

Rami George: *Untitled (the wars in Lebanon)*

11 September - 31 October 2020

On August 4th, 2020, 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate caught fire and exploded in the port of Beirut. The blast killed an estimated 200, injured 6,000, and displaced another 300,000. It is considered one of the most powerful non-nuclear explosions in history. Add this to a global pandemic, an economic disaster (with inflation already around 70% and banks refusing to distribute funds to their holders), and an ongoing revolution for long desired political change.

This show sprang out of a necessity: to share information, to be in conversation, to explore how the past haunts the present. Here we present three videos exploring my particular relationship to Lebanon – the child of an immigrant, an inheritor of the pain of an everlasting civil war – as well as various ephemera collected over the years. The Lebanese Civil War has long been a specter in my life. It remains a specter in the lives of the Lebanese as well, with many of the same politicians and war leaders of the fifteen-year civil war in office today. In this way, the explosion can be felt as a continuation of this never-ending war: neglect, corruption, greed, amnesty for the guilty, nothing for the victims.

On August 9th, 2020, I read and re-read Omar Mismar's Instagram post describing his week in Beirut following the explosion. I cried, I shared, and I cried again. It is with great gratitude that we are able to present Omar's words again here.

If you are able to, please consider donating to support victims of this blast and continual negligence on the part of the ruling class.

-Rami George

Untitled (Beyrouth), 2014.
Video, color, silent, 4:55 min.

my mother and her sister always argued in arabic, i never understood what was said, 2016.
HD video, color, sound, 5:04 min.
Voice: Sanaz Sohrabi

Untitled (the wars in Lebanon), 2018.
HD video, color, sound, 10:00 min.
Voice: Sarah Lily Yassine *transcript available upon request*
Footage Contributions: Giovanni Khoury, Hanno Stecher, Krystel Medawar, Johanna Breiding, Joshua Mosley, Jason S. Hage, Nicole Massad, Sarah Lily Yassine, Shereen Sheikhhassan, Stephanie Richa

Untitled (the wars in Lebanon), 2020.
Mixed Media Installation, Dimensions Variable

Omar Mismar
My week was a little busy, 9 August 2020.
Vinyl text based on an Instagram Post @omarmismar
www.omarmismar.com

General Aid:

JustGiving - 'Disaster Relief for Beirut Explosion'
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lebanon-relief>

Support for LGBTQ+ Victims:

GoFundMe - 'Funds for LGBTQ Victims of Beirut's Explosion'
<https://gf.me/u/ypb8w7>

Support for Domestic Workers:

GoFundMe - 'Food and Medicine for Kafala Victims'
<https://gf.me/u/yj5nnd>

Support for Arts & Culture:

GivingLoop - 'Fundraising Campaign for the Arts and Culture Community in Beirut'
https://www.givingloop.org/afac?p_id=170

Rami George is an interdisciplinary artist currently living and working in Philadelphia. Their work has been presented in exhibitions and screenings at MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; Anthology Film Archives, New York; Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow; Grand Union, Birmingham; the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; LUX, London; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and others. George received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. They continue to be influenced and motivated by political struggles and fractured narratives.

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