

War, migration, child and woman...Saab depicts the atrocities of war in her documentaries

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During a talk at Boğaziçi University, Lebanese journalist and documentary filmmaker Jocelyne Saab, guest of the Boğaziçi Chronicles, exposed the consequences of the civil war in Beirut during the last 15 years by means of images of women, children, migration, and the destruction of the city, reminding us of the stark realities of war.

In “Reflections of a Film Maker Plasticienne on Beirut, a City under ‘Siege,’” Saab shows the suffering of war in four different periods.

In her featured documentaries, she brings a historical overview by using collective memory and emphasizing issues such as war, ethnicity, and the status of women during wartime. Saab first met with the Istanbul audience, students, and scholars on November 26th, together with her colleague, journalist and film critic Cüneyt Cebenoyan, during a talk titled, “Reflections of a Film Maker Plasticienne on Beirut, a City under ‘Siege,’” during which the realities and effects of war on humans were discussed. Saab pointed out that we are seeing the same images in the Middle East today.

In her 1976 documentary, “Beirut is No Longer Never,” she depicts the realities of war and children. The film is about how war became a way of life for the Lebanese people. It shows children with machine guns, looting destroyed shops and homes; families living in exile on the streets, trying to survive in unimaginable circumstances.

In her letter-themed second documentary, Saab displays the hunger and misery experienced due to the embargo in West Beirut, and people trying to survive without a homeland on the borders as Palestinians, Lebanese, or UN refugees.

In her third documentary, filmed in 1982, Saab shows a Beirut almost entirely destroyed by Israeli bombardment, including images taken from her own home.

During the 1990s, Saab covered the youth of Beirut, who grew up in a battlefield environment, through research carried out by two young girls.

Boğaziçi Chronicles’ second event was the screening of “Dunia” (Kiss Me Not on the Eyes) on December 1st. Filmed by Saab in 2006, this documentary addresses the serious issues of female genital mutilation, which has attracted a great deal of attention in the international arena. This event was organized in collaboration with the Women’s Studies Club (BUKAK), with a Q&A session afterwards.

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