



Adam Broomberg + Oliver Chanarin, The Press Conference, June 9, 2008, from the series The Day Nobody Died, c-type print, detail, 2008

A Refusal of Images

Adam Broomberg + Oliver Chanarin, Rehab Nazzal

MAIN GALLERY

Exhibition runs January 20 2012 - March 3 2012

Reception: January 20 2012: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Curated by: Vicky Moufawad-Paul

On the eve of the first anniversary of the Arab Spring, as general strikes and occupy movements have spread across the globe, A Space Gallery is pleased to present *A REFUSAL OF IMAGES*. The works in this exhibition urge us to consider a central determinant of unfolding history—the use of mobile devices to record and transmit political events. With an immediacy that our visual culture has only recently begun to grasp, these recordings often contain moments of abstraction: for example, the shaking camera aimed at the backs of others while the videographer flees from a tear gas attack. Those segments of not being able to see tell us as much as those that are clear; they tell us about being blocked and they tell us about power in that moment. These kinds of abstract images communicate something that might circumvent a system of images that are often trapped in meaning and over-determined by our viewing habits. At the same time, satellites are repeatedly taking images of the entire surface of the earth; clear, yet dangerously totalizing, contemporary images of violence are easily accessible.

In this context, curator Vicky Moufawad-Paul has assembled this exhibition as a way to interrupt our viewing practices and illustrate experiences of violence as they relate to the problems of accessibility and control. UK based collaborative team Adam Broomberg + Oliver Chanarin and Toronto based Rehab Nazzal decided to enter zones of conflict, Afghanistan and Palestine respectively, and to return without the images that have come to be expected. Through abstracting and reconfiguring the notion of witnessing, the artists turn their backs on what Susan Sontag calls "the consensus of images" and instead present us with a *détournement* of the ways that we often see zones of conflict.

BIOGRAPHIES

Adam Broomberg + Oliver Chanarin are based in London England and have been collaborating for over a decade. They have produced six books which in different ways examine the language of documentary photography. *Trust* (2000) accompanied their first solo-show at The Hasselblad Center; *Ghetto* (2003) a collection of their work as editors and principal photographers of *Colors* magazine, was exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum; *Mr Mkhize's Portrait* (2004) documented South Africa ten years after apartheid and accompanied a solo show at The Photographers' Gallery; *Chicago* (2006), an exploration of the militarization of contemporary Israel was published by SteidlMACK in conjunction with a solo-show at The Stedelijk Museum; and *FIG* (2007), by Steidl/ Photoworks, accompanied their solo exhibitions at the John Hansard Gallery and Impressions Gallery, UK. *The Red House* (2007), produced in the cells below the former Ba'athist Party headquarters in Iraq, is published by Steidl Editions. Broomberg and Chanarin regularly teach workshops and give master classes in photography, as well as lecturing on the MA in Documentary Photography at LCC. They are the recipients of numerous awards, including the Vic Odden Award from the Royal

photographic Society and are trustees of the Photographers' Gallery and Photoworks in the UK.

Rehab Nazzal is a Palestinian-born multidisciplinary artist based in Toronto. Nazzal is currently an MFA candidate, Documentary Media Program, Ryerson University. She holds a BFA, University of Ottawa, Post Grad Studies, International Economic Relations, University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria, and B.A in Economics, Damascus University, Syria. Nazzal has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally in group and solo exhibitions, including International Yellowknife Film Festival, Montreal Palestine Film festival, SAW Video for the Media Arts, International Mini Print Festival, Gallery 101, and Ottawa X- photography Festival among other shows. Nazzal received a number of awards and grants including Edmund and Isobel Ryan Visual Arts award in photography, University of Ottawa, Documentary Photography for social Justice Award, Ryerson University, Ontario Graduate Scholarship, Ryerson University Scholarship, and city of Ottawa grant among others. Nazzal taught photography and drawing for several years at the Ottawa School of Art.

Vicky Moufawad-Paul is a curator, video artist, and the Artistic Director at A Space Gallery. She holds an MFA from York University where she completed research on the visual culture of Palestine, a topic that she has published widely on. Most recently she has curated projects at Interaccess Electronic Media Arts Centre (Toronto), Inside Out Film Festival (Toronto), and 16 Beaver (New York City). She was the founding Executive Director of the Toronto Arab Film Festival, has been an advisor to both the Toronto Arts Council, and has worked at the Toronto International Film Festival. Moufawad-Paul has exhibited her videos nationally and internationally.



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