Air Pressure:
A conversation between Lawrence Abu Hamdan and Ghalya Saadawi

Fawwaz Traboulsi, born in the 1940s, the Lebanese Marxist historian, former member of Socialist Lebanon and fighter with the Organisation for Communist Action, still introduces himself as a militant intellectual and historian; a left militant. There are no liberal militants, unless you're a fascist. In the case of socialism-communism, the word militant has been liquidated out of use, even criminalised in the name of counter-terror, or extremism, targeting its leftist, liberatory traditions of resistance. In 2023, this is as good a time to observe this as any. Constructed out of historical antagonism and contradiction, militancy is defined by struggle, and defines the preparedness for resistance, including by taking up arms. Certainly not a taboo in Traboulsi's era, a time of revolution and counterrevolution, now removed from us only in terms of the former.

Left militancy was never reform. Words for militancy – *tahrik*; *taabi'a* – in Arabic infer the mobilisation of the masses. On the left, it has another term connected to it: commitment—commitment to a perpetual struggle for freedom and life against undignified subjugation. To diagnosis, to critique, to the struggle against capitalism, vestiges of imperialism, racism, fascism, included literary and artistic forms. So, what is militant media today when thinking about art and commitment? When paranoia around militancy has turned into a flat denunciation of leftist politics, and an excuse for resignation, or gesturing. Can aesthetics, in say visual and spatial research methodologies, still be called militant? What is the role today of militant art, or media as it once existed within cultural and political struggle, especially under both the continued mass commodification of art and culture, and the crackdowns against resistance?

Is the struggle, if any, for developing militant mediatic forms still an accompaniment to leftists, and grounded political forms of struggle? Is there aesthetic debate around this under the aegis of contemporary art, or do we have to write one inherited from modernity into our future? Or, are these possible criteria now about evidence, and about weaponising image and spatial technology for counter discourse?

Lawrence and I sat down for a conversation in view of discussing the implications of some of these questions. We discussed a new research and art project he embarked upon some years ago, tracking the 50-year acts of war and colonisation by the state of Israel: its jet incursions into Lebanese air space. In the case of the ensuing conversation, this struggle in part deals with the Israeli apartheid state's continued colonization, militarisation and commodification of air and land and life, across Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, but specifically within Lebanese air-space.

Diligently tracking these daily violations over several years, through witnesses on the ground and other open source forms of research, there turned out to be hundreds of thousands of them, by different manned and unmanned vehicles. These accrued within a broader political economy that affected air, and that used air as its medium within the context of long-term, geopolitical warfare and economic collapse. We talked about some of these things, interrogating these Israeli Defense Force (Israel Offence Forces, as they are now commonly referred to) flights in terms not couched only in legal violation and questions of sovereignty, but also in terms of the occupier, the occupied and the more advanced army's impotence and lack of total power. We addressed the ways in which Lawrence's relationship to art-making could address these questions, both formally and socially.

Ghalya Saadawi
My questions and thoughts about the work, Lawrence, can be roughly divided into three parts. First, and very broadly, what do you think are the ways one formally, as an artist, begins to address the aggressions and mistruths associated with the state; second, what light can be shed on the violence of the law itself

within the context of Israel's aerial incursions, and what are the limits of the term *violation* in the context of your work; and finally, as it relates to the first point, what reconfigurations of witnessing are involved in the kind of work this art proposes, which do not rely only on first-person testimony?

Air Pressure (A diary of the sky) enumerates a portion of the 22,111 Israeli aerial incursions or violations above Lebanon over the last fifteen years. What began as a lecture performance became a video. You have structured the video and its voice-over as a recurring refrain of data and narrative diary entries, interspersed with historical context on the aural, political, and psychological impact of fighter jets and reconnaissance planes flying overhead. The voice-over is heard against upward-looking shots, mostly taken with mobile phones, of military aircrafts across the Lebanese skies. You present, typed on-screen, a chorus of data, gathering, counting, and documenting of airspace violations by date, aircraft type, and duration. In addition to the raw data, the effects of these incursions are told in the narrative weave of the script, which includes both informal autobiography and a sort of social history. It is as though you attempt to pin and name the violence of aerial threats in a language that captures it and yet cannot fully do so. The words and numbers cannot amount to what they are enumerating; they fall short of the experience perception, whilst insisting on documenting it. This approach is different to a strictly forensic one, which say may be more interested in timelines, evidence, different toolkits. Here, it wants to narrate the effects and tensions of the incursions themselves—they count, but no one really "counts" them, legally, militarily, or psychically.

You begin with August 2020, the month of missing data (the same month of the Beirut port explosion) which mysteriously reemerges online after you make a public demand for it. Presumably the Lebanese government had hidden it? You've noted in an earlier version of the script that "the absence of clarity is the bedrock upon which Lebanese autonomy is founded". Of course, misinformation, mistruths, and half-truths in the name of truth are constitutive of all states and their apparatuses. In the context of repeated and shape-shifting destruction in Lebanon at the hands of the state of Israel, I wonder if the task of the critic here is still to re-present the repetition and, through those changing forms, unveil the truth of the state's obfuscations, including the Lebanese state's total silence on this issue. In addition, I find the terror that the Israeli military poses in its routine repetitions across these skies compelling as a reverse shot of their desire to maintain an image of themselves as victims of terror. The work can be said to put up a mirror whereby shots of sky and warplanes taken by people on the ground act as both a concrete and an ideological reflection. Can you say something about your choice of visual method here?

Lawrence Abu Hamdan
The project arose from a very simple desire: to make the first publicly accessible database of every Israeli military and combat aircraft that has circled Lebanon since 2007.[1] In doing this, I found that for more than half of the last fifteen years, there has been a vehicle in the sky over Lebanon, a combined flight time of eight and a half years. This block of time establishes the sky as a solid terrain that can be occupied just like land. In many ways, this work is trying to flip the earth on its head, to see the sky as a solid terrain while the land beneath it collapses. The enumeration makes an event of something that happens every day. It foregrounds the background noise we had stopped paying attention to.

Martin Chulov, the journalist who covered AirPressure.info in the *Guardian*, told me, "Well, the violations are not news, but fifteen years of them are". So the accumulation makes it news, makes it notable, even if, as he sees it, the daily occurrence has lost its discursive value. But it would be a misrepresentation to call such routine acts of violence, which are seamlessly integrated into life in Lebanon, "new". How do you speak about these flyovers in their own terms? How do you deal with this violence as an exceptional issue while not overlooking the fact that it has become unexceptional,

[1] See https://airpressure.info.

something people have learned to live with? If we miss its mundanity, we miss what over time has really come to make these incursions violent. Brian Eno's description of ambient music is a useful reference. In the liner notes for 'Ambient I' from 1978, he wrote, "Ambient music must be able to accommodate many levels of listening attention without enforcing one in particular; it must be as ignorable as it is interesting". I found that these incursions were as ignorable as they were lethal, and with this work, I set out to accommodate the many levels of "listening attention" that perceive these rumblings from above.

In the film, I am performing not only the data but also the act of its accumulation. You listen to that act of enumerating as you might listen to a continual drone. You hear the numbers, but you can't really imagine 229 combat jets in one week. It stops being data and crosses a threshold of comprehension into noise. This reflects my position in the project, a point of tension, as someone who is attempting to search for the truth, to reveal the numbers and what is going on, to find out what is happening. And the more I think I'm providing clarity, the more I get sucked into a political ecology of noise; I become an integral particle in an atmosphere of violence and control.

This is actually how the work began—it was born out of the noise of online discourse. After the August 4 explosion happened in Beirut, many were saying they had heard planes just before the blast. I listened to the audio and, based on my work the year before analysing Russian airstrikes in Syria, I concluded that this was not the sequence of sounds that happens during an airstrike. You would never have the noise of a plane in such close proximity to that of a blast. When I stated this publicly, I found myself in a culture war. I was positioned as the voice of authority, or expertise, contra that of personal experience, and in the middle of this argument, I began thinking, *Why are we arguing about these planes at 6:07 p.m. on August 4? Why is this now the time we talk about a plane, when there were 440 aerial violations the month before?* We're not talking about them as a constant presence. We only seem to speak about them when there's an event. We're not thinking about the protracted nature of this noise and why it's going on every day. Yet, at the moment of peak anxiety, the moment when people's homes and lives were ruined, when the third largest non-nuclear explosion in the history of the world happened, the Israeli jets emerged as a kind of explainer. This noise from the background reappeared at the forefront of the discourse. This made me realise that even if they weren't physically present that evening, the jets are always with us. They live in the back of our minds, ready to emerge the minute the air is sounded. And I recognised that the work I needed to do was not to prove whether or not there was a plane at that particular moment, but to work to understand this constant noise as a protracted attack, a long bomb.

That's why I chose the format of the diary for the film. I wanted to explore the ways in which these violations are integrated and routine. This diary is not a personal diary, although it gets personal at points; it's more an enthusiast's diary, similar to a trainspotter's diary. A diary is a mode of literature that puts side by side the most significant and insignificant aspects of human life.

Ghalya Saadawi

Yes, the Israeli jets emerged as one of the theories for the potential perpetrator of the Beirut port explosion, for the generation that had lived through Israeli wars and for one that had not, as well as for those who saw the explosion and for those who only heard it. So this aerial imprint, socially speaking, emerges from Israel's own repetitive actions, which as you stated, stay with us. Who has historically inflicted such destruction on Lebanon from the air? No one. The diaristic methodology feels partly apt in this instance.

Yet, the idea of rendering data as noise could be compelling. The quantifying also speaks to both the abstract and concrete aspects of these endemic geopolitical and psychological aggressions. When you're repeating and documenting in this way, a pattern seems to emerge. The sky becomes an overhead screen onto which we can see an unfolding. The majority of the video as part of the wider project is, after all,

composed of shot after shot of Israeli military aircraft in patch of sky after patch of sky. The air becomes materialised, or it is as if a newly visible sky is sutured above our heads. It is terrifying in light of the genocide they are committing in Gaza right now as we write, and given that this repetitive aerial warfare is what they trained for there and elsewhere, such as in the Lebanese skies. More obliquely, it reminded me of the presence of war planes in Lebanese cinema, most recently in Ghassan Salhab's 2021 feature film 'The River*',* in which innumerable fighter planes zoom overhead throughout the film, and even if the protagonists can't see them, they can hear their terrifying drone. They surround and undergird the allegorical love story that constitutes the film.

Yet, in the repetition of Israeli incursions of various kinds and scales, of— as you refer to it — atmospheric violence, I find the term *violation* to be limited and to lose some of its meaning. Of course, these incursions *are* violations (of airspace, of territory, of sovereignty, international law), but to be more incisive the term must acknowledge something beyond the legal question of sovereignty. There is a serious limit to the claim of legality, or rights like these. Sure, nation-states are like property bearers over the land, and they are defined contractually by their sovereignty, one that right-wing Lebanese nationalism has been going on about for over 60 years. Thus in a mere demand for it, it prevents us from the critique we are after, and after all acknowledges that which is said to proffer this said sovereignty, especially rendered redundant in states of war.

We also know that alongside surveillance and espionage, sonic terror and the *threat* of bombardment are Israel's tried and tested forms of warfare. The F-35 has a huge sonic range, as we've learned, and there is an entire history of adverse health effects resulting from jet noise in effects-based military operations such as these. Militaries test planes and gather information through surveillance, but the repeated flights may also be designed to affect morale, or even physiology (although, ironically, many inhabitants of Lebanon no longer hear them due to the constant hum of diesel generators). This reinforces the possibility that these aerial aggressions are not over literal land grabs (which persist in the South and all over Palestine), nor over alleged security as the state of Israel claims, but over seeking to know, occupy, and enclose Lebanon's air as part of Israel's strategy to eliminate Hezbollah. Thus, they can be seen as a way to force its disarmament (thus, dismantling). This in a move towards the eventual normalisation of relations with Israel, especially when Western soft and hard foreign policy is fully geared toward this (for example most recently, with Bahrain, the UAE and the recently thwarted Saudi normalization talks), and to violate Lebanese sovereignty in order to claim that Lebanon is *not* sovereign (from Hezbollah). So, these violations occur in the arena of international law, but should not be caged in the language of rights since it is also the very ideology of equal (property) rights and treaties that undergirds the international legal system in the first place, which cannot even adjudicate. Of note here is that Hezbollah and Lebanon recently negotiated and signed an unprecedented maritime border agreement with Israel, which led many on the Israeli state side to claim that Hezbollah now acknowledges Israel's existence. We can traverse the legalistic language of violation and of sovereignty, or at least invert its nationalism—as if merely demanding that the incursions stop would return everything to a state of so-called normalcy—to consider what Israel's military fantasy might be. What is needed in order to go further than the claim of "violation" by an already warring and settler nation structured on in-built "effects" operations? This is because claiming a violation assumes that law is capable of redress, when the law itself can permit legal, or illegal incursions. Law and state *are* endemic forms of violence and accumulation. So, the said violations are, following years of what Lebanon and Palestine have witnessed, foundational, operational to the violence of the law itself. Instead of *violation* we need another term, and I wonder if reintroducing the coordinates of enmity can serve us better—seeing these as acts of war and therein of land/air grab and of genocidally-based accumulation, makes clearer forms resistance to stop that.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan
I made the decision early on that air is a very different kind of territory, and if we render the air in conventionally cartographic terms of sovereign violation alone, we lose some specificity about what's

actually happening. I am trying not to depict this as a violation of airspace that belongs to someone in particular but rather to create an understanding of the ways in which air is turned violent.

It is true, though, that on AirPressure.info the trajectory of each flight is mapped in the form of a line. A line through the air is not a faithful representation of how these flights are felt on the ground. The fighter jets have an audible radius of almost five hundred square kilometres, so their sound is not a nice, neat, placeable line but a mass of noise with often obscure origins. As the animation unfolds on the website, however, the lines start to overlap and interlace, and they form a nexus of noise that engulfs the entirety of the country.

I did not draw the boundaries of Lebanon, but the shape of the country becomes articulated through the interlocking vapour trails. So Lebanon as a kind of legal condition is not there; as a set of boundaries, it does not exist. Its shape is only constituted by the lines the planes have made in the sky, which happen to pretty much cover the entire area we know on a map as Lebanon.

In the accumulation of these lines, we see the ways in which noise produces its own territoriality. When you first see a line on the website, you see it as a simple depiction of a legal or sovereign violation; when the lines start to interlock and create these big webs, you start to realise that maybe this is not about the breach of a sovereign code or a UN agreement but something more visceral. It reads as a pressure that is being exerted. It starts with the basic, legal definition of invasion, a line moving across a territory, and then it builds and moves to a more complex rendering of a set of effects that far exceeds illegal sovereign violation. It was important to start with a legal question, as that's the framework by which this can even begin to enter mainstream discourse, but it became important to show just how much more this is than a violation of territory. Strategically, 22,111 violations of airspace are a headline, an entry point into the work for a broad audience, but once the audience was in the work, I needed to show them that there was more happening here. I wanted to speak about this issue in a way that was distinct from the completely facile way in which the Lebanese state had been addressing it. The Ministries of Defence and Interior only care about these planes in as much as they're a violation of their sovereignty, and I also deeply question the Lebanese government's sovereignty and right to rule. The air does not belong to them either.

Ghalya Saadawi
We can agree that these actions constitute an aerial form of occupation—air grabbing—or at least a desire to remind us that this is possible. In the script for 'Air Pressure', you state that during World War I, British colonial strategy was to use aircraft presence and noise to threaten bombardment as much as to actually attack. The strategy here is less about who is sovereign and more about who has sovereignty, who can exercise the right *to* sovereignty, and in that regard it is an acquisitive nationalism on the part of the Israeli state, underlining all fundamental nation-state violence.

The counting of these incursions materializes not only the air but also time. Yet, it's a null rehearsal for something that has already happened innumerable times, where the repetition seems to cancel itself out. As the line from Marx goes, history repeats, first as history then as farce—at least in the case of Lebanon before October 2023. You need to take the incursions seriously. But also how can you take them seriously? Even if these flights are surveillance operations, they don't necessarily further Israel's military or political knowledge about their enemy. Following the 2006 war, does Israel know that much more about Hezbollah's operations and infrastructure from these flights? I doubt it. The flights may have gathered some information on hideouts, or what have you, but this military strategy has neither accrued any substantial knowledge, nor deterred anything. And there's thousands upon thousands, over the years, of these demonstrations of military might.

I am therefore compelled by the idea that these manoeuvres are not exclusively a threat of what is to come but also primarily a reminder of what has already happened (in spite of the F-35's novelty, obscene

budget, and required test-drives). We know and have seen what Israeli occupation forces are capable of. Of course, a war can and will happen again, but not in this way, by invading airspace over the span of decades. They don't add up, these particular enumerations, these repetitions of flight time. Even more undeniable is that these repetitions present Israel's force as not a total one, albeit a totalizing one, further demonstrated by the present moment. So, while jockeying for the place of master, Israel is weak. It does not possess total force as hard as it may try, or as far-ranging as the sonic effects on the population below may be; it is also impotent and parodical. It reminds me of what Mladen Dolar wrote in another context about both the loss of authority and the threat of authority—how the threat of force is also an index, or symptom of a loss of authority.[2] Its actualisation hangs over us, but not as omnipotently as it would have us believe. The repetition undoes the very conditions that it itself sets up in order to be a threat.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan
In some ways, that is true, that becoming impotent sits in contrast to what we may assume Israel is trying to achieve strategically. Yet the enemy is increasingly defined with every act of enmity. It would be hard to argue that all 22,111 of these flights were targeting only Hezbollah. This level of surveillance is in excess of what is needed to monitor Hezbollah alone and is, moreover, an unprecedented act by one foreign nation on its neighbour. Every person in this country, regardless of their political affiliation, has at one point or another been photographed by these planes and drones. Every text message and phone call bounces off the cell towers and straight into these aircraft. These are highly technical planes; they're not just making noise, they're also harvesting noise from the ground. They employ a technique called "pinging the system". They make a noise in the atmosphere to see what that noise does on the ground—that is, who starts to talk about the planes above them, who starts to move in response to being watched, etc. It's a feedback loop. And the loop doesn't only include Lebanon and Israel; it includes all the countries that have invested in the F-35. The Lebanese atmosphere is a high-pressured nexus in a global weather system.

Ghalya Saadawi
Yes, that feedback loop is illuminating and disturbing. Yet, even the desire for, or illusion of "total" surveillance can be construed as limited. In any case, what is happening in the work as it tries to make the air *material*, is a demonstration of the unfolding of what Rob Nixon calls *slow violence*, via an image of aerial geography, flight sound and its effects, through filmed footage by people on the ground, as well as through the political economy behind these operations.[3] *Atmospheric violence* (your term) is thus an appellation for forms of possibly imperceptible, yet structural capitalist and state violence that need the media of time and air to unravel. I suppose the metaphor of "air pressure" is then the attempt to make the air active through looking at air and sky and what goes on in them via jittery human footage, the soundscape, the narrative told via voice-over, the archival research, and finally the website archive.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan
We feel the air as a material; it's materialised through the noise of aircraft. I wanted to close the conceptual gap between noise pollution and air pollution because I think something is lost when we separate these conditions. What this work is trying to do is really take sound seriously as an activation of air. When we smell old diesel smoke emerging from some water supply truck, we are suddenly made aware of what's going into our lungs, whereas we may not have been before. This is what's happening with these F-35s and our ears. Through the sounding of the air, the vibration of its particles, the air

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[2] Mladen Dolar,'The Future of Authority', *The Philosopher* 109, no.2, accessed 29 October 2023, https://www.thephilosopher1923.org/post/the-future-of-authority.

[3] Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

becomes a volatile compound—of noise, carbon dioxide, monoxide, nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide, and all the other toxic emissions of international militarism.

Ghalya Saadawi
The medium of air also foregrounds another material conditon: not only the economy of the military infrastructures involved, but also the circumstances of the political economy of Lebanon. We have economic and banking collapse, catastrophic inflation, and state bankruptcy; we have hundreds of thousands of private diesel generators across the country powering electricity due to national grid and power plant breakdowns grid breakdowns and to fuel shortages—what we can hear and smell, and the related long-term health effects also occur on the level of sound, and of air particles and their penetrating toxicity. These can all be considered contiguous with a Lebanese post–civil war economic order that we can comprehend (and hear) when light is shed on what we *cannot* see.

The forensic eye, or ear, is usually keen on scales, as we know, and so we can talk about not only large-scale structures but also molecules, decibels, etc. There is a formal question here, one that research and forensic architecture, certain documentary filmmaking traditions, and Marxist critics have been trying to answer, about how to fathom, present, and critique less-perceptible capitalist violence—the structures, flows, and veils it produces. Whether the method is enough to account politically for all that takes place in the violence of warfare and extraction is another matter. Although the images in your piece are all found footage, and you did not employ computer-generated reconstructions, models, or any particular sensing or photographic technologies, you still seem to pursue an approach of quantification, enumeration, and contextualisation that thickens the air, *thickens the plot*, as it were. The voice-over and the text together seem to reconstruct a crime from decades of flight time, a detective story that can become a counter-claim, a counter-discourse to that of the Israeli state's. You are not aestheticizing violence, as many artists do, and in this context we know that there are forms of technical, spatial witnessing that help materialise atmospheric violence differently than first-person testimony and human witnessing, and can work in a more, say, cartographic way to chart the prolonged destruction enacted by state and capital apparatuses. How do you configure your usual practice with this approach in the video?

Lawrence Abu Hamdan
The aesthetic demand of this work is to establish a new category of witnessing for these events. You might hear the plane, you might not; it might fly over you, it might not. With the website and with the installation 'Air Conditioning', I sought to disaggregate the position of the single witness—to render these small ephemeral invasions into the ears of individuals a collective experience; to see them as one long crime. I have made these numbers public for the first time; were the incursions to remain anecdotal personal experience, we would not have known how many planes entered Lebanese airspace, and the number way exceeds expectations. We would still think, as many did before, that these planes are flying into Lebanon to bomb Syria, when this has happened only three out of 22,111 times. We can now understand this as a specific military operation purposely targeting the atmosphere over Lebanon—the planes don't just circle the South or specifically target areas where Hezbollah is strong, but rather they broadcast violence across all of Lebanon, in spite of regional political affiliations.

The aesthetics make this disaggregation possible, make this crime sensible under new terms. In *Air Conditioning*, you don't hear military aircraft, as someone on the ground would, but for the first time you can perceive fifteen years of continued and accumulative violence. So it's not about the way we experience this with our ears and eyes in Lebanon but about using techniques and technologies to make the events sensible in ways they have not been previously. So that we can comprehend these acts strategically, structurally, collectively, and cumulatively.

'Air Pressure' does this too but in a different way. By bringing together mobile phone footage from hundreds of sources, each taken from an individual perspective, the video records the ways in which these

planes intrude on the many lives beneath them. The people taking these videos are often trying to capture a background noise; they search the sky to locate the source of this blanket of noise above their heads. It takes careful work to document this rumbling in the background while it is obscured by dogs barking, people talking, and kids laughing and screaming. These voices piercing through the noise of the jets are as important as the sounds of the jets themselves, because they demonstrate how the jets are being heard and not heard. We hear both someone trying to document a sound and others ignoring it. We are listening to the often-competing kinds of attention these jets command of the populace beneath them as the exceptional and the quotidian natures of this violence are overlaid. We witness how others hear and live with these sounds.

Ghalya Saadawi
To go back for a moment to a point made earlier—who does the air belong to, what's in it, who owns it (the air as property)? In a basic sense, of course, there is intense air and noise pollution in the Lebanese atmosphere. In tracing these, we find a series of noxious activities that can help us read so-called pollution as the materialisation of particular political-economic activities—the special, accelerated breed of Lebanese capitalism—that highlight what else is in the air. The air becomes a ground against which we read a variety of other state policies, social actors, agreements, the accumulation and the drive to profit, and so on. In this way it becomes, as we keep saying, *material*. This is not specific to Lebanon alone, of course. But we were discussing, for example, the state's lack of electricity and the decades of shortages we've suffered as traceable back to, on the one hand (and this is keeping it brief) purposeful fiscal mismanagement and corrupt deals around the state-run Électricité du Liban, and on the other, direct thievery, since the private companies of some government and party officials, Nabih Berri and Walid Jumblatt, specifically, sold the good fuel Lebanon had received, back into the market and purposefully bought the wrong (dirty) fuel for local power plants, irrevocably damaging them.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan
I think a work is only political when it is a battle on multiple fronts. If we are only attacking one thing, that's antagonism, which can be useful too, but it's not what makes things political. Politics also means a war with yourself; not to be totally Maoist, but the self-critique of my own efforts to fight noise with truth is in the work for that reason. The work also emerges out of the 2019 uprisings in Lebanon from which the expression *kilon yaani kilon*—or "all of them means all of them"—was popularised. This movement demanded that sectarianism be seen as a theatre that occludes an interconnected system of corruption that was stealing the future from the people. The expression became a clear demand to pay attention not to divisions but rather to the interrelations between the supposedly warring factions within the government. Similarly, we could say that the Israeli industrial military complex needs Hezbollah, and Hezbollah needs the Israeli industrial military complex. We need neither. *Kilon yaani kilon* was a way to demonstrate the connections between us, the subjects of corrupt rule, no matter our inherited sect. This is at the foundation of my interest in atmospherics: to identify all the agents that inseparably join together to create a toxic or violent atmosphere. Atmospherics determines both the kind of violence we endure and the kind of resistance that must prevail. Atmospheric resistance stands in opposition to sectarianism and a politics of identity; it is a call to coalesce.

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