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NEWS RELEASE

MIT List Visual Arts Center

presents

**Akram Zaatari: *Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright***  
February 10-April 8, 2012

**Opening Reception: Thursday, February 9, 6-8PM**

**Cambridge, MA—January, 2012.** The MIT List Visual Arts Center is pleased to present an exhibition of the work of artist Akram Zaatari (b. 1966, Saida, Lebanon). Referring to his artistic practice as ‘field work’, the artist addresses historical, social, and political conditions of violence and conflict, particularly within the history of postwar Lebanon. The artist’s photography and video-based work are an ongoing investigation into “the state of image-making in situations of war,” and the desire and memory contained in historical, archival, and personal narratives. Along with engaging the legacy of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) and the continued violence and instability in the region, Zaatari’s work also focuses on representations of desire and intimacy.

In *Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright* (2010), two men separated ten years before express their desire to meet again. This story of separation, desire, and reunion unfolds through a typewriter, as if a script is being written. The film tells a story of intimacy and conflict through temporal gaps in communication and recording technologies. Zaatari’s film also revisits the legend of Jules Verne’s “green ray,” a rarely seen flash of light that can occur shortly after sunset or before sunrise. This fabled green spot, visible above the sun, is thought to be an augur of fortune and love to those who see it.

*Nature Morte* (2008) is what Zaatari calls a “poetic document that is not a fiction, but not a documentary either.” In the film, two men sit in a darkened room as one methodically assembles an explosive device.

*Red Chewing Gum* (2000) takes the form of a “video-letter” in which a narrator revisits an incident that occurred years earlier on Hamra Street, a commercial and tourist center of Beirut. With the sounds of gunshots behind them, he and his lover meet a young street vendor in an alley who sits chewing the gum he is supposed to be selling—a single red piece frozen in memory among the white ones.

Several of the artist’s works screened throughout the exhibition explore the mediating role of images and text in personal, archival, and historical narratives. *In This House (Fi Hatha al-Bayt)* (2005) focuses on a letter written, and then buried in a mortar bomb, by a Lebanese resistance fighter. *This Day (Al Yaoum)* (2003) explores the production and circulation of images across the Middle East, from romantic photographs of camels and Bedouins, to television footage of war-torn Beirut. *All is Well on the Border (Al-Shareet bi-Khayr)*

(1997) presents three testimonies reflecting the experiences of prisoners held in detention centers during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

*Akram Zaatar*: *Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright* is organized by João Ribas, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

#### About the Artist

Akram Zaatar was born in Saida, Lebanon, in 1966. He received a Bachelor of Architecture from the American University of Beirut and a Master of Arts in Media Studies from the New School (for Public Engagement) in New York. His works have been shown in various solo exhibitions, including at the Museo del Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (León, Spain); Kunsternes Hus (Oslo, Norway); Moderna Galerija Ljubljana (Slovenia) Galerie Sfeir-Semier (Beirut); Kunstverein München, (Munich); the Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; La Caixa, (Barcelona), Portikus, (Frankfurt); and the Photographer's Gallery (London) among others. His work has also been featured in the Istanbul Biennial; the Venice Biennale; the Sharjah Biennial; the Sao Paulo Biennial; the Gwangju Biennial; and the Sydney Biennale.

Zaatar is also the co-founder of the Arab Image Foundation, a Beirut-based nonprofit association founded in 1997 with photographers Fouad Elkoury and Samer Mohdad. The foundation's mission is to collect, preserve, and study the photographic heritage of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Arab diaspora. By collecting, archiving, and analyzing this visual history, the foundation situates the production and circulation of images in the context of a geographically divided Middle East as a register of social and political history.

Funding for *Akram Zaatar*: *Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright* has been provided by The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Ghassan and Manal Saab, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the Council for the Arts at MIT. Media sponsorship provided by the Phoenix Media Communications Group.

**Directions:** The MIT List Visual Arts Center is located in the Wiesner Building, 20 Ames Street, at the eastern edge of the MIT campus. It is in close proximity to Kendall Square, Memorial Drive, and the Longfellow Bridge.

By T, take the Red Line to the Kendall/MIT stop, follow Main Street west to Ames Street, turn left, and walk one block to the crosswalk. The MIT List Visual Arts Center, housed in a building identifiable by its white gridded exterior, will be on your left. Signage is on the building.

By car, coming across the Longfellow Bridge or from Memorial Drive, follow signs for Kendall Square. Limited metered parking is available on Ames Street. A parking garage is located at the Cambridge Center complex (entrance on Ames between Main and Broadway). Paid public parking is also available at the Marriott Hotel on Broadway.

**Gallery Hours:** Tues-Wed: 12-6PM; Fri-Sun: 12-6PM; Thurs: 12-8PM; closed Mondays and major holidays.

**Additional Information:** 617.253.4680 or <http://listart.mit.edu>

All exhibitions at the MIT List Visual Arts Center are free and open to the public.

Valued User 12/13/11 9:27 AM

**Comment [1]:** Chicago says the's at the beginning of proper names are not capitalized in running text, even if "the" is part of the name - I changed this throughout - better to be consistent

Valued User 12/13/11 9:27 AM

**Comment [2]:** There's no such thing as "New School University. The Media studies program is in the "New School for Public Engagement" or you could just say New School.

Valued User 12/13/11 9:27 AM

**Comment [3]:** This paragraph seemed to belong more to bio

Valued User 12/13/11 9:27 AM

**Comment [4]:** Since this is a generic name, Chicago says not capitalized