Hélène Mutter

portfolio - 2022

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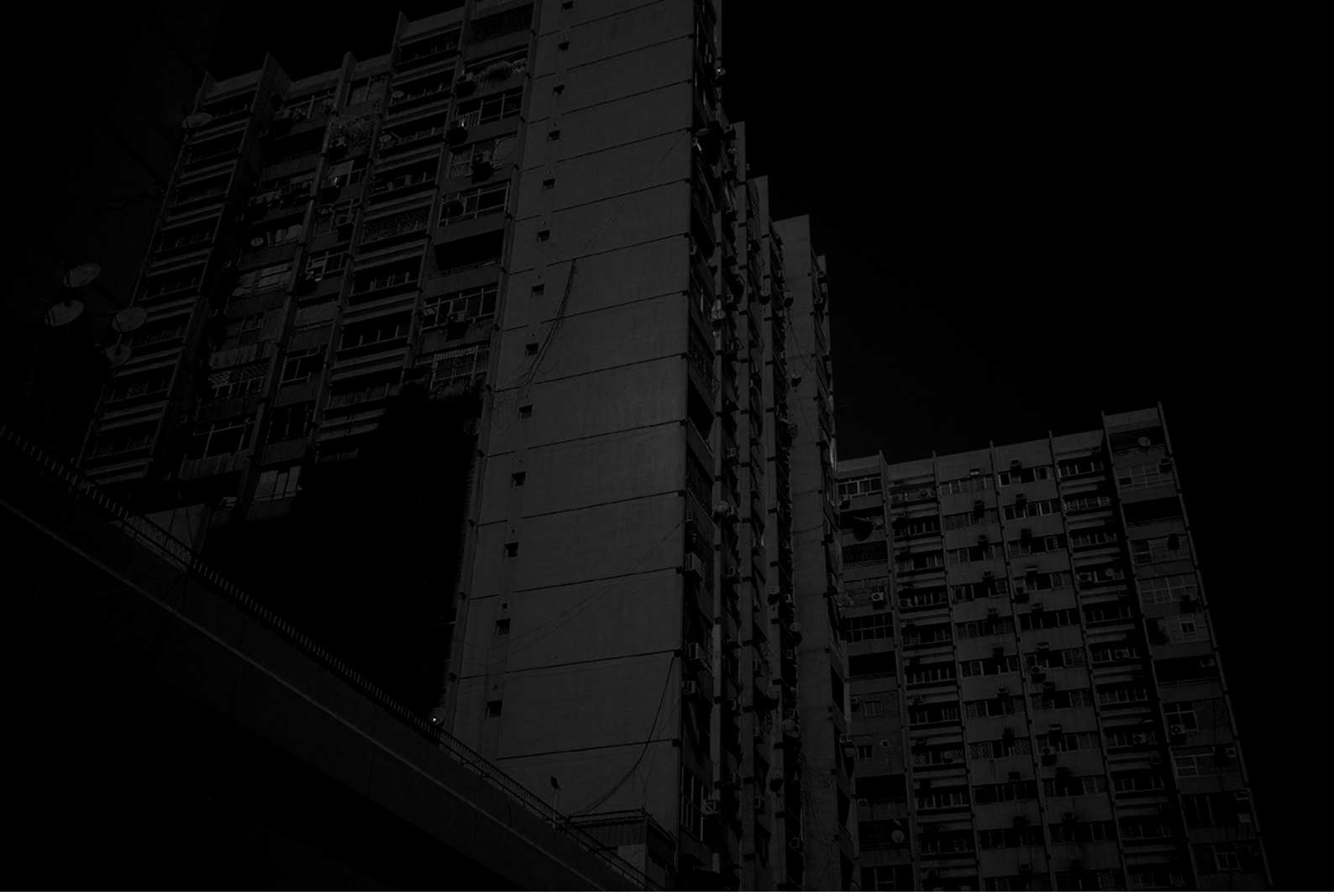
« Here, There »

Project carried out during the *Al Balad Residency Program*

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

2022/2024

The project I started to develop during the Al Balad Residency Program in Jeddah is a new long-term project, entitled « Here, There ». This project combines a photographic approach and the production of a documentary of creation in the Gulf region, between Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. My research is based on the history of the 1991 conflict, and follows the temporal and geographical unfolding of the facts, to proposes to take a sociological look at the war, in light of the technologies traditionally used in the military field.
It's also a thought which challenges the viewer, the public, on the way in which visual information produced in the context of conflicts is distributed and received, by crossing the Western point of view with the one of the Gulf.



Al Iskan buildings, Jeddah, infrared photograph, 2022

Yanbu harbor, infrared photograph, 2022

The red sea,Yanbu, 2022

View of the open studio, Rubat Al Khunji al Saghir, Al Balad, Jeddah, 2022

View of the open studio, Rubat Al Khunji al Saghir, Al Balad, Jeddah, 2022

« L'acide rougit le tournesol » (*Acid reddens the sunflower)*

Photographic research project carried out during the residency at the *Cultural Center of Neimünster*, Luxembourg

Belgium - Luxembourg - Germany - France

2021-2022

I conducted this work at the borders of 4 countries: Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and France. Rich in more than 2000 years of history, the Neumünster Abbey was a nazi prison during the Occupation, before becoming The men's prison of Luxembourg, until 1985. The penal history of this place touched me and led my research during my residency.

What remains of an imprisoned man's memory? I have followed the path of the political prisoners during the war, from the Grund prison to the execution sites, Treves's jail, and the concentration camp of Hinzert, the Gedenkstätte SS-Sonderlager/KZ Hinzert, in Germany. My research has guided me to a group of 68 French Resistants, deported to this camp in 1942, and called the « Unschuldig- Franzosen », the "French Innocents". My great-grandfather was part of them. When I went to photograph the area surrounding the old Luxembourg jailhouse and the « Sites of Inhumanity », my family history became intertwined with the great History, to recount the path of an individual and collective memory still very burning.

The title of the project, "Acid reddens the sunflower", refers to the name of a sabotage operation organized by those French Resistants.

« L'acide rougit le tournesol » - analog et digital photographs, thistles, view of the exhibition at the Cultural Center of Neimünster, 2022

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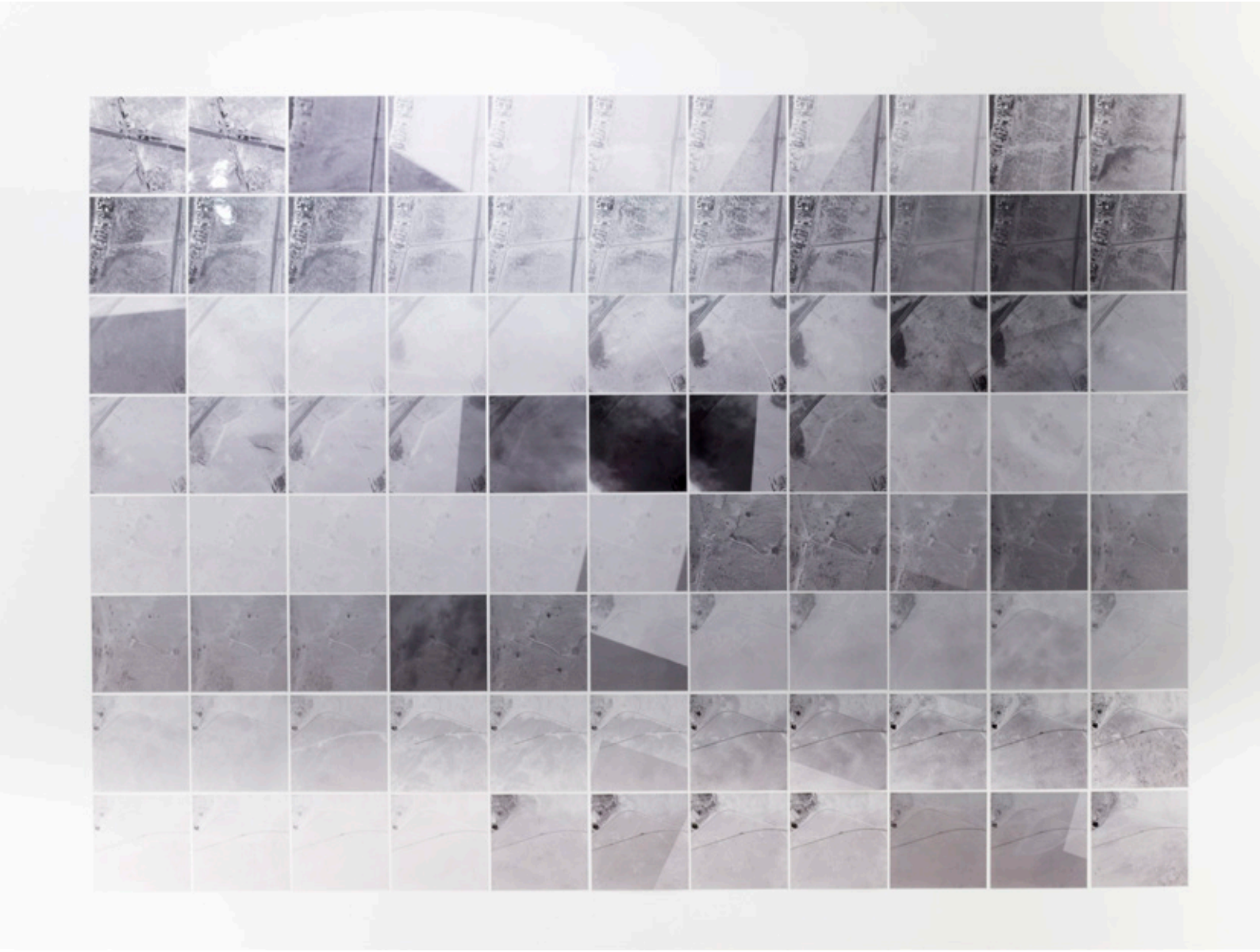
« Reconnaissance »

2009-2019

«Reconnaissance» is a long research-creation project conducted over ten years, around family military archives from the First Gulf War. It is also the title of the exhibition of my thesis defense, and the result of all this work, both artistic and theoretical. All these projects were carried out between 2009 and 2019, and according to the information gathered around these documents. Long discussions with my father brought decisive elements to the understanding of these military photographs, as well as research I conducted on the Google Earth software, at ECPAD or at the Royal Observatory of Belgium. At the meeting of several subject, art, social sciences, geopolitic or astronomy, this work was conducted in the form of a long investigation that brings together several elements, where it is a question of my place as an artist face to images as a form of History construction.

View of the exhibition « Reconnaissance » at Eté78 gallery, Brussels - 2020.

« Before & After » - Images from Google Earth, series of 88 photographs, digital prints, 269 x 195.5 cm - view of the exhibition «La guerre imag(in)ée» at the Peinture Fraiche gallery, Brussels - 2016/17.



« Before & After » - Images from Google Earth, series of 88 photographs, digital prints, 269 x 195.5 cm - view of the exhibition «La guerre imag(in)ée» at the Peinture Fraiche gallery, Brussels - 2016/17.

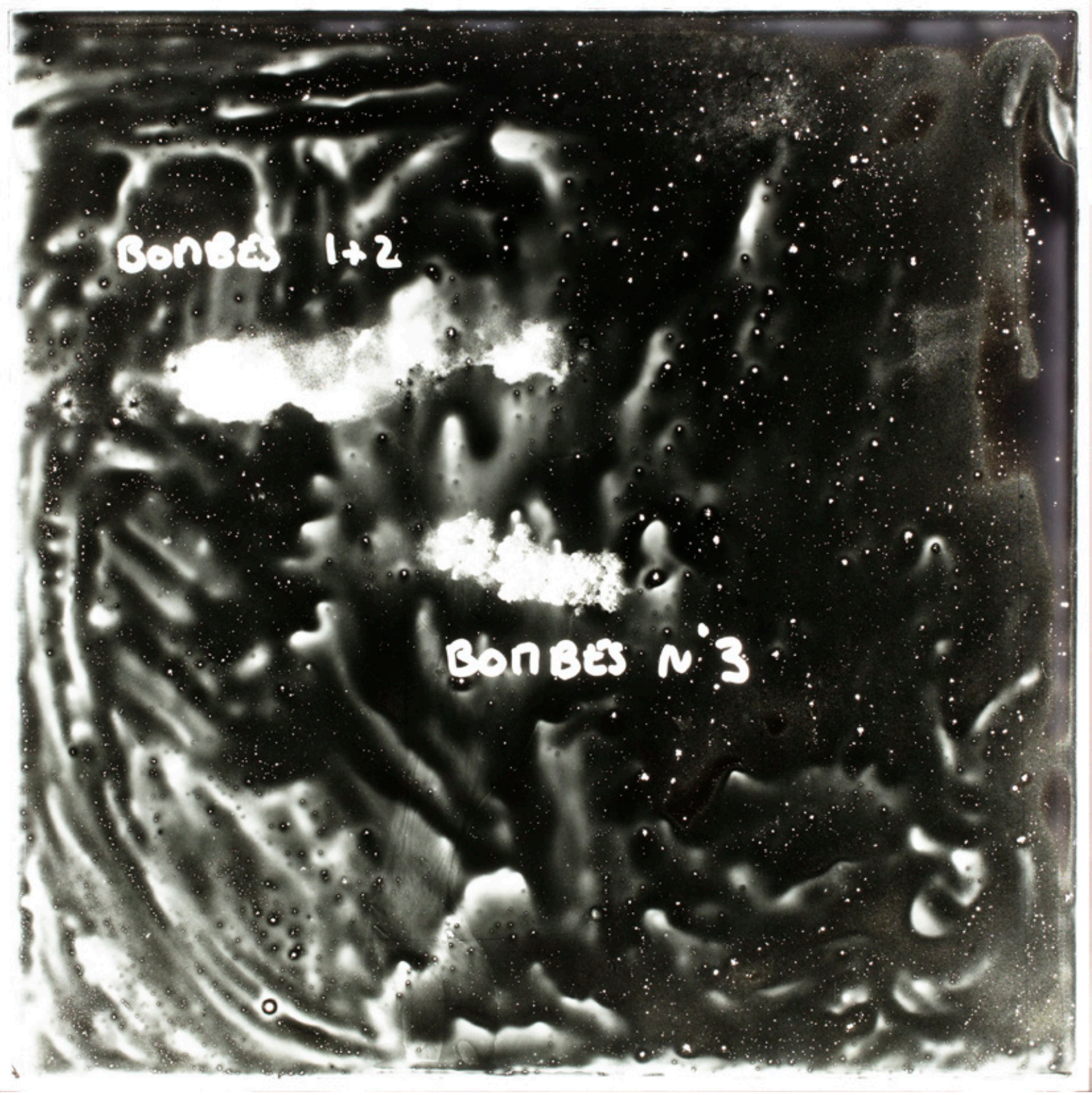
Showcase of personal archives : images extracted from Paris Match magazine, Figaro Magazine, text written by my father, family military archives - View of the exhibition «Reconnaissance» at the Eté78 gallery, Brussels - 2020.

Showcase of personal archives: family military archives - View of the exhibition «Reconnaissance» at the Summer Gallery78, Brussels - 2020.

« 1990 » - Family military archives, digital print, 200 x 100 cm - 2010/2020.

« Irak-Koweït, 1991 » - Series of 9 photoengraving on polished steel, family military archives, 30 x 30 cm - 2014.

« Etat » - Series of 26 photographs on spectroscopic glass plates, family military archives, gelatin, photographic emulsion, 30 x 30 cm - 2018/19.



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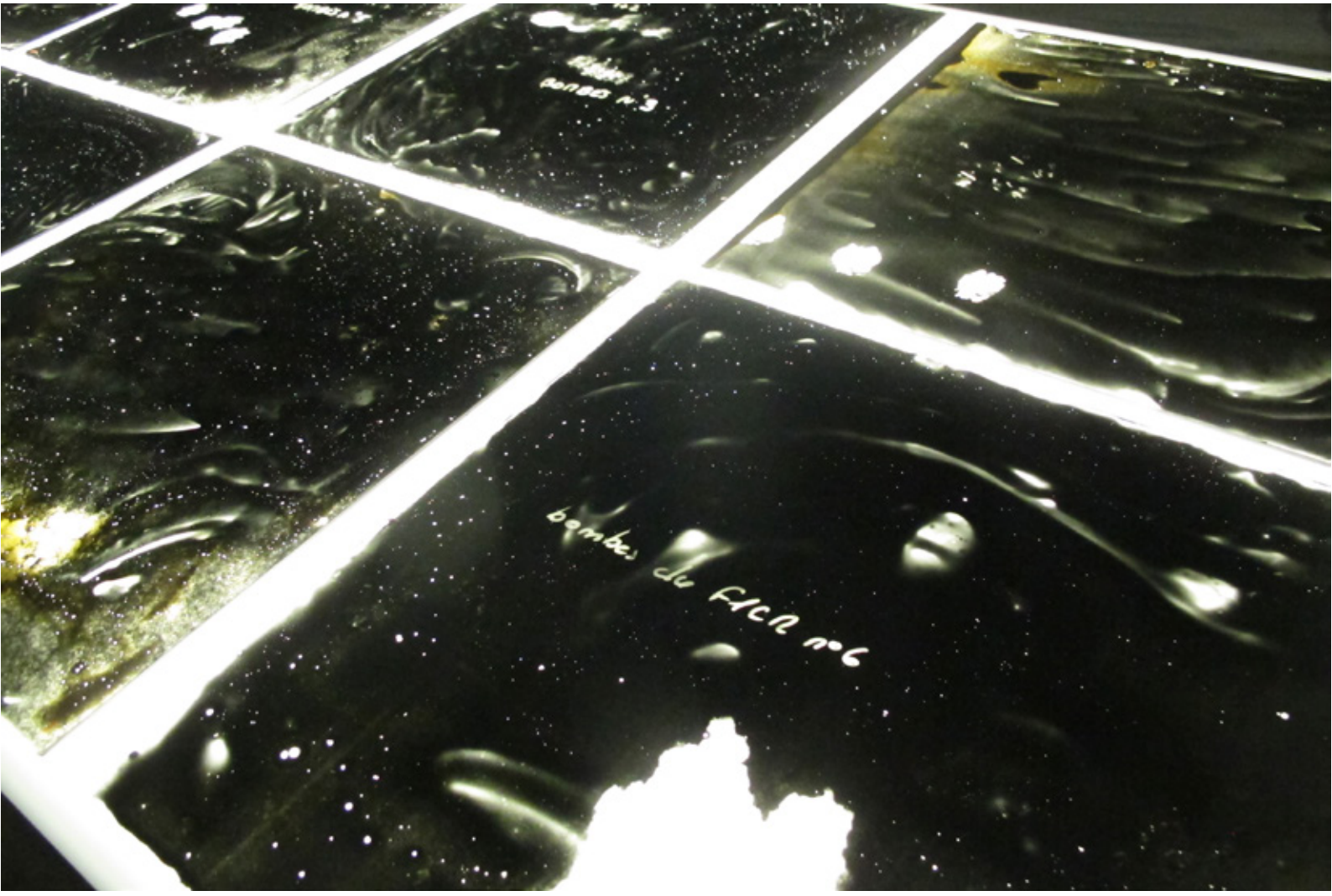

« Irak-Koweït, 1991 » - Family military archives, 64.5 x 45 cm - 2014.

« Silent Ground »

Beirut - 2019

I produced this project in Lebanon in November and December 2019, at the beginning of the revolutionary movement. I built my project according to a documentary and narrative approach to the events, imposing on myself a precise working protocol based on seriality and repetition : I photographed several times and over the days the same gathering places in Beirut and Tripoli. The redevelopment of urban space and its reappropriation by the population completely changed the visual and temporal perception that one could then have of the city. The Lebanese landscape is in constant transit, and I had to find a way to tell the story of the revolution while questioning its historical roots in the country's sensitive history. By convening a resolutely documentary approach in an unprecedented cultural and social context, «Silent Ground» questions the construction of a collective memory in full disruption, but also questions the place of the archive in a history that is played out, in Beirut, always in the present.

Research project - *In progress*

« Silent ground » - Analog photographs, variable dimensions - 2019.

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« Lines »

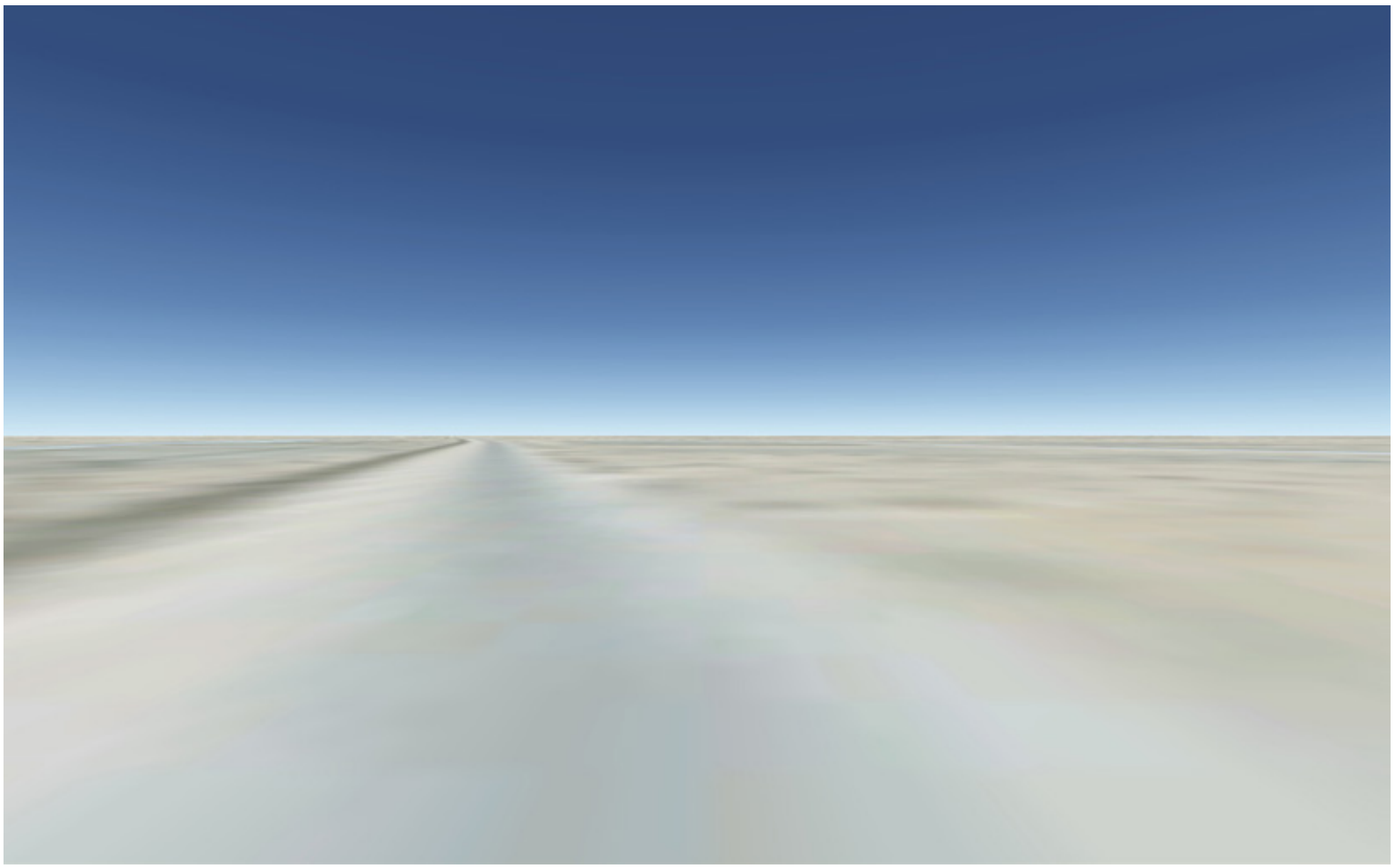
2018

«Lines» was entirely made on the Google Earth software, where I searched and archived thirty-nine border walls that still exist today in the world out of sixty already built or under construction. A project that questions the ambiguity regarding the confrontation between reality seen through software and the virtual representation of reality, I was very quickly confronted with the proper limit of the representation of digital technologies and obtain, for only representation of walls, abstract lines. We are witnessing an obvious simplification of the field of reality: all the images are similar and seem to come out of the same video game and our eye seems to have become accustomed today to such a logic of production of images.

List of boundary walls represented in the project :

Afghanistan/Uzbekistan - South Africa/Mozambique - South Africa/Zimbabwe - Algeria/Morocco - Botswana/Zimbabwe - Bulgaria/Turkey - Ceuta/Morocco - North Korea/South Korea - Egypt/Gaza Strip - Calais/United Kingdom - Gaza Strip/Israel - Greece/Turkey - India/Bangladesh - India/Burma - India/Pakistan-Kashmir - Iraq/Turkey - Iran/Pakistan - Israel/West Bank - Israel/Egypt - Israel/Lebanon - Israel/Syria - Jordan/Iraq - Kenya/Somalia - Libya/Tunisia - Macedonia/Greece - Malaysia/Thailand - Morocco/Western Sahara - Melilla/Morocco - Mexico/United States - Oman/United Arab Emirates - Oman/Yemen

« Lines » - Series of 39 images from GoogleEarth, digital prints, variable dimensions - 2018.



« Lines » - View of the installation at the FotoLimo Festival, Cerbère - 2018.

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« Lines » - View of the installation at the FotoLimo Festival, Cerbère - 2018.

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« Souvenir d'enfance » - Photographs taken by fighter plane, family archives, digital prints, 60 x 175 cm - 2000/2018.

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print size

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« Nuclear memory » - Series of postcards, archive images retrieved from the internet of nuclear explosion tests that took place in different places in the world, 10 x 15 cm - 2017/2020.

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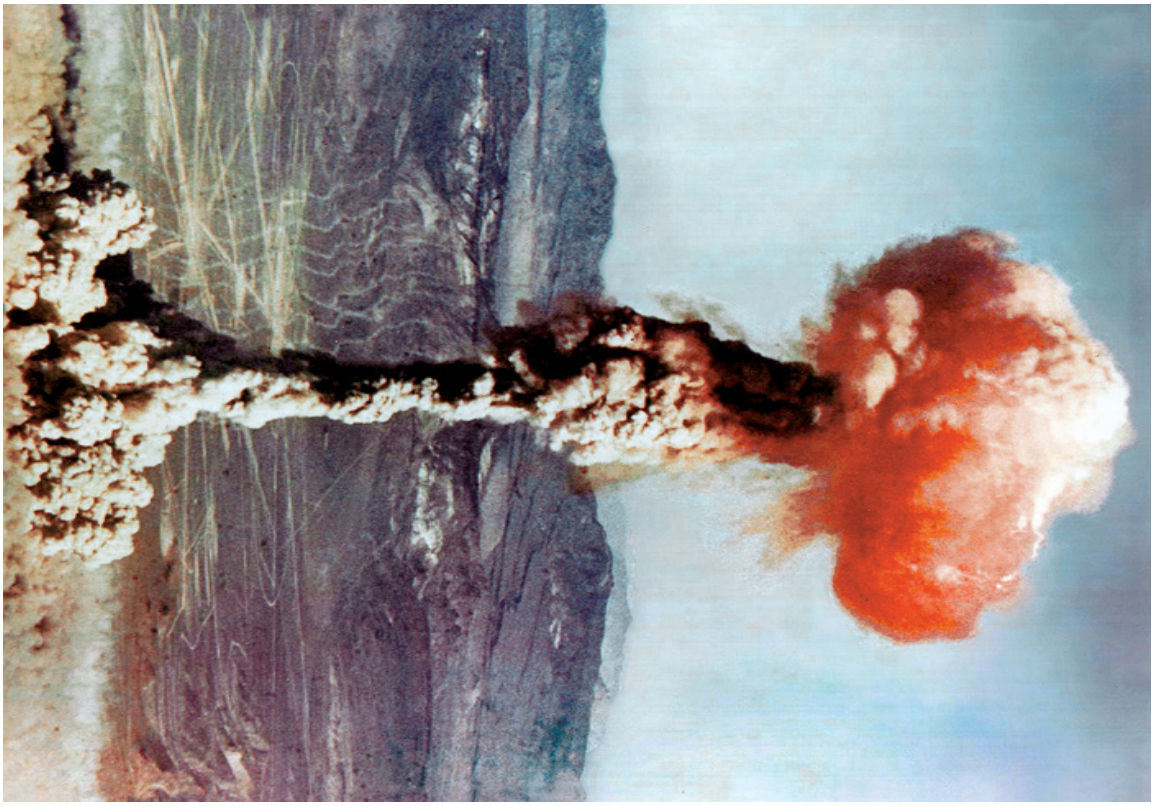


Federal Government of the United States
Operation Buster-Jangle, Charlie, Nevada Test Site, 1951.

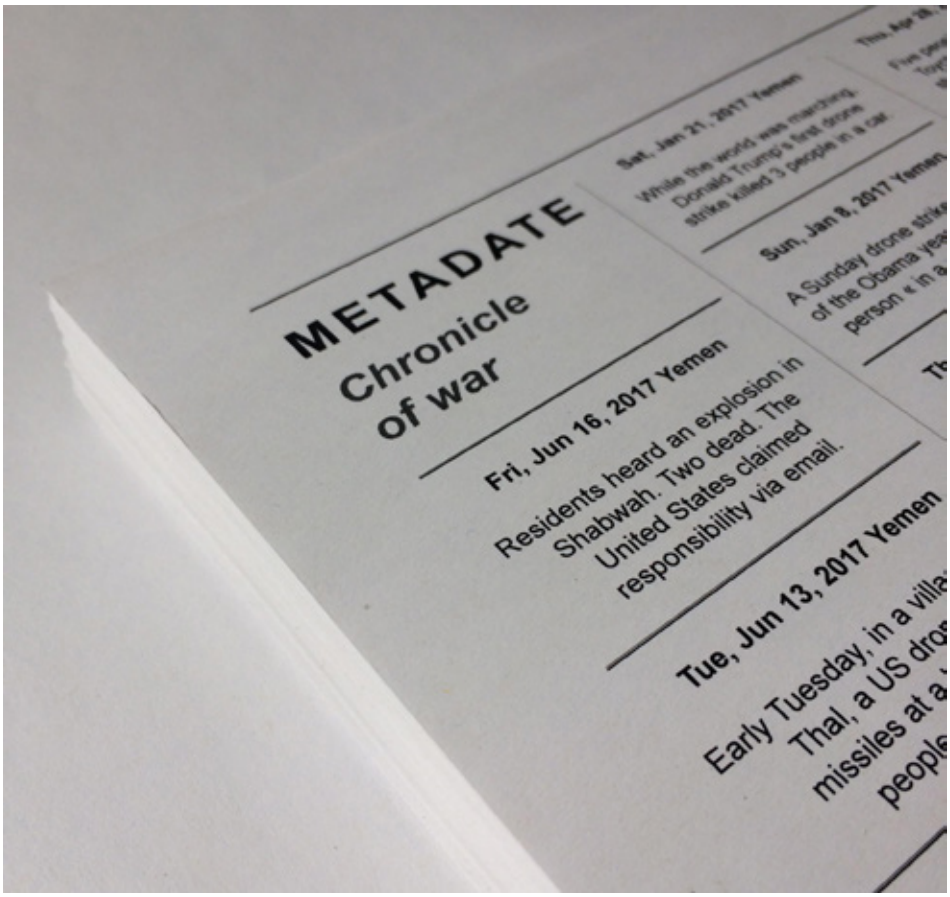
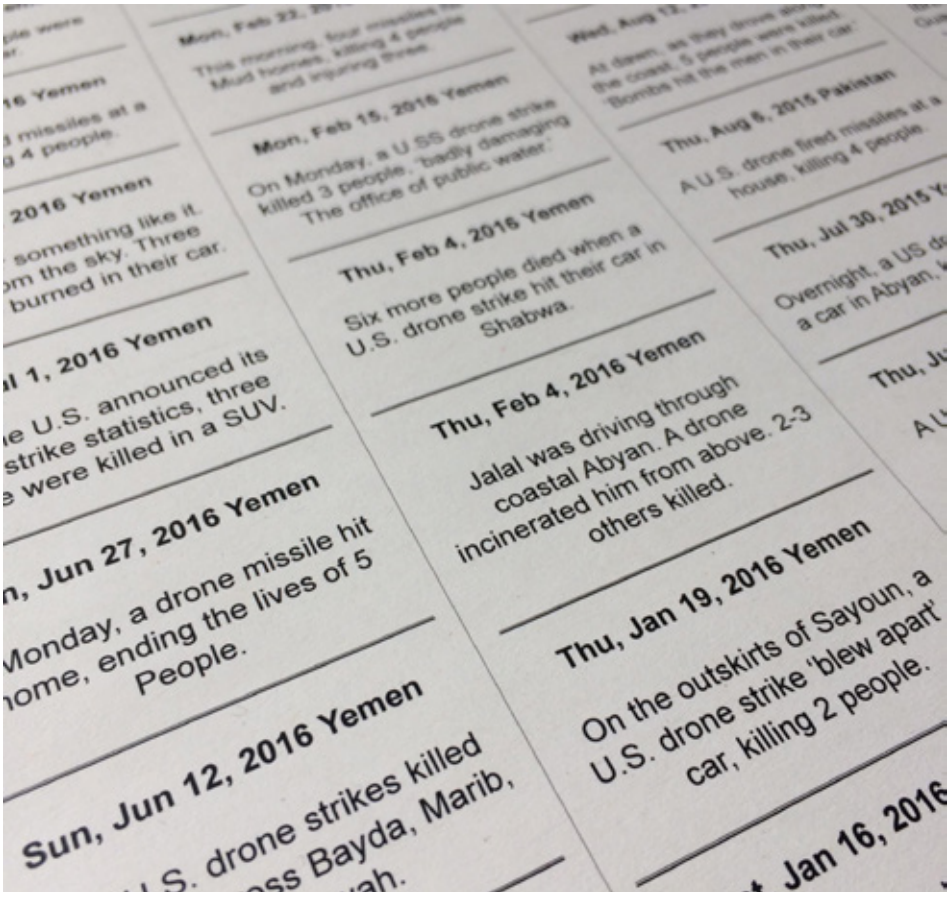
National Nuclear Security Administration

Hélène Mutter, *Nuclear Memory #1*, 2017

« Sage Comme » - Archive of the Ecpad (Establishment of Communication and Audiovisual Production of the Defense), digital print, screen printing on fabrics, variable dimensions - 2018/20.

© Arnaud Roiné/ECPAD

This project is inspired by a photograph taken by the photographer Arnaud Roiné during Operation Barkhane in Mali in 2017. According to the expression of the seventeenth century, «wise as» is a link to childhood, when children are asked to be wise as an image, to be motionless, silent, like the representations in the paintings. Printed on a white flag, an international sign of peace in times of war, this message is intended to be without identity, and a universal slogan.

« Sage Comme » - Archive of the Ecpad (Establishment of Communication and Audiovisual Production of the Defense), digital print, screen printing on fabrics, variable dimensions - 2018/20.

« METADATE - Chronicle of war » - Information from the *Metadata +* application created by the American artist Josh Begley in 2012, printed in 200 copies, 59.4 x 42 cm - 2017/2021.