A PRESENT: BEIRUT IS IN MY HAND

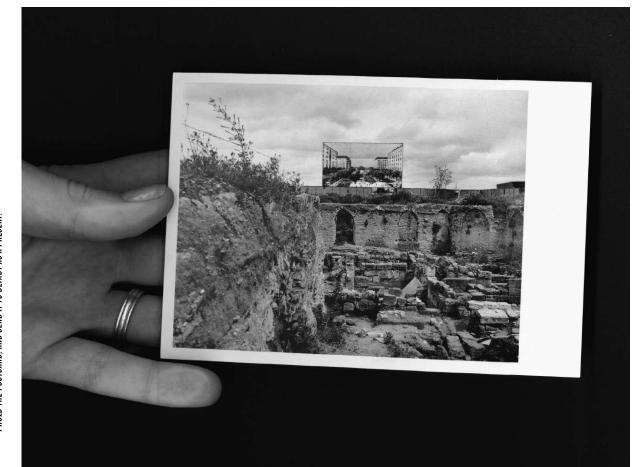
Rania Ghosn

tograph of the center of Beirut. The Photograph is entitled No Present, "THAT EACH OF THEM SEES. from the series Traces of War by photographer Fouad el-Khoury (1997). MARCEL PROUST, LA PRISONIÈRE. The one point perspective of the photograph suspends the present of Beirut by joining two fantasies of the city, that of a past archaeology and that of a projected vision of reconstruction by Solidere, the real estate company in charge of rebuilding the downtown of Beirut at the end of the civil war. Echoing Solidere's Motto of Beirut as 'An Ancient City for the Future,' both the past and the future exercise their fantastic power by presenting material evidence in the empty space of the centre, whether in the archaeological site or in the billboard of the reconstructed vision of Martyrs' Square. Ironically, the billboard stands on the site of a demolished building that previously defined the northern edge of the square, while the image represented the vision of an unbound Martyrs' Square that opens up the perspective towards the sea. Such vision suspends the present and renders it as a mere backdrop, a sandwiched transient space and time that can is not to be contested but accepted for the realization and perpetuation of the 'common vision' and its promised glories. Such power of the fantasy of another time in the physical space of the city engulfs the viewer in an absent present, depoliticizing the Now as a domain of action.

THE REAL VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY... CONSISTS NOT IN SEEKING NEW LANDSCAPES, BUT IN HAVING NEW EYES, IN SEEING THE UNIVERSE WITH THE EYES

This is a scan of my hand holding a postcard of a black and white phoof Another, of A Hundred Others, In Seeing the Hundred Universes
tograph of the center of Beirut. The Photograph is entitled No Present, THAT EACH OF THEM SEES.

from the series Traces of Was by photographer Found of Khoury (1907) MARCEL PROUST, LA PRISONIÈRE.



I HOLD THE POSTCARD, AND SEND IT TO BEIRUT AS A PRESENT.