

# PAULA COOPER GALLERY

WALID RAAD

*We have never been so populated*  
524 W 26 Street, New York, NY

March 8 – April 16, 2022

Concurrently with a cycle of museum exhibitions in Europe (La Maison des arts, Brussels, 2021; Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, 2021-2022; Kunsthalle Mainz, 2022), Walid Raad will present recent work at Paula Cooper Gallery this spring. The exhibition sets forth and develops the artist's continued interest in the hidden entanglements between art, politics, and the natural world.

According to the artist:

*This show is about a series of strange encounters with peculiar objects and living beings: invasive birds used as military weapons; paintings of clouds that appear on the backs of other paintings; gold and silver cups that attract particular arthropods; and fickle waterfalls.*

*Such fantastical encounters usually raise doubts about the sanity of the person witnessing and recounting them. Or, they may be viewed as symptoms of the ideological, economic, cultural, and historical traumas and forces that shape our world.*

*But what if these encounters are “real,” in the sense that they emerge in another realm, the one affined to the imaginary? What if museums, and the objects they care for, rested not only on historical, ideological, scientific, economic, and cultural grounds — but also always in parallel worlds, ones whose spatial and temporal coordinates are counter-intuitive and labyrinthine?*

The show speculates on these propositions by displaying various documents and objects, narrating the artist's encounters with their strange qualities, and proposing various explanations for their peculiarity. In the process, the exhibition opens several “investigative” paths into Lebanon's protracted wars, art collecting and display, museum building, and other stories.

**Walid Raad** (b. 1967, Chbaniyeh, Lebanon) works across installation, performance, video, and photography to explore how historical events of physical and psychological violence affect bodies, minds, culture, and narrative. Raad's work has been shown in numerous international exhibitions including Documenta 11 and 13, the 14th Istanbul Biennial, the first Vienna Biennale, the Whitney Biennial (2000 and 2002), and the 50th Venice Biennale. In 2021, the artist had one-person exhibitions at the Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes, France; La Maison des Arts, Brussels, Belgium; and the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain. Previous one-person exhibitions were organized by the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; and Carré d'Art, Nîmes. His 2015 survey exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston and Museo Jumex in Mexico City. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Kunsthau Zürich; and the Centre Pompidou, Paris, among others.