



The table in an Upper East Side café in New York, where ArtAsiaPacific met **Walid Raad** in June 2009. Photo by Curtis Hamilton for AAP.

WALID RAAD

T H ● S E W H ● L A C K
I M A G I N A T I ● N
C A N N ● T I M A G I N E
W H A T I S L A C K I N G

FOR WALID RAAD, THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER TO REMEMBER OR TO FORGET LEBANON'S MODERN HISTORY, BUT HOW.



(Detail) PART I_CHAPTER 1_SECTION 79: WALID SADEK'S LOVE IS BLIND (MODERN ART OXFORD, UK, 2006), 2009, mixed media, 4 x 10.3 m.

PART I_CHAPTER 1_SECTION 79: WALID SADEK'S LOVE IS BLIND (MODERN ART OXFORD, UK, 2006), 2009, acrylic paint, 4 x 10.3 m and 4 x 6 m.

By HG Masters

“Would a Lebanese artist ever erase another’s work, like Rauschenberg did to de Kooning?” Sitting in a New York City coffee shop, Walid Raad is describing his thinking behind a recent work, *Part I_Chapter 1_Section 79: Walid Sadek’s Love Is Blind (Modern Art Oxford, UK, 2006)* (2008), composed of two large, gray-shaded monoliths painted on adjacent gallery walls. “Is this a premise that a Lebanese artist would necessarily even think about?”

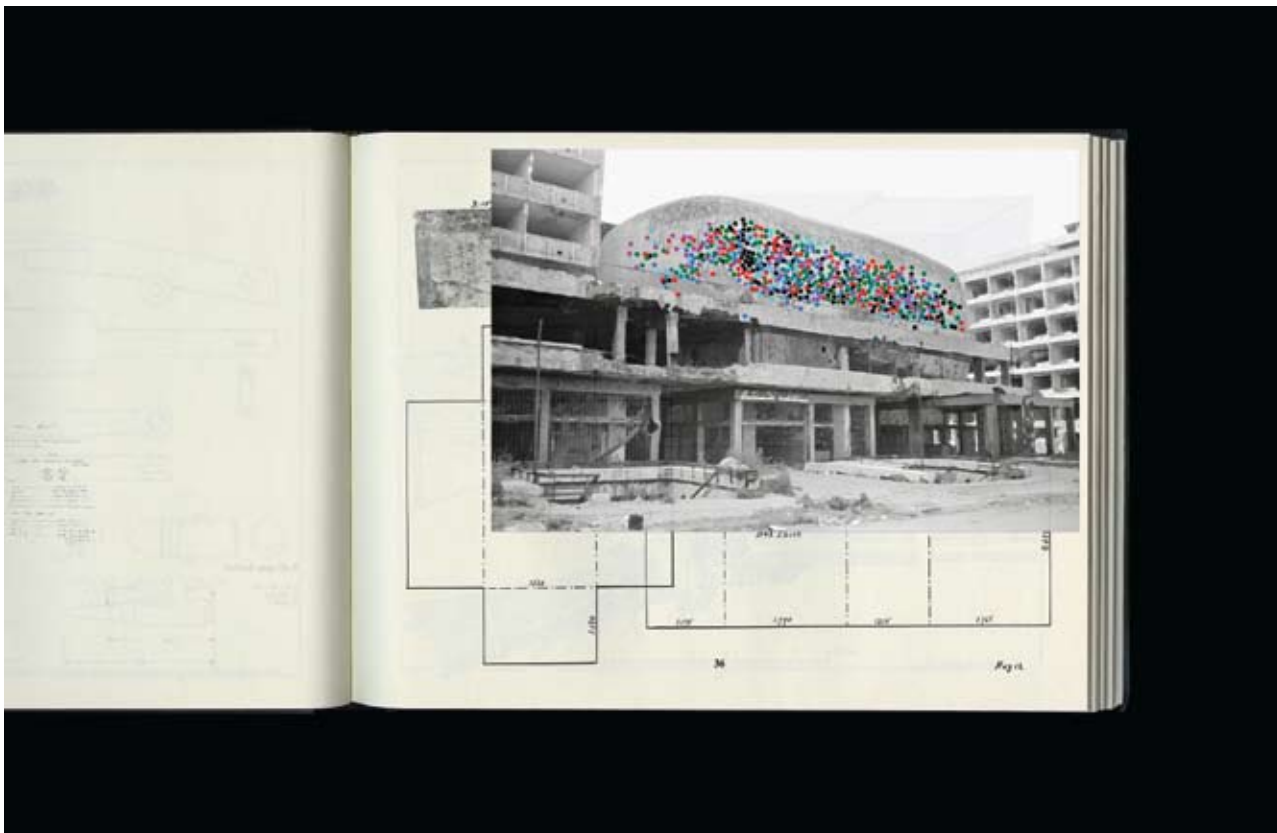
The hypothetical question arose during a longer discussion about how Raad’s new body of work on the history of Middle Eastern and Arab art relates to the archival-looking documents of the Atlas Group, Raad’s decade-long project on the Lebanese Civil War, which took place from 1975–90. Raad explains the connection obliquely: “I’ve been reading the works of Jalal Toufic, who’s been working on the idea that although we know certain wars can lead to the material destruction of culture—artworks and museums are looted, books burned, libraries demolished, schools de-funded—is there a way that an artwork can be affected by these forms of violence in a immaterial way?”

In July 2008, Raad exhibited the first results of his inquiry in Beirut at Galerie Sfeir Semler in his first solo show in his native Lebanon, “A History of Modern and Contemporary Arab Art: Part I_Chapter 1: Beirut (1992–2005).” For the exhibition, Raad had asked the Lebanese artist and writer Walid Sadek to let him borrow his installation *Love Is Blind* (2006)—itself a meta-project on the history of Lebanese art. Sadek’s artwork is comprised of wall-mounted English-Arabic captions and short descriptions of ten landscape paintings by the early 20th-century Lebanese painter Mustafa Farroukh, except that the Farroukh paintings are absent. It is only the spacing of the captions on the wall that suggests their absence. Why the paintings are not there is the central question of the work—are they invisible or did they disappear? Over the course

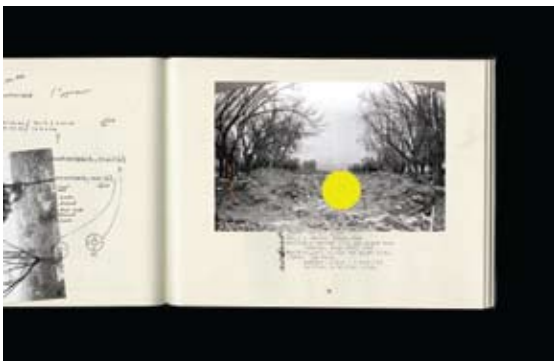


(Detail) PART I_CHAPTER 1_SECTION 79: WALID SADEK'S LOVE IS BLIND (MODERN ART OXFORD, UK, 2006), 2009.

LET'S BE HONEST THE WEATHER HELPED (ISRAEL), 2006, set of seven plates, framed digital prints, 45 x 72 cm.



LET'S BE HONEST THE WEATHER HELPED (SWITZERLAND), 2006, set of seven plates, framed digital prints, 45 x 72 cm.



Raad creates these documents, along with an elaborate but ever-shifting infrastructure of fictions to support them.

of a long dialogue with Raad, Sadek kept changing his mind about whether to loan the piece to Raad for the Beirut show. In the end, he declined. But he agreed to supply a photograph of the installation. Raad then hired a trompe l'oeil painter to reproduce an installation view of Sadek's project installed at Modern Art Oxford in 2006. In Raad's work, the trompe l'oeil paintings hover on the gallery wall, the absence of the Farroukh paintings from Sadek's installation doubled by the absence of Sadek's captions from Raad's installation.

The show at Sfeir-Semler marked a new direction for Raad. Over the last ten years, he has alternately been described as the founder of the Atlas Group, a collaborator or a contributor, though it is no secret that he is the sole creator of the group's various projects, often attributed to a cast of imaginary characters. *Let's Be Honest The Weather Helped* (1998) is a classic example of the Atlas Group's aesthetic; this series of photographic prints shows individual notebook pages with black-and-white photographs of bombed-out Beirut buildings dotted with colored stickers that through their color-coding purportedly diagram the national origins of the ammunition fired at the structure. Raad creates these documents, along with an elaborate but ever-shifting infrastructure of fictions to support them, including his own relationship to the group. After exhibiting the Atlas Group in major international shows—including the Whitney Biennial in 2000 and documenta 11 in 2002—in September 2006, Raad formally concluded the Atlas Group's activities when he showed the complete archives at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin's contemporary art museum. Subsequently, Raad has switched his focus to the history

LET'S BE HONEST THE WEATHER HELPED (UNITED KINGDOM), 2006, set of seven plates, framed digital prints, 45 x 72 cm.



(Detail) PART I CHAPTER 1 SECTION 139: THE ATLAS GROUP (1989-2004), 2008, display of *My Neck Is Thinner Than a Hair*, 1996-2004, and *Let's Be Honest the Weather Helped*, 2006, in 1/100 scale.



of modern and contemporary art in the Middle East.

It was at first a puzzling transition, but for Raad there was also a personal connection between the two series. He explains about the Sfeir-Semler exhibition: “There’s a larger premise for the show. I never showed the complete works of the Atlas Group in Beirut. When Andrée Sfeir-Semler opened her gallery in Beirut [in 2005] and asked me to show it there, I was reluctant. It took me years to realize I could do this show. But in order to do so, I had to remake every work on a 1 to 100 scale.”

That work, entitled *Part I Chapter 1 Section 139: The Atlas Group (1989-2004)* (2008), is a wooden model of an imaginary gallery with scaled-down versions of the Atlas Group’s archives displayed on the walls. But Raad is insistent on several points. “It’s not a miniature. These artworks shrunk once they entered the space [Sfeir-Semler]. Why, I don’t know. Sometimes artists encounter their own works, concepts or forms, and they’re no longer available to them. They appear distorted. Something about Beirut’s time and space makes an artwork shrink and inaccessible to the artist. This is not a psychological encounter, nor is it a metaphor for some condition.”

As an example of what he’s describing, Raad then names French New Wave filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard’s adaption of *King Lear* (1987). “Godard hires Norman Mailer, who decides to make *Lear* as a mock-historical. Godard then fires Mailer and there’s a cut and the voiceover claims: ‘Then Chernobyl happens. Everything disappeared, but gradually things come back, everything except art and culture.’ Then you see Shakespeare’s great-grandson [played by Peter Sellars] walking out of the bushes and he’s trying to rewrite *King Lear*. But he has to receive the sentences telepathically. He’s sitting somewhere and he overhears a conversation. He’ll hear a line from *Lear* and he’ll write it down. But *Lear* is available—we see Mailer carrying it. But now, somehow, after Chernobyl, it needs to be rewritten. My sense is that culture and tradition have been affected in an immaterial way in the Arab world. What I see in the massive construction of this new infrastructure for visual art in the Middle East is the negative image of these changes.”

Raad relates this transformation to his own practice: “I’m trying to keep alive both considerations: the vast development of this infrastructure yet the inability of certain artists, or maybe just one, to feel a link to culture and tradition. I feel like I can access Sadek but also that I have to go through a number of detours. I can access all the ‘artists’ who preceded me, but their names just appear as letters.” He refers here to another piece from the Sfeir-



(Detail) PART I CHAPTER 1 SECTION 139: THE ATLAS GROUP (1989-2004), 2008, display of *Sweet Talk*, 1992-2005, in 1/100 scale.

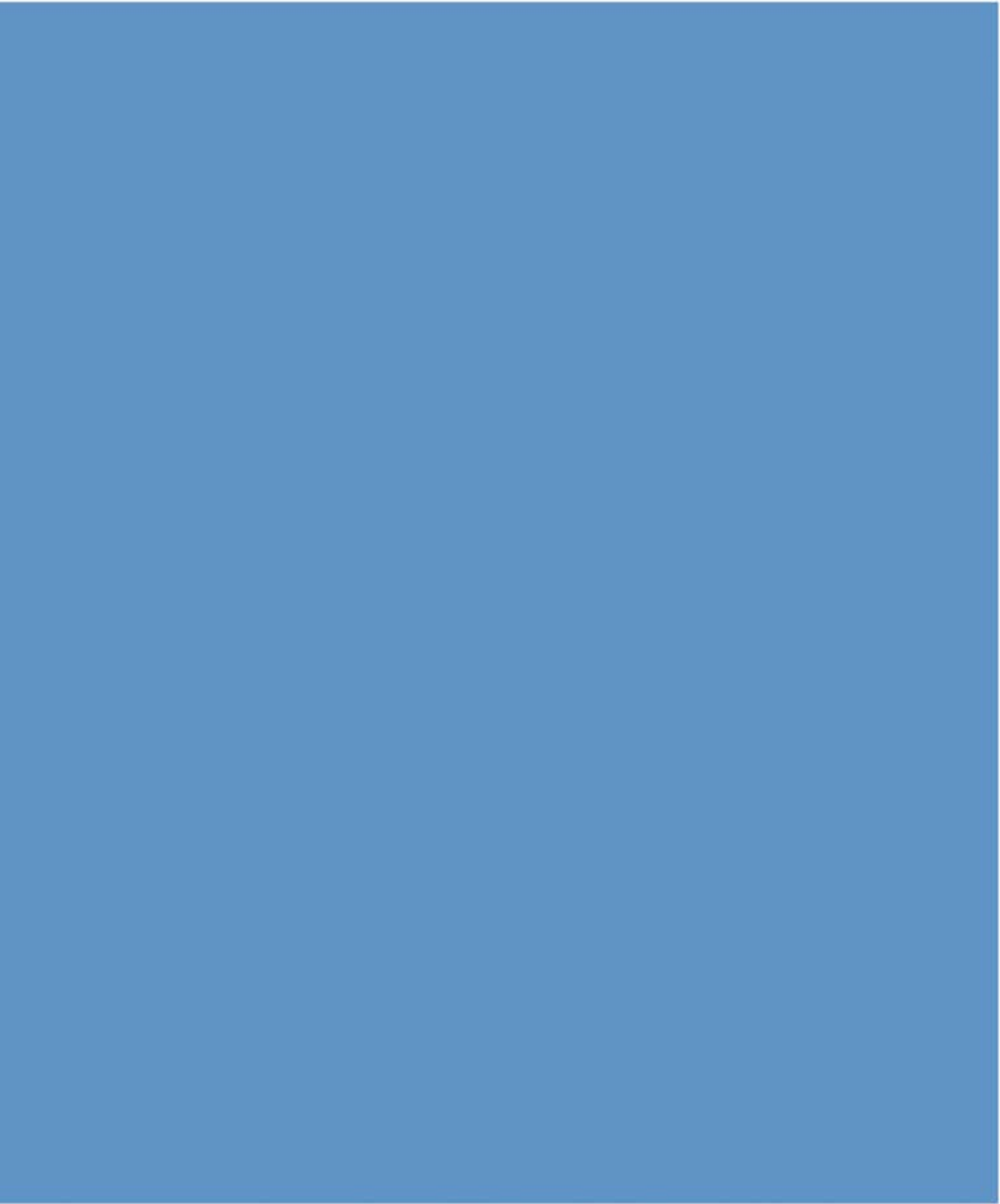


PART I CHAPTER 1 SECTION 139: THE ATLAS GROUP (1989-2004), 2009, wood, plexiglass, video, high-density foam, body: 282 x 104 x 32 cm, base: 147 x 56 x 64 cm.



SECRETS IN THE OPEN SEA, 1994–2004, from a set of six archival inkjet prints, 112 x 175 cm.

Photo © M. O. Sorensen



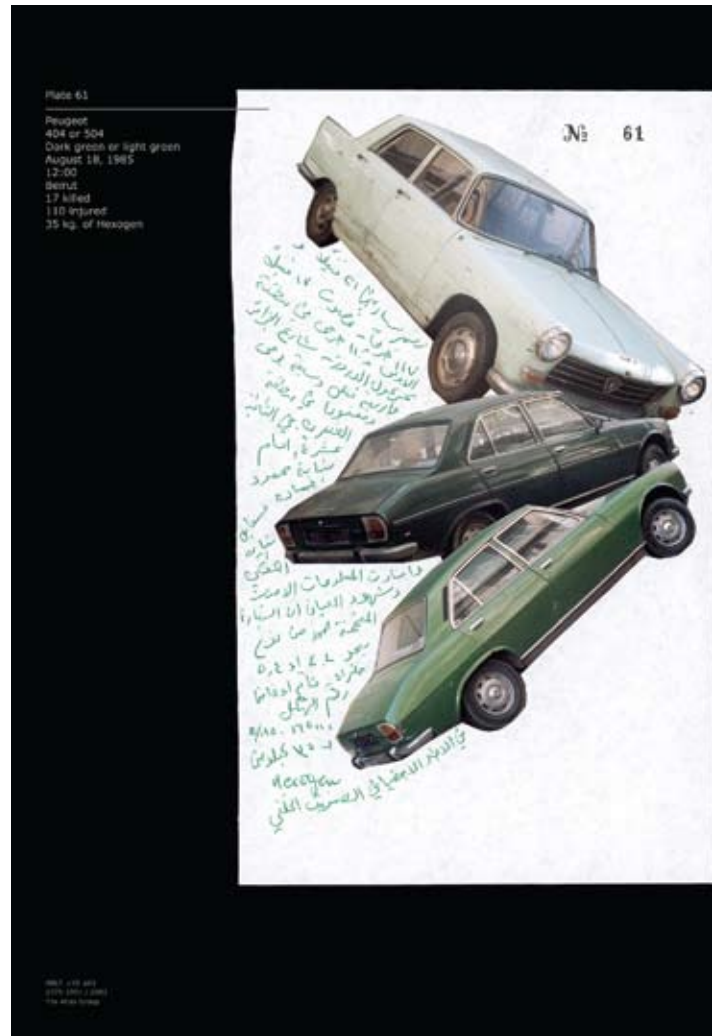
These fictive notebooks contain cutout photographs of cars that are identical to ones used for bombings in Beirut.

Semler show, *Part I_Chapter 1_Section 79: Index XXVI: Artists* (2008), the names of Lebanese artists written in white vinyl Arabic letters and layered into a line that runs on the wall across the room. “They aren’t even signs, let alone things with meaning. I was interested in the possibility that the [Mustafa Farroukh] paintings were there but that I couldn’t see them.”



Raad devises elaborate scenarios for his artworks, but no matter how removed he is from claims of authorship, they remain rooted in the complex story of his life and the modern history of Lebanon. Raad was born in 1967 in Chbanieh, a mixed Druze and Maronite village where his father had grown up, but as a child he lived in East Beirut. His mother is Palestinian and came to Lebanon with her family in the late 1940s during *al-Nakba* (“the Catastrophe”), when Palestinians left or were forced out of their homes during the end of the British Mandate and the formation of the Israeli state. Historian Mike Davis, writing in *Buda’s Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb* (2007), encapsulates the period of Raad’s adolescence in Beirut: “Never in history has a single city been the battlefield for so many contesting ideologies, sectarian allegiances, local vendettas, foreign conspiracies and inventions as was Beirut in the early 1980s . . . Beirut became to the technology of urban violence what a tropical rainforest is to the evolution of plants.”

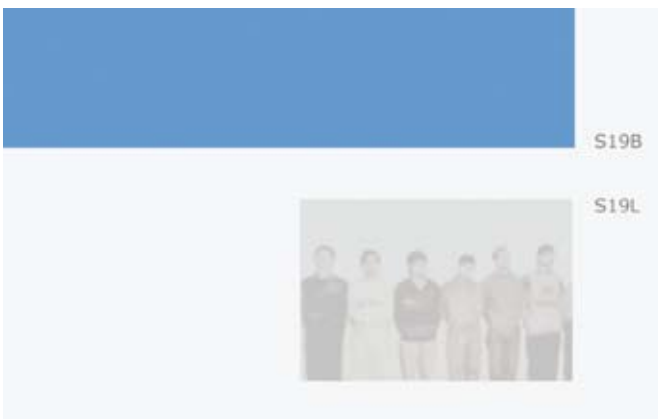
In *I Feel a Great Desire to Meet the Masses Once Again* (2007), a slide-lecture Raad performed in Paris at the Centre Pompidou and elsewhere, the artist recounts how he left Lebanon in 1983 at age 16 on a boat bound for Cyprus. “This was a year and a half after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the deterioration of the security situation once again. But this time, the local militia, the Lebanese Forces, were forcing young men to serve, to fight,” he recalls. The teenage Raad left Cyprus for the US, where he stayed with his brother and attended Boston University. He studied pre-med for two years before leaving to pursue his longstanding interest in photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology. As Raad commented: “Growing up in Beirut,



I wanted to be a war correspondent. I didn’t have to go very far. It was right outside the house.”

At Rochester, Raad learned how to make cameras, lenses, film and chemical developing solution. His fascination with the technology was evident when I met him: he was pouring over a thick photo-and-video-equipment catalog. But the Rochester program was intended for aspiring photojournalists, not contemporary artists. After graduating in 1989, Raad needed a long-term visa to remain in the US as the civil war in Lebanon continued, so he enrolled in the University of Rochester’s new Visual and Cultural Studies PhD program. But Raad says he knew all he needed to know about photography’s significance from his childhood in Beirut. As he explains: “You don’t do street photography in a city at war. You don’t walk around saying, ‘I’m interested in the man jumping over the potholes,’ or ‘I’m going to take architectural photographs of buildings.’ It assumes that you can stay in one place for 20 minutes, adjust your tripod and ensure that there’s no sniper or bomb about to go off nearby. It also assumes that the photograph is neutral, the product of a predominantly aesthetic activity. But in a divided city, it’s an intelligence document. Especially when people want information about the other side, taking photographs of buildings, streets or residents is very contentious.”

After graduating, Raad supported himself by teaching at Hampshire



(Detail) **SECRETS IN THE OPEN SEA.** According to the Atlas Group, scientific analysis of image S19B revealed image S19L, which purportedly shows people whose bodies were recovered from the Mediterranean between 1975 and 1990.

NOTEBOOK VOLUME 38_ALREADY BEEN IN A LAKE OF FIRE: PLATES 61-62, 1999-2002, digital print, 30 x 42 cm.



College in Massachusetts, at Queens College in New York, and since 2002 at Cooper Union in New York. Though he lives in the US, Raad's fictions are rooted in the post-war experience of Lebanon. After the civil war ended in late 1990, he returned to Beirut on a regular basis, along with many other people of his generation who had fled the sectarian strife. One of Raad's first projects there was the film *Up to the South* (1993), an experimental documentary about the Khiam detention center, the prison run by the South Lebanon Army, an Israeli proxy force cited by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for torturing prisoners.

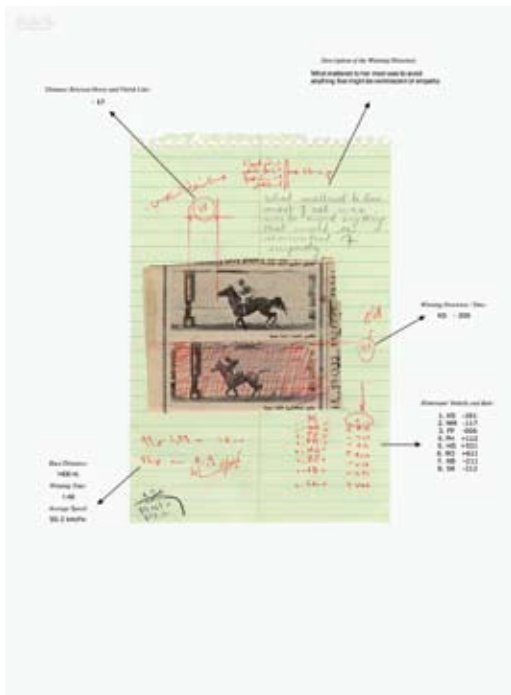
Raad began the works that comprise the Atlas Group in the late 1990s, though he initially made them under his own name. One of the earliest projects is *Secrets in the Open Sea* (1997/2002), a video that describes the discovery of large photographic plates depicting rectangular expanses of blue that were purportedly "found buried 32 meters under the rubble during the 1992 demolition of Beirut's war-ravaged commercial districts." On the Atlas Group's website [theatlasgroup.org], they are cataloged under the Found Files section, and the foreword claims: "The prints were different shades of blue and each measured 110 x 183 cm. The Lebanese government entrusted the prints to the Atlas Group in early 1994 for preservation and analysis. In late 1994, the Atlas Group sent the prints to laboratories in France and the United States for technical analysis. Remarkably, the laboratories recovered small black-and-white latent images from the prints, and the small images represent groups of men and women. The Atlas Group was able to identify all the individuals. . . and it turned out they were all individuals who had been found dead in the Mediterranean between 1975 and 1990." When Raad exhibits the prints, which he did for the first time in 2002, the large rectangle of blue from each of the fictive plates is accompanied by a thumbnail-sized image below the lower right corner, purported to be the latent images of those who died and were found in the sea. Raad does not explain why the prints have become blue, but the smooth color surface represents the lost circumstances of these individuals' disappearance as well as a society's inability—or possibly reluctance—to learn more.

Critics routinely point out that the network of fictions that Raad constructed for the Atlas Group blurred the lines between fiction and reality. But Raad says he no longer sees it that way. "I work in fiction.

NOTEBOOK VOLUME 38_ALREADY BEEN IN A LAKE OF FIRE: PLATES 67-68, 1999-2002, digital print, 30 x 42 cm.



NOTEBOOK VOLUME 38_ALREADY BEEN IN A LAKE OF FIRE: PLATES 59-60, 1999-2002, digital print, 30 x 42 cm.



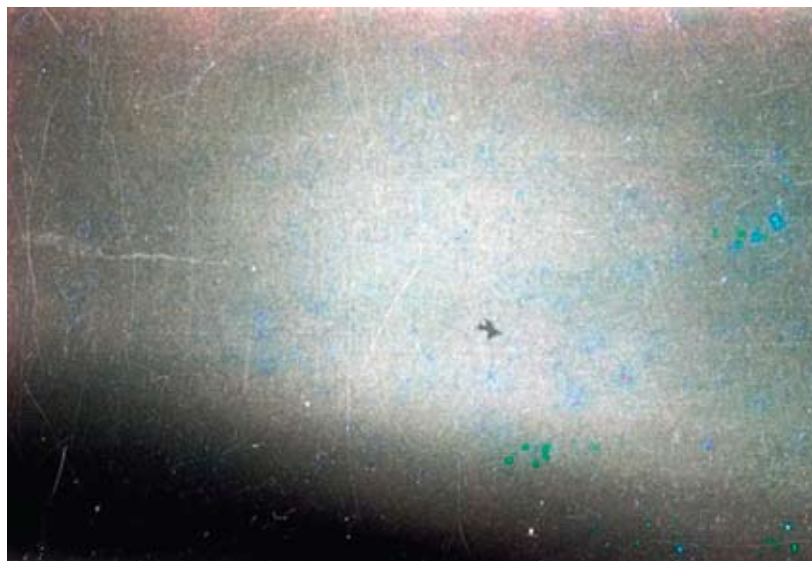
MISSING LEBANESE WARS, 1996-2002,
from a set of 21 archival inkjet prints, 33 x 25 cm.

Some things can only become manifest in fiction and nowhere else. These things also exist with rules and laws, notations of space and time. One hopes they are rigorous enough and that they hold up. The fiction-nonfiction issue is not interesting to me.”

One of the characters that Raad invented for the Atlas Group Archives is Dr. Fadl Fakhouri, “one of the foremost historians of the Lebanese wars.” The story goes that he donated 226 notebooks and two films to the Atlas Group before he died in 1993. *Already Been in a Lake of Fire_Notebook Volume 38* (1999) is one of these fictive notebooks, a series of cutout photographs of cars that are identical with the make and model of vehicles used for car bombings in Beirut, along with information about the attacks written in Arabic. The doctor was also interested in the gambling habits of Lebanon’s historians. These photographic plates, *Missing Lebanese Wars_Notebook Volume 72* (1989), show notepads of yellow ruled paper overlaid with black-and-white images of winning horses crossing the finish line. The premise is that the historians would bet on the distance between the horse’s nose and the actual finish line in the photo, since the races themselves were fixed. In another of Fakhouri’s archives, *Livre d’Or_Notebook Volume 57* (1993), the historian compiles images of doctors’ signs and arranges them in abstract patterns. As Raad explains the doctors’ signs say where they were trained, almost always in France, the US or the UK. “You could tell the history of Lebanon and the colonial mandate, and its legacy, through these signs,” Raad muses.

It is the making of artworks, as opposed to actual documentaries about the war years, that frees Raad to tell a story that while fictional in its particularities reveals a kind of truth about the past. As Raad comments, “I can say that some security officer decided to shoot sunsets every afternoon. It seems odd but possibly fascinating.” The video he is referring to is *I Only Wish That I Could Weep* (2002), a six-minute tape—according to the film’s introduction it was “mailed to the Atlas Group in 2000”—of several sunsets shot from Beirut’s seaside promenade, the Corniche. The conceit is that a Lebanese Army security officer who is supposed to be conducting surveillance on the seaside boardwalk instead turns his camera toward the setting sun each afternoon for more than a year. The emotional resonance of the piece comes as one imagines the fictitious “Operator #17” hidden in a “mini-van-café” on the Corniche all day, desperate for respite from his monotonous job and for a moment of beauty, even one

BEIRUT '82, PLANE I, 2005, from “We Decided to Let Them Say ‘We Are Convinced’ Twice,” digital print, 110 x 171 cm.



BEIRUT '82, ONLOOKERS, 2005, from “We Decided to Let Them Say ‘We Are Convinced’ Twice,” digital print, 110 x 171 cm.

Raad presents scratched photographs that he had taken in his childhood of Israeli warplanes bombing West Beirut.



● **BEIRUT '82, SOLDIERS III, 2005,**
from "We Decided to Let Them
Say 'We Are Convinced' Twice," digital
print, 110 x 171 cm.

as clichéd as the setting sun. The work asks viewers to consider that the camera operator—as a resident of a divided city at war—may not have had access to the Corniche in West Beirut, and thus the sunset holds a special significance for Operator #17. The piece also conveys psychological displacement, as Operator #17 turns away from the city and the legacy of the civil war—embodied in the ongoing intelligence operations that he monitors—to the comfort of the setting sun.

In the past, Raad has dated the origins of the Atlas Project to 1947, 1967 and 1999, but has now fixed the projects dates as 1989–2004. Even though he began the project in the late 1990s and continued to produce Atlas Group works until 2007, he back-dated them to pre-2004. Raad is also imprecise about his artistic methods, his motives and his personal history. Jalil Toufic is more than just an author whose works he has read. In fact, he collaborated with Jalil Toufic on a three-night workshop at the New Museum in New York in December 2008, "The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster." In this project, Raad connected the activities of the Atlas Group to Toufic's research into the "post-traumatic amnesia" in Lebanon, a cultural tendency given official approval when the Lebanese parliament passed the General Amnesty Law in 1991, under which those responsible for politically-motivated crimes and crimes against humanity committed before March 28, 1991, were granted immunity from prosecution.

Lebanon's culture of forgetting, which Toufic laments in his books and videos, manifests itself in Raad's Atlas Group projects. In *We Decided to Let Them Say, "We Are Convinced" Twice* (2002), Raad presents scratched photographs that he had taken in his childhood of Israeli planes bombing West Beirut, a crowd of onlookers on a rooftop watching the bombings, explosions in the distance of the cityscape, and images of resting Israeli soldiers who were stationed in the surrounding hills. But as Raad says now: "They are incredibly scratched, but I claim that the negatives are well-preserved. How is it that the world is scratched? This was the moment when I realized that I was dealing with a different logic, not the logic of trauma only. What if the distortions experienced are not the result of psychic processes but actually belong to the world? What if the world itself was distorted?" Referring to the images of horses approaching the finish line in *Missing Lebanese Wars_Notebook Volume 72*, Raad says, "It's not the photographer who froze the horse [in the photograph], it's the horse that froze." Where



BEIRUT '82, CITY V, 2005,
from "We Decided to Let
Them Say 'We Are Convinced' Twice,"
digital print, 110 x 171 cm. ●



Raad has been inadvertently caught up in the great proxy wars waged between the US and radical groups.

once Raad conceived of many of his artworks in terms of classic psychological models—displacement, sublimation, repression—he has re-conceptualized his practice. In doing so, he chronicles the signs of trauma that exist in the world—not in the artist himself. As he explains: “It’s getting away from a psychic model to a more phenomenological model. It is the world itself that acts this way and I’m just present. It’s no longer about mediation.”

Meeting with Raad had an air of intrigue about it. He stipulated that he did not want to be photographed for the article, and he would not collaborate on a printed interview. He proposed meeting at a café on New York’s Upper East Side—a seemingly anonymous location. Raad’s caution is not paranoia. He has been inadvertently caught up in the great proxy wars waged between the US and radical groups in the Middle East and the climate of fear and suspicion in the US during the last decade. In an incredible chain of events, which he described in *I Feel a Great Desire to Meet the Masses Once Again* and again in person, the FBI investigated Raad for possible connections to Hezbollah as he tried to board a plane from Rochester to New York City with his family in 2004. He was questioned about suspicious items in his suitcase, which turned out to be receipts from his travels to Hamburg (the home base of Sfeir-Semler Gallery) and Beirut, and various Atlas Group projects.

Despite the serious risks involved in making artworks about clandestine political activities, whether in Beirut or the US—for example, Raad did significant research on the private aircraft used by the CIA for the so-called rendition of terrorism suspects to foreign governments—the artist, in Raad’s view, remains free to propose realities about the world. “In good artworks, sometimes

the artist says, ‘the world is blue.’ The artist is proposing the world as such, not as one that has been submitted or mediated through a formal language in order to approximate an artist’s expression or experiences of it. It’s not as if there’s the world and there’s a formal dimension that attaches itself to it and hence aestheticizes it. There’s no division between the world and its mediations.” Rather than separating art from the world, fiction from nonfiction, Raad has tried in his new works to put historical truth and artistic truth on the same level. “More and more it’s clear to me that artists work with forms, not concepts. Ideas are attached to these forms, whether they are gestures, colors, lines or sounds.”

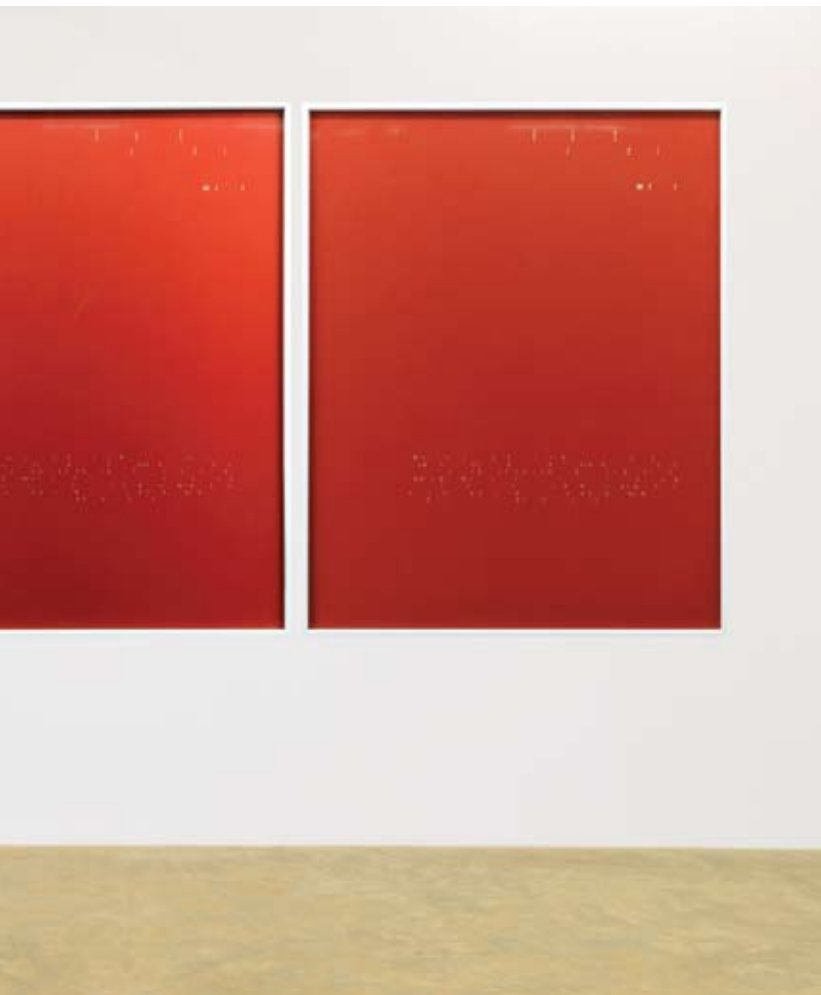
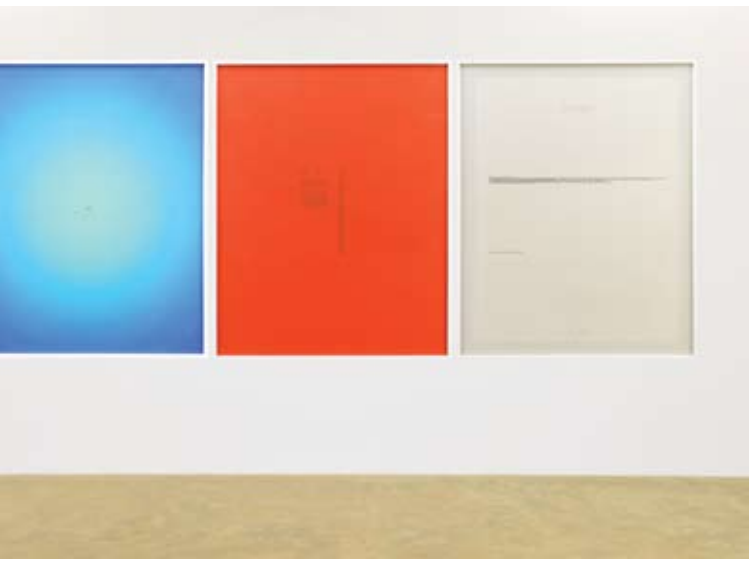
These comments help contextualize what are the most confounding works from Raad’s recent output, “Part I_Chapter 1_Section 271: Appendix XVIII: Plates” (2008), a series of five-foot-tall digital-print triptychs. *Appendix XVIII: Plates 22-24: Lebanon’s National Pavilion – Venice (2007) (Plate 24)* (2008) is from an all-red suite, with small fragments of sans serif English text—the letters *i*, *t* and *l*—dotting the surface. Another, *Appendix XVIII: Plates 56-58 Dr. Kirsten Scheid’s Fabulous Archive (Plate 56)* (2008), is white with blocks of text printed on yellowing paper arranged in a grid. A third triptych is composed of orange, white and yellow panels with minute bands of text in the center; the yellow panel, *Appendix XVIII: Plates 87-89: Study in Yellow, Orange and Blue, (Plate 88)*



APPENDIX XVIII: PLATES 87-89: STUDY IN YELLOW, ORANGE AND BLUE, 2008, archival inkjet prints, triptych, 164 x 131.5 cm each.



APPENDIX XVIII: PLATES 16-18: A NATIONAL PAVILION (2005).
2008, archival inkjet prints, triptych, 164 x 131.5 cm each.



(2008) reads “Contemporary Art Practices in Postwar Lebanon” in all-caps Times New Roman font.

In discussing the Middle East’s growing arts infrastructure—major new museums in the Gulf, a network of regional biennials, new artist spaces and galleries—Raad explains that the colors and text in this new series of images “come from this infrastructure, from books, dissertations, catalogs, invitation cards, budgets and proposals that I’ve been collecting.” However, Raad concedes that there is no definite index to the prints, so they are not expressly referential, although the titles and text in the printed works give clues. For example, Raad may have taken the red of *Appendix XVIII: Plates 22-24: Lebanon’s National Pavilion - Venice* from an invitation, press release or poster for the 2007 Lebanon Pavilion at Venice, but he does not make this explicit to viewers. He acknowledges the repercussions of this shift in his work. “They could be seen purely as formal objects—which I like. I also like the idea that there’s a consequence to making this kind of work. I wouldn’t be surprised to hear simplistic statements like: ‘You’re no longer a political artist, you’re a reactionary formalist.’ Or to hear the works dismissed as ‘graphic design art’—as if that’s an insult.” In fact, by setting himself limits as an artist about what he can use as material to make these digital prints, Raad is investing his artworks with more capacity to reveal truths than the original documents themselves. The “Appendix XVIII” series employs a variation on one of the central tenets of the Atlas Group projects: by looking away from the larger subject and instead at the small details, such as horse races, ammunition types, doctors’ signs and sunsets, one can see the subject itself more clearly.

Raad is not diminishing the capacity of artifacts to reveal history—that would be a dangerously glib proposition—but instead he is making a political point. Even though the government of Lebanon declared that it was not going to investigate or prosecute sectarian crimes committed during the civil war, the legacy of that trauma will find alternative outlets—whether it is in Lebanon’s ongoing civil strife, dramatized in violent political events such as the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri by a massive car-bomb in 2005, or in artistic hypotheses of the war’s effect on art objects, such as the missing Mustafa Farroukh paintings in Walid Sadek’s installation *Love Is Blind*. In the case of the abstract, monochrome prints of the “Appendix XVIII” series, Raad is taking a risk that the prints do—or will, in time—reveal something about how the relationship between culture and tradition has been affected in the Arab world. But for now, Raad admits that he is “fascinated but a little confused” about what to make of all the cultural developments in the Middle East. However, he was happy to relate that he had met young Lebanese who had approached him because they wanted to become artists. As Raad says, “That means they think they can.”

Before concluding our conversation, Raad digs out an article from the *Financial Times*. “Speaking of disappearance and surveillance,” he says, passing me an article about an “anti-CCTV lotion,” a skin cream that supposedly blurs your face on film or video footage. He laughs and comments that he cannot tell if this is a real article or not. Then he excuses himself, “I have to pick up my daughter from ballet class.”

APPENDIX XVIII: PLATES 22-24: LEBANON'S
NATIONAL PAVILION - VENICE (2007), 2008, archival
inkjet prints, triptych, 164 x 131.5 cm each.