**Sursock Museum Presents *Homesick*, Syrian-Armenian Artist Hrair Sarkissian’s First Solo Show in Lebanon**

Beirut, Lebanon, 29 June 2017 —

The Sursock Museum is pleased to present *Homesick*, Syrian-Armenian artist Hrair Sarkissian’s first solo show in Lebanon.

**The exhibition opens on Thursday 6 July 2017, from 18:00 to 21:00.** It will be on view until 2 October 2017.

Hrair Sarkissian’s work is often based on his personal relationships to geographies and people. Frequently produced with a large format camera, his carefully crafted photographs enable a deeper engagement with a scene, allowing a slow unfolding of revelatory details, conjuring up elided histories and forgotten places. His work is concerned with minor histories and everyday stories that too often disappear without celebration or remorse.

This exhibition marks his engagement with the moving image, created with the same studied craft as his large-scale photographs. The two related video installations, Homesick (2014) and Horizon (2016), speak of journeys taken in response to the war in Syria.

In Homesick, once again turning the lens on himself, the artist is shown destroying his childhood home in Damascus, where his parents continue to reside. A carefully crafted detailed replica of the building, made of concrete and metal, slowly crumbles as the artist repeatedly strikes an off-screen object, only pausing when out of breath or to move aside some rubble.

Leaving Damascus in 2008, Sarkissian has been unable to return. The destruction of the replica represents both a catharsis and a reclamation of agency, to destroy before others destroy you.

Horizon is a visual meditation on the perilous journey at sea those fleeing conflict are often forced to take. The video traces the journey of one of the shortest and most popular routes from Kaş on the southwestern Turkish shore, across the Mycale Strait, to the island of Megisti on the edge of southeastern Greece. For many, this marks the start of a more perilous journey into the unfamiliar and precarious life of a refugee.

Together, these works portray a sense of loss and apprehension. The loss of solid ground, of home and of the familiar, coupled with the apprehension towards what is to come.

**About the artist  
Hrair Sarkissian** (b. 1973, Damascus, Syria) earned his foundational training at his father’s photographic studio in Damascus. He attended the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie in Arles, France, and in 2010 completed a BFA in Photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Sarkissian’s work revolves around personal and collective memory and identity. His photographs of urban environments and landscape employ traditional documentary techniques to re-evaluate larger historical, political, or social narratives.

His work has recently been exhibited at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (Newcastle, UK); Kulturcentrum Ronneby (Sweden); 10th Bamako Encounters (Mali); KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin, Germany); the Golden Lion-winning Armenian pavilion at the Venice Biennale; Museum Folkwang (Essen, Germany); Mosaic Rooms (London, UK); Tate Modern (London, UK); The New Museum (New York, USA); and Darat al Funun (Amman Jordan).

**About the Sursock Museum**

**Mission**

The Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum is a modern and contemporary art museum in the center of Beirut first opened in 1961, with a mission to collect, preserve, and exhibit local and international art.

Through our collection, archives, exhibitions, and public programs, we aim to produce knowledge on art practices in the region and explore work that reflects on our contemporary moment. Our goal is to support local art production, to provide a platform for encounter and experimentation with art and ideas, and to inform and challenge different audiences in new and unexpected ways.

**Admission and opening hours**

Open daily from 10:00 to 18:00   
Late opening on Thursdays from 12:00 to 21:00   
Closed on Tuesdays

Admission to the Sursock Museum is free of charge.

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