

The Atlas Group (1989-2004) A Project by Walid Ra'ad

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The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía presents The Atlas Group(1989-2004). A Project by Walid Raadas part of the Official Section of the PHotoEspaña 2009 festival.

Walid Raad (Chbanieh, Lebanon, 1967), the only member of The Atlas Group collective, works with a highly diverse archive comprised of visual, oral and written documentation. The artist has created some of these documents, while others have been found, appropriated and reassigned meaning as part of a device that questions processes for research and documentation. The exhibition compiles a cohesive cross-section of materials, organizing them according to the artist's categorical schematic.

The Atlas Group documents and reflects on the structure and determinacy of contemporary history, specifically analyzing censorship and conflicts from the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), as well as the mechanisms of transforming information into narrative history with the difficulties it entails in confirming its causes and truthfulness.

Walid Raad lays bare the archival discipline that governs producing and engaging history today, where processes for research and documentation, as well as organizing and presenting information are likewise presented as a document, or rather as an archival system.

The project reflects on the borders between fiction and history by rescuing and archiving apparently banal, everyday situations and events dwelling in the memories of those who have lived them. Paradoxically, sometimes these events construct memories, and at times they produce

collective amnesia. However, the project does not resort to showing viewers explicit images from the war but instead displays its physical and subjective surroundings through images that have not been integrated into the social and political history of Lebanon. This character lends the project to creating and presenting an open-ended history in the process of being written before the viewer instead of a univocal, completed story.