

GRETA NAUFAL

WORK PRODUCED DURING THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR
1982-1993

- 1982 **'Beyrouth ma ville',**
Exhibited at Goethe-Institut, 1982
- 1983-1984 **'The Nuba Of Kau'**
Exhibited at Galerie Chahine, 1984
- 1985 **Drawings From Mass Media**
Ink drawings from photos in the newspaper / Sketch books and loose artworks – unexhibited
- 1985-1986 **'Le Chemin De Croix Des Survivants' / Survivors on the Road of the Cross**
Exhibited at Goethe Institut, 1986
- 1986-1987 **'Maternity'**
Exhibited at AUB Alumni, 1987
- 1987-1989 **'Stand Up And Dance' – Cathartic Danse**
First artworks on large scrolls of galvanised paper / Exhibited at Carlton, 1990
- 1989 **'The Shelter / Homage To Pina Bausch' – Painting In The Underground Shelter**
Documented by Reuters / later exhibited at Millesgarden Museum (1999) and Nadu Museum (2019)
- 1991 **'Behind the Wall'**
Exhibited at Kulturzentrum, Kaslik, Lebanon
- 1993 **'Il pleut dans ma mémoire' / It Rains In My Memory**
Alwane Gallery, Kaslik, Lebanon
- 1991-1995 **Photographing End-Of-War Beirut**
Documentation of the city post-war destruction (collaboration with Samar Mogharbel)
- 1993 **Artist In Ruins**
Installation and performance in St George Cathedral (collaboration with Imad Issa and Majid Kassir)
ZDF German TV channel
- 1994-1995 **'Bey 017/GS96'**
Exhibited at Galerie Janine Rubeiz, 1995

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THE NUBA OF KAU

OIL AND INK PAINTINGS

1983-1984

FROM THE ARCHIVE: EXHB/NUBA/84
GRETA NAUFAL – THE NUBA OF KAU
Exhibited at Galerie Chahine, 1984





With a calm that almost hurts the eye and a balance which is one step away from breaking, then breaks only to find more balance – some kind of ordered chaos which immediately gives us the impression that we are in front of an artist whose is quickly reactive yet deeply rooted and established by experience, mastering themes and mediums, here comes Greta Naufal.

As if she comes from the core of the artistic movement – inheriting from experienced, established or even revolutionary pioneers, but also carrying the seeds of a new succession. She seems to stand out among her peers. She doesn't cause a storm or break any standards but rather works on the mastery of all the academic rules and abides by the parameters which define art practice and the potential of artists. She builds her art pieces with the sweat of her hands without coming out of the widely recognised frameworks but by working with all the details of the pictorial language which since the Renaissance to our day have made up most of the writings on art. We can add to this semi-normal qualities such as solidity, strength and ingenuity but these qualities carry at the same time **a softness, a fluidity, and a flexibility which bring an expressive dimension harvested from the nerves of living and planted in the pulse of our eye to nourish it with its vibrancy.** [...] The strange thing is that all this leads us to some kind of ritualistic silence.

[...] She stands out among many artists from her generation whose art is decorative or ornamental. **And she reminds through this of the strong beginnings of Yvetter Achkar and Nadia Saikali who changed the approach to art and remained strong in the face of resistance.** Greta Naufal doesn't bring any foreign detail to the human scene which defines her theme (the face of the narrative artwork), but she deliberately removes all the elements of the natural landscape. Her focus remains on the essential traits of the human face as a window to emotional unrest or instinctive invasion.

[...] She delves into the depth of her consciousness to uproot these musical compositions which reflect both joy and sorrow just like day and night. Her ink paintings emerge like the sun carrying much talent.

Excerpts from 'Greta Naufal has her own nurturing vibrations – forms full of reactive pressure' Nazih Khater, AnNahar, 18/11/1984



In Greta Naufal's work, form is simplified. Any effect of caricature disappears at the expense of a vehement and intense expressionism of the silhouette and the dramatic opposition of zones of shadow and zones of light. [...] All figures represent the human condition and social upheaval. In some compositions, the lines converge towards a powerful source of light as if a fire invades the landscape leaving behind desolation and ruins. However, the artist has accents of poignant tenderness when she paints some faces. The lines have something absolute. The eyes open up, exaggerated as if to translate an empty inner dimension of the vision beyond.

Nicole Harfouche, 14/11/84



Everything comes from what is lived and with Greta Naufal, we are far from clichés or déjà-vu. She overcomes in the most personal of ways the horrors. A challenge and not of the lesser ones.

May Makarem, Orient-Le-Jour, 15/11/84

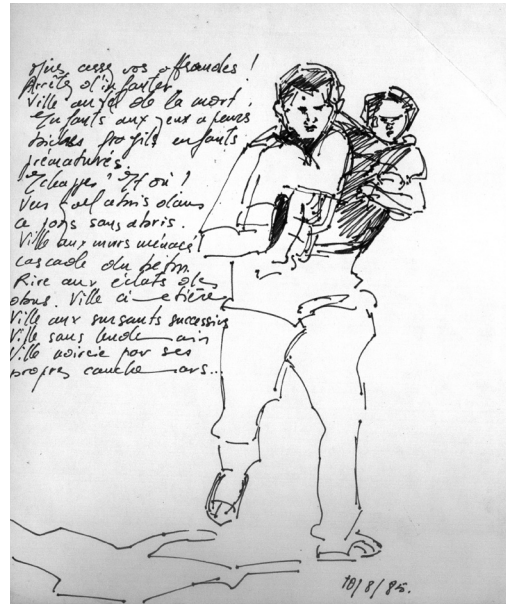
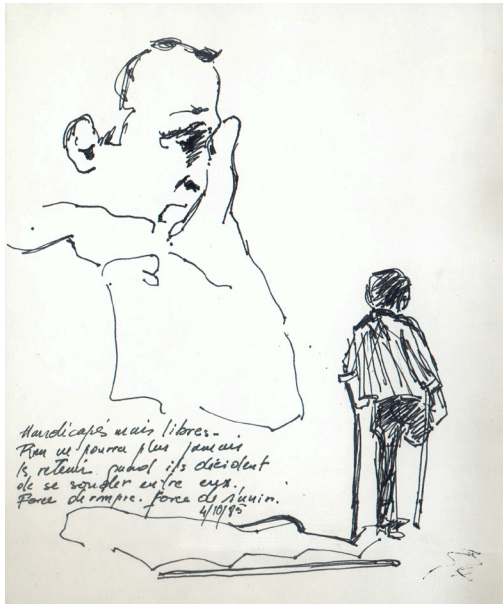
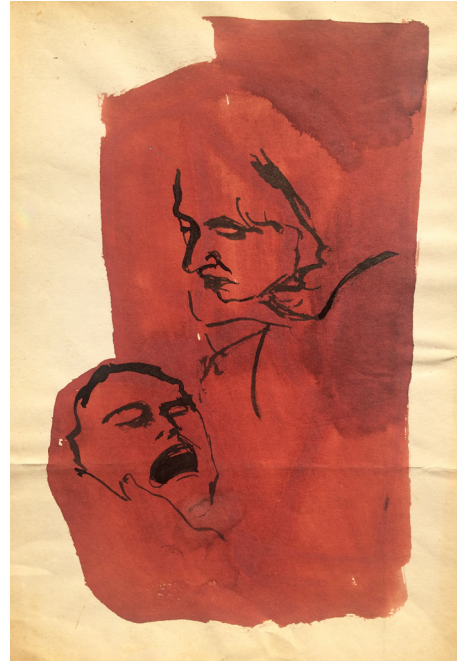


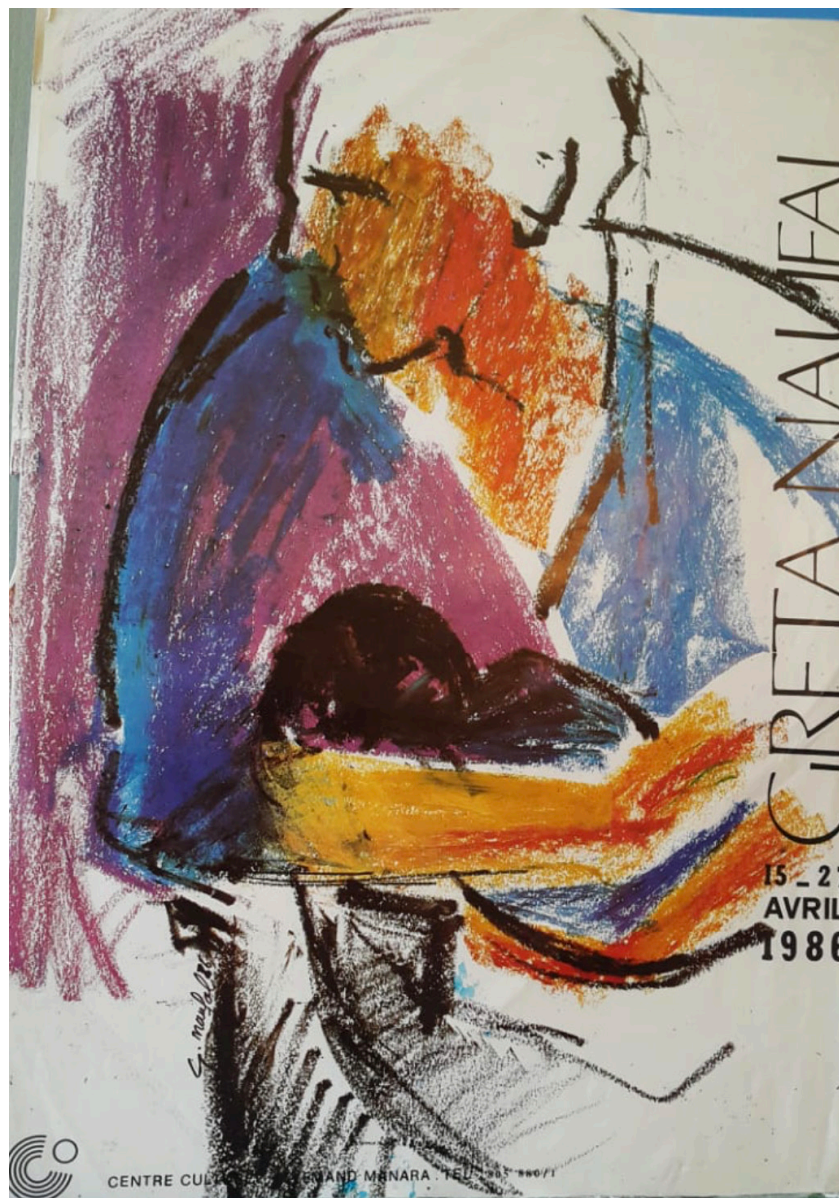
Greta Naufal doesn't copy the reality or give form to an event or a visual scene but rather paints a specific consequence, the consequence or the confrontation and collision of the inner and outside worlds-transforming images to new forms which constitute a totally new vision. An Nahar Al Arabi, 30/11/84

SURVIVORS OF WAR / MATERNITY

DRAWING / PAINTING

1985-1987

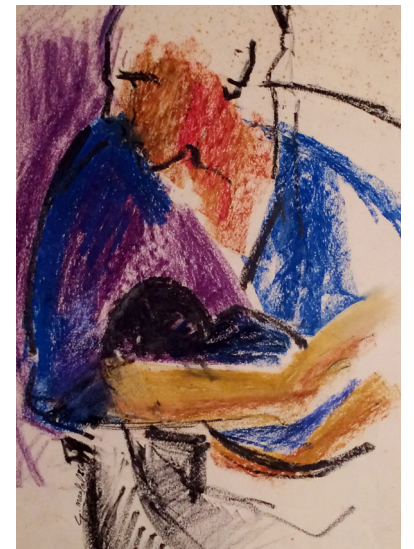




FROM THE ARCHIVE: EXHB/SURVIVORS/86

GRETA NAUFAL – SURVIVANTS DU CHEMIN DE CROIX / SURVIVORS ON THE ROAD OF THE CROSS

Exhibited at Goethe Institut, 1986



FROM THE ARCHIVE: PHOTO/SURVIVORS/86

GRETA NAUFAL – SURVIVANTS DU CHEMIN DE CROIX / SURVIVORS ON THE ROAD OF THE CROSS

Exhibited at Goethe Institut, 1986



[...] Greta Naufal traces often the same image which is never identical, the same painting which seems to be never completed

[...] Seeking emotions rather than landscapes, her works are comparable to big screams which carry much fragility – there is something which guarantees sincerity in her art.

[...] A message to denounce violence, injustice, fanaticism and indifference but also a scream of love in this world left to the irrational. A testimony of universal reach.

“My figures speak of love, maternity and death. But also about water, air and fire, the vital elements which are strongly linked or otherwise dissociated. Love is this desire to inflame (fire) the heart and this passion attaches us to life and therefore to the air that we breathe and to the water... We deliver a child with pain so said God, so we need a lot of love to conceive and hold a child (hence the theme of maternity). Without love, the being perishes, dries up and therefore we will lack water, air and energy (fire). It brings death and when I say death I am also speaking about the death of the soul, of the child that we kill with a stupid aggression, of the youth losing its sensibility, of old age which reaches desperation. It can also be ruin, the death of freedom and suffocation.”

May Makarem, ‘The unreal daily experience of Greta Naufal’
40 drawings at the Goethe Institut, L’Orient-Le-Jour, 15/04/1986

Enquêtes et reportages – L'ORIENT-LE JOUR – Mardi 15 Avril 1986

A TRAVERS UNE QUARANTAINE DE DESSINS A L'INSTITUT GOETHE

LE QUOTIDIEN IRREEL DE GRETA NAUFAL

« Sans amour, l'être déprimé... »
dit Greta Naufal.

Un quelque chose de fragile, d'éprouvé...

Il faut beaucoup de tendresse pour porter un enfant...

Elle n'a pas pu aller au-delà de la tragédie, au-delà du malheur qui frappe tous les jours... Elle n'a pu dépasser cet état de choses qui colle à la peau et prend à la gorge la femme, l'enfant et l'homme... Presque irréel, ce quotidien que Greta Naufal Khoury est à sa cinquième exposition. Elle a déjà présenté ses œuvres en Grèce (1979 et 80), à l'Institut Goethe (1982), et à la Galerie Chahine-Verdun en 1984. Créateur de sa technique (grattage, frottage... le pinceau et la lame qui interviennent), le peintre poursuit son travail comme dans un état de quête: dans un ensemble d'œuvres, Greta Naufal retrace souvent la même image qui n'est jamais identique, un même tableau qui n'est jamais terminé... puisque déjà « il contient le suivant », comme disait Edouard Pignon.

Espace que le corps humain, par ses attitudes, ses poses et ses mouvements, vient incarner les secrets de sa tendresse et de son angoisse, les œuvres se réunissent autour d'un thème: « L'Eros et la Mort ». « Mes figures disent l'amour, la maternité et la mort, mais aussi l'eau, l'air et le feu, éléments vitaux solidement liés ou alors dissociés.

L'amour est ce désir qui embrase (feu) le cœur; et cette passion nous attache à la vie et donc à l'air (oxygène) et l'eau... Vous enfantez dans la douleur, a dit Dieu, il faut alors beaucoup d'amour pour concevoir et porter un enfant (thème de la maternité).

Sans amour, l'être déprimé, se dessèche et il y a alors manque d'eau, d'air et d'énergie (feu). C'est la mort qui frappe. Et quand je dis mort, je parle aussi de celle de l'âme. De l'enfant qu'on tue par une agression stupide (il devient adulte). D'une jeunesse désemparée ou insensibilisée. D'une vieillesse désespérée. D'une société violente à outrance... Ça peut être aussi la ruine, la mort de la liberté, l'étouffement.

Cherchant des émotions et non des paysages, les œuvres de Greta Naufal sont comparables à de grands cris dont la violence saccadée a quelque chose de fragile, d'éprouvé... quelque chose qui garantit la sincérité de son art. Le peintre fait passer ses idées et ses émotions dans le travail artistique pour le doter d'une particularité. « Car, après tout ce qu'on essaie de dire, c'est toujours soi-même, la vie qu'on mène ou qui vous est imposée.

Certains de ses personnages ont les yeux bandés. « Mais oui, le rêve est une seconde vie pour la femme aux yeux bandés. Elle fait une réalité pénible ou laide. Mais vient toujours le moment où elle ôte son masque et le pose. Les yeux grands ouverts, elle devient elle-même, elle se réalise. Ceel se déroule comme lors d'un tournage. « Action »: on revêt le masque pour incarner un personnage sublime, le plus souvent; pour évoluer dans un cadre autre que le nôtre, au tout cas plus romantique, plus stimulant. Et vient le moment où l'on décide, « coupe ». Alors on redevient soi, on se réalise avec cette angoissante promesse d'une vie nouvelle.

Dans ce monde égoïste, on ne fait pas son chemin par les sentiments, disait Balzac. Greta Naufal, femme avant d'être peintre, le démontre. Nous la retrouvons dans chacune de ses œuvres, dans ses lignes toutes arrondies, cambrées, tordues... pleines de rythme, un rythme qui traduit à la fois la tendresse et la peur... des expressions qui rappellent la vie mais aussi la mort. Un message pour dénoncer la violence, l'injustice, le fanatisme et l'indifférence... mais aussi un cri d'amour dans ce monde livré à l'irrational. Un témoignage à portée universelle.

May MAKAREM

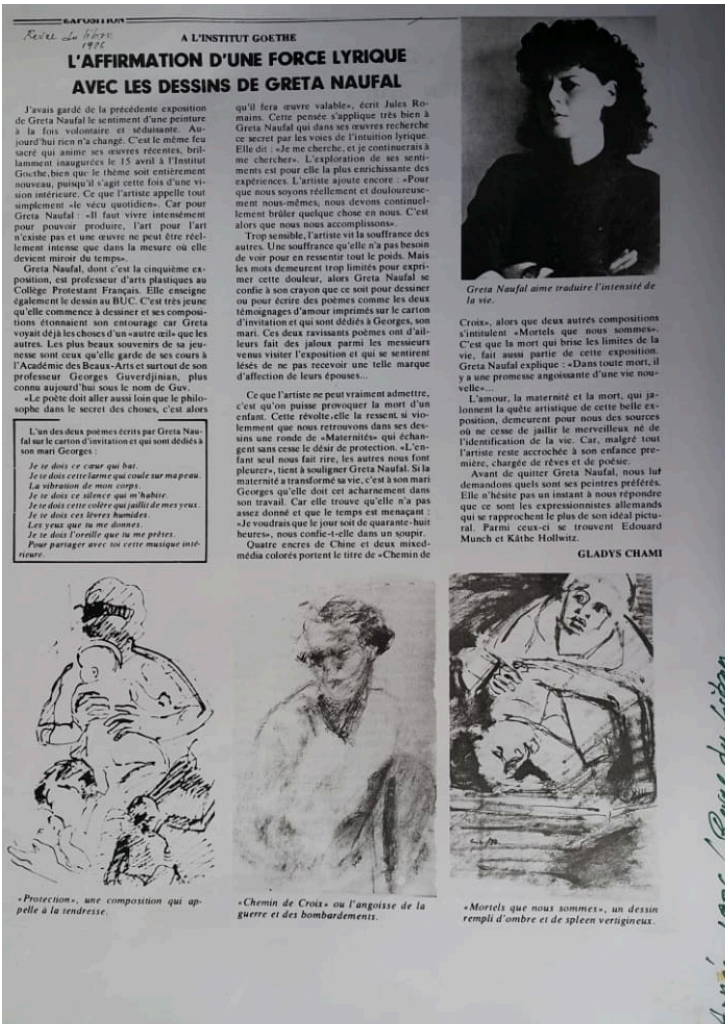
Un carton d'invitation pas comme les autres... Si dans ses toiles, Greta Naufal laisse au public le soin de découvrir ses cris d'amour, sur son carton, elle l'exprime en vers:

A Georges.

Je te dois ce cœur qui bat.
Je te dois cette larme qui coule sur ma peau.
La vibration de mon corps.
Je te dois ce silence qui m'habite.
Je te dois cette colère qui jaillit de mes yeux.
Je te dois ces lèvres humides.
Les yeux que tu me donnes.
Je te dois l'oreille que tu me prêtes.
Pour partager avec toi cette musique intérieure.



"Greta Naufal emerges as an artist with a manifesto to return to the foundations of fine arts and classical techniques with new experiments which are solid and focused and ready for bold transformations..."



"We must live intensely so that we can produce. Art for art's sake does not exist and a piece of art can never be intense until it becomes a mirror of time."

[...] What the artist Greta Naufal can never accept is the provoked death of a child. Her revolt against this is so violently felt that we find in her drawings a circle or a cocoon of "Maternities" which share the instinct to protect. "The Child alone makes us laugh, others make us cry" Greta Naufal insists to say.

[...] Before leaving Greta Naufal, we ask her who are her favourite painters. She doesn't hesitate to reply that they are the German expressionists who are the closest to her pictorial ideal. Among those we can find Edward Munch and Käthe Kollwitz.

Gladys Chami, Excerpts from 'The affirmation of a lyrical force with the drawings of Greta Naufal', Revue du Liban, 1986

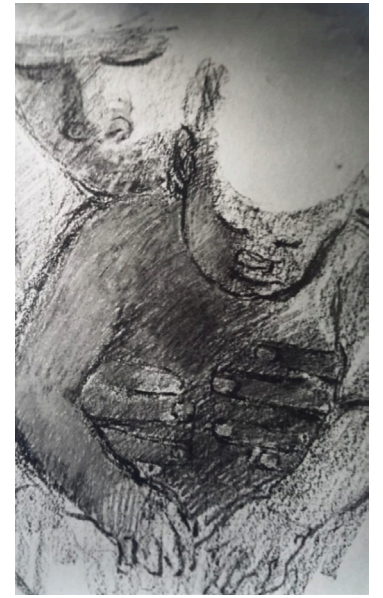
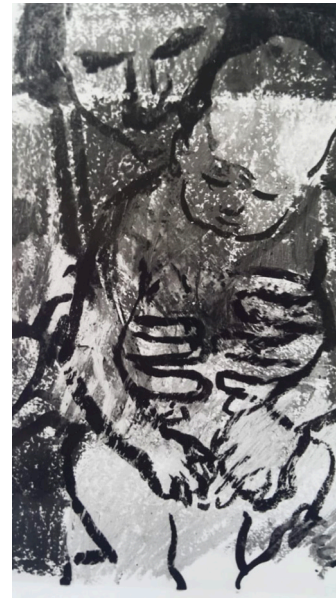


The theme of 'Maternity and War' is often the most prominent and tackled in art history but when we stand in front of the artworks of this exhibition, it immediately strikes us as a less ordinary exhibition. **Maternity here is a personal experience and war becomes a conversation where the language of motherhood takes over.** So here we see emerging in between these contradictory themes, birth and death, beginning and end, joy and fear, an emotion which gradually grows into an atmosphere which brings tears to the eyes [...] as if there was a veil between our eyes and what we see, throwing on these pictures textures and colours, as if it is a veil of tears or the tear in the eyes of a mother watching the scenes depicted in these images.

We are in front of an artist who among others is starting an artistic movement in a time witnessing a regression in art, decline, oppression or at least much worry and turmoil in the language and ambitions of art.

Samir Sayegh, Excerpt from 'The Impossible Combination', Al Kifah el Arabi, 21/4/1986

FROM THE ARCHIVE: EXHB/MATERNITY/87
GRETA NAUFAL – MATERNITE / MATERNITY SERIES
AUB ALUMNI, 1987



FROM THE ARCHIVE: PHOTO/MATERNITY/87
GRETA NAUFAL – MATERNITE / MATERNITY SERIES
AUB ALUMNI, 1987



THE SHELTER

TRANSFORMING THE UNDERGROUND SHELTER INTO A STUDIO
PAINTING AND DRAWING ON MATERIAL AT HAND (ROLLS OR TISSUE PAPER)
PAINTING WITH CHILDREN ON SHELTER WALLS

1989



Hoda Soueid, 18/10/89 - "Greta Naufal: In times of war, all standards drop and no one has the right to define what a work of art is."



Emirates News, 1989



AnNahar, 1989 – Article by Nazih Khater from Paris following the Taef agreement on how to live in the destroyed city of Beirut

FROM THE ARCHIVE: PAINT/PINABAUSCH/89

GRETA NAUFAL "L'ABRI-HOMMAGE A PINA BAUSCH" / THE SHELTER – HOMAGE TO PINA BAUSCH

Mixed Media on 3meter long paper roll, 1989



Exhibited at Carlton (1990)
Millesgarden Museum (1999)
Nabu Museum (2019)



Beyrouth et le Liban

POUR «BEYROUTH EVIDEMMENT», SAMEDI, A DAR AL NADWA

...RIEN QUE LA MEMOIRE AFFECTIVE



A Dar el-Nadwa, Beyrouth s'est offert une fête.

Il est des villes qui refusent de mourir... Rien à faire quand la légende colle; et il est fastidieux d'essayer de la minimiser, d'autant plus que cycliquement, elle revient au galop, tout comme le naturel. Et c'est «Beyrouth... évidemment», qui, tel un phénix, renaît pour que derniers bilans de MTA.



Le panneau hommage à Samia Toutounji et Mona Bustros

crise, une œuvre abondante, proluxe, avec intention et motifs, une manifestation riche non seulement par la rutilance des couleurs, l'ambition de la narration mais aussi riche par le projet que sous-entend l'œuvre, par le propos qui, mine de rien, va plus loin que la simple histoire qui s'arrête dans

Le ton est donné par Nadia Tuéni. Ecrivains, poètes et journalistes se succèdent sans jamais abdiquer. Leur plume porte très haut l'étendard de la liberté et de la paix. Ghassan Tuéni, Marie-Thérèse Arbid, Claire Gebeily, Elias el-Khoury, Nazih Khater, Salah Stétié, Abeido Bacha, Michel Naufal, Fayçal Sultan, Youssef Bazzi, Abboud Attieh, Iskandar Habach, Zahi Wehbi, Nadim Georgeour, Salouan Haïdar, Leila Osseirane, Antoine Boulad, Hoda Soueïd, Vicken Chetorian... une myriade de styles d'où surgit Beyrouth forte, vibrante adoucissant ses cris et ses déchirements, à enrober ses âmes d'une douceur contenue et d'une émotion violente.

Ces visages et ces voix, porteurs de toutes les misères d'une vie quotidienne aux joies modestes et aux douleurs désespérées, chantent la survie de Beyrouth, «mille fois morte, mille fois revenue». Leur foi en cette ville fait plus d'étoiles que le grand feu de boulets rouges, ranimant cette terre brune, verte et fertile, qui a enfermé à jamais en elle au plus profond d'elle des héros certes, mais beaucoup plus d'innocents martyrs. Moment intense que la vue de ces panneaux dédiés à Toufic Youssef Aouad, Samia Toutounji, Soha Toukan, Khalil Haoui, Nadia Tuéni et Mona Bustros. A cette manifestation-hommage à Beyrouth, ils sont

plus présents que jamais. Comme fond sonore, une musique jouée par deux guitaristes, Saleh Barakat et Ramzi Bindak... Et prenant la relève, des cassettes diffusaient les plus belles chansons offertes à Beyrouth, alors qu'au fond de la salle, un écran projetait des interviews réalisées par Antoine Boulad: Janine Rubeiz disant Beyrouth, des artistes racontant l'expérience de ces six mois hisses au rang de destinée.

Chacun dans son domaine, ces hommes, ces femmes et leurs œuvres prouvent que le cauchemar a été dépassé et que l'âme, l'âme de Beyrouth est éternelle.

Pour cette grande première, il faut saluer les efforts de Janine Rubeiz. C'est à elle que l'on doit cette fête.

May MAKAREM

Disse que nos chambres nous sont devenues étrangères et que nous ne reconnaissons plus nos lits... (Greta Naufal)

(Photos Ibrahim Tawil)

A few other collaborations:

1983-1987

'Gens et Culture'

Cultural Programme on Télé Liban

by art critic Nazih Khater

1989

Beirut Tabaan (Beirut Certainly)

Collective exhibition curated by Janine Rubeiz
bring all artists who remained in Beirut during the war – event covered by Kultur Welt Spiegel on German TV WDR and broadcasted on Nov5, 1989

1989

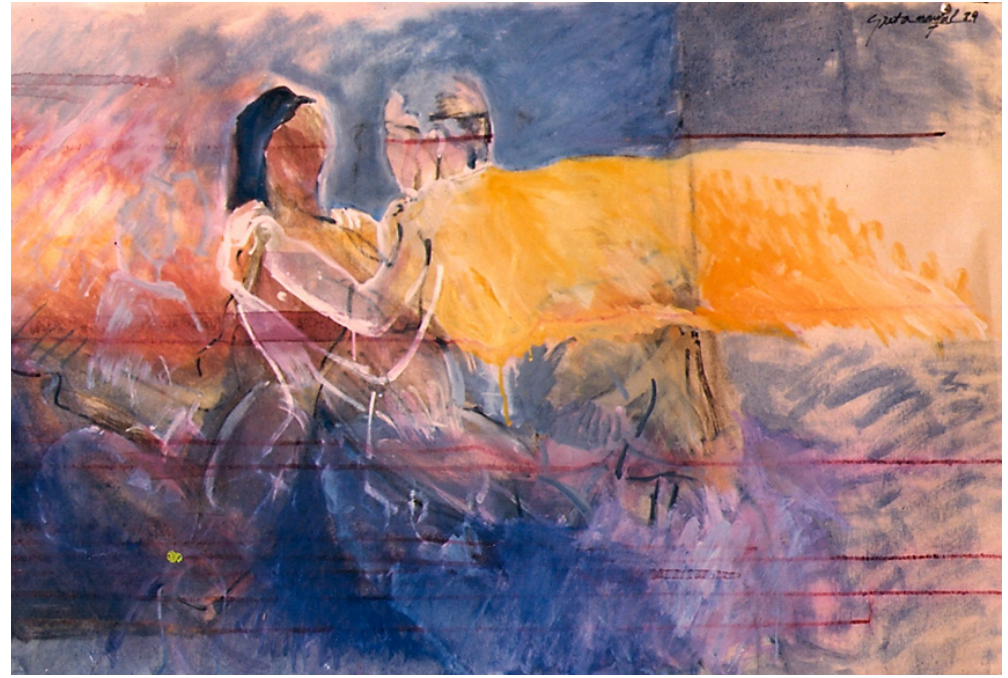
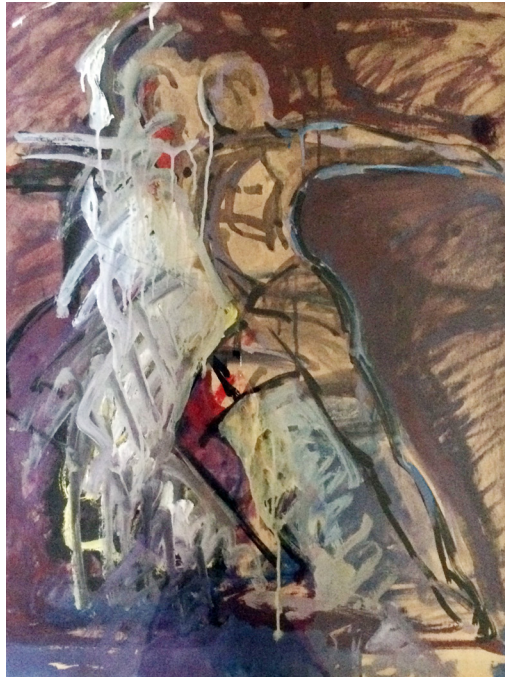
Live drawing with choreographer
Kameel Mroueh

STAND UP AND DANCE

PAINTINGS INSPIRED BY THE EXPRESSIONIST DANCE MOVEMENT
AND DANSE AS CATHARSIS

1990-1993

FROM THE ARCHIVE: PAINT/DANCE/90
GRETA NAUFAL – 'STAND UP AND DANCE'
Exhibited at Hotel Carlton, 1990





"The process of collage helps me to witness a new birth. Every single type of paper interests me and is useful to me. Wrapping paper, newspaper, cardboard paper, it doesn't matter which material as long as I can infuse a creative emotion"

Sylvain Thomas, 'Greta Naufal exhibits "Meeting", an exhibition of the most interesting kind', 1990



Nazih Khater, 'Greta Naufal challenges us throwing herself on large surfaces', AnNahar, 1990

RESURRECTION

INSTALLATION/PERFORMANCE WITH IMAD ISSA AND MAJID KASSIR

St. Georges Cathedral 1993

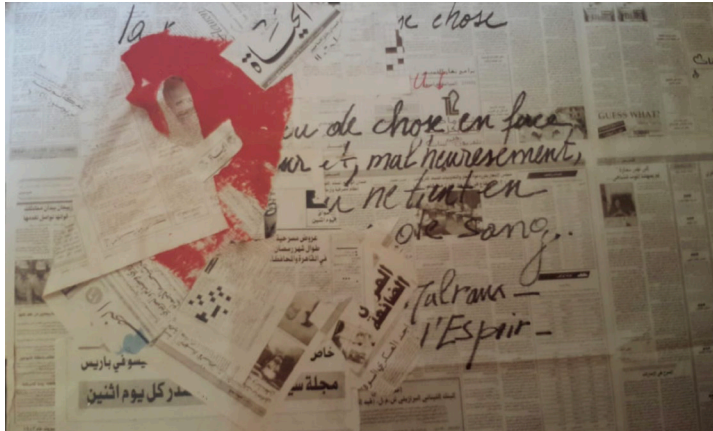
FROM THE ARCHIVE: INST/RESURRECTION/93

GRETA NAUFAL "RESURRECTION"

Installation at the St George Cathedral, Downtown Beirut, 1993

Collaborative project with Imad Issa

'Artists in Ruins' film by Majid Kassir for ZDF



INSTALLATION WITH NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers were used to cover the walls of the cathedral

Top: excerpt from Malraux, L'espoir (Hope)

FROM THE ARCHIVE: INST/RESURRECTION/93

GRETA NAUFAL "RESURRECTION"

Installation at the St George Cathedral, Downtown Beirut, 1993

Collaborative project with Imad Issa

'Artists in Ruins' film by Majid Kassir for ZDF



INSTALLATION WITH LARGE SCROLL

Scroll of paper was hanged from the upper niche of the cathedral covered with portraits and calligraphic writings

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NIGHT PERFORMANCE

The cathedral was filled with candles and Greta Naufal did a short performance standing at what used to be the altar of the destroyed cathedral

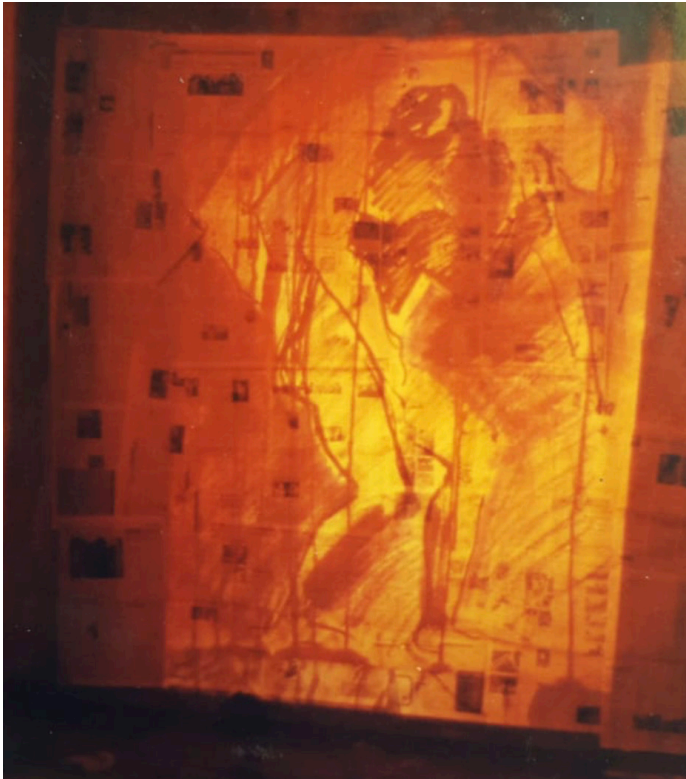
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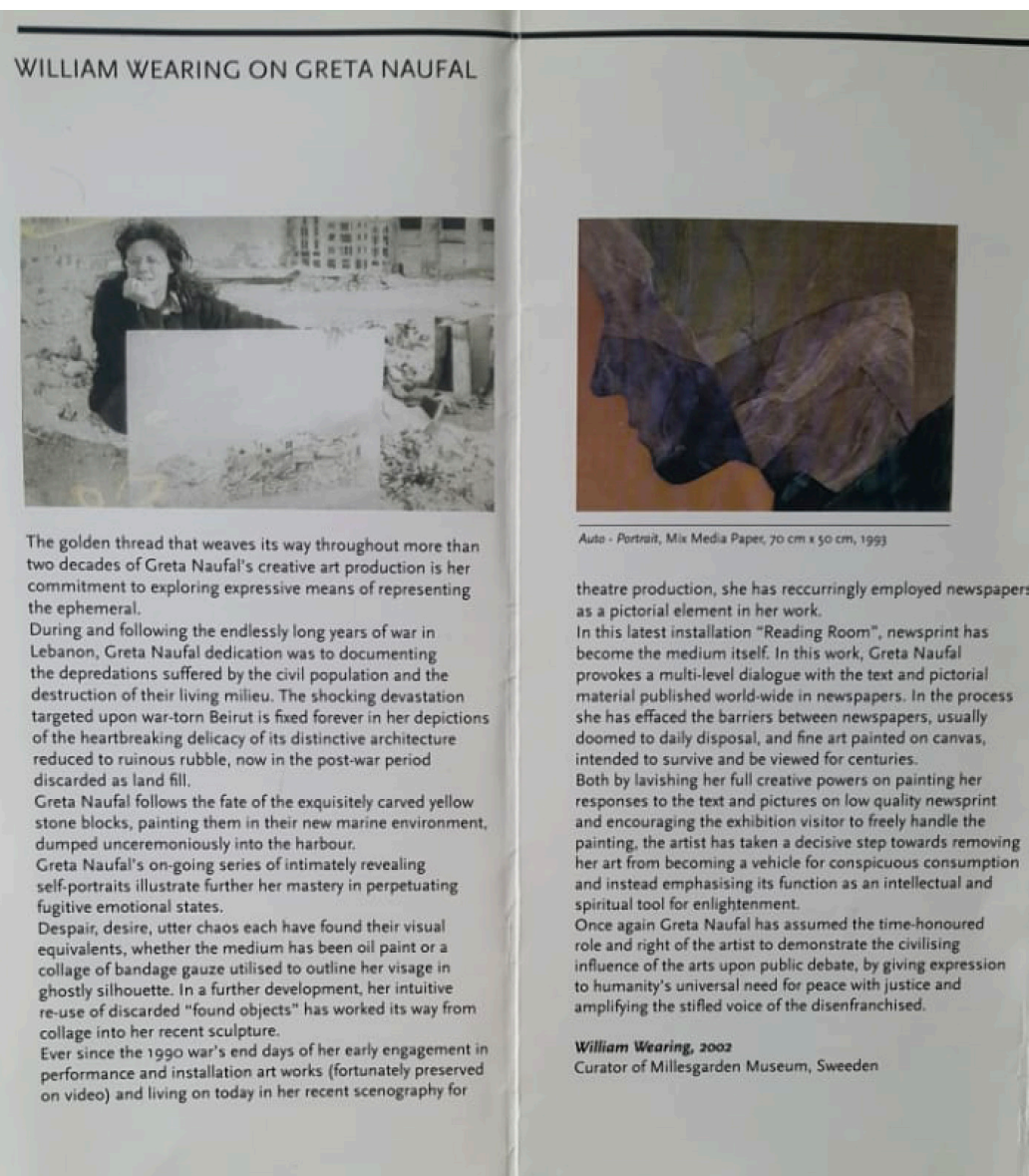
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NIGHT PROJECTION

Artworks from Greta Naufal's paintings during the last years of the civil war were projected on the newspaper covered walls. Left: Some of the artworks projected





BEIRUT

PHOTOGRAPHY DOCUMENTATION
MIXED MEDIA / COLLAGE / MONTAGE
1990-1997

*Greta Naufal Photos: Downtown Beirut in ruin after the end of the war
1990-1996*



Albums of photographs documenting the city of Beirut and the various spaces and building in the central district area straight after the war was declared officially over.



Greta Naufal Photos: St Georges Cathedral, Beirut
1993-1997



FROM THE ARCHIVE: EXH/BEIRUT/97
GRETA NAUFAL – Bey 017/GS96
 Janine Rubeiz Gallery, 1997



Thank you
