

Walid Raad: Miraculous Beginnings - Announcements - Art & Education

Walid Raad: Miraculous Beginnings.

Now living in the US, Raad's work *The Atlas Group* (1989 – 2004) is rooted in his experiences as a teenager in Beirut during the Lebanese Civil Wars (1975 – 90). His artworks, presented as documents and attributed to fictional as well as historical figures, narrate and visualise stories about the Lebanese wars of the past three decades. His images piece together a complex story of modern Lebanon – a history which still cannot be taught at school – with Raad's exploration of photographic medium, its materials and conventions.

The exhibition begins with photography and videotapes by *The Atlas Group* (1989 – 2004), Raad's project on the Lebanese wars. He queries how history, in particular one characterised as traumatic, can be told and visually represented. Key works include the photographic series *Secrets in the open sea* (1994/2004); *Civilizationally, we do not dig holes to bury ourselves* (1993/2003); *My neck Is thinner than a hair: Engines* (2001/2003); *We decided to let them say, "we are convinced," twice* (2002/2006); and *Let's be honest, the weather helped* (1998/2006-7), and selected video works.

Sweet Talk: Commissions (Beirut) (1987 – present), shown for the first time, presents a series of photo assignments Raad gave himself about Beirut to capture the changing face of his home city.

The final section, *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: A History of Art in the Arab World* (2008 – present), looks at the boom of contemporary art in the Middle East and how this affects artists working in the region.

Walid Raad: Miraculous Beginnings is curated by Achim Borchardt-Hume,

Chief Curator, Whitechapel Gallery. The exhibition is a collaboration between Whitechapel Gallery and Bildmuseet, Umeå University.

Walid Raad: Miraculous Beginnings is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by Whitechapel Gallery and Festival D'Automne à Paris with contributions by Walid Raad, Achim Borchardt-Hume, Chief Curator, Whitechapel Gallery, Hélène Chouteau-Matikian, writer and curator, Alan Gilbert, writer and poet, and Blake Stimson, Professor of Art History at University of California. Walid Raad is represented by Anthony Reynolds Gallery in London, Paula Cooper Gallery in New York, and Galerie Sfeir-Semler in Hamburg and Beirut.