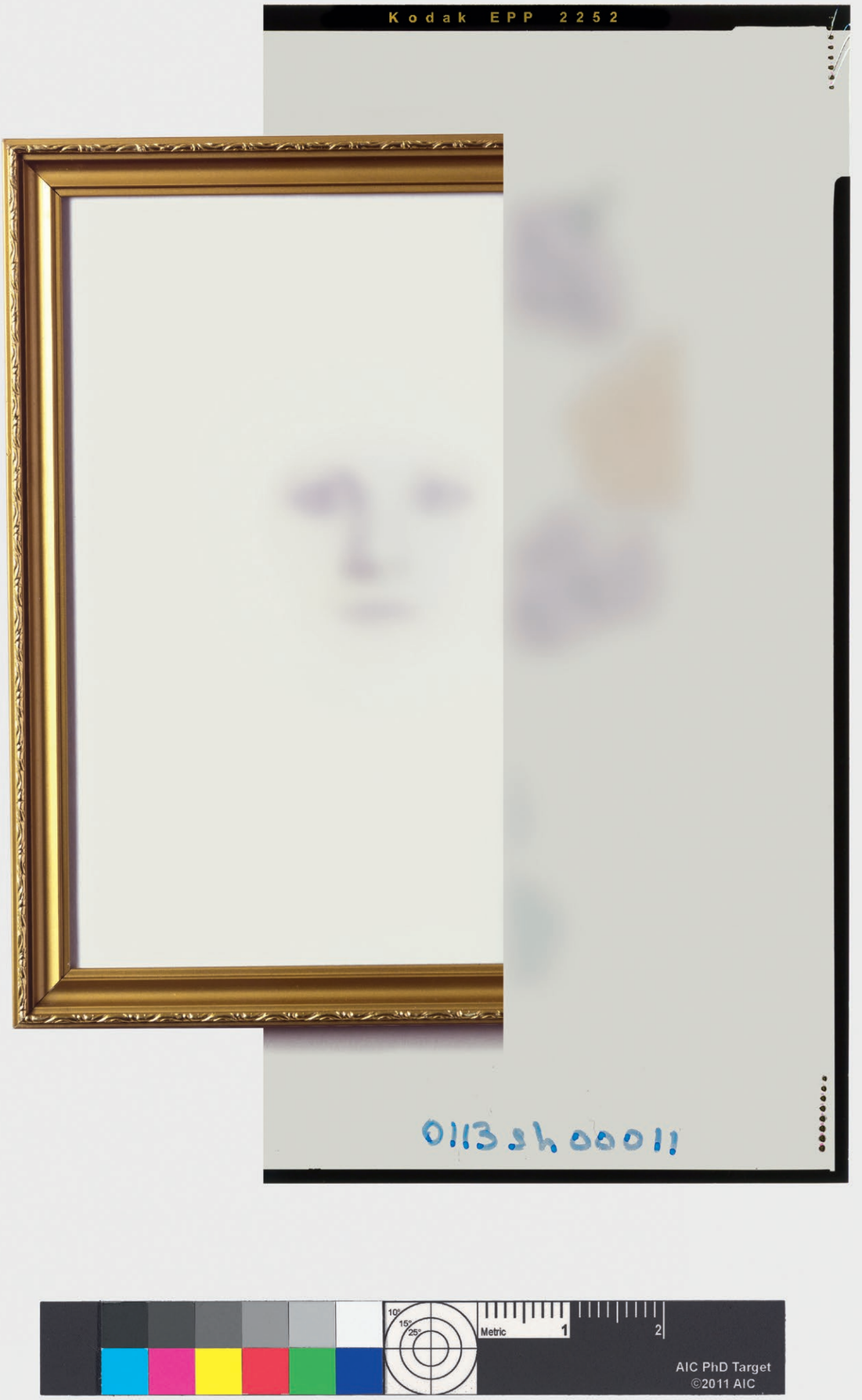

Akram Zaatari, *The Third Window 2*, 2017
0113sh

All that Refuses to Vanish

Akram Zaatari

Nahla Haidous was killed in April 1996 in an incident referred to in Lebanon as the Qana Massacre, when the Israeli Air Force bombed a UNIFIL compound sheltering civilians.[1] More than a hundred men, women and children burned to death within minutes, such that it was nearly impossible to distinguish their individual remains. Very quickly after the ceasefire that followed the attack, political and religious authorities met and agreed with UNIFIL to bury all the victims in a single mass grave at the location of the bombing. Irrespective of their gender or religion, victims were buried all together. Immediately following their burial, portraits of individual victims—printed in different sizes and sometimes cut out of pre-existing group photos then mounted in collages and framed with what was available—covered the grave.

Nahla's portrait was framed by her family and placed on the grave. They had applied colourful plastic flowers around her face, literally glued onto the surface of the glass, to cover her visible hair. Haidous did not wear the scarf when her portrait was taken, but because she wore it when she was older, her family found it inappropriate that she appear in this photo in public, head uncovered.

Such a photograph is a perfect example of a production and aesthetic that evolved out of urgency and were shaped by prevailing local customs. The framed portrait as an object is in harmony with its original social habitat. It may not be perfectly vernacular photography, but it is indeed vernacular something, not far from photography. It is a vernacular assemblage of elements that produce an object of portraiture that is photographic in its initial form, but rectified, amended or transformed by its users to suit a specific occasion. The original portrait was intended to hang at home, in the family's private space: it is not a portrait that Nahla or her family would expect to see in public. Representations of 'martyrs' are expected to have a level of dignity, normally associated to the cause they represent. In this specific case, they are also an integral part of the larger site-specific photographic monument. When I encountered Nahla's portrait in 1996, I was drawn to how local customs shaped the outlook and aesthetic of the portrait. It struck me how little I knew about south Lebanon, which is where I come from, and how little I knew about dressing up pictures for an occasion. Had I encountered this portrait without learning the story behind it, I would have thought flowers were some kind of influence of Mexican tradition, or simply a decorative crown.

Nahla's portrait and the story behind it were collected by the Lebanese journalist Doha Shams in May 1996 while researching material for her *Mulhaq al-Souwar* project, a supplement of *As-Safir* daily newspaper, published on 26 June 1996. This issue remains a rare instance in the Lebanese press, when a tragic event was commemorated not through photographs of the event itself but through a secondary photographic production that evolved very quickly within days, consciously exploring the vernacular and its ability to provide insight into a poor and marginalised rural community which remains—if not victim of an assault—almost absent from most people's consciousness in Lebanon.

Friendship ties and my assisting Doha while researching these photographic documents, at the time when discussion about the creation of the Arab Image Foundation was taking place, made AIF co-founder Samer Mohdad propose to her that she present this research to the *Rencontres photographiques d'Arles* in France. This is how this body of work became officially the AIF's first exhibition in the summer of 1997, curated by Samer Mohdad and based on material and research by Doha Shams.

My interest in this picture twenty years after its original appearance has to do with the path that it took from a mere description of a woman's face, to a dressed up object on her grave, to a small image in a newspaper, to the duplication of its framed version for the AIF and its exhibition in an international photographic event, and finally its inclusion in the AIF collection. Such a genealogy traces the object's displacement from one habitat to another, cutting through multiple practices and modes of work, notably portraiture, journalism, art, inter-institutional loans and photograph preservation. The traces that transactions leave on a photographic object become part of it.

A photograph is not the same twenty years later.

My choice of this photographic item as a sample to converse with today stems from my interest in non-photographic practices—let's call them transactions—that might leave a trace on the physical matter of a photograph or negative, sometimes to the extent of transforming the image completely. It is a direction and an interest that developed in my work gradually towards the end of my research for collections in the early years of the AIF. In the body of work entitled *Against Photography*, I try to get hold of, make sense of, traces of the photographer's work, of archival institutional practices, traces of wear over time, erosion or bad conservation. I try to understand those phenomena and write with them a parallel history of the AIF. Let's call them annotations to the AIF's history. The idea is to close eyes while looking at a picture. The idea is to open senses, other than seeing, when facing a photograph. Be picture-blind in order to see beyond content. Resist reducing a photograph to description and move on to getting hold of its totality.

Muting interest in the portrait itself while looking back at Nahla Haidous's picture gives way for other information

to rise. The back of a picture, for example, is simply another side of a picture. It carries other types of information. It carries traces of life, traces of displacement, descriptions, dedications, texts or all sorts of tags which might have tied the picture to an organisational practice while serving an individual, an institution, or both. Photographs carry, or sometimes are themselves, residues of transactions like an ATM receipt print-out. Any discipline based on studying photographs only for their content fails to seize the totality of what a photograph is and the intangible fabric that ties it to its habitat.

Looking away from the two dimensional reproduction of flowers, applied in the form of a crown onto Nahla's portrait, reveals other peripheral yet equally significant information. A thin shadow to the left indicates that the reproduction has been placed behind a mount. Looking further out, away from the mount, reveals that the reproduction might have been framed. And another look away from Nahla's portrait reveals a typical industrial golden frame. When Doha Shams met with the families of the Qana victims, with the exhibition at Arles in view, she asked them to make duplicates of the framed photographs they had placed at the mass grave. But this one was trickier to remake than others, because it involved three-dimensional flowers. So the family asked the only photographer's shop in Qana to simply take a picture of the framed photograph with the flowers on it, crop the frame out and put the picture in a new frame. The result is a two-dimensional reproduction of a framed picture, cropped and reframed to look as close to the original as possible.[2]

The peripheries of the image show that the portrait is contained within a 4 × 5" Kodak reversal transparency, which itself is a record of an institutional practice. It is a necessity while receiving exhibitions on loan, but also a necessity for a press kit in pre-digital times. This framed picture, among others, was reproduced in the 1997 exhibition, and the AIF got all these transparencies after Arles received the framed Qana portraits. The reproduction was done with one source of light, as can be seen from the single shadow, and the frame is slightly tilted. There is a bit too much magenta and there was no colour scale used. Inside the frame of the transparency, over the blank space in the lower right corner, a number is inscribed by hand with blue permanent ink, and that is the serial number given to the object by the AIF.

The Qana portraits remained atypical in the collection of the foundation.[3] They were not researched with the methodology that was put in place later by the AIF's co-founders, and were not processed for a long time. While Doha Shams insisted on collecting the victims' names, placing them carefully next to their portraits in the exhibition, she always felt that this precision was less of a priority for the curator, who was interested in the portraits themselves, as a whole. No one at the AIF cared to take note of Nahla Haidous' name, nor the names of other victims. As nowhere in the AIF records was Nahla's name transcribed, this text based itself on the original newspaper from 1996. The collection was not given a number for more than a year, and this is why despite the fact that it was one of the first collections the AIF received, it finally got the number 0113, which means that 112 collections were processed before it. Like the few collections that did not fit easily into obvious categories of prints and negatives, less typical items like damaged and collated glass plates, objects and larger fabrics of photographic material took more time to be processed, if not remaining totally unprocessed today. The five wooden drawers filled with 35 mm rolls containing the work of photo-surprise photographers employed by Photo Jack Studio in Tripoli, or other albums also made by Jack to house negative sheets of portraits, the dozens of collated glass plates rescued by Mohsen Yammine from Antranick Anouchian's studio in Tripoli after it was flooded, or the work of Radwan Matar which the AIF received on 35 mm rolls housed in sleeves in plastic folders, Saida-based photographer Mohammad el Bayroumi's 35 mm work, or the manuscripts of scholar Jibrail Jabbur all remain perfect examples of such atypical material.

Photographic material around us does not only consist of photographic prints as we popularly know them. The AIF receives prints framed with bulky wooden sections. It receives stereographs, both negative and positive; it receives transparencies, lantern slides, equipment such as viewers, cameras and other storage devices like simple boxes, boxes of film and paper stock, promotional material, photo index books, manuscripts, photo albums and all sorts of negative types and formats. We are surrounded by so many negatives, the photographer's working plates, those enigmatic sheets which dominated photographic processes in the late-nineteenth and most of the twentieth century. The negative often carried traces of the photographer's work and without it we wouldn't be able to tell how a photographer produced the image. A negative is equivalent to an engraved zinc plate in traditional engraving. Not only does it allow the reproduction of the image or print, but it itself carries traces of photographer's tricks and effects that might have corrected exposure mistakes and improved a picture. It also carries additional elements from other pictures in the case of collages. Photographers do not want their negatives to be displayed because they carry details that they might not want to share.

Every time a record is reproduced, an organisational practice leaves a trace. Every time a record is reproduced a producer has authored a new work. I'd even say that every time a record is reproduced, something in it or in the knowledge of it changes. In analogue media, the quality of a second generation reproduction is considered inferior to the original. From a historical perspective, every later generation carries more information than the previous one. Haidous's portrait is a reproduction of a remake: a reproduction

of a reproduction. Taking it as a sample item to study is getting hold of the latest generation reproduction; and consequently the portrait's belonging variously to social, journalistic, curatorial, institutional, archival and possibly artistic practices.

Every photograph is taken in a location and, unless it's a picture of the darkroom, is physically printed in another location. But photographs end up elsewhere, in so many different places, in pockets, in drawers, in wallets, and they are meant to travel and live in the proximity of people. Diffusion is one of the essences of photography. They are given to friends and they manage to get a life of their own, find the people interested in keeping them. But many inherit photographs of distant members of the family, of people they don't even know or recognise. Institutions end up custodians of family photographs of unidentified people, as at the AIF. Many photographs are left behind in rented apartments after an old member of a family dies. Many photographers' archives are thrown away after a photographic studio closes down. Photographs end up changing locations, from one custodian to another. Their displacement, very often, registers on the body of images, the body of film, of glass. It is a misconception that photographs testify to the course of history. It is history that inhabits photographs. Over the course of time, at every dramatic shift that produces displacement, history finds its way to an image through the cracks and pores of sensitised emulsion.

* * *

In May 1948 the state of Israel was announced, and over the years that followed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians left, or were forced to leave, their homes and villages. They were never allowed back. They left all their belongings behind: whole libraries, albums, photographs, clothes, carpets, silverware, musical instruments and handcrafts among so many other things. Those who stayed saw lands, homes, orange groves changing ownership; sometimes sold, sometimes confiscated. Those who witnessed the *Nakba* speak of photographs and paper documents thrown away in the garbage or out on the streets.[4] They saw homes, institutions, records or shops being looted. They experienced their times being reinvented by others in a different language with a different history. To revise or rewrite history, many look for photographs of Palestinians leaving home, crossing the bridge or settling in camps. Many look for photographs of Israeli aggression as evidence, as a historical record. But could this history be told by retracing aggression towards random photographs as opposed to retracing it in the content of photographs? History at its best finds its way to pictures through the folds of the ordinary even in the representations of the banal.

Palestinian-Armenian photographer Antranik Bakerdjian photographed his own home destroyed after the bombing of the Armenian quarter in Jerusalem in May 1948. One of the few pictures he took included a dozen teenagers, boys and girls, singing and playing musical instruments while standing on a partially demolished stone staircase. Bakerdjian himself identified this picture as 'Neighbours singing over the destroyed home where I live'. Following this bombing, Bakerdjian and many of his neighbours took refuge at the Armenian convent of St James. From then onwards, Bakerdjian would take pictures of the fortification of the convent compound and the daily lives of displaced people inside. To attach to these photographs a press label would be to ignore the displacement of their maker and his darkroom. Bakerdjian worked from home and never had a studio. He photographed his friends and members of the Armenian community in Jerusalem, accompanied people on trips in Palestine and Jordan, and was called to take pictures of religious occasions in Jerusalem. In 1998 Yto Barrada travelled to Ramallah and Jerusalem looking for photographic collections for the recently created AIF. Bakerdjian agreed to donate his negatives to the AIF. From that day onwards, he would never see them again. Barrada left Jerusalem for Paris with his collection of 35 mm negatives. In Paris she delivered the material to Fouad Elkoury, a co-founder of the AIF, who was supposed to take them by hand to Beirut. Elkoury had his own darkroom at home. He wasn't at ease with how the rolls smelled. He gave them a proper wash and left them to dry. He's always done this for his own negatives.

In Beirut, the negatives underwent a series of work processes. They were cleaned and numbered, and some of their content was used in Elkoury's *Jours tranquilles en Palestine*, a video he made with Sylvain Roumette in 1998.[5] A few years later, an AIF archivist noticed that some of the rolls had changed. The emulsion on a dozen rolls developed cracks and slightly moved off their bases causing the distortion of the images on them. Other parts of the images disappeared completely although the emulsion had not cracked. Patches of transparency invaded some rolls, erasing certain spots on the emulsion like a rash, a skin disease, but not other rolls.

Beyond recording events such as the visits of King Abdullah of Jordan to Jerusalem in 1948–49 and Glubb Pasha to the Armenian quarter in Jerusalem in 1948, or the summer camps of Armenian youth in Deir Amar and other family occasions and the thousands of locations recorded on these negatives, the gelatin and nitrate bases of these rolls, their structural bodies themselves, testify to the instability of their historical context, and indirectly recorded their displacement. Could it be poor washing at the makeshift darkroom that Bakerdjian might have set up at the Armenian convent after he was deprived of his own? How ironical, and poetic at the same time, that he was taking these pictures at the exact place of birth of local photography in the entire Middle East.[6] Could it be the wash that Elkoury gave these rolls in 1998 (fifty years after they were exposed) that caused the emulsion to deteriorate and crack? Could it be reasons related to poor

conservation? Or is it that the nitrate film base of some of the rolls reacted badly to changes in climate? The great thing about archives is that confirmation of what has triggered these phenomena can rarely be reached. Yet there is so much poetry in how these images contribute to history, detaching themselves slowly from the bases to which they have been bound for almost seventy years now. Their disintegration, not their depiction of events, is their contribution to history.

* * *

Cold storage is a space designed to preserve photographic collections and prevent any such deterioration from happening. It ensures a neutral environment with stable temperature and humidity levels. It is an essential space for institutions holding photographic collections because it helps secure longer life for photographs. Besides protecting them from physical manipulation by taking them out of circulation, cold storage ensures that any chemical residues of film and paper development and fixing processes do not continue to act on photographic matter and hence cause the deterioration of the gelatin or paper on which the image is recorded. It also ensures that any unexposed silver that might have not been washed out in fixing would not continue to change or oxidise, thereby affecting the appearance of the recorded image. Those who have worked in a darkroom know how magical developing images can be. No matter how scientific the explanation is, contemplating an object while it's changing in front of your eyes can be mesmerising. But we also know that some processes cannot be completely stopped in cold storage. No matter how controlled the climate is, some phenomena will be slowed down, but still continue to take place. Sometimes negatives continue to change even when kept in acid-free sleeves in a controlled environment.

In 1948 Palestinian photographer Chalil Raad (aka Khalil Raad, 1854–1957) left Talbieh, where he lived with his family near Jerusalem, and went back to Lebanon, where he was born.[7] His studio on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem was located in an area that became a no-man's-land. In the years that followed he tried his best to return and evacuate his collection but he was not allowed to. He learned later that his shop, where his carefully annotated albums were kept, had already been looted. But a significant number of his negatives were recovered when an Italian friend of his was able to make a hole in the rear wall of the darkroom space[8] and rescue an important part of the collection. Curator Rona Sela explains:[9]

> Raad's shop, located on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem, near the Jaffa Gate, was destroyed in the fighting of 1948. The shop's contents were looted by Jewish/Israeli soldiers and citizens. Albums containing the best of Raad's archive (small prints) were looted as well by an Israeli military commander and are currently held by a private collector. These albums were shown in Israel in 2000 and 2010.
>
> Raad's negative archive was stored in his darkroom located in another building on Jaffa Road, and consequently was saved, surviving the looting. The darkroom was in an area that became a no-man's-land in the war. Raad's daughter, Ruth Raad, and her husband Robert, succeeded in rescuing the negative archive from the darkroom. Fouad Debbas[10] and Badr Al-Hajj[11] claim (based on interviews with Ruth Raad) that the negatives were saved thanks to the help and resourcefulness of an Italian friend of Raad's, who worked at Bulus Said's bookstore located in the Old City near the Jaffa Gate, very close to Raad's studio. Despite the difficulties, he managed to enter the area during the ceasefire and transferred the negatives to Ruth, who was living in Amman at the time. The archive, containing around 3,000 negatives, was donated to the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut.

Raad opened his studio in 1889 opposite the studio of his colleague and teacher Garabed Krikorian (1847–1920). They both catered to Jerusalem's local community and an influx of tourists and pilgrims visiting the city, and were both known for taking portraits of these visitors in traditional Jerusalem or Bedouin outfit. Both of them offered traditional clothes, swords and other accessories that tourists could choose to wear for their portrait. In 1998 Yto Barrada convinced a French artist and collector of Palestinian costumes who lived in Jerusalem, Emmanuel Kleidmann (b. 1954), to deposit with the AIF a collection of negatives which included glass plates attributed to Khalil Raad. The plates represented portraits of groups in the studio, but also some portraits of groups posing at the steps leading to the Dome of the Rock, which could be seen in the background. It looked as if Raad himself, or maybe photographers working on his behalf, stood there from time to time to take pictures of visitors to the Dome, in a probably similar way to the many photographers who station themselves near the Sphinx in Giza, taking posed pictures of tourists from a certain angle with the Pyramids in the background. Kleidmann's collection also included negatives that were attributed to another photographer from Palestine, a Zionist photographer and film-maker named Yaacov Ben Dov (1882–1968), whose parents immigrated to Palestine in 1907. Ben Dov photographed Jewish European immigrants there in the 1920s and 1930s, and his photographs were made for, and used by, Zionist propaganda. He photographed young European immigrants settling in Palestine, working the land, and making their homes in what had always looked like a desert. Ben Dov's photographs radiate hope in a new world and with a modern outlook. They depict youth, virgin land and modern machinery with which to work it, and show prefabricated European-looking homes. It was no surprise to see

Ben Dov's and Raad's negatives in the same collection —after all, the two photographers shared the same city from 1907 to 1948—but their photographs described different worlds. Kleidmann's collection is probably the only repository space that these two photographers' glass plates shared, and it is not entirely clear how Raad's negatives came to be in Kleidmann's hands, although Yto Barrada's notes mention that he found the plates in the shop of an old Greek photographer who was going blind. As for Ben Dov's, Kleidmann mentioned to Barrada that a student had found them in an apartment that had just been cleared and gave them to him. The collection was deposited at the AIF from 1998 to 2004, when Kleidmann requested it be returned. Contact prints that Agop Kanledjian made of this collection in Beirut on glossy RC paper is the only trace that remains of this collection in the AIF library today. Despite a deep schism in the history of one place, between Arab and Zionist, these prints represent a collector's attempt to un-divide.

A conservator's nightmare is to lose a collection he or she preserves. When you live in an unstable political system, when you have experienced war not so long ago and are still surrounded by it, the fear is concrete. When looting museums and archeological sites has become a common practice in situations of chaos such as in Iraq, Egypt and Syria, you wonder what would remain when significant records of human activity vanish. Would empty cases testify to the missing pieces formerly displayed in them? Would the memory of empty cases allow us to reconstitute what was formerly in them? And if they did, would it silence or ease our anxiety or fear of losing them?

Description is a representation or an account of an event, an object or a person. Indirectly, it seeks to seize a certain totality or a part of an event, object or person. It aims to seize its colour, texture and possibly 3D configuration in an attempt to facilitate its study or diffusion but also in anticipation of its vanishing. In archaeology it has become common to make 3D recordings of objects and spatial configuration fearing their possible destruction, and to reproduce ancient tombs to which tourists are guided, as at the Valley of the Kings, while permanently closing the original tombs to the public to ensure their preservation. But description is also about a set of other, less visible, maybe more significant traits and ties to other practices and to a living fabric. To describe those as well is to engage with, or borrow tools from, history, anthropology and other disciplines which aren't only technical or descriptive, but rather analytical. To reproduce an object is a task that requires know-how, but to understand what the object represents, its function or how it came to be, requires another kind of knowledge. Description in creative fields such as writing, art and architecture involves utilising all of those to create an informed object. Maybe that type of description should be called 'informed description'.

An informed object is an object that is conscious of the material and processes that produced it, conscious of its provenance, its morphology and displacement over time, conscious of its history in the sense that it is able to communicate it. An informed object is already mobilised, activated. It cannot be a silent object. An informed object has elaborated a language of its own. Informed objects are objects which might be missing a part only to accentuate or highlight other parts. They might miss features or look broken up to show inner parts. An informed object is not a realistic object, but is somehow schematic. It functions like an exploded view of a machine, which is a representation informed of the inside of a machine, its construction, and is therefore able to explain it to its users. It functions like a model of the human body used in an anatomy class.

A photograph changes upon the vanishing of its referent. The death of a living person represents a threshold in the life of their portrait. Nahla Haidous's picture would not have hung in public had she not been killed in the Qana Massacre. When the body vanishes, each of its descriptions is recalled to fulfil a new function. A picture hangs, an anecdote is told, a gesture is re-enacted in memory of. There are so many ways to re-enact significant traits of a description. Each trait would privilege a story over others as if withdrawing those others from description. How about withdrawing the portrait of Haidous from the reproduction of the framed portrait, completely? What would the frame tell us? And what about withdrawing the framed object completely? What would the shadow tell about the object? And if withdrawal continues successively, what would remain? A 4 × 5" Kodak Ektachrome sheet of an EPP stock type 2252, discontinued in 2009? Or is it simply the number 0113sh? And what if even this Ektachrome sheet was no longer there? Would the memory of a light box surface have anything to tell? Do acid-free boxes in cold storage remember? And if there is an after-image to every image, is it recordable? Retrievable? An after-image is 'a visual impression of a vivid sensation retained after stimulus has ceased'. An after-image is photography.

Over the past twenty years, the AIF has parted with significant photographic collections. They did not get burned or destroyed, but were simply taken back by their owners before the AIF was in a position to work on them. There was undoubtedly a slightly bitter aftertaste to every withdrawal, in the same way as there is an after-image to every photograph no longer there. The AIF was born divided between an ambition limited in scope, with a particular mode of generating collections through artist's desire and the sampling of local photographic history, and another ambition of becoming a repository of *all* photographic archives, institutional or photographers' archives, or at least acquiring the rights to exploit electronic copies of them which the AIF could offer on a digital platform as part of an exhaustive coverage of the photographic landscape in the Arab world. Two different ambitions that would have

required different teams, different modalities of access, different communication strategies and different mission statements. They are two ambitions which simply described two different institutions. Nevertheless, the fact that collections spent time at the AIF, sharing the same space with other collections even for a brief period, had an impact on the organisation. Kleidmann's was one of the first collections to be returned to its owner. Rifat Chadirji's collection was much larger in scale, and was entrusted to the AIF at a high cost that it wasn't able to meet. The collection of Egyptian photographer Van Leo, which was on loan from AUC, is another example of a large collection that the AIF invested resources in, but could not work on as much as it would have liked. The AIF's ambition, being disproportionate to its actual knowledge and skill over the past years, compromised some of its negotiating power. The unwilling return of collections might have triggered difficult questions, if not caused a revision. How do we collect? How to organise a large collection? Do we mix collections? And when? What is the status of a catalogue made with photographs? What is the status of non photographic material accompanying a collection? These are questions that touch the heart of description. How do we describe a collection, an object or an organisational practice? Questions that are imminent.

Nevertheless, at distance from objects and the photographic practices that produced them, one does not judge mistakes, but rather finds a source of richness in them. They tell unordinary stories, show the limits of a photographer, or make visible a practice, an expertise. A wrong exposure, fifty years later, is no longer what it used to be. A picture that failed because the subject moved or blinked, and was put aside by its maker or subject—fifty years later—is no longer simply a failed picture. A negative that has developed stains which make it unusable for the photographer—a hundred years later—is no longer an object that has suffered an accident, or lack of conservation. It becomes an out-of-the-ordinary object that has something to say. At a conservation institute, such an object could become a tool for education and might be displayed as something which was considered a 'defect' by its maker. Photographers' conventions which facilitated work and left traces when practised over and over and over—for a visual artist interested in traces of work—become illuminations.

At distance from objects and the preservation practices that organised them and ensured proper access to them, the mishandling, accidents, uninformed and insensitive organisational measures, lack of vision or planning, even an ambition which overgrows the potential of its subject, all seem less conflictual and problematic when viewed as research material into the history of an organisation and the development of discourse within it. Somehow, history finds its way to be written, even through slippages and failures or whatever happens.

1. The military operation took place over 16 days (11–27 April 1996) and was named 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' by the Israeli army.

2. It is argued that the framed object in the custody of the AIF is not the original. The original was made to be placed on the mass grave in Qana. But it is legitimate to argue that both are originals because they are different, and because the one in the custody of the AIF was intended for a different context based on the first.

3. In the early days of its existence, the AIF was interested in collecting photographs produced before 1970, excluding colour photography from the scope of the collection. AIF members such as myself, Fouad Elkoury and Yto Barrada, while looking for collections in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Jordan, dismissed photographs that might have been produced in colour in the 1970s and 1980s. The Qana portraits researched by Doha Shams remained an exception in the AIF collection until Negar Azimi brought collections consisting mostly of colour photographs dating from the 1970s and 1980s from Iran in 2004.

4. Akram Zaatari. Interview with Dr Sami Khoury, Amman. In *On Photography Dispossession and Times of Struggle*. Video, 2017.

5. The video was made for the fiftieth commemoration of the creation of Israel and the Palestinian *Nakba*, produced for the French/German channel *arte* and shown on the *Thema* programme.

6. Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Yessai Garabedian was exposed to photography during his visit to Paris in the 1860s. Upon his return to Jerusalem, he immediately set up the first photography workshop ever in the entire region, at the St James convent of Jerusalem. It is also known that many of those who were apprenticed there, such as Garabed Krikorian who later taught Khalil Raad, ended up leaving the church and becoming photographers.

7. 1854 remains the most convincing date of birth for Khalil Raad, given that his father died in 1860. It also means that he opened his first studio at the age of 36 and that he got married at the age 65 and died at 103, which all seem systematically later than would be expected for that historical period.

8. Akram Zaatari. Video interview with Aida Krikorian, whose mother Najla was Raad's niece, Amman, 1998.

9. Rona Sela, *Photography in Palestine in the 1930s–1940s*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House and Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000.

10. Fouad Debbas, in Raad File, National Library, Jerusalem, Jacob Wahrman Collection, December 1988. Information provided to Debbas by Ruth Raad.

11. Al-Hajj, Badr, 'Khalil Raad, Photographe à Jérusalem', in *Revue d'études Palestiniennes*, no. 37, 1990.