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PRESS RELEASE



WALID RAAD

SCRATCHING ON THINGS I COULD DISAVOW

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In 2007, Walid Raad initiated a research and art project about the history of contemporary and modern art in the Arab World titled *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: A History of Art in the Arab World*. Raad's project explores the recent emergence of a new physical infrastructure for the visual arts in the Middle East and the Gulf. In a context where cultural tourism has become an instrument of economic growth and power, Raad's project leans on the ideological, economic and political dimensions of this phenomenon to ask whether and how culture and tradition in the Arab world may have been affected, materially and immaterially, by the various wars that have been waged there by native and external powers.

Scratching on Things I Could Disavow expands upon the intensive, research-based methodology of Raad's 15-year art project *The Atlas Group* that examined the social, political, psychological, and aesthetic conditions of the Lebanese wars. This new project marks a critical juncture in Raad's practice, at once a departure from *The Atlas Group* while expanding its historical and theoretical framework.

In his exhibition in Anthony Reynolds Gallery, Raad presents three works from his new on-going project *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow*. The three works are titled: *The Atlas Group (1989-2004)*; *Appendix XXVII: Plates*; and *Index XXVI_Artists*. Raad refers to these works as the stage-sets from a forthcoming play about the history of art in Beirut between 1992 and 2005, the so-called post-war period in Lebanon.

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