

IMMATERIAL WORLD

NADIM ASFAR

BEIRUT

GALERIE TANIT

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Anyone heading into the still-sleepy neighborhood of Mar Mikhael, which caps the far end of Beirut's rather trendier enclave of Gemmayzeh, would have had a hard time missing the glass facade that offered fleeting glimpses of Nadim Asfar's photography exhibition this spring. Curated by Naila Kettaneh-Kunigk and Sandra Dagher and installed in the ground floor and basement of an otherwise abandoned building, Asfar's 'Immaterial World' made for an intriguing encounter with the street. The encounter recalled Asfar's series *Constellations* from 2008, which was hung opposite the vast windows looking out onto Mar Mikhael's main drag, a transparent vitrine in full view of gallery visitors and casual passersby. *Constellations* consisted of nine large-scale works, each featuring a geometrically arranged grid of small photographs of pedestrians, merchants, and cars negotiating the same street, shot from above. (The studio where Asfar lives and works is located just a few hundred meters further down the road.)

The reflective interface between the gallery's interior and the street's exterior triggered a correspondence between the space and the city, and between an art-specific audience and the Beirut public at large. It also accentuated the fact that this particular building, unlike so many in Lebanon, asserts no real identity of its own.

Although the building is owned by the family of Kettaneh-Kunigk—a well-respected arts patron who directs Galerie