



The Kitchen Center
for Video, Music, Dance,
Performance, Film & Literature

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For Immediate Release

The Kitchen presents the first New York solo exhibition by Walid Raad/The Atlas Group

November 29, 2005 – The Kitchen is pleased to present the first New York solo exhibition by **Walid Raad**, titled *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs: Documents from The Atlas Group Archive*. The exhibition includes video projections, digital prints, and two performance-lectures, which are all components of the artist's ongoing venture, **The Atlas Group**. As the name of both a project and a foundation, The Atlas Group researches and documents the contemporary history of Lebanon, with a particular emphasis both on the wars from 1975 to 1991, and on the consequences of war more broadly on life in cities such as Beirut, New York, Madrid, London, and Baghdad. Presenting a collection of photographic and video documents on subjects as varied as car bombs, horse racing, and captivity, The Atlas Group explores the ways that experiences of violence are formed, represented, and remembered. Organized by Debra Singer, the **exhibition will be on view from January 7 through March 11, 2006 at The Kitchen (512 West 19th Street). Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 12 to 6 pm.** Admission is free.

During the exhibition, **Raad will present two performance-lectures**: the first will take place on **Saturday, January 7 at 5pm** and will be followed by an **opening reception for the artist from 6-8pm**; a second (and different) performance-lecture is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 28 at 6pm**. **Admission to both lectures is free.**

In his venture, Raad does not consider the "The Lebanese Civil War" to be a conclusive set of events, or a fixed chronology of bombings, massacres, and invasions. Rather, he examines his subject as an abstraction that is shaped by various actions, personalities, and many modes of experience. Simultaneously, he also explores how this constellation of factors intersects with a range of thoughts, memories, and emotions triggered by physically and psychologically violent conflicts.

Among the various documents from the Archive that will be on view is ***Notebook Volume 38: Already Been in a Lake of Fire*** (1999), which consists of a notebook attributed to an imaginary historian named Dr. Fadl Fakhouri. The notebook includes pages with text and cutout photographs of the exact make, model, and color of every vehicle used as a car bomb during seventeen years of wars in Lebanon. ***Notebook Volume 72: Missing Lebanese Wars*** (1996) comprises "photo-finish" photographs from Lebanese horse-races, along with detailed notes in the margins. This notebook documents the actions of a group of historians who decided to place bets, not on the horses themselves, but on whether the track photographer was able to photograph the winning horse at, before, or after the finish line.

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Secrets in the Open Sea (1997) consists of a series of large-scale, variously-shaded blue panels of exposed photographic paper with tiny black-and-white portrait photographs in the bottom right-hand corners that depict anonymous men and women who drowned, or were found dead, in the Mediterranean Sea during the wars. Finally, one of the projected videos is *Hostage: The Bachar Tapes (#17 and #31) English Version*, (2000) in which Souheil Bachar, who is identified as the only Lebanese person held with American hostages in Lebanon, offers compelling testimony about the cultural and psychic dimensions of captivity. Four other selections from the Archive will also be on display.

During the exhibition Raad will present two of his performance-lectures, which are mixed-media presentations using material culled from the foundation's archive of photographic slides, notebook pages, and videotape excerpts. Delivered in a formal, academic style, the performance-lectures extend Raad's exploration of the question of the document in media arts, and of the formal, historical, and psychic dimensions of traumatic experiences of historical dimensions.

Artist's Biography

Walid Raad was born in Chbanieh, Lebanon in 1967 and resides between Beirut and New York. Raad is currently an Associate Professor of Art at Cooper Union. His work encompasses a range of media, including textual analysis, video, performance, and photography. Raad's work has been shown extensively in venues and festivals throughout Europe, the Middle East, and North America such as *Documenta XI (Germany)*, *The Venice Biennale (Italy)*, *The Whitney Biennial (USA)*, *Homeworks (Lebanon)*, and numerous others.

This exhibition was made possible with support from Cristina Enriquez-Bocobo and with a generous grant from The Peter Norton Family Foundation. The Kitchen's exhibition programs are made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.



ABOUT THE KITCHEN

The Kitchen is one of New York City's oldest nonprofit performance and exhibition spaces, showing experimental work by innovative artists, both emerging and established. Programs range from dance, music, and theatrical performances to video and media arts exhibitions to literary events, film screenings, and artists' talks. Since its inception in 1971, The Kitchen has been a powerful force in shaping the cultural landscape of this country and has helped launch the careers of many artists who have gone on to worldwide prominence.

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