gallery's floor in pairs and trios throughout the foyer of the cool, minimal 1,000-square-meter post-industrial space. A few suitcases stood off on their own, alone.

In a show that included works by a number of highly established, internationally renowned artists, Tabet's piece stood. Not bad for 23-year-old making his gallery debut. But there was an unconscionable cruelty to the fact that six days after the exhibition opened, war with Israel broke out in Lebanon. For 34

days, the country was bombed and besieged. An artwork that was meant to glance back on the history of past wars in Lebanon – and grapple with the accumulated psychic damage and wounded behavioral patterns that those conflicts wrought – was suddenly plunged into the context of all too present war. Those concrete covered suitcases were ripped from pensive reflection to visceral relevance and resonance.



Rayyane Tabet | *Fossils*

The exhibition "Art Now in Lebanon," on view at Darat al-Funun from March 4 through May 29, marks the second appearance of Tabet's *Fossils*. This time around, the pieces appear heavier, their shape more streamlined and their surface further abstracted. In the intervening years, Tabet has added new layers of concrete

to the suitcases. The effect is haunting. The thicker concrete creates a physical manifestation of the catastrophic pile-up that is Lebanon's ever-unfolding history of violence, and an intimate, emotional attempt at keeping one's mind safe from harm.

Curated by Andrée Sfeir-Semler, "Art Now in Lebanon" offers neither an exhaustive retrospective of critical art practices as they have emerged in Beirut in the last fifteen years, nor a comprehensive survey of contemporary cultural production in Lebanon as it is being expressed now. Rather, the exhibition presents a highly selective collection of works by artists whose subjects and strategies converge as often as they diverge. The show makes masterful use of the various venues Darat al-Funun affords, and rests on curatorial gestures that are both sensitive and assertive.

"Art Now in Lebanon" includes 39 works by 14 artists who were born between 1964 and 1983. There are videos, photographs, drawings, ink-and-watercolor works on paper, sculptures, an enormous map of Beirut (by Marwan Rechmaoui) made from tough black rubber that visitors are expected to walk all over and stacks of texts and posters (by Walid Sadek and Akram Zaatari, respectively) that viewers are encouraged to take home.

Some of the artists featured in the exhibition have been active for more than a decade and have earned international art-world

clout. Walid Raad, for example, is a critics' darling and a veteran of Documenta, the Venice Biennale and the Whitney Biennial; Zaatari and Rabih Mroué are both showing new work in Paris' Centre Pompidou, for the concurrent, Middle East-themed exhibition "Les Inquiets," which runs February 12 through May 19; Jalal Toufic is the author of eight books, seven videos and five multimedia projects, and is generally considered the cerebral core of the group. Other artists, however, are relatively new to the scene, such as Rayyane Tabet and Randa Mirza, who each only recently finished university studies.

It is worth noting that "Art Now in Lebanon" is the first major exhibition of its kind to be shown in the Arab world since "Missing Links," an exhibition at Cairo's Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art organized by Ashkal Alwan's Christine Tohme in 2001. Nothing on this scale has ever been staged in Beirut. Every year, Lebanon's Sursock Museum hosts the Salon d'Automne, a juried, invitational exhibition that offers, perhaps, the most accurate cross-section of contemporary art now in Lebanon. But the results tend to be a mixed bag. Ashkal Alwan's Home Works Forum, established in 2001, highlights the kindred concerns among artists who are working on the cutting edge and pioneering the avant-garde. But the scope is impressively international rather than regional or local. Recent exhibitions of Lebanese art in other Arab countries typically emphasize the paintings and sculptures of an older generation, not the conceptual practices of figures such as Sadek,

**Art Now in Lebanon** is a show on Lebanese contemporary art today.

Lebanese artists from the 20th century until the 1970's work in the tradition of western art. There is no specific art or style which roots in a Lebanese tradition.

There is a vacuum in the development and in the art production in Lebanon during the Lebanese war.

It is only around the beginning of the 1990's that singular artists emerge and start developing characteristics which we can describe as a typical Lebanese artistic style.

These artists are all today in their late thirties. They do all know each other, they meet, discuss, connect but each of them work on his own and has developed a personal hand writing. They are all conceptual artists and have in common the topic they research: they work on the collective memory of the country, on archives: press archives, photographic archives, story telling... They are all interested in the political, geographical and cultural history of this part of the world with a focus on Lebanon.

Their artistic production feels therefore often almost documentary. The art pieces are testimonies of our past and oracles for our future. These artists are writing History.

The topics they are interested in dictate their mediums: they write, make videos, photographs, composite digital images by using archival means or make sculptural installations. None of them paints or draws...

These artists are: The Atlas Group / Walid Raad, Khalil Joreige & Joanna Hadjitouma, Lamia Joreige, Rabih Mroue, Walid Raad, Marwan Rechmaoui, Walid Sadek, Jalal Toufic, Paola Yacoub, Akram Zaatari. Their works are exhibited in the main building.

I have invited four very young Lebanese artists from the upcoming generation: they are in their twenties. These continue and innovate new visions... These artists are: Ziad Antar, Mazen Kerbaj, Randa Mirza, Rayyane Tabet. Their works are displayed in the blue house.

Andree Sfeir-Semler, Hamburg and Beirut



