



Translating Images

Conversations with the Collections
of *the Arab Image Foundation*

26 August - 22 September 2022

In collaboration with

CINEMA GALERIES



Beirut
Printmaking
Studio

www.minaimagecentre.org

الصور في ترجماتها

حوارات مع مجموعات
المؤسسة العربية للصورة

٢٦ آب - ٢٢ ايلول ٢٠٢٢

بالتعاون مع

**Liverpool Arab
Arts Festival**

This publication was produced in conjunction with the exhibition *Translating Images: Conversations with the Collections of the Arab Image Foundation*, on view at Mina Image Centre from 26 August to 22 September 2022.

This exhibition was organised in partnership with Mina Image Centre; and in collaboration with Beirut Printmaking Studio, Liverpool Arab Arts Festival, and Cinema Galleries.

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The Arab Image Foundation (AIF)'s work is an ever-evolving research process into ways of looking at, interpreting, and interacting with the photographic objects in its custody. A photographic negative or print, once created, remains in constant physical mutation. Likewise, its historical, cultural, and affective lives will depend on the viewer and will continue to shift.

Mina Image Centre and the Arab Image Foundation present *Translating Images: Conversations with the Collections of the Arab Image Foundation*. Bringing together two recent projects by the foundation, the exhibition explores the many lives that images can bear, and the ways in which photographic archives can be unpacked and re-interpreted through research and artistic practices.

Though these two projects were initially conceived and exhibited separately, they are presented at Mina Image Center side by side through a scenography that brings to the fore the mediums they engage in – be it printmaking or the moving image – creating a synergy between the two.

The diptychs on the walls were produced in the framework of a collaboration between the foundation and the Beirut Printmaking Studio, reflecting on the relationship between photography, printmaking, and the archive. Practitioners from the Beirut Printmaking Studio were invited to choose images from diverse AIF collections, spanning from the 1870s to the 1970s, and from different parts of the Arab region and its diaspora, to produce their own intaglio prints. Positive prints of the original photographic negatives were produced, each of which is displayed here alongside the corresponding intaglio print as a diptych. These works were first shown in July 2022 in an exhibition titled *Impressions from an Archive*, presented at the Exhibition Research Lab in Liverpool in the framework – and with the support of – the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival.

The short films presented here were co-commissioned by the AIF and Cinema Galleries for the exhibition Videos on Beirut, which took place in the framework of L'heure d'hiver, Cinema Galleries' annual festival in Brussels, which took place in April 2022. Six artists and one collective work by the AIF team focused on one image or a series of photographic objects from the AIF's collections, from which they produced video works that provoke reflection on the transformations in Beirut, adding layers of interpretation to the existing photographic collections.

Mina Image Centre presents these two projects for the first time in Lebanon, having been shown in Liverpool and Brussels, respectively, earlier this year. This exhibition is an opportunity for local audiences to engage with these works and reflect on the realities they evoke.

**Printmaking in dialogue
with photography**

Alaa Itani

Roulette on copper plate



Priest to the left: Nifon Saba; to the right: Geraique. San Jorge Orthodox Church.
Taken by an unidentified photographer between 1959 and 1961 in Mendoza, Argentina.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 16 x 22 cm.
0250sj00010, 0250sj - Parroquia San Jorge Collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

I see order, without dampening, and I see dampening in my house,
without order, but with faith. I smell odour with faith, and I see noses
within order.

I see a damp hairline, glowing in the dark, and I hear a secreting
nose dripping without order.



Antonios Chalfoun

Aquatint, etching and roulette on copper plate

Once we take a picture, the moment is lost, and engraved upon a film, subjects disappear but their print outlives them. I chose 3 verses of Abû Nuwâs's poem called DA' 'ANKA LAWMI' (verse 1, verse 8, verse 11).

The text added communicates with the plate itself, discussing the present that we live in, which somehow is the past repeating itself.



Amira Akil standing on a barrel, Villanueva.
Taken by an unidentified photographer between 1955 and 1957 in Mendoza, Argentina.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 8.7 x 11.7 cm.
0255mb00020, 0255mb - Liliana Massud de Badawi collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.



Aya Zantout

Etching on copper plate



Snapshot of a passing car taken from another car.
Taken by an unidentified photographer between 1950 and 1959 in Egypt.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 7.1 x 10.6 cm.
0042ba00004, 0042ba - Ahmad El Batrawi Family collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Diala Namour

Linocut



The body of Carlos Azar.
Second from the left: Dolores Barbar, his wife, and Olmas Barbar to the right.
Taken by an unidentified photographer in 1928 in Atlixco, Mexico.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 11.8 x 17 cm.
0233ma00006, 0233ma - Maria Antonieta Manzur de Azar collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.



Fadi Almelhem

Burin and roulette on copper plate

The imbalance between forms creates a state of discomfort to the viewer, which can be projected on many concepts without the same jaundiced state.



Sakkara pyramid.
Taken by an unidentified photographer between 1940 and 1949 in Sakkara, Egypt.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 4.3 x 6.6 cm.
0042ba00023, 0042ba - Ahmad El Batrawi Family collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

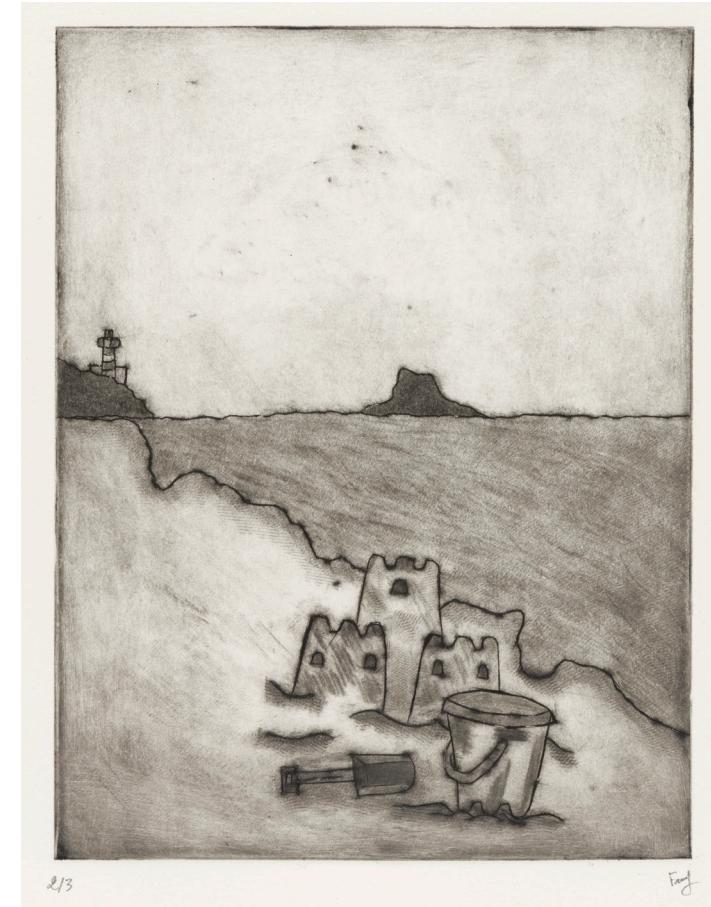
Fanny Blikaz

Burin and roulette on copper plate



Outdoor snapshot.
Taken by an unidentified photographer in 1936 in Jaffa, Palestine.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 5.6 x 8.1 cm.
0063ag00008, 0063ag - Alice Agazarian collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Une journée, je marche. Un château de sable, de l'air. Respire mon enfant en dépit de tout.
Les routes, les regards.
Des regards qui me fixent. Respire... J'ai oublié ma montre. Le temps passe. Mon poignet. Respire..
J'ai voulu prendre des photos aujourd'hui. J'ai arrosé les plantes, elles résistent.
Respire mon enfant. Un château de sable eondré. Respire, respire... Je fais de mon mieux.



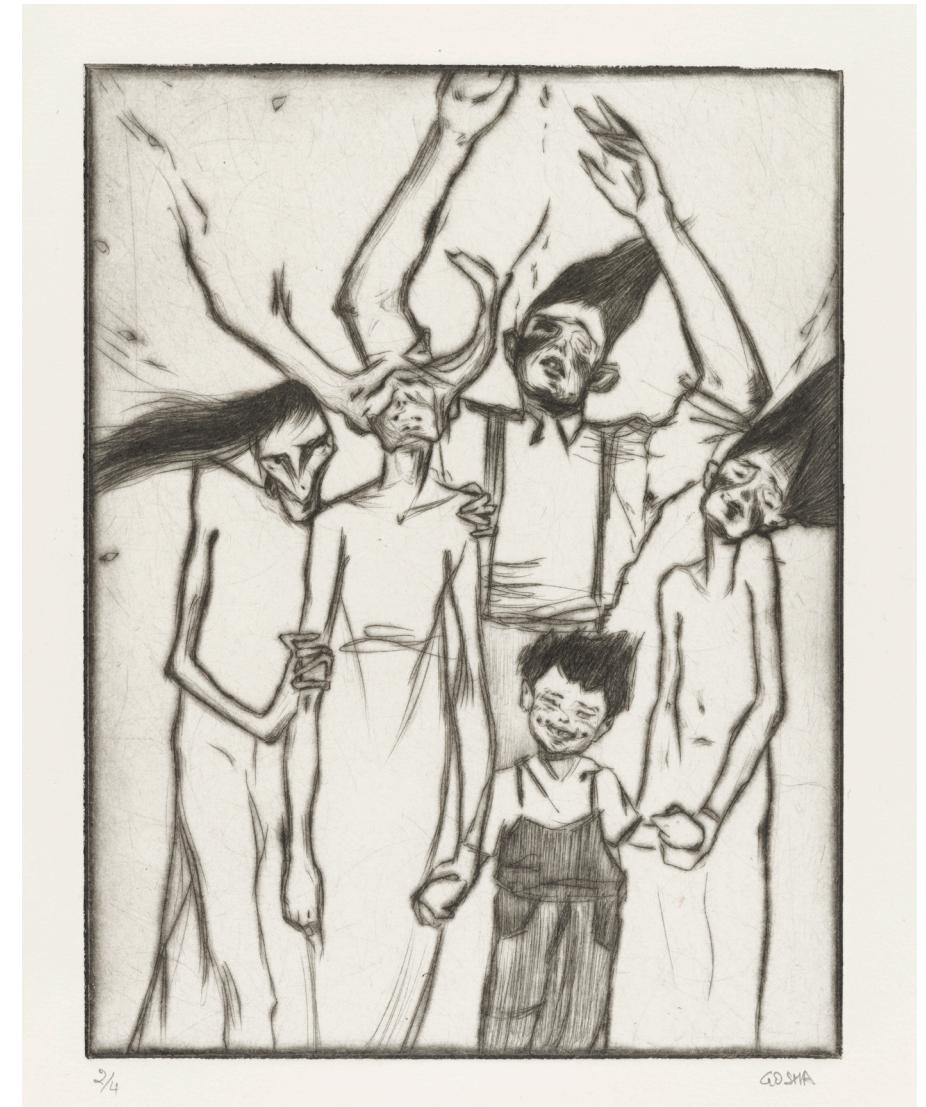
Gosha Beshlyan

Drypoint on plexiglass



Grape harvest at "San Roque," Palmira.
Taken by an unidentified photographer in 1950 in Mendoza, Argentina.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 6.2 x 8.5 cm.
0247az00004, 0247az - Alicia Simon de Azar collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Shamans summoning the rain versus kid singing "Rain, Rain, Go Away,
little baby wants to play.



Haifa Dbouk

Burin on copper plate

A dialogue of how objects from the past can be replaced by the smartphone which has become an essential need in our daily lives that the younger generation have grown accustomed to and can't live without.



Young person carrying a water jug
Taken by Pascal Sebah between 1870 and
1880 in Egypt.
Albumen print, 27 x 21.5 cm.
0010sa00067, 0010sa - Nawaf Salam
collection, courtesy of the Arab Image
Foundation, Beirut.



Jad Kazzi

Linocut



Jose Muzaber and Maria Masnu with their children Salvador, Fortunato, and Helena. Taken by an unidentified photographer in Argentina. Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 20.6 x 15.4 cm. 0251mi00004, 0251mi - Antonio Micames collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

I call this print Maria Justa in the memory of my late grandmother. She was born into a Lebanese immigrant family in Argentina. Similar to the girl in the photograph, she was probably raised with middle eastern traditions. Her destiny led her to return and settle down in Lebanon.



Jamie Haddad

Drypoint on copper plate



Rosa Baddour.
Taken by an unidentified photographer in 1938 in Teziutlan, Puebla, Mexico. Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 12.9 x 7.9 cm.
0238ha0005, 0238ha - Nagib Haddad collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

I like to think that Rosa Baddour is off dancing somewhere, toe tapping, skirt swaying, moving to her own beat. To exist in the diaspora is to discover that you must follow your own unique groove.

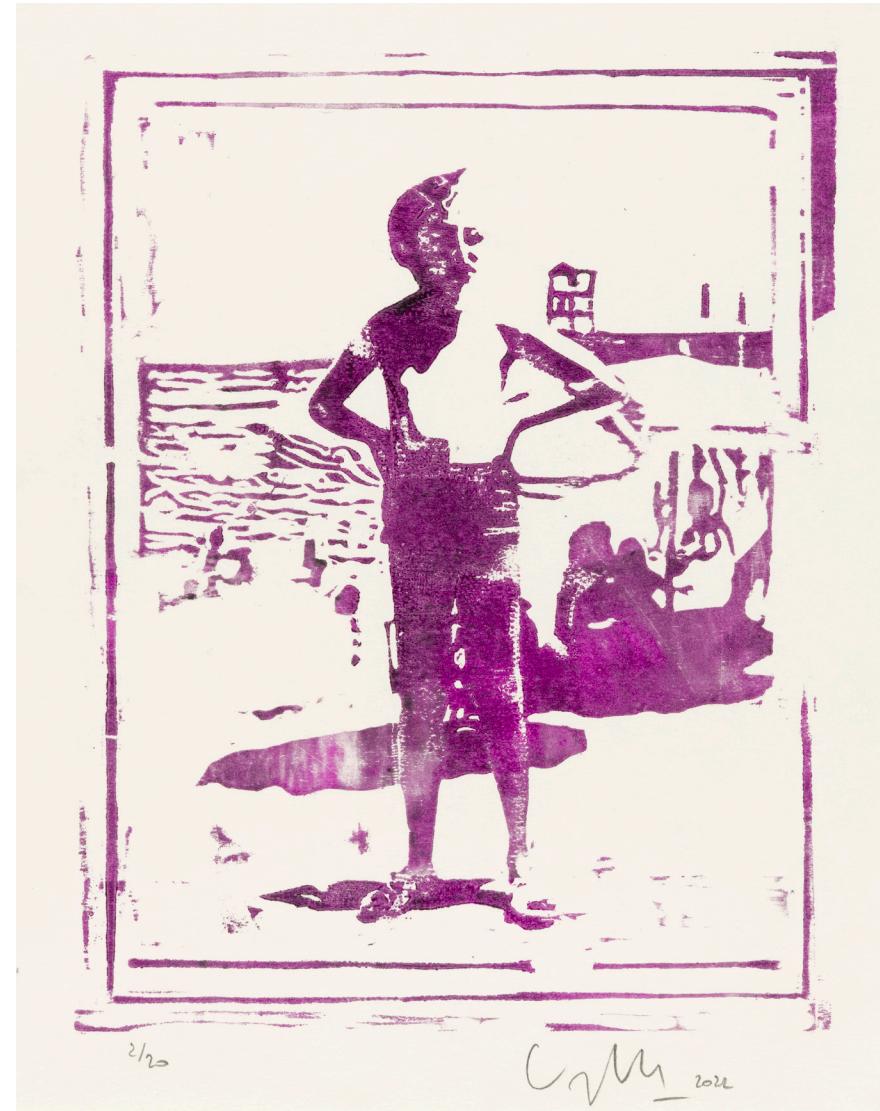


Jean-Michel Uyttersprot

Woodcut



Ismail Rachid on the beach of Alexandria.
Taken by Studio Philippe in 1950 in Alexandria, Egypt.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 18.2 x 13.4 cm.
0056ri00130, 0056ri - Ismail Rachid collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.



Mariam Arbid

Aquatint and etching on copper plate



Um Kulthum.
Taken by Badr in 1920 in Egypt Gelatin silver developing-
out paper print, 14 x 8.9 cm.
0042ba00002, 0042ba - Ahmad El Batrawi Family
collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

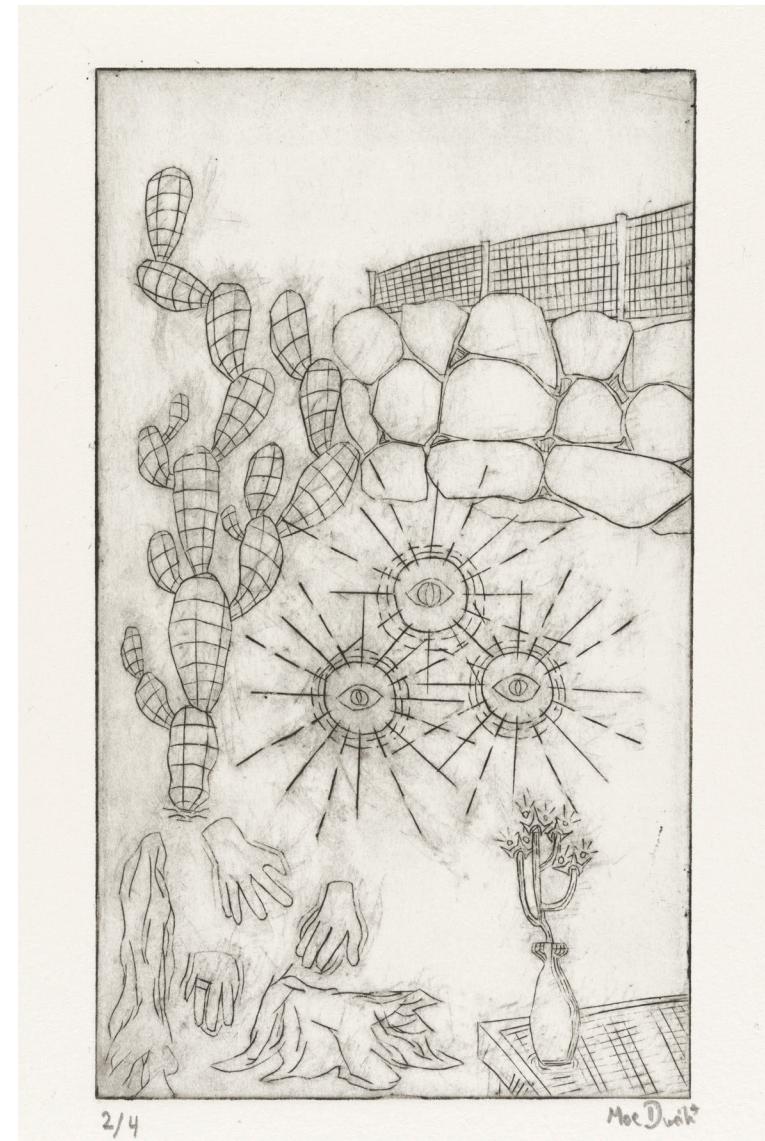


Mohamad Dweik

Burin on copper plate



From the left: Asmahan, Salma Aouad, and Samia Aouad Hamdan.
Taken by an unidentified photographer in 1928 in the Chouf, Lebanon.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print,
13.1 x 7.9 cm.
0241ha00007, 0241ha - Chafic Hamdan collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.



Qamar Shamieh

Burin and roulette on copper plate



Quadruplets delivered by Doctor Thompson.
Taken by Sami Khoury in 1947 in Haifa, Palestine.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 8.7 x 12 cm.
0077kh00018, 0077kh - Sami Khoury collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

In my print, I wanted to show the result of the angelic quadruplets in the photograph I am working on, the mother. It tries to convey the relationship between a mother and her child, similar to that of a spider weaving from within herself a new being and protects it from danger.



Ramy Saad

Burin and roulette on copper plate



Amin Kamel Kavar.
Taken by Garabed Krikorian in 1900
in Palestine.
Albumen print, mounted on
cardboard, 10.7 x 6.7 cm.
0028ka00008, 0028ka - Widad Kavar
collection, courtesy of the Arab Image
Foundation, Beirut.

2800 B.C. a Chinese legend tells the story of a huge flood that destroyed crops and land, 'Lo Shu' or "scroll of the river Lo". The people offered sacrifices to the river God to calm his anger. Every time the river flooded, there emerged a turtle that would walk around the sacrifice, it was not until a child noticed a unique pattern on the turtle's shell that told the people how many sacrifice to make for the river God to accept their offerings.

The geometric pattern of that shell was used for over 4000 years by different cultures. Indian and Egyptian cultures engraved this magic square onto stone or metal into gowns worn by talismans to ensure longevity and prevent against diseases.



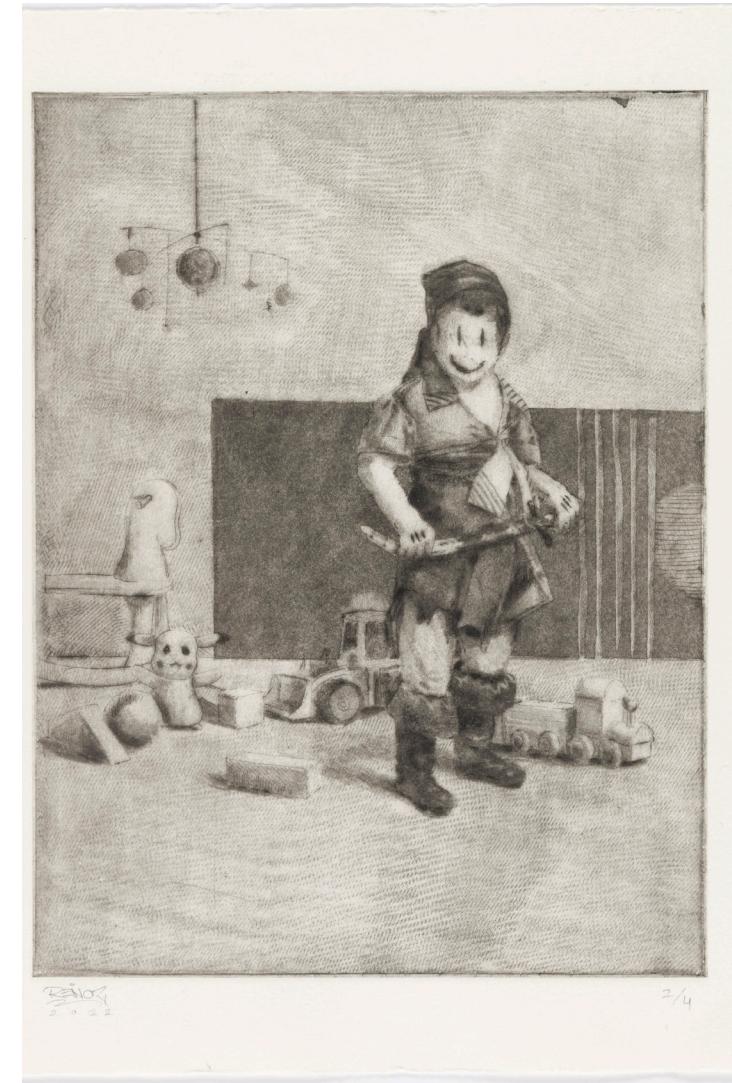
Renoz

Roulette, drypoint and aquatint on copper plate



Jorge Zgaib.
Taken by an unidentified photographer
between 1949 and 1951 in
Mendoza, Argentina.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print,
13.5 x 8.5 cm.
0249az00009, 0249az - Mariella &
Jorgelina Avila Zgaib collection,
courtesy of the Arab Image
Foundation, Beirut.

A random photo from an old archive made perfect sense.
It expressed the resemblance between our current state of aggression and violence and the way
we were raised.



Sabine Delahaut

Burin and roulette on copper plate



Dinner gathering
Taken by Constantin and Georges Zangaki between 1870 and 1880 in Cairo, Egypt.
Albumen print, 22 x 28 cm.
0010sa00065, 0010sa - Nawaf Salam collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Samer Bou Saleh

Burin on copper plate



From the left: Wadih Bulhosen and his cousin Mustafa Bulhosen. Taken by an unidentified photographer in 1939 in Mexico City, Mexico. Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 17.7 x 12.7 cm. 0236bm00008, 0236bm - Samia Bulhosen Madrigal collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

The pose of the cousins strikes great resemblance to the famous Pink Floyd album 'Wish You Were Here' cover photo, where the duality between the military and the civilian is expressed in the lyrics of the same song, '...Did you exchange, a walk-on part in the war, for a leading role in a cage?'.



Tarek Mourad

Burin on copper plate



Georges Bassil.
Taken by Georges Bassil in 1935 in
Bethlehem, Palestine.
Gelatin silver developing-out paper
print, 13.9 x 8.9 cm.
0031ka00011, 0031ka - Yacoub Katimi
collection, courtesy of the Arab Image
Foundation, Beirut.

Abdul hopped on the boat, at the young age of 13 and looked up to the Serra do Mar with fright. What beast would come out of the forest to devour him? Debret must have had the same feeling when he made his lithograph - Vallée da Serra do Mar. Abdul never met Debred. In this print, I propose a meeting between Abdul and Debret, even through the setting, that was commonplace for both.

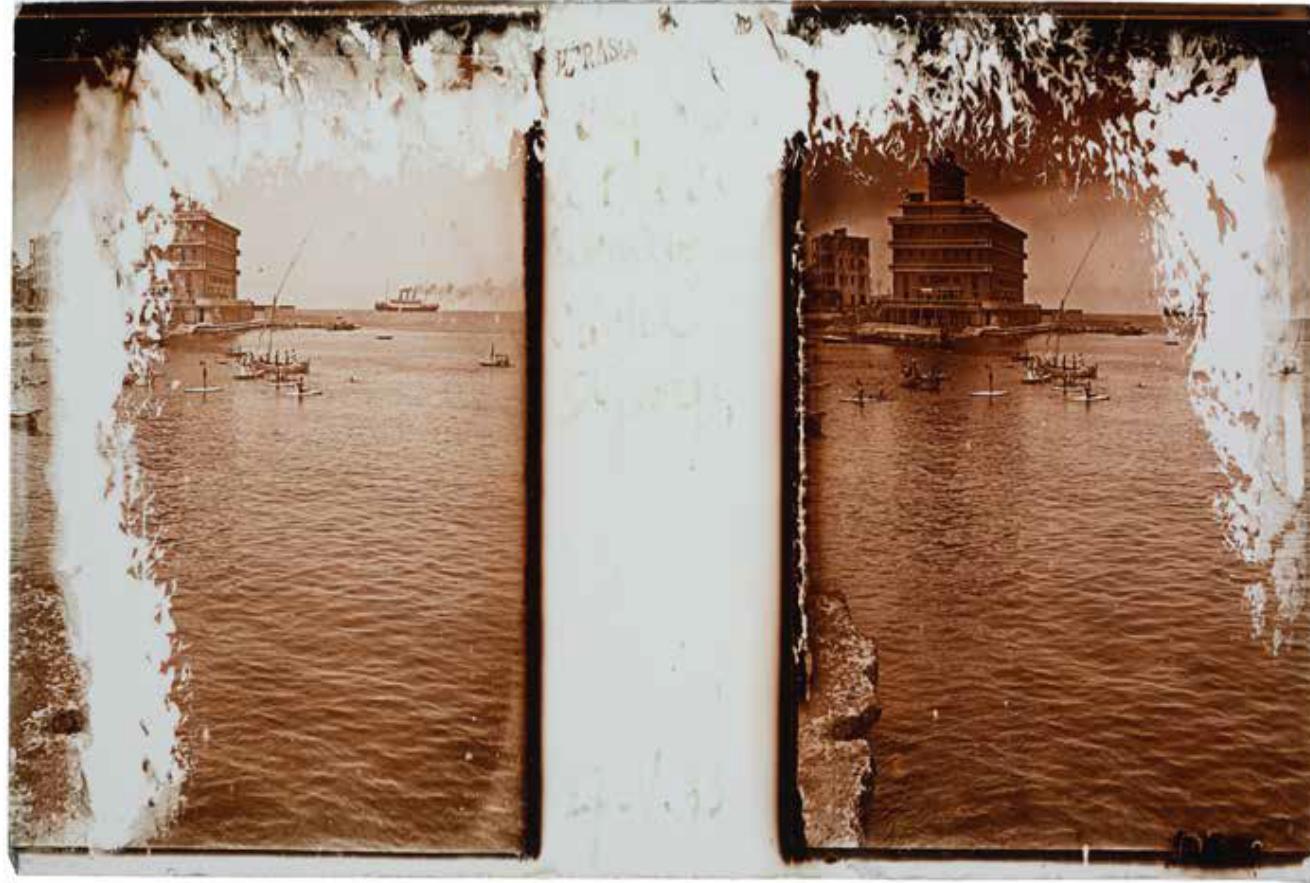


**Between the still and
the moving image**

Malak Mroueh

Lettre de Beyrouth hiver 2022,2022

2'37", colour, no sound



St. George Hotel

Photographed by Eugène Cottard in 1933 in Beirut, Lebanon

Stereograph transparency, 4.5 × 10.5 cm

0300co00168pg, 0300co – Eugène Cottard collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Beirut, this eternal construction site. Always and never the same.

Malak Mroueh is a filmmaker born in Nabatieh. She has directed several short films and essays around the themes of queer bodies and violence.

Nadim Choufi

I'm not sure it's the same sun anymore, 2022

2'51", colour



The third basin of the Beirut port

Photographed by Ciné Poly in Beirut, Lebanon

Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 18.0 x 24.3 cm

0242ac00077, 0242ac – Jorge Abud Chami collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

There are moments of impossibility in knowing what can unfold in Beirut regardless of the amount of language and work done to explain Beirut. This video attempts to locate one of these moments and how it can seep into the past and future.

Nadim Choufi is an artist and researcher living in Beirut. He primarily focuses on the material histories and futures of innovation, their social and political driving forces, the visual and literary practices that surround them.

Mark Khalife

Chafic El Soussi, témoin [Chafic El Soussi, witness], 2022

5', colour, stereo



Digital contact sheet containing outdoor snapshots
Photographs taken by Chafic el Soussi in 1956 in Saida, Lebanon
0038so-DCS0014, 0038so – Chafic el Soussi collection, courtesy of the
Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.



Sifting through the sheets of the photographer Chafic El Soussi, in the rather arbitrary order in which they were listed at the Arab Image Foundation, the beautiful, the mundane, and the terrifying all merge into one another.

The images in this video were all taken between 1953 and 1964 by Chafic El Soussi, in and around Saida in south Lebanon. The video contains some disturbing imagery, so please proceed with caution.

*Mark Khalife is a cinematographer born in 1986 in Lebanon. He has worked on several feature films, including *After the End of the World* (2022), *Sanzaru* (2020), *Une Rose Ouverte* (2019), *Speaking in Tongues* (2018), and *The Drift* (2018). He has also collaborated with visual artists such as Akram Zaatari, Roy Samaha, Nesrine Khodr, Alia Farid, and Carlos Motta.*

Digital contact sheet containing indoor and outdoor snapshots
Photographs taken by Chafic el Soussi between 1957 and 1959 in Saida, Lebanon
0038so-DCS0029, 0038so – Chafic el Soussi collection, courtesy of the
Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Monica Basbous

Mountains at sea, 2022

2'51", colour, sound



Untitled

Taken by an unidentified photographer between 1940 and 1950 in Bekaa, Lebanon

Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 6.2 x 10.4 cm

0001ph00060, 0001ph – Alfred Pharaon collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Monica Basbous is an architect, researcher, and educator. They devise inter-scalar and intersectional approaches to investigate the nexus of spatiality, knowledge production, and representation. They work primarily with maps, images, and text using critical and speculative frameworks.



Raoucheh

Photographed by Louis Fattal in 1964 in Beirut, Lebanon

Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 12.8 x 17.9 cm

0242ac00045, 0242ac – Jorge Abud Chami collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

This video uses personal field documentation and photographic archival research to trace the territorial transformations of the Greater Beirut area in relation to the Koura region in the north of Lebanon. It attempts to reconstruct various points of the landscape while highlighting their entanglement and the dissonance between the modernist dream and its violent repercussions.

Sabine Saba

12:45, 2022

3'14", black and white, stereo



Public event at Al Inaya Institute

Photographed by Fouad Bendali Ghorab in Dora, Lebanon

Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, 12 x 17.3 cm

0004sf00310, 0004sf – Studio Fouad collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Through a spatial reconstruction of the school space using archival photographs, this work revisits childhood experiences of prolonged subordination through various instruments of time.

Sabine Saba is a trained architect and urban designer based in Beirut. She is interested in identifying and tackling issues of social, ecological, and spatial disparities produced by the very laws that mediate and govern the human-to-land relationship. She looks at emerging polities driven by resource extraction and their contribution to cultural identities and political narratives that drive national and planetary futures. Her current work departs from the aesthetic regimes of climate modeling, and sensing, and existing codes of territoriality to explore and imagine a counter-narrative/aesthetic of land occupation.

Salim Mrad

218, 2022

2'12", colour, sound

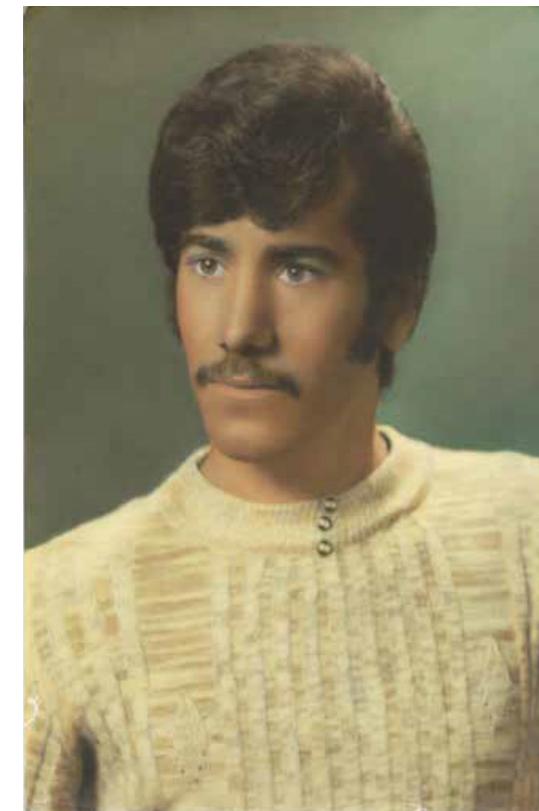


Studio portrait
Taken by Fouad Bendali Ghorab in Beirut, Lebanon
Framed paper print, 50 x 60 cm
0004sf00052, 0004sf – Studio Fouad collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

“Le jour où ta maison fut soufflée
tu trouvas dans ton salon
Sous les débris de verre
le visage d’un homme.
Le destin t’envoyait-il, en guise d’excuse,
le visage de celui qui serait l’homme de ta vie ?
Mais d’autres photos continuèrent à surgir de partout.
Elles prenaient feu et se consumaient sous ton regard.
Depuis tu les collectionnes et tu attends.
« Tu reviendras à ta maison », te dit-on.
Autant de fois qu’il le faudra

The day your house was blown
you found in your living room
Under the glass debris
The face of a man.
Did fate send you, as an apology,
the face of the man who would be the man of your life?
But other photographs continued to emerge from
everywhere.
They caught fire and consumed themselves under your
gaze.
You’ve been collecting and waiting ever since.
“You will come back home,” they said.
As many times as they had to

*Salim Mrad was born in Beirut in 1987. He studied film at Université Saint-Joseph’s Institute for Theater, Audiovisual and Cinematographic Studies (IESAV). Recent films include Letter to My Sister (2008), *: Design (2012), and This Little Father Obsession (Visions du Réel 2016). His work wavers between the documentary, self-portraiture, and experimental fiction. He is currently working on writing his next film and releasing his first music album.*



Studio portrait
Taken by Fouad Bendali Ghorab in Beirut, Lebanon
Gelatin silver developing-out paper print, hand-colored, 40 x 30 cm
0004sf00185, 0004sf – Studio Fouad collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

Arab Image Foundation team

One minute of Fairuz moving, 2022

1'12", colour, sound



Digital contact sheet containing photographs of the Baalbek International Festival

Taken by Radwan Mattar in 1998 in Baalbek, Lebanon
0286ma-DCS0561, 0286ma – Radwan Mattar Collection, courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

The photojournalist, Radwan Mattar, took 29 shots of Fairuz before he decided on the final image. How does one capture a city in constant motion?

The Arab Image Foundation is an independent association forging new pathways for photography and image practices. Uniquely positioned at the intersection of artistic creation, research, and archiving, we explore, question and confront the complex social and political realities of our times.

The AIF team members that worked on this video are Paul Gorra, Christopher Baaklini, Blanche Eid, Maha Kays, Muriel N. Kahwagi, Asadour Garvanian, Rawan Maze, Mahmoud Merjan, Rana Souki Omar Thawabeh, and Heba Hage-Felder.

