

ENCOUNTERS—ONGOING

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The series of drawings *Encounters—Ongoing* stems from chance meetings on leisurely road trips around the mountains of Lebanon. The drawings act as markers of my conversations with landowners, farmers, and people directly working in the fields.

The formal particularities of drawing, and specifically the use of ink washes, allows for an approach that is both intuitive and intentional. This approach reproduces the spontaneity of these accidental or brief exchanges with people who have a vested interest in Lebanese land. Each conversation is represented by a simple tree branch or a fragment of a (flowering) plant belonging to the site and moment the encounter took place. These fragments index encounters in which farmers shared their stories, experiences, or relationship to the land and its borders. Excerpts from our exchanges are also handwritten in Arabic on the picture plane.

In the directness of the creative process, and the abstraction of the conversations, this project alludes to, and yet blurs, the sectarian divisions upon which the ownership of land is based, as well as the present geopolitical context. What I share is the marking of unplanned encounters through representations of fragmented personal accounts along specific terrains and borders.











دست و پا کردن، اگر چه این کار را می توانستند،
چون در آن زمان، کارهای کشاورزی و باغبانی
و سایر کارهای خانه را می توانستند انجام دهند.



النبات شجرة بأعلى من الماء. النبات
ذو كفة ومعالجة في قوتله. هذا النبات
رقيق. صلبه في الماء. هذا النبات
مستطيل ومنه شوك. النبات ذو كفة
النبات ذو كفة. النبات ذو كفة
النبات ذو كفة. النبات ذو كفة.





البهجة في كرا بتوكل قبل الرقة
 غشاو غش بعن الحار من جو بان
 من شي ماسي الغش بكيفية البهجة
 صغر البهجة الحلة النقية على اوج
 والصالحة من حب البهجة









- 1 I am a 'khenseh', an illegal. yes, I can walk freely, go anywhere
and I carry fear
- 2 I sleep with my eyes open. once you have crossed and you live
outside your land, there is no rest
- 3 the *Kounaisseh* village is self-sufficient. we carry arms for self-
protection. we are the front face of the 'Resistance' and Sayyid
Nasrallah
- 4 one of the daughters was so beautiful—a Turkish lieutenant
had his eye on her. my great-grandparents came down from
the highest mountains, the Cedar Mountains
- 5 the new maps are wrong and no one dares to speak up. my
neighbor took 320 meters of my land and built on it without
my permission
- 6 what I dislike about farming is that nobody will pay me back my
losses. my three other brothers chose to become car mechanics
- 7 merchandise piled up and imports stopped. but not the bananas!
bananas come only from our land
- 8 villagers eat, drink and satisfy all their needs from their lands.
without a line, people would slaughter one another
- 9 I got attached to the land here in *Jwar el Hoz*, as much as to my
native land in *el Raqqah*
- 10 we have actually been stripped of our rights here, as well as there.
we are waiting silently for 'el faraj', for a miracle to happen
- 11 when roads open between us and our neighbor, all will resolve.
today, Saudi Arabia is sending us carrots
- 12 he had six girls and did not want to give them away to any men
from Tripoli, let alone from Beirut. even if we do not see borders,
we feel them and we live them
- 13 we only needed to buy red meat from the butcher. when one's field
stops giving, it feels like one has lost a child
- 14 he should not have opened his mouth. he should have listened to
the military and given him the pistachios. we visited him once in
Sidnaya prison
- 15 'Allah' is great and is on our side. cherry trees are very strong
around here
- 16 I do not want to live a separation. the soil here and there is 'one';
it is my only consolation and connection to the other side

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