

# Beirut

## Lamia Joreige

**MARFA'**  
**1339 Marfa' District**  
**October 10–December 29**

“And yet the moment finally came when the city no longer resembled itself”: With these words, Franco-Lebanese historian Samir Kassir described his civil-war-struck hometown of the 1980s in *Beirut* (2005), a book widely accepted as the definitive monograph on Lebanon’s capital. Lamia Joreige’s ongoing three-part project *Under-Writing Beirut*, 2013–, perhaps can be best explained as a painstaking attempt to recover traces of how the city was, and still is, in the process of undoing itself.

This exhibition brings together works from its second and third chapters, focusing on the transformation of the outlying Beirut River and Ouzaï areas. While a documentary impulse is strong in the three-channel video reportage *After the River*, 2016, and in the superimposed aerial period photographs of the series “Ouzaï, Cartography of a Transformation,” 2017, Joreige is most eloquent in works with relative poetic license. Mixing wax, pigments, pastels, and crayons, her delicate, impressionistic drawings demonstrate a curious evolution from year to year, neighborhood to neighborhood.

Although a faint outline of the Beirut River or the Ouzaï shore is visible in all her works on paper here, the drawings dated to 2016—tinged with reds and sickly yellows—from a series titled “The River,” 2015–17, turn the stream into a blood vessel susceptible to storing puss in bulbous pockets. On the other hand, the 2017 “Coastline” series furnishes barely connected ghostly explosions along the waterfront with less spindly flowers of evil that remain witnesses to the neighborhood’s experience of war, forced migration,



View of “Lamia Joreige: Under-Writing Beirut,” 2017. From left: *The River 8*, *The River 7*, *The River 9*, all 2016.

growing religious conservatism, and pollution. The orientation of the area around the seashore is tilted ninety-degrees clockwise in the sculpture *Ouzai*, 2017, but given that here the main arteries are cast in golden alloyed metal, the district takes on a zoomorphic form, ready to dart off, reminding one of how much is still in flux here.

— Gökcan Demirkazik



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