



Stachka! (2024), 1, 2–19

VISUAL CULTURE

Photographing the Past and Future of Lebanon: The Potential History and Visual Afterlives of Beirut's War-Damaged Buildings

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Abstract

Beirut, Lebanon, is a city in constant construction and reconstruction, it seems. After surviving multiple wars, with the Civil War of 1975-1990 as an arguably most impactful example, Beirut has been left with buildings riddled by bullets. That these buildings still stand is incredible, because they have survived not only the material damage of the war but also the various 'rebuilding' projects which have taken place since the end of the war, most of which were (and continue to be) headed by private companies such as state-founded Solidere. These buildings are some of the most photographed sites in Beirut; even when they are not the focus, they linger in the background, both physically and figuratively. As a case study, this paper examines the photography of an unfinished, decrepit cinema popularly called "the Egg." In doing so, this paper seeks to investigate how visual cityscapes create a sense of morale and identity, as well as pasts and futures. The Egg's afterlife as a ghost of a city that never came to be, drawing on Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's concept of potential history, troubles conceptions about how public memories and aspirations are negotiated, particularly visually and in the so-called Global South.

Keywords: Beirut, Lebanese Civil War, Photography, Memory Studies, Visual Culture Studies (VCS)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33682/kydw-ajf1>

Introduction

It is hardly debatable that Lebanon has been plagued by crises in its recent history, to put it lightly. Images of these tragedies, from civil wars to invasions,

to economic collapses and the degradation of its infrastructures, to a hollow government and a blast in 2020 which threatened to decimate much of its capital, Beirut. The cityscape in Beirut has been implicated, an unconsenting participant, in narrative-making projects about the problems the country and city itself have faced, particularly through photography. Many histories are lost and found, broken down and reconstituted with each of these images. Following Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's theoretical framework of potential history as "a commitment to attend to the potentialities that the institutional forms of imperial violence—borders, nation-states, museums, archives, and laws—try to make obsolete or turn into precious ruins,"¹ this article examines the images of Beirut 'ruin'—namely the abandoned 'Egg' cinema in downtown Beirut—and what potentialities images of ruin come to obscure and uncover as they are captured and circulated across different contexts and by various actors.

To investigate Beirut ruin photography, this article focuses on the lives and afterlives of the bullet-riddled buildings in Beirut which remain standing after the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). These buildings' continued presence seems paradoxical, perhaps even 'honorable,' at first because they have survived not only material damage from the war but also the various 'rebuilding' projects which have taken place since the end of the war, most of which were (and continue to be) headed by Solidere: a private company founded by former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.² These buildings form an interesting case study of how public memory is negotiated and constructed and how visual languages and images shape morale and identity (even if 'broken') for Beirutis and the Lebanese at large. Their lives and afterlives form an interesting case study of how public memory is negotiated and constructed, and how visual mediations of notions of decline and decay are structured in the 'Global South.' The central questions this article asks are: How do these buildings appear in popular photography?³ What are the afterlives of these ghostly figures in light of the various traumas and aspirations that the Lebanese state and people hold? And what claims do images of these buildings make about Beirut as a city and capital, about Lebanon as a nation-state, and about the history and future of Lebanon?

This article revolves around one example of these now-iconic buildings: the 'Egg,' also known as the 'Dome.' This case study is centered around analysis of photos of this building presented online, which come from both mainstream media (journalism and news) and social media through examining the top results of the Egg on Google Images in Arabic and English.⁴ In making sense of the Civil War beyond reductionist conceptions of crisis, this article returns to Azoulay to reframe the war, its impacts, and the conditions which have arisen since its end as a "Regime-made Disaster," which she defines as

[...] disasters that are generated and reproduced by the structure of a regime based on differential rule. These disasters affect the entire

body politic of the governed, though differentially ... These disasters do not only affect the direct victims and are not ‘their’ problem, part of ‘their’ history, as if the catastrophe in question takes place in an offshore territory ... Understood as regime-made, citizens are not only mobilized to perpetrate them, but they are also impacted by them, though differentially, and like the regimes that perpetrate them, they are precisely what the entire governed population has in common.⁵

When the war is understood through this framework, a clearer image emerges of the varying contributions of the state, private companies, and the general population, as well as non-living entities such as buildings—an inanimate, ‘dead’ limb of the body politic, in a way—in making sense of the past and the future vis-à-vis the war.

Furthermore, to situate photography’s role in concretizing narratives (particularly around such “regime-based disasters”), this article looks to and complicates Azoulay’s argument that “[t]he photographic shutter contributes to the reproduction of imperial divisions and imperial rights and is used as lasting proof that what was plundered is a *fait accompli*.”⁶ Specifically, this article posits that the variety of photography of the Egg both reproduces narratives of decline and trauma as “*fait accompli*” while offering a visual language of imagining a different future which does not banish the past, as ‘redevelopment’ initiatives like Solidere does.

The Lebanese Civil War

The Lebanese Civil War (though not the only civil war in Lebanese history)⁷ was the outcome of crystallizing regional conflicts and global political tensions which had come to a head by 1975, including the aftermath of the establishment of the state of Israel, the heightening Cold War, competing Arab nationalist movements, and the proliferation of what has been termed ‘political Islam.’⁸ The internal matters of sectarian tensions—the result of uneven power and wealth distribution between Muslim and Christian sects historically—the presence of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Palestinian resistance fighting within Lebanese borders, and opposing nationalist movements structured much of the fighting which took place in Lebanon during the war.⁹

As historian Haugbolle Sune argues, “[w]hat is habitually referred to as the Lebanese Civil War was in fact a series of more or less related conflicts between shifting alliances of Lebanese groups and external actors, who from 1975 to 1990 destabilized the Lebanese state.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, as with all wars and despite disagreements, popular historiography delineates a start and an end of the Lebanese Civil War: its start is said to be the April 13, 1975 clashes between

the Phalange party and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO),¹¹ and its end is generally accepted to be the October 1990 defeat of the Lebanese Army by the Lebanese Forces (Maronite Christian faction) in the “War of Elimination” which the Army’s leader Michel Aoun had launched in January earlier that year.¹² One of the most impactful political outcomes of the war was the Taif Agreement,¹³ which established a new division of representation in the Lebanese parliament whereby specific numbers of seats were assigned to newly legally recognized sects in Lebanon to ensure a 5:5 Christian-to-Muslim quota.¹⁴ Many hoped this would ameliorate power imbalances and prevent future sectarian conflicts. As fighting dimmed and the Civil War was officially marked as over, arguments and proposals for how to make sense of the war and move on from it immediately emerged. One which has prevailed has been one of ‘redevelopment,’ headed by Solidere.¹⁵

Solidere

It is impossible to walk around Beirut’s downtown streets without noticing Solidere’s impact, even before knowing of Solidere. Perhaps one of the first times an outsider may learn of Solidere would be encountering the now-abandoned St. George Yacht Club and Marina, which has been sporting a large “STOP SOLIDERE” sign since at least 2009.¹⁶



Figure 1. Ballester 2009. “Saint Georges Hôtel Stop Solidere”

Solidere—an acronym for ‘Société Libanaise pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Centre-ville de Beyrouth,’ which translates to ‘The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central Dis-

trict¹⁷—was founded as a private joint-stock company on May 5, 1994,¹⁸ by Rafic Hariri, then-prime minister of Lebanon.¹⁹ A set of laws legislated between late 1991 and early 1994 to allow for a private real-estate firm to handle all reconstruction in downtown Beirut, bypassing issues of property ownership and inheritance.²⁰ Solidere was not the company already imagined by these laws,²¹ but it became the private company to lead redevelopment. The goal was to ‘rebuild Beirut’—as Saree Makdisi puts it, Solidere presented itself “as a healing agency”²²—but the plan initially entailed total demolition of the downtown area.²³

Solidere continues to operate in the present, having even opened a sister company, Solidere International in 2007.²⁴ According to Solidere’s own website, “Solidere’s role is manifold; land developer, real estate developer, property owner, property and services manager and operator. The Company is establishing a solid base for prosperity in the city center through its value-added activities.”²⁵ Its current board of directors is largely made up of technocrats and politicians, all are Lebanese nationals, and most are educated in North America or Europe or at elite institutions in Lebanon such as the American University of Beirut.²⁶ One Hariri family member remains on the board—Nader Hariri,²⁷ Rafic Hariri’s nephew.²⁸ From the very beginning, Solidere has claimed an attention to history as a grounding for its future-facing projects. Solidere’s first-ever slogan was “Beirut—An Ancient City for the Future,”²⁹ and the company continues to reference a commitment to historical preservation, even dedicating a section on its website to “History and Culture,”³⁰ with a page on “Archaeology.”³¹ A “Heritage Trail,” marking fifty historic sites around downtown Beirut with bronze medallions, is promised on the website as well,³² though its completion status is unclear. Beirut residents have voiced their support or rejection of Solidere’s plans since soon after the company launched. This is evident in Makdisi’s recounting of the two distinct discourses she had witnessed in 1994: those who “mourn the loss of the old city center,” and those who “claim that the old city center had been left beyond salvation by the end of the war ... this particular reconstruction plan was and is the only possible option.”³³ Nowadays, however, most Lebanese—speaking anecdotally and based on media narratives—are dissatisfied with Solidere, believing its work to be a flattening force in a city already razed to the ground many times over.³⁴ As such, the buildings which have evaded Solidere’s grasp have come to take on added afterlives as symbols of resistance to the Solidere order.

Case Study: Depictions of The Egg

Background

The structure which has come to be known as the “Egg” or the “Dome” is an abandoned or unfinished cinema (narratives seem to conflict,³⁵ as do larger

public memories of the city) within an unfinished multi-use complex planned as the “Beirut City Center” (BCC).³⁶ The BCC was dreamed up by Lebanese modernist architect Joseph Philippe Karam.³⁷ Accounts of Karam’s life are scant, but the website run by his estate narrates that he was born in Beirut in the immediate aftermath of World War I and the formation of the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon.³⁸ It goes on to state that he witnessed the creation of the Republic of Lebanon at the end of World War II and the emergence of a prosperous postwar economy and optimistic nation in his early twenties.³⁹ As the Egg shows, Karam’s style, mixing bold curved shapes with angular structures and aiming for functionality over ornament, drew on modernist European architecture like the work of Le Corbusier, the Bauhaus school, the International Style, and Brutalism.⁴⁰ Furthermore, like Le Corbusier’s buildings, the BCC was constructed primarily of concrete.

The BCC was designed with two tall towers, planned to house shopping and office spaces to accompany the cinema, but only one tower was finished.⁴¹ Construction on the BCC began in 1965 but was halted, and never finished, with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1975.⁴² The one tower which was realized during construction was demolished sometime after the end of the war, and now the Egg stands alone within a radius of unoccupied, flattened, unused land in downtown Beirut near Martyrs’ Square. An early advertisement for the to-be-constructed BCC shows an illustration of the egg-shaped cinema in the embrace of the two tall towers which were to hold a shopping complex. Though the surrounding streets are bustling with cars and pedestrians, the background behind the BCC is empty; there is no city behind it, only a white void. This allows the BCC to stand out, though it also removes it from space and time—arguably overcoming history and facing the future.

Solidere has been the administrator of the Egg since around the 1990s and continues to be.⁴³ It limits access to the structure, but people have always found a way in, including through underground parties in the 1990s.⁴⁴ After decades of casual interaction with it, the Egg was drawn back to the public sphere during the October 2019 anti-government protests, during which an “Eggupation” of the space took place and included community gatherings, teach-ins, and late-night parties.⁴⁵ It can be said that the Egg is a character in the regime-based disaster of the Lebanese Civil War and its aftereffects. If the Civil War, as a regime-based disaster, is “ongoing” and “at one and the same time the expression of the differential principle of the regime and what stabilizes it,”⁴⁶ then the Egg is a part of that tapestry, as a holder of the recorded and potential histories it knows, and as a visual reminder of the never-ending war through which the Egg still lives.

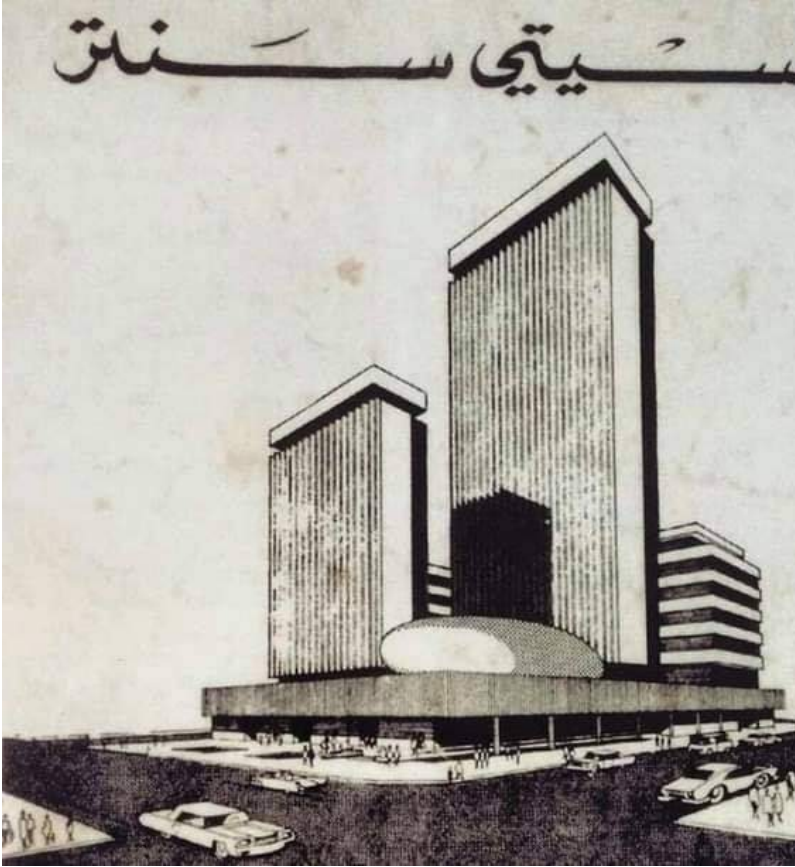


Figure 2. *Beirut City Centre Dome Cinema in Beirut, LB - Cinema Treasures 2020*

Photography

When looking up “the egg beirut” on Google Images, in English and Arabic, the results come from various sources, global and local, ranging in genre from online encyclopedias (e.g. Wikipedia) to digital media articles (e.g. Failed Architecture⁴⁷), travel blogs (e.g. Atlas Obscura⁴⁸) news reporting (e.g. The National⁴⁹) and stock images (e.g. Alamy), as well as social media sites and image-sharing platforms (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, and Pinterest).

Scanning the first few results (my screenshots cover about eighty images across both searches), common tropes and imageries emerge, while divergences too stand out. Most images of the Egg appear recent, though they are intermixed with a few speculative proposals for its reconstruction as well as historical photos of the structure and a few images of other war-damaged buildings, which are often grouped together as a larger canon of visual testimonies of the profound impact of the war. The perspectives of the photos differ: some are of the exposed parts of it, which would have been connected with one of the towers,

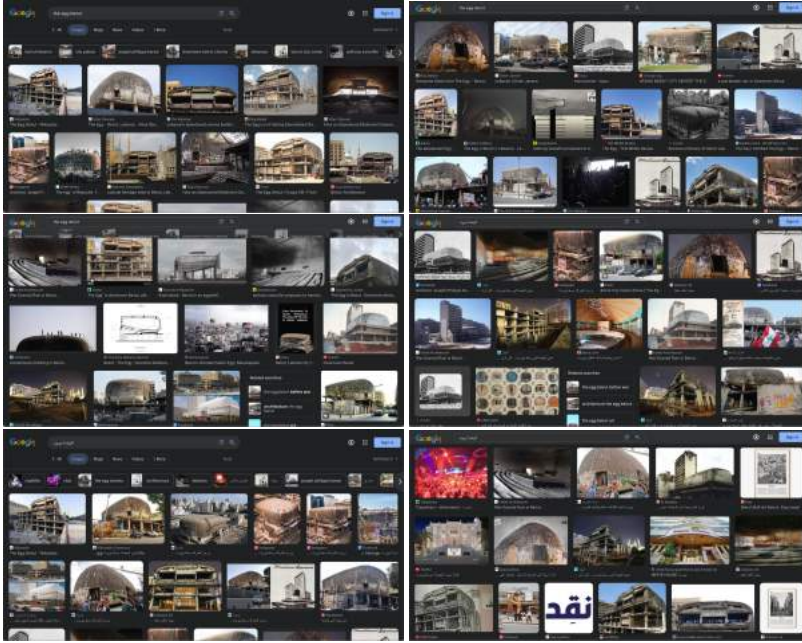


Figure 3. All screenshots were captured by the author on December 14, 2023.

while others are of its facade, a covered, seamless egg shape. Most images are of the outside of the egg, but a few of its interiors, its concrete rows of seats facing an empty wall where a screen would have stood.

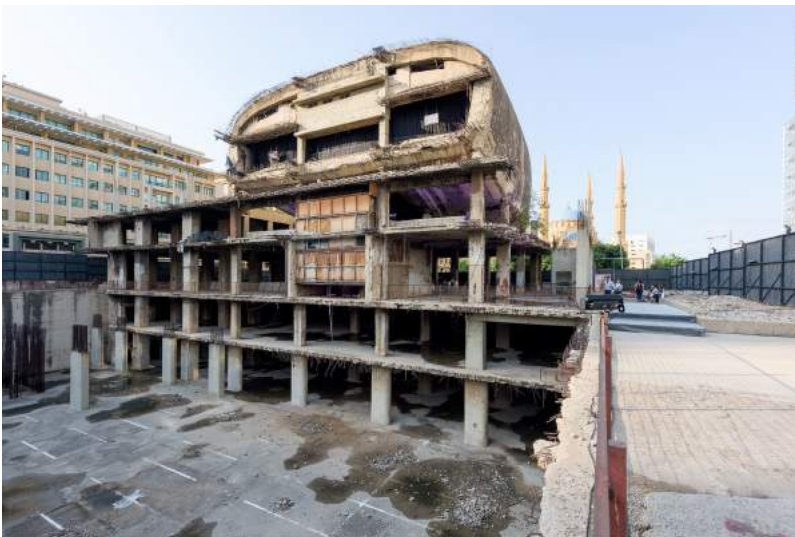


Figure 4. Emmecca 2023 "The Egg" Source: Wikipedia.

The top result is the first photo on the Egg's Wikipedia page. It captures the Egg's exposed back, taken right at the edge of the fencing which keeps

visitors from falling into the pit where one of the towers used to stand—forming the foreground of the image. The Egg is in the middle ground of the photograph, with Mohammad Al-Amin Mosque, a relatively new mosque built in 2008, and residential buildings appear in the background to either side of the Egg. A few pedestrians pass through the walkway to the side, where a patchwork of sidewalk, makeshift stairs, and somewhat tall, opaque fencing. The Egg’s interiors appear to have been used for a gallery exhibit at the time, as indicated by a sign reading “Plastik Gallery.” This exhibit, titled “MonuMental,” was created by Saint Hoax,⁵⁰ the anonymous artist known for his satirical “POPlitical art.”⁵¹ The exhibit showed oil paintings of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, and Kim Jong Un in drag makeup, surrealist portraits of Lebanese singer Fairouz and Princess Diana, and an inflatable ‘statue’ of Donald Trump as a tank, among other works.⁵²

This photograph was taken on October 22nd, 2018, a few days after MonuMental closed.⁵³ October 2018 was a time of relative calm in Lebanon. Though the U.S. State Department designated Lebanon as a Level 3 “Reconsider Travel” Travel Advisory at the time,⁵⁴ due to “crime and terrorism threats,”⁵⁵ now raised to a Level 4 “Do Not Travel,”⁵⁶ the country was relatively safe and its residents, though disgruntled and frustrated at the state’s handling of the economy⁵⁷ and political corruption,⁵⁸ lived fairly normal lives.

The composition of this photograph is similar to other photographs of the Egg. The Egg stands in the foreground as a ruined structure while more pristine buildings peek out from the background. It appears in disrepair, covered in bullets, with metal rods sticking out. Its building uncovered materials convey the scale of the damage it carries while implying a limbo state between destruction and reconstruction. Its drab grays and cool-toned beiges contrast with the clean, untainted warm beiges and poppy blue and white in the other buildings in the photo. The presence of these other buildings situates the Egg in its physical location while reinforcing its difference as old and ruined unlike the new and uninjured developments that appear to encroach upon the decrepit structure. Taken as a whole, the contradictions within this image appear as a larger representation of how downtown Beirut has been cornered into becoming a site of tension between traumatic histories and optimistic aspiration while suffocating all attempts to uncover what else has been and what could have been.

This photograph, taken at a slight low angle from a 45° point of view, is reminiscent of much of the photography of the Egg. Interestingly, a similar angle appears in the depictions of the Egg in early advertisements of the structure, both illustrations and photographs.

In addition to the illustration presented earlier in the article, a photograph of the structure, taken after the cinema and one of the towers were completed,



Figure 5. The original captions read: “A hundred stores. In a hundred days, you can win hundreds of prizes at the City Center.”

shows the BCC from a similar perspective. This old image,⁵⁹ however, takes place in front of the complex, likely because that is its facade, and because its open back would not have been visible at the time. The reversal of the position of the camera while maintaining its low angle suggests a continuity to the Egg from an onlooker’s perspective, a continuity which links the past with the present, lost dreams of wealth and modernity with ruin and despair. Such proposed continuities paint a picture of what history has been canonized, leaving around its edges openings through which to peek and imagine other histories.

Another top result is a closer view of the Egg, only depicting the cinema itself.



Figure 6. Mackenzie 2019. The photograph originally comes from AFP by way of Getty. It was taken by Patrick Baz and dated November 5, 2019, Baz 2019.

A banner of the Lebanese flag stretches across the floor. This photograph was taken on November 5, 2019,⁶⁰ just two weeks after October 17, 2019, revolution broke out.⁶¹ The “Eggupation” which forms the background for this image—why the flag was put up inside the Egg—became a physical manifestation of the revolution, as protesters filled its hollows in a trespassing act of reclaiming inaccessible, private spaces across the city.

The Egg takes up the majority of the composition of the photo, though a corner of a yellow-beige residential building appears behind the Egg. The Egg, captured at a somewhat low angle, seems to beam with pride as its national flag lies on its chest. However, no protestors appear in the photo, but the Egg nonetheless takes on a liveliness suggested by the flag’s striking red, white, and green, which contrast to the Egg’s gray concrete and the full blue of the sky behind it. The Egg’s exposed side, although it is technically the back of the building, takes on a face-like quality with its open features, and seems to gaze directly into the camera. There is something of a living quality to this image: the installation of the flag—a first for the Egg—and its depiction head on from a low angle fuel a sense of vivacity. This view of the Egg stands out from the usual angles and depictions of it. In all, this photograph lends an optimism and energy to the Egg as it participates in aspirational revolutionary dreams of what could be and what could have been. Such optimism opens up possibilities to reinforce reductionist binaries of free-oppressed and sound-damaged, but they also allow for other potential histories to become visible.

Conclusion: Reaching Out to the Past and Future Visually

The abandoned, damaged structures of Beirut stand out in their sterilized environment as sites of constant recollection and speculation between daily remembrance and possible demolition. In this hybrid space, these buildings, like the Egg, form visual reminders of the history which Solidere buries under new layers of rubble—ones caused by demolition in the name of ‘redevelopment’ and ‘reconstruction.’

The common, widely circulated views of the Egg form a canon of narratives about Beirut and the war. But photography does not always and necessarily reinforce the status quo, or even intentionally subvert it. With the proliferation of certain angles of the Egg and the recurrence of particular images of its ‘decay,’ contrasting the Egg’s present condition with the dreams of modernity its architect imagined, new, different images of the Egg inevitably reveal the cracks in dominant historical narratives. Such cracks may not radically transform historical narratives on their own, but their emergence allows for buried potential histories to surface, ones where Beirut is not necessarily free of struggle but nonetheless rejects the idea of the necessity of tragedy. As Azoulay conceives of it, “potential history is not an attempt to tell the violence alone, but rather an onto-epistemic refusal to recognize as irreversible its outcome and the categories, statuses, and forms under which it materializes.”⁶² Potential history aims to keep memory and the past alive, to not relegate the past to a faraway temporal land out of reach. The potential history of the Egg and therefore Beirut keeps alive their overt and obscured memories of the war, violence, and the consequences of imperialist, neoliberal, and capitalist projects. Potential history does not do so by dwelling on painful memories but by imagining the past, present, and future as non-linear, as coexisting and constantly in negotiation. As such, potential history rejects the tendency to turn one’s back on the past; instead, it demonstrates that imagining futures does not necessitate the removal of all traces of the past, and is not only a forward-looking exercise.

In common narratives about the Egg, it is a once-used cinema which has been hollowed out and abandoned, and while some manage to sneak in, it is not officially accessible. During the occupation of the Egg in October 2019, Beirutis who had grown up knowing the Egg only in its present deterioration got to enter the former cinema and imagine the other histories and futures they were never allowed access to. Upon entering the Egg in October 2019, one protestor remarked that “[p]ublic spaces [are] coming back to the people ... Before, walking in the street we would look at it and say: ‘Ok, it’s a building. We don’t know what it is.’ Now we can enter it, and see how people before us lived.”⁶³ The trespassing of those who hold and seek potential history onto the site of the banishment of these potentials are what can spark new positions for the photography of the Egg, and this new photography in itself opens up more

possibilities for a more expansive engagement with the Egg's potential history.

Notes

- 1 Ariella Azoulay. 2019. *Potential history: unlearning imperialism* [in eng]. London: Verso.
- 2 Profile: Rafik Hariri. 2009, February. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2009/3/1/profile-rafik-hariri>.
- 3 Here, I study popular photography as the top results on Google Images considering its primacy as a source of photography in popular consumption.
- 4 For the search in each language, I captured the top forty or so results, which I selected because I estimate it to be equivalent to the first two or so pages of a usual Google search. Google Images features a continuous scroll without pages, so I chose to cover what I believe is a sufficient survey of top results for this article.
- 5 Azoulay 2019.
- 6 Azoulay 2019.
- 7 Examples of other civil wars include the 1858-61 First Lebanese Civil War and the 1958 Second Lebanese Civil War. See Edgar O'Ballance. 1998. *Civil War in Lebanon, 1975-92* [in en]. Springer. ISBN: 978-0-230-37468-3 xvii.
- 8 Haugbolle Sune. 2011. *The historiography and the memory of the Lebanese civil war* [in fr], October. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/historiography-and-memory-lebanese-civil-war.html>.
- 9 Sune 2011.
- 10 Sune 2011.
- 11 Sami Hermez. 2017. *War is coming: between past and future violence in Lebanon* [in eng]. *The ethnography of political violence*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press. ISBN: 978-0-8122-4886-9 xi.
- 12 Hermez 2017, xi.
- 13 The agreement was signed on 22 October 1989, but the fighting continued until the end of the aforementioned War of Elimination. See John Nagle and Mary-Alice Clancy. 2021. *Power-Sharing after Civil War: Thirty Years since Lebanon's Taif Agreement* [in en]. Google-Books-ID: hxxDEAAAQBAJ. Routledge, November. ISBN: 978-1-00-048674-2.
- 14 Nagle and Clancy 2021.
- 15 Sune 2011.
- 16 The earliest evidence I could find of this sign are images from 2009. See Ballester 2009.
- 17 Sara Darwich Abboud. 2018. *TO PROJECT IN A BORDER ENVIRONMENT: BEIRUT - LEBANON*. Master's thesis, Politecnico de Torino, September. <https://webthesis.biblio.polito.it/8603/1/tesi.pdf>, 43.
- 18 Saree Makdisi. 1997. *Laying Claim to Beirut: Urban Narrative and Spatial Identity in the Age of Solidere* [in en]. *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (April): 661-705. ISSN:

- 0093-1896, 1539-7858, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448848>.
<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/448848>, 675.
- 19 Profile: Rafik Hariri 2009.
- 20 Makdisi 1997, 670–675.
- 21 Makdisi 1997, 672.
- 22 Makdisi 1997, 675.
- 23 Makdisi 1997, 670.
- 24 About solidere [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.solidere.com/corporate/about>.
- 25 About solidere, Emphasis by author.
- 26 Board of Directors [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.solidere.com/corporate/about/board-directors>.
- 27 Board of Directors,
- 28 Hariri Family [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://egypt.mom-rsf.org/en/owners/individual-owners/detail/owner/owner/show/hariri-family/>.
- 29 Makdisi 1997, 662.
- 30 History and Culture [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.solidere.com/city-center/history-and-culture>.
- 31 Archeology [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.solidere.com/city-center/history-and-culture/archeology>.
- 32 Heritage Trail [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.solidere.com/city-center/history-and-culture/heritage-trail>.
- 33 Makdisi 1997, 662.
- 34 Melissa Plourde Khoury. 2017. The Egg: Memory and Visual Structures Within Representations of an Iconic Lebanese Ruin [in en]. *Visual Communication Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (January): 3–14. ISSN: 1555-1393, 1555-1407, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15551393.2016.1272417>. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15551393.2016.1272417>, 4.
- 35 Reports on whether the Egg was finished but abandoned or unfinished conflict. Most narratives (including the stories I have heard personally from Beirut residents) call it an unfinished cinema, but some articles refer to it as abandoned after being in use for a few years before the war (despite the full shopping complex being unfinished). See for example Melissa Plourde Khoury, “The Egg: Memory and Visual Structures Within Representations of an Iconic Lebanese Ruin,” *Visual Communication Quarterly* 24 (2017): 3, which states that “Only one of the two towers was actually built. Nonetheless, the cinema and shopping centers below it were open for several years. The Egg was one of many thriving cinemas during the years just before the war,” whereas Sinno 2020, calls it “an unfinished cinema built in the 1960s.”
- 36 Khoury 2017, 3.
- 37 Khoury 2017, 3.
- 38 Joseph Philippe Karam [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <http://www.joseph-philippe-karam.com/>.
- 39 Joseph Philippe Karam,
- 40 Joseph Philippe Karam,

41 Khoury 2017, 3.

42 Khoury 2017, 3.

43 Khoury 2017, 4.

44 Lebanon protest teach-ins revive pre-war landmarks [in en]. 2019, October. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.france24.com/en/20191027-lebanon-protest-teach-ins-revive-pre-war-landmarks>.

45 Mackenzie 2019.

46 Azoulay 2019.

47 Failed Architecture is a digital media production company with the goal of “reconnect[ing] architecture with the real world.” They state their work as: “Through articles, podcasts, Situations, a Twitch stream and more, we support an international network of writers, editors and critics committed to challenging dominant spatial narratives and exploring alternative realities.” See About Failed Architecture [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://failedarchitecture.com/about/>.

48 About Atlas Obscura [in en]. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/about>.

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51 Ameer Daou and Hala AlSalman. 2018. Instagram Artist Saint Hoax Talks Trump, Kim Kardashian, and Being POlitically Incorrect [in en], October. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/4384gp/instagram-artist-saint-hoax-talks-trump-kim-kardashian-and-being-poplitically-incorrect>.

52 Syrian artist creates subversive works of famous faces ++REPLAY++. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://newsroom.ap.org/editorial-photos-videos/detail?itemid=7844f5ecff671e6354f8534d55ef0b08>.

53 The exhibit was on display between October 11 and 14, 2018. See Saint Hoax MonuMental 2018.

54 Lebanon Travel Advisory. 2024. Technical report. US Department of State, January. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/lebanon-travel-advisory.html>.

55 Amir Bibawy. 2018. These countries have the highest threat levels [in en-US], April. Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/travel/2018/04/02/these-countries-have-the-highest-threat-levels/33472751/>.

56 Lebanon Travel Advisory 2024.

57 Economic institutions like the World Bank considered Lebanon’s economy stagnant and “sluggish” at the time, while inflation was at a higher level than previous years. See, Lebanon. 2018b. Technical report. The World Bank, October. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/756401538076843074-0280022018/original/mpoam18lebanonlbn2.pdf>.

58 Political action against the state’s shutdown of Pride events earlier that year took place in May. See, Lebanon: Police Shutter Pride Events [in en]. 2018a, May. Accessed

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59 Trans: “a hundred stores. in a hundred days, you can win hundreds of prizes at the city center.”. Tweet Within one hundred days beginning April 20, every five-pound purchase from any City Center earns you an entry into the Grand City Center Lottery. Hundreds of prizes await you. First place: a 125-pound Fiat; second place: a round-trip airplane ticket to London; other prizes include Philips televisions, sewing machines, Norge refrigerators, Philips record players, Philips transistors [radios], etc. and hundreds of different prizes. Yes, make any five-pound purchase at City Center and win hundreds of prizes. City Center, the largest shopping complex in the Middle East, contains hundreds of different stores: clothing stores, sweets shops, restaurants, a patisserie, a snack bar, a supermarket, shoe stores for men and women, etc.” [Translation by author]

60 Baz 2019.

61 Mackenzie 2019.

62 Azoulay 2019.

63 Protests bring Beirut’s abandoned Egg back to life. 2019 [in en-GB]. Reuters (October). Accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN1XA1GP/>.

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