

IMAGES RECALLED

Haide Hausler

The idea that multiple parallel universes exist is not dissimilar to certain notions about the medium of photography. In its technical reproducibility and availability, it likewise pretends to overcome the limits of space or time. Almost anything can be experienced almost anywhere. This is particularly noticeable in the case of war reports in the media, which transports the war into our living rooms via graphic photographic images, continually confronting us with the injustices of the world.

In *Parallel Universes* Randa Mirza delineates this highly charged clash between war scenes on the one hand and peaceful atmosphere on the other by creating a collage out of pictures of the Lebanese Civil war of the 1970s and the war on Lebanon in 2006 combined with snapshots of an exuberant recreational culture. The effect is not only to change the setting before the camera - the authorship is also at issue here: the gaze of a war reporter melds with the viewpoint of the amateur photographer to yield the questionable voyeurism of a war tourist. The viewer is drawn into this game and must face the accusation of voyeurism, for the photographs turn us into witnesses of political offenses. How much responsibility do we then share? Commenting on the canonical viewer reactions of inability, passivity and indifference, Mirza aptly remarks : "looking at this work makes us watch ourselves watching."

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