



DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES — August 17, 2016 — Gulf Photo Plus is pleased to present the new exhibition “When Time Does Not Exist” featuring photographic work by Stephane Lagoutte and Randa Mirza.

“Beirut is a city of contradiction and paradox. It is an urban and rural city, one of violence and forgiveness, memory and forgetfulness. Beirut is a city of war and peace,” writes Iman Humaydan in her introduction to “Beirut Noir” (2015), a collection of short stories dedicated to the city.

Nowhere is Beirut’s paradoxical nature seen more starkly than in its relationship to time. Beirut is a city where the past and the present entwine in unpredictable and unexpected ways, where the past with its memories and lingering scars of war burst through the ends of the city’s evolving contemporary identity. Aspirations of the city’s future break through the walls of modern life with equal force, manifesting in rapid urban development. Indeed, with its juxtaposition of abandoned structures and gleaming new buildings, its thriving public spaces and silent hidden corners, Beirut becomes a living monument of what has been and what is yet to come.

Just as the city unites disparate elements into one cohesive whole, the exhibition “When Time Does Not Exist” unites two seemingly disparate photographic series about Beirut by two distinct photographers: Stephane Lagoutte (based between Beirut and Paris) and Randa Mirza (based between Beirut and Marseille). Both photographers take the present-day city as a departure point for a symbolic travel in time - backward and forward - creating images in search of the city that has been forgotten and the city that has yet to be created.

The series “Beirut 75-15” by Stephane Lagoutte is the result of three years’ work. The photographs of present-day Beirut were taken during Lagoutte’s numerous visits to the city, while he was wandering its streets. Lagoutte marries these contemporary images with a series of archival photographs he uncovered amidst the rubble of a crumbling luxury hotel in the city center. By creating superimpositions of these carefree pre-war

photographs with current images of the dilapidated hotel, Lagoutte entangles the past and the present, creating a physical representation of their entanglement in the minds and shared memories of the Lebanese people.

By contrast, Randa Mirza, in her ongoing series “Beirutopia”, looks into the imagined future of the city. Her series showcases Beirut’s striving to regain a long-gone glamour and revive the old myth of a city commonly referred to as the “Paris of the Middle East”. This quenchless aspiration is manifested in the city’s frenetic construction. Mirza captures images of the large billboards that have erupted all throughout Beirut, sprawling displays advertising new construction projects. Each billboard is photographed in its real environment, creating a projection of what is to come against the stark reality of what currently is. In Mirza’s words, the project is “a portrait of Beirut’s urban future” that “aims to raise questions about the devenir, or the becoming, of Beirut and its associated representations”.

### **About Stephane Lagoutte**

Stephane Lagoutte (b. 1974) graduated with a visual arts degree and quickly assumed the role of documentary photographer. His camera is focused on society: Lagoutte takes great privilege in deciphering life and meeting people in their most intimate environments. His photographs are regularly published in magazines such as *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *National Geographic*.

In 2002, Lagoutte won the Fondation Hachette prize, which permitted him to start a long-term photography project in Maghreb and Mauritania. He participated in the well-known festival “Visa pour l’Image”, exhibiting a series that documented the living conditions in Île-de-France. In that same year, he also presented at “Regards sur dix nouvelles capitales Européennes” in Paris and “Transphotographiques” in Lille.

Between 2003 and 2005, Lagoutte published his photobook “Mauritanie – Lumière Noire” (Trans Photographic Press). This work has been exhibited widely throughout West Africa and made its European debut at “Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie d’Arles” in 2006.

Lagoutte continues to work and exhibit all over the world, collaborating with major international cultural institutions. Since 2009, he has been a member of MYOP photo agency.

### **About Randa Mirza**

Randa Mirza (b. 1978) lives in Beirut and Marseille. She has been the recipient of many acclaimed prizes, such as the No Limit Award at “Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie d’Arles” in 2006. The award acknowledges those whose photography goes beyond established boundaries.

Mirza has received grants from The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), Al Mawred Al Thaqafy and La Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores in order to further develop her work. She was an artist-in-residence at The Nordic Institute for Contemporary Arts (NIFCA) and HIAP, both in Finland, and also at Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa in Venice.

Mirza has had several solo exhibitions, most notably “Beirutopia” at Galerie Tanit, Berlin (2010), “Parallel Universes” at Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg (2009) and “Shock Culture” at the Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki (2008).

Mirza is currently a collaborator to Zoukak and photography agency Picturetank and a committee member of Vol de Nuit.

### **About Gulf Photo Plus**

Gulf Photo Plus (GPP) is the only dedicated center for photography in Dubai, UAE. With an expansive education programme, ambitious calendar of events, thought-provoking exhibitions and state-of-the-art printing facilities, GPP has long been established as the go-to place for both beginners and professionals to discover, enjoy, and learn more about photography.

### **Exhibition Details**

Title: When Time Does Not Exist  
Address: Alserkal Avenue, Warehouse 36, Al Quoz, Dubai  
Opening: 7pm on September 14, 2016  
Dates: September 14 to October 27, 2016

### **Media Contact**

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Download the high-res images [here](#); image table on next page.

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	<p>“Sexy has a new address” from Beirutopia series</p>	<p>© Randa Mirza</p>
	<p>“The selective residence” from Beirutopia series</p>	<p>© Randa Mirza</p>
	<p>From “Beyrouth 75-15” series</p>	<p>© Stephane Lagoutte</p>
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