

Walid Raad

For over 35 years, Walid Raad has used art to explore the psychological effects of war and violence on people and communities, not least as they play out in his native Lebanon. The artist had solo exhibitions at Fondazione Volume!, Milan, Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut, and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, this year. This last, *Better be watching the clouds* (notionally a project from the archives of Raad's fictional Atlas Group, which collects documentary material related to the contemporary history of Lebanon), was a typical expression of Raad's sensibility, featuring pages from a book of flora native to the Middle East, onto which he had overlaid the portraits of political leaders connected to the Lebanese Civil War. Outside the gallery space, Raad is a prominent activist within the Gulf Labor Artist Coalition, looking out for those building the baubles of the Emirates. Raad's students at New York's Cooper Union are getting a vivid demonstration of how art practice and real life can marry.