

Scratching On Things I Could Disavow - Walid Raad

- Sfeir-Semler Gallery, TANNOUS BLDG.- 4th FL. STR.56 - JISR SECTOR 77 - QUARANTINA, Beirut, Lebanon

Scratching On Things I Could Disavow - Walid Raad, Sfeir-Semler Beirut

SFEIR-SEMLER GALLERY, BEIRUT

Invites you to the opening of its new exhibition

WALID RAAD

Scratching on Things I Could Disavow

Four years after displaying the first edition of his ongoing project on the history of the arts in the Arab world, Walid Raad presents *Scratching On Things I Could Disavow*, now expanded from its first chapter on post-war Beirut to explore other forms, gestures, institutions and practices from across Middle East. In 2008, Walid Raad initiated this project about the history of contemporary and modern art in the Arab world. The project was initially motivated by the museum building boom taking place in the Gulf, and by his continued engagement with the works of the artist and writer Jalal Toufic.

Scratching on Things I Could Disavow explores the ideological, economic, political, but most importantly, the aesthetic dimensions of this recent fascination with the arts in the Arab world. In his works, Raad also leans on Jalal Toufic's concept of "the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster" and asks how culture and tradition in the Arab world may have been affected, materially and immaterially by the various wars that have been waged there by native and external powers.

The show will include sculptures, videos, photographs and stories. Most were recently on display in Documenta 13 in Kassel. Others, such as Preface to the Seventh Edition are exhibited here for the first time. At one end of the gallery, Raad presents large-scale sculptures tackling architectural motifs relevant to the newly constructed museums in the Gulf. In other spaces Raad show photographs of what appears to be abstracted forms and colors. The show also includes a video installation on the Artist Pension Trust (APT), which unravels the complexities behind this investment fund for artists. Raad's stories, available as wall-texts in the gallery, recount his and other characters' historical and imaginary encounters with forms, concepts, economies, and situations made available on the fertile but thorny ground of the visual arts in the Arab world.

Walid Raad is an artist and an Associate Professor of Art in The Cooper Union (New York, USA). Raad's works include The Atlas Group, a fifteen-year project between 1989 and 2004 about the contemporary history of Lebanon, and the ongoing projects Scratching on Things I Could Disavow and Sweet Talk: Commissions (Beirut). His books include The Truth Will Be Known When The Last Witness Is Dead, My Neck Is Thinner Than A Hair, Let's Be Honest, The Weather Helped, and Scratching on Things I Could Disavow.

Raad's works have been shown in Documenta 11 and 13 (Kassel, Germany), Kunsthalle Zurich (Zurich, Switzerland), The Whitechapel Art Gallery (London, UK), Festival d'Automne (Paris, France), Kunsten Festival des Arts (Brussels, Belgium), The Venice Biennale (Venice, Italy), The Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin, Germany), Homeworks (Beirut, Lebanon) and numerous other museums and venues in Europe, the Middle East, and Americas.

Raad is also the recipient of the Hasselblad Award (2011), a Guggenheim Fellowship (2009), the Alpert Award in Visual Arts (2007), the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize (2007), and the Camera Austria Award (2005).

The exhibition runs from the 29th of November until the 23rd of March 2013. For more information, please contact beirut@sfeir-semmler.com