



"GAZA 31," 2014, Jaime Scholnick  
MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS MOUNTED ON PANEL, 7" X 11"

#### LOS ANGELES

**Jaime Scholnick:  
"Gaza: Mowing the Lawn"  
at CB1 Gallery**

Artists' reactions to world events like wars are often depicted in their work; Goya's *Disasters of War* and Picasso's *Guernica* come to mind, as does Fred Tomaselli's series *The Times*. The 50 images that comprise Jaime Scholnick's "Gaza: Mowing the Lawn" are her way of confronting the inhumanity of war. For 50 days, in the summer of 2014, Israel bombed the Gaza Strip in response to missiles repeatedly launched at Israel. This tactic has come to be known as "mowing the lawn." Scholnick was horrified by the images of the bombings that infiltrated her media feeds, yet at the same time drawn to them. They were not images of soldiers fighting but of innocent victims—women, children and babies. Scholnick collected the news photographs, printed them to scale and began drawing over them, as an attempt to honor the victims. The resulting series uses the conflict as a catalyst for aesthetic creation. To commemorate the 50 days, Scholnick created 50 images. Forty-nine are hung in two rows spanning a corner of the gallery. The 50th image, which is mounted by itself on a wall baring witness to these others, depicts a crowd of Israelis sitting in

lawn chairs watching the devastation just across the border.

Scholnick's method of mark making is a form of doodling. She creates lattices of single-colored lines across the surface of the image emphasizing its formal qualities. Scholnick's past works were less politically charged and her lines emphasized contrasting shapes and colors. In "Gaza: Mowing the Lawn" the lines obscure the content of the image, covering up and in her mind also protecting the subjects. As with any documentation of war there are depictions of bombed-out buildings, explosions, mourning crowds and the wounded. Scholnick's photographic choices illustrate the scope of the damage as well as the proliferation of this type of imagery in the media. At first the drawings appear as abstractions—colorful lines creating specific shapes across the composition—but upon close viewing what lies below the marks becomes apparent. In one image, a civilian carries a wounded child to safety against a skyline of destruction. Scholnick's pattern of lines mask the photographic veracity of the image, turning it into an expressive representation. While her alterations clearly aestheticize the original photographs, they do not celebrate the violence. Rather they are deeply felt reactions to a painful conflict, and a presumably cathartic exercise in trying to make sense of the human destruction from afar.

—JODY ZELLEN