



Jocelyne Saab, the Film as an Unspeakable Memory. About the 'Joumana' Unfinished Project

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Mathilde Rouxel, « Jocelyne Saab, the Film as an Unspeakable Memory. About the *Joumana* unfinished project », July 22, 2023.

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Presentation followed by a discussion with Eliane Raheb, moderated by Alix Beeston.

Jocelyne Saab, the Film as an Unspeakable Memory.

About the *Joumana* unfinished project.

Mathilde Rouxel, University of the New Sorbonne

The French-Lebanese filmmaker Jocelyne Saab is known as a leading documentary and fiction filmmaker, although she has also worked as a photographer and installation artist. She began her career as a war reporter, particularly covering the war in Lebanon.

She passed away in 2019, leaving behind an extensive archive of unfinished projects. This collection of research documents and notes of intent reveals a whole side of Jocelyne Saab's ambition as an artist that is not apparent if we consider only her finished work. Indeed, after 1982 and the departure of the Palestinians from Beirut in the aftermath of the Israeli siege of the city, Jocelyne Saab decided not to make any more documentaries in Lebanon. She filmed two dramas there before the end of the 1990s, and turned her documentary camera to other subjects, notably Egypt.

Of her documentary filmography, only one was shot in Asia: *La Dame de Saïgon*, made in 1997. It's a portrait of Doctor Hoa, a former maquis who became a minister in the Communist government, which she eventually left to work on child malnutrition. And yet, when we consult the boxes of Saab's unfinished projects, most of the many projects written in the late 1990s and early 2000s focus on Asia, from Turkey to Hanoi to India. All remained in the draft stage for lack of production.

Yet this interest in the Far East never left Jocelyne Saab, who saw it as a political tool. By the end of her life, Jocelyne Saab was campaigning through the creation of a film festival in Lebanon, bringing together films from Asia and the Mediterranean, for greater consideration of Asian culture in Lebanon, a country whose eyes are often turned towards the West but whose roots lie in the Asian continent. It's another definition of identity that

she wanted to propose for her country as it was healing from fifteen years of civil war, and another heritage with a broader horizon that she hoped will be more tolerant. In the late 1990s, Saab even considered relocating her life to Asia, an unsuspected ambition if we look at her filmography and her work as an artist, which until the end of her life in 2019 will document social and political issues related to the Middle East.

In an interview with Swiss Television in 1999, Jocelyne Saab explains both her relationship with Asia and her relationship with Lebanon at this point in her life:

[EXTRACT HUPPI – TRANSCRIBING AND TRANSLATION:]

[Jocelyne Saab:] We were from the upper middle class but we had one particularity, which was that my father had made his life in the Far East and traveled the Arab world, from Lebanon to Iraq, to Iran and then on to the Far East and he was an admirer of Gandhi he was self-taught and the thing I kept from him is the idea of peace and tolerance he lived in China for a long time and spoke several languages and so I grew up totally carefree but with the image of an adventurer and that's what propelled me into the world, I think and I've stayed... I was rejected by my community, which during the war was not tolerant at all while I remained tolerant and defended my ideas. I think I got it from here and also perhaps the rejection of a society that... which I think suffocated me. That's it.

At this time, Asia is really at the core of her preoccupations. However, one singular project stands out from Jocelyne Saab's other ambitions at the time. In the midst of her reflections and travels in the Far East, Jocelyne Saab was working on a documentary film that once again addressed the question of the memory of the war in Lebanon. I felt it was important to re-situate the creative context in which Jocelyne Saab began this project, specifically to underline its importance and urgency: the filmmaker had by this time decided to film other worlds under other latitudes. The making of this film on the Lebanese question seems to

have been imperative because of the power of its subject, which stood in opposition to the amnesiac political choices made after the war.

Saab, who during the war had turned her camera to those who resisted the horror of the conflict and to what she considered the most legitimate fighters for their freedoms - the Arab nationalists and the Palestinians - was now seeking to understand those who had sided with the extreme right. A film project, entitled *Joumana* after the film's protagonist, began in the mid-1990s, based on the story of a former classmate of Jocelyne's, when they shared the benches of the Notre-Dame de Nazareth school. Joumana later became close to the far-right Phalangists during the war. A collateral victim of the assassination of her husband, the Spanish ambassador Pedro de Arestigui, in 1989, she was wounded and fell into a coma that lasted a month, causing her to lose her memory. From this attack, Joumana kept a large scar from the wound that tore her neck. Seeing Joumana as the personification of a wounded, amnesiac post-war Beirut, Jocelyne Saab wanted to confront her with her past and portray a woman recovering her memory of the horror of her own history. In the course of its conception, the film took different directions, but was never completed, and the reasons for its stoppage remain unclear to this day.

Jocelyne Saab's filmography already includes a very short film, made for a private French TV channel in 1989, in which she sought to portray the repentance of the executioners. The war was coming to an end, and this was the first time Jocelyne Saab had returned to film documentary images in Lebanon since 1982. The film is entitled *La Tueuse* and portrays the former Phalangist leader of a women's militia. Jocelyne Khoueiry is the fighter who had beaten up Jocelyne Saab in 1975 when she wanted to film the Phalangist training camps for her film *Le Liban dans la tourmente*. In 1989, Jocelyne Khoueiry repented, denounced the violence and embraced the Christian religion. Although the film was made for television, it can perhaps shed light on the approach Jocelyne Saab intended to use for the portrait of Joumana she wrote eight years later.

[EXTRACT LA TUEUSE – TRANSCRIBING AND TRANSLATING:]

[voice over] In one of the many convents from the mountains of Lebanon we found Jocelyne Khoueiry, who the Christians used to call "The Rose of the Phalangists" and her opponents "The Woman Killer". For five years, Jocelyne Khoueiry fought like a man, machine gun in hand, at the Phalangist barricades. Today, she reread the Bible during a weekend retreat with other ancient passionflowers of the Christian militias. The group prays and takes care of those we call "the generation of the children of war".

Jocelyne and her former command of fighters became civilian sisters, and they chose as a symbol to the Virgin Mary. Because she is the woman that she is engaged into the path of the Lord, at the service of the world.

The Lord has his plan. And history has its end and its purpose. Curious return.

Just a few kilometers of this peaceful garden, where Jocelyne, at the beginning of the civil war in 1975, had learned to fight and kill. Very quickly, her comrades-in-arms made her a legend. They said that she alone had destroyed several armored columns. Pierre Gemayel, the leader of the Phalangists, had decorated her.

Today, Jocelyne doesn't like to be reminded of this violent past.

[Jocelyne Khoueiry] My house was on the demarcation line. So I only had three options: run away, or rush to defend my parents or hide somewhere. Since I got ready I made the decision to defend myself.

[voice over] On the demarcation line, precisely, in the heart of the city, a place of exchange among all communities, her name of hers inspired fear.

The international press accused her repeatedly of having committed the worst atrocities.

Impossible to question her on this subject, It took us hours of discussion to get a few words out of her, about this period which she does not deny. On the contrary, if she had



Mettre sur bande
 - l'annonce de Samia
 - l'annonce de Samia
 - voir si document de
 la Police → chercher
 le K7 à chercher
 et à Rabih
 et Samia
Rabih
 1h 2 minutes
 - retrouver l'annonce de l'avis
 de la police car elle est
 Mettre en bande
 sans nous prions pour
 le retournement de
 Joumana.

Rabih

- 0 - On peut essayer de demander puis on verra
 si on a besoin de la reprendre.
- Bon alors, donc si vous voulez faire un
 film sur ma sœur Joumana évidemment
 la station capitale de ce film est l'accident
 de l'ambassade d'Espagne qui lui fait
 perdre ainsi de la guerre du Liban.
- C'est sûr, mais si tu veux essayer...
- // tout ça c'est dans un même contexte.
- (...) oui essayons, essayons de me parler
 d'elle, comme tu m'en as parlé hier, de sa
 qui était Joumana avant cet accident, qui
 était elle par rapport à son père. Je veux que votre
 père se sente dans votre vie. Alors quelques
 qui vous se donne un esprit plus fort, une
 regarda culture (...).
- // ça c'est vrai
- (...) en tout cas toi il l'a marqué
 moi, toi Rabih, ton père et toi. C'est ça
 ou bien Joumana, Joumana par toi et
 ton père.

Nous rédigeons alors une première ébauche, qui met essentiellement
 l'accent sur la nécessité du travail de mémoire. Double travail en
 l'occurrence, d'une part reconstituer ce qu'elle a oublié en raison du
 coma où elle a été plongée, d'autre part se resituer par rapport à la guerre
 civile qu'elle a vécue.

JOUMANA s'impose comme une figure emblématique du Liban, avec
 sa séduction, ses contradictions et son corps qui porte les stigmates de la
 guerre. Elle est à l'image de ce pays complexe, d'une formidable vitalité
 jusqu'à se brûler, mais qui renâcle à revenir sur son passé, ses
 guerres... Le B018 lieu paradoxal, va donc naturellement s'inscrire dans
 l'histoire du film. Il est vécu comme un microcosme de Beyrouth.

Pour avancer dans mes recherches, je décide de commencer à filmer
 JOUMANA et différents témoins à Beyrouth, afin de les familiariser
 avec la caméra. J'explique seulement à JOUMANA qu'il est mieux
 qu'elle n'assiste pas au travail de recueil de témoignages ; je préfère les
 lui soumettre au cours du tournage. Je lui consacre trois voyages à
 Beyrouth. Je saisis quelques beaux moments de vérité, que je ne
 retrouverais sans doute pas sur le tournage. **Je les garde précieusement.**

Parallèlement, deux jeunes garçons d'une vingtaine d'années, passionnés
 par l'histoire de JOUMANA, m'assistent dans mon travail. L'un est
 réfléchi, l'autre intuitif. Rentrer dans son histoire, c'est aussi
 comprendre la leur et celle du Liban. Seul impératif, ne pas montrer la
 première mouture du synopsis, ni même la note d'intention à
 JOUMANA. Mais fidèle à elle-même, JOUMANA séduit les deux
 garçons, qui en oublient mes mises en garde. Ils la laissent venir aux
 entrevues avec les chirurgiens qui l'ont opérée, les psychologues et
 physiothérapeutes... etc, qui l'avaient soignée à la suite de l'attentat.

À mon tour, je me laisse piéger. Lors de ma troisième visite à Beyrouth,
 JOUMANA insiste pour m'accompagner auprès d'autres témoins. Je
 cède également, sauf pour les entretiens avec son amant-peintre celui qui
 lui a permis de redécouvrir sa féminité.

The *Joumana* project includes numerous research documents (press clippings, photographs, handwritten notes and printed e-mails), interview transcripts and two applications written to seek funding for the film, which contain a note of intent, a synopsis and a treatment. The first document is dated 1997; the second 2002. From one application to the other, the note of intent is quite similar, but the film has changed. In the notes, several handwritings are interwoven - mainly that of Jocelyne Saab and probably that of France Saint-Léger, with whom she worked on the film. Mention is made of rushes, "preciously kept" by Jocelyne Saab; these images, today, remain untraceable, as do the filmed family images of Joumana's father, Toufic Youssef Awad, and her husband's, Pedro De Arestegui, mentioned in the documents.

Quelques temps plus tard, je relate l'histoire de cette amitié interrompue à France Saint Léger avec qui je travaille. Je lui présente JOUMANA peu de temps après. Elle est aussitôt fascinée par sa singularité et sa très grande beauté et m'interroge sur le pourquoi de notre éloignement, comment la guerre civile avait fait écran entre nous deux.

En 1976, le Liban plonge dans sa deuxième année de guerre civile. Beyrouth est coupée en deux. JOUMANA habite sur « le front des grands hôtels » où se déroule la guerre ; elle migre naturellement vers sa maison de campagne située en pays chrétien en plein fief phalangiste. SAMIA, la sœur aînée de JOUMANA, est à l'époque la compagne d'un chef militaire phalangiste. JOUMANA l'admire et certains disent même, qu'elle tente de l'imiter. Elle tombe amoureuse d'un proche conseiller des phalangistes.... Leur père, Toufic AWAD, un écrivain de langue arabe, renommé et réputé pour sa grande ouverture d'esprit et sa tolérance, voit ces liaisons d'un très mauvais œil, mais n'intervient pas... Il lui est pourtant très difficile de voir ses filles se ranger du côté de l'intolérance et soutenir le fanatisme religieux.

C'est à cette époque que l'ami de SAMIA, propose à JOUMANA de filmer de nuit "l'opération de nettoyage du bidonville de la Quarantaine".

Pour les chefs militaires phalangistes, il s'agit d'une action ponctuelle. Cette zone, située en bordure de l'autoroute, représente un danger pour leur passage d'un côté à l'autre de la ville. Il faut donc faire table rase. Aujourd'hui, ce massacre fait étrangement penser aux nettoyages ethniques de Bosnie et de Serbie....

JOUMANA a déjà travaillé pour la télévision Libanaise, lui proposer de filmer va donc de soi. Elle se prend au jeu. "On m'a habillée en battle dress, on m'a filé une bolex. J'étais seule ; il n'y avait personne en dehors des miliciens. C'était désert. Ils ont ordonné aux gens de se rassembler et ont menacé de les tuer si l'un se retournait... Il y en un qui s'est retourné et ils ont tiré. Tac, tac, tac... D'un geste de la main, JOUMANA illustre ces corps qui chutent...

De nombreuses années se sont écoulées. JOUMANA se marie avec l'ambassadeur d'Espagne au Liban, PEDRO DI ARISTEGUI, dont elle aura deux enfants. Cet homme admiré tant en Espagne qu'au Liban, est une grande figure de la diplomatie, un homme courageux, qui disait, "*Si tu as peur de mourir, quitte ce pays*". Au paroxysme de la guerre, il ne craint pas de sillonner Beyrouth à bicyclette.... L'Espagne est alors à la présidence de la Communauté Européenne et le Liban en pleine guerre inter-chrétienne. Lorsque PEDRO prend des positions politiques tranchées, les représailles ne se font pas attendre. Une bombe explose sur l'ambassade, coûtant la vie du père, du mari et de la sœur de JOUMANA. Quant à elle, grièvement blessée, elle plonge dans le coma. Quelques minutes après le carnage, deux journalistes de la TV espagnole, attendus à déjeuner, arrivent sur les lieux ; ils filment à chaud le désastre.

France Saint Léger est intriguée par ce destin chaotique, en pleine guerre civile, qui conduit JOUMANA par le fait du hasard amoureux à glisser du côté des "bourreaux" à celui des "victimes".

Est-ce un manque de vigilance, un manque de réflexion sur l'Histoire qui se déroule à ses côtés ? Fait-elle partie de ces êtres parfois dépassés par leur propre vie et les événements qui s'y rattachent ?

En nous attardant sur ce "glissement", je repense à mon projet de film de fiction sur la mémoire qui met en scène des jeunes gens au BO18*, une boîte de nuit construite sur le lieu même du massacre de la Quarantaine. Une boîte de nuit à la mode où se rue toute la jeunesse libanaise. Cette boîte de nuit est enfouie sous terre. À la surface, une gigantesque plaque d'acier lacère le sol ; cela ressemble étrangement à une cicatrice. On descend dans ce lieu comme on descend au fond de sa mémoire, au plus profond de la ville et de ses fantômes.

Il me paraît évident qu'il y a de nombreuses correspondances entre ce film qui parlait de mémoire et que je ne ferai plus et le film à venir sur JOUMANA.

In 1997, Jocelyne's note of intent begins with a portrait of Joumana and her wartime memory of her:

In 1976, Lebanon plunged into its second year of civil war, with Beirut cut in two. Joumana lives on the "big hotel front" where the war is taking place; she naturally migrates to her country house in the Christian zone in the middle of the Phalangist stronghold. Joumana's elder sister Samia was at the time the girlfriend of a Phalangist military leader. Joumana admires her, and some even say she tries to imitate her. She falls in love with a close advisor to the Phalangists... Their father, Toufic Youssef Awad, a renowned Arabic-language writer famous for his open-mindedness, takes a very dim view of these liaisons, but does not intervene... (...)

It was at this time that Samia's friend asked Joumana to film the night-time clean-up operation in the Karantina neighbourhood. Joumana was hooked. "I was dressed in battle dress, given a bolex, they ordered people to assemble and threatened to kill them if anyone turned around... Only one turned around and they shot. Tac tac, tac..." With a wave of her hand, Joumana illustrates these falling bodies...

Many years later, Joumana married the Spanish ambassador of Lebanon, Pedro de Arestegui, and had two children with him. When Pedro took a strong political stance, a bomb exploded at the embassy, killing Joumana's father, husband and sister. Joumana was seriously wounded and plunged into a coma. Minutes after the explosion, two Spanish TV journalists filmed the disaster.

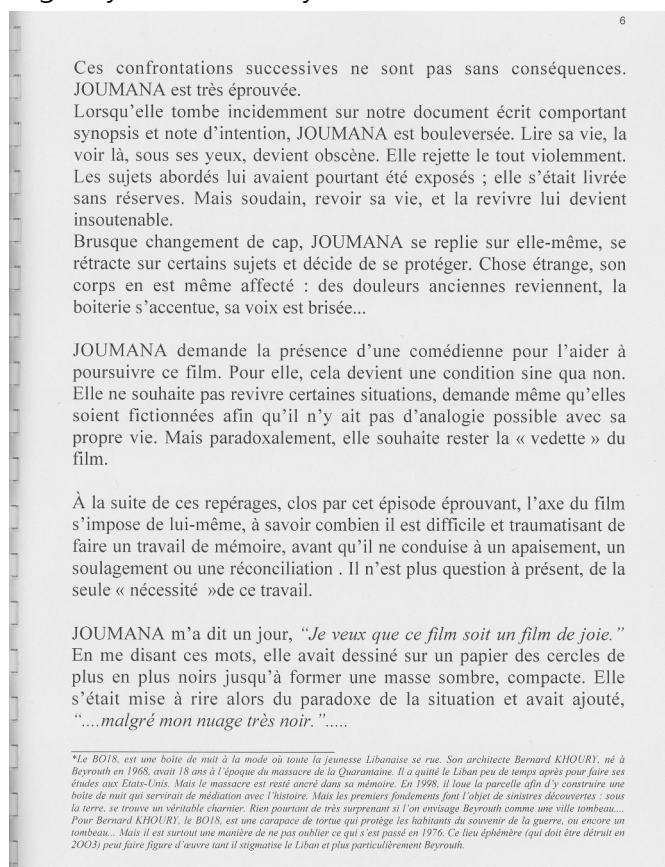
France Saint Leger is intrigued by this chaotic destiny, in the midst of the civil war, which leads Joumana, by chance of love, to slip from the side of the "executioners" to that of the "victims".

Is it a lack of vigilance, a failure to reflect on the story unfolding alongside her? Is she one of those people who are sometimes overwhelmed by their own lives and events?

To anchor this film in the present, and even the future, Jocelyne Saab entrusted two young men in their twenties, Kamal and Alain, with the task of participating in the research surrounding the film and interviewing Joumana about her experience, by filming their interviews. Embodying a youth that had grown up in war and thirsting for answers, they were to appear in the film as those who would have guided Joumana along the path of her own memory.

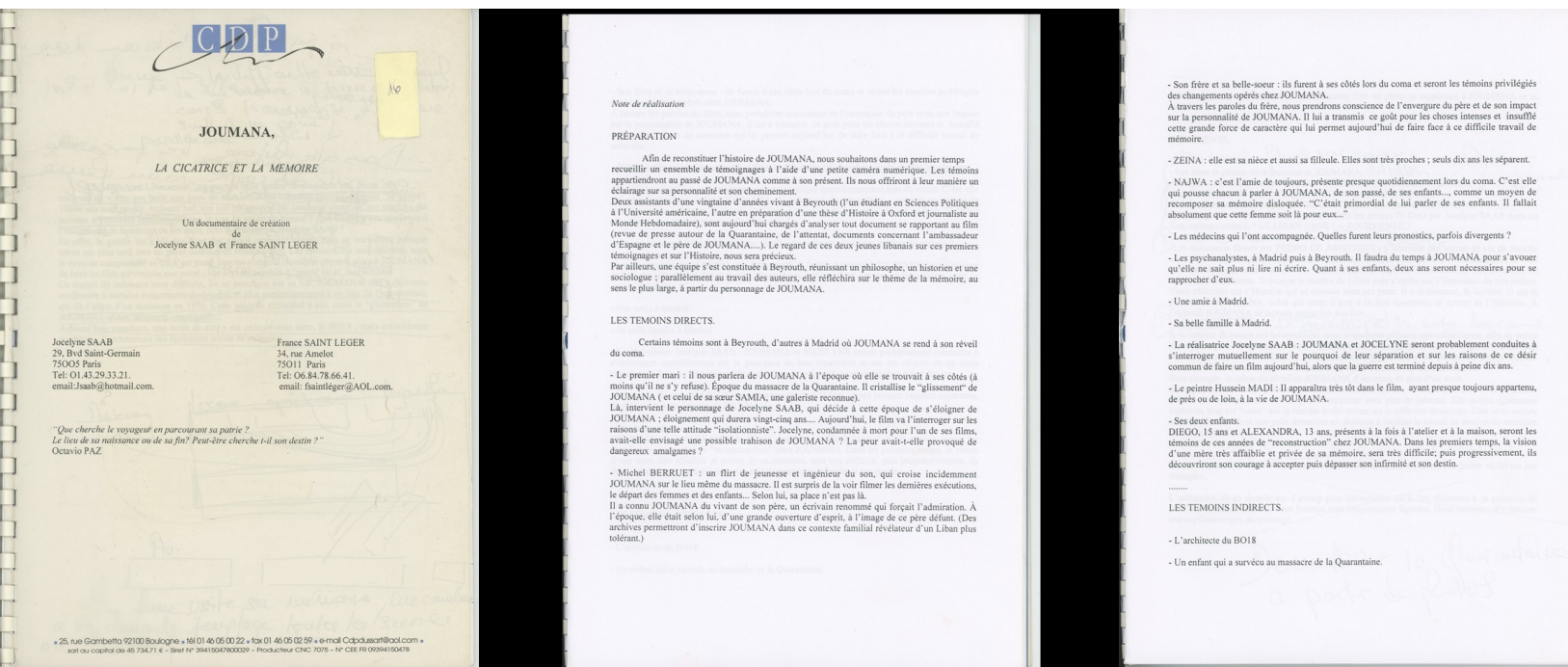
Jocelyne imposed just one condition: never to give Joumana the work in progress on the film to read. The two young men failed and, seduced by Joumana's charm, let her read Jocelyne's work, which had a devastating effect on Joumana: she no longer wished to make the film under the same conditions. She then asked for an actress to play her role. She even wanted certain scenes to be fictionalized so that she wouldn't be equated with this testimony.

We know all this from the film's original brief : by the time Jocelyne Saab submits her application for funding, her project is already severely hampered. Vulnerable, Saab exposes the flaws in the film she is trying to write, while explaining that it is these very flaws that prove the urgency and necessity of this film to be made. She writes :



Following the scouting, which ended with this difficult episode, the focus of the film was self-evident: how difficult and traumatic it is to work on the memory, before it leads to appeasement, relief or reconciliation. There's no question now except the sheer necessity of this work.

Joumana once said to me, "I want this film to be a film of joy, despite my very dark cloud."

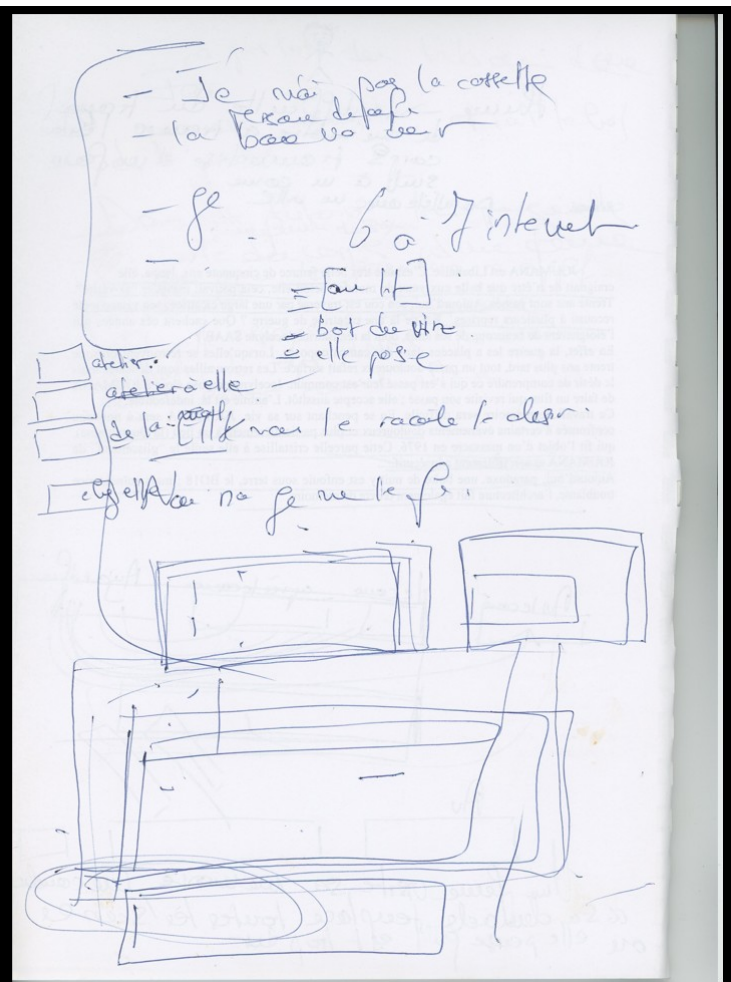
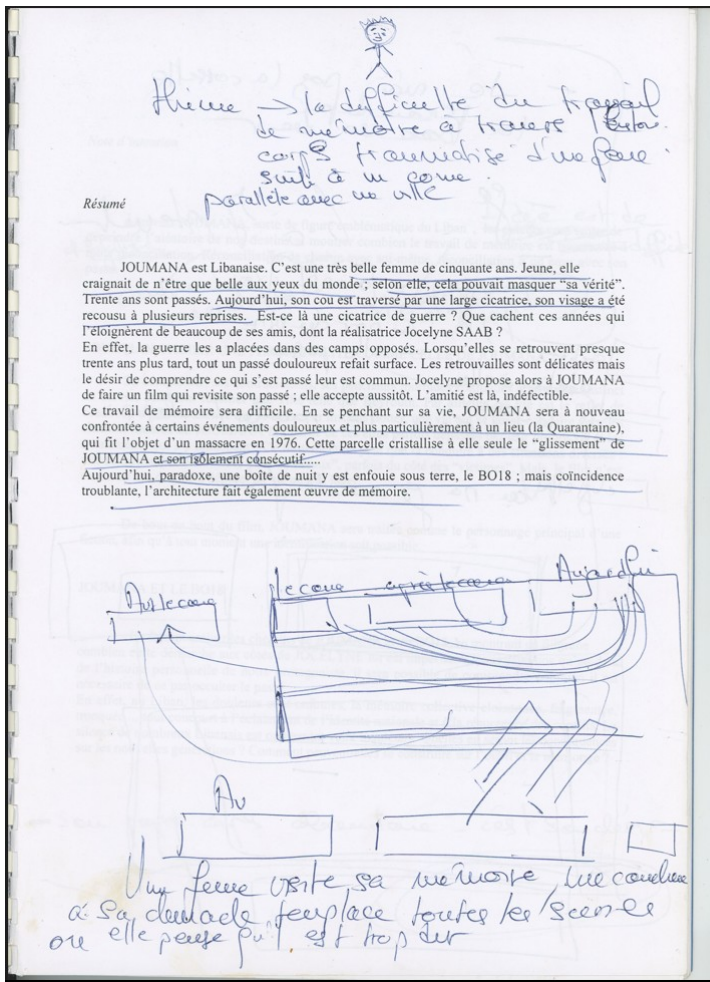


The second application was written five years later. The film is now entitled "*Joumana, la cicatrice et la mémoire*". The application is annotated by Jocelyne Saab, and was to be presented by Catherine Dussart's production company in Paris, which was already producing *Dunia*, a drama shot in Egypt to be released by Jocelyne Saab in 2005. France Saint-Léger is still working on the project, but now appears as co-writer. An actress is mentioned for the role of Joumana. Kamal and Alain have disappeared. It's Jocelyne herself who stands out in the document as a discussant opposing Joumana.

This would not have been the first time that Jocelyne Saab had staged herself in one of her documentary films; we already saw her in 1978 in *Lettre de Beyrouth*, seductive, provoking UN soldiers in southern Lebanon:

[EXTRACT LETTER FROM B.]

You're not having enough fun ? Well, it's the job !



In the new version of the film, the curious innocence of a war youth is replaced by the cold building of an underground nightclub called B018, built in 1994 by Lebanese architect Bernard Khoury on the very site of the Karantina massacre. We can see on the application sketches made by Jocelyne of the specific place. For Jocelyne, this nightclub was the scar of Beirut, mirroring the one Joumana wears around her neck.

The nightclub was actually already evoked in the first version from 1997, but as a previous film subject on which Jocelyne stopped working on while starting working on Joumana's experience :

Reflecting on this "shift", I think back to my fictional film project on memory, which features young people at B018, a nightclub built on the very site of the Karantina massacre.

(...)

It seems obvious to me that there are many connections between this film about memory, which I won't be making, and the forthcoming film about Joumana.

De nombreuses années se sont écoulées. JOUMANA se marie avec l'ambassadeur d'Espagne au Liban, PEDRO DI ARISTEGUI, dont elle aura deux enfants. Cet homme admiré tant en Espagne qu'au Liban, est une grande figure de la diplomatie, un homme courageux, qui disait, "*Si tu as peur de mourir, quitte ce pays*". Au paroxysme de la guerre, il ne craint pas de silloner Beyrouth à bicyclette... L'Espagne est alors à la présidence de la Communauté Européenne et le Liban en pleine guerre inter-chrétienne. Lorsque PEDRO prend des positions politiques tranchées, les représailles ne se font pas attendre. Une bombe explose sur l'ambassade, coûtant la vie du père, du mari et de la sœur de JOUMANA. Quant à elle, grièvement blessée, elle plonge dans le coma. Quelques minutes après le carnage, deux journalistes de la TV espagnole, attendus à déjeuner, arrivent sur les lieux ; ils filment à chaud le désastre.

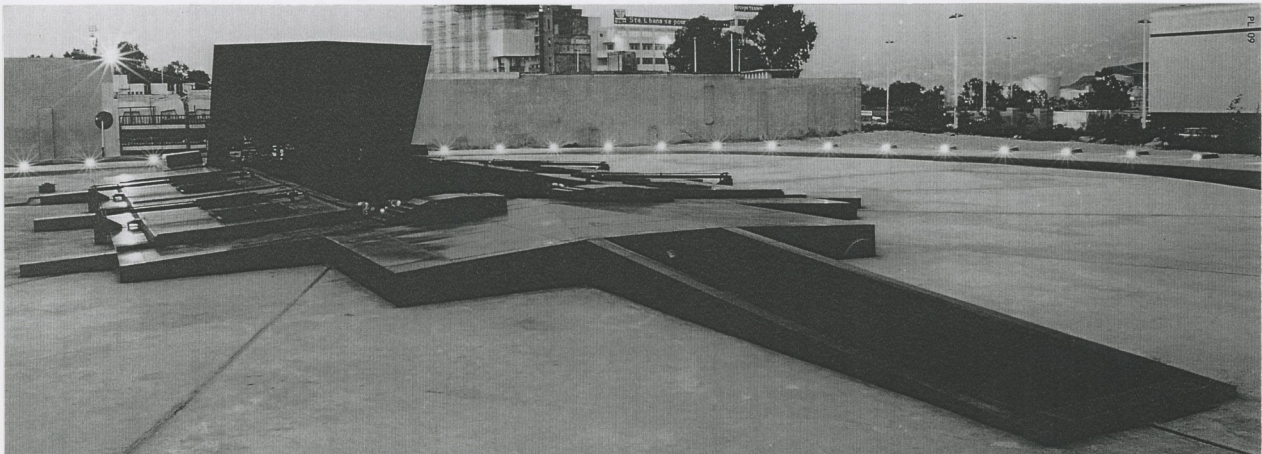
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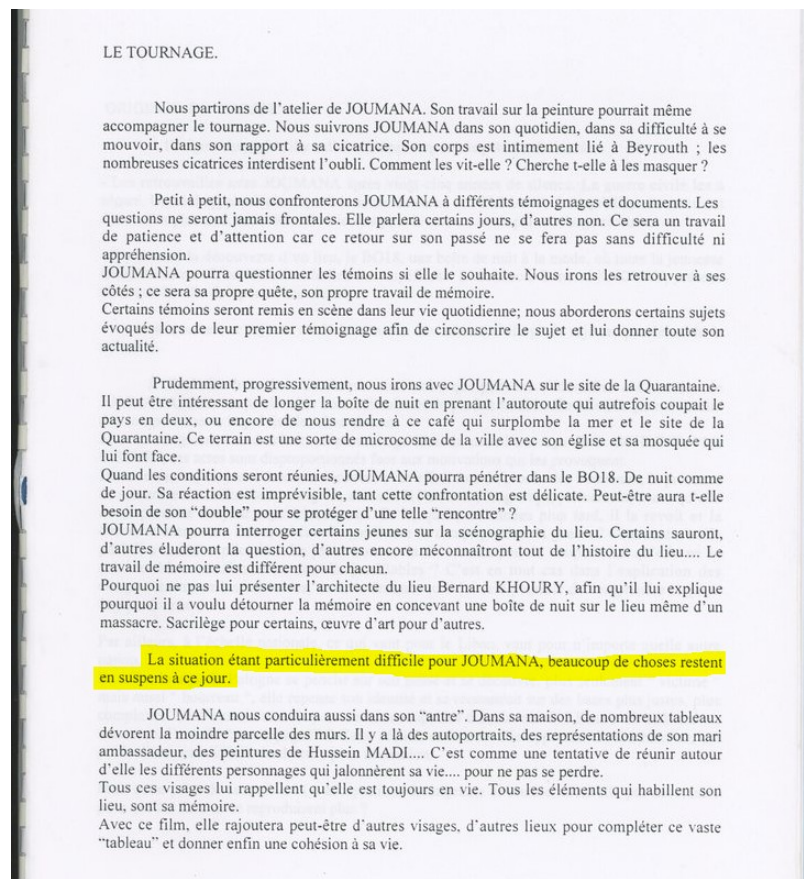
In 2002, the nightclub becomes a protagonist of the film. Joumana is ultimately relegated to the background. The film, initially very intimate, which was intended to testify to an intergenerational transmission of memory and the repentance of those who participated in the horror of the war, becomes a more theoretical and conceptual film on the impossible memory of the Lebanese war: the intervention of Joumana's psychiatrists and the nightclub's architect, coupled with the testimonies of the protagonist's family and close friends, now keep Joumana at a distance: she is no longer so much the personification of Beirut she was in the first version of the film but a mere case study - she now shares the limelight with the city itself. And yet, while Joumana was keen to fictionalize the events to distance her from her own testimony, she remains firmly at the heart of the subject, as her entire entourage is called upon to testify.



*Axe d'entrée du 3018. Placée dans l'obscurité de
la terre, à ciel ouvert.*

What happened to Joumana? What happened to Jocelyne and Joumana's initial collaboration and friendship? Why did Jocelyne abandon the project? Archives push the analyst to speculation; and speculation leads to investigation. In the study I was conducting on Saab's filmography during her lifetime, she always told me very little about this project, except to say that it had been aborted because Joumana had finally

withdrawn. This is what seems to be apparent in the marked evolution of the project between the two applications, five years apart, that Jocelyne submitted to the French Film Center, the CNC. However, Jocelyne's explanation for the aborted project raises a major question: what was Joumana's real involvement in the evolution of the film project? The shooting of the 2nd project is evoked in Joumana's presence, but seems to be based primarily on the research work carried out in 1997; at the time of writing in 2002, Jocelyne admits that "the situation being particularly difficult for Joumana, many things remain pending to this day". Were the multiplication of interventions and the involvement of an actress intended to overcome Joumana's reticence and make the film in spite of her?



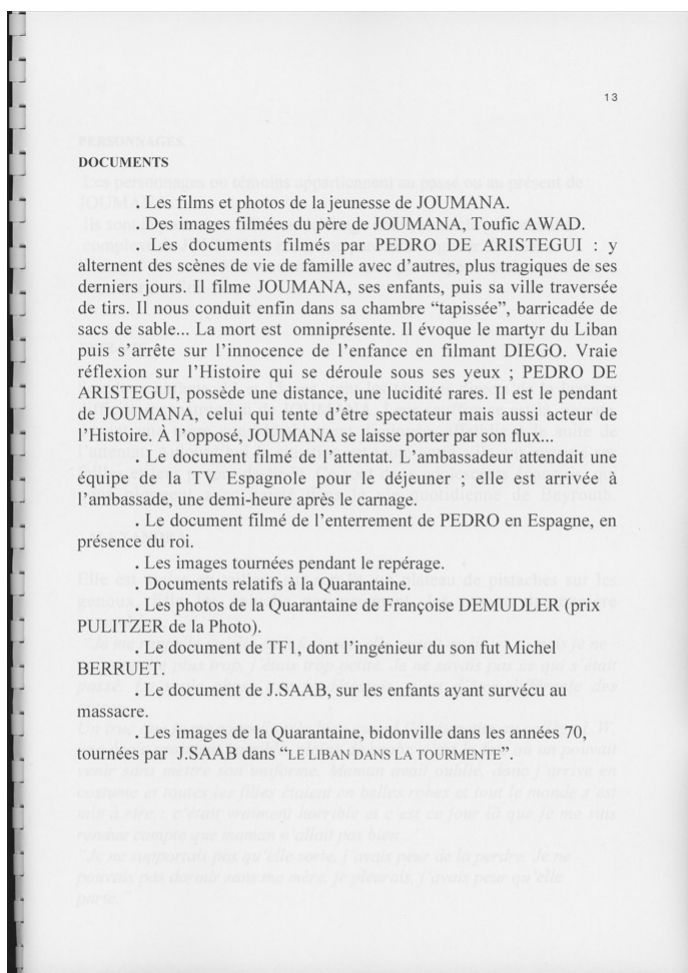
Among the answers that may emerge to explain the transformation and halting of the project, the first application from 1997 already provides some elements: it shows Joumana's very strong involvement, as she immediately accepts Jocelyne's proposal to make a film and insists on taking part in the research and interviews, which Jocelyne

eventually accepts, even though she is well aware of the danger her project would run if Joumana understood too well the ins and outs of the film in preparation.

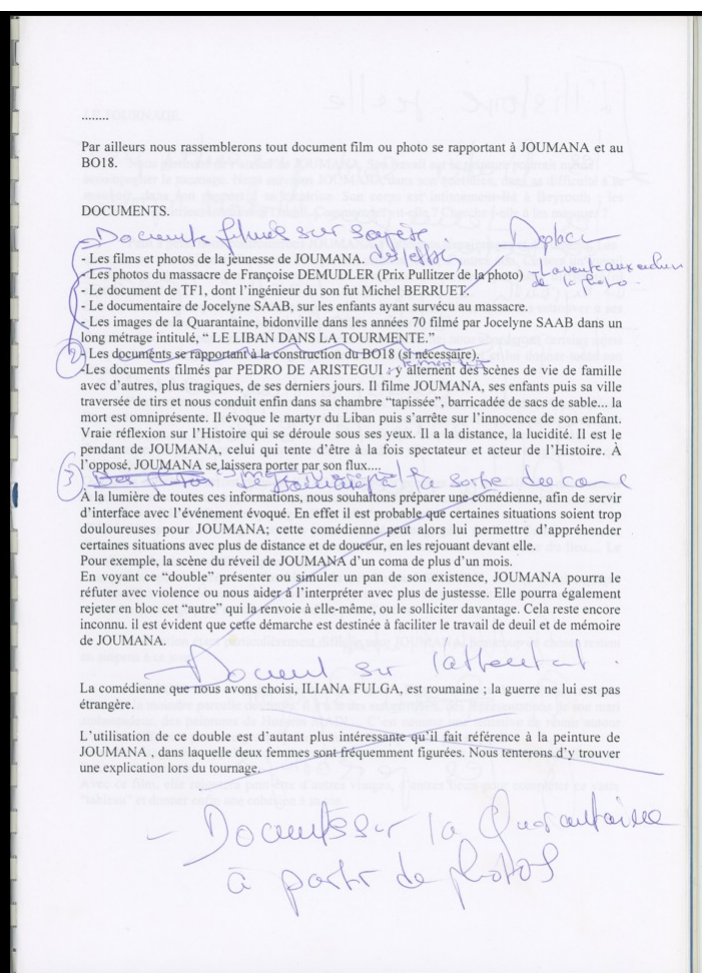
In the application submitted in 1997, Jocelyne admits to having "surrendered" to Joumana, whom she presents as a seductress and charmer - a diplomatic vocabulary that nonetheless presents her as a manipulative woman. However, it's difficult to know from the archives what Joumana, who had placed her trust in Jocelyne, knew about the filmmaker's true intentions for the film.

In an interview I conducted with Kamal, one of the two young men featured in the first version of the film, he explained that they themselves had no insight into Jocelyne's work on the film; she extensively recorded the interactions between Joumana and the two young men, but they were never able to see this footage afterwards. Information about the film seems to have been distilled by Jocelyne in the form of instructions to the protagonists of her film, without them having any overall vision of the project. This overt suspicion is undoubtedly also at the root of Joumana's curiosity and responsible for the breach of trust that led to the transformation of the project, to which the 2002 version bears witness.

To my point of view, it seems that Jocelyne's aim with this project was to settle scores with her community, which had rejected her, and that her use of cinema to push her interlocutors to repentance was also intended to legitimize her own choices, since she had spent her life and career fighting against violence and injustice. Both applications mention Jocelyne's desire to reuse her own images, those filmed in the Karantina district in 1975 in *Le Liban dans la tourmente* and those shot after the massacre in 1976 with the surviving children, entitled *Les Enfants de la guerre*.



1997



2002

This very personal involvement is evident in the 1997 version, where she fails to script Joumana's retreat other than by presenting it as a failure due to her own mistakes as a filmmaker. The collaboration of France Saint-Léger, who was working regularly alongside Jocelyne Saab at this time, as evidenced by other unfinished projects from the late 1990s and early 2000s, was intended to allow a distancing that is evident in the analyses emanating from the handwritten notes, but which was not sufficiently asserted in the face of Jocelyne's personal objectives to be able to situate the project in a more objective posture before the elaboration of the second project, written in 2002.

Whatever the reasons for halting this project, its content and its very incompleteness say a lot about the history of contemporary Lebanon. Saab's paper archives have been digitized

and made freely available, in the belief that beyond the artistic projects and what they tell us about Jocelyne Saab's creative process, the research carried out for these films is a source of history, and a fascinating archive to explore. The process of re-emerging from these archives has intersected with the interest of certain artists and researchers in films left unfinished. Lebanese director Eliane Raheb, an investigative filmmaker and audacious, provocative portraitist, took an interest in Jocelyne's *Joumana* project. Two generations younger than Jocelyne, Eliane has a different conception of political commitment, particularly when it comes to writing Lebanese history. Does she have the distance that Jocelyne lacked to reopen the scars of this endless war? What does it mean to take over a project abandoned by a filmmaker who is no longer with us? Eliane Raheb is here to tell us about her project and the context of its emergence.