

TORN, FOLDED, CURLED

PHOTOBOOKS SOURCED FROM THE ARAB IMAGE FOUNDATION



BAYROUMI (46,000 QUESTIONS)



TODAY/ AL YOM



SUPER – PRIVATE: SCENES 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6



Sex'n'database: A Corporeal Taxonomy"

TORN, FOLDED, CURLED

PHOTOBOOKS SOURCED FROM THE ARAB IMAGE FOUNDATION

A MENA—MIDDLE EAST NORTH AFRICA—PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

TORN, FOLDED, CURLED is an ongoing research project that brings a new approach to my long-standing interest in orphan and vernacular photographic collections.

My work with the Found Photo Foundation is centred on interpretations of my own photographic archive, which is flexibly organised around provisional taxonomies.

During my residency at the Arab Image Foundation, my interest shifted to the investigation of the different types of archival organisation in public photographic archives and their translation into book structures.

Working with “torn, folded, curled” images— a working term used at the Arab Image Foundation to categorise heavily damaged photographs that require special care in storage and preservation— also meant developing specific strategies to account for themes of war and memory in photobook sequencing.

TORN, FOLDED, CURLED was produced in the context of the research grant project “Torn, Folded, Curled: Sourcing from the Arab Image Foundation.”

From June 22 to July 2 2015, I was in residence at the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut.

This residency was supported by the Centre for Media Research (London South Bank University).

This residency was primarily focused at sharing archival methodologies used by the Found Photo Foundation in its exhibitions and publications and exploring the potential of the Arab Image Foundation’s photographic collections as source for photobook publishing. Two of the Arab Image Foundation staff —Hala Tawil, archivist/librarian and Charbel Saad, collections manager— assisted me.

PHOTOBOOK#1

BAYROUMI (46,000 QUESTIONS)

Hand bound artist's book with scroll paper structure

7 Pages, sizes: 24×30 cm / 24 x 61cm / 24 x 94cm

10 photographs of the Bayroumi Collection

Inkjet printing on Epson Matt Enhanced paper

Cover on card stock with sticker

Pages stitched with japanese stab binding

and bound to a roll in an acrylic tube

Photography & book design : paula roush

Source: Arab Image Foundation/ Bayroumi Collection

PlanBey: 1st edition

msdm publications: 2nd edition



paula roush, 2015: Bayroumi (4,600 questions)

Photobook sourced from the Arab Image Foundation/Bayroumi collection. Published by PlanBEY in conjunction with the exhibition Torn Curled Folded, Makan project space, Beirut Oct – Nov 2015

The Bayroumi Collection has been temporarily held in storage boxes at the Arab Image Foundation waiting to be catalogued and re-housed in safe archiving environment, until it is ultimately digitised and made available for online

access. It was brought in by AIF member Akram Zaatari, from the studio of Mohamad Bayroumi in Saida, Lebanon and it is still being researched. It is a collection of approximately 4600 negatives of 35mm format, packed in cardboard boxes and plastic bags.

ABOUT BAYROUMI: 46,000 QUESTIONS

A group is a static collection of photographs without a structure or constructed movement. This is the way collections exist when they are in limbo, waiting to be processed. At the Arab Image Foundation, there are groups of photographs in boxes, binders, stacked, held together by a common denominator, such as topic, subject matter or provenance. The best example I have of a photobookwork that reflects this state of accumulation, what an unprocessed collection looks like is Bayroumi (4,600 questions). In this case, a collection that is grouped by provenance and hasn't been studied yet. All we know is that it is a collection of approximately 4600 negatives of 35mm format, packed in cardboard boxes and plastic bags, brought in by Arab Image Foundation founder Akram Zaatari, from the studio of Mohamad Bayroumi in Saida, Lebanon.

When I designed the book I asked myself how could I represent the

collection in a state of accumulation, still being researched. It is a scroll book, with 10 photographs of films, negatives and contact prints in plastic bags, printed in seven pages with different lengths (30.5cm, 61cm and 92cm), stitched with Japanese stab binding and bound to a roll in an acrylic tube. The handwriting is by Charbel Saad, the collections' manager. The work is printed with an Inkjet printer on Epson matt-coated paper and the cover is in card stock with a sticker, where the colophon is situated. I used the scroll format that displays a succession of pages in a simultaneous tableau, allowing for a vision outside of the codex time. I introduced gaps in the unprocessed collection and this way each sack of contents starts to get individuality. It could be considered the beginning of a process of unraveling the life of the Bayroumi studio.





paula roush, 2015: Bayroumi (4,600 questions)

Photobook sourced from the Arab Image Foundation/Bayroumi collection. Published by PlanBEY for the exhibition Torn Curled Folded, Makan project space, Beirut Oct – Nov 2015

PHOTOBOOK#2

SUPER – PRIVATE: SCENES 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

Hand bound artist's book with six-volume accordion paper structures

Accordeon structure: 30cm x 11cm (page size), expanding to 40-130cm depending on the volume

Inkjet printed on Epson Enhanced 189 gsm paper

Folded insert 29.7 x 42 cm

laser printed on corona offset 120gsm

Photographic source: Arab Image Foundation / EPS + Al-Yom Collections

Editing and design: paula roush

Hand-bound and manufactured by

PlanBey: 1st edition

msdm publications: 2nd edition

Super-private consists of photographs taken in the late 1940s, 1950s by a Lebanese banker known as RS, sourced from the Arab Image Foundation's EPS collection. Insert



paula roush, 2015: SUPER – PRIVATE: SCENES 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6
Photobook sourced from the Arab Image Foundation/ EPS + Al-Yom Collections. Published by PlanBEY in conjunction with the exhibition Torn Curled Folded, Makan project space, Beirut Oct – Nov 2015

includes a newspaper photograph from the 'Al-Yom collection' (also held at the Foundation), showing the building where RS worked, damaged by a nearby explosion during the 1975-1990 Civil War, and a conversation between PR (paula roush) and EPS, who donated the 'EPS collection' to the Arab Image Foundation and wishes to remain anonymous.

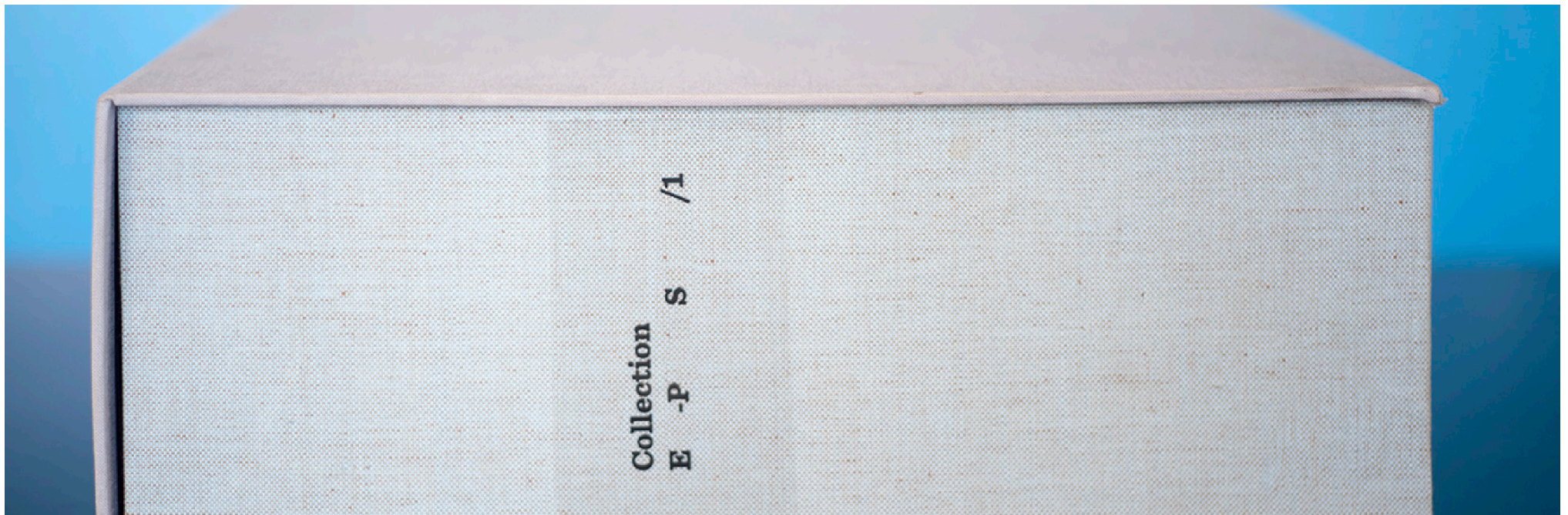
ABOUT SUPER – PRIVATE: SCENES 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

SUPER-PRIVATE is the second photobook sourced from the Arab Image Foundation collections.

Unlike Bayroumi collection that was unorganised, this collection had already started to be processed in two ring binders labelled EPS collection (after the donor's name), containing hundreds of standard family album size prints organised as series, in the order of the date they were taken. Because of nudity in some of the films, there were concerns this collection might be “super-private” and the Foundation contacted the family with the intention to protect their privacy. EPS

agreed to meet me for an interview that provided the context and situations for the work to become public.

In 2005, EPS deposited two dozen rolls of undeveloped 35mm film at the Arab Image Foundation. Stored in a bespoke wooden box, each had been carefully wrapped in protective foil and enclosed in individually fitted drawers. He had found them in the family house – carefully protected against Beirut's dampness – and brought them in for conservation and preservation. They were his



uncle's work, a Lebanese banker born in 1904, to be known as RS, who died of a heart attack when he was 54. The people in his photographs were friends and lovers who never had the chance to see themselves in what looks like a *photo-roman noir* including road trips, jet flights and secretive hotel room encounters. Were they following a script? Or did these scenes just happen as life unraveled itself in the glamorous Lebanon of the 1940s and 50s? What might have been a photo family album, was nothing of that kind.

My initial engagement with the collection was to select some of the scenes and significant moments, and use the series as a departure point to develop a sequential organisation, where several photographs react to one other, but not necessarily with just the adjacent photograph.

I developed a method of sequencing archival photography I describe as "story-showing." In the book format, it is possible to show both photographs and research in productive constellations that open up the material to the present. In this hybrid associative mode, photographs become an index to a larger narrative including, documentary fieldwork, interview, oral history, biography and autoethnography. This bio-political approach adds depth to the

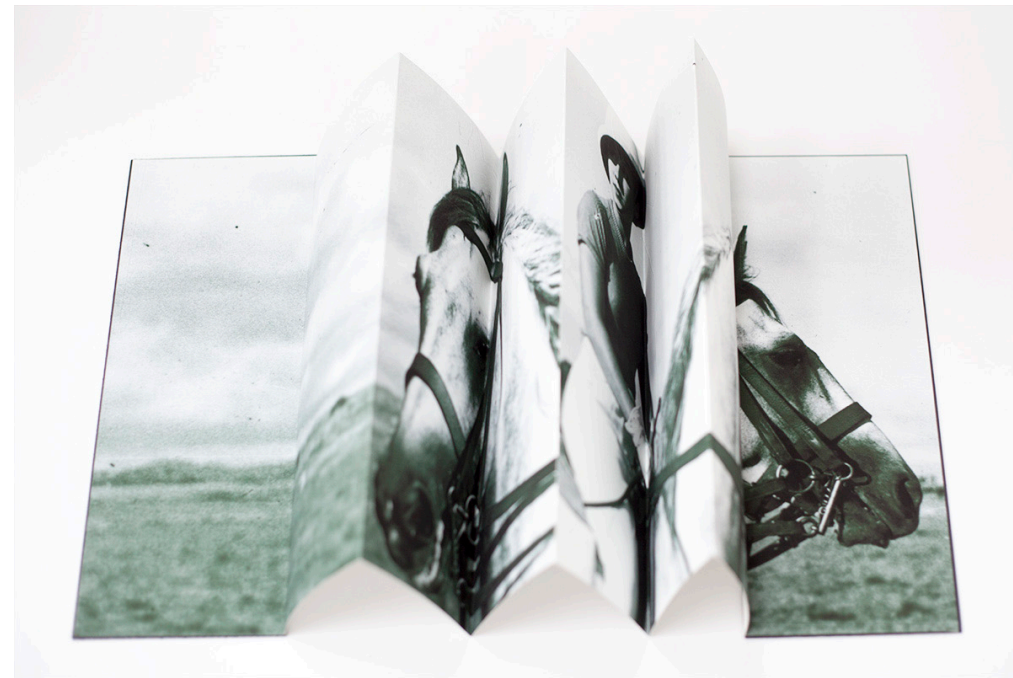
work and connects with the documentary tradition of the 1970s 'photobookwork' when the term was coined for photographic documentary artwork in the book form, made possible by affordable printing.

Group and series is the organisational logic of the archive, where there is no individuality and no context. The desire for conservation levels all photographs when they are grouped in boxes, organised by place or date, all photographs being equally important and equally banal. Sequencing, on the contrary, offers an oppositional challenge to the dominant models of the archive. It is about tuning in with the material energy of the collection, as well practicing what is known as archaeologies of the contemporary past. Publishing as archaeological investigation of traces and presence of the past in visual culture, can provide a significant new dimension to the understanding and interpretation of place and the everyday.

When I interviewed EPS in the family building where he works, and where his uncle also worked at the time he photographed, I had with me other photographs from my research at the Arab Image Foundation, and he recognised in one this same building just after the civil war, half-destroyed. It was a moment of synchronicity and so I combined this photograph with his interview.



SUPER – PRIVATE: scene #1 : RS (self-portrait by the flower curtains)
12 accordion folded pages 29.7 x 130 cm



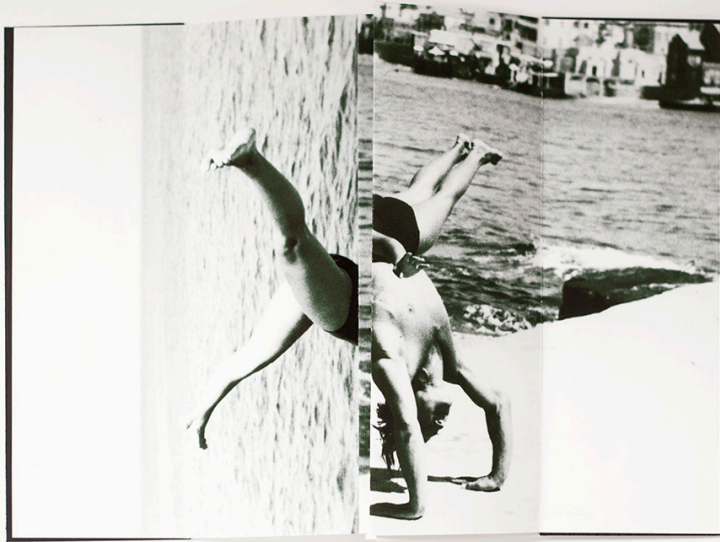
SUPER – PRIVATE: scene #2: Andrée (Beirut Hippodrome)
8 accordion folded pages 29.7 x 84 cm



SUPER – PRIVATE: scene #3: Rositta (Budapest, hotel room)
6 accordion folded pages 29.7 x 63 cm



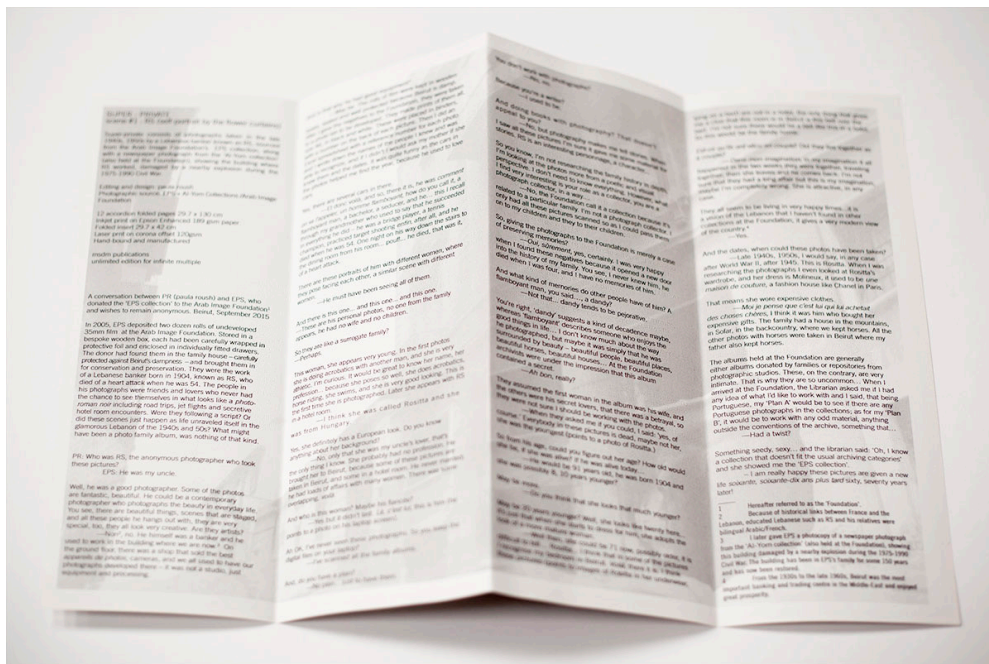
SUPER – PRIVATE: scene #4: Andrée (Show jumping)
8 accordion folded pages 29.7 x 84 cm



SUPER – PRIVATE: scene #5: Rositta (Beirut Corniche)
8 accordion folded pages 29.7 x 84 cm



SUPER – PRIVATE: scene #6: Rositta (Hamra, family home)
8 accordion folded pages 29.7 x 84 cm



SUPER – PRIVATE: Accordeon fold Insert includes a newspaper photograph from the 'Al-Yom collection' showing the building where RS worked, damaged by a nearby explosion during the 1975-1990 Civil War, and a conversation between PR (paula roush) and EPS, who donated the 'EPS collection' to the Arab Image Foundation



PHOTOBOOK#3

TODAY/ AL YOM

Hand made artist's book unbound paper structure

in case folder

48 pages, 21×29 cm

Monotone laser printing

on coloured paper Favin Le Cirque 80gsm

Photographs (of photographs) and design: paula roush

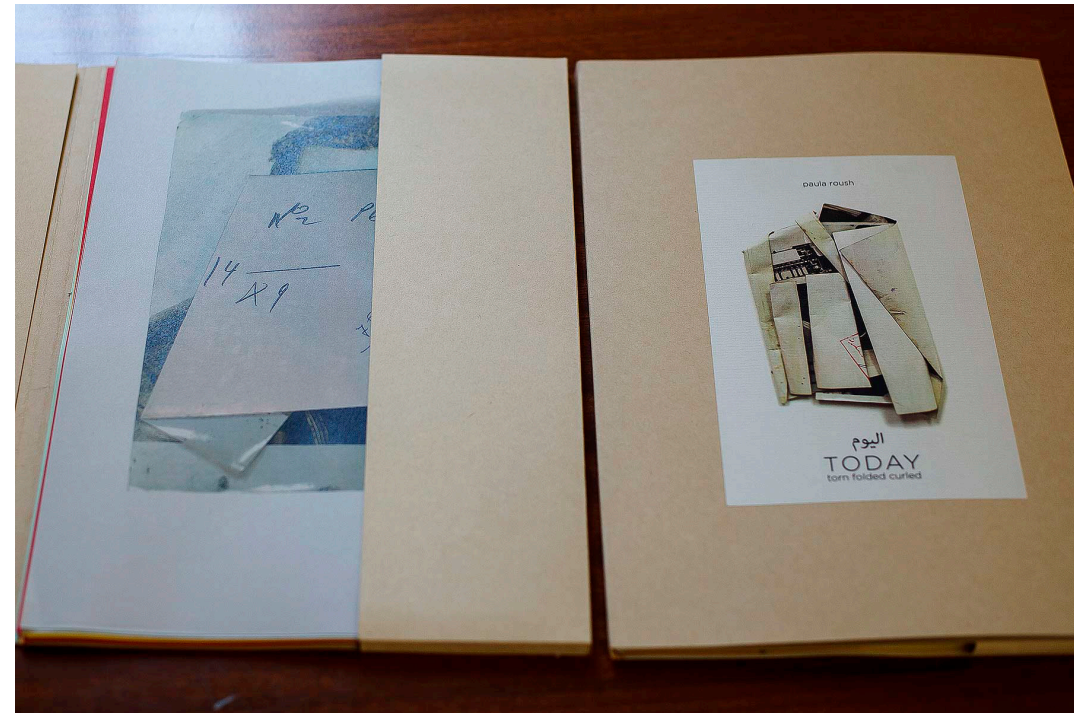
Source: Arab Image Foundation / EPS collection

Text: Elie-Pierre Sabbag, from the novel "L'Ombre d'Une Ville"

PlanBey: 1st edition

msdm publications: 2nd edition

The photook is made of 47 pages A4 size, a photograph at the recto (right side of the folio) paired with a sentence at the verso (folio's left side). The book is laser printed on coloured paper, unbound and organised on a folder labeled with stickers.



paula roush, TODAY/ AL YOM

Photobook sourced from the Arab Image Foundation/ Al-Yom Collections.

Published by PlanBEY in conjunction with the exhibition Torn Curled Folded, Makan project space, Beirut Oct – Nov 2015

ABOUT TODAY/ AL YOM

TODAY / AL YOM is the third photobook sourced from the Arab Image Foundation collections. It is an experiment with the genre of the photo-text, a blending of photography and literature that investigates the relationship between image and writing. At the Arab Image Foundation, I found several storage boxes labelled Al-Yom, containing heavily damaged and no information about their provenance. It involved several weeks of phone calls, emails and visits to other archives to find more about the photographs.

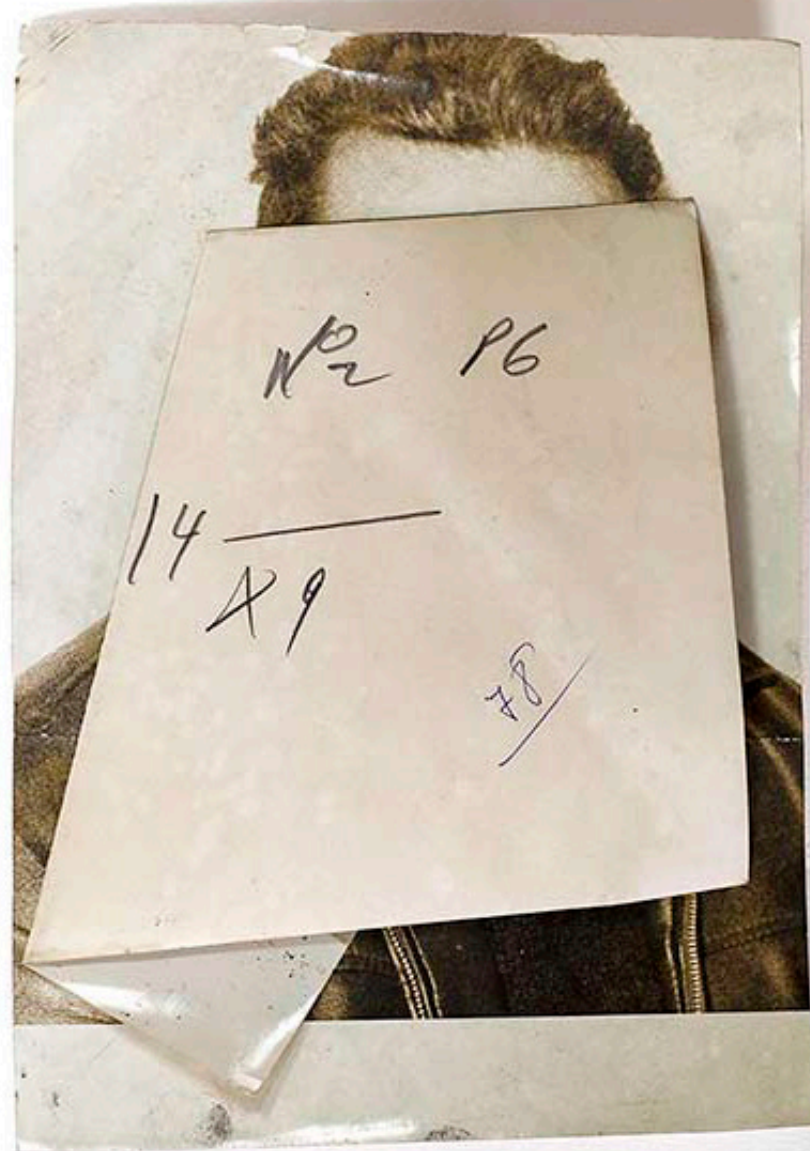
Al-Yom had been an Arabic-language daily newspaper published in Lebanon, no longer in print. The collection was brought to the Foundation by former director Zeina Arida who found it outside Walid El Tibi's apartment, in the same building her parents lived. After the newspaper's editor passed away the apartment where he lived had been cleared out. Al-Yom had been founded by Afif El Tibi—considered the father of Lebanese journalism—in 1937 and closed when the newspaper was attacked at the outbreak of war in 1975. Armed militia had stormed the building and given the staff thirty

minutes to leave the offices. That is possibly how the newspaper archives ended in its editor's apartment.

The book structure pairs each damaged photograph with text sampled from the novel "A L'ombre D'une Ville," a 1993 work of autofiction by Lebanese architect/writer Elie-Pierre Sabbagh about his return from Paris to a war-ravaged Beirut. I sampled all the sentences with the word Beirut and was given permission by its author to repurpose the text in this format.

The photographs are the referential blocks of the work, the text blocks introduce temporal dissonance, suspending the photographs' own temporality and placing them in a complex chronological relation with the novel. The writing is there not to explain the photographs or the photographs to illustrate the text, but they co-exist simultaneously within an archival framework. The photo-textuality foregrounds personal and historical material in a format that depends on reader's memory practices—activation of the page—to bring it to the present and safeguard it from being forgotten.

1.
Beyrouth aime aussi l'hiver.



PHOTOBOOK#4

SEX'N'DATABASE: A CORPOREAL TAXONOMY

Hand bound artist's book with folded paper structure
29,5 x 126cm colour inkjet print folded onto 6 pages
accordion structure (29,5 x 21 cm closed)

Epson 189 gsm paper and black boards (cover)

Editing and design: paula roush

Photographic source: Arab Image Foundation

msdm publications, 2015-2020





Lighting
Make-up
Standing up
Stood up
Dressed up

Nudity

DISC DISC

DISC DISC

DISC DISC

DISC DISC

DISC DISC

DISC DISC

ABOUT SEX'N'DATABASE: A CORPOREAL TAXONOMY

During the course of the residency, I also drew on the Arab Image Foundation's online image database as source for an artist's book. The work I created, "Sex'n'Database: A Corporeal Taxonomy" is a photographic object comprised of creative data visualisation and a bookwork. Both showcase a series of experiments done whilst querying the photographic database via textual keyboard input.

To focus on a small sample, I utilised only search words related to sexualities and corporeality and documented linked photographic sources as they rendered live on screen. Words (taxonomy) and photographs (collection) were captured via screenshots, and collaged to showcase the operating system crashing on overload. The resulting "panels" evidence the tension between two simultaneous processes: taxonomy (cataloguing practices) and photography (photographic practices), whilst also rendering visible gaps in the building of institutional collections.

My next step was to investigate how screen-based photography transfers to the structure of the book. One single (126 cm) inkjet print, with a panoramic collage of screen-captures, was folded into a six folds accordion. The case also has an accordion spine that sustains the book vertically and stores it as a six pages codex.

This artist's book sets up an interactive experience and the emergence of a quasi-narrative relationship between the screen-capture and the print translation.

The accordion structure, allowing the reader to expand more than one spread at a time, creates a time space sequencing that contrasts with the flatness of the screen. Both works have become media archaeology, for the image database has since then been replaced by an open access platform with a very different interface.

< Previous Gallery
Moksha

Remove

Exhibition Home

Change Gallery

Next Gallery
The Lost Chapter: Nampula 1...

SEX'N'DATABASE: A CORPOREAL TAXONOMY

Paula Roush

During a residency at the Arab Image Foundation I looked at several photographic collections that, in different ways, reflect the city of Beirut and its links to both the Arab and international photo-visual culture.

Description
Body exposure
Bracelet
Breast
Column
Cross-handed
Duo

“Sex’n’database: A Corporeal Taxonomy” is part of
the exhibition Activating the Archive
PH museum online exhibition
July 24- Sept 24 2018



And features in Membrana Photography Magazine
 Commissioned visual essay for the issue
 "Cabinet" on Archives and archival photographic practices
 April 2018

EXHIBITION DOCUMENTATION



Installation views of SUPER – PRIVATE photobook and wall photoprint in the exhibition Torn, Folded, Curled , Makan Project Space, Beirut Oct-Nov 2015

TORN, FOLDED, CURLED —A ONE PERSON EXHIBITION

Makan Project Space, Beirut Oct-Nov 2015

Torn, Folded, Curled—a working term used at the Arab Image Foundation to categorise heavily damaged photographs that require special care in storage and preservation— is also the title for the project started with photographic research at the Foundation followed by a publishing residency at PlanBEY that resulted in

photobookworks and an exhibition. Based in Beirut's Mar Mikhael, Makan was a residential apartment before its conversion into a project space. Relying on the domestic feeling of the site, the gallery was retrofitted into a furnished apartment and the photobook works integrated within a site-specific installation. The staging of a narrative within an out-dated domestic interior invited the audience into an intimist reading of the scenes evoked on the printed pages.



Installation view of AL-YOM/ TODAY photoprints in the exhibition Torn, Folded, Curled , Makan Project Space, Beirut Oct-Nov 2015

EXHIBITION DOCUMENTATION



Installation views of SUPER – PRIVATE: SCENES 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 photobooks in the exhibition INFINITE MULTIPLE, Carroll / Fletcher Gallery, London September 2017

INFINITE MULTIPLE

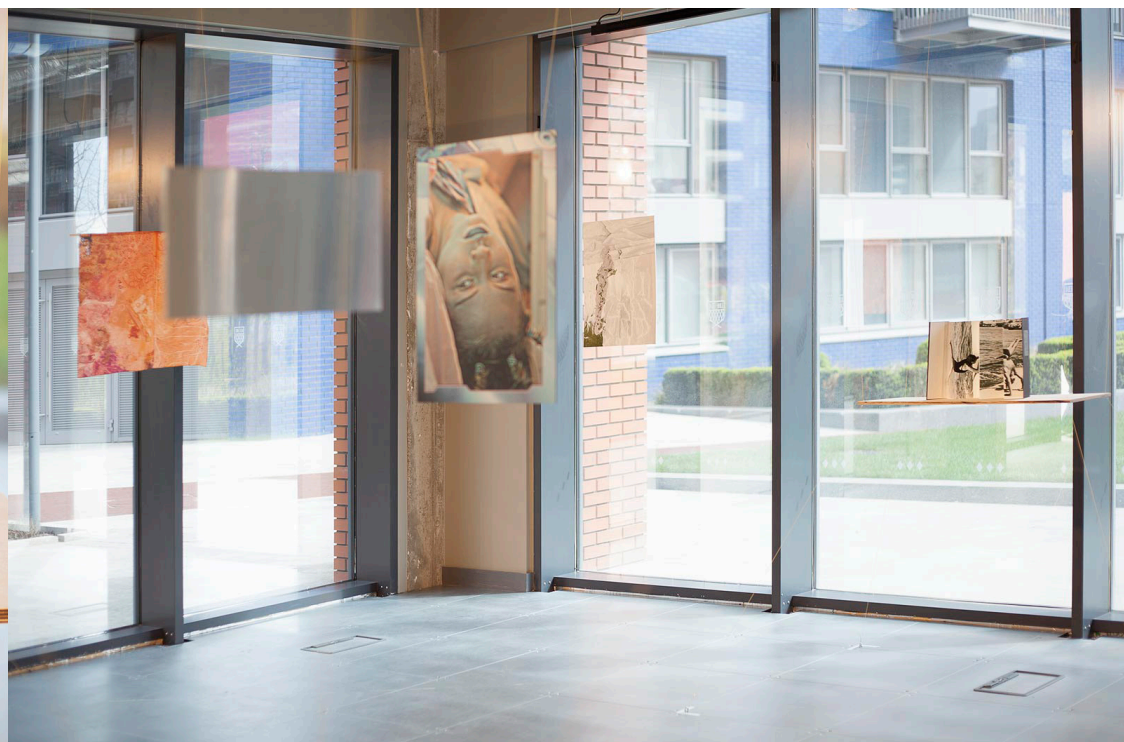
www.infinitemultiple.com online platform

Carroll / Fletcher Gallery, London September 2017

Arebite Gallery, London April 2018

The Infinite multiple is an experimental model for making and buying contemporary art; an online platform selling unlimited editions at accessible prices. Developed and managed by a London-based collective of artists and curators, the vision of infinite multiple is to widen the scope for owning and collecting art.

The first set of 30 unlimited editions by 20 artists was launched online at www.infinitemultiple.com on 1st September 2017, and was on display September 2017 at the Carroll / Fletcher Gallery,



Installation views of SUPER – PRIVATE: SCENES 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 photobooks in the exhibition INFINITE MULTIPLE, Arebite Gallery, London April 2018

London. followed on April 2018 by Lounge Arrival exhibition, Arebite Gallery, London.

SUPER – PRIVATE: SCENES 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 were presented on plinths and shelves, multiple copies of the works used to present the viewer with the complete content of the work.

Participating artists: Ilona Broeseliske, Max Colson, David Cotterrell, Nina Coulson, Thomson & Craighead, Matthew Darbyshire, Rod

Dickinson, Oliver Durcan, Theo Ellison, Marcia Farquhar, Jacob Farrell, Shayna Fonseka, London Fieldworks, Freee, Maria Paz Garcia, Roxman Gatt, Tristan Hessing, Lizzie Hughes, Mustapha Hulusi, Louise Long, Adrian Lee, Sally Labern, Christopher MacInnes, Antonia McDonald, Jon Rafman, paula roush, Santiago Sierra, Jonathan Trayner and Theo Turpin

Launch of infinite multiple, an online platform selling unlimited editions by established and emerging artists



Bookwork of images from a found collection of photographs from secret and illicit encounters of a Lebanese banker during the 30's and 40's by Paula Rouch.

LONDON.- infinite multiple is a new model for making and buying contemporary art; an online platform selling unlimited editions at accessible prices. Developed and managed by a London-based collective of artists and curators, the vision of infinite multiple is to widen the scope for owning and collecting art. The first set of 30 exclusive unlimited editions by 20 emerging and established artists is launched online at www.infinitemultiple.com on 1st September, accompanied by an exhibition at Carroll / Fletcher in London.

The works for sale span the breadth of contemporary art in the post-internet age, from the overtly political to the wittily observational and the gently anarchic. Forms range from sculptures, objects and digital prints to a bookwork, woodcut and wearable artworks including Santiago Sierra's NO armband from his NO global tour and Lizzie Hughes' scarf printed with satellite images of Californian donutting tracks. Other works include Thompson & Craighead's circumnavigational white plate presenting a drawn arrow with the words 'HERE, 24,859 miles', Marcia Farquhar's grey painted souvenirs and David Cotterell's lenticular print, playing with notions of distance with imagery from his time as a war artist in Afghanistan.

Jon Fawcett, the founder and director of infinite multiple said, "infinite multiple is a genuinely exciting project, revealing new things about a field we thought we knew so well. The most important part of the project is offering anybody with an interest in contemporary art the opportunity to own their own original artworks, and so develop a deeper personal relationship with both the work and the artists."