

# Alumnus Walid Raad Receives 2011 Hasselblad Award in Photography

University of Rochester alumnus and former adjunct faculty member [Walid Raad](#) has been named the recipient of the 2011 Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography. The annual international award for outstanding achievement in photography is among the most important photography prizes worldwide.

Raad received the award at a ceremony in New York last week, co-hosted by the Hasselblad Foundation and the Consulate General of Sweden in New York. The prize consists of \$150,000, a diploma, and a gold medal. An exhibition of his work, [Walid Raad](#) 2011 Hasselblad Award Winner, will open on Nov. 12, 2011, at the Hasselblad Center at the Gothenburg Museum of Art, Sweden, where the foundation's main office is located. Previous winners of the award, which was established in 1980, include Sophie Calle, Robert Adams, Nan Goldin, and Cindy Sherman.

According to a [statement](#) from the foundation: "Walid Raad is one of the most original and singular contemporary artists using photography. He has been widely acclaimed for his project "[The Atlas Group](#)," in which Raad generated original ideas about the relationship between documentary photography, archive, and history." The foundation also credits Raad for developing innovative methods of approaching the imagery of war and the way political and social conflict can be explored in art. Named in memory of Victor Hasselblad, the creator of the Hasselblad camera system, and his wife Erna, the [foundation](#) aims to promote research and academic teaching in the natural sciences and photography.

In 1999, Raad established The Atlas Group, a project devoted to researching and documenting the contemporary history of Lebanon.

While his work references the brutal realities of daily life in Lebanon during a crucial phase of its history, it also promotes an understanding of how that history is envisioned, narrated, written, and imaged in art. According to Thomas DiPiero, senior associate dean of the humanities at the University, "Walid Raad has been producing some of the most astute, visually captivating representations of conflict in Lebanon. His critical work demonstrates that we can never fully understand a traumatic event, even when we are experiencing it directly." DiPiero was one of Raad's professors in the 1990s when he attended the University of Rochester.

Raad received both his master's ('93) and doctoral degrees ('96) from the University's Graduate Program in Visual and Cultural Studies (VCS). He taught briefly as an adjunct professor in the University's Studio Art program where he also taught introductory photography as a graduate student. Since then, his body of work, which includes video, photography, and literary essays, has gone on to be widely recognized in the art world and within fields connected to cultural studies.

"Walid asks us to confront the things that we set up as incomprehensible, and to try to understand how and why we put them beyond our intellectual grasp. His work is so powerful because it hits you at both an intellectual and an emotional level," said DiPiero.

Raad currently lives in New York and is an associate professor of art at The Cooper Union's School of Art. For more information about the 2011 Hasselblad Award and images by Walid Raad/[The Atlas Group](http://www.theatlasgroup.com) visit, <http://www.hasselbladfoundation.org/news/en/>.

### **About The Hasselblad Foundation**

The Hasselblad Foundation was established in 1979 under the terms of the last will and testament of Dr. Victor Hasselblad and his wife Erna. The purpose of the Foundation is to promote scientific education and research in the natural sciences and photography. This aim is achieved through the awarding of donations and grants for scientific research, an

international award in photography, and scholarships and grants for research projects in photography.