PERMANENT TEMPORARINESS

| SANDI HILAL |
Alessandro Petti

AL MASHA/COMMON

BORDERS

CAMP

MADAFEH/HOSPITALITY

MUJAWAARA/NEIGHBORING

DECOLONIZATION

CONFESSION

EXILE

HERITAGE

PARTICIPATION

PROFANATION

REPRESENTATION

TAWTIN/

Since their first work, *Stateless Nation* at the Venice Biennial in 2003, and throughout their more recent architectural interventions in refugee camps, the artistic practice of Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti has explored and acted within and against the condition of permanent temporariness that permeates contemporary forms of life. In their ambitious research and project-based practice, art exhibitions are both sites of display and sites of action that spill over into other contexts: built architectural structures, the shaping of critical learning environments, interventions that challenge dominant collective narratives, the production of new political imaginations, the re-definition of words, and the formation of civic spaces.

This book is organized around fourteen concepts that activate seventeen different projects. Each project is the result of a larger process of collaboration and is accompanied by individual and collective texts and interviews that contextualize and expand the reach of every intervention. Contributors to projects and texts include Maria Nadotti, Charles Esche, Robert Latham, Salwa Mikdadi, Eyal Weizman, Okwui Enwezor, Munir Fasheh, Grupo Contrafilé, Murad Odeh, and Rana Abughannam. Edited by Maria Nadotti and Nick Axel.

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The Arabic term *al masha* refers to communal land equally distributed among farmers. Masha could only exist if people decided to cultivate the land together. The moment they stop cultivating it, they lose its possession. It is possession through a common use. Thus, what appears to be fundamental is that, in order for this category to exist, it must be activated by common uses. Today we may ask if it is possible to reactivate the cultivation of the common, expanding the meaning of cultivation to other human activities that imply the common taking care of life. The Arab Revolts that started in 2010 have shown various ways in which al masha can be reclaimed and reactivated. Al masha is different from "the public." The state apparatus mediates the existence of the public, whereas al masha exists beyond state institutions. The public is a space that is given to people by structures of power, whereas al masha is a space created by the interaction of people. Public space can exist without people. Al masha only exists if people are constantly producing it.

AL MASHA/COMMON

The border is not a line. It is a space with depth. The materials it is made out of are the same as those of cities, just used differently; a retaining wall made out of reinforced concrete serves as a barricade. Inside the border, the rules are few, but essential. All flows are strictly monitored and controlled. The border is a machine that tears apart everything that crosses it, both objects and people, into separate, classifiable elements, only to put them back together again, in one way or another, when they exit. The border machine is interactive architecture. It changes depending on the citizenship of the person who crosses over it. As a prototype of biopolitical architecture, maybe in its purest form, the border becomes more or less porous depending on the nation it belongs to. A regulating device that mediates between birth and nationhood, it constructs and deconstructs itself depending on the relationship that each individual has with the state.

BORDERS

Refugee camps should not exist: they represent a crime and a political failure. For over a century, the social and political experiments that are the camps have not remained confined inside their walls and fences. They have contaminated and undermined the Western notion of the city as a civic space in which the rights of citizens are inscribed and recognized. Camps are established with the intention of being demolished. They are meant to have no history and no future; they are meant to be forgotten. The history of refugee camps is constantly being erased, dismissed by states, humanitarian organizations, international agencies, and even by refugee communities themselves in fear that any acknowledgment of the present undermines their right of return. The only history that is recognized within refugee communities is one of violence, suffering, and humiliation. Yet life and culture in the camp exists, and should be understood, beyond suffering and marginalization.

Foucault tells us that we live in a confessional society. We like to be interviewed, our dreams to be known, our past investigated, our biographies written, our faces photographed. The confession, once a practice confined to churches, is today prevalent throughout society. There is no need for a priest to confess our sins. With confession, there is automatic absolution.

CONFESSION

After the Second World War, decolonization emerged as a powerful cultural and political process to liberate many countries from direct European colonial control and reshape power relations. It was a moment of great hope, but also great disillusionment. Architecture plays a crucial role in the processes of both colonization and decolonization: in organizing spatial relations, expressing ideologies, and serving as evidence for political and cultural claims. The analysis of the ways in which colonial architecture has been re-utilized is a new arena for understanding broader political and cultural issues around national identity and exile, senses of belonging and alienation, and mechanisms of social control and urban subversion. Decolonization is the starting point to understanding the globalized present and the associated conditions of exile, displacement, migration, revolt, and struggle against oppression, with which a convincing conceptual vocabulary can be produced and exercised in today's struggles for justice and equality.

DECOLONIZATION

Rather than being in a constant state of postponement—delaying action until a particular time has come—exile can be mobilized as an operational tool to transgress borders and forced dislocation. Exile and nationalism both stem from and respond to the same modern condition of alienation and its subsequent search for identity. Whereas nationalism tries to create collective identities of belonging to an imagined community, a political community of exile is built around the common condition of non-belonging, of displacement from the familiar. As a political identity, exile opposes the status quo, confronts a dogmatic belief in the nation state, and refuses to normalize the permanent state of exception in which we live. Exile demands to be thought as a radical, new foundation for civic space.

For some, heritage freezes time, space, and culture, reducing buildings to spectacular objects for contemplation and consumption. Yet conservation also pertains to the contested space in which identity and social structures are built and demolished. Heritage has become a battlefield where the understanding of culture, history, and aesthetics has been and continue to be reshaped. Who has a right to define what constitutes heritage?

HERITAGE

In order to be accepted in foreign countries, refugees are expected to constantly perform the role of the "perfect guest." Access to public space is thus a challenge. Turning private spaces, such as the living room, into social and political arenas, is often a response to this limitation of political agency in the public realm. Located between the domestic and the public, *al madafeh* is the Arabic term for the room dedicated to hospitality. It is the part of the private house that has the potential to subvert the relationship between guest and host, and give different political and social meanings to the act of hospitality. Al madafeh opens itself to the foreigner, the outsider.

How can we live, express, interact, think, and converse beyond professional terminologies, academic categories, and the logic of institutions? For Munir Fasheh, *mujawaara* is a form of organization without hierarchy. Mujawaara is a medium of learning. It is a basic ingredient in stitching together the social, intellectual, and spiritual fabric of communities. Mujawaara embodies the spirit of regeneration in the most important aspect of life: learning. It demonstrates that another vision of education is possible.

Participation in refugee camps or informal settlements is often understood exclusively through the lens of relief, and architecture as a tool to react to immediate needs and emergencies. This frame establishes asymmetrical relationships between organizers and the participating community, reducing them to "relief recipients" who should be grateful and endorse the attempt of those who are there to help them. In order to challenge this asymmetry, participation needs to operate as a tool to negotiate conflict within different sectors of the community. "The community" is often perceived as one solid entity in need of help and support. Such conceptions do not permit practitioners to effectively engage with "communities" themselves and their different power structures, needs, and agendas. Participation is about finding a new balance between existing power structures. Participation should not escape conflict if it aims to redistribute power.

Giorgio Agamben proposes the idea of "profanation" as a strategy to restore things to common use. To profane does not simply mean to abolish or cancel separations, but to learn to make new uses of them. To profane is to trifle with separation lines, to use them in a particular way. If to sacralize is to separate—to bring common things into a separate, sacred sphere—then its inverse is to profane, to restore the common use of these things. Decolonizing architecture, therefore, does not only mean to dislocate power, but to use its destructive potential to reverse its operation and subvert its uses. It is, accordingly, important to distinguish between secularization and profanation. Secularization leaves power structures intact; it simply moves from one sphere to another. Profanation, instead, manages to deactivate power and restores the space that power had confiscated to common use.

Contemporary cities and territories have often been described as fluid spaces, without borders, lacking any exterior, and continuously traversed by flows. Interconnected global cities form an autonomous transnational space. There exists a rhetoric and an imaginary tied to globalization, to this new freedom of movement, and to the elimination of distances made possible by new electronic and mechanical infrastructures. These representations of the urban and territorial reality literally implode when things fail to work as they are supposed to, when something goes wrong. The system of representation thus plunges into crisis, revealing all its inadequacy.

The notion of "return" has defined the diasporic and extra-territorial nature of Palestinian politics and cultural life since the Nakba. Often articulated in the "suspended politics" of political theology, it has gradually been blurred in the futile limbo of negotiations. Return is a political act that is practiced in the present as well as projecting an image into an uncertain future. "Present returns" thus ground an ideal in present day material realities. These practices necessitate the adoption of a stereoscopic vision that navigates the complex terrain between two places—the space of refuge and the destroyed site of origins. Both are extraterritorial spaces, not fully integrated into the territories that surround them. The former is defined as "absentee property," and the latter as a "United Nations run area," a sphere of action carved out of state sovereignty. Refugee life is suspended between these two sites, always double.

Opposition to the normalization of life in the camps and the resistance to settling *(tawtin)* has shaped the experience of refugees for decades. Palestinian refugees have always opposed any assimilation into their surrounding cities, fearing that their right of return might be undermined. At the same time, host governments have opposed normalization in fear of having to deal with the integration of thousands of people, often perceiving them as a threat. Both of these approaches are based on the assumption that as long as refugees are living in horrible conditions, their suffering would put pressure on the international community to enact their right to return. But forcing refugees to live in limbo and destitution has not brought them closer to returning. Why should better living conditions and access to rights in their host countries necessarily undermine the right of return? Today, refugees are re-inventing social and political practices that improve their everyday lives without undermining the exceptionality of the camp. Camps have become semi-autonomous zones where different social, political, and spatial structures have emerged; a fragment of a city yet to come.

PERMANENT TEMPORARINESS

│ SANDI HILAL │
Alessandro Petti

Introduction

SPARKS | IN CONVERSATION WITH MARIA NADOTTI | *Beit Sahour* | 2018

> *For not to speak roundly of a man's self implies some want of courage; a man of solid and lofty judgment, who judges soundly and surely, makes use of his own example upon all occasions, as well as those of others; and gives evidence as freely of himself as of a third person. We are to pass by these common rules of civility, in favor of truth and liberty. I dare not only speak of myself, but to speak only of myself: when I write of anything else, I miss my way and wander from my subject. I am not so indiscreetly enamored of myself, so wholly mixed up with, and bound to myself, that I cannot distinguish and consider myself apart, as I do a neighbor or a tree.*
>
> *—Michel de Montaigne[1]*

Permanent Temporariness is a book, a catalogue, and an archive that accounts for fifteen years of research, experimentation, and creation that are marked by an inner tension and a visionary drive that re-thinks itself through collective engagement. It is the result of the profound desire of its authors, Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, to look back in connection with the eponymous retrospective exhibition that was inaugurated at the New York University Abu Dhabi Art Gallery on February 24, 2018, and at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven on December 1, 2018.

To fully understand the nature and interconnections of the projects that Hilal and Petti—who have been partners in both work and life since the beginning of the twenty-first century—have conceived to date, we immersed ourselves in a conversation that took place over the course of two weeks, between August 2 and August 15, 2018. We met at their house in Beit Sahour, which they designed and built in 2010. It is the place they chose for their work, as well as for their experimentation with being partners and parents in ways that do not conform to the standard rules of the nuclear family.

This introduction crosses the spheres of private and public, professional and intimate, personal and political. Every interpretation which would separate or oppose these spheres would end up marginalizing one in order to highlight the other, thus hiding the complexity and contradictions of reality. This would in fact be a power play rather than an attempt to unveil the truth.

These pages have the structure of a dialogue with three voices. As the dialogue goes on, however, it progressively moves away from the format of the interview and morphs into a self-analysis aimed at revealing the profound, and deeply political motivations of a way of thinking and making that is both original and antagonistic; one that stands on the border between art and architecture, narration and history, geopolitics and the politics of emotions.

MARIA NADOTTI As a retrospective exhibition and a book that summarizes fifteen years of your life—going chronologically through your projects and, with them, the material conditions in which they took shape and the collaborations that made them possible—where does the need for permanent temporariness come from?

ALESSANDRO PETTI I felt the need to take some critical distance from our own practice. Here in Palestine you always run the risk of turning into an NGO, becoming a doing-machine. When DAAR began getting external commissions, we started realizing that we were on shaky ground. Until we began working as artists, neither making architecture nor working with/as an NGO gave us the freedom to experiment.

SANDI HILAL This book is also a transition, a passage. I needed it in order not to lose the past. I know very well that what I left behind in leaving Palestine will never come back, but I don't want the pain of abandonment to take over a feeling of immense lightness.

MN A book and an exhibition to deal with turning the page? Writing, however, is also a conclusion…

AP We are used to this paradox. In 2011, when we wrote *Architecture After Revolution*, we understood that we needed to pause in order to understand. We needed closure in order to be able to take the next step, which led, in that case, to the establishment of Campus in Camps. In this current phase, we needed to retreat from the frontlines, to reflect on a ten-year cycle lived with the sensation that we were doing meaningful things that required a full engagement on the ground. I move between critical reflection and practice; between the desire to follow an intellectual trajectory, independent from daily news, and the urgency and ambition to intervene in reality, to transform it. For us, Palestine has always been a condition rather than an object. When we chose to come and live here, when Sandi chose to come back, we quickly realized that "representation" was not enough, that we weren't here to explain Palestine to the distant observer as we were doing with *Stateless Nation* and *The Road Map*. Once we moved here, we were no longer talking to Europe or to a generic outside. Everything arose from our local relations. Our reality was here.

MN Could we describe these phases or cycles as a movement from the outside in, and today, having recently moved to Stockholm, back again towards the outside? As some kind of zoom and counter-zoom, but also as a continuity in the re-adjustment of your personal and professional lives to a collective story? Perhaps the conceptual

paradigms, political vocabulary, and working methods that you developed within Palestinian refugee camps now need to be tested against what is happening elsewhere, and in particular in Fortress Europe.

SH Indeed. The sense of loss that for me is connected to the decision to take some distance from Palestine is slowly morphing into a work of reconstruction and moving towards a new life. It is not by chance that in Sweden I am looking at the personal, political, conceptual, and affective dimensions in the project that I started with a couple of Syrian refugees. *Al Madafeh/The Living Room* seeks to create places where foreigners, exiles, refugees, or migrants can exercise the "right of hospitality." My elaboration of grief—if I may define it that way—is coming through a slow and non-solitary awareness that what is happening inside me can become productive in a situation that I may understand better than the Swedes themselves. To be able to see with full clarity, one really needs to look in from the outside. This book is therefore an attempt to put together those phases; to open by closing. The experience of displacement can be incredibly fertile.

AP There is a fundamental question that emerged from our projects in refugee camps: what are the techniques to oppose normalization? Refugees in Palestine have developed extraordinary ways to refuse normalization, to avoid being captured by the regime that wants to impose an unjust reality. During these projects we were able to conceptualize and work with these lessons, even though in previous years it was already an important factor that influenced our decision to move to Palestine. Continuity and leaps; interconnected rings; shifts from practice to understanding the very reasons of that practice; from direct experience to its theorization.

MN Could your home in Beit Sahour and the idea to turn it into an open "residency," into a research space for collective and temporary experimentation, perhaps also be considered as one of your projects to resist normalization?

AP Yes, the extended family of the residency, with people coming from all over the world, helped us avoid the trap of the bourgeoisie family. In 2006, the compelling reason to start a family and set up a home in Palestine was that we didn't want to be reduced to the norm. Sandi's extended family was also a guarantee against the suffocating paradigm of the nuclear family and gave us the opportunity to do things that would have been impossible had we lived in Europe. Here in Beit Sahour we started from scratch; there was construction instead of the deconstruction that was happening in Europe at the time. We felt like we were in charge. We went as far as conceptualizing a school for our daughters in an existing school cooperative where, along with other parents, we contributed to and established its "principles and vision." We managed and ran it for over four years. After ten years of this, however, you become exhausted. Sometimes I wonder whether we accepted Palestinian marginality because there were no alternatives.

SH Perhaps ours wasn't even a real decision. It all happened at a practical level. When we moved here we were surprised by how in both Italy and Palestine moving with your children to a country under occupation was considered socially unacceptable. The parallel between our initial situation of the four of us living in a single room and the life of Palestinians living in refugee camps was a formidable drive for our practice. From the very start we interrogated our own fear of accepting Palestine as a stable condition. And the practical and political answer we found was: if refugees who were forced to live in refugee camps oppose normalization by rooting themselves in temporariness, can we not also set up home here, despite our precarity and temporariness, and try to have a better life? This was a crucial passage for us: rooting ourselves in Beit Sahour became possible because of the conceptual understanding that came from our work in camps.

AP For me the past ten years have been a time of "permanent impermanence." Every time I would leave Palestine to travel, I didn't know whether I would be allowed to come back. To the regime of "temporariness" (the condition of spatial and temporal transience in the camps), we never opposed a project of permanence or citizenship. We chose instead to embrace destabilization. This is a fundamental issue, especially today in a European context where the issue of refugees, migrants, and hospitality is addressed in a binary manner: you either have to live in the camp, in a precarious condition, or become a model citizen with a permanent residency permit. The idea that if you "become a citizen" everything is solved doesn't seem acceptable to us because it erases the specificity of the past and entails a messianic aspiration that does not consider life in the present.

MN Let's try to imagine that the Palestinian refugees' "right of return" moved away of its messianic dimension and was exercised. For seventy years, Palestinian refugees have lived, died, were born, studied, and worked; when they could, they chose to leave or stay; they set up structures of political and administrative self-governance; they built services, community centers, and cemeteries to bury their dead. Today the Palestinian refugee camp is a lively and self-aware community, not just a poor overcrowded town held hostage by Israel, by the Palestinian National Authority, by international organizations, or the "good will" of NGOs. Similarly, migrants who come to Europe are not a *tabula rasa* to inscribe our norms for the sake of the supposed superiority of the Western societal model.

AP After the right of return is granted, the eradication of camps would produce a second Nakba because several generations of Palestinians have been born and raised there. If we continue with the parallels with those who are migrating to Europe now, their memories and experiences cannot evaporate or simply be erased. The political vision of our practice embraces this very dimension, heading towards the possibility of alliances or identifications that are unusual and pluridirectional. Take the Arab Spring and what it produced in Europe: representative democracies from the West learned about direct democracy and political agency from the Arab world; it was the first time that

there was a real reciprocity. Political inventions today entail the ability to recognize and nurture these possible identifications. What is it, for example, that prevents young and unemployed, precarious Italians or Greeks from identifying with migrants coming from beyond the borders of Europe? Or what about the absolute precariousness of migrant workers in Abu Dhabi, who even after decades of residency in the country are not legally allowed to stay if they lose their jobs? We are not interested in solidarity, but in interconnections and joint struggles. Only through new allegiances can wars among the marginilized be avoided. Today, colonized bodies are at the heart of the metropolis and, through their very existence, they bring a claim that collapses an existing structure of privilege based on five hundred years of exploitation, racism, and slavery.

MN This book is also a great narration, an attempt at disclosing what happened by presuming that it can be replicated or reproduced in an original manner in new professional and personal contexts.

AP Through description, reasoning, images, technical overviews, multi-vocal conversations, and interviews, all the projects presented here are strictly *site specific*, but they are also readable within a wider framework. This book is an answer to our wish to connect all these projects, not with a universalizing or abstract aim—which is one of the many totalizing Western illusions—but with the intent to relieve them from the isolation that often defines Palestinian exceptionalism. The replicability that we hope for is not based on imitation, but rather on example. Our hope is that these pages will push readers to question the nature of the regime that forces European youth or migrant workers in the UAE into a condition of precariousness. We also hope they will start considering the sense of displacement not as a problem to solve, a malady to heal, but rather as the terrain in which contemporary identity is rooted; an identity based on loss, a void that no replacement (integration, citizenship, assimilation) can ever fill.

MN *Permanent Temporariness* is therefore a manifesto against the monotheistic promise of the state that poses citizenship as the final objective, as well as against the bureaucratic public machine that assists, rewards, and includes under the condition that one uncritically adapts to its regulations.

SH We believe—and this is apparent in each of our projects—that we need to build a new civic space that could construct a relational geography and allow new perspectives and new "first times." With Campus in Camps. for instance, it was as if we "saw" the camp for the first time, because we began to look at it from a new point of view. We were not there to teach, but to learn with them, to understand through exchange, to confront the asymmetry that the logic of aid inevitably generates as it creates disparity, subjugation, and dependency, and thus prevents any chance of transformation.

MN As we see at the beginning of each of the chapters, a fundamental part of your work is the redefinition of words; the individualization of a shared vocabulary, purified of all ambiguities.

AP We don't want the projects to be pigeonholed in airtight boxes; we want to activate them. This activation can only take place through words and concepts that we identified over the years in our collective research. The transformation of the way we think—what we call decolonizing the mind—takes place through a rigorous critique of how certain words are used, while in parallel looking at a process of re-orientation or rejection of those same terms, devoid of their original meaning. The backbone of Campus in Camps was the creation of a collective dictionary made of words, free of colonized terms such as "aid," "help," or "development." The redefinition of our semantic grounds allowed us to make different languages and cultural traditions resonate. When words are not merely empty shells, they carry precious knowledge that has to be communicated, exchanged, and osmotically mixed so as they can thrive and regenerate themselves and others.

SH Let's take the word *madafeh* as an example. In Arabic it defines the part of the house that is meant to host guests. In Arabic cultures, it symbolizes hospitality and openness, as the madafeh is the middle ground between the private and the public, the intimate and the social. It is the place where you exercise both your duty and your right to host. This word is one of the cornerstones of our conceptual vocabulary because it highlights the double-faced nature of hospitality and questions its complex social relations. Its fluid nature constantly problematizes the strict interconnection between certain places and specific subjects and certain subjects and determined roles. "Guest" in Arabic entails a supplement, not an assimilation.

MN A shining example of this is *The Tree School*. You defined the project as "a device to create a physical and metaphorical common ground where ideas and actions spring from critical, free, and independent discussion among participants." The first time you conducted it was in 2015 in Bahia, Brazil, and it then took place again in Palestine, in Mexico, on the ground, and in museums. That experience, besides offering a reflection on the conditions and modalities of pedagogical relationships, posed the need to create free spaces where that relationship can take shape in full reciprocity; where all the participants equally belong and are foreign.

SH We found the final proof of the relevance of the words we identified in the collective experience of Campus in Camps away from both Palestine and Europe. We found it in Bahia, by the sea, where all the participants of *The Tree School* lived with us for forty days. No one was at home, no one owned the place; we were all both guests and hosts at the same time. Every time we have managed to create this kind of setting, power dynamics give way to circularity and a multi-directional curiosity.

AP In the camps, which for us have been formidable places of learning, we have understood what it means to be outside the rules. There, belonging is not the same as ownership. The camp is a laboratory where one discovers how to live without possessing, how to reuse things without owning.

SH The creation of a collective dictionary that was connected to a very specific situation determined direct actions. It was a basic operation that allowed us to oppose concepts that came from the outside and did not derive from experience. We started listing all the words we wanted to dismantle or discard (citizenship, sustainability, activism, etc.), and through a process of *unlearning*, we freed ourselves from the subjugation generated by their opacity and rhetoric. Following Giorgio Agamben's intuition, we understood that people do not react to power, but create worlds that power in turn tries to co-opt. In the whole Middle East, the camps are the true and only political heart—so much so that in Lebanon the government decided to close them, allowing access only with special permits. Enclosed and under surveillance, only then could they become harmless. In Palestine this did not happen. There refugee camps benefit from a condition of extraterritoriality that produces their porosity, their ability to influence the city because residents can come and go. This bi-directionality requires an inside and an outside that is recognizable and can be crossed. We didn't intend to erase the boundaries of the camp, but use them in a different way; to work on their exceptionality as a potential. In refugee camps we could do things that the city would have never allowed.

MN Transit in itself is what allows one to question what is inside, what is outside, and where the threshold that separates and connects them both is. In this context, where do you place the concept of "return," which is so politically over-used and rhetorically loaded?

AP There isn't a single return, but many possible returns. Our task is to reopen the imagination on how returns could take place. It should not be understood as a messianic event, but rather as a multiplication of acts of profanation of borders and separations. It became even more clear during our stay in Bahia: what does it mean to "return" after five hundred years of African diaspora? It is obviously not about an actual return to Africa, but it is about, for example, a series of gestures that carry in themselves the meaning of free and self-determined acts: going back to the land, to territorial sovereignty, to old cacao plantations through a reinterpretation of intensive colonial economy.

SH In Bahia they told us: "Every time I plant a baobab in Brazil, I feel like I'm going back to Africa." Thresholds are necessary for identification. Borders mark differences and safeguard one's own identity and story, but the threshold is a mobile space to inhabit together while inventing rules and codes. For us, for example, the English language is a threshold.

AP It is a threshold as *broken English*, the lacunose, stunted, approximate language of those who did not learn it as children. It is a nascent idiom in which we all project meanings different from the original one, constantly contaminated by the many mother tongues that are reflected in it.

MN The theme of hospitality cuts through your research. It is an idea of making space for the other not on the grounds of ethical categories or moral imperatives, but rather through the acknowledgement of temporality and the circularity of need. It is a theme that is present in *The Concrete Tent* as well as in *Al Madafeh/The Living Room*.

SH For us the tent is the space where the codes of hospitality were historically developed. To the idea of "unconditional hospitality"—the one above the laws of the state that Derrida advocated for—we prefer a less idealistic and more reciprocal and pragmatic reason. In the desert, the tent is a means of survival: if you don't have one, you risk your life. One day you can be a host, and then another you are a guest. Derrida refers to the Bedouins, but he didn't fully grasp the cogency of this habitus. For Derrida hospitality is an ethical path, but for us it is an urgency and a practice of survival, driven by necessity. In the Arab world, the social contract is based on mutual need; on mutual convenience rather than a way of being. To host is to be an active member of society. It generates a shared obligation.

In the West, it is ever more apparent that the right to host is in the hands of the state. We want to question this monopoly and highlight that, when the rights of others are eroded, our own rights are eroded as well. The citizens who re-appropriate the right to host, the neighborhood that re-appropriates the right to decide who is the host, stops delegating to the state. In this way they reveal the state apparatus that is hidden behind "helping those in need," who become ever more passive because of this unidirectional hospitality.

MN If we push this reasoning further, and look at *The Concrete Tent* beyond metaphor, we reach a paradox. The only way to be yourself and to be a political subject is to feel "other" in the place where you live; to be ill-at-ease in the reality you inhabit, a foreigner at home. This implies a double movement or strategy: to stay without conforming, to practice the subtle art of belonging, while using the tools of imagination. How does this show in your work?

AP It is reflected in the rejection of fixed roles and in the search for a consistency that has nothing to do with capitalization or solidification. If you're not constantly alert, you run the risk of slipping into the comforting inertia of stability, of linearity, or worse, of repetition. To deconstruct roles, to opt for exile and displacement, to sabotage your own work from within, to desecrate the thresholds between disciplines (the limen between art and architecture, history and politics, mine and yours)—this is what has saved us from ossification and from falling into the trap.

This retrospective and this book-catalogue is a way for us to keep transforming ourselves, each with our own potentials, limits, and fears. *The Living Room* is a project that Sandi is mostly working on; an experiment that springs directly from her own biography. Whereas for me now it seems urgent to bring the question of decolonization back to Europe and investigate the historical dimension of colonization. I

am focusing mostly on a kind of continuation of *Italian Ghosts* and *Refugee Heritage*. I want to understand how modernist architectures from Italian Fascism are appropriated and reused both in Italy and in the former Italian colonies in Africa. Along with my postgraduate students in Sweden, I am investigating the paradox of a city like Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, being declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and turned into a tourist destination thanks to its fascist colonial buildings. The history that I am interested in is full of question marks: who has the right to use these buildings? Is colonialism over? If so, how did the transition take place? How did certain things survive and how did others transform? What are the factors that allow for this transformation? Which is the moment of their conversion? What are the forces at play? Which mediations, negotiations, and compromises are unavoidable? We have just started to work on these mutilated histories, to expose contradictions, and to prevent amnesia and repression.

MN The title of the book and the retrospective is anchored on a temporal metaphor. It is a confutation of a linear understanding of time, non-sedimentation, intermittence, and an embrace of transience as the seed for a potential political transformation. The projects in this book don't sum up or translate into a system; each of them takes you to the next, but also outside, here and there, and yet neither here nor there. The action itself, in its absolute specificity, is also a positioning—connected, communicating, multifaceted—within a horizontal, reticular space brightened by gleams of light that reverberate from outside.

AP The challenge is exactly this: how to give longevity to the world we wish for and that every so often is lit by a spark? How to prolong the intensity of these moments without getting burned? How to shape exceptionalism without bringing it back to ordinariness? How to ensure that moments of extraordinary creativity inspire other places and situations? How to make sure the light that the little spark produced is propagated as far as possible? Or, to go back to ourselves, how to learn the lesson of Palestine, renouncing the aggressive will to explain the world on the grounds of one's own exclusive categories? How to connect and not isolate ourselves in our individual problems?

MN This new spatial and temporal metaphor relies on the fugacity and intermittence of light to propagate local knowledge and experiences. It is based on a principle of multiplication and reciprocal induction, on the ability to connect and take on memories of events we might not have been part of. It also implies the formidable ability to move in the dark, to keep walking even when we are surrounded by darkness and the light of the last spark is extinct. What are the sensorial means for this nocturnal practice, for this "meanwhile" that is the real dimension of history and great transformations that are inevitably conceived in the dark?

SH Sparks may not fade. The presence of a person I loved and whom I wanted to be with, even though we came from different worlds, is what has nurtured them for me over the years. The only chance for Alessandro and I—coming from different cultures,

languages, families, "jails"—was to keep the sparks alive. How? For me it was through the awareness that light is not a given, but needs to be nurtured, patiently and tenaciously kept alive by remembering and imagining. A sort of love instinct, a physical intuition—as if it were my body that was speaking and giving me the direction to follow.

AP After those moments of absolute intensity that coincide with full light, what is it that remains of lightning and sparks? The awareness of things: that's where the real permanence is. That is the tool for moving in the dark.

1. Michel de Montaigne, "Of the Art of Conference," in *Essays*, Book III, 1877.

SEPARATION | IN CONVERSATION WITH
CHARLES ESCHE | *Eindhoven* | 2018

ALESSANDRO PETTI This book is the first time we have really acknowledged the part of our practice that materializes itself as an installation or in an exhibition. Even though our projects can start or end as "art," we have never fully documented or outwardly reflected upon this process. This book accounts for this important aspect of our work, one which has allowed some of our projects to exist.

CHARLES ESCHE What do you mean by the art world allowing your projects to exist?

AP Exhibitions play the role of a catalyst. Having to think about a project's spatial manifestation gives us a certain autonomy from it, as it initially exists only in a specific site and for a specific community. Especially in the context of Palestine, it is very easy to be trapped in the NGO logic that quantifies success and measures impact statistically. The art world was ambiguous and remote enough for us to use it as a critical platform. Instead of being a self-referential space, for us, the exhibition was always a space for experimentation that could not take place elsewhere.

SANDI HILAL Hannah Arendt, in one of her interviews, said: "when I write, I clarify my ideas through the writing." For us, more than writing, art exhibitions are occasions for being in conversations, to explore and clarify ideas that are far away from our everyday reality. The conversation is a way to share doubts and explore suspicions.

CE But also the artworks or the installations themselves, no? They also seem to be a way of concretizing some suspicions or ideas you have. The photographs and lightboxes of *Refugee Heritage*, for instance, give you a certain way to talk about and share your experience of being so closely attached to Dheisheh for so many years.

AP One aspect that might clarify our relation with the exhibition space is that it always creates a space of tension. Since most of our projects are very site-specific, the exhibition is a space of necessary alterity that allows us to clarify our understanding of the projects. This means that we never have the intention to either represent the projects themselves, or simply bring the social practice inside the museum. We are not interested in translating our work into exhibitions. For example, *Fawwar Square* took eight years of community participation to make. We don't find it interesting to represent or mimic this process in the museum. What is at stake for us in exhibitions is the ability to continue our explorations in different ways. We are not interested in institutional critique, as it tends to merely perpetuate the cultural hegemony of the modernist white cube. If we look at the museum from an architectural perspective, however, we could ask ourselves how to reuse the white cube of the museum for aims different from those it was design for. This speculative approach opens a much more

constructive way to engage with it that is not only critical, but also engages in an ongoing process of its transformation.

So you can see how exhibiting for us is very much like a project; it operates according to the same principles. For example, in *Refuge Heritage*, we presented the project to the refugee community of Dheisheh not as filling out a UNESCO application for heritage status of the camp, but as an art project. Similarly, after developing the *Manual of Decolonization*, we had several meetings with the UN in Jerusalem. They were very interested in our propositions, but said that this is not the time; maybe in twenty years when the geopolitical conditions are different. So we use art, and its perceived uselessness and powerlessness, as a Trojan horse for people to accept a political conversation that would not have otherwise been possible. It is actually at biennials and in museums that we found places of support and the platform to develop ideas that others rejected as not belonging to this historical moment.

CE This takes me back to some of the expectations I had—and still have—about the art world, which was this idea of a permissive space, a space that said yes, rather than no. In this sense, the art world would not be determined by what it was, or is, but by what people wanted to do with it. That idea of repurposing the art world for your own needs, and those needs being in excess of or counter to what the art world needs—in terms of commodities that go into the market—is something that museums and biennials might make possible. This understanding is probably the main reason why I stay within the world of art, the potential for art to exceed its structural limits. I think, or at least I hope, that art and artists embrace the opportunity that art offers to work in a way that an NGO won't. They might say that a given project is not sufficiently utilitarian, not sufficiently productive, not sufficiently directed towards a solution, that it does not directly, in such awful terms, "help people."

Of course, I'm not denying that art has its own control systems and protocols—particularly around modernist autonomy—but they are easier to challenge from within. What is positive about art, even given its conformity to luxury commodity status today, is that it has an open-ended quality of being whatever artists use it for. And maybe this is even more the case with public institutions, their bricks and mortar, and their quite solid funding structures. We can say, "let's see what happens here," and not face an immediate shutdown. Despite the fact that it is a vague and undefined license, I would say that this is my understanding of how research operates in art. Exhibitions like yours should offer that space to let you see what happens when you make your ideas concrete. It is a way of seeing what you think, in the way that Hannah Arendt describes writing, but also seeing how people respond.

I find that an inspiring use of the institution that presenting your projects in the Van Abbemuseum makes possible. For me more generally, you are helping us distance ourselves from modernism and especially its utopian or universalizing aspects. In this regard, if you look at the evolution of your work, it seems to have gone from something

quite speculative, with ideas of repurposing settlements in a post-Zionist world, to active, practical engagement with the situation in which you are living. Where do you see your practice going now? Because with your move to Stockholm, it is obviously changing again.

SH It has been very clear since the beginning that our role within architecture is to find cracks within the discipline and try to understand how to work within them. I never felt the same about art. Art, for us, is this moment of pleasure and experimentation, of not necessarily having a contract with society, of not necessarily feeling that we have a role in the discipline. We deal with very harsh realities in architecture, so art was, for us, a blank space where we could create freely. In that sense, our work inhabits a situation of permanent temporariness, where it temporarily resides in many disciplines—art, architecture, pedagogy—without accepting to settle in any one of them.

CE Do you see any disadvantage in that? There is an idea that disciplines give certain frameworks, and a certain security, which obviously you abandon. But the way you talk about it sounds incredibly attractive; there doesn't seem to be much lost in this sort of nomadic, interdisciplinary existence.

SH There are many more gains than losses, but you feel like a foreigner everywhere. This only means that you should learn how to accept being one, which is sometimes not an easy thing to do. Ilana Feldman came to the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program when I was working with UNRWA, and I recall her saying: "as an anthropologist, what I see is that you manage to do what you to do inside this super bureaucratic machine because you are never afraid of losing your job." In that sense I never saw myself as a permanent employee of UNRWA, but this gave me freedom. It also gives a sort of resilience, because if art, or architecture for that matter, rejected us, it wouldn't be the end of the world. We would wake up the next day and still have too many things to do.

CE Permanence seems to be one of the struggles the world is going through at the moment, in a sense of wanting a certain idea of security. I was thinking the other day, what is the opposite of terror? What would it take to be anti-terror? To be terrorized is to lose calmness, stability, and permanence, in a certain sense. So that is non-terror, but non-terror is not anti-terror, just like the opposite of love is not the absence of love, but hate; it has to be an active thing. This active idea of moving away from terror seems to embrace the idea of temporariness, that things are uncertain, and to live with that; maybe even to find it far more exciting than the state of stability. Permanent temporariness comes to stand for many other lives, not only your own life, and not only people living in refugee camps. But then I can't help but wonder, are we normalizing conditions that are really intolerable? In other words, are we in danger of romanticizing the idea of permanent temporariness, when I know that the conditions in the camp are undesirable? Could it come to justify something which is unjustifiable, the conditions of life that it produces?

AP What is important to clarify is that the condition of permanent temporariness is imposed on us. It is a regime that exists today, and is manifested of course in refugee camps as an extreme, but is diffused into many other spheres with all sorts of precarities. After recognizing that the condition of permanent temporariness is not a choice, the question then becomes how to challenge it, how to overcome its regime. The answer cannot be permanency. It is unbearable when you don't have access to rights that citizens nominally have, and the path to permanent citizen becomes the only way to obtain these rights. But we know that this is an illusion, and unachievable promise: first, because the very system of the nation state and citizenship is collapsing; and second, because the "integration" it requires suppresses individual qualities, and is never fully achieved for many categories of people—they will never be accepted as equal. So, what is left if we don't want to succumb to the regime of permanent temporariness and see neither permanence nor temporariness as salvation?

A great lesson in this sense can be learned from refugee camps, in opposing permanency while at the same time creating a space for a life in common, one that exists beyond the idea of a nation state. These are not utopian places, but places of endless struggle for justice and equality. The very existence of Palestinian camps is a reminder of the violent power of exclusion inherent within, and an existential threat to, nation states. It is a crack in the regime that shows both its limitations and its possible overcoming. This is the very important lesson that we have learnt from the struggle of Palestinian refugees: that despite all the dominant forces that want to erase them from the earth, they have not given up or disappeared.

Permanent temporariness could become the space and time from which to challenge the status quo. In *Stateless Nation*, for instance, we challenged form of an "international exhibition" organized around European national pavilions by pointing to the spaces that exists in between them as cracks and starting points to cultivate a political community beyond the idea of a nation state. Campus in Camps, the *Shu'fat Basic Girls' School* in Shu'fat, *Fawwar Square*, and *The Concrete Tent* are all tangible ways to work within and against this condition of a space in between nation states. The space in between is very far from being ideal, and it requires one to always question one's own role in it. It is very easy to become complicit in a situation of misery, deprivation, and self-exploitation.

CE Maybe this goes back to your architectural beginnings, but it seems to me that you are both saying that permanent temporariness forces you to create your own frameworks; you have to be critical towards them, but you have to build them in the first place. When you lose permanence, or a sense of security, you have to build walls around you in all sorts of ways—metaphorically, physically, economically, cognitively, intellectually. Those frameworks need to be constructed anew, and that is an exhausting process. Campus in Camps or *The Tree School*, for instance, create a pedagogical framework for conversation, but you couldn't use existing schools, you couldn't use existing curricula, you couldn't use existing literature; everything had to be built from

scratch. You started with a children's book, which makes sense, because children's books are also beginnings. We could analyze each of your projects in that way, looking at how they build their own frameworks. I'm interested in whether that is a product of permanent temporariness, or whether it is really a conscious decision to move away from these existing frameworks. Is it imposed on you or is it something you enjoy and want to do?

AP Every project requires the creation of a space and a community. A critical practice in the West is heavily invested in deconstruction because it is very built-up, institutionally speaking, while in Palestine that does not make much sense since there the real task is to rebuild, to be constructive. The country is in ruins; there isn't much to destroy. Campus in Camps was a university that created its own modalities for knowledge production. We had to start with deep foundations, for instance by redefining the meanings of the words that we used. This process of delving into language was very powerful for all the participants; they realized the power of giving names to their environment.

SH For us, it is really a way of life. Our lives and practice are often so intertwined that we no longer know which is which; whether our living room is the living room of our house or the public space where we are hosting collective discussions that do not exist elsewhere. I still remember how shocked I was as a Palestinian arriving in Italy seeing all these young Italians wanting to reject the idea of the nation as old-fashioned. Everybody wanted to escape from family, from the notion of a state, etc. The students I was with in Italy came there because they wanted a rootless life; but I was coming from a reality that was already rootless. In that sense, I desired what they were rejecting. So when Alessandro and I decided to escape Italy, I wanted to come back to Palestine to build the state, and Alessandro wanted to come to understand what it meant to reject this normal life. In order to be together, we had to share a condition of permanent temporariness; it was our common ground. But after ten years of living in Palestine, we were tired of constantly building new machines. The problem with them is, if you stop driving for just one day, they stop moving. We were trapped, in a sense, within the machines that we had built. This is why we moved to Sweden, in the hope that we would react in the same way, building from scratch, but in a completely different context, under radically different conditions.

CE One of the challenges of today is how the colonizer and the colonized can talk to, rather than seek to eliminate, each other. Colonized people around the world have been made voiceless for centuries, but what does the colonizer do with the fact that they can now be listened to? And what do the colonized do with the fact that they are now being heard—mostly ignored, but nevertheless heard? I think there are two moves that need to be made: the West needs to demodernize, while the Global South goes through a process of decolonization. These are twin processes in a certain sense—they are similar, but applied differently in different parts of the world. As Alessandro says, it would be absurd to try to deconstruct things in Palestine, and it is just as absurd to

try to construct things in the Netherlands; the one has too little and the other has too much. There is obviously no global solution to that imbalance, but something has to happen that makes the two come closer together, that involves a movement in both directions. It is only in this relationship that some kind of prospect for a continued existence lies. This is also where it becomes very personal for you two. These two worlds cannot be kept apart anymore, and a global society cannot fall back on the hierarchical forms of the nineteenth century. Maybe permanent temporariness is a way of trying to understand what moving towards that kind of relationship might mean. The integration of your life into your work makes it possible to understand what these new relationships might look like on so many levels, from the personal to the global.

AP I understand the necessity to distinguish between "decolonization" and "demodernization" as different tasks and conditions, but I'm not sure I agree that the geography where they apply is so clearly divided between the Global South and the Global North. In recent years, we have seen how the arrival of a relatively small number of people in Europe resulted in its governments legitimizing the erosion of rights within its territories. Therefore, it seems to me that the struggle of decolonization has followed the bodies of migrants and is now located at the very core of European cities. From this perspective, I think the need for decolonization applies now more than ever to the European mindset. It is time that Europe comes to terms with five hundred years of structural violence and exploitation. Similarly, one could say that demodernization is very important in the "liberated countries," whose authoritarian elite see themselves as a continuity of the imperial project of modernization. Fanon really saw it coming, how many liberation movements would turn in on themselves and buy into the colonial apparatus.

CE For me this idea of demodernization is a subcategory of decolonization, so they are not on the same level. I agree that Europe needs to be decolonized. But what I would say is that Europe's reaction to these relatively small numbers of migrants has to do with the fact that they threaten the idea of the "modern" as it is constructed in the European imaginary. This idea of Europe as a safe, clean, separate territory, in which borders are clear—borders between people, borders between nations, borders between subjects, borders between property—is being muddied. The very idea of separation, which is terribly modern and is rooted in the ideological construct of race, is being transgressed by the idea of these people "bleeding" through all the holes of what we've built, with the reaction being that we have to stop up all the holes. This feels like such an unavoidable gesture within the modern mindset that the only response I have to it is to say: "well, let's just drop the modern idea of rationalizing separation and distinction at all levels." Overcoming the idea of a rationalist universe in which these simple fictitious separations are played out in the complex lives of people needs more than just decolonization. This is where I think demodernization adds an extra set of challenges, but also of possibilities, to decolonization. I am still thinking about their relationship, because I think you are right, they certainly have applications in each

other's territories, but there is a particularly conservative, not to say fascist, defensiveness around the idea of the modern in Europe at this moment; an urge to defend the modern at all costs.

SH I think those who come to Europe today think they are arriving in a stable, permanent world. I am working with many of these people in Sweden, and they are shocked to find that where they live is not what they imagined it would be. Of course, this is the modern project speaking, the imagination of Europe as paradise. There is a tension in this dream of paradise, as it devalues life elsewhere. The colonial project has worked to convince people that the only valid and valuable culture is the permanent one.

CE I also think that in Western Europe there was—and still is—a huge blindness when it comes to how that fictitious or former "good life," if we can call it that, is built on the suffering of the rest of the world. Thinking about demodernization is useful as a means to escape from that form of separation, in which not only one nation state but the West as a whole—Europe and its white colonies, Australia and America—would be understood as not participating in the forms of oppression going on elsewhere. There is this double bind, or double bluff, going on, where from the point of view of somewhere like Palestine, the West looks like a utopia, it looks like the "good life," and from the European point, there is no sense in which that "good life" is seen to be produced because of Palestinian suffering. If that connection was made it might be easier to renegotiate, but at the moment it is not seen that way. The consequence of not understanding the modern–colonial matrix is this completely false notion that migrants are taking away something of the modern from Europe, something that is Europe's by right, when it is really the rest of the world that gave Europe its modernity—or rather, where and who Europe gained its modernity from, through a range of colonial oppressions. Rebalancing might mean that the West becomes less permanent and more temporary, and what your work shows is that this can be a positive development. I think we need to reconcile ourselves with change, and this is where recognizing permanent temporariness everywhere can help a lot.

AP Yes, and I believe that a common struggle could be to destabilize the binary notion that rights and a good life can only be obtained with permanency and that precarity and exploitation are brought about by temporariness. It is tragic and paradoxical to see that in the asylum-seeking process, you are asked to remain immobile; to put your life in the hands of the authorities and wait. Or, when people claim that "Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel." We have to demolish this solidification of permanency and temporariness.

CE This makes me think of two things. First of all, there is an irony in claiming Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel and then believing in the Messiah. Because at some point, when the Messiah comes, Jerusalem will stop being the capital; it will be transformed. Secondly, within an institution like Van Abbemuseum, which collects works, permanency is absolutely encoded, and we sometimes use that to defend ourselves

against the City Council, instrumentalizing the public responsibility we have for the collection to say that we cannot be abolished. There is a strange sense of eternity in everything we do. We have loans that can only be viewed at 50 lux, which effectively destroys the work as an experience, but preserves it for longer. I think that if the Messiah is going to come, it doesn't matter whether the work is shown at 50 or 200 lux, but that's not an argument that holds up in modern museology.

SH How, then, can we make sense of being hosted in the museum today?

CE To me the reason for your presence in the museum is very clear, in the sense that you are helping us to repurpose the museum away from its modernist heritage. Your presence here is not as guests who are coming to submit to our rules, but as agents who create conditions that help us repurpose this institution, through the experience we have with you and through the experiences we have with other people. This institution has its own history and you are contributing to it becoming something else— something that may not be a museum in the tradition of the British Museum or the Louvre, but something that is more relevant or pertinent to artistic research, this "trying and seeing what happens" that we started with. In order to learn what we should be as an institution, we need people like you to come and challenge it.

RETROSPECTION | IN CONVERSATION
WITH SALWA MIKDADI | *Abu Dhabi* | 2018

SANDI HILAL What were your motivations and expectations in inviting us for an exhibition at the New York University (NYU) Abu Dhabi Campus Art Gallery?

SALWA MIKDADI I've been interested in the collective dimension of you work from the start, so I invited you to come to the campus. I remember that you were very skeptical about the possibility of having such an exhibition, not just within the American context of NYU Abu Dhabi, but also the Gulf Region. I understood your hesitation, but I also knew that the university operated as a very strong space for the liberal arts, and with an international body of students and faculty that would be very open to such an exhibition. I wasn't exactly sure how to develop this, but from our discussions it became clear that there was a space for you, and that the whole campus was open to such questioning of ideas. All of this fit perfectly within the academic environment.

Our first collaboration was in 2009 when I curated the first Palestinian collateral exhibition "Pavilion" in Venice. It was an event that offered great visibility, but like all such "art festivals," the experience was limited in time and space. There's no time to question and engage with the public. Our exhibition at NYU Abu Dhabi not only engaged the public visiting the campus, but, more importantly, the students themselves were able to discuss a set of topics over a period of four months. The faculty integrated subjects addressed in the exhibition in their classroom discussions; they held classes in *The Concrete Tent* as well as in other spaces such as the circle around *The Tree School*, Campus in Camps' *Collective Dictionary* in the reading room, and the experience inside *Ramallah Syndrome*. There was an on-going dialogue.

In 2006, when I was working in Jerusalem and thinking about the Venice exhibition, I was meeting with artists living in Palestine and much of what I saw was, justifiably, a reaction to the Israeli occupation. Very few artists had actually questioned their relationship with governmental institutions and political representation. You were the only ones who were consistently engaged in the collective dimension. This is when we started the conversation that led to the realization of *Ramallah Syndrome*, which created a common space that is neither private nor public. The concept of the commons has always been central to your practice.

ALESSANDRO PETTI I would like to follow up on what you were saying in relation to our desire and worries about thinking of a "retrospective" exhibition. We've always been much more interested in working on projects and engaging in research. However, after ten years of continuously generating projects, it also became important to look back and reflect on how they could become activated in different spaces and times. The question of the location of the retrospective was important to us. As you've

mentioned we were concerned about the context of the Emirates, but at the same time, we did want it to first take place in the Arab world first. Our worries completely disappeared the moment we arrived and started to work with the people on campus. We immediately understood that the exhibition was landing in a place where all the different themes that we have been engaged with in Palestine were actually speaking to the site, and specifically to the temporary students and faculty.

We felt that the condition of permanent temporariness could resonate with people living in the Gulf. The conditions in refugee camps are of course radically different, but at the same time, people living in the Gulf as guest workers for their entire lives might understand the state of permanent temporariness we were speaking of. This allowed us to find an equilibrium between the fact that all the works had emerged from a specific place, Palestine, and going beyond the site-specificity of the works themselves. The exhibition was a way to create a space for discussions that were absent in the public sphere, and being embedded in an academic context increased the possibility of deepening its experience and possibilities. The works were spread around the campus to multiply the sites of discussion and debate, enabling the work to operate in a new context and speak a different language.

SM The Palestinian cause was once on top of the agenda of many Arab countries, but more recently it has become overshadowed by other regional conflicts and forced migrations. However, the resulting loss, dispossession, despair, and impermanence is commonly shared with the current crisis. *Permanent Temporariness* brings back the Palestinians' loss into the foreground and links it with other conditions that we're living in; this impermanence you mention which is so typical of our temporary lives. It is a condition I inhabit while living temporarily in Abu Dhabi. Some people only realized later on that this is not just about politics, it is not just about the Palestinian condition, but much more. Your work raises an issue that has become central to life in the second decade of twenty-first century.

SH I would like to ask you, Salwa, about your own history in the Arab world. You told me once that your father went to Kuwait in the 1950s to set up the school curriculum for the entire country, but that you stayed in Jerusalem to study. So, since your childhood, the Arab world for you has contained both Palestine and the Gulf. Now, after having been in so many other Arab countries and in the West, you are contributing, similarly to your father, to shaping culture in the Gulf. Could you tell us more about your history in the Gulf and in Palestine and how you move between the two? The exhibition tries to do this in many ways as well.

SM You're right about my father, and actually my mother worked in education as well. My father helped establish the educational system in Kuwait. He travelled across the Arab world, from Gaza and Beirut to Baghdad and Cairo hiring teachers to teach in Kuwait. It was interesting that Kuwait served as a model in education for the rest of the Gulf. Both of my parents worked there, but my mother wanted me to study in

the same school she graduated from in 1937 to maintain the family ties to Jerusalem, where she was born. The first time I saw a refugee camp was when I accompanied a family friend who was a social worker with UNRWA on his daily visits to refugees. For a nine-year old, the ride in the bluish-grey UNRWA car was an experience in itself. Yet, what was most memorable was the encounter with the women refugees, several of whom were wearing beautifully embroidered dresses. Some were still living in tents. These trips became more frequent and I became interested in the costumes and their origins. That was what first drew me to Palestinian heritage.

In Kuwait, my first experience with culture and heritage was through my father's work on the first museum in Kuwait and a memorable trip to visit recently excavated archaeological sites. As a child growing up between Kuwait and Jerusalem, I felt that both cities together were home; a combination of experiences linked by the adventure of flying from Qalandia airport to Kuwait and back. The war in 1967 shattered this construct and separated my worlds. Returning to the Gulf and living in the UAE was like returning home, but going to Jerusalem is another matter.

AP Coming back to the exhibition—as you know, we had these very important and intensive weeks in Abu Dhabi before the opening. It's always very strange when you work so hard on something as you imagine it, but then, of course, it's a creature that has a life of its own. Do you have a sense of what happened after we left?

SM There is an important form of curation that takes place after the opening. It's only then that critical discourse activates each installation. Ideally, I would have recorded the many conversations that took place around them, such as the meetings that took place in *Al Madafeh/The Living Room*. Both Bana Kattan and I tried to engage the faculty and student clubs with the topics prior to the opening to ensure such activation of the spaces. The exhibition became part of the campus life, through the *madafeh* but also even after the closing of the exhibition; *The Concrete Tent* remains on campus, we hope as a "permanent" structure, The Tree of Knowledge from *The Tree School* is rooted in the campus, and *The Book of Exile* is in our library, still on exhibit. *Permanent Temporariness* became part of the university. But we could only do that because the conceptual framework of your work and its decolonization of space and discourse, which encouraged a wider and more egalitarian conversation that is relevant to all audiences.

Curating *Permanent Temporariness* was a collaboration between us as a team of four curators and many collaborators. Your work has been curated over many years in collaboration with communities living in different camps, with the residency program, and other communities across the West Bank. There's a quote by Ernst Fischer in the book *The Necessity of Art* where he says: "art is the individual's way back to the collective." Your work reminds me of this book, which is how I view your art. The on-going challenge is how to give a voice to all these collaborators during the exhibition and how to historicize the discourse.

RECOLLECTION | IN CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT LATHAM | *Stockholm and Toronto* | 2017

ALESSANDRO PETTI I would like to start by sharing some of the fears and desires behind the realization of *The Concrete Tent* in Dheisheh Refugee Camp. The desire came from participants in Campus in Camps to give form to the camp's condition of permanent temporariness; the paradoxical situation of considering the camp as temporary, and at the same time acknowledging the permanency of its built structures. The question was how to avoid being trapped, either by normalizing the camp as a permanent settlement, or by negating its history and reality? The project of *The Concrete Tent* tries to inhabit this contradiction and make it visible. At the same time, it aimed to create a different collective narrative where the reality of the camp is recognized without undermining the right of return. How do you think this project resonates with your work on "liberating temporariness?"

ROBERT LATHAM *The Concrete Tent* should force one to confront the very basis upon which we value one status—permanence—and devalue another—temporariness. As you clearly recognize, the issue looms as to what to do with the complexities of seeking or desiring, either explicitly or not, a "just permanence" for those relegated to a sustained and deeply unjust temporariness (the permanently temporary). Here, a double risk emerges. We risk devaluing the existences of those relegated to temporary status; but in the possibility of valuing such existence, we also risk contributing to a rationalizing and legitimation of such status.

Hovering here are the institutional, material forms you touch on (such as UNRWA), that force us all into this pernicious binary that governs temporality and visibility. The monopoly of that temporal governance is in the hands of states that use it to great effect, to assign every human and nonhuman form (including cities and bytes and UNRWA itself) an understood symbolic status and place along a temporal spectrum from the nanosecond to the perpetual. It is a spectrum that is not linear, but rather circuitous. After all, how else could one be abidingly consigned, paradoxically, to the temporary end of the spectrum? This entanglement only enhances the power associated with such governance.

What *The Concrete Tent* does, among other things, is attempt not only to point to, but also to re-appropriate a fragment of this power. It is already a form of resistance that raises the question of what happens when lives assigned to an enduring temporariness create other ways of understanding, if not also experiencing, the temporal, in a way that is in sight of, but not within the imposed spectrum.

AP I agree that the most necessary move is to reject the very notions of temporariness and permanency; they are indeed a form of government. I guess what *The Concrete Tent* does is, first of all, make the very material condition of permanent temporariness visible. It was important among Campus in Camps participants to give form to the humanitarian form of government that is imposed on them. At the same time, since *The Concrete Tent* is a place of gathering and knowledge production and not a monument, it is also a site for the production of meaning, practices, and narratives that challenge the very notions of permanency and temporariness. Therefore, permanent temporariness is a critique of the actual condition, but also the physical and conceptual terrain from which to challenge the status quo by opposing both normalization (becoming a citizen) and the perpetuation of temporariness (remaining refugees).

SANDI HILAL Since the establishment of Palestinian refugee camps in 1948, temporariness has been used as a way to resist normalization, by refusing the camp as the final destination or permanent habitat of refugees. The risk of this condition is that refugees find themselves resisting their own existence and refusing any attempt at implementing solutions that are needed in the camp. Therefore, the question becomes how to combine the right to the past with the right to the present. The *Girls' School* that we designed in Shu'fat Refugee Camp, for instance, is greatly contributing to the lives of its students, and refugees are very proud of the school. Nevertheless, they are still unable to figure out how to fit the school into their overall discourse of the right of return, which is based on rejecting permanence.

RL This is an essential tension and perhaps what is at stake in it is the very possibility of articulating a ground upon and from which to challenge this normalization. The refusal you emphasize can be seen as an assertion against not just the initial expulsion and suppressed displacement within the camp, but also against the notion that lives and conditions cannot be challenged or seen otherwise. There is the intimation that "return" (not just home but also to autonomous and full human existence) can start—or rather has already started—by appropriating areas of life like education (but also political resistance) that are otherwise subject to the logic of tyrannical temporariness. The question I have is how to identify and mark what counts and contributes to normalization and what does not? And how might this scale up, in terms of the potential range of community-developed transformations? What about the notion that such transformations and interventions need to be organic, in order to counter such official schemes and approaches and overrun the logic of UNRWA-type normalizations (and ultimately, the more important normalization of camp life itself)? Furthermore, there is the question of whether and how such transformation can aid the broader struggle for return.

SH To aid in the broader struggle for return is to make sure that refugees' lives in the camp are recognized. To deny life in the camp as a strategy of return proves impossible. When Abu Khalil, one of Dheisheh Refugee Camp's leaders, was asked by some women from the Al Feniq Cultural Center whether it would be possible to bring

Dheisheh back home with them when they returned, the present life and history, and even the potential future of Dheisheh was recognized within the scenario of return. This brings us to an essential question: how does one recognize the value of the temporary life in the camp?

There are different ways to tackle this contradictory question, but one that we struggle against is to not value it at all, to demolish it. In the case of refugees, temporariness is connected to misery, and that has become their image, the only one the world can accept to recognize them today, both for their right of return and their right to asylum. Our humble attempt in the camp was to understand—through both architecture and education—how to separate temporariness from misery. Architecture was, and still is, perceived by many refugees as the enemy of a refugee camp, because architecture brings with it the notion of permanence and an ability to alleviate misery.

We believe that temporariness could be an interesting political tool, but that it should not necessarily be bound to misery. So the question, for us, is how one can use temporality as a way to challenge the status quo and form alliances with other struggles, rather than just keeping communities contained by relief. Another very important issue is how the right of return can put other rights at risk, such as the rights of refugees to a decent education, to decent schools, and the rights of women to have an active role in public life. There is a risk that we see at play in refugee camps, that in prioritizing the right of return, other rights that need to be addressed are neglected. So how can these essential rights strengthen rather than defeat each other?

RL I think you are implying that one can work with a notion of a history for the future, where one can imagine the present as part of a desired future. In concrete terms, it is a notion where camp life is anticipated to be part of a future of return, as part of the story between expulsion and return. The question, however, is how one can treat contemporary life and society, even camp society, in this way without lapsing into a false utopia? Perhaps *The Concrete Tent* is a gesture toward this future's past, and toward what it means to manifest that possibility in real, material terms. But so is the creation of more just, equal, and self-determining forms of life in the camp (including schools, healthcare, public spaces), where the bending of temporalities you are touching on can be seen as a challenge to assigned temporary schemas. Does this agency create the conditions for claims to some new form of open future (or at least one less closed)?

This of course implies working in the opposite direction: where the future (of return and a life returned) is interwoven with the present (one that is based on a just asylum). It is not just a matter of prefiguration, which suggests that the future can be created in the present with the development and enactment of alternative organizational models and socio-political practices. Rather, what is at stake here is, in part, how a collective—in deflecting from imposed temporal forms and associated socio-material orders—seeks to contribute to and create the conditions for an alternative future. That is, the development of other ways of being, such as the Palestinian camp collective

moving into the future with both the camp (more justly organized based on the principle of asylum) and the principle of return. This goes well beyond the development of alternatives for the future. Instead of being countered with a claim to permanence (which is a typical politico-temporal response), could the imposed, enduring temporariness of the camp be countered with a claim for the possibility of entering into a trajectory of transformation? Such transformation, then, is not about anticipating and modelling a certain future—which is currently not much of an option—but about contending with contemporary oppressive forces, about preparing to enter a future that starts as a struggle for return on new terms.

AP It seems that the condition of permanent temporariness destabilizes notions such as public spaces, schools, municipality, etc. We still use these words to describe what is happening in camps, but they do not exactly mean the same thing. For this reason, Campus in Camps felt the need to create a *Collective Dictionary*, a collection of terms that tries to give meaning and names to the present reality of the camp. It was an extremely powerful tool for the participants to both conceptually and practically re-appropriate the camp and its history. For example, "public and private" are two categories that do not make much sense in the camp. Refugees in the camp cannot legally own their houses, despite the fact that they build them. At the same time, the camp is not a public space either, since there is no municipality or state that owns and manages collective space. What exists in the camp is *al masha* (the common) which is a collective form of cohabitation, and which structures the ongoing negotiations between inhabitants and the built environment.

I see the *Collective Dictionary* as an attempt to write and work both within and against the condition of permanent temporariness, criticizing its limits, but also developing its potentialities in ways that are not just relevant for the camp. This condition of permanent temporariness permeates, in different forms, vast parts of society, such as those who live as permanent guests in host countries. Our task for the future is to understand the camp not as an isolated condition, but as an extreme manifestation of a form of government—of temporariness—now being extended across the globe.

RL The *Collective Dictionary*, pointing to ways that time and space might be rethought outside its assigned forms, is quite intriguing. The idea of the common may be a good way to start, but I think you are also pushing beyond this in important ways, as with the dialogues that run throughout the *Dictionary*. I say this because, in general, I find that many of the ways that the common is typically idealized and framed does not adequately deal with how a common intersects with power. Common forms have always been everywhere in societies (language, norms, icons, symbols, laws, beliefs). The problem is commons can serve power with great effect (as Gramsci underscored for us with his approach to hegemony).

The state is, of course, a great exploiter and governor of commons, allowing some of its forms and not others. It is not unlike the governance of temporality we spoke of earlier.

Certainly, in today's context of expanded concentrations (of economic, political, and social power) and new technologies of exclusion and displacement, the notion of the common feels contrary to all of this, like a negation, and is therefore popular. But I think we have to be careful about whether such concepts can really help us organize within and challenge the context of statist capitalist modernity, of which the refugee camp is a part. How do we emphasize how important it is not to settle for starting points that can lapse into unintended gestures? What you are attempting to help open up, with the Tent and the Dictionary, is a way to think about and do that. Both offer focal points of reflection that are not satisfied with dwelling on starting points.

sh What constantly surprises me in refugee camps is the negotiations that take place everywhere as a part of everyday life. People never give up their right to plan their own lives. They are negotiating it constantly. I'm not saying that this might not go wrong and cause conflict, like what happened fourteen years ago in Fawwar, when four people died and a family was exiled due to a conflict that arose over the expansion of a house, but these types of episodes are not the norm. The way life is organized in the camp still depends on negotiating every aspect of daily life. This is what we are pointing to when we use the word al masha to refer to a life in common. Life in the camp is not planned in a municipal or UNRWA office; it is planned in common.

If anyone in the camp needs to do something, from organizing a wedding or a funeral in the street to building a fourth floor onto their house or a terrace, they need to have the agreement of everyone surrounding them, and if it's not accepted, it won't happen. Verbal agreements have been quite efficient in refugee camps since their establishment. There are no official ways to buy or sell houses in the camp. Refugees do not own their houses—they have only the right to use it—but people have created a system of informal compensation. They have created their own market that everyone respects, considers valuable, and essentially reliable. This informal system took a very important form of resistance in Jenin refugee camp when it was invaded and destroyed by the Israeli army in 2002. Jenin's inhabitants got together and claimed their right to be compensated for what they lost. They refused the UN's temporary tents and collectively asked for the reconstruction of their concrete houses. UNRWA and the international community was thus forced to recognize what might have otherwise been considered illegal or non-existent by law.

The limitation of this life in common is the control that is exercised over more marginalized members of society, especially women and children. Many suffer from claustrophobic conditions. Years ago in Fawwar, one woman explained to me why she hates her life in the refugee camp and would love to live outside of it, and another women, just a few minutes later, explained to me how she cannot even imagine her life outside. Both love and hate Fawwar for the exact same reason: one feels protected, as part of a larger community, while the other feels a lack of privacy, or as she put it, too much life in common. In the last few decades, many refugees have left camps in the West Bank to build houses outside. But the majority of them are still exercising their right

to common life in the camp, and still treat and use the camp as the center of their lives. Some even decided to move back.

rl I think that the way life in common is structured in the camps, as you depict it, speaks powerfully to the politics of collectivity, which is not often thought about in so-called exceptional social spaces, especially those vulnerable to violence or abandonment. People in such circumstances are typically and regularly faced with having to re-create their collective life—they must re-collectivize—as a result of external force, through a sort of obstructive transgression—by evading what is imposed on them and building organizations and relations that break with and go beyond current imposed circumstances.

The common, like the public, designates a status or condition. It is like a social object. "Collective"—or better, "re-collective"—puts the emphasis on the nature of the organizational activity. At the same time, collective connotes a common relationship with things, land, provisions, and material infrastructure, as in collectivism. To recollect is also to gather anew, to draw together. Recollection can entail re-making a camp or community as an ongoing process; just as it can also entail assembling scattered histories that have been forgotten. This was, of course, a central concern in Walter Benjamin's thinking. Whether it is land, status, or rights: a gathering of resources, of things that have been scattered and lost in history and by social exclusion. In recollecting, a group's power can involve not just rallying around experiences and senses of oppression and being wronged, but also seeking to move along into another future. Recollectivity, as an ideal, involves working in both these registers simultaneously. Do you think this commitment to the camp you mention reflects an identity with a recollective process?

sh Recollectivity is a very important way to read and understand the common life of the camp. Since its first day of existence, the camp has worked as a space to recollect the lost history of Palestine. To this day, refugee camps are organized around the lost place of origin of refugees. Neighborhoods in the camps are given the names of the destroyed villages that people came from. Having lost their collectivity, upon arrival to the camp, people from the same villages gathered to build a new one in the camp.

Colonialism fears that people will come together and form a collective. This has been very obvious in the past seventy years of Israeli colonialism. Cities are destroyed not only as material, but also collective spaces, as punishment. In that sense, the life of the camp has survived colonialism and resisted against it through a continuous attempt to collect and recollect. What form of life and what heritage can be traced if we think about the refugees recollecting in the camp? What past, present, and future could we envision to give value to what might disappear one day, without anyone noticing?

rl It seems you are pointing to an overall paradox of the camp, both malevolent and beneficial: expulsion and marginalization to, for lack of a better term, "in-between

space." Although intended to displace, exclude, and dissemble, perhaps because refugees are collective and a collective, this has prepared the ground for survival and resistance. Anthropologists have been studying life in refugee camps (both within and outside of cities) for some time now and contrasting this with, for instance, the life of refugees outside of camps, living on their own or in ghettos. What you are doing here, however, is not a study, but an attempt at forming an alliance to explore a triple movement of making a sustainable, meaningful life in such circumstances (which should be memorialized as part of a people's history), which is both a defiant claim against the colonialism that led to the camp itself and the basis for articulating and mapping a future, liberated, Palestinian collective.

AP In the process of "recollectivization," heritage becomes a crucial concept. History is never acknowledged in camps; it is dismissed by state authorities, international organizations, and the refugee communities themselves, fearing that it will undermine the right of return. This negation is extremely violent, especially for younger generations, since they have only experienced life in the camps. Acknowledging this life is therefore crucial in order to give meaning to experiences, memories, and practices that have taken place in and emerged from the camp. Having the right to make history, to be part of history, is an essential claim in order to recuperate dignity and agency, and to shape one's own future. We have felt the urgency for refugee history to be valued and treated with dignity, as a way of challenging the dehumanization of people. *Refugee Heritage*, for instance, is a project that essentially tries to understand the dimension of exile beyond its temporariness. To reclaim time.

RL In a world that is full of lost histories of injustice and violence there are no clear paths to historical recovery. In many instances there is information out there on what is lost, written about in an attempt to thwart permanent suppression. There are discussions in oppressed communities—or segments of them—about these histories and therefore a recognition of them. However, these lost or squashed histories often do not take hold in, or form a basis for mobilization. But if they can find their place in a community's collective being, they can be used to confront the present and work towards the possibilities of a liberated future. Have you uncovered any logics for the transport of such dismissed histories into a group's collective struggle, which clearly requires much more than presentation or articulation?

AP That is a pertinent question, and a possible answer needs to contain deconstructive and constructive elements. I first need to indicate the traps and conceptual limits of wanting to measure the political and social impact of our actions. Despite the fact that we have resisted establishing an organization for several years, wanting to spend our time doing things rather than writing applications to support the "machine," at some point, due to the complexity of the projects and the increased involvement of other people, we had to give ourselves a structure. The support from donors brought with it demands that we monitor and evaluate the impact of our projects. We always understood our own practice to be in service of and grounded in communities, which

are themselves socially and politically responsible for the greater transformation of society. We witnessed how the limitations of donors and their bureaucratic procedures can create a certain distance to communities and their struggles, while their work is still considered effective. This has transformed activists into professionalized NGO workers, and has led, for example in Palestine, to a system in which NGOs cannot explicitly work on the fundamental common objective: the removal of the Israeli occupation.

In some cases, we had to navigate a fruitful misunderstanding between our objectives and the donor's objective. For the donors, our work in camps was understood as a way to normalize the camp, and for us, it was a way to reinvigorate existing practices that recognize the existence of the camp without undermining the fundamental right of return. After three years, it become clear to the donors that we had succeeded in a very risky endeavor. But this misunderstanding didn't last long, and for this reason, funding for Campus in Camps was suddenly withdrawn. The regime of permanent temporariness obliged projects to remain projects, and almost never transform into autonomous institutions.

The constructive element that needs to be taken into consideration in order to answer your question has to do with the very nature of our work, how it is communicated and how it operates within different groups. If we take *Refugee Heritage* as an example, we have to consider this document as a trace, a residual product of a much longer and deeper process that we were part of, but not the most important actors in. This project could only exist after the decades of struggle experienced by the people of Dheisheh. They created a discourse and the possibility for us to build on it. If one reads the full application, this becomes quite clear: we did not invent anything, nor did we ask the community to join our political project. Rather, we simply pushed things in different directions. The combination of grounded discussion and actions in camps and being able to bring these discussions and the people involved in them to other contexts has been very generative, like when we held a discussion at documenta in Kassel with groups from the refugee camps, UNESCO experts, artists, and curators. This connection between local struggles and more general theoretical reflections is the goal, but also perhaps the limit of our practice.

SH In 2006, I accepted a job with UNRWA as head of a field research unit in refugee camps on the West Bank. It was a research project led by Stuttgart University to develop guidelines for UNRWA on how to launch a new department called the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program. It was a response to the 2004 Geneva Conference where it was claimed that improving the daily life of refugees in Palestinian refugee camps would not jeopardize their right of return. Geneva could be seen as an attempt by UNRWA and host governments to partially abandon their mandate of "relief" and concentrate more on "development," but it could also be seen as an attempt to finally normalize the life of refugees and settle them where they are. I was asked to understand how to deal with this issue with refugees on the ground. I went to camps with

no guidelines, so the only way I could introduce myself to refugees was by saying that I was representing a program called "Infrastructure and Camp Improvement" and that I was in the camp in order to understand, together with them, what that might mean. I saw the potential of such a program rather than viewing it as a trap of normalization, and I needed the refugees to see the same. The name of the program created a lot of tension. I wasn't allowed to enter Dheisheh for two years until we clarified its potential.

Later on, after three years of research, I headed up this program. That meant there was the possibility of actually implementing some of the research that was done during the first years. It was a way to show the potentiality of different camps' struggles. But I still had to reflect on my position in the camp, and think about how participation should work. Whom should I deal with in the camp? Should I accept the existing power structures and work with camp leaders, or I do need to go far away from it and empower marginalized voices, or maybe try to combine the two? I was aware of my position of power, especially when it meant bringing funds and resources. At the same time, I was very scared of being completely incorporated into the bureaucracy of a machine like UNRWA. This is where our practice played a crucial part: this was how we found a way of working from within the institution without losing the possibility of dreaming, changing, and challenging. Being part of a platform like the one we created with DAAR helped us find a way to struggle, a way to be engaged on the ground and to produce certain projects that were only possible within the fields of art and architecture.

Another main challenge we have and continue to face as a practice is how not to define a precise border around ourselves when it comes to essential struggles like the one of refugee camps. We feel that the Palestinian question and the refugee question does not only belong to refugees, and should not only belong to a defined community within a certain territory. Refugees should not be left alone, but neither should they be "helped," as many would put it. We are all obliged to feel responsible for the loss of Palestine. Palestine was taken away from world heritage, not only from Palestinians. Haifa, Yaffa, all the villages and towns are lost to all Palestinians, not only the ones who lost their houses in those places. Refugee camps are the manifestation of a struggle for free movement. They are places that many of us can belong to.

This was my entry-point into the camps and my way of belonging to their streets and their struggle. This was the way I tried to communicate my presence in the camps to the refugees I worked with. What was crucial to me was that I was not there to listen to the needs of the refugees and fulfill them, as I was required to do on paper and by contract. I was there to understand how we could work together to comprehend and challenge daily life under colonialism from the camp's perspective.

The refugee camp was the place from where to raise many questions like the right of women to be in public—not only for refugees, but also for myself and many other women in the world who are denied the right to belong to the public in the way they

want to. It is also the place to exercise my right to decolonize my mind. The camp is the place where we can discuss the here and now, our everyday lives, without waiting for the messianic day when the UN grants refugees their right to return to what they lost. Postponing this struggle in the name of the right of return means postponing the day of liberation. We saw ourselves and our position in the camp as a way to inspire others to be part of such a struggle.

Interlude I

ON THE BORDER | ALESSANDRO PETTI

ON THE BORDER BETWEEN JORDAN AND PALESTINE-ISRAEL
| AUGUST 2002

By the time we get to Amman, in Jordan, it's the middle of the night. Illuminated signs revolve in the desert blackness, randomly lighting up the parched land along the road leading from the airport to the house where we'll be spending the night. The glittering lights of exclusive nightclubs shine in the distance. We wake up early in the morning. A hard day of waiting and sun lies before us.

In order to come to Palestine with my wife Sandi and her parents, Anwar and Monira (all three with Palestinian passports), I decided to cross the border with them, over what Jordanians call the King Hussein Bridge and Israelis refer to as the Allenby Bridge, instead of taking the easy route via Tel Aviv, which is barred to Palestinians.

There are three border crossings between Jordan and Palestine: the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge is the closest one to Jerusalem. It's built on the lowest ground in the area, at the same level as the Dead Sea. During the trip, the heat rises and the air pressure drops; our ears pop and we begin to sweat as our bodies attempt to compensate. The taxi that has ventured into this inhospitable land is an old Mercedes with a dozen seats, dilapidated on any terrain.

We are on the Jordanian side of the border. In silence, we get out of the vehicle. Sandi and her parents walk off a few meters ahead toward the entry point reserved to Palestinians.

Left on my own, my defenses naturally go up and my attention is more alert. A young man takes my luggage from me and I automatically follow him. I wouldn't know where else to go, and there aren't any signs with information written in a language I can decipher. The boy, around eighteen years old, takes me in front of a baggage track and sets the suitcases down on the rollers. He turns around, looks at me, and then leaves. It doesn't take a genius to understand that my next stop is some seats set in the shade, out of the merciless August sun. A few minutes later I hear a voice behind me. I follow it and find myself at passport control. Everything's in order.

After five minutes, I'm already in the no man's land. A ribbon of asphalt, fenced along the edges, with signs warning of landmines. Up ahead, there's the Israeli checkpoint. Two young men with rifles dressed in camouflage make us get out of the bus and inspect it from top to bottom. A short time later they make us get on the bus again, but we only drive a few meters. Another checkpoint.

The Israeli flag flutters on top of the only hill rising out of the dry plateau. We're stopped for another half hour. I don't know why or what we're waiting for. All of a sudden, a barrier lifts up and we're free to pass over the Israeli border. A surreal expanse of green spreads out in front of our eyes: palm trees and flower beds. Welcome to Israel.

The border is not a line. It is a space with depth to it. The materials it's made out of are the same as the ones in cities, just used differently. Here, for example, a retaining wall made out of reinforced concrete serves as a barricade.

Inside the border, the rules are few but essential. All flows are strictly monitored and controlled. The border is a machine that tears apart everything that crosses it into separate, classifiable elements, only to put them back together again one way or another when they exit. This applies to people, too, not just objects.

When I get off the bus, I'm greeted by some young soldiers who look like American teenagers, with low-slung pants and baggy t-shirts. A female soldier comes up to me and asks me where I'm heading. "To Bethlehem," I answer. "Follow me, please," she says.

They take me out of the "normal" line. I sit down and wait for the security staff. Another female soldier starts questioning me: where am I headed? Whose house am I going to? When will I be coming back? Where's my luggage? The same questions asked in different ways for half an hour.

When the interrogation finishes, another soldier shows me into a dressing room. Very courteously, he asks me to undress. He checks every single piece of my clothing, then goes out, taking my shoes with him. I am back in the place where I started, only shoeless. Two hours have already gone by since we got to the border and I wonder just how long we are going to have to stay here.

They take me into another room and ask me to open up my suitcases that are arranged on steel tables, like meat in a butcher's shop, easy to clean. Seated, I wait for every single thing I own to be inspected.

Truth be told, I was prepared for this treatment so I take it calmly, even when they tell me that my personal belongings may now be repacked after their vivisection. It's the same feeling you get when you come home to find that a burglar has dropped by in your absence. You feel violated: your dirty laundry, your agenda lying open, everything

has been touched by other hands, the hands of complete strangers. I try not to lose my humanity, and with great calm and dignity I fold everything as if I am about to take my leave from a Grand Hotel. I will my gestures into slow motion, trying to be as refined as possible in spite of the anatomical theater I've wandered into.

This particular procedure is reserved for Palestinians and anyone who has contact with them.

My clothes are now back in my suitcase. I think I've finally finished, but where's my passport? They tell me I have to pick it up in an office near the exit: this is where I'm told to fill in yet another form, and I'm asked the same questions.

Four hours to cross the border. The border is not a line: you can't cross it by stepping over it.

Once I'm over the border, the heat clutches at my throat and the light is blinding. We bargain with a taxi driver over the fare for the trip. The discussion goes on longer than expected because there are problems reaching Bethlehem. To get there, you first have to pass through Jerusalem. That would be the easiest route in theory, but Palestinians are not authorized to go there. The taxi driver doesn't want to risk any of the rural routes because there might be roadblocks on them. We agree on a relay arrangement: the first taxi will take us as far as the outskirts of Jerusalem, and from there we'll have to get ourselves another ride.

Along the road, we come across colonies and Bedouin tents. Two opposite ways of using the territory: one sedentary, one nomadic. The settlements are fenced in by walls whose foundations are dug into the ground, while the Bedouin tents are perched on the surface of the land. Immobility versus motion. Controlled borders versus freedom of movement.

At 2:30 p.m. we're on the outskirts of Jerusalem. At 3 p.m., curfew starts. We have to hurry. Yet another checkpoint. We get out of the taxi in the middle of a line of vehicles packed tightly together. We jump into a new taxi that turns around and goes back for a bit over the same road we just arrived on.

I'm starting to give up on the idea of ever making it, when the genius of self-organization suddenly comes into play. Whenever a new checkpoint is set up by the Israelis, Palestinian taxi drivers respond by planning a new road to get around it. They pool their money together to lease a tractor and clear a few hundred meters with it: voilà, a new passage that circumvents the checkpoint. The soldiers know about it, but these are the crazy rules of the game and the Palestinians are forced to abide by them. The taxi driver who's taking us on this part of the drive is a refugee; he risks receiving a fine that he wouldn't be able to pay and being arrested, but what can he do about it? It's the only way he has to get by.

After a long series of twists and turns, we finally make it to the gates of Bethlehem. We get out of the car to find the entire family there to greet us. Our marriage, which had taken place a few weeks earlier in Rome, is celebrated in the family courtyard with singing and dancing. My thoughts turn for a second to the courtyards of Italy, lit by the blue glow of televisions, and to the same TV news story broadcast every year, about the mid-August exodus and counter-exodus and the bad weather that's ruining everybody's summer holidays.

ON THE BORDER BETWEEN PALESTINE-ISRAEL AND JORDAN
| AUGUST 2006

Tala, our daughter, was born in Bethlehem on a beautiful spring morning in the month of February. She was birthed in a clinic built with funds from the Japanese government and tended by a Palestinian nurse who spoke perfect Neapolitan, learned during a long stay in Naples where he had studied.

After the first few days spent rejoicing her arrival, we find ourselves faced with a dilemma: How is Tala going to be able to cross the border and get out of the Occupied Territories? How will the border machine work on her, with a Palestinian mother and an Italian father? If Tala leaves Bethlehem as an "Italian," she'll only be able to come back as a tourist; if she leaves Bethlehem as a "Palestinian," she'll be treated as such by the Israeli army, meaning she won't be able to move freely around the Occupied Territories and Israel.

The border machine is an interactive architecture. It changes depending on the citizenship of the person who crosses through it. As a prototype of biopolitical architecture, maybe in its purest form, it becomes more or less porous depending on the nation it belongs to. It constructs and deconstructs itself depending on the relationship that each individual has with the state, a regulating device that mediates between birth and nationhood.

By being Italian and Palestinian, Tala puts the pre-established spatial and political order into crisis, revealing the fiction of national belonging and all the politics that stem from it. The mere thought of having to face with her the device that awaits us on the Jordanian border, the only entry and exit point for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, is deeply disturbing to me. The idea of being forcibly stripped bare by the border machine makes almost any certainty you have about your rights and existence falter.

We hire the usual group taxi, a dilapidated yellow Mercedes. Concerns about the trip are magnified by the sense of uncertainty. How many times have I heard it said that the real problem is not knowing what the rules are? At the beginning, I always used to say, "There must be someone who decides what you can and can't do!" Then I discovered that this void is a form of government.

Take the roads, for example. The Israeli army can decide for security reasons to blockade a given part of a road used on a daily basis by thousands of Palestinians. The blockade is enforced by deploying patrols, roadblocks, and barriers. After a few months, even though the roadblocks have been removed, the Palestinians—fearful of running up against soldiers and being arrested—choose not to use the road anymore, thus leaving it to the exclusive use of the colonists.

This is what differentiates the rule of Israel in the Occupied Territories from South African apartheid. The separation here is not crudely imposed by "Whites Only" signs, but rather by a much more sophisticated system ensuring that the prohibitions will be internalized. You will never find signs saying "Forbidden for Palestinians—Reserved for Tourists and Colonists" along the roads used exclusively by them. The regime of prohibitions is implemented by verbal orders given by Israeli military officers who control a given area of the territory. Palestinians found on a road they are prohibited to use or for which they lack the required permit risk being put into jail or having their vehicle confiscated. This is why Palestinians are forced to use group transportation vehicles that shuttle between one checkpoint and another.

The border machine is not located on state lines; rather, it acts on the boundaries of Palestinian cities and villages.

To increase our chances of being able to cross the border into Jordan, which is only open a few hours a day, we set out from Bethlehem at 4:30 in the morning. Luckily, Tala is sleeping. We get through the first checkpoint, called "the container", without any particular problems. I'm the only Westerner in the bus, one of the few Westerners to take the roads reserved for Palestinians. The soldiers at the checkpoints have often asked me, "What the fuck are you doing here?" And I've always answered, "It's a long story, actually…" To save themselves the boredom, they almost always let me through.

Having come as far as Abu Dis, I'm beginning to think that this is a charmed trip with a remarkable lack of snags, when we suddenly come up against a mobile checkpoint. They stop us and tell us that we can't pass this way. The passengers start to get upset. They start shouting, waving airplane tickets departing from Amman airport. The soldiers pretend they don't hear. There's no point in arguing.

Tense and irritated, the taxi driver turns the car around and after a few meters sets off down a back road through the countryside. Tala wakes up: the car is rocking a little too violently to be mistaken for a cradle. I hold her baby seat against my chest as tightly as I can. We cut across a field of ancient olive trees. After a short while, we're back on the main road, with the soldiers behind us grinning from the checkpoint.

The road starts to go downhill and we gaze out the windows onto the hills of the Dead Sea, dotted by colonies and Bedouin camps. My thoughts turn toward the nomadic city designed by Constant. I tell myself that its tragic dimension, rarely discussed,

takes concrete form in this place. I have always thought of Constant's *New Babylon* as a dystopia: the vision of a world in collapse, in constant conflict, not so much between nomads and sedentary peoples as between different conceptions of nomadism.

As I look out the car window, I recognize the encampments and the new colonies. Lost in my thoughts, I fail to notice that, instead of driving straight toward the Jordanian border, the taxi has detoured and is entering into Jericho. Suddenly, I find myself facing the border, but it was a different one than the one I had crossed four years previously.

The first time I arrived here from Jordan, I met with the Jordanian police and then with the Israeli forces, assisted by a Palestinian police unit. Now, the Palestinians have been moved away from the official border and have set up a sham one—a border for a non-existent state—on a piece of land measuring 45 by 150 meters.

A barrier appears in front of our vehicle. We get out of the taxi and climb onto a bus that stops again after a few meters. Some Palestinian policemen climb on to check documents and luggage. The bus starts, and stops again a few meters later. They make us get off. Despite having the sensation that, throughout all of this, we were getting somewhere, we pick up our suitcases from practically the same spot where we began.

The Palestinian border is like a service station that leads nowhere. I'm flooded with a feeling of overwhelming sadness. The idea of Palestinian sovereignty appears to have achieved its final form in this place: a sovereignty exercised over a miniscule plot of land inside of which all procedures are complied with for a border crossing into nowhere. The real border is five miles away. I'm flabbergasted: the police and the people in transit diligently recite their parts in this puppet theater. Everybody knows that it's make-believe, but no one objects to it.

Back in the bus, we leave for the real border, this time presided over solely by Israelis. As an Italian citizen in a taxi, I could have reached the border directly. Sandi and Tala, as Palestinians, had no way of avoiding this farce.

The trip from Bethlehem to Amman—less than 125 miles—normally takes more than eight hours. The puppet-theater border crossing has radically disheartened me. The day will come, I say to myself, when the Palestinians will climb out of their rundown buses, their overcrowded, stuffy group vans, and with a resigned but peaceful expression, say to the Israelis: "Fine, you win. This cannot be the dream of a Palestinian state that we have nurtured for so many years. We don't want a fake state, a sham border. We simply want to live and move around freely like you. We give up on our state. We just want our rights."

After hours of waiting to be able to enter the border zone, the moment comes to show our documents. Many Westerners with privileged passports do not understand the anxiety of people who are faced with the potential of being sent back. The Palestinian travel document is once again the paroxysmal expression of this control device. It's a travel document, not a passport, and it doesn't even specify a nationality. I've seen policemen at the airport stare at it with puzzled expressions and ask, "What the heck is this?" Whoever thought up this document didn't have the courage to write the word "Palestinian" in the box for "Nationality." The adjective "Palestinian" is becoming like the adjective "Jewish": a lot of people are too scared to even pronounce it. Bad consciences.

Even though Tala is registered on my passport, for the Israelis and Palestinians, she's Palestinian, so she has to follow the same route as Sandi, a different one from mine. I don't object to this, I just ask the Israeli soldier to allow me to go with them, to let me follow the procedure reserved to Palestinians. I want to give up my Westerner privileges, air conditioning, cleanliness, and cold drinks, in order to accompany my family into the crowded buildings and hallways reserved for Palestinians.

The soldier informs me that this will not be possible and that I have to stick to the procedures for tourists. A confused jumble of questions comes to my mind. By accepting this treatment, to what extent do I make myself an accomplice to this madness? Why do all the things I've read not come to my aid, preventing me from going crazy with rage? To stop myself from dehumanizing the soldiers standing before me, I imagine that Nadav, Eyal, Ravit, Runit, and many other Israeli friends of mine might very well be disguised behind their uniforms and rifles. All I know is that I give in and, dazed, watch Sandi and Tala walk away from me.

I enter into the area for non-Palestinians. Air conditioning and Bermuda shorts. I feel ashamed of myself for giving up and accepting this privileged treatment. Me, here, with the tourists and them, over there, hoping not to be sent home. Stunned, I obey the orders issued to me: pay here, open there, get up here, go there, step down, step up, sit down...

After a few hours, I cross the bridge. I'm in Jordan. I immediately start looking for the Palestinian exit, but it's not easy to find. The building is built in such a way as to prevent human traffic flows from ever meeting up, like in hospitals, where areas and routes for healthy people and patients are kept rigorously separated. Breathlessly, I search among lazy Jordanian policemen and sweaty tourists for the door connecting the area reserved to Palestinians with the area for everyone else. I finally find the door, and before opening it, I feel like Jim Carrey in *The Truman Show* when he discovers the hidden door in the painted blue skyscape that may eject him into the real world.

THIS TEXT IS AN EDITED EXCERPT FROM | ALESSANDRO PETTI, *ARCIPELAGHI E ENCLAVE* (MILAN: BRUNO MONDADORI, 2007).

STATELESS NATION

2003–2007

The international art exhibition of the Venice Biennale was established in 1895 with the intention to represent the arts from all over the world through national pavilions located in the Giardini di Castello in Venice. However, the international exhibition was, and still is, formed both by and for the vast majority of European countries, despite the fact that states with strong economies have begun to have national pavilions outside the Giardini. How is it possible in this context to represent a nation without a state, and at the same time challenge the idea of a world organized around nation states?

Each Palestinian is by definition "without a state," even if they possess some form of citizenship within the nation in which they currently reside. They continue to feel that they belong to a singular community. They are men and women tied to a human experience, to a memory, to a dream to be realized. A nation without a state, without a right to citizenship; a people rooted in absence of place. The traces of this absence are found in the documents which should represent them: passes from the Lebanese Government, special identity cards for those living in Jerusalem, Egyptian travel documents, a passport with no state, travel documents from the Palestinian Authority, Jordanian, European, or American passports.

BORDERS

REPRESENTATION

EXILE

CREDITS
| SANDI HILAL AND ALESSANDRO PETTI

LOCATION
| GIARDINI DELLA BIENNALE, ITALY
| BETHLEHEM MANGER SQUARE, PALESTINE
| BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, PALESTINE
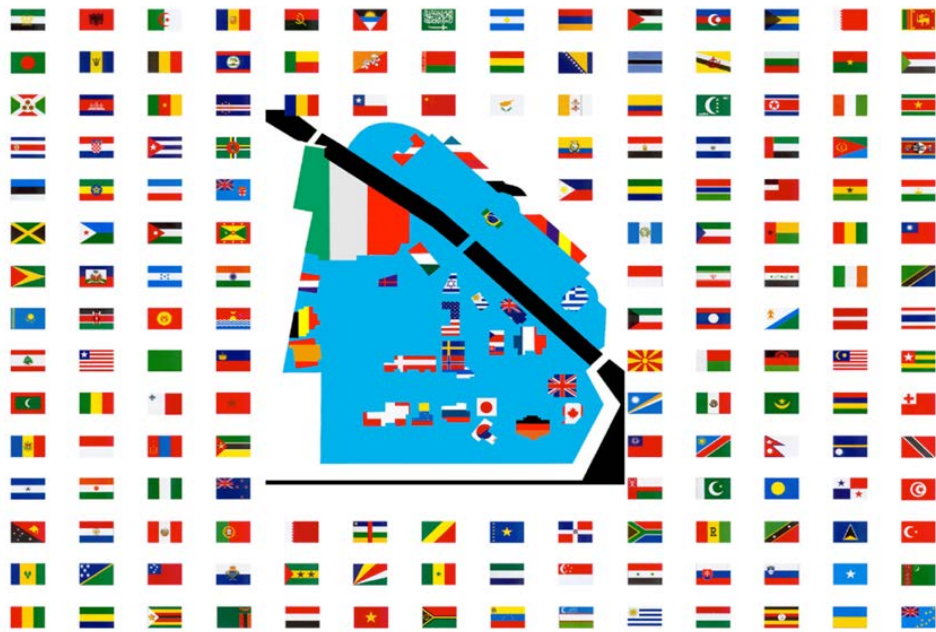
MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
| SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION, 10 PASSPORTS (180 CM X 240 CM)

EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS
| DISPLAY PASSPORTS IN A PUBLIC CONTEXT (I.E. NOT IN A GALLERY SPACE)

IMAGES
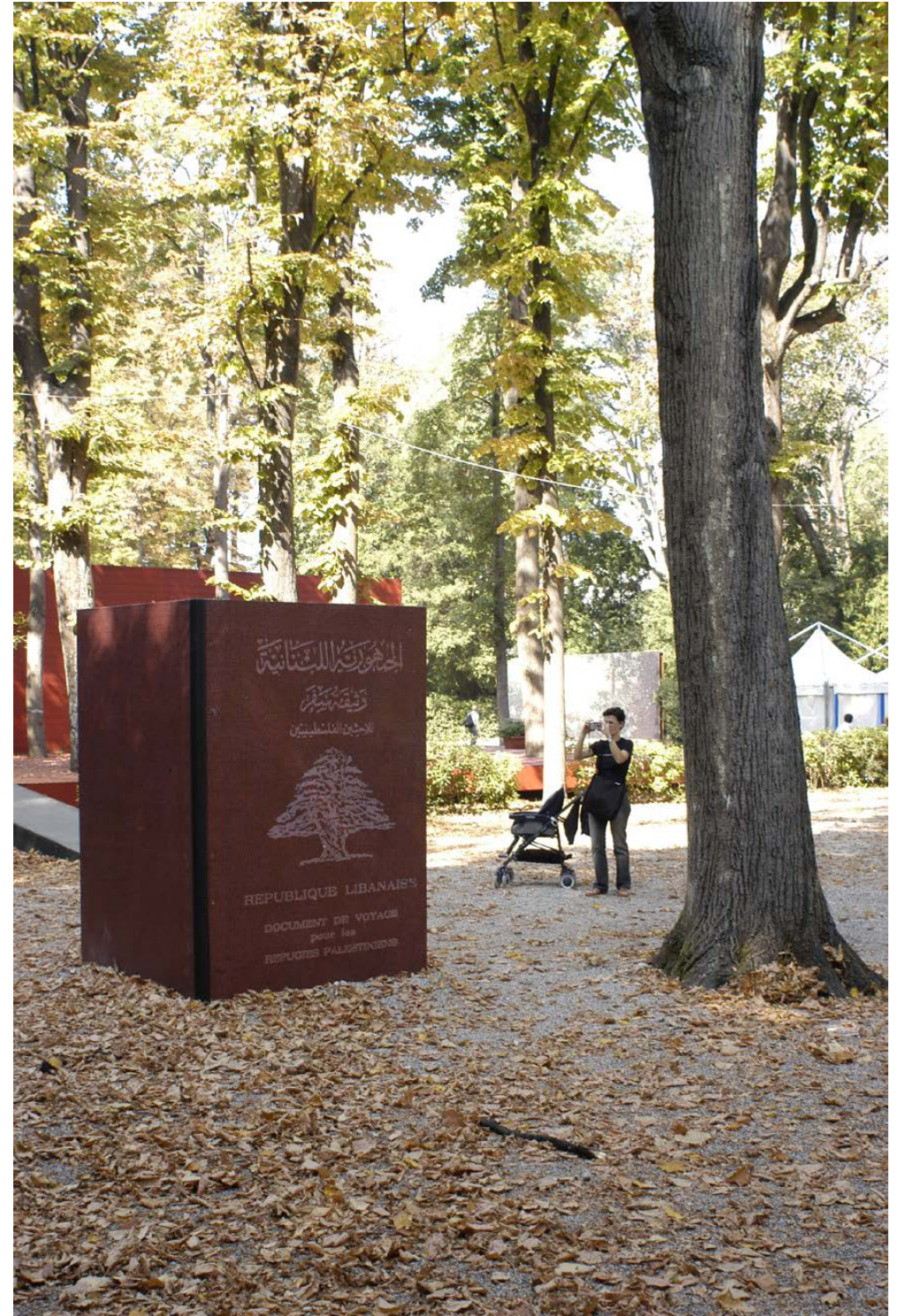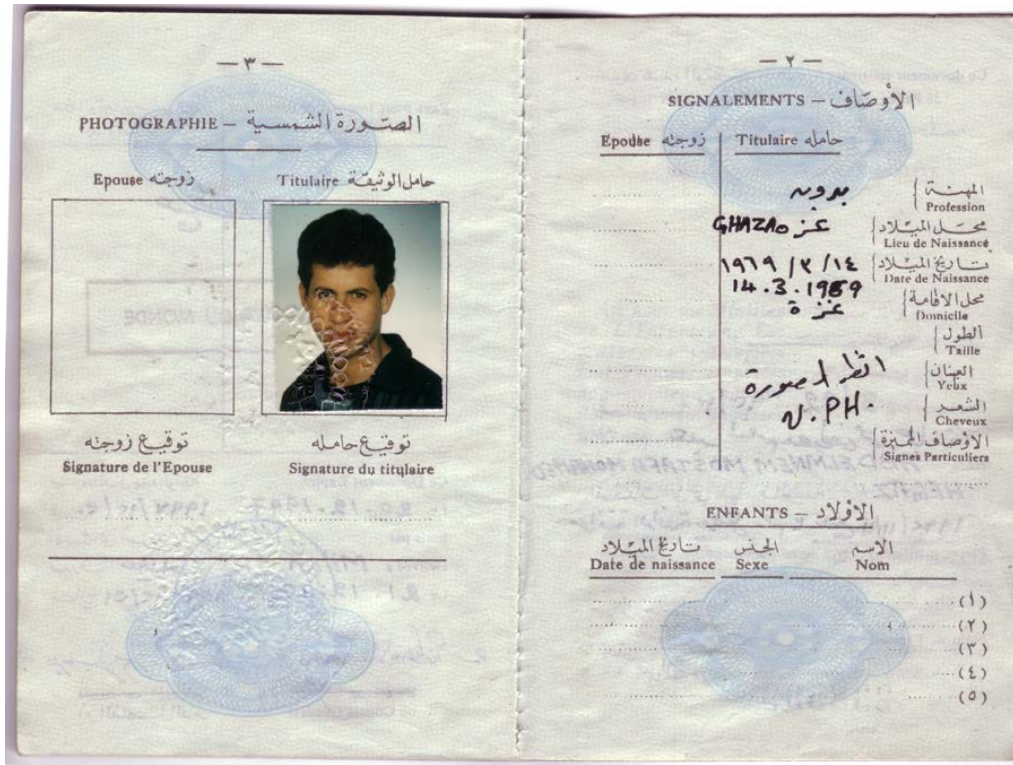| STEFANO GRAZIANI P.78–79

STATES WITHOUT NATIONAL PAVILIONS INSIDE
THE GIARDINI | 2001
STATES WITHOUT NATIONAL PAVILIONS INSIDE
THE GIARDINI | 2001

BETHLEHEM PEACE CENTER | *Bethlehem* | 2004

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS OF STATELESS PALESTINIANS | 2003
PASSPORT | *The Arab Republic of Egypt*

STATEMENTS

BORDERS | SALMAN NATUR | *Writer* | I am a fifty-four-year-old man and I don't know how much longer I will live, but I wish to have the possibility of seeing the Middle East finally transform itself into a secular democracy. A free Middle East without repression and without discrimination. I dream of open borders between one country and another in the Arab world, capable of containing within itself the five million Hebrews who live in Israel, both as a state and as individuals. Arab culture has always accepted Jewish culture, together with other cultures, such as that of Armenians, for example. I don't consider the liberation of the Palestinian people to be a dream, because I consider it to be a reality already underway.

STATE | RULA JEBRAEN | *Journalist* | I believe that we will most certainly obtain a state. This is the only solution—even the Israelis know this to be the case. They can postpone it for as long as they wish, but sooner or later they will have to accept it. I ask myself how many tears and how much blood must be shed before we finally reach this point. I hope that this state will be truly democratic and governed justly and not in the half-hearted way in which it has been run up until now.

SELF-DETERMINATION | RUBA SALIH | *Researcher* | The self-determinism of the Palestinian people must pass through the acquisition of universal rights, the right to citizenship and to a passport with which one may travel. Individual and collective self-determination must be realized in their diverse forms: the right to a house, the right to live a normal life where conflicts are contained within the sphere of that which we call normality. How this is to be realized remains an open question.

IDENTITY | SALMAN NATUR | *Writer* | Every Palestinian is aware of the fact that the loss of identity is equal to the loss of our political cause, of our recognition as a people, and of our rights. For this reason, identity is so rich with meaning. I believe that by now the Israelis should have learned to accept the idea that the Palestinian people exist.

IDENTITY | KHALED HOURANI | *Artist* | Identity, for a Palestinian, has an enormous weight. This is largely the result of discrimination. Palestinian identity is continuously threatened and constantly at risk of disappearing altogether. I am convinced that if the Palestinian people enjoyed liberty and independence they wouldn't be tormented by identity problems. They would most probably have been critical towards this notion, perhaps even have hated it. Instead we are pushed towards this concept because it deeply touches the life of each and every Palestinian. Many believe that Palestinian people exaggerate with their seemingly endless battle, with their desire and necessity to affirm their identity, to possess a sense of citizenship. Each Palestinian suffers, in many different ways, the consequences of the absence of the right to citizenship, whether they live in Israel, the occupied territories, or in Diaspora. Even if a Palestinian is able to obtain documents from another country, he/she will continue to dream of Palestinian citizenship.

FEELING OUT OF PLACE | SARI HANAFI | *Anthropologist* | Being Palestinian means being constantly out of place.

DEMOLITIONS | SUAD AMIRY | *Architect* | The conflict with the Israeli people is first and foremost a conflict connected to territory. Since 1948 Israelis have tried to cancel any physical trace of the presence of the Palestinian people, of Arab Culture. Between 1948 and 1952 they demolished more than 420 Arab villages. Razed completely to the ground, there no longer remains a testament to ancient Arab civilization. In Jerusalem, two entire historic neighborhoods in the ancient city were completely demolished to create the square in front of the Wailing Wall and a new Jewish quarter. In Jaffa, the entire Manshia neighborhood was destroyed in April 2002. When Nablus was once again occupied this year, in one of the numerous incursions, various buildings in the historic center were destroyed. In recent days, the Israeli authorities have begun demolishing a large Arab neighborhood, Jaber, in the historic center of Hebron. The Palestinian fight is a fight for existence.

IDENTITY | EZZ ALDIN ALMANASRA | *Poet* | Palestinian identity is not transmitted through words, but passed on through a sense of belonging. Some seek to negate the fact that they are Palestinian, but soon come to realize that they cannot choose, the outside world reminds them of this each day. Some countries, such as Jordan, offer the possibility of becoming second-class citizens, negating the possibility of being Palestinian. Other countries recognize the fact that you are Palestinian, but only so that they may subject you to discrimination, such as in Lebanon, where Palestinians are not permitted access to more than eighty-four professions. The Arab world has a hypocritical position towards the Palestinian people. They do not accept that a Palestinian can declare himself to be so with the rights that this implies. The Palestinian question is not a political question, but a question of existence.

UNIFORMS | RULA JEBREAN | *Journalist* | I lived in East Jerusalem for twenty years without ever meeting an Israeli who was not wearing a uniform. I met an Israeli in civilian clothing at a peace camp in Florence.

JERUSALEM | OMAR YUSSEF | *Architect* | The Israeli occupation finds its greatest expression, its most limpid manifestation in the transformation of the territory of the city. Jerusalem is the epicenter of these transformations. Following the occupation in 1967, East Jerusalem was colonized by Israeli villages which were strategically placed on the hillsides. All the politics of planning favored the Israeli occupants. In this way there exist, beside the well-connected colonies, equipped with services and high technology, Arab villages to which the authorities offer no services whatsoever. The new highway arteries, in addition to connecting the new colonies, are used to separate one Palestinian area from another. Moving along the highway which follows the plan of the wall of 1967, it is possible to note how the city remains, even though the wall no longer exists, a heavily divided city. Jerusalem has been transformed into a city of ghettos with Christian and Muslim and Jewish ghettos. In the Arab parts of the city the only

PASSPORT | *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*
PASSPORT | *The Syrian Arab Republic*

public works constructed by the local government are the police headquarters and the prison, which is the largest in the city. The public institutions in the Arab zone serve as a form of intimidation, their presence like a threat. They are the spaces of Apartheid. Not of the division between whites and blacks, as was the case in South Africa, but between Jews and Arabs. Jerusalem is the metaphor of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. If this conflict is not resolved in a just manner, we will continue to distance ourselves from a possible solution, simply postponing the problem.

STATE | HASAN KARMI | *Man of Letters* | If ever a Palestinian state should be born, it will be a magnetic state, the state of all Palestinians in Diaspora, of all Palestinians spread around the world. It will be the motherland of the homeless.

STATE | RUBA SALIH | *Researcher* | I believe that the form of the state is a form which by nature tends to homogenize, to create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, therefore I do not believe in the state as a panacea that, once it includes the Palestinians, will instantly erase the problems of inequality between man and woman, rich and poor. All of these issues will become even more evident than they have been in recent years. For me, as a woman, the feminine agenda is very important. Palestinian women are very well aware of the fate of their Arab sisters in their respective feminist battles. They are well acquainted with the risks of decolonialization and the creation of a state. Risks which a country like Algeria reminds us of. On the other hand, I feel that the state is the only form existing at the international level which guarantees the acquisition of certain rights and obligations. There are currently no other forms that can guarantee access to citizenship in the same way as a passport. In this sense I feel that we must then pass through the state. The Palestinian people know what risks are involved in this passage.

STATE | SALIM DABBOUR | *Writer* | When the Palestinian Authority established itself in the occupied territories, we were full of hope. Finally, we could have our own Palestinian National Government and not a regime of military occupation. I was enthusiastic, as were all other Palestinians. We went into the streets to celebrate and to sing. However, after only a few days I realized that the truth was another. One occupation was being substituted by another. What was occurring was not that for which we had suffered and waited for such a long time.

SPACES | ZAKARIA MOHAMMED | *Writer* | The dream of every Palestinian is to be a man who lives in his own space. This is the minimum existence of every human being, the lack of which causes us to suffer. We do not live like other men in the world... I want to forget Palestine, I would like to decide to leave because I wish to and not because I am forced to by the Israelis. I want Palestine so that I may finally be able to forget it! My dream is to be able to wake up in the morning, take my passport, to be able to leave and to return when I wish to. To leave now, I require permission from the Israelis, and to return, once again I require their permission.

DREAM | SUAD AMIRY | *Architect* | My dream is to live freely in the Palestine of old. I have always thought that the Palestinian state could be a solution, but in recent months I have begun to think that this place must have a different character, it must be an open place, a place where people may live together. The Palestinian state which is being discussed today sanctions the prohibition of my being able to visit Jaffa which has great meaning for me. It is for this reason that I imagine instead a state composed of Palestine, Jordan, and Israel, which may possibly grow to include Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. I wish to live in a place in which I am not a second-class citizen. I wish to live in a democratic place, where women have full rights, where Palestinians are not seen only as such. Before belonging to a state, we are all human beings.

JUSTICE | EZZ ALDIN ALMANASRA | *Poet* | For the future of Palestine, there exists an acceptable and a just solution. The acceptable one is the existence of two states, Hebrew and Arab, the just solution is a democratic Palestinian state for Hebrews, Muslims, and Christians; a multi-religious and multicultural state, as the Palestinian state has been throughout history.

REFUGEES | SARI HANAFI | *Sociologist* | I believe that the right to return is an extremely important one, but it will be the least determinant element of a possible geographic mobility of Palestinian refugees. I believe that it is fundamental for a Palestinian refugee in Syria to have the right to return, to know that he can return, and that finally this historic injustice will be resolved. At the same time, I am not sure that a Palestinian who has lived in Syria for fifty years would wish to return to Haifa to live in a place where Israeli flags fly everywhere, where he may be forced to join the military. In the same way that I am not sure that Gaza could become a better place for a Palestinian who lives in the United States. This means notwithstanding that the Palestinians fight for a just cause, for their right to return, that we will most likely not be witness to a sudden rush of 4,000,000 refugees into the occupied territories and the Gaza strip. I believe that these refugees will maintain what I call a trans-national existence. They will maintain their various ties, rich with various meanings. Some will return to work in Palestine for only a short time, or others simply to visit or to buy land.

RETURNING | AHMAD KHALIFA | *Researcher* | Even after many years of exile, the majority of the Palestinian people insist upon their right to return. It is not something felt only among the elderly, but also by small children. If we look at the composition of Palestinian refugee camps, we can see that each camp is full of people who come from the same geographic region of Palestine, from which they have been forced to flee. Once they arrived in the camps they reconstructed their neighborhoods as they were in Palestine. The questions which continue to be asked after many years are: Who are we? Why are we here? They are followed by stories of life in Palestine, descriptions of their village. Children look at the hard facts, confronting their life in the camp, a miserable life of poverty, discrimination, and oppression on the part of the authorities in the country in which they now live, with the lives of their parents, of their grandparents.

PASSPORT | *The Republic of Lebanon*
PASSPORT | *The Palestinian Authority*
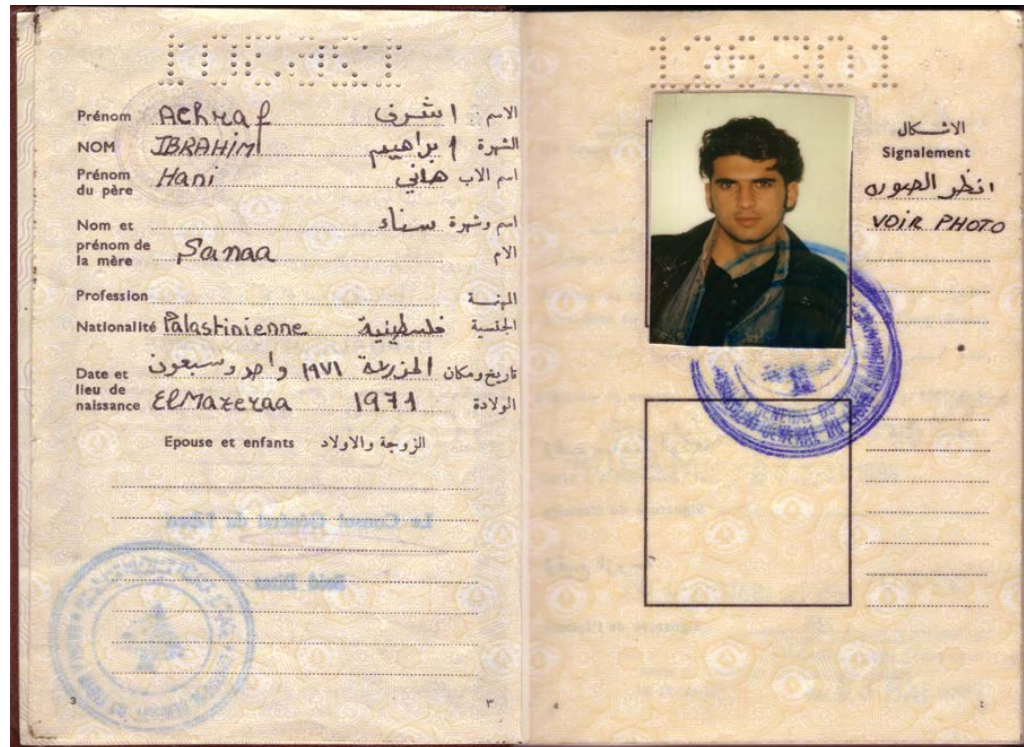
THE WEST | RABA SALIH | *Researcher* | Palestine is the dark side of the West. The tragedy of the Palestinian people is born of the tragedy of the Hebrew people who have suffered the most shocking ambivalence of modern Europe and its history. The two tragedies are profoundly intertwined and each reflects, though in a different manner, the dark side of Europe. The holocaust is a product of the story of Europe and not of Palestine. Moreover, Europe was not capable of accepting the responsibility of resolving this other tragedy, that of the Palestinian people. A population which finds itself, casually, the victim of the victim par excellence. Europe has always confronted itself with its constitutional myths. European civilization, modern and democratic civilization, and plurality are continually faced with the reality which they have created in Palestine, the non-modern, the denial of self-determinism, the denial of rights and of liberty.

THE FUTURE | ALA HLEHEL | *Journalist* | I look around me and see Palestinians in every corner of the world, and I ask myself: Are we a people? What do we have in common? Beginning in 1948, our experiences have taken many different roads and to say that our identity can be founded upon our memory is a weak argument. I believe instead that which is truly capable of holding us together are our hopes for the future and our common ambitions.

DREAM | SALIM DABBOR | *Writer* | I have a small, big dream. Actually, to tell the truth, it is not a dream, but a right. It is the right to live as a free man, free in my native land. My dream is not a state, this does not interest me. What interests me is the possibility to live freely in my country, and this is much more than simply having a state.

DREAM | SARI HANAFI | *Sociologist* | My dream is to live in a world where nation states do not exist. This is part of my culture as a refugee, to hate the nation state, to feel myself to be constantly in a position of being a minority and of not feeling completely represented by the state in which I find myself. My dream is freedom of movement.

CONFLICT | LIANA BADER | *Writer* | The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is not only a conflict for land, but a conflict of culture. Each day they attempt to cancel our multicultural heritage, seeking to transform us into a singular identity. I am a daughter of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem has many identities. The Israelis are seeking to give this city only one face, a Hebrew one, destroying the richness of this city.

THIS TEXT IS AN EDITED EXCERPT FROM | ALESSANDRO PETTI AND SANDI HILAL, "STATELESS NATION," *ARCHIS* 4 (2003).

THE ROAD MAP

| 2003

The territory of Israel and Palestine is a region where, within just a few acres, an incredible variety of borders, enclosures, fences, checkpoints, and controlled corridors are concentrated. In January 2003, we tried to measure, with EU passports, the density of border devices in the surrounding areas of Jerusalem. Along with a person with an Israeli passport, we travelled on Highway 60 from the Israeli colony of Kiriat Arba to the colony of Kudmin. Then, with a person with a Palestinian passport, we travelled from the city of Hebron to the city of Nablus. The two routes both start and end in the same latitude; at some points they overlap. Their travelling times, though, are profoundly different. The difference in temporality is due to the fact that Israeli travelers can use highways—often in tunnels or elevated—which link colonies and bypass Palestinian villages. Palestinian travelers, on the other hand, must cross a number of both permanent and temporary checkpoints—or try to avoid them altogether.

CREDITS
| MULTIPLICITY—STEFANO BOERI, MADDALENA BREGANI, MAKI GHERZI, MATTEO GHIDONI, SANDI HILAL, ALESSANDRO PETTI, SALVATORE PORCARO, ANNIINA KOIVU, FRANCESCA RECCHIA, EDUARDO STASZOWSKY

FIELDWORK
| SANDI HILAL, ALESSANDRO PETTI, SALVATORE PORCARO

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
| VIDEO INSTALLATION
2 PROJECTIONS (DIMENSIONS VARIABLE; 28'48" LOOP, WITH SOUND)
2 MAPS ON CRT VIDEO MONITORS (CA. 27", STILL IMAGE, SILENT)
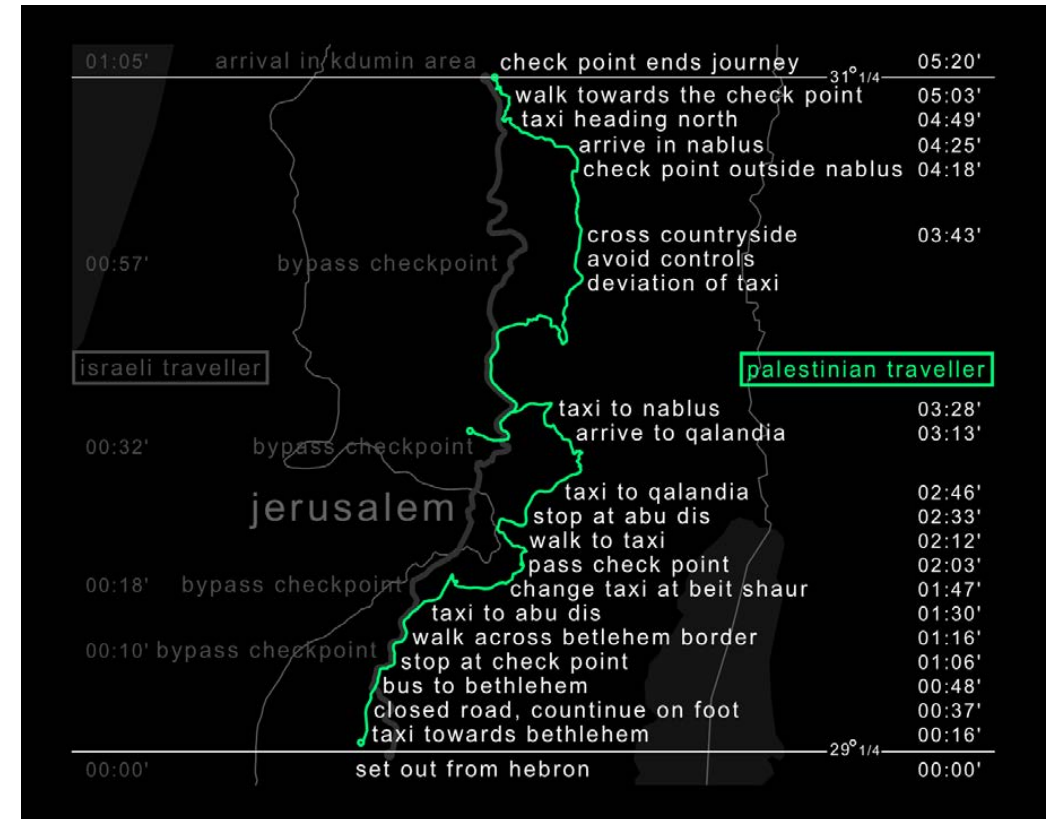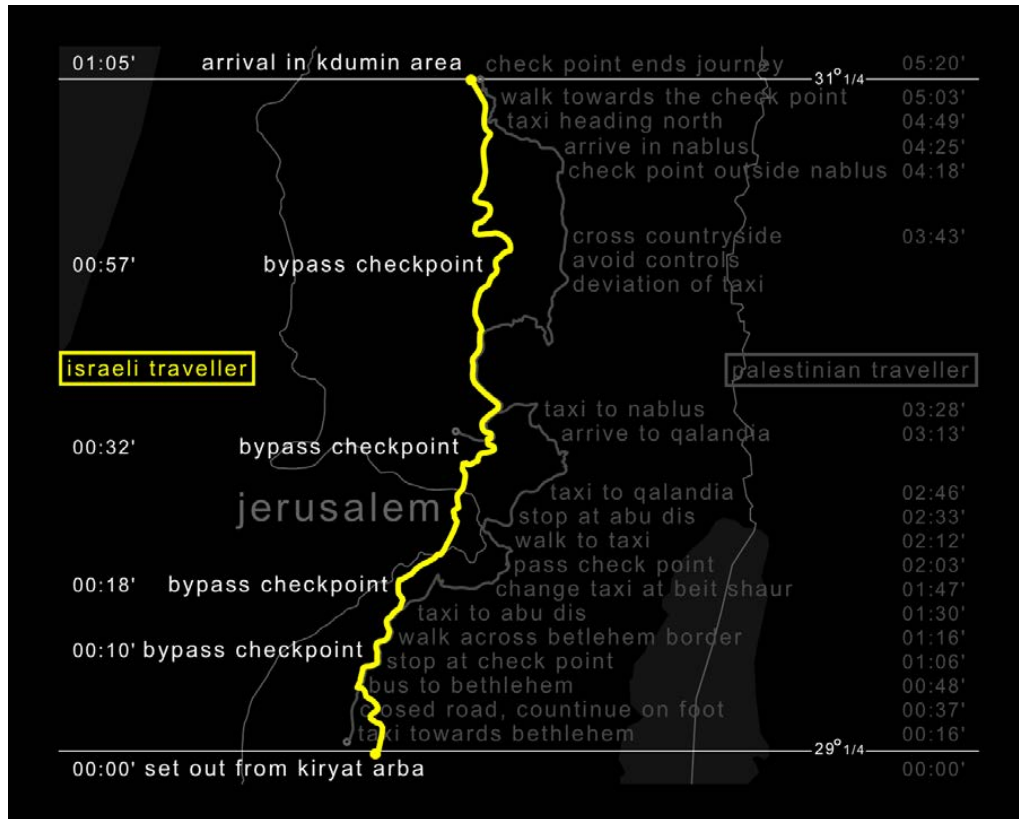2 SCROLLING TEXTS ON CRT VIDEO MONITORS (CA. 27", 2' LOOP, SILENT)

EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS
| DISPLAY IN A DARK ROOM, WITH THE BOTTOM OF VIDEOS ALIGNED TO THE LEVEL OF THE FLOOR
| PLACE TWO PROJECTIONS EITHER SIDE-BY-SIDE OR BACK-TO-BACK, WITH TWO CRT VIDEO MONITORS ON THE SIDE OF EACH

BORDERS

REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION

Left map labels:

01:05' arrival in kdumin area — check point ends journey — 05:20'
31°1/4
walk towards the check point — 05:03'
taxi heading north — 04:49'
arrive in nablus — 04:25'
check point outside nablus — 04:18'

cross countryside — 03:43'
00:57' bypass checkpoint — avoid controls
deviation of taxi

israeli traveller — palestinian traveller

taxi to nablus — 03:28'
arrive to qalandia — 03:13'
00:32' bypass checkpoint

taxi to qalandia — 02:46'
stop at abu dis — 02:33'
jerusalem — walk to taxi — 02:12'
pass check point — 02:03'
00:18' bypass checkpoint — change taxi at beit shaur — 01:47'
taxi to abu dis — 01:30'
walk across betlehem border — 01:16'
00:10' bypass checkpoint — stop at check point — 01:06'
bus to bethlehem — 00:48'
closed road, countinue on foot — 00:37'
taxi towards bethlehem — 00:16'
29°1/4
00:00' set out from kiryat arba — 00:00'

Right map labels (same text, Palestinian traveller highlighted):

01:05' arrival in kdumin area — check point ends journey — 05:20'
31°1/4
walk towards the check point — 05:03'
taxi heading north — 04:49'
arrive in nablus — 04:25'
check point outside nablus — 04:18'

cross countryside — 03:43'
00:57' bypass checkpoint — avoid controls
deviation of taxi

israeli traveller — palestinian traveller

taxi to nablus — 03:28'
arrive to qalandia — 03:13'
00:32' bypass checkpoint

taxi to qalandia — 02:46'
stop at abu dis — 02:33'
jerusalem — walk to taxi — 02:12'
pass check point — 02:03'
00:18' bypass checkpoint — change taxi at beit shaur — 01:47'
taxi to abu dis — 01:30'
walk across betlehem border — 01:16'
00:10' bypass checkpoint — stop at check point — 01:06'
bus to bethlehem — 00:48'
closed road, countinue on foot — 00:37'
taxi towards bethlehem — 00:16'
29°1/4
00:00' set out from hebron — 00:00'

ISRAELI JOURNEY | *Malmö Konsthall, Malmö* | 2004

PALESTINIAN JOURNEY | *Malmö Konsthall , Malmö* | 2004
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FROM A TO B | ALESSANDRO PETTI |
Sandi Hilal | SALVATORE PORCARO

In January 2003, we conducted a field study whose results reveal the effects of the regime of "sterile roads"—Israel military jargon for roads that have been decontaminated of Palestinians. We conducted the following experiment on two different days. The first day we traveled along the route taken by an Israeli colonist to go from the Kiriat Arba colony to the Kedumim colony. The next day we traveled along the route taken by a Palestinian to reach the city of Nablus, starting from Hebron. Both trips start and finish on the same latitude.

The first trip, in an Israeli taxi, took one hour and five minutes; the second, using various Palestinian group taxis, took five hours and twenty minutes. The difference in the trip times was due to several factors: along the route taken by the Palestinian traveler, we had to pass through a number of checkpoints, cover some distances on foot, and change taxis; whereas for the route the Israeli traveler took, we used the bypass roads and passed through the checkpoints without being stopped.

FROM HEBRON TO NABLUS | JANUARY 13, 2003
DISTANCE | *60 miles*
DURATION | *5 hours 20 minutes*

We leave from the historical center of Hebron in the H1 special zone, where Palestinians are under semi-permanent curfew. On foot, we head toward the first checkpoint separating the historical center from the rest of the city. We take a group taxi which drives us as far as the limits of Area B. The road is blocked by a barrier built by Israel to stop vehicles with white Palestinian license plates from entering Bypass Road 60. We get out of the taxi and pass through the barrier on foot. On the other side, we find a bus reserved for Palestinians that goes as far as Bethlehem. During the trip, the bus stops to pick up other passengers. There are no cars with white license plates on this part of the road; the bus is the only vehicle allowed to travel along the bypass road from Hebron to Bethlehem.

We stop in front of a checkpoint at the gates of Bethlehem. Israeli soldiers search the bus. Shortly afterwards, we get off the bus and pass through the checkpoint on foot. On the other side, we find another group taxi which we use to continue our trip. We cannot proceed north using Bypass Road 60, which bypasses Bethlehem going toward Jerusalem, because it is forbidden to Palestinians who do not have a special entry permit. We are forced to detour toward the south-west. At Beit Sahour, we change taxis again. We go down a secondary street that is particularly dangerous, with lots of checkpoints. Whether we'll be able to take this route or not is uncertain. We come across various Israeli army jeeps that are patrolling the roads. The taxi drivers call

each other on their phones to exchange information on which roads are passable and free of military patrols. Taking various winding roads, we get to Al 'Ubeidiya. The taxi driver asks us to get out because there's a mobile checkpoint up ahead that he can't go around with the car. Following the other passengers, we go around it on foot and further on, 150 meters in the distance, we find other taxi drivers who are waiting to take us to the next checkpoint.

We reach Abu Dis. The taxi stops next to huge reinforced concrete retaining blocks that divide Abu Dis from East Jerusalem. Here we find other taxis that continue on toward the north. They confirm that we can get at least as far as Ramallah. But they don't know if we can get any further than that. They tell us that once we get to Ramallah we'll find out if there are any taxis for Nablus. During the trip, we leave Area B near Ma'ale Admim, taking Road 1 until it intersects with Road 458. Here, we see a lot of cars with yellow Israeli license plates and group taxis with white Palestinian plates. We get to the Qalandiya checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah. At the checkpoint, we find a taxi for Nablus. We go back along a section of the road to be able to hook up with Bypass Road 60 going north. We are surrounded by a large number of colonist cars.

We continue our trip without stopping. Various colonies come into view as we drive past them. When the road narrows and becomes unpaved, there are no more colonies to be seen. Long before reaching Nablus, the taxi abandons the main road to take a secondary street running through an olive orchard. We ask the taxi driver why he doesn't continue along the road that leads directly to Nablus. He answers that further on there's a checkpoint that we can't get through. We go on through the olive trees until we come out again onto the bypass road. We drive along it for a short distance until coming to the Nablus entry checkpoint. We cross it on foot, showing our European passports to the soldiers, who are very surprised to find us there.

Many of the Palestinians are forced to go back. Once we have crossed the checkpoint, we take a new taxi to Nablus. There the taxi drivers tell us that we can't continue north because there are no passable roads. The army has closed all the roads today, they say. But after waiting for a few minutes, one taxi driver claims that he knows which roads to take to get around the checkpoint. We get into his taxi and take a dirt road, through the middle of the countryside, until the taxi driver tells us to get out before a checkpoint that will lead us back onto a normal road. In the distance, soldiers shout at us with rifles pointed that no one is allowed through here. Our journey ends here.

From the colony of Kiriat Arba, with a yellow-plated Israeli taxi, we start off on Bypass Road 60. We pass through the first checkpoint we come to without stopping. We note that some of the sections of the road we're on are the same as the ones we traveled along in the Palestinian bus. There are no cars with white Palestinian license plates. We pass through the checkpoint before arriving at the entry to Jerusalem. We bypass Bethlehem through a tunnel and viaduct. In some places, the road is protected from stone-throwing by barriers. The bypass road climbs over the Palestinian village of Beit Jalla, passing above it like a bridge. We drive through the traffic for Jerusalem, continuing northwards. At the checkpoint, we are stopped. After a few questions, we are allowed to continue. We proceed to the colony of Kedumin, where our journey ends.

ASYMMETRIES | ALESSANDRO PETTI

Contemporary cities and territories are often depicted as fluid spaces, without borders, lacking an exterior, and continuously traversed by flows.[1] This is part of the idea that interconnected global cities form an autonomous transnational space.[2] There exists a rhetoric and an imaginary tied to globalization about a new freedom of movement and the elimination of distances made possible by new electronic and mechanical infrastructures. These urban and territorial representations implode when something goes wrong, revealing their inadequacies and bias. Parallel to the proliferation of new computer, financial, and economic networks, the number of borders, barriers, and checkpoints for the protection of these networks has multiplied.

While flows become increasingly intangible, the fortification of physical space is accelerating. This has created a territorial system in which the *archipelago* (the smooth space of flows) and the *enclave* (the space of exception) coexist.[3] These two figures inhabit the same space, but their cohabitation is asymmetrical. On the one hand, elites who manage the space of flows live in an archipelago that they perceive to be the entirety of the world. On the other, there are spaces in which the rules of the archipelago are suspended, creating legal and economic vacuums. The archipelago is a system of connected islands; enclaves are simply islands. The archipelago can accommodate both legal and illegal flows, whereas enclaves have no connection to flows whatsoever. Enclaves are isolated by a power that may be internal or external to them; a power that they submit to, or which they exert.

There is a substantial difference between being enclosed and enclosing oneself; it is what distinguishes a concentration camp from a luxury community. In his book *The Capsular Civilization*, Lieven De Cauter claims that gated communities and immigrant camps or detention centers are mirror images of each other, in the same way that tourist areas and ghettos function in relation to one another.[4] The camp is the counterpart of the fortress; a fortress is a machine of exclusion, while a camp is one of reclusion. De Cauter points out that in order to reflect on cities and territories at the same time, we must think in dual terms: entertainment versus control, opening versus isolation. Connection is what makes archipelagos necessary and possible, while disconnection is what creates enclaves.

A group of islands creates an archipelago when relations exist between one and another; when a space of flows exists. Manuel Castells asserts that in contemporary cities, this space is constituted by flows of information, organization, capital, images, and symbols, and that thanks to new communication technologies, this flow is able to generate an integrated global network.[5] For Castells, the space of flows is a space capable of shaping new urban conditions and a new type of society, the "networked society." The space of the networked society is governed by the most affluent members of the elite who live in superconnected cities and spaces, from where they exert enormous power.

The space of flows ... can be described ... by the combination of at least three layers of material supports ... The first layer, the first material support of the space of flows is actually constituted by a circuit of electronic impulses (microelectronics, telecommunications, computer processing, broadcasting systems, and high-speed transportation)... The second layer of the flow space is constituted by its nodes and hubs. The space of flows is not placeless, although its structural logic is... The third important layer of the space of flows refers to the spatial organization of the dominant, managerial elites (rather than classes).[6]

For Castells, the space of flows is the fruit of technological innovations that have allowed people who are geographically distant to participate in shared social practices. His analysis is therefore predominantly centered on intangible flows. From this point of view, practices of control and segregation exerted on the movement of people in physical space remain marginal.[7]

Early theorists of cyberspace believed that access to new technologies would give birth to a world without borders or barriers, in which bodies would dematerialize into data. This vision has remained a utopia, belied by the dramatic evidence of billions of people who are excluded both from access to networks and free circulation in a world presumed to be without borders. Quite to the contrary, the movement of bodies in physical space has become subject to iron-handed control by governments and private entities. The illusion of a world without fences has been replaced by a reality in which the spaces of freedom have been occupied by an evolving form of power that has followed the passage, foreseen by Michel Foucault, from a disciplinary society to a society of control. Apropos of this transition, Gilles Deleuze writes:

> The control society is a type of society in which mechanisms of control become increasingly "democratic"... The normalizing devices of discipline that act within our shared everyday practices are intensified and generalized in societies of control; unlike disciplinary societies, however, this control extends well beyond the structural places of social institutions by means of a free-floating network.[8]

In societies of control, we are continually monitored and our movements are systematically recorded and filed away "by means of a free-floating network." We are all, in other words, potential criminals. If Foucault discerned the spatial model of the disciplinary society in the prison and panopticon, where deviant behavior was brought into line with normalcy, in the control society, in addition to creating normalizing institutions and penetrating the very materiality of the body (fingerprints, faces, DNA, etc.), power grounds itself in territory. Airports, streets, public squares, stations, houses, offices, resort villages, and sports centers are increasingly subject to widespread surveillance. No longer targeted, surveillance has become generalized.

The space of flows, both tangible and intangible, is the favored space for power to exercise its control, and it is the occupation of these spaces that puts an elite in a position of dominion. If the elite is able to exchange information and travel faster, the majority are denied the universally recognized right of movement and residence.

In order to explode the contradictions of a space of flows whose access is fortified, controlled, and monitored, we should focus on the tangible displacements of bodies in space rather than on the intangible flows of information, finance, and goods. An approach that investigates the regimes imposed on movements of bodies in space has the advantage of making the forms of power explicit. This perspective was also suggested by Castells:

> The space of flows does not infuse the entire field of human experience in the network society. The vast majority of people in both advanced and traditional societies live in places, and, therefore perceive their own space as a place-based space.[9]

His theory of urbanism in the information age posits that cities are simultaneously structured and destructured by competing logics: on the one hand, the logic of the space of flows, which links individual places into a network connecting people and activities in distant geographical locations, and on the other, the logic of place, experiences, and activities within the confines of territory. Castells believes that places are redundant and superfluous in the organization of the space of flows and power. Yet places are where the legal foundations of cities and states are instituted, where relations between the city and its inhabitants are created, where the borders between a territory and a people are established. These are the spaces of exception, places that are anything but marginal to understanding how power is exercised over space.

The territorial model of the Occupied Territories is based precisely on controlling the rights of movement and residence. The archipelago—enclave model has put into crisis the notion of citizenship which had defined the political relationship of the individual with the city ever since the classical age. In the era of globalization, citizenship is no longer a factor of inclusion and equality that goes beyond religious and racial belonging. Citizenship has become an element of exclusion and discrimination; the devices an elite use to manage global flows of people, in complete contradiction with the proclaimed universality and equality of so-called fundamental rights, especially those of freedom of movement and residence. Inclusion—exclusion and connection—disconnection are logics according to which cities were constructed and continue to be constructed.

DISCONNECTION

While infrastructure and networks act to reinforce connections, they are also the instruments by which entire parts of territories and populations are controlled,

filtered, and segregated. A space of mobility and flows for some always implies the existence of barriers for others. This apparently banal feature has been underestimated by modernist urban planners, for whom modern infrastructure networks were the support for a harmonious spatial and social order. In their conception, modern infrastructural networks are capable of sweeping away old hierarchies and founding a new, standardized social order. The use of the automobile in Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City*, for example, allowing residents to move around in the boundless "City-Region," was a genuine vehicle of freedom. Infrastructure always presupposes a spatial and social ideology.

The road network, and electric, water, sewer, and communication grids were originally imagined to reach everyone in the same manner and at the same cost. Standardized and uniform modernist infrastructure was constructed by the state in the collective interest. This ideology, which in some ways continues to survive even today, was put into crisis by two factors: the inadequacy of the rational paradigm, including planning, which was too rigid and bureaucratic to include the new dynamics of urban agglomerations, and the privatization of infrastructure networks, aimed at connecting the most affluent and most lucrative islands.

This process of infrastructural subdivision and spatial fragmentation is what Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin described as "splintering urbanism."[10] Begun in the 1970s, this process has transformed cities all around the world. New urban areas such as shopping centers, amusement parks, residential complexes, airports, conference centers, and resort villages are connected through a selective infrastructure network that is capable of forming autonomous, privatized space, putting the notion of public space and the very idea of the city into crisis.

BYPASSING

With the collapse of the modernist ideal, private networks providing potentially high-efficiency services were developed and promoted. Fiber optic networks, superhighways, tunnels, bridges, and new energy networks tend to either bypass old networks or be superimposed on top of them, connecting some parts of the territory and ignoring others that are less appealing from a business point of view. For the places and people that are bypassed by new infrastructural systems, all that remains are public networks or informal mechanisms.

Bypass exists in all infrastructure networks, but it is most obvious in highway systems. Today, the highway system directs the development of residential settlements and our way of moving through space. After leaving our fortified garages in our cars, we drive down armored routes that take us to protected office areas or shopping centers.

In the 1990s, privatization radicalized technologies of control, differentiating various groups based on the power they held over the space. This has created a territory that can be crossed at different speeds depending on the person's income and national, ethnic, and social belonging. Electronic devices such as sensors and closed-circuit video cameras watch over access points and monitor toll payments.

Surveillance goes hand in hand with exclusion. Only the wealthiest users can bypass congested public streets and gain access to privileged road networks. The same roadways that were seen as devices for progress and modernization in the visions of Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier have become instruments of control and segregation. In the Occupied Territories, highway infrastructure physically connects and disconnects entire segments of the population and territory. The layout of a street can have the same importance as a border; it can include or exclude, unite or divide, create belonging or estrangement. This is radically opposed to the rhetoric of a world without borders, where nation states no longer exercise any power. Instead, old and new borders are being reinforced in both contemporary society and space, and nation state politics appear to be anything but worn out.

PERMEABILITY

The Israeli colonies in the Occupied Territories are strategic points for controlling the territory.[11] As points of control dispersed across a "hostile territory," the settlements could not function unless they were connected to each other and to Israel through a continuous and uniform infrastructure.

The combination of colony and infrastructure generates what Israeli anthropologist Jeff Halper defines as "the matrix of control."[12] If we compare the map of the West Bank territory with the plan of a prison, we can note that: a) the prison officers' guard posts correspond to the colonies situated on the hills; b) the corridors that allow for the cells to be policed correspond to the highway networks that bypass Palestinian villages; c) the cells where the prisoners are incarcerated correspond to the villages inhabited by the Palestinians.[13] In addition to linking settlements, the highway system blocks the development of Palestinian villages, creating borders and barriers between communities that at one time were connected. According to a B'Tselem report:

> Contrary to the customary purpose of roads, which are a means to connect people with places, the routes of the roads that Israel builds in the West Bank are at times intended to achieve the opposite purpose. Some of the new roads in the West Bank were planned to place a physical barrier to stifle Palestinian urban development. These roads prevent the natural joining of communities and creation of a contiguous Palestinian built-up area in areas in which Israel wants to maintain control, either for military reasons or for settlement purposes.[14]

This strategy of controlling flows and using roads as barriers has its roots in the history of the occupation of the West Bank. Immediately after the 1967 war, in addition to the construction of Jewish outposts, a highway system allowing for the circulation of military and civilian vehicles was needed to control the occupied territory. According to Benvenisti Meron and Khayat Sholomo, throughout the following decade, highway networks were planned primarily along a north—south axis. Since there was no desire for integration with the Israeli highway system, no roads running east–west were planned. Attention was focused particularly on consolidating Highway 90, which runs from north to south along the border with Jordan and is easily reached from Jerusalem via Highway 1. According to the military strategists, in the event of an Arab invasion, this would have allowed military vehicles to easily reach the border and respond to the attack.

During the next decade, with the presentation of the new master plan for the settlements of Judea and Samaria, the geopolitical strategy for constructing networks changed. The Settlement Master Plan for 1983–1986 expressly stated that one of the primary considerations in choosing the site to establish settlements is to limit construction in Palestinian villages, while introducing regulations designed to restrict their growth.[15]

The plan envisaged clearing distances between one and four hundred feet for the construction of new highway routes, well over the area required for the planned traffic speed and density. For major and regional roads, the clearance distance reached up to 2,000 feet. This brought the total of the area occupied by the infrastructure network to 91,923 acres, almost the entire built area of the West Bank.[16]

Given these proportions, it seems clear that the objective of the plan was not to connect Palestinian villages, but rather to build a matrix that would cage them in. The decision to grant such a large area to infrastructure was a strategic expedient to physically and bureaucratically curb Palestinian expansion. The clearance distances specified in the plan allowed for the demolition of a significant number of houses. For security reasons, new Palestinians houses could not be built less than three kilometers from highways. This regulation did not apply to Jewish settlements, which were built based on special urban plans.

Many objections were raised but ignored, while the approval procedures for new construction remained unclear. Although the plan was never formally approved, based on the regulations contained in it, the occupation forces went ahead with the expropriations and demolitions needed for the construction of roads reserved for the exclusive use of Israeli settlements. The plan included the design of an infrastructure network that connected the West Bank settlements with the metropolitan areas of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Driven by lower rents, state incentives, and the possibility of living far from the most congested areas, many Israeli residents decided to move to new West Bank colonies, which were now well-served by a new and efficient highway grid. During the peace process in the 1990s, this logic reached its apex. According to the same B'Tselem report:

Starting in 1993, with the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (Oslo I) and the redeployment of Israeli Defence Forces to the West Bank, the bypass road system gained momentum. In 1995, new road construction reached its peak. Israel began the construction of over 62 miles of roads in the West Bank alone, more than 20 percent of all roadwork performed in that year.[17]

The new highway grid provided Israel with spatial control over the West Bank. Its flows are under direct control of Israel, which directs them through permanent and temporary checkpoints, barriers, and military patrols. For a Palestinian traveler, there is no possibility whatsoever to go from one city to another without passing through one or more checkpoints. The matrix of bypass roads that circle major Palestinian cities is a formidable straitjacket.

Most of the highways were constructed on land belonging to Palestinians. Expropriations carried out by Israel in the Occupied Territories since 1967 were, and continue to be, an instrument of colonization and control. Before the 1990s, expropriations were carried out for "military reasons." Once the geopolitical situation changed, so did the pretexts for the expansion of new settlements and the construction of new roads. During the Oslo peace process, Israel expropriated in the name of the "public interest," claiming that the bypass roads were also useful to Palestinians. During the Second Intifada, the expropriations were continued for "security reasons."[18] The line between military and civil law, between standards and exceptions does not exist.[19]

Although the bypass roads were not built in the interest of Palestinian cities and villages, whose growth they served to block, before the Second Intifada most of the roads were technically accessible to everyone. Their use by Palestinians was limited, however, by a number of factors, both large and small, such as a lack of entry and exit roads near Palestinian cities, an almost complete lack of road signs indicating Palestinian towns, and public transportation stops restricted solely to Israeli colonists and soldiers.

When the Second Intifada began in 2000, Israel drastically cut Palestinian access to many of the roads in the West Bank, including various bypass roads. It is a regime of arbitrary and unwritten prohibitions, categorized by B'Tselem as: a) roads that Palestinians are completely forbidden to use; b) roads that can be used by Palestinians only if they have a special permit that is extremely difficult to obtain and with a restricted use of vehicles; c) roads whose access is controlled by checkpoints, some permanent and others temporary.[20] This regime is implemented by Israeli security forces and has dramatic effects on mobility. Palestinians caught using a road forbidden to them or lacking a permit risk being arrested and having their vehicle confiscated. Regarding this regime of prohibitions, B'Tselem notes that:

The policy is entirely based on verbal orders given to soldiers in the field. The strongest proof of the regime is the local population's awareness of its existence. Palestinians have almost completely ceased using many of these roads, even when entry to the road is not blocked by physical obstacles or staffed checkpoints. In response to questioning by B'Tselem, the IDF let it be known that an order from 1970 granted the authority to restrict travel and movement "to anyone who is an authorized military commander."[21]

In many cases, travel on the roads using one's own vehicle is forbidden. This is why, in order to be able to travel, Palestinians use group transport vehicles that shuttle between one roadblock and another. B'Tselem estimates that there are seventeen roads whose access is completely prohibited to Palestinian vehicles (about 75 miles); ten roads whose access is partially prohibited (150 miles); and fourteen roads whose use is restricted (225 miles). It must be kept in mind that these distances are relative to a territory with an average width of 30 miles and an average length of 190 miles. Forbidding access to even a few miles of a road can mean causing entire areas to be disconnected.

THE TRANS-ISRAEL HIGHWAY

Highway 6, the Trans-Israel Highway, was officially completed in January 2004. It extends from the border with Lebanon, in the north, to the city of Be'er Sheva in the south. Every road that traverses Israel and the West Bank from east to west intersects it.[22] By observing Palestine-Israel from the point of view of its infrastructure networks, the two spaces—seemingly separated by walls and borders—are completely unified. The islands of the colonial archipelago in the Occupied Territories are joined together and connected with Israel through an efficient and continuous highway system. The highway runs parallel to the wall in certain parts, revealing that the space of flows and apparatuses of exclusion are complementary. The wall acts as a membrane that allows some flows to pass through while blocking others. Together with Highway 6, it forms a single system capable of including and excluding, connecting and disconnecting. This logic does not apply solely to the West Bank: it also invades the territory of Israel.

The government's long-standing and explicit policies of "Judaizing" the Galilee to ensure a Jewish majority and prevent territorial contiguity between cities, towns, and villages, are furthered by the highway's construction. The Trans-Israel Highway has required massive expropriations from Palestinian communities in Israel, while limiting their natural expansion through the construction of highways and settlements that primarily serves the Jewish population. Eighty-five percent of the land confiscated for the road's construction is from Arab landowners, in a state where only three percent of the land is Arab.[23]

The highway was constructed by a private company that obtained special status through a law voted into existence by the Knesset in 1995 that allows it to confiscate land. Public interest is thus contracted out directly to private companies. The legal status of these companies is ambiguous. Public and private functions are mentioned, depending on the contexts the companies are involved in.

The highway is equipped with a "free flow" toll system which eliminates the need for the driver to stop at the booth. When the vehicle enters the highway, it is scanned and photographed by an optical surveillance system. The vehicle owners' data is collected by the private company through direct access to the Ministry of Transportation databases. The owner receives a bill for the amount owed directly at their home. Failure to pay can result in the owner's driving license being withdrawn, and, in more serious cases, the private highway police can confiscate the vehicle.

DIFFUSION

Practices for the control and surveillance of flows are not specific to the Palestinian Occupied Territories. They appear in other geographical contexts—from Australia and East Asia to North America—and they take form in various ways: in toll-road freeway bypasses, "sanitary cordons," and pedestrian overpasses and tunnels.

SR 91 Freeway, Road 407, and Transurban CityLink are the names of new bypass road networks in Los Angeles, Toronto, and Melbourne, respectively. They are toll highways built to circumvent the overcrowded public roadways and use electronic control systems for entry and exit, freeing drivers from having to stop at toll booths. Some have toll fares that vary depending on the time of travel and traffic flow. The construction companies that built them offer reserve spaces for paying customers who want to get across the city even more quickly.

The Transurban CityLink in Melbourne, inaugurated in 1999, is fourteen miles long and links the most affluent neighborhoods on the city with the downtown area and airport.[24] Offering faster travel times, toll highways are capable of determining the lines along which future expansions of the city will develop. Projects like CityLink can become pivotal in determining the evolution of a city's form; they are structural and tend to set the agenda of what sort of urban space is created for future generations. At issue is the future of public space itself, in its social, technical, and aesthetic forms.

In the wake of a period of economic and political renewal, new settlements for the emerging class have sprung up in Istanbul. They offer "Western lifestyles," social uniformity, comfort, and security from crime, as well as refuge from the multiethnic, chaotic, polluted city. Esenkent and Bogazkoy are two postmodern settlements built to the west of the city, composed of luxurious apartments furnished with swimming pools and gardens.[25] Highways separate the settlements from the surrounding

informal settlements, while at the same time constraining their growth. Furthermore, these roads have been sterilized of activities and people who are considered incompatible with the smooth space of flows. Individual private transport has been privileged, excluding those who use public transport.

The use of highways as a sanitary cordon can also be found in some Asian cities. In the endless suburbs of Jakarta, gated communities, shopping centers, and office areas are linked by public or private toll highways. The privileged social classes have moved to the safest and least polluted places in the vast outskirts, abandoning the old city, which, with its poor infrastructure, they consider to be dangerous. The major roadways that link the islands of the wealthy soar over the old city center.[26] In Manila, to build the new toll road bypass network called the Metro Manila Skyway, various informal neighborhoods were demolished, forcing their inhabitants to evacuate. To reinforce exclusive use of the highway network that connects these islands, access is forbidden for traditional vehicles. Jeepneys, buses, and motorcycles are thus forced to use the old streets.

The creation of privatized spaces for flows has even invaded spaces designed for pedestrians. Raised or underground pedestrian routes have emerged in financial centers, connecting one building to another while bypassing the city streets. Because of this, the streets and squares that for years symbolized public life have slowly and inexorably been replaced by tunnels and skyway bridges. Workers and executives never have to step out of their cars other than inside a private parking garage. Entrances to buildings are monitored by video cameras and security staff. The use of tunnels and pedestrian bridges has compromised the indiscriminate life and use of the public streets. In some business centers, simply going somewhere on foot automatically makes one suspect. The street, a place of human activity and chance encounters, has been transformed into a realm of fear and surveillance.

THIS TEXT IS AN EXITED EXCERPT FROM | ALESSANDRO PETTI, *ARCIPELAGHI E ENCLAVE* (MILAN: BRUNO MONDADORI, 2007)

1. The rhetoric of a world with no more borders and of the network in particular is the favorite rhetoric of economic reporting.

2. Saskia Sassen, *Global Networks, Linked Cities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

3. For a thorough study of this model, see Alessandro Petti, *Arcipelaghi e enclave* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2007).

4. Lieven De Cauter, *The Capsular Civilization: On the City in the Age of Fear* (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2004).

5. Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

6. Ibid., 412–415.

7. Castells' analysis of the space of flows is largely based on research work conducted during the 1980s, summarized and developed in his book *The Informational City: Information, Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban-Regional Process* (1989). This subsequently emerged as his theory on the space of flows presented in *The Network Society*. His theory is very much a product of the "cultural climate" of the Eighties: faith in the digital revolution, the end of history, the end of the nation state, cyberspace, and so forth. Sometime later, partly in response to changes on the geopolitical scene, Castells revisited these ideas.

8. Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2000).

9. Manuel Castells, "Space of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age," in *The Cybercities Reader,* ed. Stephen Graham (London: Routledge, 2003).

10. Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

11. See Benvenisti *Meron and Khayat Sholomo, The West Bank and Gaza Atlas* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Post, 1988); Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land* (London and New York: Verso, 2007).

12. Jeff Halper, "The Key to Peace: Dismantling the Matrix of Control," *The Israeli Commission Against House Demolitions* (1999), https://icahd.org/get-the-facts/matrix-control/ (2018).

13. Jeff Halper used the analogy between a prison plan and the map of the West Bank specifically to deconstruct the theory of the "generous offer" that Barak made to Yasser Arafat in 2000 by offering him ninety-four percent of the West Bank. Halper claims in his article that only two percent of a prison space is required to control the inmates. By maintaining a modest six percent of the territory, Israel would thus have continued to control all the borders, as well as the underground and the air space of the Palestinian Territories.

14. B'Tselem, F*orbidden Roads: Israel's Discriminatory Road Regime in the West Bank* (August 2004), 7–8.

15. Ibid., 7.

16. In 1987, the built area of the infrastructure network in the West Bank covered 106,255 acres.

17. B'Tselem, *Forbidden Roads*, 7.

18. The expropriations occurred, depending on the cases, for military reasons or for the good of the population in the particular places, in compliance with the laws in force prior to the occupation (Land Law: Acquisition for Public Purpose, Law No. 2 of 1953), or through the suspension of any of the regulations implemented for security reasons. The instrumental use of ambiguity and suspension of rules is also evident in the construction of roads created between colonies in the B areas, only subsequently legitimized through military orders.

19. In the Occupied Territories, an Israeli Civil Administration is in charge to which Palestinians have to apply for construction and work permits, and so forth. The heads of this administration are not civilians; they are members of the military who are subject to military orders. This is an example of how the line between military and civil administration is nonexistent.

20. As of July 2004, only 3,412 Palestinians from among the 2.3 million Palestinians living in the West Bank hold this special permit, known as a "Special Movement Permit at Internal Checkpoints in Judea and Samaria." In actuality, Palestinians cannot travel from one city to another in their own vehicle.

21. Order Regarding Defense Regulations (No. 378), 5730–1970. In B'Tselem, *Forbidden Roads,* 42.

22. The Trans-Samaria Highway (Road 6) starting from the coast near Ramat, which passes through the settlement of Ariel to reach the Jordanian Valley; Road 45, which starts from Modin, passing through the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, to reach the Jordanian valley; Road 7, which starts from Ashdod, passing through the settlements of Etzion and Ma'ale Adumim, to reach the Jordanian Valley. The north–south highways in Israel, Highway 2, Highway 4 and the newly built Highway 6; expressways Highway 60 and 90 in the Occupied Territories, together with the east–west routes listed above, form the main axes of the large-scale grid, flanked by a secondary road system that completes the matrix.

23. Jeff Halper, "The Road to Apartheid," *Alternative Information Center* XVI 5 (Jerusalem/Bethlehem, May 2000): 3.

24. David Holmes, "Cybercommuting on an Information Superhighway: The Case of Melbourne's CityLink," in *The Cybercities Reader*, ed. Stephen Graham, 177.

25. Asu Aksoy and Kevin Robins, "Modernism and the Millennium: Trial by Space in Istanbul," in *City* 8 (1997): 21–36.

26. Abidin Kusno, "Custodians of (Trans)nationality: Metropolitan Jakarta, Middle-Class Prestige and the Chinese," in *City, Space, and Globalization: An International Perspective,* ed. Hemalata C. Dandekar (Ann Arbor: Collage of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan, 1999).

Interlude II

TEMPORARY MANDATE | SANDI HILAL

Sometime in 2006, I was accompanied on my first visit to Fawwar Refugee Camp by Muna Budieri, an architect working as head of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program at its headquarters in Amman. Despite the fact that we had emphasized the importance of having women present in the community meeting, we entered a room full of men and only two women sitting on one side. I would later learn that Fawwar is a very conservative camp, and women are rarely part of public life. Muna introduced us and initiated the meeting by using a set of words I would use myself in the following meetings: "We are here as part of a new project that UNRWA is launching called the Camp Improvement Program and I am happy to inform you that Fawwar Refugee Camp, together with two other camps in the West Bank, has been chosen as pilot projects to begin the first phase of research. Very soon we will begin a participatory planning process together with you in order to identify the main priorities for the camp." As she finished, a heated discussion immediately broke out. I was startled, but Muna did not seem to be surprised. I then understood why she had decided to come with me on my first visit.

The people attending the meeting, refugees living in the camps, were suspicious and confused. Why was UNRWA only now interested in partnering with them? They had always taken decisions without consulting them, why would they want to consider their opinion now? Why is UNRWA suddenly using new terms like "community participation processes?" Is UNRWA trying to co-opt them into this project, in order to achieve some questionable political move covered by a sense of consensus from the community? Why improve the camp now, and what does that mean? Would they be sacrificing their right of return by accepting to be resettled and participating in this camp improvement process? Is this program an attempt to normalize the life of refugees in the camp?

As questions continued to be raised, I perceived that the refugees were somehow torn between excitement and fear. Excited to be chosen for this adventure to improve the camp and have better conditions of daily life, they were also very afraid of being accused of normalizing the life in the camp, which might jeopardize the struggle for the right to return.

I somehow identified with the refugees' concerns. A few years before, when I was still completing my master's degree in Rome, my thesis concluded by claiming that there

was no place for architectural interventions in refugee camps. Instead of an architectural intervention, I proposed to paint the alleys of Aida Refugee Camp—a small camp in Bethlehem—with various colors where each would indicate the cities and the villages from where the refugees fled. My claim was that without assuring the refugees that improving their lives would not jeopardize their right to come back home, spatial interventions would be problematic and would never be accepted or welcomed by the camp's inhabitants. As expected, my thesis jury was not at all pleased with my intervention and my evaluation did not go well. They considered it an attempt to avoid doing a project, rather than taking a political stance.

Now, in Fawwar Refugee Camp, I was part of the team who would bring architecture to the camp. I was at least formally on Muna's side, which was trying to convince its residents that architectural interventions are not the enemy of the camp. But personally, I was not sure about what Muna was telling them. My major question was: what is architecture doing in a refugee camp?

Muna listened to the residents, and at the end she added: "I understand your concerns, but it is important to understand that this program is part of a shift in the way UNRWA has been working in camps. The Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program has been formed as a response to the Geneva conference of 2004, where all stakeholders, states, and people concerned with the protection of the right of return met and concluded the urgent need to improve the difficult conditions in which refugees live without jeopardizing the right of return."

We left Fawwar and I was confused. Maybe it was a mistake to have accepted this job. Why would I want to be remembered as the architect who designed and built spaces in refugee camps? Why would I ever risk being seen as the architect who contributed to the normalization of camps? As I arrived home, I felt it necessary to understand UNRWA's position in greater detail. Was there really a conspiracy plan behind it, as refugees were insinuating?

I looked up the Geneva Conference and found the keynote speech of UNRWA's general commissioner, Peter Hansen.[1] As I began to read, the current historical moment was described as a very peculiar one, with a certain urgency that needs to be addressed. I was intrigued to understand why this man thought this period was different than others for refugees.

> I would like to refer briefly to those aspects of UNRWA and our role, which are extraordinary and special in themselves, and which have merited the holding of this conference.

> UNRWA was established almost 55 years ago. It was conceived as a temporary program to deal with refugees who had lost their homes and/or livelihood in that part of Mandatory Palestine which became the State of

Israel. Originally, the thinking and the hope of the international community was that matters would be resolved within a few years, and, meanwhile, the refugees required emergency humanitarian relief.

> In a stroke of vision and good sense, a component was introduced of what today is called "development," "income-generation," and "self-reliance"—the antithesis of welfare. This led to the "works" part of our name.

> Hence, when the United Nations itself was in its infancy, it developed one of its earliest programs as a mix of relief and development, something which the international community struggles to combine even today.

His words touched me, particularly as I felt that he was precisely describing the meeting we had where I had witnessed the complexity and contradictions in combining relief and development. As it is named the "United Nations Relief and Works Agency," Hansen highlighted the dilemma between being responsible for providing a decent life for refugees while not jeopardizing their political right of return, especially because the "right of return" was prescribed in Resolution 194, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 11, 1948. Therefore, UNRWA must respect this resolution even if it has no political mandate to either advocate for or fulfill it. His words navigated between the impossible position UNRWA found itself in and the dilemma of refugees trying to understand how to live a condition of permanent temporariness while waiting for a just solution.

I continued reading, aloud, in the middle of the silent night, afraid of what might come next, preferring to hear my words break the silence:

> Unfortunately, the "temporary" is still with us. UNRWA is still here, mandated to continue to provide "relief" and "works" assistance and support to a Palestine refugee population which has grown to over 4 million registered refugees. Over the decades, in the face of wars, conflict, and ensuing turbulence, UNRWA has had to deal with waves of first-time, second-time, and third-time refugees. It has had to deal with one ad hoc situation after another. Each time it seemed that the most severe problems had been dealt with, matters grew worse, and UNRWA was asked, via resolutions and other instruments, to take on additional task

"I never thought about that!" I shouted loudly, risking to wake my daughter. I tried to stay calm. Hansen was trying to say was that UNRWA is as temporary as refugee camps, if not even more so. The white car that was given to me, the offices, the white and blue flag, led one to think of UNRWA as a solid agency, aware of what comes next. However, now it was clear that they do not have any clear plan for the future. All they have is a survival plan and are, like refugees, living one day at a time. "Of course there is no conspiracy theory," I thought to myself. There is no UNRWA plan to resettle

refugees—or not. All they are trying to do is provide basic services year after year, without clear guidelines or direction. In fact, Hansen would continue his speech by complaining about the lack of funds and resources that UNRWA was receiving from the international community, urging them to ensure minimum survival funds for the agency. If UNRWA would fail to fulfill its duty, it would be a message to refugees that the world is not standing near them. Excitedly, I continued to read:

The situation in which UNRWA, and Palestinian refugee communities, find themselves today, should be seen in the context of an inexorable and escalating worsening in their daily lives. Every decade has been marked by events which have had some positive, but largely negative, consequences. To recount briefly:

| The 1950s were marked by a certain consolidation of the relief and works program, a shift from tents and caves to shelters and prefabs, but also a receding hope of a quick solution to the refugee question.

| The 1960s saw an improvement in schooling, and the introduction of training, of co-ed schools—the first in the region—but also the 1967 war which led to the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to a phenomenon which was at that time unique: Palestinians becoming refugees a second time, and the birth of a second generation of refugees.

| The 1970s saw continued improvements and expansion in vocational training, a generation of educated and trained Palestine refugees who contributed to the socio-economic development of the host lands, as well as in the Gulf and elsewhere; but this decade also saw war (1973) and conflict, leading once again to refugees being displaced, for the third time.

| The 1980s saw a major invasion (Lebanon), which had very specific social, economic, and "political" consequences for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon; and the start of the first intifada, which affected primarily the refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

| The 1990s were marked by the (first) Gulf war, which led to a mass movement of Palestine refugees and other Palestinians away from the Gulf countries; a consequent worsening in the lives of refugees as overseas remittances dropped and supporters of families became themselves applicants for aid; and the hope offered by the Oslo accords: the return of many Palestinians to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

| The beginning of the new century, the 2000s, saw a drastic worsening in every sector of the life of Palestinian refugee communities: the start of

the second intifada in late 2000; a retrogression in their social, civil, and political lives; a huge drop in safety and security; a massive increase in the applicant pool for relief and aid; a break in their schooling; massive setbacks in their ability to simply feed their families; a destruction of the infrastructure introduced in preceding decades; investments—physical, capital, national—laid waste; and a continuing loss of that most valuable, irreplaceable resource: human life.

I was feeling a mixture of sadness and satisfaction reading the description of this historical context that I knew too well. This speech felt personal and different from previous speeches I had heard from UN officials in the past. It was honest and seemed to be standing beside refugees, exercising its "neutrality" in a very brave manner. I felt understood by this man.; I felt real empathy. He continued highlighting this crucial moment of the history of refugees:

In short, where once refugee communities had, through their own hard work and determination, with the support of the international community and of major donors and of host governments, reached and in some cases exceeded, regional standards in health and education, they are now today at the bottom. The Palestinian refugee population is at a crucial juncture: as in many developing countries around the world, the benefits of available and efficient primary healthcare have led to sharp drops in child mortality and increases in life expectancy. As a result, the age pyramid of this population shows a very broad base, with 33% of refugees under 14 years of age, and a very broad middle, with 57% between 15 and 59 years old. The consequence is simple: we are faced with a cohort of refugees in their prime, enjoying a good level of health and literacy. It will be followed by another large cohort, those currently under 14 years of age. At this important juncture, what role model will they follow? That of the hooded, gun-slinging militant, or that of the modern young computer whiz? Will it be graduation caps and gowns or will it be unemployment and forced idleness? Will it be pride in achievement or pride in destruction? Will it be self-confidence and tolerance, or cynicism and bigotry?

Self-evidently, half of the Palestinian refugees to whom I am referring are women. At UNRWA, we take pride in having reached gender parity in our schools early on in our existence. Still, there is certainly scope for improvement. We have undertaken a thorough analysis of what else UNRWA could do to liberate fully the potential of Palestine refugee women.

Working with women and young refugees is a big challenge, especially in conservative places like Fawwar. How does one work with a marginalized group, and will I have the skills to do it? How are women going to perceive me? I am a Palestinian woman,

but I am not from Fawwar. Will they treat me as an outsider, or will I be able to find, together with them, especially the youth, a common struggle? I continued to read:

> The "youth bulge" is both a blessing and a challenge: it can present the opportunity of significant socio-economic development in the region, or it can become a harbinger of unemployment and disaffection. We cannot afford to disappoint the Palestinian refugee youth, not only because our failure to secure their future would come back to haunt us, but also because we would have sorely failed in our mission. It is with them foremost in our mind that we have developed a vision for the coming years, which aims at ensuring the following:

> | That the refugees of the upcoming generation (both men and women) are well prepared to play their rightful role in the socio-economic development of their community.

> | That all Palestinian refugees can live their life in dignity, free from the scourge of disease, within a decent living environment.

> | That the most vulnerable among them can count on our support in their time of need through a solid safety net while their own empowerment is stimulated through locally—based incentives towards self-reliance.

> | That their rights as refugees will be fully safeguarded for as long as it takes to find a just and lasting solution to the conflict of which they are the long-suffering victims.

There we were, two years after that speech, about to launch the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program. I felt scared but very motivated, challenged; a bit lost, but excited. I understood that a lot depended on me. I eagerly waited for the sun to rise in order to head back to Fawwar. Still unaware of what I was doing, I began my series of meetings with the community.

1. Peter Hansen, "UNRWA Commissioner-General keynote speech," Conference on *Palestine refugees* (Geneva, June 7–8, 2004), https://www.un.org/unispal/document/conference-on-palestine-refugees-geneva-7-8-june-2004-unrwa-commissioner-general-keynote-speech-unrwa-press-release/.

FAWWAR SQUARE

| 2008–2014

CREDITS
| SANDI HILAL WITH THE UNRWA CAMP INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN THE WEST BANK

LOCATION
| FAWWAR REFUGEE CAMP, HEBRON, PALESTINE

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
| PUBLIC SQUARE (230 M²)

PRIMARY MATERIALS
| STONE AND CONCRETE

IMAGES
| LUCA CAPUANO P.118–119
| DAAR P.118, 120–121
| IRIS MAKLER, P.121

In May 2008, an attempt to think about an open space of about 500 square meters in a crowded neighborhood of the Fawwar Refugee Camp was initiated. People in the neighborhood used to call the space *harajeh*. This term is rarely use in Arabic, and it is defined in various Arabic dictionaries as a tiny, inaccessible place crowded with trees where animals are not able to access. It is not a place where various forms of life can exist. None of the Fawwar's inhabitants knew why this term was used to describe the open space. Once the square was designed, constructed, and ready to be used, the inhabitants of Fawwar stopped referimg to the place as the harajeh and began to refer to it as a *saha*, meaning a square or a plaza.

AL MASHA/COMMON   MADAFEH/HOSPITALITY

MUJAWAARA/NEIGHBORING

PARTICIPATION

RETURNS

FAWWAR SQUARE | *Fawwar Refugee Camp* | 2014–2018
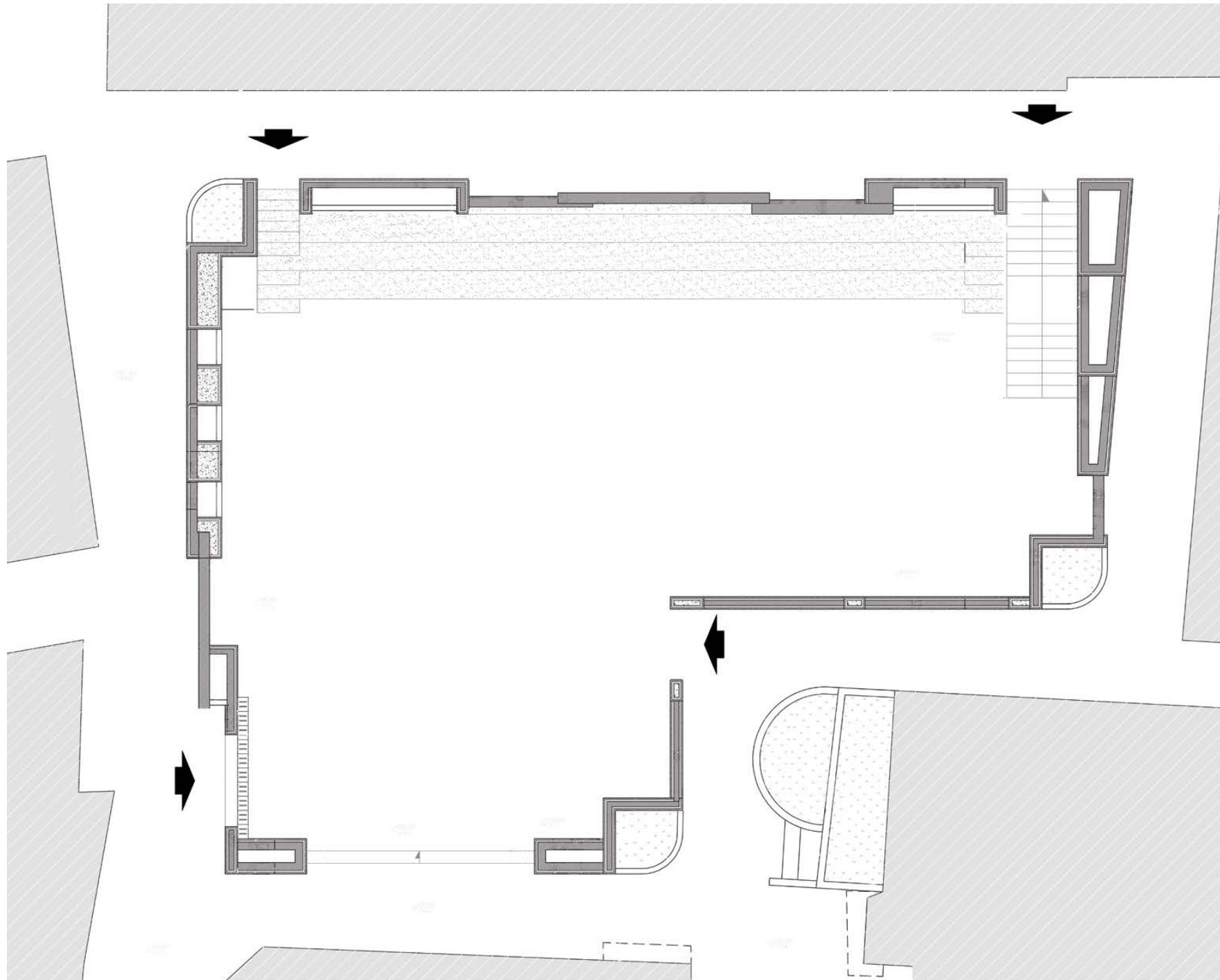
FAWWAR SQUARE | *Fawwar Refugee Camp* | 2014
Left | ARCHITECTURAL PLAN

ROOFLESS | SANDI HILAL

If we build a plaza in our refugee camp, it should be a closed one.

—FAWWAR REFUGEE CAMP INHABITANTS

This was the challenge posed by the inhabitants of Fawwar Refugee Camp to the UNRWA Camp Infrastructure and Improvement Program, where in 2009 I was directing a team of architects to design and build a plaza in one of the camp neighborhoods.[1] Throughout the participatory design process, the most emphatic requests came from several women who suggested the camp needed more safe spaces between houses for kids to play "under the eyes of their mothers." The few available recreational spaces on the outskirts of the camp were mainly used by older teenage boys. These spaces, usually enclosed by walls, locked at night, and protected by a guard, were the only images the camp inhabitants had of anything resembling public space.

Camps are political spaces and their built environment is a symbol of political struggle. How can one build public space in an exceptional environment where the concept of public and private doesn't exist? Where any urban elements that resemble those of a city threatens the temporality of the camps and therefore is seen as jeopardizing the refugees right of return? This has been the dilemma plaguing refugees since they were forced to replace their tents with houses. Elias Khoury remarkably describes this moment in his novel, *Bab el-Shams (Gate of the Sun)*:

> What do you call the refugee camp? Now you see houses, but early on the camp consisted of a group of tents. Then after we had built huts, they allowed us to put roofs over them. It was said that if we put actual roofs on our houses we'd forget Palestine, so we just put up zinc sheets. Do you know what zinc sheets do to you under the Beirut sun?[2]

Now, more than sixty years later, I am sitting with a team of architects and a concerned group of refugees questioning what building a plaza in a refugee camp might represent. Among them are Abu Rabih and Abu Rami, considered among the founders of Fawwar Refugee Camp. They witnessed the tents being replaced with masonry homes, and now they are observing their neighbors beginning to acknowledge the spaces between the houses as well. Abu Rami surely remembers how difficult the decision was to build concrete walls instead of maintaining the tents. Would this move cause the world to forget that what they really wanted was to return home to their villages, rather than settle permanently in the camps? Would a plaza be another concession—another way of accepting the permanency of the camp? Is this merely a wretched attempt to mitigate the conditions of total subjugation? Or is the plaza the physical indication that the refugees have abandoned their strategy of convincing the whole world of their personal misery through the architectural misery of camps; that they are instead initiating a new strategy of capitalizing on their strengths as refugees

rather than their weakness as victims? Abu Rami's father had been among the main opponents of building more durable homes. No doubt he remembers his father telling him, "Once you begin to enjoy your life in the camp, you will forget the land you came from." Is it historically acceptable to think about the "public space" of a temporary camp? What is defined as "private" in the camp is not really private, because the homes are not registered as private property, and what is defined as "public" is not really public because neither the host government nor the residents themselves recognize it as such. Thus, how does one define "private" and "public" in a camp anyway?[3]

THE CLOSED PLAZA

The plaza not only provoked questions about normalization but also about the political reality of camps. If there is no private property and no authority that advocates for public space, then who would be responsible for its maintenance? Who would decide how it can be used and who can use it? Would women be allowed to gather in this space even though they had requested it initially for their kids?

I asked the women in the neighborhood if they would ever gather to drink coffee or tea in the plaza. One of the women answered forcefully, but with humor, "It would be a shame for a woman to leave her home without a proper reason. What woman would leave her home and her kids for coffee and tea outside? Do you want them to write about us in *Al Ah'hiram*?[4] We already cannot deal with our husbands; never mind us going out and having tea and coffee in the plaza!"[5]

Finally, as the discussion was geared towards how this space might look, the community decided that the plaza would be enclosed by walls. Many of them were convinced that the plaza would never work without doors, locks, and a guard. Neighbors were emphatic that they did not want the façades of their houses to be what contained the plaza, as they felt they would lose privacy. They believed that by enclosing the space, whoever wanted to be inside it had to deliberately enter it, and would therefore feel more responsibility in respecting and taking care of it.

Abu Ata, one of the neighbors explained: "The enclosure of the plaza was a very important step, and absolutely essential. Imagine if kids were to kick a ball through a neighbor's windows…"[6]

And then, there it was, a plaza enclosed by four walls. Suddenly I was reminded of that very first moment in the history of the camp when refugees replaced tents with a roofless house. It was a good compromise: the plaza was open and always accessible but enclosed and not entirely public nor private. No locked doors, no guards. It was built and it quickly became an ideal place for weddings, and funerals, and kids could run around with their balls without disturbing the neighbors. Skeptics soon began to understand the purpose of the space.

THE TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

In 2011, I met Ayat, a young woman from Fawwar, during the selection process of participants for Campus in Camps. Meanwhile, the plaza was almost in its final stages of construction. Fawwar Refugee Camp is not like other camps. It is located on the southern tip of the West Bank, a few kilometers from Hebron. As constant clashes occur between Israeli settlers and Palestinians around the main road that leads to the camp, it is isolated from the rest of the territory, and its community is among the most conservative. However, after years of working in Fawwar, it always manages to surprise me. This camp, where it is socially forbidden for women to drink coffee outside in front of their houses, is also where we encountered some of the strongest female candidates for Campus in Camps.

Ayat is in her mid-twenties. She is open to challenges and convinced of her rights as an individual and the possibilities of changing her society. Throughout the selection interview, she highlighted the importance of being an active member of her camp community. For six years I had struggled to involve the women of Fawwar to participate in the design of the plaza, and the few women I managed to engage were all over forty, married, and with children. In such conservative places, like Fawwar, the unmarried woman is treated like a treasure to be preserved and kept away from the eyes of everyone until she is married. Thus, many women see marriage as a way of escaping their family and obtaining some measure of freedom. As I would later discover, this was not the case for Ayat.

When I asked her if she had visited the plaza and what she thought about it, I was not surprised to hear that she had yet to set foot inside of it and never had the opportunity to be part of the various meetings that took place around its design. I immediately felt that Ayat was exactly what the plaza needed and, in some way, maybe the plaza would be exactly what she needed. I smiled at the idea it this might be like a traditional marriage, just between a woman and a space.

THE VANDALIZED PLAZA

After several discussions about the plaza with all the participants of Campus in Camps, we decided to hire a bus and visit. We arrived at the camp during the early winter of 2012, after a long ride full of enthusiastic young men and women blasting music from the bus speakers. Fifty-five days had passed since the beginning of a strike of UNRWA employees demanding better employment conditions. It's a common event, and as UNRWA is responsible for garbage collection, a strike quickly results in mountains of garbage piled up on the camp streets. As we made our way through the narrow alleys, stepping over piles of trash, we finally arrived at the plaza. To my relief, the plaza, unlike the rest of the camp, was not littered with garbage. We all sat on the plaza stairs under the warm winter sun. The feeling of relief, however,

quickly turned to distress, as I glanced at one of the walls we had perforated with small openings as a way to create permeability between the street and the plaza. The holes had been covered with cement and an adjacent smaller wall had been covered with oil in order to prevent teenagers from sitting on it.

While I was lost in my thoughts about the role of architecture in a place like Fawwar, I was interrupted by one of the participants of Campus in Camps who gasped: "The plaza is much smaller than I imagined. The image on the website is of a much nicer and much bigger space!" The plaza was bursting with eager kids who had swarmed around us. There were so many we had a hard time hearing each other as we were drinking coffee brought to us by one of the neighbors.

One of the kids replied, offended: "But this plaza was much smaller before. Exactly here where we are sitting was where my uncle's two very old UNRWA shelters were demolished in order to enlarge the plaza. While you have imagined it much bigger, I remember it much smaller."

I jumped at the opportunity and asked him: "If you are so happy to have this big plaza then why do you destroy it? Why aren't you taking care of it?"

This question had haunted me ever since the first moment I began to work in public spaces in places with a long history of colonialism and marginalization. As Ayat would later put it, people have no culture of belonging to what is outside of their houses. But I also believe that when the relation between people and the authorities is so tense, as it is in camps, public space is the first victim of such tension. That day we spent hours in the plaza discussing the lack of belonging and the appropriation of public space. Months later, after having done several activities in the plaza, Ayat complained about how she didn't understand why kids, after having planted trees and flowers as part of an activity held in the plaza, would immediately vandalize them. Is it the way they are raised? Is it the school? Why do they behave differently inside their homes? Is it because the camp is a constant reminder of not belonging? That the public realm is dominated by the reality of oppression and colonialism, and that consequently, that the public realm is the enemy itself?

THE QUIET REVOLUTION

The right of women to become active members of the public became Ayat's personal cause within Fawwar. She managed to create a group of women that would join her in her adventure. She organized several events in the plaza including cooking sessions, morning exercises, collective breakfasts, and twice a week they would meet for coffee or tea. All of the women in the group are older than Ayat, but she is the leader of what she believes is "a revolution without a lot of noise."

Ayat is fiercely trying to defend her rights and her freedom from within the social framework of the camp. She is not trying to detach herself from her community; she does not refuse the camp that is not giving her the freedom she seeks. She is not escaping herself or the place where she lives. Instead, she is trying to create a new space that challenges stereotypes through activities that will eventually make it normal for women to be seen outside of the walls of their homes. Ayat believes in a woman's right to be free beyond the confinement of the private home.

However, I continued to be confused by why Ayat had not recruited other young women to join her revolution. When I asked Ayat why the women in the group were all older than her, she answered:

> Firstly, I feel I learn from them and they learn from me as knowledge is not conditioned by time or space or a degree. Secondly, I feel older than my age and I relate better with people older than me. And lastly, maybe the most important reason has to do with my mother's refusal to leave the camp. My mother suffered from what people from the camp call an "illness of not being able to sit in the car." Each time she would step inside a car she would begin to shout, hurt the driver and herself, and would even go so far as to destroy the car. Many doctors tried to intervene by giving her several types of drugs but it never worked. I have no idea if my mother was afraid that if she would leave the camp she would never find it again, as it happened to her mother with her home during the Nakba. By having this "illness" she decided to guard the camp and never leave it. The very few times she had to go to the doctor in the nearby city, we would wake up very early and would walk for two hours to reach the doctor. All the camp would know that day that my mother would be walking and not guarding the camp. I remember my sister's wedding was in Doha city, a four-hour walk from Fawwar. And since it was so difficult for my mother to leave, I was the one normally replacing her in social occasions outside of the camp. My mother's "illness" forced me to be responsible and mature at a very early age as I had to accompany my father everywhere.

Ayat was born in the camp. She is now part of the third generation of women refugees living in Fawwar and she is trying to redefine what being a refugee means. Ayat's mother is afraid to leave the camp as she feels she will lose her home again. In a way, her right of return is secured only if she is in the camp guarding it. However, for Ayat, her right of return is a more abstract idea. It is not linked to a physical space she has to protect. It consists in her right as a woman to be an active political subject: she refuses to be a victim. Most of the time, the struggle for liberation for people under colonialism keeps them from dealing with important basic rights. Human rights in Palestine are subsumed by one gargantuan struggle: the end of occupation. In this case, the plaza becomes a key protagonist in Ayat's struggle to define resistance: the plaza as a place from within the community to begin to imagine its own future. The process of decolonization begins with negotiations, discussions, and inevitably contradictions within their community.

AYAT'S MOTHER

I worked with Ayat for more than two years and never had the chance to meet her parents. Ayat has been able to fill the plaza with women of her mother's age, but never has she managed to convince her to join. In June 2015, together with some colleagues, we visited Ayat and her group for some tea and biscuits in the plaza. It was evening and everyone was in good spirits. We chatted in the summer breeze while the kids were playing around us. Time for prayer arrived, and the women wanted to go back home, until one of them said, "Why don't we pray in the plaza?" Despite skeptical looks, she began praying and another woman joined her, while the rest of us continued chatting, laughing, and discussing until they were finished. As night came, lights were switched on and it felt as if a bell had rung, reminding us that it was time for the men and young teenagers to get some fresh air outside of their homes too. As I was saying goodbye to everyone, Ayat proposed we go to her aunt's house to continue the evening together.

We arrived at the house and found ourselves in a beautiful green garden with an olive tree in the middle surrounded by mint, basil, rosemary, and oregano. We were invited to the salon for guests, but I insisted we sit outside in the garden. We sat under the tree in the dark as Ayat's aunt sat next to the open door of the house, giving way for some light coming from inside.

Later on, Ayat's mother arrived and immediately asked why we were sitting under the tree and not in the salon. We all reassured her that we had requested it as we wanted to be outdoors. Her voice was identical to Ayat and we kissed each other, both feeling that we should have met a long time before. Ayat interrupted and with excitement announced that they were all celebrating that her mother had finally been liberated from her illness. Her mother began to tell us the story.

> Two months ago I had a very bad pain in my knee. I was unable to cope with it any longer so we prepared for the walk to Hebron to visit the doctor. I woke up very early in the morning and walked three hours with the pain that increased with each step. When I arrived, I was completely exhausted. When he was told that I had walked all the way from Fawwar to Hebron, he was shocked and insisted that a car be called to take me to Fawwar. He gave me two injections assuring me that this would permit me to get into the car. To be honest we did not believe him. Six doctors before him had tried to give me various injections to cure me of the panic attacks and it had never worked. As I got in the car we were all elated that I was only shouting. I did not hit the driver, I did not hurt myself, and I did not destroy the car.

When we arrived to the camp I felt like a celebrity. Everyone had gathered around to witness the scene of me getting out of the car.

I didn't know if I should believe this story or not. It was so fantastic it seemed as though she had invented it as a metaphor for the decades of exile in the camp. As she described the journey, it brought me back to the image of Palestinian refugees preferring to live under the heat of the zinc roofs in the hot Beirut summer rather than accepting a more comfortable life under concrete roofs.

To be uncomfortable and unsettled is a form of struggle, a reminder of refugee status. As time went by, the camp itself turned into the only legitimate witness of a refugee's loss. Preserving the image of the unsettled, roofless camp was a way of preserving refugee history and their right to return home. Ayat's mother never wanted to leave the camp because she was so afraid that if she did not guard this space she might lose its existence; subsequently, she thought that she would lose her grandfather's house as well. The house she had always longed for in her dreams and through her father and grandfather's stories is protected only if the camp is still there to witness the loss and to continue reminding the world of the right of return of Palestinian refugees. As the entire camp came to witness her getting out of the car, they wondered: was Ayat's mother publicly giving up her responsibility of guarding the camp? Of course, she is still shouting inside to show that she is suffering, but she also accepted that she, like others, will eventually leave the camp behind.

At some point, I realized that Ayat's mother embodies the camp. It goes to follow then that Ayat is the plaza. The camp is the condition that lives inside Ayat's mother. In order to protect her family and home, she refuses to be on wheels and has accepted the camp as her prison in order to protect the notion of "home" from disappearing.

FREEDOM PROJECT

As we are sitting in the garden, Ayat's sister tells me that she won a scholarship for a Master's degree program in Berlin. I look at her, puzzled. I know that she will not be allowed to go on her own. Almost as if she is guessing my thoughts, she adds that her father will accompany her.

Almost shouting, I ask: "What will your father do for two entire years in Berlin?" Ayat's mother replies: "He will find a mosque where he will pass his days." Ayat adds: "He wants to go; he would love to accompany her. This is what she wants and he is willing to do anything to please her." Ayat's mother groans: "The other solution is that she finds a husband and takes him with her. Many young men have asked for her hand in marriage, from the worker to the doctor, and she has never paid them any attention." She continued: "I would like to see both my daughters marry. Each one of them could take her husband wherever she would like to go. If they had yet to receive any marriage requests I would accept it as God's will, but what I cannot accept is that they are rejecting them all. I don't think that they don't like any of them, but I believe they are against the idea of marriage as such. They want their life as it is."

Another woman, from Ayat's group added: "Marriage is a very good thing as religion tells us. It is not right that you refuse marriage." Ayat quickly replied: "This has nothing to do with religion. I still have work to do. I still have many things I would love to achieve in my life. If I encounter a person to marry then he is welcome in my life; if not, I am not concerned. For now, I'm happy, I'm not interested in a man that will come and control my life. Leave me alone." Ayat's mother was disappointed: "Did you hear? This is the main reason she refuses marriage. She is not even open to the possibility." Ayat pauses and tries to explain: "It's not because I'm snobbish; all I'm longing for is a person that understands who I am inside and outside. I'm happy and free in the house of my father. Why should I get involved with someone?"

I was moved. From the outside one might perceive Ayat's freedom as meaningless. She is a young woman who cannot travel unaccompanied, who has to constantly negotiate her actions outside her home, who has to rush home at sundown. However, Ayat feels she has agency over her own life to change it and to help change that of others around her. This is the freedom that Ayat is trying to defend and she is not willing to compromise any of it by getting married. However, this contradicts the unspoken rules of her society. The reason, in the end, that many of the women in her group are older is because younger unmarried women are not willing to compromise the social image they are trying to preserve. No revolution before marriage: first we get married, then we change; otherwise we risk our chances of finding a proper husband. The beautiful thing is that Ayat's bravery is supported by her family. Her father is also trying to find ways within the framework of religion and society that would permit Ayat the maximum freedom of a woman her age in Fawwar. She understands this better than anyone else and, as with all the limits she has, she is convinced that her father is a believer in her freedom project. Ultimately, she fears she will never find another man to be her ally.

"But your father and mother will not live forever." Ayat asserts: "I have God and myself. I hope God will give my parents a long life and eventually my sister, my aunt, and me will be a fantastic group together. We will take care of each other." Ayat's mother shakes her head: "This is what she will tell anyone who comes to ask her hand in marriage: that she is not in need of a husband. She is looking for a partner, and when they tell her is that they will be her shelter, that they will protect her. She says that she is not looking for shelter; she feels sheltered enough and has no need for a man to do so." Ayat responds: "I absolutely hate the language they use."

Ayat's mother looked to me for help. She asked if I felt it was appropriate for Ayat to be speaking this way. I felt trapped. I liked Ayat's mother very much and I wanted to please her, but what Ayat is doing is what I always hoped to see happening in Fawwar. I asked her to forgive me. "Unfortunately, I cannot be on your side this time."

ROOFLESSNESS

As much as I would like this to be a story about how the plaza improved life inside the camp and how Ayat managed to transform women's rights in Fawwar, the truth is that both the plaza and Ayat's revolution are vulnerable experiments. As much as Ayat seems to be a strong revolutionary and visionary, she has also placed herself in a position in which she is extremely fragile. The same applies to the plaza. Its strong presence within the camp is what makes it vulnerable: it challenges the very meaning of the camp.

Ayat recently sent me a letter: "I feel that the plaza is the place that represents me. It is considered a challenge for the camp as it represents public space in a temporary place. It is very similar to the challenges of women, proclaiming our rights to be in public, to my rebellion against all the stereotypes the reality in which I live. I feel a lot of similarities between the plaza and me: both of us are roofless; my thoughts have no limits but they are still within what is accepted by the walls of religion and society. My thoughts have no limits when I think how much is possible for me to change my reality and the reality of other women my age in the camp."

THIS TEXT IS AN EDITED VERSION OF | SANDI HILAL, "ROOFLESS," IN *HOUSING AFTER THE NEOLIBERAL TURN: INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES* (BERLIN: HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT, 2015).

1. The United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) launched the Camp Improvement Program in 2006, focusing on improving the physical and social environment of refugee camps through a participatory, community-driven planning approach.

2. Elias Khoury, *Gate of the Sun* (Bab al-Shams), trans. Humphrey Davies (New York: Picador, 2006), 236.

3. Excerpt from Sandi Hilal, "A Plaza in a Camp: A Play in Four Acts," in *Architecture is All Over,* ed. Esther Choi and Marrikka Trotter, (Barcelona: Actar, 2015).

4. *Al Ah'hiram* is one of the most important Egyptian newspapers.

5. Excerpt from Hilal, "A Plaza in a Camp" (2015).

6. Ibid.

Interlude III

RESIDENCY | IN CONVERSATION WITH

EYAL WEIZMAN | *London* | 2017

EYAL WEIZMAN I find it exceptional and of great value when a project or a practice is able to serve as a reflection of its time. The situation in Palestine may seem like it's static and hopeless, but if you look at your work and the work of DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency) carefully, you can see that there are various moments we have gone through that demonstrate how much things have changed. *The Road Map* is basically a story about the Second Intifada, and the situation in Palestine is not like that now. We started working together at this time of huge violence, which is not the same type of violence that we live in now, one that has become more structural and bureaucratic. When we started, it was dangerous to drive through the West Bank. You would be shot at, either by the Israeli army or a Palestinian resistance group. There were gun battles day and night.

Within all of this, and the shock of the collapse of the peace process, Alessandro, your book, *Archipelaghi e Enclave*, and my book, *Hollow Land*, were both works in between journalism and architecture trying to understand and analyze the situation of conflict. In 2007, when we started DAAR, the same year both of our books were published, it was still dangerous to travel through the West Bank, so the people who came were taking a great risk, and would stay with us longer. So the residency was a little bit like a refuge, a place to be together against all odds. I still remember how worried Sandi was when I would get a call from my sister and I would speak Hebrew, because the sense of danger was always there. During the Second Intifada, the international presence in the West Bank changed. International activism started, and the residency tapped into these energies.

ALESSANDRO PETTI I remember the reactions of the people who visited us in Beit Sahour at the time, how they were so surprised to find such a culturally active environment despite the surrounding violence. Ann Stoler wrote a very generous text that described a house filled with people from all over the world working on projects that embraced a notion of critique that allies with Foucault's definition: not to be governed, not by these people, not at this time, and not in this way. Irit Rogoff recently told me that she always hated to be in Israel, but when she was with us in Beit Sahour, it was a completely different experience. I remember Adi Ophir sitting on our rooftop, absorbed in his own thoughts, and when I asked why he was so silent, he told me

that he was trying to imagine how his writing would be different if written from here instead of Tel Aviv.

What I feel is crucial in a collective practice is the ability to create a space and possibily of encounters that do not exist elsewhere in the present. The residency created a world in which a life in common became possible, and a place where people knew that they would find a unique space. Okwui Enwezor recently recognized that, as a sort of side effect of our practice, we created a civic space that constructed a reality, rather than simply being based on the analysis, documentation, and denouncement of a colonial regime.

Looking back, I am moved by the generosity of all the people who decided to come and contribute to DAAR. They came and entered into a relation of reciprocity. I guess what attracted people was the possibility of being instantly plugged into an extremely charged situation, while at the same time being provided with effective conceptual and practical tools to challenge the status quo. DAAR offered a conceptual framework and a way to see the reality of the time, and in exchange, the residents offered their professionality, time, commitment, and experiences. In a hostile condition like the one in Palestine, where everything is about destruction, the residency offered grounded visions.

This reciprocal exchange worked well until the moment the residency became structured and recognized. At that point, we began to receive people interested in a generic art residency, and not committed to the struggle and to the practice of decolonization. At the same time, as an organization, DAAR become known by both local and international organizations. We felt that this new situation was pushing us towards the world of development and non-governmental organizations, where we would be forced to lose the critical and experimental dimension cultivated in the art world. The residency of course changed over time. It became more like an architectural studio, with projects that started to have material manifestations, like being built, and more direct engagements with the refugee community, like *Shu'fat*, *Fawwar*, and *The Concrete Tent*. All of these projects now have lives of their own beyond the residency. But we entered the difficult, limiting, and compromising terrain of non-governmental organizations.

SANDI HILAL Since we moved to Europe in 2017, it has become ever more evident how crucial the creation of public spaces is and how we need to address the questions of who has the right to use them and who owns them. Since the first projects we did on the decolonization of settlements in the West Bank, we understood that we were not just dealing with colonial settlements, but with the expropriation of Palestinian public space. The Israeli settlements in the West Bank were built partially on the remains of the vast majority of Palestinian collective land. The question of decolonization therefore became how to decolonize Palestinian public space? What would a Palestinian public look like, particularly in the absence of the state? Similar questions were posed later on, regarding Palestinian refugee camps. What is the notion of public space in Palestinian refugee camps? Is it even a legitimate question in a place that should never have existed in the first place? What is the political meaning of thinking about public space in Palestinian refugee camps, and how is this connected to the Palestinian right of return? In our *P'sagot* project, we concluded that return can be possible only if we are able to imagine how a collective return might take place. This made us realize the centrality of the commons not only in the reality of refugee camps, but also as an essential pillar for the right of return. These realizations led to the recognition that the residency in our home, DAAR, is essentially the creation of a collective space where the public does not exist. This creation of a quasi-institution in our own private space was a response to the lack of public space in Palestine.

EW I think there is a triangle of projects: there is the house residency as a form of a civic space, and the two sites of action that somehow mirror each other: the Israeli settlement and the Palestinian refugee camp, both of which are extraterritorial and define common space in a different way. These two are, in a sense, mutually constitutive: the settlement as a place from which you are banned, an island that you cannot enter, an exclusive public that needs to be decolonized, and the refugee camp as a site for the commons. I still want to insist that DAAR's projects are rooted in a history; it was a sort of transitional period between one form of violence and another. At the same time, it prefigured history. It was ahead of its time on the map of other institutions. I think what helped it become what it was is a particular, fundamental characteristic of architecture that does not exist in art or other kinds of residencies. Architecture requires collective work. It's not like each person can come and do their own individual project. This is the reason why there are no architecture residencies. A residency is a place where you go to cut yourself off from your habitat and work on your own thing. DAAR was a residency existing in a situation, it was a space of immersion, rather than removing you from the world. It rooted you in a civic space that was larger than the office. It is a model of a shared world that art does not allow.

AP I believe that the residency worked based on the notion of friendship. The residents of DAAR built strong relationships that continued beyond the period of the residency. I find this kind of intensity very hard to replicate nowadays, especially in more institutional settings. Palestine, with its kind of radicalism, creates very intense, emotional moments.

EW I think it is quite interesting that DAAR also coincided with our life projects, our children. It is very interesting for me today to see how Sama and Tala developed, because they grew up in a very special environment. On the one hand, it was very enclosed, almost claustrophobic, in the sense that it is very hard to move around, but on the other hand, the residency provided them with incredible exposure to so many different people. They were always around, they were always exposed to all these languages of different people coming from all over. So now they speak four or five different languages with an incredible level of adaptation and ease. The way you opened your life, the breakfasts you had in the morning, the dinners in the evenings... In the

way that Alessandro is speaking about it, in terms of friendship, we can also speak about it in terms of family, the way the residency entered into and effected it. You can say, well, this resident married that resident, but Sama and Tala are also a product of that form of life that you decided to have.

SH And not only them. I think one of the major issues we had when we got married, especially for Alessandro, was how to avoid becoming a petit bourgeois family. He was really worried about this, all the time saying, "I don't want to live just the four of us, this is not the form of life I want to have." So, the residency was a form of escape from certain ways of being within a family. It was a similar strategy of profanation to when we decided to baptize Sama and Tala in the camp. This was the moment that I felt the refugees we had been working with really opened up to us. It was a gesture that said, we can share the most intimate things of our life with the camp. We were both open to sharing our family, not in the sense of a kibbutz or communitarian experiments, but simply that we could both say that we have no problems with sharing our life with others. Maybe Sama and Tala understood, instinctively, that we have what I call a public family, not a private one. The residency was also part of the desire to get out of the isolation of a nuclear family.

EW The residency became entangled with the space of your extended family too.

SH And now that we've moved to Sweden, we ask ourselves what it means to have a public family, to have one there. This dimension is what I miss most about Palestine.

EW Because of the house? The residency in your house in Palestine was based around the kitchen and the living room as spaces for discussion. It was a way for the residents not only to talk about projects, but to live in them. It was always the family house, which was extended to encompass, to become something else, which really means that it was about finding and living an intimacy within it.

It is also interesting to see different moments in its transformation. The years leading up to 2010, more or less, were years of struggle. They were years of violence and precarity, but there was also an idea of a political project that could grow out of this violent struggle. There was a revolutionary energy. In these types of situations you say okay, this is it, we're living with immense violence, but there is something there that makes the future seem near. When you're in the midst of the struggle, you believe that it will shift at some point.

In the second decade of this millennium, the future has only moved further and further away. I think that is also an indication of the shift in DAAR's practice from the settlement to the camp. The camp is also a laboratory for a longer struggle; the camp works at a different duration. But I think that shift in your practice had different reasons. One of them was the job Sandi got at UNRWA. It was a combination of conceptual choices and professional choices, but it was also a shift in the register of struggle; when it became

clear that this kind of armed resistance and radical struggle is not operating the way it should be, but that instead, it was happening in between, in a much longer duration.

SH I believe that the shift in the camp happened with the collapse of the idea of building a state. And not only in Palestine, but in the whole Arab world. When we were working on the settlements, the idea of building a state was very present. We were confined to this idea. I still remember once when we were in Venice and I told you, "Yes, why not the wall? I want to have an independent place, let's build the wall if this separates Israel from Palestine."

EW One state, two states...

SH Yeah one state, two states. We were still thinking what a Palestinian state might look like and how we can shift and intervene in these settlements. But then we began to understand that the only way we can get out of the political situation that Palestine was in was to start working in extraterritorial spaces like refugee camps. In *The Red Castle*, *A Common Assembly*, and even *P'sagot* we shifted our perspective; what interested us was not that the parliament was where it was, but rather that it allowed us to work in the cracks. We saw that it is only from the position of refugees that we can challenge the status quo.

EW That's absolutely true. And I think this is, in a sense, why the future retreated all of a sudden. It's also why I think your subsequent move was Campus in Camps, which is an infrastructure project not only for the near future, but for the distant future. The sequence of projects you described are like when you draw a circle, each one has a hitching point and as you go further from the hitch, you take the center and you draw. I thought it was a very interesting sequence of projects; the periphery of each became the place where the needle entered for the next one. But you battled against this situation of a receding future, and against the intellectual and architectural challenges of dealing with that. There is always an immediacy in your built architecture, in *Shu'fat*, *Fawwar*, or *The Concrete Tent*, but the future that you speculate on is a long-term one.

AP I don't see it the same way. I think what we did, which was more radical and at the same time more pragmatic, was to create situations in the present that allowed for a different form of cohabitation, without having the illusion that things would radically change in the near future. The year that marks this for me was 2011. It was the first time I had the feeling that the kind of condition, what you called the future, that we were working on, became closer. It was a rare moment, when you feel that finally, history is not so hostile against the way you live. Discourse on the common became central, and suddenly all of the ideas that we had been working on in the camps, and the collapse of the state, became relevant for everyone. A second shift was the summer of 2014, with the so-called "refugee crisis," when the condition of refugeeness became central to public debate in Europe, and was understood as a threat to nation states. These changes brought our work over the last ten years in Palestine to the forefront

of the struggle. Decolonization moved from the occupied territories to the colonial metropolis.

I'm against this discourse about the future, because we've found a much more effective way to think political transformation than messianic Marxism. We understood decolonization as an endless struggle, one that is happening right now, right here. There are already fragments of futures in the present. You imagine something, and at the same time live it. It is liberating to understand political transformation without being trapped in the idea that one day everything will be solved and we will all live happily. The work that we have been doing in refugee camps is already the future; it is already something that deals with people that live outside the nation state. Working within and against the condition of permanent temporariness means opposing two fronts at the same time: the perpetuation of the status quo, that imposes an unbearable condition of precarity on people, and normalization, trying to put all the broken pieces of the nation state back into its box.

When the work shifts from speculation to realization, it shows that a third way is actually possible. And more importantly, we also start seeing how different struggles are connected to each other and not imprisoned in their self-referential logic along with the global success of BDS, we are witnessing Palestine becoming a laboratory of resistance, and not only against Israeli violence.

DECOLONIZATION | IN CONVERSATION
WITH OKWUI ENWEZOR | *London* | 2014

OKWUI ENWEZOR Your conception of decolonization strikes me as paradoxical on the one hand, and curious on the other. In the first instance, it appears paradoxical to want to decolonize Palestinian architecture, that is, if we accept the historical argument that the architectures of the landscape of Israel and Palestine have always been entangled, to the extent that it is impossible to disentangle their individual, unique structural languages. If my assumption bears any relation to the facts of spatial practice in the area, what in your view constitutes the colonial architecture in which you aim to intervene? I am also curious about the apologetic tone you adopt in the usage of the term "decolonization," which you deem to be problematic and fraught with historical problems. What makes the term decolonization problematic in the contemporary context?

DAAR In order to engage with your challenges, we'd like to trace a trajectory of the terms you are enquiring about, and then deal with the ways in which these have become operative concepts in our work. In the afterword to the first Hebrew edition of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Ella Shohat commented on the "inverse way" in which postcolonial literature entered Palestinian-Israeli discourse. In the early 1990s, several articles by Gayatri Spivak were translated into Hebrew. These were followed by the work of Homi Bhabha, and only much later, that of Edward Said. Finally, it was only at the start of the Second Intifada that translations of Frantz Fanon became available. This can be seen as shorthand for how the academic environment of the Oslo years engaged with a robust postcolonial discourse, yet one that did not rest on anti-colonial struggles. Translated into Arabic, however, Fanon's book was often found on the bodies of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) fighters throughout the 1970s.

We seem to be living through a kind of postcolonial colonization. On the one hand, the discourse of the 1990s was saturated with terms such as proximity, hybridity, neighborliness, all without sufficiently engaging with the colonial reality of Zionism, or what Derek Gregory called "the colonial present." On the other hand, the type of control held by the Palestinian Authority simulates a kind of quasi-state attitude, all the while being under Israeli control. It is also apparent that the present technologies of domination are themselves post-structural, networked, and multilayered more than ever before. What we are dealing with is not only blatant exclusion and separation, but a regime that madly juxtaposes freedom and domination, autonomy and control, law and lawlessness, access and separation, liberalism and occupation. In this mixture, there is a central place for liberal technologies of moderation—humanitarianism, international law, human rights—to become abused forms of government/governance. In the West Bank, apparatuses from industrial zones, through to the flow-modulation of checkpoints and the path of the wall, are physically engineered according to the proportionality mechanism, in which "well-being" is part of the logic of control.

As such, it is meaningful to insist on colonization as the frame of reference, and on the term decolonization as the necessary practice. There is nothing apologetic in our treatment of the term decolonization. But we do think that it needs to be updated in so far as contemporary colonial practices are different from those of the first half of the twentieth century. Furthermore, our ultimate aim is to learn to do other things, with what we call "the future archaeology of colonization."

OE What seems to be missing, however, is what I consider precisely to be the several registers of address that bear directly on the notion of spatial practice, namely terms such as "distance," "proximity," and "neighborliness." How does a critical architectural program, whether pragmatic or speculative, invent new lexicons for dwelling next to, or theories of adjacency, to deal with the unspeakable other, be they Palestinian or Israeli?

DAAR Aesthetically, in this regard, there is much grey area. Israel began building in and around Jerusalem in the second half of 1967. Israeli and international architects rushed to build these occupied parts of Jerusalem, professing a yet-unclear "return to history," and abandoning abstract, modern practices in exchange for feelings of "locality and place"—a certain "dwelling" rather than "living." Local, Arab architecture became the main reference for imitation in the framing of Zionist architecture as a so-called local and native practice. Conversely, many Palestinian buildings reflected a desire for the kind of luxury that appeared in settlement homes. Today, you can see an entirely new Arab town, Rawabi, located north of Ramallah, built in a very similar fashion to an Israeli settlement. In fact, one of the reasons for this similarity is brutally practical: it was Arab construction workers who build the settlements, keep the plans, and use them in public and private projects for Palestinians!

Although they may superficially look alike, it is the infrastructure, the networks of transport, the flow of commodities, provisions, water, electricity, gas—in short, the invisible networks of power—that charge these building with their performative capacity. Thus, it is not so much in the houses themselves, but in the systems that weave them together, that the difference is both made and perceived.

We think that questions of togetherness and the like should be made meaningful through the terms of a joint struggle against a present system of inequality and control; terms that then become the condition for dealing with the issue of neighborliness and proximity. The idea of a struggle today has various forms, many of which are based on building institutional frameworks that unite pedagogy with activism and architectural work, much as we have tried to do. Amira Hass has suggested that these joint platforms set up to fight the injustice of colonization will become the political platforms of the future. It is not by chance that our practice is based in Beit Sahour, which has been, and still is, a nodal point for several left-wing political movements and practices.

P'SAGOT

| 2008

Historical processes of decolonization tend to see the reuse of the buildings and infrastructure left behind in the same way they were designed, leaving the hierarchies and structural power of the colonial world intact. What is at stake in the re-inhabitation of colonies and military bases to be evacuated in the future archaeology of Israel's occupation? Concentrating on the settlement of P'sagot, near Ramallah, our guiding principle is neither to eliminate the power of the occupation's architecture, nor to simply reuse it in the way it was designed, but rather to reorient its logic to other aims. Like other settlements, P'sagot is suburban: fenced-in bedroom communities fed by a growing matrix of roads and other infrastructure. Yet they must be articulated as potentially urban in relation to the Palestinian cities beside which they were built.

AL MASHA/COMMON

DECOLONIZATION

HERITAGE

HEIDELBERGER KUNSTVEREIN | *Heidelberg* | 2008

ARCHITEKTURFORUM TIROL | *Innsbruck* | 2010

HOW TO RE-INHABIT THE HOUSE OF YOUR ENEMY | ALESSANDRO PETTI | *Sandi Hilal* | EYAL WEIZMAN
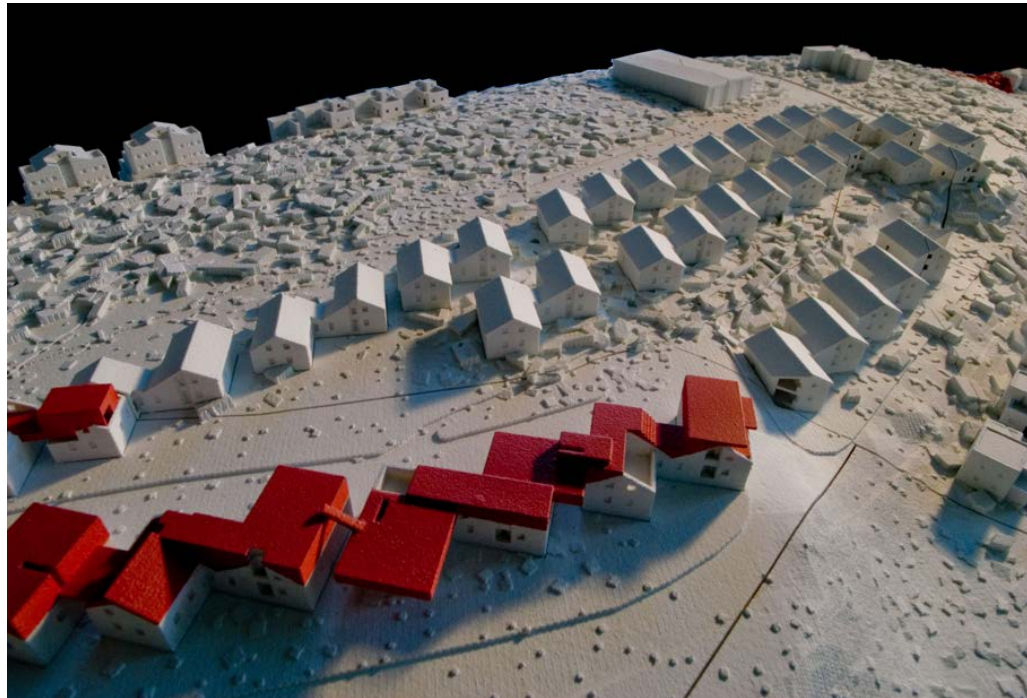
In the summer of 2005, the Israeli Army left the ground of the Gaza strip and relocated the occupation to the airspace up above—and, of course, its walls and gates. It left behind the bulldozed rubble of more than 3,000 buildings. These were mainly single-family homes, but also public buildings, schools, and military installations, as well as industrial and agricultural facilities built for the benefit of the twenty-one settlements and the scores of military bases that protected them. Prior to the withdrawal, and ignorant of the impending destruction, a number of interested local and international parties considered alternative scenarios for the possible reuse of buildings in the settlements. The imminent evacuation had opened up a unique arena of speculation, in which—between April 2004, when the plans for evacuations were made firm, and August 2005, when they were carried out—interested parties grappled with questions that would normally be relegated to the domain of architecture and planning.

Although the evacuation was conceived of and undertaken as a unilateral Israeli operation, the fate of settlement buildings was debated by the US, the EU, the UN, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), along with a variety of NGOs, think tanks, and some of the world's wealthiest Arab property developers.

These groups convened with the Palestinian Ministry of Planning for intense meetings. On the other side, Israeli discussions focused on the potential symbolic effect of Israeli architecture under Palestinian control. Representing the attitudes of the right-wing faction of the Likud Party, Benjamin Netanyahu—who later resigned from his office of Finance Minister in protest against the evacuation—demanded that all settlement homes be destroyed. This was purportedly in order to avoid the broadcast of what he felt were ideologically destructive images: Arabs living in the homes of Jews and synagogues turning into mosques. The Palestinians, he said, "will dance on our rooftops."

His rhetoric conjured up images of a murderous Palestinian mob storming the gates of settlements, looting and reoccupying the homes of "decent" settlers. This "apocalyptic scenario," he feared, would become the symbolic image for a reversal—and thus imply the reversibility—of a Zionist project previously characterized by the seizure, destruction, and, in some cases, reoccupation of Palestinian dwellings that became highly prized real estate among an "orientalized" Israeli bourgeoisie. Images broadcast

internationally of the evacuated settlements taken over by Palestinians might have triggered barely repressed middle-class anxieties at the root of the suburban project itself: the internally ordered, wellserviced outposts of the "first world" collapsing in the face of a "barbaric" surge of the "third world" erupting, so to speak, from the outside. The US administration, on the other hand, was opposed to the destruction of the settlements. Handing over homes, public buildings, agricultural, and industrial assets was seen by President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as more than mere economic stimulus. What could better befit the American agenda of "civilizing the Middle East" into a liberal society with broad middle-class values than having Palestinians live in American-style single-family homes? In response to US demands, the Israeli government announced that it would reconsider its decision to demolish settlement homes.

Mohamed Alabbar, a flamboyant Arab businessman, arrived in Israel six months prior to the evacuation. After meeting with Israel's President at the time, Shimon Peres, and briefly with its former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, he promptly offered to buy all the homes and other real estate assets in the settlements of Gush Katif for $56 million. Alabbar is the chairman of Emaar Properties, a gigantic real estate company registered in the United Arab Emirates. The company has been a central player in the frantic development of Dubai, specializing in the rapid construction of themed onshore tourist and residential projects. He imagined the settlement block of Katif as the site of a possible tourist enclave.

This resulted in bizarre, grotesque plans for Dubai-style, high-rise hotel complexes in Gaza. Settler homes would become a part of a set of tourist villages on what was now dubbed "the best beach resort of the Mediterranean." If the project had come to fruition, such complexes would no doubt have become extraterritorial enclaves set against the deep poverty surrounding them, just like the colonies. These fantasies fortunately never got very far. But together with other proposals for wholesale privatization, they would have robbed Palestinians of the evacuated land to which they were entitled, and which they desperately needed, as a public.

It was therefore no wonder that Palestinians responded angrily when they were asked to pay for the remaining structures and, considering Israel's price-offer, to overpay for something they had never asked for. Is not paying for the colonies equivalent, in some respects, to the executed having to pay for the bullet that kills them? Palestinian Minister Saeb Erekat stated that Palestinians were not interested in purchasing the infrastructure and told Israel simply to "dismantle the houses and take them away." Jihad Alwazir, permanent secretary of the Palestinian Ministry of Planning, claimed that "the settlements are an alien body that was forced on the Palestinians," and that if it were up to him, he would "have a big bonfire... where every Palestinian should come with a hammer and bang on a building."

POWER UNPLUGGED

We began where the above scenario failed, starting with a similar question, but from a different perspective: how could Israel's colonial architecture be reused, recycled, or re-inhabited at the moment it is unplugged from the military and political power that charged it?

The proposals discussed by international organizations and property developers entailed either the complete destruction of the existing architecture, or its re-inscription into continued or renewed colonial functions and hierarchies. Both these paths ultimately fail to live up to the conditions and task of decolonization. Hence, in seeking a third option, we imagined that a new set of collective functions would inhabit the abandoned military structures and the evacuated houses of the colonists.

We began to ask ourselves what new institutions and activities could model the evacuated space and what physical transformations these spaces would require. The guiding principle was not to eliminate the power of the occupation's built spaces, but rather to redirect its destructive potential towards the fulfilment of other aims. We believe that if the geography of occupation is to be liberated, its potential must be turned against itself. Because the reuse of colonial architecture is a more general cultural and political issue, we do not seek to present a single, unified architectural solution, but rather what we call "fragments of possibility."

The project was organized around a series of consultations. Each Saturday, we hosted a meeting of representatives from various organizations and individuals to discuss these issues, seeking to determine to what extent the evacuated structures might be adaptable to accommodating new uses. Among the guests were members of a variety of NGOs, private organizations, public institutions, refugee associations, culture and art institutions, private landowners, architects, planners, writers, journalists, and academics.

The idea was to set up an arena of speculation in which different actors could simulate and evaluate a set of scenarios for possible transformation. Their genuine participation was the crucial factor and the only element that could guarantee the implementation of these projects—if they were ever to be realized.

"Why are you wasting your time and our time by thinking about the future of the colonial architecture? Occupation will never end and settlements will expand even more in the future."

In most of our meetings with local NGOs, municipalities, or universities, these were the words used to question the scenarios of decolonization we proposed. These are certainly legitimate questions. Being born under the occupation, you quickly learn that planning your own future is prohibited. It was only when we began organizing these discussions around architectural models displaying the re-use of the colonies that the possibilities began to become apparent. The discussion then shifted from "if

it will happen" to "how it will happen," from geopolitical scenarios to architectural transformations of houses, windows, and doors… When the process of imagining starts, it is difficult to stop.

Thereafter, when we presented our plans and models, the initial reaction of our discussants was a smile. In the beginning, we feared we were being ridiculed. Were our plans too far-fetched and outlandish in this environment of permanent impossibility? It is also true that models are reduced worlds "under control" and that they often make people smile. But the smile might equally be interpreted as the first moment of decolonization of the mind. Rather than a single, unified proposal of urban planning covering the entirety of Palestine, we presented a series of detailed transformations on an architectural scale. The project site would be chosen as a laboratory to explore different modes of reusing colonial architecture. The first was a colony called P'sagot, on Jabel Tawil, next to Ramallah.

JABEL TAWIL (P'SAGOT)

There is a large satellite photograph hanging in the entrance hall of the Al Bireh municipality (the town adjacent to Ramallah and near the settlement of P'sagot). When we first visited, on this map there were two white cutouts masking two areas: the place where P'sagot now stands and the refugee camp of Al Amari, at the city's southern fringe. Both are zones extraterritorial to municipal control. The municipality could not access the first for physical reasons, and chose to avoid the second as planning for it would be considered an act of normalization. These cutouts were an inversion of the white spots that colonial cartographers used to draw over native territory. When we returned two years later, the map was still hanging in the hall but the municipality had removed the two white masks, integrating both types of extraterritorial space into the urban and cognitive geography of Al Bireh. With the masks now removed, P'sagot came into full view.

Located on a hill some 900 meters above sea level, P'sagot visually dominates the entire area around it. Until 1967, it was used as an open space for recreation. The hills of Jerusalem and Ramallah were popular with families from the Gulf, especially Kuwaitis, who traveled there to escape the summer heat. In 1964, the municipality of Al Quds, which was under Jordanian control at the time, bought the land in preparation for its development into a tourist resort. The work started in early 1967 with the construction of an access road, which is the project's only remaining trace.

Some fourteen years later, in July 1981, at the initiative of the Likud Party, the colony of P'sagot was inaugurated as "compensation" to right-wing Israelis for the evacuation of the Sinai Peninsula. The area once designated by Palestinians for tourist accommodation was the first to be occupied by settler housing. The first houses set on the hill of Jabel Tawil were prefabricated structures wheeled over from Yamit, a settlement

that had been evacuated in the north of the Sinai. P'sagot is at present a religious settlement inhabited by 1,700 people, mainly American Jews and a minority of recent Russian and French Jews. We interviewed Jewish residents of the settlement, many of whom arrived from the US to settle the occupied territories.

RESIDENT When we came here, some twenty years ago, this place was a no man's land. Then we started adding new houses.

DAAR As an act against any territorial compromise?

RESIDENT There were sixty families, which in two months grew to a hundred and twenty families. There were a lot of empty houses, empty caravans too. People were scared to come. You had to come through Ramallah, not the bypass road.

DAAR But you would prefer to go through Ramallah?

RESIDENT Yes.

DAAR Just to demonstrate presence?

RESIDENT To demonstrate that this is our land. I come from America, and Americans in America are American. If Mexicans come to America and they want to live in America, they have to act like Americans. They cannot just tell you what to do…

DAAR I am not sure who you are referring to, you just said yourself that you come from America.

RESIDENT Because I am Jewish.

DAAR But the Palestinians were already here, no?

RESIDENT Yes, but this is our land. If they want to stay here, I don't mind; they can live here, they can stay here, they can be here, they can work for us, we could work for them. But they cannot decide for me what's going to be here, because we are here.

DAAR Did they move the original houses from the Sinai?

RESIDENT Yes, they are prefabricated houses. They are the property of the settlement now, but people can rent them.

DAAR So is it possible that one day, by political decision, the entire P'sagot settlement will be moved somewhere else?

RESIDENT I hope not. We lived in these houses after we first arrived. They are still used for newcomers until they build new houses. It' s very cheap here because it's no man's land. In Jerusalem it is much more expensive.

DAAR How much is the rent?

RESIDENT A caravan is 550 NIS (€110) a month.

DAAR Do you think that the government wants to evacuate you?

RESIDENT Yes, for sure.

DAAR How do you know?

RESIDENT From the radio.

DAAR How are you organizing yourselves in response to the threat of evacuation?

RESIDENT We are not organizing at all. I think people will not even fight here, most of them will just go.

DAAR And what do you think Palestinians should do with the settlement?

RESIDENT I don't want to leave it like this… I don't even want to talk about it…

DAAR Would you prefer to have it destroyed?

RESIDENT Yes… I believe that we came on a mission, for the good of the Jews and to get as much land as we can, so what will happen is decided by somebody up there… I don't listen to the radio… What is the difference if I know? Should I start packing? What am I going to do?

SUPERIMPOSITION OF 1954 LAND OWNERSHIP MAP ON A SATELLITE IMAGE OF P'SAGOT.

DEPARCELIZATION

The buildings of the colony of P'sagot, like those of many such colonies, are built upon land that either belonged to Palestinian families—i.e. private land—or on public land that was used by Palestinians for recreational purposes or for the fulfilment of their public needs.

DEPARCELIZATION

We made use of both documentary resources and interviews to identify some of the landowners within the areas of the colonies. Our investigation traced some of the Palestinian landowners to the United States, Australia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq; and of course, some were closer at hand in Palestine, sometimes fenced off just a few hundred meters away from their land. Their private and family histories are the intertwined histories of Palestine and its displaced communities, forced out by colonization and drawn away by economic and professional opportunities overseas.

Much of the colony's land used to be collectively owned, which was the reason why it was easy for Israel to expropriate it as "state land." The rest, about a half of the area of P'sagot, belonged to private owners. These private fields gradually fell into Israeli control using other expropriation devices. We felt that the fate of private lands should be decided by their owners. It was thus within the communal lands that we proposed various types of collective uses.

We discovered a map dating from 1954 that shows the original parceling of Jabel Tawil, and superimposed it onto the plan of the colony. The Palestinian demarcation lines cut arbitrary paths through the suburban fabric of the settlements. When they pass through the structures themselves, they create a new relationship between the houses and their parcels, between internal and external spaces, and between public and private spaces.
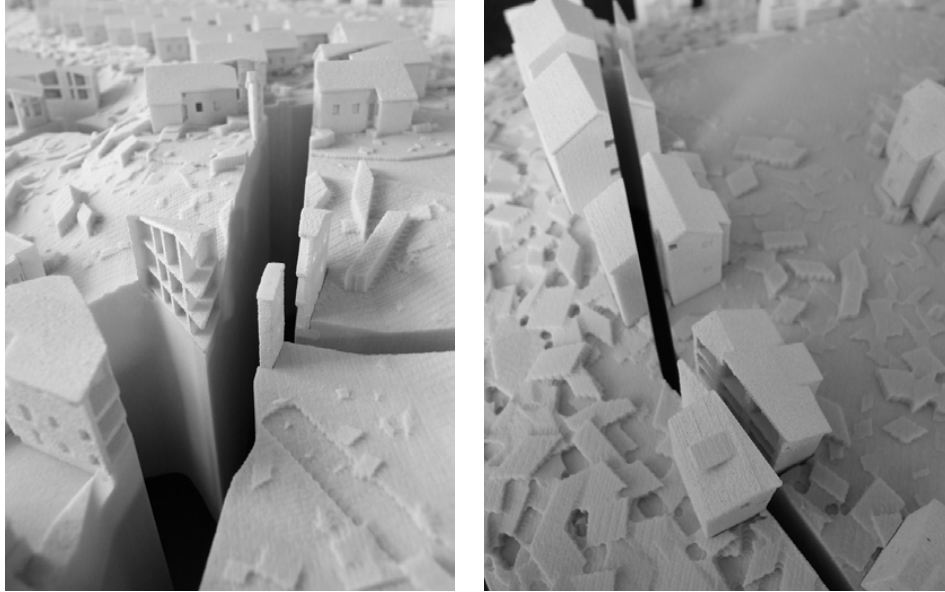
UNGROUNDING

Settlements are suburban when considered in relation to the Jewish geography of the Occupied Territories. They are gated bedroom communities fed by a growing matrix of roads and other infrastructure—but they can be understood as urban when viewed in relation to the Palestinian cities alongside which they were built. The surface of the suburb is marked by its various uses. It is inscribed extensively with the signs of the petite bourgeoisie lifestyle that maintains it: an excess of roads and parking lots, private gardens, fences, sidewalks, and tropical plants. Street patterns in the settlements/suburbs are a folded linear structure. By designating drive/walk/no-walk areas, channeling movement and designating the different degrees of private and public space, the first ten centimeters of the urban ground surface embody an operational logic and ideology. It is the logic of the surface that we seek to deactivate in order to dismantle the structures that define the internal organization of the suburb and transform its private, public, and communal functions.

Ungrounding is achieved by the dismantling of the existent surface—roads, sidewalks, private gardens—which are then replaced with a new surface layer. The pervasive system of concentric roads and spaces for parking will be eroded, removed, or buried. The barriers and fences that once demarcated the edges of the private lots of single-family homes will be removed, thus encommoning the land. Built structures will be suspended like pavilions on a single, unified new surface. Likewise, the regrounding of the surface is central to an attempt at reconfiguring a new figure—ground relation. Possible connections between individual buildings will be reconceived. Connections,

for example, could be undertaken across a field in which movement is not prescribed by the linear folds of the roads and the sidewalks.

Controlled material decay could become part of the process of "place making," and destruction could become part of a design process that would lead to new uses. The destruction of the surface by actively uprooting its elements and accelerating the decay of other surface elements would create the ground for new forms of use.

UNHOMING

At the molecular level of the occupation is the single-family house on a small plot of land. Investigating ways to transform this repetitive semi-generic structure may open up ways to transform the entire geography of occupation. What are its limits of transformability? Can a single-family home become the nucleus of new types of collective institutions?

Which structural parts should be retained, and what are the possible ways of connecting groups of houses? The problem is also how to transform a series of small-scale, single-family houses into unified clusters of communal space.

But the question of unhoming is not only technical. Within the multiple cultures of Palestine succeeding each other over the decades, rarely has anyone ever been the "first" or "original" inhabitant, but rather each is always a subsequent. To inhabit the land is always to inhabit it in relation to one's present-day enemies or to an (imagined or real) ancient civilization. This is a condition that turns the habitation of old cities, archaeological sites, battlegrounds, and destroyed villages into culturally complex acts of "co-habitation."

OUSH GRAB

2008

In May 2006, the Israeli army evacuated the strategically located military fortress of Oush Grab at the southern edge of Beit Sahour. Several concrete buildings formed the heart of the fortress. Throughout the Second Intifada, the Israeli military piled sand and rubble in a giant circle around the hill, making it appear like a crater or artificial volcano. Since its evacuation, groups of settlers have attempted to establish a new colony within Oush Grab. A fight for the hilltop has taken place as activists, settlers, and the Israeli military clash both in situ and in courts. The hilltop is also a point of natural singularity. It serves as one of the main sites where birds—starlings, storks, and raptors—land to rest on their seasonal migration between Northeast Europe and East Africa every spring and fall. Around them, a rich micro-ecology of small predators and other wildlife gathers. We seek to accelerate the processes of destruction and disintegration through an architectural project of obsolescence and return the ghost town to nature.

PROFANATION

DECOLONIZATION

RETURNS

PHOTOMONTAGES | 2008

GALLERY OF MODERN ART | *Brisbane* | 2011

RETURN TO NATURE | ALESSANDRO PETTI | *Sandi Hilal* | EYAL WEIZMAN

More than 500 million birds navigate the skies with regular points of orientation over the Syrian-African Rift—the Jordan Valley as it crosses Palestine—during their seasonal migrations. The former military base of Oush Grab that overlooks Bethlehem is located within a narrow bottleneck in their path.

Oush Grab sits on a high hill with a unique morphology, created by both nature and man. The top is surrounded by a giant earth mound that was piled high by soldiers during the Second Intifada, which gives the base its volcanic shape. Twice a year, for a few weeks each fall and spring, tens of thousands of birds land on the hilltop. Around them, a temporary micro-ecology of small predators and other wildlife forms. It is a breathtaking and terrifying scene.

On February 14, 2008, an unusually large flock of migratory birds moved over Beit Sahour. Imad Al Atrash, director of the Palestine Wildlife Society, arrived in Oush Grab early that morning in order to witness this spectacular event and document the more than thirty species that pass through Palestine annually, including storks, starlings, and nightingales. Excited by the sight, Imad instinctively climbed onto the rooftop of one of the military watchtowers (more like a tiny, squat bunker) and planted his bird-watching binocular tripod. In doing so, he turned the direction of the military gaze from the Palestinian surroundings to the borderless skies above.

When Imad leaped onto the abandoned watchtower, quickly followed by his students, he did not change the architecture of the place, but rather re-oriented it. This irreverent act, born out of his commitment to the practical demands of birdwatching and in a manner oblivious to any symbolic meaning, did not transform the watchtower into a museum, nor did it undo its military history, but rather it brought new life to it.

Watchtowers are omnipresent control devices throughout Palestine. They are menacing presences of stored violence. Architect Sharon Rotbard claimed that the tower and stockade have been in the DNA of Israeli architecture since the establishment of the early Jewish colonies in the 1930s. Moreover, they are always associated with buffer zones, creating no man's lands around them, "sterilized" areas free of human presence. Paradoxically, after years of existence, these spaces have become perfect environments for wildlife. The fortifications in Oush Grab, designed to keep "the enemy" outside, created an untouched space inside. The occupied hilltop is singular not just within, but as a natural environment. Shortly after the military evacuation, Oush Grab became host to various new forms of wildlife.

It had also become a sort of experimental testing ground for new forms of civic space. Gaining access to military structures was a fundamental step for a population under occupation in opening up endless possibilities for new uses, for reinvention. Oush Grab's large terrace, which had been previously used as a tank ramp, was transformed by the Municipality into a football field and children's playground. The shooting zone became a picnic area with a large fountain at the center. The prefabricated walls used for erecting checkpoints were converted into retaining walls for a playground, and abandoned wooden planks were used to build a climbing tower. In the end, Oush Grab became the liveliest outdoor space in the Bethlehem area.

Despite, or perhaps because of, its initial success, in 2008 on May 15—that is, on the Palestinian Nakba/Israeli Independence Day—forty colonists invaded Oush Grab and proclaimed the establishment of a new Jewish settlement named Shdema. Their aim was to transform the military outpost into a new colony. The location of the hilltop—and the existing fortification—would be suitable, they believed, for their regimented and securitized way of life. They were accompanied by soldiers who, just a few days earlier, had declared the area a "closed military zone."

Despite the military order, Palestinians and international activists did not stop organizing events in the area. On June 6, we played a common game that transformed the watchtower at the top of the hill into a hub. More than fifty people participated. When the soldiers arrived, they seemed both surprised and confused. One spoke into a military radio, trying to describe the scene to his commander, hoping to receive some instructions on how to deal with the situation. At the end of the long radio exchange, the soldiers simply left the area. It remains unclear why they didn't intervene to enforce the military order.

On June 13, in collaboration with the Municipality of Beit Sahour, we invited associations to join exploratory walks in the evacuated area and make plans for its future. The day after, a group of colonists returned to the site, but they quickly left, perhaps disturbed by a "loud" party organized by the Municipality on one side of the hill. Palestinian organizations and activists continued to hold events, tours, conferences, and parties until July 25, when a larger group of settlers accompanied by heavily armed soldiers arrived on site. This time, the soldiers expelled all Palestinians and international activists, allowing only the colonists to stay.

On July 30, a graffiti battle began. The colonists started planting and painting Israeli flags on the abandoned military barracks. The day after, Palestinians and international supporters arrived at the site and painted over the settlers' graffiti. The next day the settlers came back. But we also returned. It went on for days until, on August 6, a joint prayer with Palestinians and international supporters was held on the site.

Colonists arrived and hoisted the Israeli flag on the partially collapsed water tower. Together with the soldiers, they physically pushed the participants out and a number of activists were injured. A priest was spat upon after being dragged along the ground by a settler. That day, we realized that we were dealing with one of the most active and violent settler groups, known as "the Women in Green." Members of this group see themselves as fervent defenders of the values of the "civilized West" against "Arab invaders." They seem to have conjured up a hybrid beast in which the American Wild West meets the Wild West Bank, and like their imagined ancestors, they love guns. Their graffiti expressed hatred for Arabs, international activists, and Islam (probably unaware to the fact that the majority of Palestinians in Beit Sahour are actually Christian), but in particular, they loathe "leftist Tel-Avivians," who they view as responsible for "selling" their country to Arabs. They see themselves as being on the frontline in a "clash of civilizations." In a tragicomic moment during the clash, after several pushes and insults, an American anarchist and an American colonist discovered that they had once been neighbors in Brooklyn.

Throughout the summer of 2009, local NGOs, among which the Alternative Information Center, the Siraj Center for Holy Land Studies, and the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between Peoples, continued to organize public lectures and

events. On September 9, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad inaugurated what would be called the Oush Grab Public Park.

It was during this period that the Palestinian front for resisting settler aggression divided into two camps. On the one side, the Municipality of Beit Sahour believed that the best way to counter the occupation was to keep a low profile, negotiate with the Israeli Civil Administration, and aspire to protection and financial support from USAID, while slowly creating "facts on the ground." On the other side, the left-leaning NGOs propagated the idea that negotiating with Israel would be futile—as has been demonstrated time and again—and therefore, called for popular resistance to openly confront the occupying settlers.

The mayor of Beit Sahour invited us to design parts of the park on the side of the hill, suggesting a large fountain, a restaurant, a playground, and so on. But we wanted to engage with the core of the problem, at the top of the hill. Without changing this, the transformation of the entire area would remain incomplete. Yet at the same time, we wanted our proposal to enable the kind of transformations the mayor had envisaged.

On October 16, dozens of Israeli colonists stormed the hilltop where Palestinians and international supporters had been organizing lessons on migratory bird-watching. Conflict ensued. Israeli police detained six people.

A few weeks later, a group of colonists returned to the site to vandalize the public park, spray-painting stars of David on the walls.

On February 10, 2010, Israeli soldiers and police entered the park compound with two bulldozers, uprooting the remains of the military fortifications that were being used as retaining walls and destroying different elements in the park. The entire area around the former outpost was then declared a closed military zone and the top of the hill was fenced in again. A new watchtower was set up, of the kind which, in classic panoptical tradition, makes it impossible for external observers to verify whether or not it is occupied.

In response, the next morning, some 150 activists, both Palestinians and internationals, gathered to plant hundreds of olive trees around the hill in order to prevent further expropriations.

Ten days later, hundreds of Palestinians and international supporters gathered at Oush Grab to protest the military closure order. About seven Israeli army jeeps arrived, threatening to run over the demonstrators. After barking orders in Hebrew, one soldier threw tear gas and a sound bomb, momentarily dispersing part of the crowd.

At the time of writing, the future of Oush Grab remains uncertain. It appears that in the winter of 2013 a permit was given to establish the settlement of Shdema. If this happens, it would be the last link closing the chain of colonies surrounding and strangling Bethlehem. Some even speculate that it might become a military base again. What we know for certain is that despite its relative autonomy in shaping its own recent history, the future of this small hill at the entrance of Beit Sahour is both crucial within and exemplary of the manifold conflicts of decolonization.

MIGRATION

One day, an irritated Imad asked: "You're architects, right? So instead of wasting your time planting trees, bringing people around, organizing events, why don't you produce an architectural project for Oush Grab?!"

Accepting his challenge, our proposal for the reuse of this site became an intervention into the political struggle for the hilltop.

Due to its revolving-door occupation, it became of prime importance to render the buildings inhospitable for human activities. Rather than renovate and convert the base to give it another function, the intention was to accelerate the process of its destruction and disintegration. Thus, our project had become one of obsolescence, in which the top of the hill, with its military barracks, would no longer be used by humans, and instead "returned to nature."

The first stage involves the perforation of all the external walls of the buildings on the summit with a series of equally spaced holes. Our colleagues from the Palestine Wildlife Society expect that birds will come to inhabit these holes. We also proposed to transform the landscape by opening up the fortified rampart enclosure in order to allow access and drainage. This transformation of the rampart will partially bury the buildings in the rubble of their own fortifications, reorganizing the relationship between buildings and landscape. Eventually, the buildings and the artificial landscape will stand at the center of a park where nature will be allowed to gradually take over.

BOOKS OF PROFANATIONS

2009

To profane is to trifle with separation lines, to use them in a particular way. If to sacralize is to bring common things into a separate sphere, then its inverse is to restore the common use of things. Reutilizing colonial architecture, therefore, does not only mean to dislocate power, but to use its destructive potential and reverse its operation. Secularization is not profanation. Secularization leaves power structures intact, simply moving them from one sphere to another. Profanation, instead, manages to deactivate devices of power and restore the common use of confiscated space.

AL MASHA/COMMON

PROFANATION

DECOLONIZATION

RETURNS

11TH ISTANBUL BIENNIAL | 2009

THE BOOK OF RETURNS | ALESSANDRO
PETTI | *Sandi Hilal* | EYAL WEIZMAN

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP | *Bethlehem* | 1952

Since the Nakba, starting in 1947, the condition of Palestinian refugees has been defined by two limiting concepts: extraterritoriality and return. These terms traditionally refer to conditions in the present and in the future, respectively. The former concerns the endless present of homelessness. The latter relates to a nostalgic utopia. In reality, however, extraterritoriality is an extended "temporary" condition of precarity, marginalization, and exclusion while the notion of return is often abused and traded in the context of futile political negotiations. If continuing to articulate the problem in these terms is a dead end, it is necessary to invert this temporal order. The term decolonization is the necessary third aspect of this triangle. It allows us to articulate this temporal inversion and think about present return and future extraterritoriality, unlocking the transformative potential therein. Return and decolonization are entangled concepts—we cannot think about return without decolonization, just as we cannot think about decolonization without return. As committed as we are to the full implementation of the right of return, we do not believe that return can offer a solution to the condition of refugeeness by simply reversing the trajectory of time; its

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP | *Bethlehem* | 2010

potential is for a much more radical kind of transformation. However well-meaning the intentions of comrades and colleagues are, it would be best to stop pathologizing refugees as if they were a disease to be cured by return. Rather than marginalizing refugees as a residual issue in contemporary politics, they must be put at the center of any political vision for radical change in the region.

Return is, after all, both a matter of a political or legal right—one that should not be compromised in diplomatic negotiations—and a ghost—a category that organizes the lives of refugees in the present. In order to help explain the multiple layers of the term, we propose to use its plural, returns. The concept of returns grounds the right of return in daily material practices. Traditionally, return is understood as a coming back to one's places of origin and one's property. However, during the sixty-five years of exile, conditions have changed not only in the cities, towns, and villages that were cleansed, but also in the places of refuge, where a new political culture has gradually started to articulate itself.

Returns poses both a challenge and a promise that is in excess of the mere reversal of time. It is the most necessary move in the implementation of decolonization because the notion of returns demands the complete reorganization of modes of property ownership and the relation between multiple polities and territory. Indeed, in order to unpack the potentials embodied in returns, we must first turn to the refugee camp. The layout of the camp involves an intersection of military and medical principles

MISKA │ 1944

MISKA │ 2010

within a spatial regime of multiple separations and regimentations. When constructed in the early years after 1948, they were organized as a dense fabric of districts, blocks, and undifferentiated shelters. Without the possibility of expanding beyond the boundaries of the zone allocated to the management of the UN, the initial layout of grids of roads and the standardized units of shelter became a dense conglomeration of built structures and ad-hoc extensions, a shifting maze of alleyways under constant transformation, mutation, and adjustment.

The internal layouts of many camps contain invisible folds of geographies that reflect an imagined spatiality of displacement and recreate the refugees' places of origin. Places like Jaffa, Zakaria, and Safad are socially and materially reconstituted in camps such as Balata, Fawwar, and Arroub. In this respect, refugee camps have become the footholds of Palestinian memory, evidence of the formative act of ruination and dispossession; a twisted mirror image of a lost geography.

While they may appear like rather chaotic physical environments, refugee camps rely on complex assemblages of spatial arrangements, infrastructure, means of communication, and legal and organizational procedures. They are global spaces and sites of intense political battles for influence between the agencies of the host states (or the host non-states, in the case of Gaza and the West Bank), international organizations and NGOs, donors, religious relief organizations, and the committees representing the refugees themselves.

What makes refugee life a potentially powerful agent of decolonization is that the ongoing desire for return is the strongest possible challenge to the sovereign power of the state.

For Israel, the Arab states, and even eventually a Palestinian one, could be accepted as manageable enemies. It is only refugees who have a moral and historical claim against the state established in 1948 on the ruins of their society. As such, Israel's colonial order regards the refugee as an existential challenge to its very foundations.

Indeed, the figure of the refugee is closely associated with a sequence of intertwined figures of destruction and ruination. The refugee is the justification for an "irresolvable" conflict along simple territorial lines. The homelessness of the refugee and the provisional nature of the camps also make temporary and questionable the existence of the Israeli state.

These figures of destruction thus invert the relation between refugee and protection. For Israel, the refugee is not the one in need of protection, but the one to be protected against. We need to learn to see attacks on refugee camps as part of a "war on refugees"—a type of violence distinct from counter-insurgency and urban warfare, and one that aims not only to cripple resistance and pacify the camp, but also to undo the refugee as a political category.

STEREOSCOPIC VISION | *Dheisheh Refugee Camp*

STEREOSCOPIC VISION | *Miska*

Refugees' condition of exile cannot be dealt with by existing political categories: it demands the conception of an extraterritorial political space. Refugee life is thus suspended between these two ungrounded sites, always doubled. Thinking about the question of the returns of refugees necessitates the adoption of a stereoscopic vision that navigates the complex terrain between two places—the extraterritorial space of exile and the out-of-reach village of origin.

The camp and the place of origin are two islands. The demolished villages, towns, and refugee camps are extraterritorial spaces not fully integrated into the territories that surround them. The ruins and the lands themselves are legally defined as absentee property, and the camps as self-administrative zones supported by the United Nations.

THE VILLAGE OF MISKA

The first of the two sites related to the stereoscopic condition of refugeeness is the destroyed village of origin. The remnants of the village of Miska, next to the Palestinian town of Tirah, are a material archive for the spatial practices of refugee life.

Miska is one of about four hundred Palestinian villages demolished by Zionist forces during the 1947–48 war and thereafter. On April 20, 1948, the paramilitary Haganah occupied the village and expelled its inhabitants. In 1953, fearing the refugees' return, Israel destroyed the core of the village. To cover this up, state authorities planted a small forest of eucalyptus trees in and amongst the ruins. This was part of an Israeli

policy to use the planning designation of "natural reserves" to expropriate village lands. Environmental protection was invoked as a justification for actions whose true purpose was to conceal state crimes. Paradoxically, rather than erase, today these trees clearly mark out the extent of the village.[1]

By the end of April 1948, only one family was able to stay in the area of the village. At present there are close to four hundred descendants of this family living as "internally displaced persons" in nearby Tirah. The exiled population is scattered throughout refugee camps and cities in the West Bank and Jordan.

The land of Miska is managed by the Israeli Land Administration (ILA) which further rents it for the cultivation of fruit trees to the Jewish settlements of Sde Warburg, Mishmeret, and the Kibbutz of Ramat Ha-Kovesh. The only significant visible remains of the village are the ruins of a mosque and, until 2007, a school.

It is within and around these structures that in 2002 refugees started to organize social and religious events. Ismat Shubeita, one of the organizers of these events told us: "We celebrated weddings, birthdays, ate together, then marked the outlines of the demolished buildings around the school and posted signs bearing the names of children who once attended it."

In 2005, the Israeli authorities fenced the school in, declaring the area a "security zone." In response, the community, along with Israeli activists, continued to use the area and appropriated the fence for exhibitions.

In 2007, the authorities demolished the school to discourage such use. Yet the community did not give up. Instead, the village became the starting point of the annual March of Al Awda (the March of Return) to commemorate the Nakba.

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP

The second of the two entangled conditions is embodied by the refugee camp of Dheisheh. The camp was established in 1949 on less than half a square kilometer on the main road just south of Bethlehem. The land was leased by UNRWA from the government of Jordan to house refugees from forty-five different villages.

Since then, the population of the camp has grown to some ten thousand refugees without its area ever expanding. During the First Intifada, the camp was amongst the most important sites of resistance. Not only were the refugees able to hinder the movement of troops and settlers by sporadically closing and continuously threatening the main artery between Bethlehem and Hebron; the camp also became the cultural and operational headquarters for resistance groups such as Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The fence around the camp operated both ways—it controlled and limited Palestinians from leaving the camp, but, crucially, it also reinforced the out-of-bounds nature of the camp and made Israeli incursion more difficult.

At the beginning of the Oslo peace process, the fence was removed and only the revolving gate at the entrance of the camp was kept as a memorial for the ongoing struggle. From the robust headquarters of resistance—which only a few years earlier had been

the organizational hub of militant action and civil disobedience—a network of NGOs has emerged.

Wherever one looks in Dheisheh today, one sees NGO headquarters. There are more than thirty of them in this small area—probably the highest density of NGOs per square meter in the world. This transformation follows the history of Palestinian resistance: most of the leaders of the First Intifada in 1987 are now NGO heads. Dheisheh is perceived by refugees in other camps throughout the West Bank as a political inspiration. Normally, the cultural-political ideology of camp life interprets all forms of material improvement and transformation in the physical fabric of refugee camps as part of a process of "normalization" that undoes the exceptional status of the camp.

In the case of Dheisheh, however, any new construction of collective institutions in the camp is articulated not as an act of permanent settlement that would contradict the desire to return. Rather, paradoxically, the more established these institutions become, the more they turn into vehicles of decolonization that can connect present struggles to a history of displacement and a future of returns. Another paradox is that the more attempts were made to use the neutral humanitarian spaces of the camps to exclude refugees from political life, the more they gave rise to the most radical forms of politics. In Dheisheh, refugees build not "instead of" but rather "in order" for camps to provide political spaces, spaces where political claims can be voiced and political struggles pursued. It is in this way that the camp continuously develops and rearticulates the self-conception of refugeehood in a way that maintains its vanguard political status. Rather than enacting normalization, these constructions became potential agents of decolonization.

When asked if improving physical conditions in Dheisheh camp and establishing a network of NGOs has not jeopardized the right of return, Abu Khalil, one of the leaders of the Dheisheh popular committee, said, "the stronger we are, the more we can fight for the right of return. If we need to fight for our daily bread, we cannot even begin to think about the return."

PRESENT RETURNS

Al Feniq is a multi-story social and cultural center at the edge of the Dheisheh camp. It was built as part of a British military compound before being used by the Jordanian and eventually Israeli armies.

When the Israeli army partially withdrew from urban areas following the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority planned to adapt part of the compound into a prison, thus continuing the colonial history of the site. However, at this point, the refugee community—which did not want to see a prison in their camp—took over the location and within a few months had built the foundation of a cultural center instead.

Both the appropriation of this site and the transformation of its prospective use from a prison into a cultural center provide clear evidence of the visionary and active power of the refugee community. Today, Al Feniq has a range of multifunctional spaces for hosting myriad activities: the Edward Said library, a large hall for weddings, a women's gym, a community health and business advice center, and guesthouse facilities.

Thus, when Naji Odeh, one of the founders of Al Feniq, was asked if building the center was a form of settling in the camp, he replied, "I'm ready to demolish it and go back home; or even better, I'd like to rebuild Al Feniq in my village of origin."

As such, Al Feniq could be considered a bridge between the site of origin and the site of exile.

The tension between the political desire to return and the human inclination to remain in a familiar environment is also evident in an exchange that occurred one afternoon in Dheisheh, when Abu Khalil dropped in on a ladies' coffee gathering. Suhair, one of the women, jokingly asked, "Abu Khalil, when will we return home?" He joked back, "We don't have enough transportation to take you all home at once, do we?" Suhair persisted, "but we've already bought the bus, which could take us all home," pointing out the fact that the refugee center of Ibdaah had bought a bus which it calls "the bus of return." Shyly, a woman named Basma asked, "Can we bring Dheisheh camp with us?"

Basma's question became our brief. The exchange had demonstrated the tension between the desire to return and the sense of belonging to the present life and culture in the camp. We realized that any intervention at the site of origins would need to be mirrored by an intervention in the site of exile. The two must be part of a single architectural project.

We marked out two circles of equal dimensions in both the destroyed village of Miska and the camp of Dheisheh, considering them as probes representing the nature of the site of origin and the site of exile respectively. Inverting solid and void, we exchanged the contents of these two circles, proposing an open space in Dheisheh and a solid building in Miska.

In the density of Dheisheh, parts of the camp are un-built, with a square gradually opening to create a common civic space in what was otherwise perceived as an apparatus of relief, providing nothing more than a multiplicity of shelters.

On the ruins of Miska, we proposed an urban core for a city yet to come. Within the marked-out area, the places where houses once stood become voids, and the open spaces between them become solid, inhabited by common programs modeled on the Al Feniq program, effectively enacting Basma's request. Upon return, refugees would be able to continue building upon the culture they have developed in exile.

After sixty-five years of exile, the memory of a single house is equally shared by hundreds of individuals. Traditional categories of ownership become extraneous to the situation. Owned by so many potential claimants, a single house, or its lands, could be sold and the profit divided, of course, but many refugees would rather keep these sites. Challenging categorization, these spaces could no longer be considered (strictly speaking) either private or public. In this respect, the veritable revolution of returns is fundamentally a revolution in relation to property and demands new forms of co-habitation to be developed.

But the returns of Palestinian refugees will not only demand a radical change in and to Israel/Palestine: they will also affect the transformation of cities across the entire region. There are two and a half million refugees across the region already undergoing revolts and massive transformations, mainly on the outskirts of the now burning conurbations of Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, and Amman. The emergence of refugees as a diffused polity might help us to rethink today's struggles not from the point of view of national liberation, but from that of a continued profanation and decolonization of state borders.

The right of return is thus the quintessential aspect of decolonization. The right of return is the right to the urban, to a condition of heterogeneity and multiplicity that may already distinguish the sites of origin. The right of return is the right to mobility, to move freely across the region and to live in more than one space at once.

RAMALLAH SYNDROME

| 2009

The Ramallah Syndrome is a side-effect of the new spatial and social order that emerged after the collapse of the Oslo "peace process" that manifests itself as a hallucination of normality. The consequences of the perpetual presence of a colonial regime in Palestine are accompanied by the fantasy of the possible coexistence of occupation and freedom. The Ramallah Syndrome sets aside an understanding of subjugation and forms of resistance, as if the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state could somehow only be achieved through pure illusion. This power becomes spatialized in Ramallah and instantiates contradictions throughout the city and in all its facets, from culture to politics and the economy.

CREDITS
| SANDI HILAL AND ALESSANDRO PETTI WITH YAZEED ANANI, NASSER ABOURAHME, LAURA RIBEIRO, REEM FADDA, OMAR JABARY-SALAMANCA, YAZAN KHALILI, BASEL ABBAS, RUANNE ABOURAHME, MANAL ISSA, WAFA' ABDELRAHMAN, MUNIR FASHEH

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
| AUDIO INSTALLATION (13'40", LOOP)

SOUND INSTALLATION
| RUANNE ABOU-RAHME AND BASEL ABBAS

EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS
| PLAY IN AN ACOUSTICALLY ISOLATED BLACK BOX WITH PADDED WALLS
| DOOR TO ENTER THE SPACE SHOULD HAVE A PORTHOLE
| DISPLAY "RAMALLAH SYNDROME" ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE BLACK BOX

SUPPORT
| PALESTINE C/O VENICE, CURATED BY SALWA MAKDADI, 53RD INTERNATIONAL VENICE ART BIENNALE

CONFESSION

DECOLONIZATION   REPRESENTATION

TAWTIN/NORMALIZATION

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BEING NORMAL? | BASEL ABBAS |

Wafa' Abdelrahman | NASSER ABOURAHME |

RUANNE ABOURAHME | *Yazeed Anani* |

REEM FADDA | MUNIR FASHEH | *Jamil Hilal* |

SANDI HILAL | MANAL ISSA | *Omar Jabary-*

Salamanca | YAZAN KHALILI | ALESSANDRO

PETTI | *Laura Ribeiro* | LISA TARAKI |

OCTOBER 2008–JUNE 2009

ALESSANDRO PETTI There is a need to start a conversation around the development of Ramallah after the Oslo accords. To start a self-critical discussion on the social, political, and urban forms taken by the national liberation movement in Palestine; on how much potential exists in the city of Ramallah, with its exiled revolutionary elite, and how so little of this potential has resulted in real political change. The Ramallah Syndrome is the materialization of this paradox.

This condition does not only belong to Ramallah. It has been part of the destruction and reconstruction of urban centers in Palestine since 1948. We need to question the production of space, ask what the implications are of building a city such as Ramallah, reflect on how the arrival of the Palestinian Authority has radically transformed a village into an urban center, and question the relation between this urban development and the ongoing struggle for liberation.

SANDI HILAL It's also important to discuss the meaning of building a city under occupation and to discuss the significance of public space within a colonial context. Public space is where society is represented and where different political debates take place. The public arena is what people use for collective action. So, what is public space in Ramallah, under occupation? To what extent does the Israeli colonial regime allow Ramallah to develop? What is the meaning of giving the colonized the ability to create their own city? What is the price to pay? Despite the limitations, Ramallah could have provided an opportunity to create new forms of connection between people. But instead, Ramallah says "we don't care about anything; we just want to have normal lives."

YAZAN KHALILI I think you are mixing up issues here: a city trying to be normal is just a city trying to be normal. The "project" is something else. What is normal for a city under occupation? Who decides? Is Bethlehem more normal? Or is Nablus the more normal city? I think a city trying to progress, to have its own space, its own intellectuality, is a city in a normal situation. I think the Palestinian Authority allows for this. But I think it is a normal thing, to try and be normal.

NASSER ABOURAHME This quest for an uncritical normalcy, a normalcy associated exactly with the kind of everyday rhythms of a normal city, is a dissociation from reality. This is the syndrome. A very clear project is being fashioned in and through the city of Ramallah. Especially through the construction of subjectivities, the construction of identities, the construction of social divisions, of class. All this is happening in Ramallah!

YAZID ANANI No, no, no. It's the institution, not the place! The institution of the Palestinian Authority is what came and changed the place.

NA But it's the people who say, "we just want to be normal; we just want to have normal lives." What is normality in this case?

YA Survival, habibi.

NA You're doing so much more than just surviving, though, such as this discussion.

YA I can't live anywhere else but in Ramallah. Ramallah has always been a representation of my lifestyle.

LISA TARAKI I think that a lot of people, this new middle class we are referring to, are trying to legitimize their own search for satisfaction, enjoyment, whatever, as a kind of resistance activity. I don't buy it. I think that it's exactly the colonial situation that forces people to justify their own lives to themselves. Oslo was a political project, and the whole point was to create a false consciousness and make people begin to feel like they are living in a normal society. Ramallah has become a normal Arab city, or like a city anywhere, where you have a very heterogeneous population. It wasn't always like that. You have growing social and cultural polarization, in the sense of consumption patterns and lifestyles. This also didn't exist before, not in that sense.

SH They are asking themselves if having fun at parties is a form of resistance. So, what is our self-critique? How will we pay the tax on these benefits?

AP The notions and forms of resistance have certainly changed. We always refer to the First Intifada as a model, the only model. It was great, but it was also a different time, a time in which people would not go to cinemas and other cultural activities, as they were understood as inappropriate and disrespectful to the struggle and martyrs. Today cultural resistance has gained a certain legitimacy.

YK I don't think we are currently in a postcolonial situation; we are in a globalized world. When I open my email every day, I see twenty discussions between people about what's happening and what's not. Public space has changed from the physical to the internet. The public space is there, but in a different shape. Discussions between people, the *manasheer* (pamphlets), whatever is or used to happen in the city, exhibitions, advertisements, etc., happen daily between people on the internet. So, you can see a city under occupation—the occupation itself has changed, you can have schools, universities, cafes—but the structure of the city itself has also changed. The notion of building a city or public space cannot be compared to other colonial experiences such as Algiers. The relation between the oppressed and the oppressor has changed and is affected by globalization. People are shocked to see how we are living, how many satellites we have. We all watch Al Jazeera and know what's happening. The occupation is now also virtual.

LAURA RIBEIRO I think that to describe the internet as a public space is problematic because it is a very individual form of public space, one that bears no challenge to the new modes of occupation. It is a mere adaptation. It is ultimately very passive; it's not inclusive and it doesn't bear a call to action. It doesn't create participation either. How often do you reply to these discussions? At best you can read them all, but how often do you participate in the discussions?

OMAR JABARY-SALAMANCA I don't know if the problem is whether we have public space or not. The space is just there. The problem is, what is the project? On which project do you galvanize support and use those public spaces. I think that what we are lacking is the project. I don't think that public space will become a problem in the end. Everything can become public space.

NA We're interested in how space and the production of space and its articulation with new, different types of power—economic power, class power, political power—is producing a city, or what appears to be a city, that underpins a much larger, obscure political project. What does the production of space in Ramallah mean today? What does the articulation of the city mean? How does this fit into the wider context of Palestine? How does it fit into wider political projects? How does it fit into political, economic, neoliberal projects?

YA Ramallah is the place of corruption, it's the place of opportunity, central policing, money, power, etc. The Palestinian Authority is being used by many businessmen who are becoming millionaires by speculating on the growth of the city.

NA This is not just an institutional dynamic; there are people who actively collaborate, there are people who tie their own interests to the institution at political, economic, intellectual, and cultural levels, either consciously or unconsciously.

YA I think it's important to remember that the Palestinian Authority is not a socialist movement. It came with a capitalist movement, with its businessmen. It did not try to produce a socialist society. Even now, taxes are being reduced and everyone is happy. They do not understand or care about what taxes mean for health or education. Ramallah is the core of this emerging capitalist Palestinian state. But if you go to Nablus and Hebron, you will also see capitalists. This is not a new project: it's the continuation of a capitalist project, which is booming in Ramallah. And if businessmen can choose to come and invest, they will choose the best for them, not the best for society.

LR Sure, it was capitalist, but the primary project was to build a state. Now, the building of a state needs different behavior, so it's not a natural way of building a state. The PA exploits the building of a state for its own benefit.

YK But what's keeping the PA alive is what is being invested in it.

SH Yes, Ramallah is a project endorsed by Israel, therefore it's important to understand the collateral effects which Ramallah could produce. What energy it is capable of producing.

YA This worries me. It reminds me of the beginnings of my architecture studies, this European way of defining cities, its population size and what symptoms you can refer to in order to decide whether to call a space "a city." It doesn't really matter if Ramallah is called a city or a village. It's just a human population living in a built fabric. I don't find the European case to be a good reference. Why should we always define things by a fixed caliber? I find this very tedious. Nasser, I have a real problem with the way you refer to European space. It reminds me of the story by Raymond Williams about a guy who was living in a valley (determined to be rural) left for London where he became a big-shot intellectual and then returned to the valley. The way he looked at the valley on his return is the way you are looking at Ramallah.

NA Actually, there are many points to be made about Eurocentrism. But I have a problem with your absolute differentiation between a European model as the norm, and then an Arab, Eastern one. I feel this is a kind of reverse-Orientalism: to interpret our cities as totally different from European ones; to think that there is nothing in common. As if there is no difference between living in a village or a city. The fact that architecture as a discipline was developed under a European cannon is true, but it doesn't mean that there are no objectives, no universals, in it. The point I was trying to make is that people in Ramallah think that they have achieved a kind of metropolitan modernity, and in a way this becomes a trade-off. It becomes a positive outcome of a negative situation: you're enclosed, you're confined, but somehow you are isolated from the Islamic trends of the rest of Palestinian society. You're given room to urbanize in a metropolitan, secular, modern way. We should also try to judge Ramallah according to its own credentials, its own criteria. Claiming to be an urban modern metropolis means something. Whether that's good or bad is another issue.

MUNIR FASHEH I recently wrote an article about Ramallah and Gaza. In it, I wrote that Gaza is being destroyed from the outside by the Israeli army, while Ramallah is being destroyed from the inside by the World Bank. The consumption patterns of the World Bank are really getting inside us, our thinking, our perceptions, our relationships. All the talk about Gaza is about how we can ruin it from the inside. The idea of "help" and paying money and reconstruction and so on is actually to finish Gaza off from the inside. As long as destruction is only from the outside, Gaza is safe. Ramallah is not safe. Because on the outside it looks like everything is fine and everything is flourishing. I feel that development projects change the city in ways that are much worse than sometimes destroying a few buildings here and there. I also want to say something about the word "resistance." When an army invades, you resist the army. When consumption invades, you resist consumption. Ramallah is not resisting consumption.

MANAL ISSA What do you mean by consumption?

MF For example, the number of "workshops" in Ramallah is consumption beyond belief. Another is the rise of the banks—Ramallah is becoming the hub.

MA But this is happening everywhere!

MF We have to resist the pattern of living that is being imposed on us, but very sweetly. This is how the world has been conquered.

MA I see consumption everywhere, not only in Ramallah. It's the mentality of societies everywhere. In Damascus—an unoccupied place—consumption is everywhere. It is a world plan. I don't want you to just collect the issues and see them in Ramallah… Don't condense everything.

NA But what's interesting in Ramallah, what's specific about it, is that the creation of a regime of consumption is precisely linked to the occupation by the army Munir was talking about. There is actually no split between occupation through consumption and occupation through the army. They are two intertwined and interlinked things. It is about the creation of new subjectivities; making people think differently, reconstituting subjects, reconfiguring people. The radicality of the situation here positions this in a much wider process of fragmentation and Bantustanization. It means that consumption cannot be separated from the colonial regime.

AP We can also speak about Ramallah, from the point of view of women, for whom it is a place for freedom. Especially when we talk about it with younger women, for them, being in Ramallah is gaining a space that is free from what is imposed or what is perceived to be imposed by the family.

WAFA' ABDELRAHMAN I'm actually from Gaza, and this is very important because it defines what I'm going to say and perhaps where I stand. I think there is a very strong relation between loving Ramallah and how the people from the outside look at it as the city of liberation—which it's not! As a Gazan who came here in 1990 to study at the university, maybe I was deceived by this rhetoric of Ramallah, the liberal city, the city where women can do anything they want, a free place for them, that gives them back their rights and their freedoms. But after one year of being in Ramallah, I discovered that this is deceitful. It is not true. As long as you're not from Ramallah, you don't carry the privileges of those who are. You will always be labeled as a stranger who is not a "Ramallawi." In 1995, I decided to go back to Gaza. I decided that this is my place. If I am a free woman—I call myself a feminist—and if I am a feminist, then I have to try it there, not in Ramallah. In Ramallah you cannot tell what's true and what's not true. You cannot read the faces of the people. You cannot tell whether they like you because of who you are, or because you are making an effort to look like them.

MA I don't want to attack Ramallah, to highlight its positive or negative sides. I moved to Ramallah ten years ago. I grew up in Damascus, and if you look at Ramallah, it's the same. When women want freedom, they go to Damascus; when youth want more opportunities, they go to Damascus. Ramallah has been the open city and the center since the 1940s. We know that Umm-Kulthum used to come to Ramallah to record her songs; there were famous restaurants that people from Lebanon and other places came to eat in. Ramallah was always an icon of openness; an icon of welcome. I won't attack Ramallah because Ramallah accepts everybody. It accepts Muslims, it accepts Christians, it accepts conservative or religious people, it accepts everybody. I want to say to Wafa', can you keep smoking and doing what you do in Gaza when you know that people don't like it? You can do what you like in Ramallah. This highlighting of the negative side, it's as if you are closing the door on the only hope of a place that is welcoming and receptive of everybody; a place that gives you the space to be who and what you are, to do what you want to do. For us, for women, Ramallah is the only place where we not only can live alone, but can have a boyfriend. I'm not sure you can have a boyfriend in… can you do it in Qalqilya?

RUANNE ABOURAHME When you say everyone is accepted in Ramallah, I think everyone is only accepted within certain parameters. Ramallah is a space of consumption. If you want to be politically active or critical, then no, you're not allowed to do that. You're not allowed to go and demonstrate. I went to the Manara to demonstrate over the attacks on Gaza, and I saw a child being beaten up.

JAMIL HILAL There still remains, among the elite of the Palestinian Authority and part of the private sector, the possibility of a state, of an independent sovereign Palestine through negotiations. There is this illusion that they can do it without resistance—I'm talking about not just one form of resistance but resistance in its various aspects; against the Wall, against colonization, against normalization, etc. But with the failure of the Road Map for Peace, of the Annapolis Conference, after the rise of the extreme right-wing Israeli government, and the continued expansion of the colonial settlements, this myth, this illusion, is, I think, disappearing fast. So now, the majority of

people realize that there is not going to be a Palestinian state in the sense that Bush used to talk about, or maybe that Mubarak would talk about. But there is a project, of a Bantustan state, with pockets of population under control of the Israeli state. The elite have also come to see that they have some privileges, and they don't want to say to the Israelis "Go to hell." The PA is just a façade; we don't have any form of sovereignty, and we're going to dissolve the PA and go back to a liberation movement. The time will come, and I think it will come soon, even if Obama assures them every day that there is a two-state solution. There is not. There is one state that is creating an apartheid in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

AP Is it even possible to dismantle the Palestinian Authority at this moment? There are so many people employed by the machine.

JH People are employed so it is difficult to dismantle the machine. How are you going to support 165,000 people who get salaries from the PA? What about education, which is now run by Palestinians, or the health services? You could keep the PA, not as a political organ but more like a municipality that runs services. It's not doing more than this! Because there has been no negotiation on the part of the PLO, the PLO has been frozen since the PA was established; it's not active, it's not the representative body. We don't have any national institutions. For example, since 2006, the Legislative Council has been paralyzed. PLO institutions have also been paralyzed, which is why we have this polarization between Hamas and Fatah, each of which have established their own political domain, with Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. There's no national umbrella, no national institution to flesh out your differences, to find the solutions to national problems.

Once you are outside Ramallah, you immediately face Israeli checkpoints. So you have to see the city through this system of controlled urbanization, where the Palestinian Authority has some symbolic sovereignty, which in fact is very deceptive. There isn't much power. If you go to the restaurants, if you go to the clothing shops, you can choose fashion from Italy and suits from France or whatever, and you may think that you have entered a bubble—but it is a bubble, and it can be punctured. Like what happened in 2002, when the Israelis invaded Ramallah: within an hour, the Israelis had taken complete control; Arafat was besieged in one room, with smelly toilets and it was difficult to get food to him. That shows you their real power. With the occupation, when they want to use it, they use it.

SH Don't you think that the project of normalization in Ramallah is like using machines to keep a terminal patient alive? Like a dead body that is kept alive by the illusion of being alive?

JH You think it's like a bribe to the political elite?

SH Exactly.

JH I don't know the point of view of the Israelis, but I think that the first thing they want to establish is: "Look, Jerusalem is not going to be your capital, if you want a capital, here is your capital, Ramallah-Bireh. Forget about Jerusalem, Ramallah is your center." Talking to the elite, they might say: "Ok, you want to have a sense of urban life, you can have your theaters, you can have your restaurants, you can have whatever, but only within these few square miles." But at the same time, Israelis remind us of their presence, the situation, every now and then. They go in at two o'clock in the morning and take whoever they want and then leave. And they give the PA advance warning, they tell the police: "We have some activity between 12 and 4 a.m.," which means "disappear." So the Israelis let the PA know who's the boss, but they allow them to play in this free, fenced-in space. This, I think, will eventually, and I hope sooner rather than later, become obvious.

AP Ramallah in particular is a different situation. It's not like Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, or Nablus, because as you just said, there is a kind of urban density and diversity of people in Ramallah that isn't there in other cities, even though they're all under occupation. What we are trying to understand is whether in Ramallah, in all its specificity, there is a possibility for a Palestinian counter-project, something that we can call resistance, or perhaps it is just another form of co-optation? Because we can say that perhaps in Jenin, or Hebron, more or less the same things happen, but they are not built in the same way, for the same reason, and with the same power. The main difference with Ramallah is the Palestinian Authority, which has the power to speak for everybody; they represent power.

JH It has potential yes, because if you take other towns—we don't have cities, we have towns—if you take Al Khalil or Nablus, for example, these cities are still structured by family groupings. The most prominent families there more or less control the economy, political structure, etc. Ramallah is different; it doesn't have this structure. Fact of the matter is, Ramallah has become the seat of the Palestinian Authority, NGOs, new companies, the private sector, political parties, etc. So, it contains this plurality, this diversity from different parts of the West Bank. Ramallah has become a real urban center. Forget for a minute about the colonial situation. It has come to represent Palestinians from different trajectories of life, from different areas, from Gaza, as well as Palestinians who are returnees from the diaspora. It has become a small nucleus of Palestinian society, including Palestinians from '48 areas who work in universities and different institutions. So objectively, it has the potential to become the center for resistance against the Israeli project of turning Gaza and the West Bank into Apartheid Bantustans and calling them a Palestinian state.

THE RED CASTLE AND THE LAWLESS LINE

2009

The Oslo "peace process" defined three types of territories within the West Bank: Areas A, B, and C. When the process collapsed and the temporary organization of the Occupied Territories solidified into a permanently splintered geography, a fourth space emerged. Existing in between these spaces was the width of the line that separates them. Less than a millimeter thick when drawn on a map, it measured upwards of 5.5 meters in reality. The Lawless Line delves into the thickness of this line, following it along the edges of villages and towns, across fields, olive groves, and fruit orchards, roads, gardens, kindergartens, fences, terraces, homes, public buildings, a football stadium, a mosque, and a castle. Within this line is a zone undefined by law; a legal limbo that acts like a vortex pulling in all the forces, institutions, organizations, and characters that operate within and around it.

AL MASHA/COMMON

BORDERS

RETURNS

CREDITS
│ DAAR—ALESSANDRO PETTI, SANDI HILAL, EYAL WEIZMAN, AND NICOLA PERUGINI
WITH AMINA BECH, SAMIR HARB, SEAN HARB, SEAN MURPHY, SUZY HARRIS-BRANDTS,
ALESSANDRA GOLA

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
│ MIXED-MEDIA INSTALLATION
1 LINE MODEL (50 MM X 5,000 MM)
4 IMAGES (DIMENSIONS VARIABLE)
6 PHOTOMONTAGES (DIMENSIONS VARIABLE)
1 PROJECTION (DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, 8'13", WITH SOUND, LOOP)

IMAGES
│ AMINA BECH FOR DAAR P.194, 196–198

NOTTINGHAM CONTEMPORARY | *Nottingham* | 2012
10ᵀᴴ SHARJAH BIENNIAL | *Sharjah* | 2011
Left | OSLO ARCHITECTURE TRIENNALE | *Oslo* | 2010

LAWLESS LINES | ALESSANDRO PETTI |
Sandi Hilal | EYAL WEIZMAN | NICOLA PERUGINI

The various historical plans for partitioning Palestine—from the Peel Commission Report in 1937 to the Oslo Accords in 1993—not only divided the land into a non-contiguous patchwork of territories, but also gave rise to a new spatial condition. Between the divided territories, another space unintentionally emerged, and its expanse was a product of the map drafting process—the very width of the partition lines themselves. Each partition line reflected the geopolitical circumstances as well as the cartographic techniques of the time. The width of each line was dictated by the sharpness of the drafting instrument, the scale of the map, and the kind of surface on which it was drawn. Legally and mathematically, a line has no thickness: it is a one-dimensional trajectory. In this case, however, abstract law and mathematics yielded a three-dimensional object when they encountered materiality.

Referring to the 1949 ceasefire lines between Israel and Jordan, historian and former deputy mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti famously asked "who owns the 'width of the line'?" The lines, he wrote, had been drawn on a 1:20,000 scale map by the two military's commanders—Moshe Dayan and Abdullah Al Tal. Meeting in an abandoned house in the frontier neighborhood of Musrara in Jerusalem, they laid out a map on the floor. Each drew a line using a different colored grease pencil: Dayan used green, and Al Tal, red. The thickness and softness of the colored pencils resulted in lines that were, generally, three to four millimeters wide. But because the floor under the map was uneven (or perhaps Dayan and al-Tal were a little careless), in some areas of Jerusalem the width of the line became wider.

This ambiguous legal space—a few millimeters wide on the map and more than a hundred meters wide in real space—was a consequence of the materialization of the law-making drawing process. In the most densely built-up area of Jerusalem, the lines were so wide they covered entire neighborhoods. The physical width of the lines became the subject of debate (which carry on to this day). It also resulted in border transgressions and skirmishes.

Several decades later, in the early 1990s, the cartographic work undertaken during the Oslo "negotiations" was conducted digitally—on computer screens—but the maps, signed by Yitzak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, were printed in hard copy. Separation lines were now drawn throughout and across the West Bank, carving it up into the infamous Areas A, B, and C, in which Palestinians have different levels of limited control. Because the documents signed were printed hard copies in which the lines were just over a millimeter wide; on the ground, the line acquired a width of about five meters.

When the Oslo negotiations collapsed, the lines remained an open legal problem. Without legal definition, or a mechanism to resolve legal issues, a series of challenges brought back the question: "Who owns the thickness of the line?" Paradoxically, the question challenges the very partition that these lines enacted.

These thin slivers of extraterritorial space are ubiquitous throughout the West Bank; they run at the margins of almost every town and village. We walked along these lines—along the periphery of olive groves and orchards, roads, fences, terraces, houses, public buildings, kindergartens, a football stadium, a mosque, a suburban castle, and even the building of the Palestinian Legislative Council. With Israel and the Palestinian Authority—Israel's powerless collaborator—each exercising control over one side of the line, we thought that the thickness of the line could itself be seen as "all that remains" of Palestine; a common, extraterritorial zone, containing a sample of all types of spaces. Walking along the lines, we encountered a series of legal conflicts that exemplified the "borderline" disorder of the area.

THE LINE AND THE CASTLE

The suggestion that the thickness of the line generated a legally undefined zone emerged as a legal question at the end of 2009 in the small village of Battir, west of Bethlehem. A right-wing Israeli NGO called Regavim, established with the aim of protecting the "human rights of Israeli settlers," submitted a petition to the Israeli courts for the demolition of a large private Palestinian house. Built by a US-based Palestinian in a breathtakingly eclectic style and locally known as the "Red Castle" (referring more to the hair color of the owner than to the tone of the cladding, which is effectively white), Regavim claimed that it was partially "invading" Area C—the area fully controlled by Israel, and where Palestinian construction is prohibited.

The owner of the castle and the local village council commissioned surveys that identified the exact position of the line. But to their surprise, the line ran right through the living room and bathrooms, dividing the house into two parts—or, in fact, into three. The eastern part was in Area B, the western part was in Area C, and a strip of the house—the thickness of the line—had some undefined extraterritorial status. The house was not demolished, but this sliver of architectural-scale extraterritorial space has haunted us ever since.

THE LINE AND THE MOSQUE

We walked north. In the village of Burin, southwest of Nablus, the line between Areas B and C crossed a section of the majestic Salman Al Farisi mosque, built in 2008. Eighty percent of the mosque was in Area C, with the remaining twenty percent being included in the thickness of the line and in Area B. At the beginning of 2010, under the pressure of Jewish settlers who live in nearby settlements (and who have previously attempted to burn the mosque), the Israeli Civil Administration sent a demolition order to the local village council, which is still pending as an ongoing threat.

THE LINE AND THE VILLAGE

We walked southwest to the village of Neve Shalom (Wahat Al Salam), an experiment in cohabitation, inhabited by both Palestinians and Israeli Jews. The village is situated where the Green Line of 1949 splits into two, enclosing a no man's land. This zone was occupied in 1967. One of the lines crosses right through Neve Shalom. In 2003, one of Neve Shalom's founding members, Eitan Kramer, was arrested by the Israeli Border Police and accused of transporting a Palestinian worker from the West Bank to the village (something that he did regularly, but that had become illegal a few months earlier). Kramer was charged and appeared in court. Realizing that Neve Shalom was situated within the no man's land, he argued for the inapplicability of the law. The court accepted his claim, and he was acquitted, demonstrating the ongoing ambiguity that state institutions still have towards the extraterritorial spaces of and between the lines.

THE LINE AND THE HOUSE

Back in the northern part of occupied Jerusalem, near the village of Akab, we found another house traversed by yet another line: the border of the Jerusalem municipality, which was unilaterally expanded two weeks after the occupation of the West Bank in June 1967.

It was Moshe Dayan who again oversaw the drafting of a new line of separation. His intention was to expand the Jerusalem municipality under Israeli control by including as much agricultural land and open space as possible in order to build Jewish neighborhoods, and he was careful to include as few Palestinian built-up areas as possible—in order to keep a Jewish majority within the gerrymandered border. The consequence of this was that the line severed the historical connection between the Old City and the Arab villages surrounding it. From 1967 until the beginning of the Oslo Process, the border was simply a line on the map. Its effect was rather juridical: the people living east of it were under the military's civil administration and the people living west of it became residents of Jerusalem. However, during the Oslo Process, Jerusalem was effectively cut away from the majority of Palestinians—a reality that was aggravated in 2003 when the wall was erected, brutally turning this lawless line into a menacing concrete presence.

The house of the Bardans, a Palestinian couple, was traversed by this line. As residents of Jerusalem, the couple were given temporary Israeli IDs, which, under the logic of Israeli colonization, provide more access to public welfare and a greater freedom of movement. But the state wanted to excise the couple altogether, along with many other Palestinians, from the city. The Labor Court of Jerusalem was tasked with arbitrating this issue and commissioned a surveyor to draw the exact location of the line in relation to the house. The result: 51.2 percent of the property was outside of Jerusalem jurisdictional area; 48.8 percent inside.

The court assigned no thickness to the line. Furthermore, the Israeli National Insurance Institute claimed that since most of the house was outside Israeli territory, the Bardans were not entitled to be residents of Israel. Through their lawyer Ghiath Nasser, the couple tried to explain that most hours the family spent at home were spent in the bedroom, which was, together with the entrance to the house, in Jerusalem. The state disagreed, however, arguing that the configuration of rooms could be easily changed
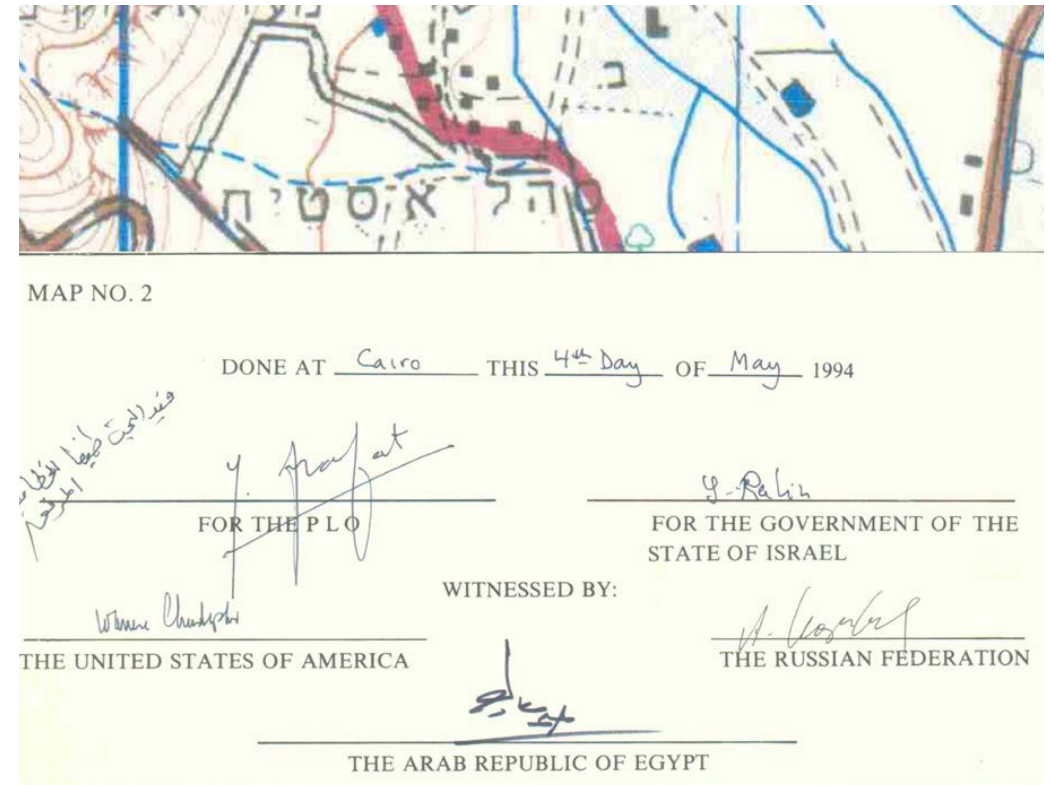
DETAIL OF THE MAP ATTACHED TO THE 1994 CAIRO AGREEMENT (PART OF THE OSLO ACCORDS).

to suit the purpose of their claim. At this point, the concept of the "thickness of the line" was brought up by Nasser. The couple claimed that the entire house was in fact literally within the boundary of Jerusalem. The Bardans lost the case, demonstrating the fact that when it is in its interest, Israel can render a conclusive decision in relation to the line.

THIS TEXT IS AN EDITED EXCERPT FROM | ALESSANDRO PETTI, SANDI HILAL, AND EYAL WEIZMAN, *ARCHITECTURE AFTER REVOLUTION* (BERLIN: STERNBERG PRESS, 2013).

A COMMON ASSEMBLY

2011

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS

SITE-SPECIFIC MIXED-MEDIA INSTALLATION
1 STAIRCASE (CA. 130 CM X 2000 CM X 500 CM, VARIABLE MATERIALS)
5 INTERVIEWS ON VIDEO MONITORS (CA. 27" AND DURATION VARIABLE, LOOP, WITH HEADPHONES)
1 VIDEO ESSAY PROJECTION (DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, 14'23", LOOP, WITH SOUND)
1 ARCHIVE PROJECTION (DIMENSIONS AND DURATION VARIABLE, LOOP, SILENT)
1 PERFORMANCE PROJECTION (DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, 6'05", LOOP, WITH SOUND)

EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS

BUILD STAIRCASE WITH READILY AVAILABLE MATERIALS
PROJECT EITHER THE VIDEO ESSAY OR BOTH THE ARCHIVE AND THE PERFORMANCE

VIDEO

CRESSIDA KOCIENSKI P. 204, 2016

The Palestinian Legislative Council building—known as the Palestinian Parliament—is simultaneously a construction site and a ruin. It collapsed not through military violence but through political failure. Its location in Abu Dis is the product of political maneuvering. Some prominent members of the Palestinian leadership wanted to push the building as close as possible to the Al Aqsa mosque. Thus, the building was built illegally on top of the border. Today, the building sits like a massive relic and testimony to the failure of political negotiations within three different spaces: one part within Israeli territory, one part within Palestinian controlled territory, and a small strip, no larger than the thickness of a line on a map, in legal and sovereign limbo. This potentially extraterritorial zone is an invitation to reimagine the building, and its suspended status, as an assembly capable of representing all Palestinians: those living in Israel, under its occupation, and in exile.

AL MASHA/COMMON

BORDERS

CAMP

PROFANATION

REPRESENTATION

EXILE   RETURNS

BAK, BASIS VOOR ACTUALE KUNST │ *Utrecht* │ 2017
NYU ABU DHABI CAMPUS ART GALLERY │ *Abu Dhabi* │ 2018

NOTTINGHAM CONTEMPORARY │ *Nottingham* │ 2012
THE JAMES GALLERY │ *New York* │ 2014

PARLIAMENTS IN EXILE | ALESSANDRO PETTI | *Sandi Hilal* | EYAL WEIZMAN | NICOLA PERUGINI

VIDEO STILL | 2011

The Palestinian Legislative Council building, known colloquially as the "Palestinian Parliament," is located in Abu Dis, just outside the borders of the city that were unilaterally declared in 1967. Or so we thought.

The project of building a parliament began in 1996 during the euphoria of the Oslo Accords. The location of the building was the product of political maneuvering. The Palestinian leadership had wanted to locate the building as close as possible to the Al Aqsa mosque so that it would be seen as a stepping stone towards the ultimate establishment of Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State. Meanwhile, Israel—in its insistence that no Palestinian institutions would be built in Jerusalem—pushed the Parliament outside of its borders.

Abu Dis, the closest town to Jerusalem's Old City, was chosen for a good reason. The Palestinians positioned the building in such a way that one of its edges abutted the borderline itself. However, in 2010, Khalil Tafakji, a Palestinian cartographer of the Orient House in Jerusalem and a member of the Palestinian negotiation team during Oslo,

described it as a project of cartographic subversion: "If we were to build a Parliament, it had to be in this area. Half of the Parliament would be inside Jerusalem—we call it Al Quds... People thought that the Parliament was built in Abu Dis, not in Jerusalem... But by building across the line we wanted to break Israel's taboo that it is forbidden to speak about Jerusalem." Situating the building over the line was staking a Palestinian claim to Jerusalem.

Three years after the collapse of the Oslo Accords, with the eruption of the Second Intifada and the construction of the wall just a few meters from the building, all this complexity was lost in the fray. The building, in its entirety, was left outside the concrete borders of Jerusalem. Construction work on the Parliament halted in 2003 at the same time as the wall was being put up. Today, the building is both a construction site and a ruin: it was destroyed neither by military violence nor by natural deterioration, but by the failure of the politics of the so-called "peace process."

A PARLIAMENT IN EXILE

The Palestinian Legislative Council in Abu Dis is the last iteration of Palestinian experiments with parliamentary democracy. But its establishment overshadowed the Palestinian National Council, also known as the "parliament-in-exile"—the only Palestinian assembly aspiring to represent all Palestinians whether in Israel, occupied Palestine, or in exile.

Parliaments-in-exile were a form of political representation exercised throughout the years of the Palestinian Liberation Organization's exile which sought to account for a scattered and extraterritorial polity, a polity in conflict, without the possibility of arranging for a census on the basis of which proportional representation could be organized, and without the possibility of physically congregating in Palestine.

These parliaments-in-exile assembled, more or less, about once every two years. Before the 1967 occupation, the meetings were not held in exile, of course, and the first session met in Jerusalem in May 1964, with representatives from Palestinian communities in Jordan, West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt, Qatar, Libya, and Algeria. After the occupation, sessions were held in Cairo (1968–1977), Damascus (1979–1981), Algiers (1983 and 1988), Amman (1984), and after the Oslo Accords, in Gaza (1996 and 1998), and Ramallah (2009). The locations of these councils marked the geopolitical transformations of the region, the history of the Palestinian struggle, and the dispersal of its organizational centers.

These robust and sometimes controversial parliaments-in-exile survived precisely because their gatherings had no fixed seats. Territorialized, they would have become easy prey to Israeli politics.

However, the National Council is a PLO body, and the PLO has come into much disrepute since the failure of the Oslo peace process, losing its leadership role in the Palestinian struggle. The extraterritorial aspirations and modes of operation of the parliament-in-exile, nevertheless, could be adopted as a starting point for generating a new form of gathering that we refer to as a "common assembly," a term we use to maintain a distance (spatially and politically) from a parliament, and to identify a space that could host and embody decolonization.

Taking us through the precise location of the line in the interior of the parliament building, Khalil Tafakji explained that the building is partly within the Israeli-controlled area and partly within the Palestinian-controlled area—with a narrow strip, as wide as the borderline itself, potentially in a legal limbo. This extraterritorial zone corresponds to the types of space across which Palestinians are dispersed, with the thickness of the line acquiring a strong symbolic power—representing those in exile and, thus, excluded from participation in political decisions within Palestine.

Most Palestinians are living as refugees outside Palestine in different states throughout the region. In some of these states they are effectively excluded from political representation. Many Palestinians have never had the chance to vote. Those within Palestine are forcibly separated into several distinct locations—Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. This fragmentation has been one of the most effective means of controlling and dominating Palestinians. It is within the very thickness of the line that we found an echo suggesting the possibility of a common assembly.

Rather than the parliament of representative democracies, a common assembly might refer to claims to immanent democracy that have emerged across the streets and roundabouts of the Middle East. In Tahrir Square, the cleaning of the square is what turned it from being a "public" space—the space of the regime—into an effective political common. As a gesture recalling this move, we ourselves engaged in an act of cleaning. With this gesture, we sought to continue, but also challenge the cartographic subversion undertaken by the builders of the Parliament.

Carefully measuring and tracing the line that Khalil Tafakji had drawn inside the building, we swept and polished it clean (as much as we could), producing a 1:1 scale architectural drawing through a thick layer of ten-year-old dirt and bird droppings. Like these droppings, the thickness of the line is the legal flotsam of the illegal process of Israeli domination. But paradoxically, it is in this very apparatus of division that we can find a place to start thinking about decolonization.

Left | PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL | *Abu Dis* | 2011 | *Video stills*

Interlude IV

CAMPUS IN CAMPS: A UNIVERSITY IN EXILE | ALESSANDRO PETTI | *Dheisheh Refugee Camp* | JUNE 11, 2013

Refugee camps are usually constituted of tents and shelters. They are designed for quick and easy assembly in order to respond to emergencies. A temporary form of architecture, they are not built to last. Although the establishment of refugee camps is rhetorically justified by humanitarian intent and technocratic design discourse, they remain an essentially political issue. Whether they serve temporarily or become more permanent is ultimately not decided by the humanitarian bodies tasked with managing and controlling them, but rather by political conflicts. The prolonged exceptional temporariness of refugee camps could paradoxically create the condition for their transformation: from a pure humanitarian space to an active political space, as the embodiment and expression of the right of return.

The over ten million refugees currently registered worldwide by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), and the five million Palestinian refugees registered by UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), in some sixty camps across the Middle East give only a partial idea of a widespread phenomenon. The radical economic and social transformations currently being experienced throughout the world have produced a proliferation of the "camp condition"—that is, a space suspended from the surrounding legal, social, and political order.

There are now innumerable places in suspension in megalopolises around the world, where internally displaced people and new immigrants take refuge. Whether they are camps that precede or follow wars, encampments set up after natural catastrophes, or refugee camps, they often become places where people are born and die waiting to go home. At the same time, the camp condition has opened a new horizon of political and social configurations, and new ways of understanding the relation between population, space, and territory. The permanent temporariness of refugee camps has produced spatio-political configurations that call into question the very idea of the nation state. And despite the fact that the "camp form" has been used as a tool for regulating the "excess of its political dimension," the camp as an exceptional space could also be seen as a counter-site for emerging political practices and a new form of urbanism.

THE CAMP AS A SITE OF DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL

Although states and non-governmental organizations have been, and still are, actively conceiving and managing camps, we are just beginning to understand how the camp form has problematized the very idea of a city as a functional political community and democratic space. If a citizen's political identity is played out in the public space of the city, what is found in the camp is its inverse: here, citizens are stripped of their political rights. In this sense, the camp represents a sort of anti-city, a constitutive void of a political order. But what effect does this anti-city have on the public and political space of the city as such? If the city has historically represented the place where the rights of citizens are recognized—often by keeping one part of the population outside its walls—the invention of the camp is a new mechanism of exclusion.

The camp system goes beyond the inclusion—exclusion dichotomy that defines relations between citizens and non-citizens, mediated as they are by the borders of nation states. The camp, in fact, excludes through inclusion. As such, it marks the degradation of conventional political organizational systems. Camps are desperate attempts to preserve an outdated political order through constructing a space of suspension, within which to confine all those who "do not belong."

The space of the camp is no longer "inside" or "outside." Rather, it represents a sort of third area, a place in suspension where an increasing number of individuals excluded from the polis are shut away. Here, spatial segregation takes on an added dimension, becoming strict confinement under armed surveillance. Once within, one's life is always at stake. The "camp" signals the breakdown of any political relationship between territory and people. It has, in turn, become the form of localization for those who do not belong.

The camp is a "space in suspension," a place in limbo, held within the "normal" spatial and social order of a territory. These spaces in suspension, usually summoned into being by security concerns, become powerful forms of social and spatial control. They emerge every time the relationship between the population and its territory enters a state of crisis. They first made their appearance in the colonial context as temporary measure for controlling local populations, and later reemerged in Europe at a time when the imperial spatial order was collapsing.

Camps are again becoming visible today, as the connection between territory, state, and citizenship has once more entered into crisis due to the disintegrative effects of migrations and the globalization of economies and communications. Called for as an exceptional means of preserving the established order—as a measure required to deal with temporary, short term geopolitical crises (migrations, wars, terrorism)—these spaces often transform into relatively permanent expressions of political ideology and power.

THE CAMP AS A SITE OF POLITICAL INVENTION

Palestinian refugee camps, first appearing after the Nakba in 1948, were conceived of as an emergency response to the expulsion of nearly the entire Palestinian population by Jewish militias. The first pictures of these camps, in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, showed small villages made of tents, arranged according to the same regular grids used for military encampments. As the years passed, and no political solution was found for the plight of displaced Palestinians, tents were substituted with basic shelters in an attempt to respond to the growing needs of the camp population without undermining the temporary condition of the camp, and therefore the right to return. However, with a growing population, conditions in the camps worsened.

The precariousness and temporariness of the camp structure was not simply a technical problem, but also the material-symbolic embodiment of the principle that its inhabitants should be allowed to return as soon as possible to their place of origin. Israel refuses the internationally recognized right of return of Palestinian refugees. For this reason, Palestinian refugee camps have become a magnetic force field in which competing and unequally matched political entities—the host states, international governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the refugees themselves—attempt to exercise influence. Every single banal act, from building a roof to opening a new street, becomes a political statement concerning the right of return. Nothing in the camp can be considered without political implications.

During the 1990s and within the framework of the Oslo peace process, which subsequently led to the creation of an interim Palestinian Authority, the right of return became marginalized under the pressure of successive Israeli governments, which have never acknowledged Israel's responsibility in the Nakba. At the same time, the withdrawal of the Israeli army from most Palestinian urban areas created the conditions for some West Bank camps to become relatively autonomous and independent socio-political communities. For decades, the political discourse around the right of return, and the associated imperative to stagnate living conditions imposed by the Palestinian political leadership to reaffirm the camp's ephemerality, forced refugees to live in appalling conditions.

From 1948/49 to the present day, official political discourse has sought to prohibit any development in, or formalization of, refugee camps. The fear is that any transformation of the camps would bring about an integration of the refugee community with the local environment, and thus sacrifice the political motivation for the right of return. This discourse was also based on the assumption that as long as refugees were living in such conditions, their suffering would pressure the international community to enact their right to return. Thus, any improvement to camp infrastructure and housing was seen as a direct erosion of the right of return.

Today, this imperative is being reconsidered. It is argued that improved living conditions in refugee camps do not necessarily conflict with the right to return. No longer a simple recipient of humanitarian intervention, the refugee is seen as an active political subject, constituted by their participation in the development of autonomous governance for the camp. Refugees are re-inventing social and political practices that improve their everyday life. The refugee camp has been transformed from a marginalized holding area to an interconnected center of social and political life.

A UNIVERSITY IN EXILE

In 2012, in an effort to intervene in such unstable and socially and politically charged urbanity of exile, Campus in Camps was founded as a means to address the numerous spatial and social concerns that have arisen over the more than sixty years of existence of Palestinian refugee camps. It originated from of a collective, cumulative thought aimed at bringing together theory and action, learning in a contextual environment, and project-based interventions. The desire for such a program matured in an ongoing dialogue started in 2007 between the UNRWA Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program and refugee camp communities of the southern West Bank. From this ongoing dialogue, an urgency emerged to explore and produce new forms of representation of camps and refugees, beyond the static and traditional symbols of passivity and poverty.

Campus in Camps engaged young participants in a two-year program dealing with new forms of visual and cultural representations of refugee camps after more than sixty years of displacement. The aim was to provide young motivated Palestinian refugees who were interested in engaging their community with the intellectual space and necessary infrastructure to facilitate these debates and translate them into practical community-driven projects that would incarnate representational practices and make them visible in the camps. The group of participants in the program was picked via a three-month-long process of personal interviews, consultations with the community, and public announcements in newspapers and mosques. There was no real selection of participants. Instead, a series of meetings allowed us and the applicants to understand if we shared an interest in embarking on such an experimental project.

Campus in Camps does not follow or propose itself as a model, but rather as public space in formation. *Al jame3ah* translates to English as "university," but its literal meaning is a place for assembly: a public space. Campus in Camps is part of a long path that had stations in the schools of Khalil Al Sakakini, where grades and punishment for students were abolished and walks and music were considered a form of knowledge, and the informal and clandestine learning environment established during the First Intifada in which people learned from each other and in context.

Qussay Abu Aker, Alaa Al Homouz, Saleh Khannah, Ahmad Al Lahham, Aysar Al Saifi, Bisan Al Jaffarri, Nedaa Hamouz, Naba' Al Assi, Isshaq Al Barbary, Ayat Al Turshan, and Murad Odeh are the embodiment of Campus in Camps. A central role in activating the Campus in Camps project has been played by the project activators: Brave New Alps, Matteo Guidi, Giuliana Racco, Sara Pellegrini, and Diego Segatto. Sara and Diego in particular contributed majorly at different moments of the program. Great inspiration derived from dialogue and active engagement with Michel Agier, Ilana Feldman, Tareq Hamam, Ruba Saleh, Khaldun Bshara, Thomas Keenan, Ayman Khalifa, and Munir Fasheh. The Campus in Camps team consisted of Yasser Hemadan, Tamara Abu Laban, Ala Juma, and Dena Qaddumi, without whom the program could not have existed.

The first year of Campus in Camps was focused on establishing a common language and approach. This was achieved through education cycles, seminars, lectures, and the publication of a *Collective Dictionary*. The first months of the program were dedicated to what we called unlearning; a process of healing from pre-packaged, alienating knowledge that is not linked with life. Munir Fasheh was an amazing source of inspiration during this phase. We invited professors from Al Quds Bard (AQB) and outside guests for lectures and seminars. Based on these first encounters, participants, together with the project team, discussed inviting guests for a cycle, a set of bi-weekly meetings for a minimum of one month. Decisions were based on the guests' relevance in relation to the interests of the group. For this reason, the structure of Campus in Camps was constantly reshaped to accommodate the interests and subjects born from the interactions between the participants and the social context at large.

Sandi Hilal offered a cycle based on Camp Improvement Projects, in which she established the base and the network for participants' initiatives in the camps. Tareq Hamman held a cycle in International Law and Human Rights, which culminated with the participation of the Campus in Camps participants in official government meetings about Palestinian refugees. Wilfied Graf and Gudrun Kramer's cycle acquainted participants with the conflict transformation approach. Vivien Sansour's cycle explored the relationship between agricultural practices, food production, and political power. Ayman Khalifah introduced the concepts of culture and representation. Fellows from AQB offered a series of intensive English workshops with the aim of bolstering project participants' critical inquiry in English. Daniel McKenzie in particular overviewed all the different and mutating needs of the group. Arabic tutoring was offered by Tala Abu Rahme, Samih Faraj, and Ayman Khalifah. Fellows from AQB also offered English classes for young students in the camps during the summer of 2012. During the summer of 2013, Linda Quiquivix led a two-month seminar in which students from AQB, Campus in Camps, and interested youths from the camps learned about the Zapatista Movement.

Parallel to these cycles, Campus in Camps organized a series of public lectures and seminars open to all students from Al Quds University and other universities in

Bethlehem. Over the course of the first year, more than a dozen seminars and lectures were held that gave the participants exposure to experts in a variety of fields. These areas of interest included citizenship, refugee studies, humanitarianism, gender, mapping, and research methodologies. Many of these events were open to the public and were the mechanism to connect with members of the camp community as well university students. Our guests included Beatrice Catanzaro, Basel Abbas, Ruanne Abourhame, Wilfried Graf, Tariq Dana, Felicity D. Scott, Mohammed Jabali, Moukhtar Kocache, Hanan Toukan, Shadi Chaleshtoori, Jeffrey Champlin, Manuel Herz, C. K. Raju, Fernando Rampérez, Emilio Dabed, and Samer Abdelnour. The first year culminated in an open public presentation over the course of two days in which more than one hundred people from the local community participated.[1]

During the event *The Collective Dictionary*, a series of publications containing definitions of concepts considered fundamental for the understanding of the contemporary condition of Palestinian refugee camps, was presented. Written reflections on personal experiences, interviews, excursions, and photographic investigations constitute the starting point for the formulation of more structured thoughts, which serve to explore each term. Multiple participants developed each publication, suggesting a new form of collective learning and knowledge production.

During the second year, more emphasis was placed on the kind of knowledge that emerges from actions. Gatherings, walks, events, and urban actions were meant to engage more directly with the camp condition. What was at stake in these interventions was the possibility for the participants to realize projects in the camps without normalizing their exceptional conditions and without blending them into the surrounding cities. After sixty-five years of exile, the camp is no longer made up of tents. The prolonged exceptional temporariness of this site has paradoxically created the condition for its transformation: from a pure humanitarian space to an active political space, it has become an embodiment and an expression of the right of return. The initiatives bear the names of this urbanity of exile: the garden, the pathways, the municipality, the suburb, the pool, the stadium, the square, the unbuilt, and the bridge. The very existence of these common places within refugee camps suggests new spatial and social formations beyond the idea of the camp as a site of marginalization, poverty, and political subjugation.

1. On this occasion a sort of informal academic committee was established, comprised of Sari Hanafi, Michael Buroway, Gudrun Kramer, Sandi Hilal, Muhammed Jabali, Munir Fasheh, Tariq Dana, Aaron Cezar, Thomas Keenan, Shuruq Harb, Umar Al Ghubari, Khaldun Bshara, Jawad Al Mahal, and Ayman Kalifah.

HOUSE OF WISDOM | MUNIR FASHEH

The word for university in Arabic is *jame3ah*, which literally means a "gathering place" that brings together people within real, rich, and pluralistic environment that helps them learn and do things, in freedom, honesty, and with enthusiasm. In this sense, jame3ah is much closer in meaning to "multiversity" than to "university." This is what the sixteen young men and women and I experienced at the House of Wisdom within Campus in Camps.

The 1970s and the First Intifada were the most significant periods of my life. They provided me with convictions that I consider crucial in modern life. One conviction is: there is no substitute for small groups, formed in as many places as possible by their own initiative, outside an institutional framework, in order to decide what they want and can do—something that is meaningful, useful, rooted, and contextual. Replacing local, self-formed initiatives is destructive to human communities. (Yet in our quest along this path, we should not go to the other extreme in the sense of trying to replace every other form of organization.)

My first experience along these lines was the voluntary work movement which I started with some friends in 1971. My second experience, also in the 1970s, was encouraging students in schools to form math and science clubs which revolved around questions that they had and wanted to pursue. My third experience along this path was creating a course at Birzeit University in 1979 where every student or group of students tried to notice patterns, regularities, etc, and make sense out of them. My next experiment was encouraging the formation of groups in every possible place within the Reading and Expression campaign at the Tamer Institute for Community Education, which I established in 1989 during the First Intifada when Israel closed all schools for four years. That was followed by the Qalb el-Umour project within the Arab Education Forum.

My dream today is to have jame3ah (or better, a "house of wisdom") in as many camps and villages in Palestine as possible, where around ten people who are rooted in their community form a lively group and choose words, construct meanings, form visions, and create useful, rooted knowledge through actions in their communities, in harmony with pluralism and well-being. It is crucial to stress that what we do at Dheisheh is not a new model or a shift in paradigm but a different vision whose core is wisdom. Vision requires attentiveness to what is around. For me, a vision consists of three main components: how we see reality; how we perceive our place and role in it; and the values we agree not to violate in our actions. The only aspect of vision which all in the group need to adhere to are its values. Saying that everyone has full autonomy in one's place does not mean each works in isolation, but rather in constant interaction, with no one having authority over another. People interact in freedom, with honesty, and respect.

Adopting Imam Ali's statement that the worth of a person is what they *yuhsen* (which in Arabic means what they do well, beautifully, usefully, respectfully, and comes from within) as a guiding principle, these "houses of wisdom" guarantee every person has worth and is able to learn. This means that there are no failures, and that our worthiness comes from our relations to our surroundings, and not from abstract, arbitrary numbers. This way we reclaim both learning as a biological ability and our relations and actions as a source of our worth. Perceiving every person as co-author of meanings is a basic and ongoing conviction within the vision.

When I first went to Dheisheh and met participants at Campus in Camps, I looked for a core idea which could host the richness embedded in Dheisheh and other participating camps. I quickly realized that idea of *mujawaara* can serve this purpose and be the core theme. It embodied many aspects of wisdom: well-being, social fabric, honesty, freedom, justice, equality, and saying what one means and meaning what one says—where there is no competition or evaluation. The main aspects that characterized mujawaara were: using it as the medium for learning; reclaiming *al 3afiah* (well-being) as a "measure" and a core value governing one's thinking, expressions, relationships, and actions; stitching together the socio-cultural-intellectual-spiritual-economic fabric in society and with nature; and perceiving every person as a source and co-author of meaning and understanding.

As a medium for learning, mujawaara is radically different from institutional learning. Mujawaara cannot happen at the individual level only; it always involves communal learning. When asked about the subjects that participants in Campus in Camps study, I say "the subject of study is their lives, in the contexts in which they live, and sharpening their characters, where knowledge becomes part of the person's lifestyle." Mujawaara is an integral part of life, where people reflect and converse about actions and experiences, in light of wisdoms that have been part of communities throughout history. Communal freedom to learn cannot happen with fear; it can only happen with trust, confidence, honesty, and mutual nurturing among people who are ready to listen, with full attentiveness, to one another.

When we embarked on Campus in Camps, we knew we were embarking on an experiment—a different vision—in learning, not only in relation to content and style but also in relation to medium, values, meanings, convictions, and perceptions which necessitated looking for radically new terms. We knew we were sailing in uncharted seas. However, what was wonderful about that journey was the "discovery" that we were sailing towards home, towards ourselves, our culture, and planting the seeds of our knowledge in our own soils. We did not start with readymade knowledge and then try to apply it in the camps but, rather, we searched for words, meanings, and understandings that stemmed from the reality in which participants live. This led us to explore the difference and relationship between search and research. Moreover, every participant was responsible for explaining the meaning of words they used, through experiences, stories, events, or mental images. *The Collective Dictionary* is a manifestation of that.

SHU'FAT BASIC GIRLS' SCHOOL

| 2012–2014

CREDITS
| ALESSANDRO PETTI, SANDI HILAL, AND LIVIA MINOJA WITH THE UNRWA INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAMP IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN THE WEST BANK

LOCATION
| SHU'FAT REFUGEE CAMP, JERUSALEM

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
| PUBLIC SCHOOL (CA. 4,200 M²)

MATERIALS
| CONCRETE MASONRY UNIT

IMAGE
| ANNA SARA P. 220–221
| ANNABEL DANSON P. 222–223
| LUCA CAPUANO P. 221–222

Shu'fat is a refugee camp on the outskirts of Jerusalem that has been almost entirely surrounded by walls and fences built by Israeli governments since 2002. It is trapped in a legal void, neither inside nor outside Jerusalem's borders. The inhabitants of Shu'fat are in danger of being deprived of their Jerusalem residency documents, and therefore once again being forced to leave their homes. The design of the Girls' School in Shu'fat embodies an "architecture in exile." It is an attempt to inhabit and express the constant tension between the here and now and the possibility for a different future. The architecture of the school does not communicate temporariness through an impermanent material construction, but rather, attempts to actively engage the new "urban environment" created by almost seventy years of forced exile through its spatial and programmatic configuration.

AL MASHA/COMMON

BORDERS   MUJAWAARA/NEIGHBORING

CAMP   PARTICIPATION

RETURNS

TAWTIN/NORMALIZATION
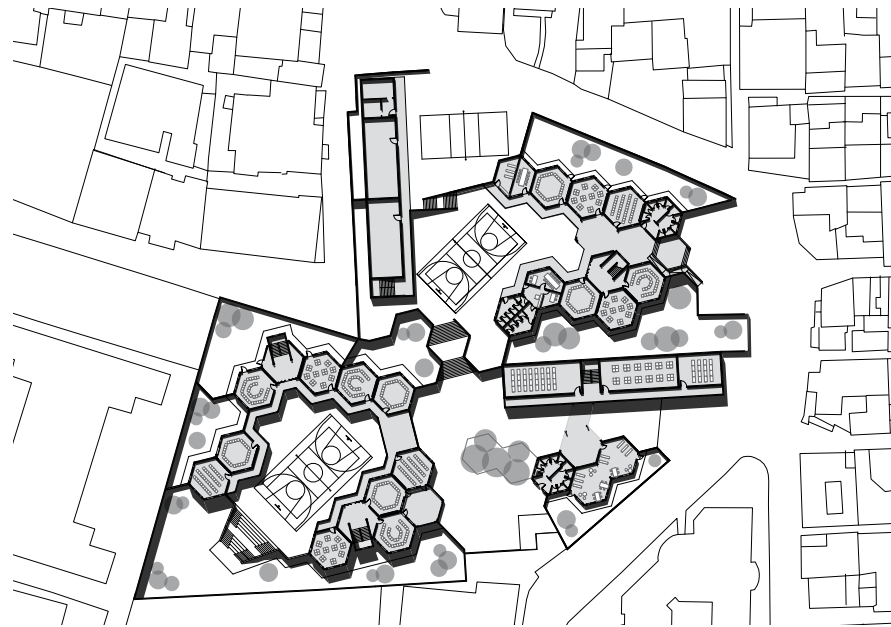
SHU'FAT BASIC GIRLS' SCHOOL | *Shu'fat Refugee Camp* | 2015
ARCHITECTURAL PLAN

SHU'FAT BASIC GIRLS' SCHOOL | *Shu'fat Refugee Camp* | 2017

SHU'FAT BASIC GIRLS' SCHOOL | *Shu'fat Refugee Camp* | 2015

SHU'FAT BASIC GIRLS' SCHOOL | *Shu'fat Refugee Camp* | 2017

NOTES ON PARTICIPATION | SANDI HILAL

NORMALIZATION

The meeting was complete chaos. Everyone was screaming and hardly listening to each other as numerous topics about the camp were being raised and discussed intensely. The architect knew it would be difficult to bring up the idea of a new design for the school. Just as she was thinking that perhaps this was not the right time to have this discussion, a man looked at her and bluntly asked: "Who are you?"

"I am the architect."

"Is this a joke?" he exclaimed. "What do you want from us, Madame architect?"

She nervously responded, wishing she could escape from the room. "I was sent by UNRWA to work on a new design for the old boys' school."

A chorus of voices exclaimed: "What?!" "What do you mean by 'design'?" asked one man. "We need the school as soon as possible, and this design will only make us lose time. We have so many priorities and you are thinking about the design? We certainly live in different worlds!"

The architect stared at the floor. Up to this moment, they had all disagreed on everything. Now, the only consensus was how her presence was unnecessary in this meeting.

Among the overlapping voices, the principal of the girls' school intervened: "I personally believe that this proposal by the architect should be our priority. I urge you to listen to her. What she is proposing is in fact addressing the heart of all the problems you are talking about. We are all concerned for our children and how they are being raised in Shu'fat camp. The architect is trying to propose some solutions."

A young man rolled his eyes as he spoke vehemently: "What does it mean to propose a design for a new school in the camp?! And what is its real purpose? We demand from UNRWA and the world our right of return, not our right to the beautification of our camp as a way to normalize our presence here."

The architect asked: "Are you satisfied, though, with the services provided by UNRWA regarding education?"

Different voices came from every corner of the room, demanding the right for refugee children to study in dignified and decent learning environments. "All that remains for us and our children, after the loss of our homes and homelands, is education." "Education is the most essential aspect of our life as refugees." "It is the only weapon we have."

Loud shouting continued but was abruptly silenced by a louder, overpowering voice. "Even if this sounds like a contradiction, we in Shu'fat Refugee Camp demand not only for our right of return but also for our right to remain within the borders of Jerusalem city! We want both the right to remain and the right to return. The occupation is trying to expel us from here by all possible means. But we have to resist it. To have a new school that we feel proud of is our right and this should never undermine our right of return. On the contrary, to me, this is the first step towards our return. Our demand for dignity should not contradict our demand for return."

Another man stood up, appalled by what he was hearing. "Do we need to be proud of our camp rather than fighting for the return to our original homes? I personally want to return to my home. I don't want you to decorate the camp and make it decent so I stay. I reject this idea!"

"So you want to build a 'wonderland' for our kids inside the refugee camp?"

"What about you? Do you want to continue accepting identical blue-and-white UNRWA schools that they just 'copy and paste' all throughout the West Bank? Our kids are not numbers!"

Another man, an UNRWA official, interrupted the heated discussion, addressing the crowd as if he was standing on a platform: "It is important to understand that UNRWA builds schools in refugee camps as a part of their mandate to provide basic services that are to be distributed equally among refugees. These services include, among other things, health, food supplies, and education up to the ninth grade, after which students must attend schools belonging to the host countries. Within this context, these identical 'copy and paste' buildings are part of the equal distribution of schools throughout all refugee camps. All camps should get the same service. Thus, the same school! I would also like to remind you that the white and blue you are making fun of is the United Nations' colors to protect our kids from potential bombing."

As he finished, the architect responded: "It is true that there are many efforts being made to ensure equality among the refugees. However, all camps are different from each other. I have visited them all, from north to south, and I can assure you, from my experience, that Arroub camp is different from Dheisheh, and both are different from Fawwar camp, and so is the case for Shu'fat camp."

The UNRWA official seemed annoyed. "Listen to me closely. Refugees living in this camp, although it is where I come from, do not deserve anything. Children in Shu'fat camp are troublemakers, they break everything, destroy anything that comes their

way. School windows have been fixed and replaced many times, just to be destroyed again… I don't think that refugees in Shu'fat deserve a better school."

The architect looked alarmed by these remarks. "I do not agree with you at all! I believe that a new school with carefully designed spaces, such as classrooms that receive natural light and ventilation and access to green gardens and courtyards will change the way that students relate to their school. They will finally feel as if they belong to the school and therefore feel the need to take care of it. They spend their entire life in a camp surrounded by walls and difficulty. They deserve for the school where they spend eight hours of their day to be an environment that is decent, welcoming, and encouraging. I believe that school buildings are very important to change the relationship between students, teachers, and education."

Chaos started again, and the architect desperately wanted someone to agree with her, or at least to shift the discussion to a more productive and positive angle. She felt completely stuck. Suddenly, a woman stood up to speak. The entire room was silent. Her presence and authority instilled a feeling of respect, and it was as if she was about to officially conclude the discussion.

"We have continuously asked UNRWA to give the current girls' school to the boys and build a new one for the girls where the boys' school is now, but sadly no one has ever responded to our call. Currently, the girls' school is located outside the borders of the camp, exposing them to harassment from the Israeli soldiers, while the boys' school is inside."

There was silence. The architect looked carefully around her, then towards the principal of the girls' school in an attempt to understand what was happening. Could this mean that the design should be for the girls' school, and not the boys'? This was not what UNRWA had in mind and she was aware that the funding they had received was for building a new school for the boys. The shift would not be easy.

This time, the same woman addressed the architect directly: "If we get approval for interchanging the two schools, we will have the girls' school next to the women's center, where I work. We would like to work closer with the girls' school and by having them next to us, this would be easier."

She turned towards the men and continued: "As for the boys' school, it would be next to the youth program center that is in the process of finishing a modern football pitch. We will finally be able to give our boys a space where they can play and release all their energy in a healthy way."

All eyes were now on the architect. She had been sent to the camp by UNRWA with the task of engaging the local community in the design of the school. She now understood that this demand was a test not only of UNRWA's credibility within the community but

also of hers. If she was unable to change the location of schools, then she would be unable to change anything else.

Two months later, the architect returned to Shu'fat to deliver the good news to the principal of the girls' school. She had received approval to interchange the school sites and they would now be able to design a new girls' school together. The principal and the teachers were thrilled to participate in this adventure. They drank coffee and celebrated this new beginning.

EDUCATION

It was early spring and the warm sun shone brightly outside. Everyone took to the courtyard, but since there were no seats outside, teachers brought chairs from the classroom. Meanwhile, the architect observed the students who had just been let out to enjoy a break outside in the courtyard. Their loud voices concentrated in groups as they searched for shade to hide from the sun. The students quickly gathered on the edges of the courtyard, leaving the middle space completely empty. As the architect turned around, she noticed the teachers and the principal were settling down on one of the sides.

"This is where we should start!" the architect said. "How do we design a playground? What is it? Where and how do children play? The playground, as it is today, reminds me of an asphalt street where girls play while the teachers patrol them. The main challenge here is how students and teachers can feel that the school playground is not like a public space that belongs to no one, but rather a familiar, green, colorful place where they can gather and spend quality time together."

Said, one of the teachers, eagerly leaned forward in her seat. "You mean, like a garden? I don't have a garden at home; wouldn't it be nice to have one at school?" They all smiled as another teacher added: "Imagine having a garden that allows me to interact with my students outside the classroom. This is the most joyful thought I have had in a while."

The architect laughed and said: "You have reminded me of a story about a garden that Munir Fasheh once told me. I think it relates to the discussion we are having right now. I love his story and would love to share it with you."

The principal said in excitement: "Munir Fasheh has worked with us for a long time and has had a major influence on our way of teaching and our souls! Our school teachers owe him the most beautiful memories."

The architect pulled out a rectangular book with black-and-white drawings called *My Story with Words* and began to read aloud:

When I was five years old, my family decided to send me to kindergarten in a school close to home. At that time I was living with my family in Al Baka'a Al Tehta in Jerusalem before we were expelled in 1948 and moved to Ramallah. I went to that kindergarten for one day and decided not to return. Intuitively, I felt the difference between the kindergarten and the real garden around our house. The kindergarten was full of words, instructions, and strange sounds. I rebelled against going to it and wanted to stay in a real garden full of natural things, where I could play without restrictions, among trees, with soil, stones, chickens, and cats that make sounds I love, where every morning I searched for eggs which I perforated with a pin and sucked what was inside them raw. I continued doing that until I was in my early twenties. That did not constitute a health risk at that time; science was not advanced enough to corrupt eggs. In the home garden, I was living, playing, and learning from objects, colors, and other children, while in the kindergarten I felt that everything was fake. I kept promising my father, through my aunt, that I would go to school the next day but didn't, until my father got tired of my lies. One day he returned home angry and hit me, demanding I stop lying and go to school daily. That was the first and last time my father ever beat me. The transition from a real garden to a school kindergarten sums up my whole life experience, even during my doctoral studies: the replacement of what is real and lively, where one learns without being taught, to a formally framed institutional learning where learning was programmed consisting of right and wrong. This has been the path I was forced to follow over the course of my life, and which I rebelled against all my life.

The principal sighed. "This is truly the challenge we are facing. The educational system will not change, including the absurd need to constantly implement exams and evaluate students. However, we can try as individuals to generate small changes to improve the quality of education in our school."

The architect left overwhelmed by the many thoughts and ideas that had been voiced. It was now time for her, together with her colleagues, to translate all of these ideas into classrooms, playgrounds, and gardens. Throughout this process, the architect's role was to bring UNRWA, the camp community, and the school family together in order to find common ground for the design of the school.

Based on the stories she had heard about the school, the architect felt that this garden school should simulate a Palestinian village. The classrooms would resemble a home, a personal space where the students and teachers could feel committed to its care. The courtyard, instead of being black asphalt, similar to a neglected street, would become the garden that everyone in the camp desired.

When she returned to the school some weeks later to share her designs and sketches with the teachers and the principal, she was confronted with different emotions. Some teachers were skeptical, as they did not understand how changing the appearance of the school would solve fundamental problems of the educational system. Others believed it was a good place to start and an important change to make. The architect then took the drawings and met with the students parliament, a group of girls elected by the students to represent them. At first, none of them showed any enthusiasm towards the design. When asked by the architect what they thought, they collectively answered: "It's nice," and then remained quiet. A few minutes passed and the silence began to feel uncomfortable. Finally, Hanneen, one of the students, challengingly asked the architect: "What about the garbage that surrounds the school and covers the streets of the camp? Will it change or stay the way it is?"

"I don't think that the problem with the garbage will be resolved any time soon. It is a very complicated issue and its solution requires enormous efforts from all stakeholders involved and the community."

Hanneen shook her head, frustrated by the architect's answer. "Ever since we were elected to represent the students in the parliament, we have challenged the issue of garbage in the camp. We have called camp officials for a meeting, listened to them, and discussed this topic many times between us. We believe that we must do something about it."

The architect responded: "But aside from that, wouldn't you like to have a school that you belong to and love?"

Donia, another student, stepped in: "What good will that do when we still live in an unhealthy environment, where the streets of the camp are filled with rubbish?"

"I can understand your frustration regarding the garbage, but how about changing the reality of the camp step by step? By combining efforts, you and your teachers will be able to create a new image of the camp through education, hopefully inspiring others to also transform the context they live in and challenge the status quo. Don't you think so?" Donia squinted her eyes, looking incredulous.

The architect continued: "What I believe, dear Donia, is that by improving the school and making it a place you feel proud of, students, teachers, and families will be able to reflect on how they want to relate to and care for the context they are living in, including how to deal with seemingly unsolvable problems, like the garbage. The garbage is a symptom of how people perceive the streets and what is public. For the camp community, the streets represent the military occupation. How can they be motivated to take care of it? It's the sense of belonging and the notion of sharing that makes us care for something."

"But how we can change such reality? It's frustrating!" exclaimed Hiba.

"Perhaps by creating other realities, such as a school you relate to surrounded by green gardens!" said the architect.

Hala nodded and cheered: "Imagine if the school could become our gathering place where we could enjoy each other's company and share our experiences."

"A *mujawaara*, you mean?" asked the architect.

"What is a mujawaara?" the students responded.

"Mujawaara is something I learned from my friend and teacher Munir Fasheh. Mujawaara means the ability to be in a group, to learn things from each other, and to derive our ability and our strength from within us and that which surrounds us. One of the most important characteristics of a mujawaara is the ability to self-generate. It is like a seed in the ground that is capable of generating itself. Munir made me realize that the most important sources of knowledge are the people and the contexts that surround me. My mother, my friends, my neighborhood are all like books full of stories and wisdom. He insists that words derive their meaning from life! My life and my interaction with others."

Hiba was captivated by this idea. "Do you mean that together with our classmates and teachers we could become a mujawaara like the one Munir describes?"

"Hiba, of course you can create a mujawaara in your school! The only condition is that you would all want to participate. It would be great to have the new architectural design encouraging the students and the teachers to look at the school as a space of mujawaara—not only a place for work and forced education but also a place to practice daily life with all its meanings and to participate in education and learning as an essential aim of life, not an imposed external factor on practices."

Islam asked: "Can my family be a mujawaara?"

"According to Munir, the best families are precisely those who are able to form a mujawaara. He once said to me that he had never seen the occupation more afraid of us than during the time of the First Intifada when we began to depend on our families' networks to organize our lives, form neighborhood committees, and learn from each other. When we recognized ourselves and our neighborhoods as an important source of knowledge, solidarity, and learning, we became a real threat. I understood through him that what I learned during the First Intifada, and still carry with me today, was the experience of being part of this unique mujaawara that impacted me as much as those who lived it with me."

"Can we form a mujawaara with you in the new school?" another student asked.

Donia noticed the excitement of her classmates and cautiously walked towards the architect and asked her: "Who are you?"

The architect was surprised. This was now the second time she had been confronted with this question in Shu'fat camp. Despite the fact that the question was coming from a twelve-year-old girl, she again answered nervously, "I am the architect."

She felt vulnerable. As the answer came out, she understood how difficult it was to explain what an architect was doing in a refugee camp. Was there any space for architecture in a temporary place like this one? What did she want to accomplish with this? Why did she feel such need to participate in this challenge? As she began to feel consumed by doubt, her thoughts were interrupted by Hiba's loud voice.

"We know that you are the architect. You have told us that and our principal explained this to us, but we want to know why you care about designing the school? What brings you to our camp?"

CHILDHOOD

It was 1987 and together with my neighbors in Beit Sahour, I was building the most wonderful school in Palestine. I had always felt that my neighborhood was my home. I remembered how as children, we would play on the street while my grandmother, Oum Jameel, and her neighbor, Oum Mohammad, watched over us as they sat on the concrete threshold drinking tea with sage.

I was fourteen when the First Intifada broke out. Schools and universities shut down, and a series of curfews were imposed on Palestinian cities, villages, and refugee camps. Curfews were imposed by the Israeli military occupation as collective punishment of the Palestinian population, to make them stop their daily actions of the Intifada, like stone throwing, strikes, collective land plantation, collective self-organized learning environments, etc. It was our way of resisting against their right of self-determination. Whether it was true or not, I always felt that the neighborhood community would survive despite the difficult situation we were experiencing. I would participate in the neighborhood meetings that proliferated due to the Intifada. I no longer played in the presence of my grandmother, but became involved in my community, finding solutions for how to organize our daily life.

Everyone in the community insisted that schooling should continue, that all uncultivated land in the neighborhood must be planted to make sure that our daily needs would be met, and that there should be a plan to guard the neighborhood at night in case the army came. These were the decisions that I participated in together with the other children.

Within a few days, a neighborhood school was formed. Every member of the community who had a garage or an empty room in their house cleaned and prepared it to become a classroom. Classrooms of different forms and colors were scattered around the neighborhood. Mothers and fathers became teachers and worked together with groups of children, teaching them what he or she was best at. I studied at the neighborhood school for a long time and felt that my school and the fields around it had become my home. I participated in the planting of fruit and vegetables and patiently waited with everyone for harvest season. The whole community was involved in agriculture and in the collection of our crops. I felt fear around me but also strength, reassuring me that together with my community we would be able to resist settler colonialism and free ourselves by emancipating our minds and determining how we would live our daily lives.

I understood that education was a powerful tool and was considered dangerous by the colonizer. Education was a way of liberating the mind even before we could liberate our bodies, houses, cities, and homeland. Indeed, the emancipation of our minds was something that the occupier could not control or steal from us and prevent us from practicing. Nevertheless, the new neighborhood school also taught me something else. The traditional form of education I had received before the creation of the neighborhood school had not been liberating. I then understood that education could also be a way to enslave people.

In the meantime, while I was engaging in my new life, my uncle returned from England where he had studied architecture. My grandmother's house was too small, so my uncle stayed at my house. He took over my room, forcing me to share a room with my two brothers. This did not disturb me at all. In fact, I was happy to have my uncle, the architect, as company. He began taking me together with his architect friends to Al Hakawati Theater in Jerusalem. I wished I was older so I could live the adventurous life of this group of men and women architects. I joined them on their trips around Palestine, from Haifa to Jaffa to Acre, photographing and filming architectural landmarks. They would always tell me that the work of an architect is great because it enables the building of cities and villages, houses, hospitals, and schools.

I thought a lot about my school while accompanying my uncle and his fellow architects. Many questions were wandering through my mind, and one day I decided to share my thoughts with my uncle.

"My school is beautiful even though it is made of a collection of garages and rooms in our neighborhood. I feel I belong to each corner. I have participated in the construction of these spaces and while I am in school, I feel at home surrounded by my family. My mother teaches in the school, I help my little brother in reading; each one of us is contributing with what we are best at. Do you think that an architect can contribute to the construction of a school like our school in the neighborhood?"

My uncle asked me, "What makes your school unique?"

"I feel it's my home. I belong to it and love it. I feel free and independent unlike my previous school that has now closed. There, I always felt watched and controlled, in the classroom, the corridor, or at the plaza of the school. I was constantly under surveillance, afraid of being caught doing something I wasn't supposed to be doing. This fear reminds me of Khalil Al Sakakini's *Kaza ana ya Doniah*, in which he describes his memories about his headmistress and the fear she would spread among students and teachers:

> I was working as a teacher several years ago at the school of Banat Sahyoun in Jerusalem. And one of the nuns would always accompany us from the very beginning of the class until the end, making sure I would not teach the pupils something that went against the religious beliefs of the school. She wanted to be able to control the pupils' behavior. And whenever the headmistress approached the classroom, the nun would hold her breath in fear and screech 'the boss.' The children were frightened of the headmistress and it would always take me a while to get their attention back to the lesson.

"Sakakini's story also reminds me of what happened to my classmates and me during the first weeks of the Intifada, before the schools were shut down by the Israeli military regime. I still remember my engagement in the first school strike. Like the rest of the schools in the West Bank, we had endorsed the request for united Palestinian political leadership. Our plan was to go to our school and announce a general strike. I remember that morning when we refused to enter our classes and we all sat down on the floor, one next to the other, in our wide and long school corridor. A few minutes later, everyone around me was whispering 'She's arrived, she's arrived.' The school headmistress was short and had fat legs. We were all terrified of her. My heart began to beat fast and I could feel the heartbeats of the other students around me.

"She stood there among us and said loudly, 'Everyone go to their classrooms immediately. I don't want to see anyone in the corridor.'

"I was terrified. I looked around and saw that everyone had remained seated. A few seconds passed and no one made a move. I felt very scared but strong; confused and at the same time very determined. It all happened in the blink of an eye. I heard her shouting again, ordering us to move, but as she got angrier, I felt stronger and more determined to stay and to not enter the classroom. I remember saying to myself, 'Don't worry, she does not carry a gun like the Israeli soldiers,' and if the kids who confront the soldiers with stones don't fear their guns, why should I fear the voice of the headmistress?

"That was my first encounter with authority. I then realized that authority has different forms and motives, different agendas. I understood that I do not want to learn because my headmistress or my teachers or my family want me to learn. I don't want to learn because I am afraid. I want to learn because I enjoy it."

My uncle, who had been listening attentively, wondered aloud, "But the neighborhood school can never be a permanent solution."

"Why not? Don't you understand? In the neighborhood school, I learn because I want to, not because I am obliged to. I like to feel that the school belongs to me. We all share this respect for this space. This is the school I dream about. I ask you again, do you think that an architect can create this type of school?"

My uncle, bewildered, leaned back in his chair for a minute as he stared at my pleading eyes while he searched for an answer to this difficult question. "Not alone, my dear. Any school consists of several aspects. A fundamental aspect is the teacher and the students, then the curriculum and certainly the place in which they study and teach. Let me ask you a question. Do you think that if a family lived in a beautiful spacious house, a house they all loved and enjoyed every corner of, this would have any effect on the relationship between the family members?"

"Of course," I answered. "I am very fond of my home. I feel safe and enjoy every corner of it and I think the whole family enjoys sharing time together inside it."

My uncle continued: "This is what an architect can do for a school. The relationship between the teacher and the student depends very much on the different spaces that exist in the school, from the classroom to the courtyard as well as the gardens. Therefore, the role of space in education is as important as the role of the teacher or the students or the curriculum."

Shaima had been listening attentively as the architect narrated her story. "I wish I had lived through the First Intifada. When I hear stories about this time, I imagine you had a perfect life." "I think we only remember what we want to remember and in the way we want to remember it," the architect replied.

"Your story made me feel like you were the hero of your neighborhood." The architect shook her head. "I don't think that I was the hero of the neighborhood… but I did feel I had a role in deciding what was happening around me and I felt special that my voice was heard even though I was a little girl."

"Is that why you remember it only as a beautiful time?"

"I have asked myself this question several times: why do I insist on remembering only what was beautiful from that period when it was in fact perhaps the hardest in my life? While I was telling you this story, I considered several times telling you how cruel it was, how we had long periods of curfews or how many of my friends were killed during the First Intifada, of the moments of horror that my family and I endured. But my memories refuse to do so, and when my community was forced to come together and organize our lives, we also chose to only include its positive sides. Together, we were

the strongest neighborhood that we had ever been. Like Munir Fasheh and Sakakini, this experience also taught us the joy of learning from those who surrounded us and from our own experiences."

ARCHITECTURE

The architect left her job at UNRWA four months before the completion of the new school. One day, as she was reading the *Al-Quds* newspaper, she suddenly stumbled upon an article covering the inauguration of the *Shu'fat Basic Girls' School*. She ran to the nearest store, bought all the newspapers and compared them with each other, searching for all the news related to the school. She finally opened her computer and searched the UNRWA website to learn more.

Although the architect was sorry she had not been invited to the inauguration, she understood that it was simply a bureaucratic issue. Outsider "architect" figures were never invited to the openings of facilities.

She paused and giggled, remembering how she hadn't really been invited to design a new school in the first place. After pushing and insisting, she had convinced the UNRWA senior management to let her design a different school for the camp and they had reluctantly allowed her to do so. What mattered now was that the school had been built. Somehow, it felt like a victory to see how UNRWA was proudly inaugurating this new school. Maybe she had managed to convince them of the importance of designing schools for camps, of how architecture can go beyond merely providing shelter and indoor spaces and how it can play a decisive role in the way humans interact with each other.

She was thrilled to find that a few newspapers had quoted Miss Jihad, the school headmistress. She must have read the words a hundred times over:

> For her part, the headmistress of the Shu'fat elementary school, Jihad Allan, said that this school provides great infrastructure for education especially in terms of design that facilitates an active learning environment inside the school. The school's contemporary design allows us to move freely from one part to another and to experiment with learning in small groups inside the classrooms. In addition, it provides a garden for each classroom, the courtyard, and the special connection points that permit smooth mobility and diverse activities.

She added "the presence of a garden has an impact on the psyche of the students as it encourages them to study and come to school. The twenty-five classrooms, labs, multipurpose rooms, and outdoor areas provide plenty of space for the students. We now have the ability to receive a larger number of students in the future. The first

new school will consist of students from the sixth grade until the tenth grade, and the second new school will be from the first grade to the fifth grade, which is opening 24-08-2014."

She pointed out that the new school gives the students greater motivation to learn, as well as promoting a sense of belonging that encourages students to look after it. The architect stared at the pictures of the new school, the students, the headmistress, and the teachers. She missed them and remembered her promise that she would return and create a mujawaara with the students.

The next day, she returned to the school. The headmistress was excited to see her, greeting her with coffee. She was eager to share her experiences of the new school with the architect and impatiently insisted that she had to see the school for herself, dragging her into a classroom that seemed chosen on purpose. The architect could not believe what she was seeing. Children were sitting on the floor, cutting colored numbers, engaging in the best math class she had ever seen. This was truly the most impressive mujawaara she had witnessed.

"How are the other teachers coping with the new school?" the architect asked.

"Well, you know, there isn't any new project that convinces all people. Some of the teachers are very excited about the new school, others are not so happy."

"Well, I have only seen the positive aspects; I would also like to see what doesn't work."

The headmistress was amused. "Are you ready to hear criticism and complains then?"

"You are very kind to warn me. Sure, I am ready. I'll certainly learn more by hearing criticisms than by hearing compliments."

The architect entered the teachers' room where everyone seemed to know who she was. She wanted their opinion on the new school and how it had changed the way they taught and how the children learned.

"There is no doubt that this wonderful design is creating a break in our routine. The problem is that it is still embedded within a strict traditional education system that is immutable. For example, the gardens are great but the doors shouldn't open because then the students will go out... We are still in an old system," one teacher said. "With the new design of the hexagonal classrooms, we went from having four walls to now having six. The board is no longer in the middle as it used to be. Plus, although the light in the classroom is great, the six walls disperse the sound... My voice is no longer central," another teacher added.

"Ingenious architecture also needs ingenious ideas about education," another joined in. "Sport class is a nuisance... When the girls go out in the courtyard, it distracts the other classes." "Yes, we should build a sports hall!" one teacher suggested. "And we have to walk too much between classes... it's tiring." "We stopped being able to properly organize the chairs in the classroom... Often I don't know where to stand. I get lost between the students and their chairs spread all over the place."

"But the problem is not only the new classrooms or the old ones. The girls have to go through an Israeli checkpoint every day where soldiers search them. They have learned how to oppose anyone with authority. So when the teacher has authority, they oppose her... I feel that they are punishing us because we are nice to them. When we try to discipline the class, they cause trouble on purpose. Anything that is related to discipline has become a big problem for us and we no longer know how to deal with it as teachers."

"But changes come gradually," another teacher objected. "Step by step, not all at once. Change comes from gradually changing our habits in the way we use the school... The ball is in our court now." "I wish to create a healthy educational atmosphere, where I feel that I am a teacher, not a police officer." "I wish to feel at home when I'm at school, but I feel drowned in rules and regulations." "We should not forget that at least ten percent of our students suffer from difficult family circumstances, an addicted father, conflict between parents, or violence against children."

For a moment, a positive voice interrupted, "Despite all the problems you have all mentioned, I think the gardens will bring us much joy... If we can manage to plant them, the school will turn into heaven." "We need flowers and plants that cover the walls—that way, we can overcome the issue of the garbage smell coming from outside the school."

Once the issue of the garbage was mentioned, another heated discussion broke out. In the end, everyone agreed there was not enough time to discuss this issue. They had to focus on their obligations at the school and at home, where after a long day of teaching, more work awaited them.

The architect thanked the teachers for their time and wished them a good day. She stepped onto the courtyard, still trying to digest all the feedback she had received from the teachers, when she heard and saw Donia shouting and running towards her with Hanneen and Shahid. She was very happy to see them. "I came back as promised," she said. Hanneen called the rest of the girls who surrounded the architect. They were very happy to have her back.

"I want to hear your news... And your thoughts on the new school." Hanneen jumped in: "I miss my old school so much." The architect did not expect such a response, or perhaps she hoped to hear the opposite. "Why do you miss your old school?"

"I lived inside it for many years. I got used to it. I miss my life back then and my memories."

Donia frowned at Hanneen and turned to the architect. "I like this new school more than the old one because I like the way it looks. Also, we now have our classes in many places—in the lab, in the technology room, and even in the courtyard and sometimes on the stairs—while in the old school, we would only have classes in the classroom and would only go to the courtyard during sport class and break time… What I love about this school is that it makes me feel free."

Islam added: "Yes, and when you move from one classroom to another, you feel as if you are going on a trip. We now like the school more because it makes us feel like we are in a place of entertainment and not at school… It looks like a honeycomb and we are the bees that produce the honey." "We are jealous of the younger students because this is our last year before leaving the school," Hiba grumbled.

THE CONCRETE TENT

| 2014–2015

The tent is the material manifestation of the temporary status of refugees. It is an architectural structure "with an expiry date" that symbolizes the right of return. Nevertheless, most Palestinian refugee camps are no longer constituted by mobile tents, but rather by concrete urban structures. *The Concrete Tent* is not only an attempt to preserve the cultural and symbolic importance of this archetype for the narration of the Nakba, but also a way to engage with the present political condition of exile. The idea of such a space emerged in discussion with the participants of Campus in Camps, who saw a possibility of materializing and giving an architectural form to the representation of the camp, and refugees beyond the idea of poverty, marginalization, and victimization. *The Concrete Tent* is a site of gathering, exchange, and debates. It embraces the contradictions of an architectural form that emerges from life in exile: temporariness and permanency, softness and hardness, movement and stillness.

AL MASHA/COMMON

CAMP

REPRESENTATION

RETURNS

HERITAGE   TAWTIN/NORMALIZATION

AL FENIQ CULTURAL CENTER | *Dheisheh Refugee Camp* | 2015

NYU ABU DHABI CAMPUS ART GALLERY | *Abu Dhabi* | 2018
Left | AL FENIQ CULTURAL CENTER | *Dheisheh Refugee Camp* | 2015

INAUGURATION | ALESSANDRO PETTI |
Dheisheh Refugee Camp | JUNE 26, 2015

When we think about refugee camps, one of the most common images that comes to mind is an aggregation of tents. However, after more than sixty years since their establishment, Palestinian refugee camps are constituted today by a completely different materiality. Tents were first reinforced and readapted with vertical walls, later substituted with shelters, and subsequently new houses made of concrete have been built, making camps dense and solid urban spaces.

There is, therefore, a gap between the image that we have in our minds when we think and talk about refugee camps and the actuality of camps today. This challenges us to find meaning in a reality that is in front of our eyes, but one that we can hardly understand. Camps are no longer made of fragile structures. Yet, at the same time, they are not cities either. Cities have a series of public institutions that organize, manage, and control the lives of inhabitants. Yet due to its role as purely humanitarian agency, UNRWA does not govern the camp. The camp thus developed its own form of social and political life. We lack the right vocabulary to describe this new condition. The prolonged exceptionality of its condition has produced different social, spatial, and political structures.

Al Feniq is a clear example of this contemporary condition. Built by the camp community at the highest point on a hill that was previously occupied by a military base, the Al Feniq Cultural Center today contains a women's gym, a guesthouse, a common kitchen, a wedding hall, and the Edward Said Library. It definitely does not look like a tent.

If we want to start understanding what a camp is today, we have to look at its history. This is where things start to get complicated.

Let us assume that camps have a history, and that after sixty years of existence they could be personified to correspond to the life expectancy of a person. A sixty-seven-year-old person would not be denied their history; they would not be denied all the experiences and events that brought them to that point. How are we to reconcile this condition with the fact that the camp is always understood and described as a temporary situation of the present with no past; as something that has been established in order to be quickly dismantled and destroyed?

For some, inhabiting a refugee camp means inhabiting ruins. It means living every day in the space produced from the beginning of the Nakba. Camps are built on the destruction that started in 1948, and for this reason they are "historical sites" being constantly destroyed and rebuilt. Refugee camps are also a reconstruction of the demolished villages, re-assemblages of people and their social relations. Camps are the embodiment of the Palestinian struggle to exist. Yet it seems that we consider their importance only when they are demolished. Only when they cease to exist.

For instance, when the Nahr El Bared refugee camp in Lebanon was destroyed during the battle between the Lebanese army and Islamic militias, Palestinian refugees promptly demanded its reconstruction. They did so, not by asking for tents, but by demanding the exact reconstruction of their concrete houses that were built throughout years of sacrifice. The same happened after the 2002 invasion of the Jenin refugee camp. Here the significance of the camp and the rebuilding of its exact structures only began to surface once it was lost through military violence.

How do we make sense of the demands of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to "Return to Nahr El Bared"? Or, in the case of Syria, what do Palestinian refugees mean when demanding the "Return to Yarmouk"? What does it mean to demand to return to a space never intended for permanence and without a history? Yet perhaps, claiming that the camp has a history, and a history that needs to be preserved for its cultural, political and social values, is the best way to try to answer to the question of what a refugee camp is today.

The camp is a place full of stories that can be narrated through its urban fabric. These stories, its history, have been repressed for fear of normalization. Preservation in a refugee camp can give meaning and historical importance to a life in exile. And conversely, thinking about preservation and cultural heritage allows us to question how systems of values are decided upon and represented.

Claiming that life in exile is historically meaningful is a way to understand refugee-hood not only as a passive production of an absolute form of state violence, but also as a way of recognizing refugees as subjects of history, as makers of history, and not simply victims of it. Claiming the camp as a site of heritage is a way to avoid the trap of being stuck in either the commemoration of the past or the projection into an abstract, constantly postponed, messianic future. This perspective offers the possibility for the camp to be a historical political subject of the present, and to see the achievements of the present not as an impediment to the right of return, but on the contrary, as a step toward it. Claiming history in the camp is a way to start recognizing the camp's present condition, and actually articulate the right of return.

Architecture is able to register various transformations that make the camp a heritage site. And in camps, every single architectural transformation is a political statement. When refugees, forced by the first harsh winters in the early 1950s, decided to replace their tents with concrete walls, they were forced to confront the necessity of protecting their families from adverse environmental conditions and provide more decent living conditions. They were forced to accept the risk of making life in exile more stable and permanent.

Forcing people to live in miserable conditions does not bring them closer to return. Negating their right to a life in dignity is just another form of violence imposed on the most vulnerable segments of Palestinian refugees. Here we need to seriously consider why it is that the right of return should negate the existence of the camp, or call for its destruction. In other words: how can we articulate the right of return from the point of view of the condition of the camp?

The Concrete Tent is a gathering space for communal learning. It will host cultural activities, a working area, and an open space for social meetings. The urgency and idea of such a space emerged in discussion with the participants of Campus in Camps who saw in this occasion as a possibility to materialize, to give architectural form to narrations and representations of camps and refugees beyond the idea of poverty, marginalization, and victimization.

We are aware of the danger of monumentalization and overt symbolism, but we decided to take the risk in order to make architecture that engages with social and political problems that concern the refugee community that we work with. Too often, architecture in our context is seen simply as an economic asset with no social and political value. Too often, architecture has been humiliated in void formalism, to look green or sustainable or efficient, as apolitical answers to political problems. Too often, within the humanitarian industry, architecture has been reduced to answering to the so-called "needs of the community." Rarely has architecture been used for its power to give form to social and political problems, to challenge dominant narratives and assumptions.

The project tries to inhabit the paradox of how to preserve the very idea of the tent as something of symbolic and historical value. Because of the degradability of the tents' materiality, these structures simply do not exist anymore. The re-creation of a tent made of concrete today is an attempt to preserve the cultural and symbolic importance of this archetype to tell the story of the Nakba, but at the same time, engage the present political condition of exile.

The Concrete Tent deals with the paradox of a permanent temporariness. It solidifies a mobile tent into a concrete house. The result is a hybrid between a tent and a house, temporariness and permanency, soft and hard, movement and stillness. *The Concrete Tent* does not offer a solution. Rather, it embraces the contradiction of an architectural form that has emerged from a life in exile.

REFUGEE HERITAGE

| 2015–2016

Refugee camps are established with the intention of being demolished. As a paradigmatic representation of political failure, they are meant to have no history and no future; they are meant to be forgotten. The history of refugee camps is constantly being erased, dismissed by states, humanitarian organizations, international organizations, and even self-imposed by refugee communities in fear that any acknowledgment of the present undermines a future right of return. Yet the camp is also a place rich with stories narrated through its urban fabric. Documenting, revealing, and representing refugee history beyond the narrative of suffering and displacement can serve as an attempt to imagine and practice refugeeness beyond humanitarianism. UNESCO's "Format for the nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List (Annex 5)" is a monumental building founded during a colonial era. Refugee Heritage seeks to deploy the potential for heritage to be mobilized as an agent of political transformation.

AL MASHA/COMMON

CAMP

PROFANATION

EXILE   RETURNS

HERITAGE   TAWTIN/NORMALIZATION

NYU ABU DHABI CAMPUS ART GALLERY │ *Abu Dhabi* │ 2018

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP │ 2016
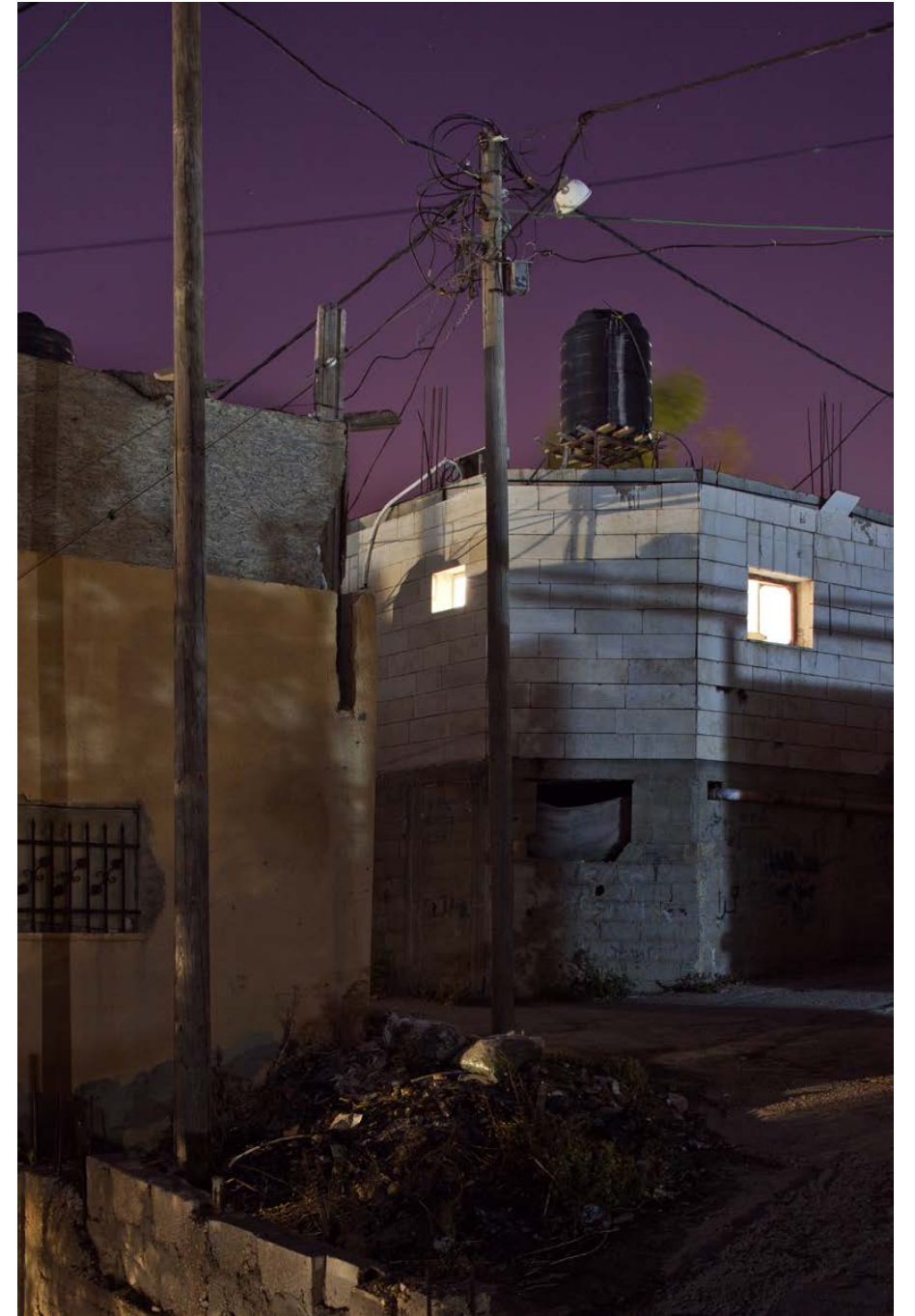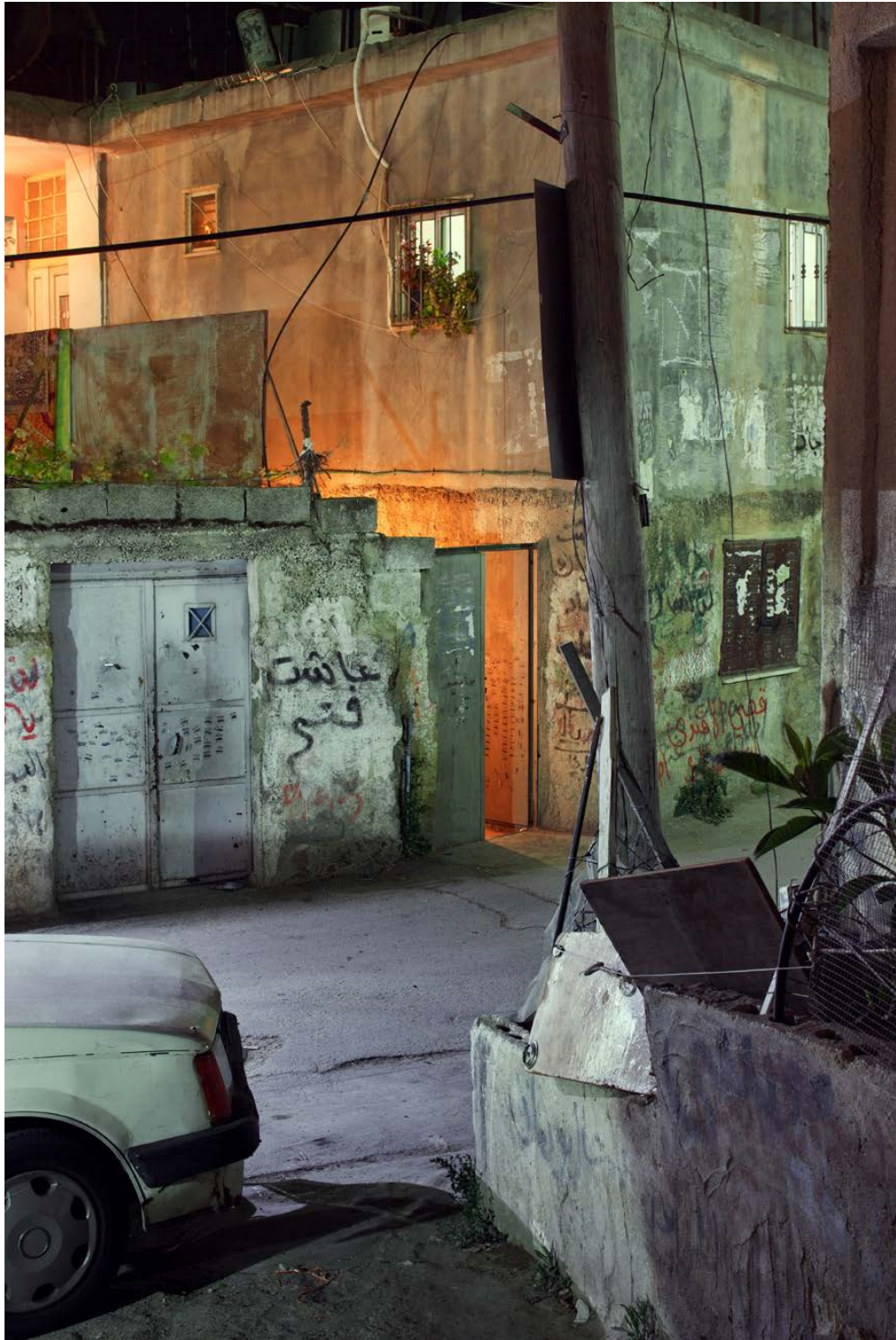
DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP │ 2016

DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP | 2016
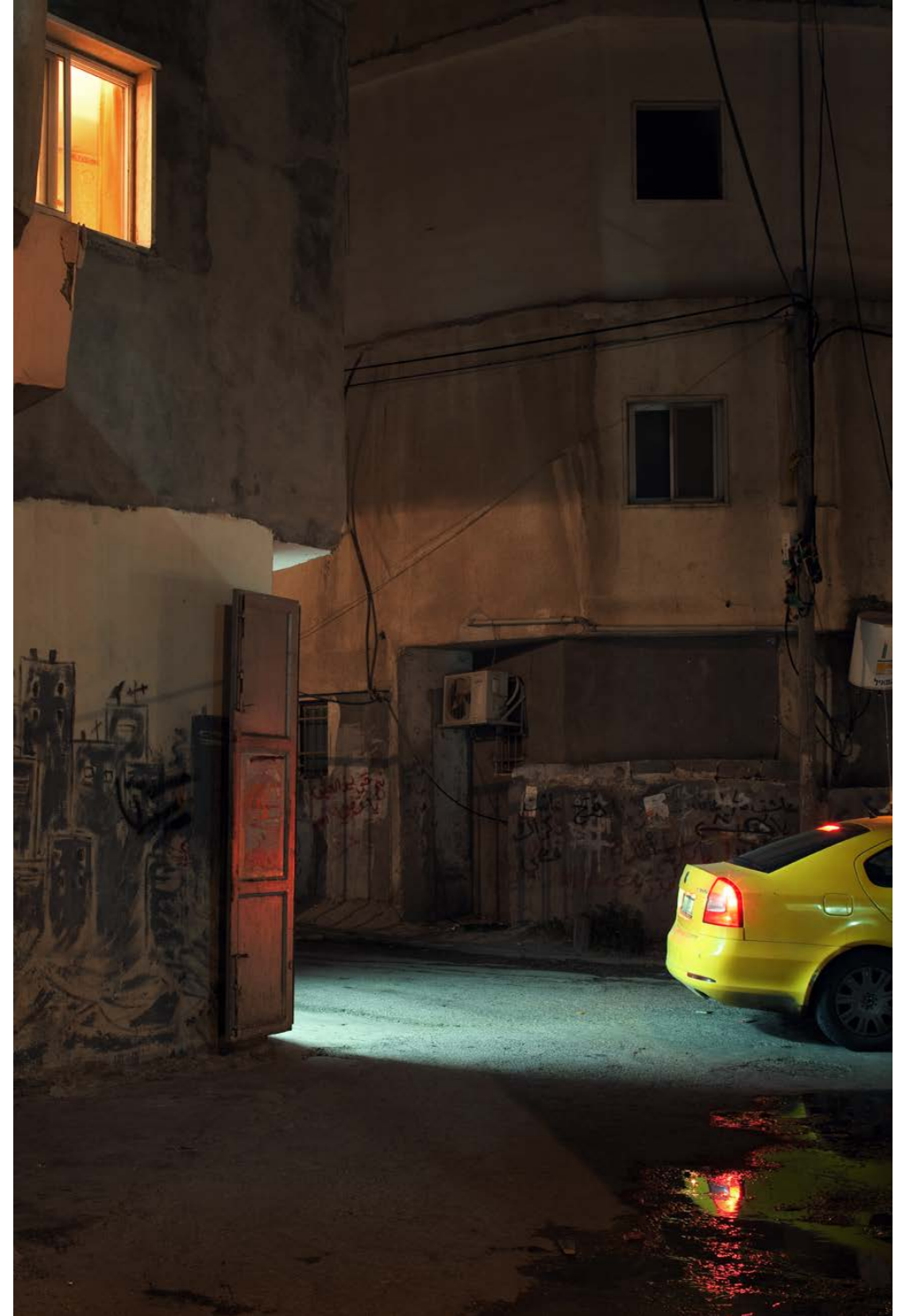
DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP | 2016

ARCHITECTURE OF EXILE | IV.B |
Alessandro Petti

In *Seeking Locations in Palestine for the Film "The Gospel According to Matthew"* (1965), Pier Paolo Pasolini discovers that Palestine is not the majestic biblical landscape he had in mind, but rather "four barren hillsides, an arid and abandoned landscape, burnt by the sun."[1] He remarks that local inhabitants cannot be used for extras because of their "savage faces," and exclaims that "Christ's preaching had not been heard here, not even from afar." The priest accompanying Pasolini on his journey, comforts him, wondering whether at "the time of Christ, the Galilee was different; that Palestine, prior to the Arab invasions was a bit more florid, richer."

In contrast, the film continues by documenting Pasolini's admiration of the communitarian life he found when visiting the kibbutz Bar'am. What he failed to realize was that this "freedom, emancipation, and model for communitarian life" was built on the ruins of Palestinian villages: Bar'Am was built on the ruins of Kafr Bir'im, a Christian village evacuated by Jewish militia in 1948 and demolished in 1953 to prevent its inhabitants from returning. The site today has been declared a national park and touristic archaeological site. However, some of the original inhabitants succeeded in remaining close to their village of origin, and their struggle to return has never ceased.[2]

Pasolini's film stumbles from stereotype to stereotype. This continues to the point at which, upon arriving in Jerusalem, a city divided in two, he capitulates in his search. Many before him had the same problem and attempted to redesign the country so that it would resemble this biblical image. Instead, desperate, Pasolini moved the location of his film to the Sassi of Matera in southern Italy—ancient cave dwellings that a few decades later would be added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

In 2010, the Italian photographer Luca Capuano was commissioned by UNESCO to document the forty-four World Heritage Sites located in Italy. In 2016, we commissioned Capuano to document Dheisheh Refugee Camp as a World Heritage Site with the same respect, care, and attempt at monumentality used when photographing historical centers like Venice, Rome, or Mantua. Contemporary notions of heritage and conservation have been appropriated by institutions of great power, which are too often oriented towards cultural expropriation. Contrary to this, we seek to deploy the potential for heritage as an agent of political transformation.

Refugee Heritage is an attempt to imagine and practice refugeeness beyond humanitarianism. Such a project does not just require rethinking the refugee camp as a political space: it demands redefining the subject of the refugee itself as a being in exile, and understanding exile as a political practice of the present capable of challenging the status quo. In this sense it can be seen as our ultimate aim to reframe the position of the refugee from one of weakness to one of strength. Recognizing a "culture of exile" is the perspective from which social, spatial, and political structures can be imagined and experienced beyond the idea of the nation state.

RUINS

Refugee camps should not exist in the first place: they represent a crime and a political failure. For over a century, camps have undermined the Western notion of the city as a civic space in which the rights of citizens are inscribed and recognized. To inhabit a refugee camp means to inhabit ruins, to live in a space whose origins lie in forced displacement. At the same time, the present proliferation of the "camp form" has eroded the very notion of citizenship and cannot be ignored.

Camps are established with the intention of being demolished. They are meant to have no history and no future; they are meant to be forgotten. The history of refugee camps is constantly erased, dismissed by states, humanitarian organizations, international agencies, and even by refugee communities themselves in the fear that any acknowledgement of the present undermines their right of return. The only history that is recognized within refugee communities is one of violence, suffering, and humiliation. How then do we understand the life and culture that people build in camps, despite suffering and marginalization?

After the destruction of Nahr El Bared camp in 2007, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon demanded to "return to the camp." Similarly, in Syria, after becoming one of the most intense battlegrounds in Damascus, Palestinian refugees demanded to "return to Yarmouk Camp." The reactions to the destruction of these two camps forces us to acknowledge the fact that the camp is not a place without history, but rather one rich with stories narrated through its urban fabric. Since their foundation, refugee camps have served to reconstruct, in a sense, the demolished villages by re-assembling their people and the social relationships that bind them. In understanding today's refugees beyond the humanitarian crisis, Refugee Heritage traces, documents, reveals, and represents refugee history beyond the narrative of suffering and displacement.

ANNEX 5

Format for the nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List (Annex 5) is the official UNESCO application document whose implications for Dheisheh were discussed over the course of two years with organizations and individuals, politicians and conservation experts, activists, governmental and non-governmental representatives, and proximate residents.[3] Members of the conversation strongly expressed their fear that the nomination would change the status quo and threaten to undermine the legally recognized right of return. At the same time, many

expressed their desire to see refugee history being acknowledged and an attempt to bring the right of return back to the center of the political discussion. In the end, we filled out the nomination form together in the most respectful way, with full awareness that our end goal was not UNESCO approval. We never had the illusion that recognition by UNESCO would imply the recognition and implementation of certain rights for refugees, yet we also did not underestimate the potential for recognizing refugee heritage to start a much-needed conversation about the permanent temporariness of camps and the connection between rights and space.

From the outset, there was a paradox at the heart of the application procedure. The World Heritage Convention states that "Universal Values ... transcend the interests of individual States Parties," yet the right to nominate is reserved for nation states who have signed the World Heritage World Convention.[4] In the case of Palestinian refugee camps—extraterritorial spaces carved out from state sovereignties—who has the right to nominate? The states within which camps are located? The State of Palestine? The Palestinian Liberation Organization? Popular committees within the refugee camps themselves? The *Stateless Nation*, population sixty million?

Palestinian refugees and refugee camps have always been a political exception. Instead of falling under the protection of the UNHCR (the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), two ad hoc UN agencies were constituted in 1949 with distinct mandates: the UN Conciliation Committee for Palestine (UNCCP)—with a mandate to find a political solution for the Palestinian refugees—and the UN Relief and Works Agency (for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA)—with an exclusively humanitarian mandate.[5] The UNCCP, having failed to mediate between the newly established State of Israel, Arab States, and the Palestinians, ceased operations in 1966, yet UNRWA has continued its operations up until today, despite suffering the lack of a political mandate. We wondered, could UNESCO be an agency capable of operating in a political landscape where negotiations about the sovereignty and territory of Palestine are increasingly being drawn into and trapped within colonial echo chambers?

Beyond an intervention into the political context of the Palestinian struggle for the right of return, the aim of nominating Dheisheh to UNESCO was to destabilize and open up the dominant Western conception of heritage to a richer and more complex understanding. UNESCO emerged from the horrors of the Second World War as an organization dedicated to world peace through education. The World Heritage Convention, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, nearly three decades after its founding, has been signed by 192 countries with the aim to protect natural and cultural sites of exceptional importance to humanity. The Convention is built upon a Eurocentric understanding of heritage—over half of the currently inscribed sites are located in Europe and North America. However, over time, the nomination process and the convention itself have been transformed into a public forum in which our understanding of heritage, culture, aesthetics, and authenticity are actively debated and reshaped.

In 1994, for instance, in the context of a conference jointly organized with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and UNESCO, the Nara Document on Authenticity was drafted to address the different ways in which cultural and social values are expressed, and whose adoption led to the acceptance of alternative conservation practices.[6] In the same vein, UNESCO has come to recognize how "local people are a primary source of information about local values," and recommends that the identification of "Outstanding Universal Values" is based on "wide participation by stakeholders including local communities and indigenous people." As a result of these and other initiatives, expanded categories for recognition—such as "cultural landscapes," "cultural routes," and "intangible heritage"—have been incorporated, and UNESCO recognizes the need to engage and support local stakeholders in the protection, conservation, and management of heritage.

Indigenous people, minority cultures, and sometimes even states have begun to nominate sites where crimes such as slavery, genocide, and colonization were committed.[7] These acts have been accused of politicizing culture and criticized for undermining the very existence and purpose of the World Heritage List.[8] What critics fail to understand is that the World Heritage List has been politicized from the beginning, insofar as it has, in a single gesture, glorified the presence and erased the history of sites built by colonial networks of exploitation. The nomination and inscription of sites where human rights have been violated should thus be seen as an acknowledgement and acceptance of the historiographic and epistemological power commanded by heritage. Instead of shying away from politically charged nominations, such acts can open up a political arena for the reconfiguration of marginalized histories.[9]

We imagine *Annex 5* as a monumental building built during a colonial era, with each of the categories corresponding to different rooms overly designed for antiquated purposes and its criteria corresponding to the typologies and construction materials that were available at the time. In filling out the form, we saw ourselves as new inhabitants entering an old architecture, transforming it to adapt to a different form of life—sometimes drastically transforming its spaces, other times accepting the existing ones or knocking down walls.

THIS TEXT WAS EDITED AND FIRST PUBLISHED BY | E-FLUX ARCHITECTURE

1. *Seeking Locations in Palestine for the Film "The Gospel According to Matthew,"* dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini (1965), http://ubu.com/film/pasolini_palestine.html.

2. See Nihad Boqai, *Returning to Kafr Bir'im* (Bethlehem: BADIL, 2006), http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/Badil_docs/publications/Birim-en.pdf.

3. UNESCO, "Format for the nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List (Annex 5)," https://whc.unesco.org/document/137909. The critical and safe space for such discussions was provided by Campus in Camps, an experimental educational program hosted in Dheisheh Refugee Camp, produced on occasion of the 5th Riwaq Biennale, based on the pioneering work on heritage by Riwaq, the center for architectural preservation in Ramallah and enriched by the experiences, comments, and suggestions of Nada Atrash (Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, Bethlehem).

4. UNESCO, "The World Heritage Convention," http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/.

5. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UNHCR, was created shortly after the UNCCP and UNRWA, and has never applied to Palestinian refugees.

6. Article 11 of the Nara Document on Authenticity states that: "All judgments about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgments of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong."

7. In recent years, many groups have succeeded in their political struggles by wielding the power of heritage. Sites in Central America, for example, have been successfully nominated by indigenous communities and environmentalists to stop mining projects. Le Morne Cultural Landscape in Mauritius was recognized for its "exceptional testimony to maroonage or resistance to slavery in terms of the mountain being used as a fortress to shelter escaped slaves," UNESCO, *Le Morne Cultural Landscape* (2008), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1259. Robben Island in South Africa was inscribed as a "witness (to) the triumph of democracy and freedom over oppression and racism," UNESCO, Robben Island (1999), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/916, as were Australian Convict Sites, "the best surviving examples of large-scale convict transportation and the colonial expansion of European powers through the presence and labor of convicts," UNESCO, *Australian Convict Sites* (2010), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1306.

8. Saville R. Davis, "Documentary Study of the Politicization of UNESCO," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 29 (December, 1975): 6–20.

9. The State of Palestine as signatory state party of the heritage convention, has successfully nominated the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Cultural Landscape of Battir, and the Old Town of Hebron/Al Khalil, marking a fundamental success in the struggle for the recognition and protection of Palestinian Heritage. Moreover, UNESCO has often intervened, denouncing Israel's actions towards Palestinian Heritage.

ANNEX 5 | PART 1 | *Identification of the Property*

1.A **COUNTRY**
Palestine

1.B **PROVINCE**
Bethlehem Governorate, West Bank

1.C **NAME OF PROPERTY**
Dheisheh Refugee Camp

1.D **GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES TO THE NEAREST SECOND**
31°41'38,47" N, 35°11'02.96" E

1.E **MAPS AND PLANS SHOWING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NOMINATED PROPERTY AND BUFFER ZONES**
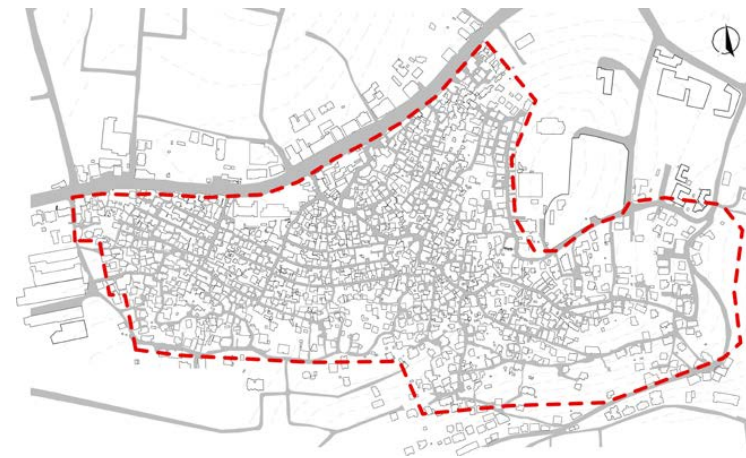
MAP | *Nominated property*

1.F **AREA OF NOMINATED PROPERTY (HA.) AND PROPOSED BUFFER ZONES**
Area of nominated property: 31 ha
Buffer zone: 186.6 ha
Total: 217.6 ha

1.G **DESCRIPTION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NOMINATED PROPERTY**
Dheisheh Refugee Camp is located on the main road that connected Jerusalem with the southern region, and thus played a strategic role for the Palestinian resistance during the 1980s. During the First Intifada, the Israeli army built a fence and a gate

surrounding the camp in an attempt to protect settlers using the road. Dheisheh Refugee Camp can be identified by the official borders established by UNRWA upon the camp's foundation in 1949. It was originally established as a refuge for 3,400 Palestinians from more than forty-five villages west of Jerusalem and around Hebron. The 1949 border of the camp is thus both a trace and testimony of the Nakba.[3]

Camp borders exclude refugees from the body of rights granted by host states to their citizens, yet the Palestinian Authority does not hold full sovereignty over the land on top of which Dheisheh sits; it is technically still leased to UNRWA by the Jordanian Government. The border of the camp is thus not simply a physical and symbolic element, but marks the extraterritorial dimension of the camp in what is already a political state of exception; it is an enclave in a quasi-state territory.[4] Palestinian refugees in the West Bank consider the Palestinian Authority a "host authority," similar to how Palestinian refugees in Beirut may see the state of Lebanon.

Despite the fact that Palestinian refugees in Bethlehem don't vote in local or national elections, they informally influence local and national politics and hold positions inside the Palestinian Authority. There is no municipality in or sovereign over the camp, but there is a popular committee that functions similarly to one.[5] While UNRWA's mandate is to offer services to refugees, it also intervenes in the camp's administration.[6] Therefore the border of the camp also marks the exceptionality of its internal management.

For the past seven decades, refugees have opposed any act that could erase the borders of the camp and blend it into the city fearing that it could normalize the political injustices that have been enacted on them and undermine their right of return. The border of the camp is thus a place that props open a political horizon and connects its residents to their place of origin. Yet with a current population of approximately 15,000 residents, Dheisheh has been forced to grow. By preserving and profaning the border, residents have been able to expand beyond the original camp limits while still maintaining their identity as refugees.

MAP | *Nominated property and proposed buffer zones*
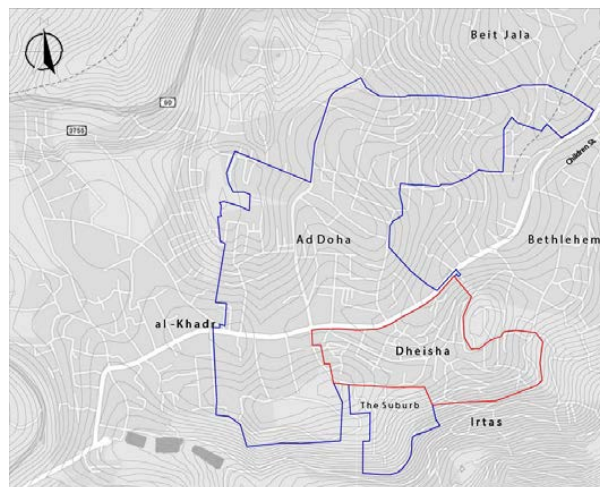
AL DOHA CITY

In some parts of the camp, the border is blurred by the spillover of its built fabric into other areas. Refugees living in the adjacent area of Doha, for example, view the camp as their center of social and political life. They see it as closer to their homelands and more connected to their right of return.

Starting in the 1970s, refugees from Dheisheh seeking greater privacy or more space began moving to Doha. As a result, the Municipality of Beit Jala withdrew the services that it had been providing to the area. Doha was formally established as an independent municipality in 1997, at which point it was able to offer services to its population. In 2004, Doha was renamed after the capital of Qatar, which gave a large grant to widen the main road that connected the new municipality to the city of Bethlehem.

Today's population of Doha are primarily refugees coming from different camps south of Bethlehem. Less crowded than Dheisheh, this "refugee city" lacks the social relations that exists in the camp. Hajj Nemer, the mayor of Doha, expressed the relation between the camp and Doha in these terms:

> When I walk through its alleys, I feel completely different. It's living memories and stories always come to my mind. I am more attached to Dheisheh camp than Doha, although I have been living here for 25 years. The wide social bonds extending from Dheisheh have helped me to be elected as the Mayor of Doha. People who live in Dheisheh are the same as those who live in Doha. The only difference is the place and the lifestyle. My behavior changes when I am in Dheisheh. I deal with people in a different way. The interaction with daily events is stronger in Dheisheh than in Doha.[7]

AL SHUHADA SUBURB

Houses first began to appear on the land of Al Shuhada Suburb at the beginning of the 1990s and were serviced by the nearby municipality of Irtas. In 2005, Irtas surveyed 210 plots on a total area of 162 dunam with the aim of including the area within its municipal borders. After residents refused, Irtas withdrew its services. Electricity was subsequently brought by cables strung from Dheisheh. On November 26, 2012 the local committee of Shuhada made a formal request to be included within the Dheisheh Popular Committee's jurisdiction. The request is still pending.

Similar to Doha, the residents of the suburb were confronted with the question of their refugee identity the moment they moved out of the camp. Despite the fact that more

refugees live outside Dheisheh than inside, the fear of leaving is the fear of normalization, the fear of having a normal life and forgetting about the right of return.

The following conversation between Ahmad and Qussay, two refugees who both grew up in Dheisheh but no longer live there, reflects the implications and questions regarding the identity of being refugees and living outside or inside the camp.[8]

AHMAD I am entering a new stage of my life by moving outside the camp, to the Suburb. There are a lot of things I am wondering about and would like to know from someone who has a strong connection with the camp but lives outside of it. What is it like to live outside the camp?

QUSSAY The easiest answer would be that living outside the camp is like living in a hotel. I spend my life in the camp because there isn't much in Doha. On a personal level, I don't know my neighbors very well. I don't even recognize them. There is no conversation between us except on the social occasions when you have to invite them. I don't spend time in Doha. When I leave home, I come to Dheisheh.

A What makes the camp attractive? Bethlehem has attractive things. Why do you stay in the camp?

Q I don't know, maybe because of the relationships I established when I lived there; through school, Ibdaa, Al Feniq, and work. My social network is in the camp. In Doha I feel that to a certain extent everyone is living on their own—not totally alone, but not as it is here in Dheisheh. There isn't a single falafel place in Doha! And if one were to open, it would close after two months. No one would go to it. Even non-refugees come to Dheisheh.

A Is there are something emotional in this? Or is it just to find things?

Q Of course there are emotional aspects. When I introduce myself, even though I am living in Doha, I say I am from Dheisheh. People know Dheisheh: it has *sumud* [steadfastness]; it's a highly aware camp. You feel like you are coming from a strong place. The problem is, if I introduce myself as coming from the camp and someone says to me "but you're not living there," I perceive it as humiliation.

A Why? You don't live in Dheisheh.

Q I am not living in Dheisheh, but I am from Dheisheh.

A I don't get it.

Q It's about the Dheisheh style, the way things move. For example, I have never seen a demonstration against anything in Doha for as long as I've been living there. The people

can't gather about anything except an increase in prices. And even for this, what they did was walk towards the main entrance of the camp.

A Would you also say that the camp is not just a place, but an idea?

Q Yes of course, and the idea isn't limited. Would someone live in the camp the same way as they would live in Paris? Or vice versa? What are you afraid of in preparing to live outside of the camp?

A It's about memories. For human beings all over the world, not only Palestinians, memories are their homeland. And my memories are only in the camp, not in Beit Etab, my original village; not in Bethlehem, not anywhere else. I am afraid of losing these memories and how that might affect my life.

1. This application of Dheisheh Refugee Camp is an example for the serial nomination of all 59 Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Levant.

2. UNRWA, Profile: Dheisheh Camp, https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/dheisheh_refugee_camp.pdf

3. *Nakba*, translated as "tragedy," is a term that refers to the expulsion of two thirds of the Arab population living in historical Palestine between 1947 and 1949 by Jewish militias. The term is used to mark not only an event in time but the ongoing tragic events perpetrated by successive Israeli governments, including house demolitions, land expropriations, movement restrictions, extrajudicial killings, and mass incarcerations.

4. The Palestinian Authority was created during the Oslo Peace Process with a limited form of self-governance restricted to areas A and B a total of approximately 40% of land in the West Bank and its mandate supposed terminate in 1999 with the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state.

5. Popular committees began to emerge informally during the first Intifada and evolved into a formal body representing the camp during the 1990s with the constitution of the Palestinian Authority. See Sari Hanafi, *Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East* (Beirut: The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2010).

6. Riccardo Bocco, "UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees: a history within history," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, no. 2 & 3 (UNHCR 2010).

7. Naba' Al Assi, *The Municipality* (Dheisheh: Campus in Camps, 2012), http://www.campusincamps.ps/projects/08-the-municipality/.

8. Ahmad Al Lahham and Qussay Abu Aker, *The Suburb* (Dheisheh: Campus in Camps, 2012), http://www.campusincamps.ps/projects/05-the-suburb/.

ANNEX 5 | PART 2 | *Description*

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was established by the UN General Assembly on December 8, 1949. Resolution 302 (IV) determined that the Red Cross would continue its work of providing basic services to refugees until March 1950, after which UNRWA would take responsibility for the humanitarian assistance of the then-700,000 Palestinian refugees. As time passed and Palestinian refugees were still unable to return to their villages, the tents and urban plans they were originally placed in became ill-suited for continued occupation. By necessity, families began modifying their environment for sustained inhabitation, such as digging channels around their tents to prevent the floors from turning into mud with cold winter rains.

In 1951, UNRWA began constructing more solid housing units commonly referred to in the camps as "shelter rooms."[1] Each family was given one room whose size was determined based on the number of family members living in it, with a rule of one square meter per person. Single-room shelters were built for single mothers or women whose family had died in the war. Huts ranged in size from three-by-three to three-by-five meters and often had an internal division to create the effect of two rooms. Shelters were located adjacent to one another, and every fifteen shared a single bathroom. From 1955 to 1964, when over 470,000 people received assistance from the shelter program, camps began to assume a form and organizational logic very different from how they started.[2] Yet the shelters were built to serve a maximum of five years, and many more went by without a political solution.

Refugees were thus forced to adapt again to the circumstances in which they found themselves and began developing self-built structures.[3] A significant factor in the emergence of this type of construction was that camps were placed near urban centers, which facilitated economic opportunity and exchange. In the early 1960s, UNRWA directors began to discuss the fact that camps were growing out of control and beginning to resemble slums.[4] As a result, an attempt was made not to forbid but to control refugee self-built housing. The shelter-based program was closed and replaced with a self-help program that would provide building materials and monetary assistance instead.

In 1967, the *Naksa* ended with the State of Israel occupying the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai and Golan Heights, creating a second wave of refugees—many from the West Bank—who fled to Jordan and other countries. This greatly reshaped not only the camp's structure but also refugees' perception of the idea of return. Some refugees who were able to bought a piece of land outside of the camp and started a life in the city. Dheisheh's population decreased, making it so that there was more space for those who had remained. Vacated plots of land were appropriated in endless negotiations
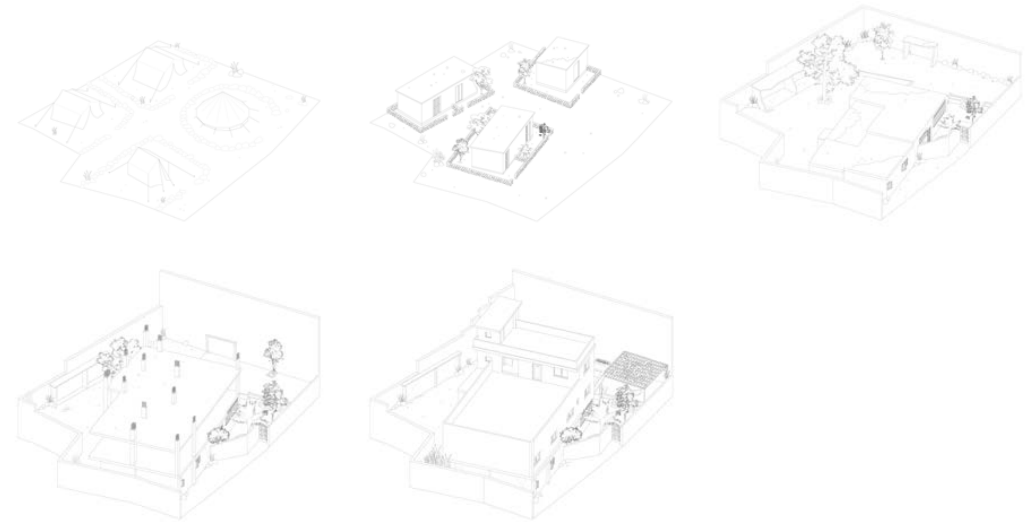
DAR AL SAIFI | 1949, 1952, 1989, 1998, 2016

between neighbors, and borders were built to demarcated each family's property.[5] These complex negotiations of place and identity within the camp itself and in relation to the city resulted in the streets, pathways, and neighborhoods assuming the form they have today.

Over the last twenty years, within the framework of the so-called "Peace Process" that subsequently led to the creation of an interim Palestinian Authority, the right of return has become increasingly marginalized under pressure from successive Israeli governments who have never been willing to acknowledge Israel's responsibility in the Nakba. At the same time, the withdrawal of the Israeli army from most Palestinian urban areas created the conditions for some West Bank camps to become relatively autonomous and independent socio-political communities.

2.B **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTIES**

DAR AL SAIFI

Khaled Al Saifi was born in 1961 and grew up in a single-room shelter that was used as a bedroom, living room, kitchen, and bathroom. After their neighbors fled to Jordan in 1967, Al Saifi's family took over their abandoned shelter room, which they had the key for from before. They managed to acquire another shelter room later that year after a long and tense negotiation process with their neighbors. Al Saifi's family then marked the boundary of their three shelter rooms and respective plots of land with a single line of stone. Khaled described this moment as the beginning of a more individualized life, the giving up of a collective dimension in exchange for better living conditions.
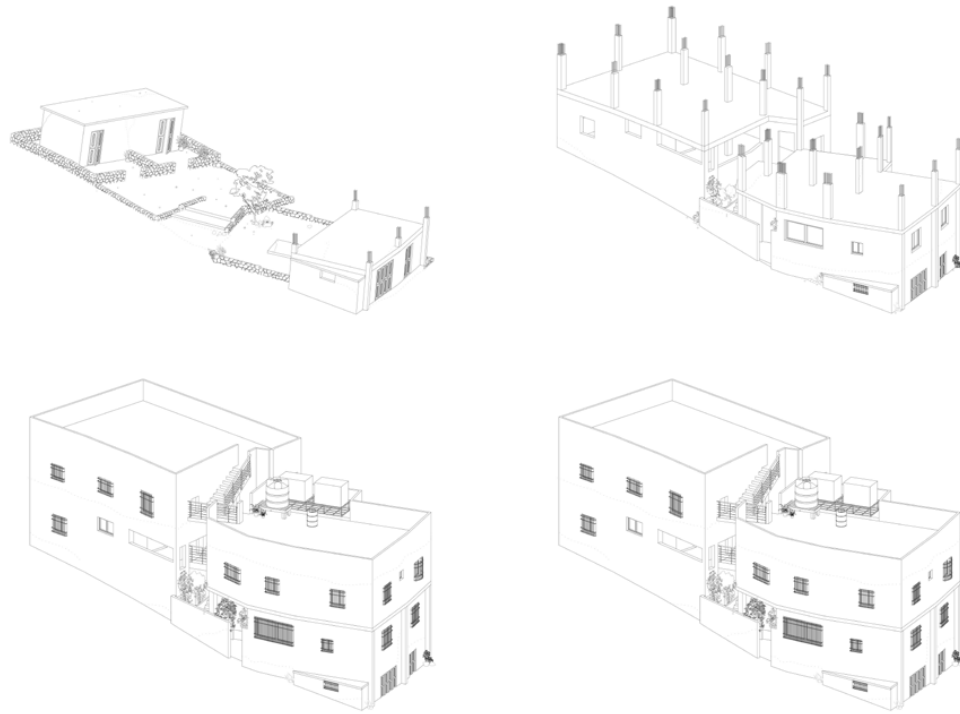
DAR ODEH | 1956, 1972, 1990, 2016

In 1974, a cement brick factory opened near the camp. Its founder—himself a refugee from Dheisheh—offered financial support to refugees. With this, Al Saifi's family was able to add two small rooms to their original shelter room and left the other two shelters to decay. Khaled led a politically active life that was interrupted by multiple arrests. During his time in prison during the First Intifada, his wife, Umm Aysar, continued to work on the house and added two more rooms on the ground floor.

After returning from prison, Khaled added a concrete slab roof to the house to prevent water from entering in winter, extended the structure upwards with columns, and added another slab overhead to allow for future expansion. In 2002, during the Second Intifada, the camp was placed under military curfew. Unable to leave the camp, inhabitants saw building as a form of resistance to military occupation. Khaled used this period to finish the first and the second floor.

A single feature that has witnessed this entire process of architectural transformation is a lone tree by the front door. While it cannot be definitively confirmed, this tree was likely born from a date seed thrown onto the land in the 1950s, when UNRWA gave out dates in food boxes.

DAR ODEH

After the Nakba, Naji Odeh's family took refuge in Beit Sahour, a town close to Bethlehem. Faced with social marginalization and exclusion from their neighbors, they moved to Dheisheh in 1959. The family consisted of eight members living in a single room of nine square meters up until the late 1960s. Their income was limited by the father's illness and subsequent paralysis. In 1973, he passed away and the oldest brother, Fathi, left for Lebanon to study. Naji, the middle brother, was occupied with political action and spent time in prison, and the youngest brother, Raji, was too young to help with the income. The mother was thus forced to take a significant role in family finances and the development of the house.[6]

In 1968, Naji's mother started working as a maid in a psychiatric hospital next to Dheisheh. With her income, the family was able to build a new room for the kitchen. It was constructed of cement block walls and a sheet metal roof that would blow off in winter and fly away. Over time, the cement blocks began to fall apart and ruin their supply of rice, flour, and oil. By the end of the 1970s, Naji started building a garage towards the street to occupy the land that had previously housed the public toilet. He also prepared the foundation and made plans for a new house.

The struggle of living in poverty and only being able to build what could be afforded was a shared reality among many families—a hardship over which they were able to connect and form social bonds. Furthermore, as construction was dependent on available resources, social connections played an important role in acquiring affordable building materials and labor. Friends and neighbors would frequently help with construction.

Naji married Suhair in 1987, and they lived together in the house with Naji's mother and younger brother Raji. In 1993, with the stable income that came from Naji's job at a local non-governmental organization, and Suhair's at a hospital, they managed to add two more floors and finish the house.

AL FENIQ CULTURAL CENTER

Situated on top of a hill overlooking the camp, the Al Feniq Cultural Center is built in a strategic position with a long history of oppression. The site was first occupied by the British army during the British mandate, then by the Jordanian army, and finally by the Israeli army. When the Israeli army partially withdrew from the West Bank and left the site in the early 1990s, it was claimed by real estate developers planning to build either a tourist attraction or a prison. The refugee community wrote to President Yasser Arafat in response, claiming the site as belonging to the camp and a much-needed space to alleviate its high density. A few months after Arafat agreed, a cultural center started to be built.

AL FENIQ CULTURAL CENTER │ 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2016

After building walls around the perimeter, the local community started building a wedding hall in 1996. Construction was disrupted by the Second Intifada and the Israeli military's invasion of the site. After the Israeli military left again, refugees repaired the building and continued with construction, adding a gym, guest house, and the Edward Said Library. It was at this moment that people decided to call the cultural center "Al Feniq" after the mythological bird, the phoenix, symbolizing rebirth from its own ashes. A garden was opened in 2004 that gives inhabitants of Dheisheh and the nearby towns an opportunity to spend time with their children outside. In 2008, a second wedding hall was added to the site on the upper level of the garden, where meetings and conferences can also be held.

Al Feniq demonstrates the rich social and cultural values of refugees in exile, while at the same time opening up new forms of thinking and fighting for the right of return. Discourse on the right of return tends to oblige refugees to forget and repress the culture produced during their period of exile. Yet asking refugees to destroy their life in exile and existing networks of social relations in order to go back to their origins would be akin to a second Nakba. Thus, when Naji Odeh, the former director of Al Feniq, was asked if building the center was a form of settling down in the camp, he replied, "I'm ready to demolish it and go back home; or even better, I'd like to rebuild Al Feniq in my village of origin." Al Feniq is a bridge that connects sites of origin and exile. It is an example of how the refugees of Dheisheh have managed to build collective structures without undermining either the exceptional condition of the camp, the condition of being in exile, or the right of return.

1. In one area of Bethlehem, for example, UNRWA began building shelters in Al Azza in 1958, meaning that the first ten years were lived in tents. During the 1950s and 1960s, the camp remained a single-story urban structure, its monotony strongly reflecting the faith of returning to the destroyed villages and lack of economic resources for expansion.

2. *Review of Shelter* Policy 1960–1975, RE 410/2 (18.4.1964)

3. Qussay Abu Aker, Naba' Al Assi, Aysar Al Saifi, Murad Odeh, *The Garden* (Dheisheh: Campus in Camps, 2012), http://www.campusincamps.ps/projects/01-the-garden/

4. Dheisheh nomination assembly (March 23, 2016).

5. Dheisheh nomination assembly (February 23, 2016).

6. Women have, in general, had a crucial role in improving living condition in the camp and in Palestine.

ANNEX 5 | PART 3 | *Justification for Inscription*

In order to inscribe a site in the World Heritage list, the property should have outstanding universal values, defined as "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."

<div align="right">—UNESCO OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES[1]</div>

In order to be eligible for inscription on the List, nominated properties must meet at least one of the criteria, and shall therefore:

(I) Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

(II) Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning, or landscape design;

(III) Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

(IV) Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

(V) Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

(VI) Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

(VII) Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

(VIII) Be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphological or physiographic features;

(IX) Be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal, and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

(X) Contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

<div align="right">—UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE[2]</div>

3.1.A BRIEF SYNTHESIS

Dheisheh Refugee Camp is nominated for inscription on the World Heritage list according to criteria IV and VI.

(IV) Dheisheh Refugee Camp typologically embodies the memory of the Nakba, the longest and largest living displacement in the world, and is at the same time the expression of an exceptional spatial, social, and political form.

(VI) Dheisheh Refugee Camp is associated with an exceptional belief in the right of return, which has inspired both refugees and non-refugees from around the world in the struggle for justice and equality.

3.1.B CRITERIA UNDER WHICH INSCRIPTION IS PROPOSED
(AND JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION UNDER THESE CRITERIA)

IV. TYPOLOGY

The Nakba is an unbound and ongoing event of displacement. As its physical expression and material evidence, Dheisheh Refugee Camp represents the suffering of millions of Palestinians. Palestinian refugee camps remain a fundamental issue undermining peace between states, cultures, and religions in the region. The camp itself is the materialization of a crime and is in itself a question that calls for justice, land restitution, and a change of power relations. In a moment in history in which sixty million refugees around the world are actively navigating identities defined by their exclusion from statehood, Dheisheh offers a historical perspective onto the contemporary condition of refugeehood and culture of exile.

The perpetuation of legal exceptionality in Dheisheh has created a unique urban condition. The camp is not ephemeral, but it is not a city either. Refugees forced to live in this suspended condition have developed distinctive systems of civic management outside of state and municipal institutions. The camp exists in a limbo where

fundamental juridical categories such as public and private do not and cannot exist. Despite the fact that refugees build their own homes and have lived in them for generations, they cannot technically own their house or the land it sits on. This has led to the development of an exceptional form of life in common: *al masha*[3]

The camp's inhabitants follow an underlying system of informal processes and interpersonal negotiations to make decisions concerning both individual and collective problems. These self-regulated means of conflict management and resolution did not emerge by choice, but rather in the absence of official mechanisms and as a reaction to decades of military and police violence. Constant internal debate—over building new houses, extending properties, encroaching onto pathways and alleys, closing streets for celebrations, etc.—has played a great role in shaping the camp.

The camp is subdivided by the inhabitants into different neighborhoods that maintain the name of their places of origin: Zakaria, Ras Abu Amara, Al Walajeh, Beit Jibrin, Beit I'tab, etc. Within the camp, there is great value placed on social capital. Norms that have helped deal with adversity over time, such as collective participation and the maintenance of social relations between families, are strongly respected. Networks of mutual support have emerged, like the "economic safety net" set up by families originating from the village of Zakaria, who regularly pay a certain amount of money into a communal fund that can be used for accessing higher education.

VI. ASSOCIATIONS

Dheisheh is not only representative of the strength of millions who resisted annihilation and erasure from history through their immutable belief in the right of return, but also where we can understand the right of return as essentially the claim for the freedom of movement and the freedom to decide where to live. Refugees are forced to identify either with their village of origin or their site of exile. Yet how can one ask a young refugee born in a camp in Lebanon whether she is more Palestinian or Lebanese? The belief in the right of return opens a different political space that allows refugees to be multinational: Palestinian *and* Lebanese; Palestinian *and* Jordanian; Palestinian *and* Syrian, Palestinian *and*... The aspiration for return is a civic form of cohabitation that is not based on ethnic, cultural, or religious division, but instead involves all states where exiled Palestinians live.

Palestinian refugee camps are the only space through which we can start to imagine and practice a political community beyond the idea of the nation state. Refugee camps are by definition exceptional spaces, carved out from state sovereignty. Since their creation in 1949 and 1967, Palestinian refugee camps have been directly excluded by the creation of national boundaries. As the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage property depends on its ability to "transcend national boundaries," Dheisheh transcends these boundaries through its lived reality of statelessness, refugeehood, and exile.

The integrity of Dheisheh is marked by a consistent and purposeful act of collective refusal. From the very beginning, several actors have exercised their power to preserve the camp as it is. The camp therefore became a battlefield, where every transformation—from something as simple as opening a window to changing a roof—has served as a political statement about the right of return. Its integrity has been preserved not by freezing the development of the camp but rather by its transformation and continual opposition to normalization and resistance to settling (*tawtin*). Dheisheh's social fabric furthermore draws strength from its refusal to integrate into the urban life of Bethlehem. The camp is thus an architecture of exile; its reality is double. Dheisheh's existence is the material connection to other places: the place of origins.

The camp has an undisputable origin in the Nakba and the forty-six villages families were relocated from. The original urban structure of the camp was a military-like grid adapted to the topography. Without municipal involvement and state governance, residents were largely left to determine the evolution of their urban environment according to the values they themselves willed. Over time, the grid has been modified, contested, and absorbed by the lives of its inhabitants. In adapting to urban conditions, unique systems of civic management were developed to preserve elements of the rural cultures residents brought with them.

In opposition to the city, Dheisheh has developed a unique spatial and social structure. It is an entirely distinct property system where refugees own the right to live in a house, but not the land itself. The high density of the camp gives it a similar feeling to a historic town center, with small alleys and tightly woven social relationships. The architecture of Dheisheh can be characterized as "low profile," in that any bold formal gesture is interpreted as a statement against the right of return. Dheisheh's basic materiality is constituted by cement blocks. The low cost and versatility of the material allowed refugees to replace UNRWA shelters with more durable structures. The simplicity of the blocks enables the camp to maintain its form and design as both permanent and temporary. Always on the verge of being destroyed, Dheisheh's half-constructed, half-ruined form serves to oppose settlement and protect the right of return.

Palestinian refugee camps hold the oldest refugee population in the world at the global center of religious, cultural, imperial, and geopolitical interest. In order to compare Dheisheh with other sites we need to understand the colonial origins of the refugee camp itself. The first camps created to regulate entire populations first appeared in European-controlled territories between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century with the intention to bulwark against potential rebellions. Those interned by the Belgians in the Congo and the Spanish in Cuba were indigenous peoples, a population without rights who were never granted citizenship by colonial authorities. The population interned by the British in South Africa was, in contrast, not made up of

natives but rather of white Europeans from a former colonial power. The official justification for confining one hundred and twenty thousand Boers in camps was to protect those who did not participate in the ongoing revolt. In spite of these "benevolent" intentions, more than twenty thousand non-combatant civilians died in the camps. Indeed, the concentration and confinement of a population within a small space is often justified by the will for a colonial power to "take care" of the internees.

As a form of rule, the socio-spatial typology of the camp is common among colonial histories: from the German colonization of what is now Namibia and the Italian concentration camps set up in Libya to the villages built in Algeria during the French occupation and those in Kenya by the English. But it is not until the concentration camps built during the Second Boer War where we can glimpse what would later become a diffuse phenomenon: the use of camps to control citizens of the state. The internment of entire populations became Europe's "solution" not only to colonial resistance, but, with the two world wars, to waves of refugees and stateless peoples "back home." The first European concentration camps appeared in Holland to "welcome" Belgian refugees after the German invasion in 1914. After spreading to England, France, and beyond, by the thirties the internment camp seemed to be, in the words of Hannah Arendt, the only "country the world had to offer the stateless."[4]

Colonial camps produced a new type of population, one perceived to be—by definition—hostile, and composed of undesirable, dangerous, suspicious individuals who needed to be kept under control simply because they belonged to a particular tribe, religion, or ethnicity. Yet it is in the basic transformation of a people into a population—a statistic to be governed—that we begin to see the possibility for extermination. It is in this historical context that the two most extreme camp-forms of the twentieth century were created: the death factories of the Nazi Lager and the "new slavery" of the Soviet Gulags. Yet the effects of the camp did not remain confined within its barriers and barbed wire; they pervaded the city. Disenfranchisement practices such as denationalization, or the revocation of rights became common in France starting as early as 1915, in the Soviet Union in 1921, in Belgium in 1922, in Italy in 1926, and in Germany in 1935. By diffusing exceptionalism throughout the space of society, the camp as an experimental form of governance has politically corroded the structural relationship between citizen and state.

The history of Palestinian camps is fundamentally tied to this colonial history of camps. Among the most important nominations that signaled a turning point in the perception of World Heritage as a celebration of "positive human values" is the 1979 nomination of Auschwitz Birkenau, whose Statement of Significance reads:

The site is a key place of memory for the whole of humankind for the Holocaust, racist policies, and barbarism; it is a place of our collective memory of this dark chapter in the history of humanity, of transmission to younger generations and a sign of warning of the many threats and tragic consequences of extreme ideologies and denial of

human dignity. Between the years 1942–1944 it became the main mass extermination camp where Jews were tortured and killed for their so-called racial origins. In addition to the mass murder of well over a million Jewish men, women, and children, and tens of thousands of Polish victims, Auschwitz also served as a camp for the racial murder of thousands of Roma and Sinti and prisoners of several European nationalities.[5]

Similarly, the Island of Gorée is described as:

> [A]n exceptional testimony to one of the greatest tragedies in the history of human societies: the slave trade. The island of Gorée lies off the coast of Senegal, opposite Dakar. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, it was the largest slave-trading center on the African coast. Ruled in succession by the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French, its architecture is characterized by the contrast between the grim slave-quarters and the elegant houses of the slave traders. Today it continues to serve as a reminder of human exploitation and as a sanctuary for reconciliation.[6]

In both of these cases, nominated under Criteria VI as associative "evidence," World Heritage becomes a way of dealing with the world's most heinous crimes and events. Both Auschwitz, Birkenau and Gorée serve as interesting comparisons to Dheisheh. Like both cases, Dheisheh is the site of a crime, yet one for which the time of reconciliation and commemoration has not yet arrived. It is therefore important to emphasize the cultural dimension of the nomination; the culture of exile. Dheisheh also contains the expression of resistance as both materially and immaterially significant, similar to the site of Le Morne in Mauritius, which serves as:

> [A]n exceptional testimony to marronage or resistance to slavery in terms of the mountain being used as a fortress to shelter escaped slaves, with physical and oral evidence to support that use. The dramatic form of the mountain, the heroic nature of the resistance it sheltered, and the longevity of the oral traditions associated with the maroons, has made Le Morne a symbol of slaves' fight for freedom, their suffering, and their sacrifice.[7]

Australian Convict Sites similarly:

> [I]llustrate an active phase in the occupation of colonial lands to the detriment of the Aboriginal peoples, and the process of creating a colonial population of European origin through the dialectic of punishment and transportation followed by forced labor and social rehabilitation to the eventual social integration of convicts as settlers.[8]

Both Dheisheh and Australia's Convict Sites are architectural ensembles illustrating forced displacement and imprisonment. However, they are not nominated for the culture that arose within them, but rather for the "living conditions" and the architectural

exhibition of the development of punitive strategies on a global scale. While both serve a direct purpose for a colonial regime trying to expand, their productive mechanisms differ. In Dheisheh, people were removed to make room for the colonial apparatus, whereas in the Convict Sites, people were transplanted to carry out its needs. Seen together, the two make up both sides of the settler-colonial coin: the British convicts became settlers, and the Palestinians became refugees.

In relation to Criteria IV as an "example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history," Dheisheh's urban form and its associated urbanism resonate with the city of Venice. According to its statement of Outstanding Universal Value, Venice has its origin in the "fifth century when Venetian populations, to escape barbarian raids, found refuge on the sandy islands of Torcello, Jesolo, and Malamocco. These temporary settlements gradually become permanent and the initial refuge of the land-dwelling peasants and fishermen become a maritime power."[9] Venice is further described as an "incomparable series of architectural ensembles … and presents a complete typology of medieval architecture, whose exemplary value goes hand-in-hand with the outstanding character of an urban setting which has to adapt to the special requirements of the site." The urban fabric of Dheisheh contains the oldest living traces of contemporary refugeehood and represents a radical urbanism that emerged through years of political exception. It is an expression of the creativity and resistance of millions of women and men to the unique political conditions of the site.

1. UNESCO, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (World Heritage Centre: July 12, 2017), https://whc.unesco.org/document/163852.

2. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), *Outstanding Universal Value: Compendium on Standards for the Inscription of Cultural Properties to the World Heritage List* (UNESCO, May, 2008), http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2008/whc08-32com-9e.pdf.

3. As a term, *al masha* comes from the form of life that emerged during the Ottoman empire under the conditions in which people did not own the land but had the right to use it, to cultivate it together.

4. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Berlin: Schocken Books, 1951).

5. The committee accepted the nomination of Auschwitz Birkenau only on the basis that it would "restrict" the nomination of "similar sites" in the future. Regardless of the intention behind the restrictions, a precedent was set: reconciliatory sites would be few in number and

the committee would attribute them to a singular event (rather than treat them as serial nominations). UNESCO, *Auschwitz Birkenau* (1979), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/31/.
6. UNESCO, *Island of Gorée* (1978), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/26.

7. UNESCO, *Le Morne Cultural Landscape* (2008), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1259.

8. UNESCO, *Australian Convict Sites* (2010), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1306.

9. UNESCO, *Venice and its Lagoon* (1987), http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/.

ANNEX 5 | PART 4 | *Present State of Conservation*

The right of return is a universally recognized human right of all persons. It was first inscribed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as Article 13(2), stating: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." The right of return was first inscribed within the realm of international law when, on December 11, 1948, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 194, stating that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date." This inalienable right has since been reaffirmed in more than one hundred UN resolutions.

Despite its legal recognition, the right of return for Palestinian refugees has been postponed for almost seven decades. This status quo must be challenged so that the right of return can finally be brought about. But we must also think projectively, into the future, and imagine what would happen if the right of return were to be granted. What would happen to the camps? Would they be destroyed and abandoned? Would they continue to be inhabited, or reused for other purposes?

In order to tackle these questions, we need to destabilize the right of return's political foundation: the concept of exile. Exile is not a condition that needs, or even can, be cured by return. Exile is a pervasive social condition that is radicalized in the case of refugees. The erosion of the rights of southern European citizens brought about by a state of austerity derives from the same regime that oppresses, expropriates, and controls refugees. Young people living in global cities around the world suffer from a similarly permanent condition of precarity. Rather than perpetuate a false dichotomy between citizens and refugees, a new alliance between what might appear to be radically distinct groups must be imagined. Exile demands to be thought as a radical, new foundation of civic space.

Exile and nationalism both stem from and respond to the same modern condition of alienation and its subsequent search for identity. Whereas nationalism tries to create collective identities of belonging to an imagined community, a political community of exile is built around the common condition of non-belonging, of displacement from the familiar. As a political identity, exile opposes the status quo, confronts a dogmatic belief in the nation state, and refuses to normalize the permanent state of exception in which we are all living.

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience.[1]

DEMOLITION | *One of the original shelters on the site*
DEMOLITION | *Site plan with platform*

The second concept in need of destabilization is conservation. For some, conservation is an architectural discipline that freezes time, space, and culture; one that reduces buildings to spectacular objects for contemplation and consumption. Yet conservation today pertains to the contested space in which identity and social structures are built and demolished. In recent years, architectural conservation has become a field of knowledge and practice able to reframe our understanding of culture, history, and aesthetics. What follows are three examples of how radical and political understandings of conservation have been put into practice by residents of Dheisheh.

CONSERVATION THROUGH DEMOLITION

Closed behind a gate, a plot in eastern Dheisheh contained the foundation and history of the camp. Three original UNRWA-built structures from the 1950s stood there—three shelter-rooms, one communal toilet, and a water reservoir—no longer in use. Recognizing the sensitive and politicized context, a collaborative design process about what to do with the site unfolded between local inhabitants, Campus in Camps participants, and DAAR. Considering the value of the architectural structures and their symbolic place within the collective memory of the camp, a non-intrusive intervention was decided upon to both preserve and bring new uses to the site. The project materialized as a black frame—a fifteen-centimeter-thick reinforced concrete platform—surrounding the historical structures, leaving them intact as a sign of respect for the past in this new beginning.

Months were spent with the site's neighbors and owner discussing the aim of the project. With their consent, activities such as concerts and film screenings began to be hosted on the site, and an agreement was signed between Dheisheh's Popular Committee and the owner to guarantee collective use of the land for two years. Construction began by excavating foundations, but after ten days, one member of the large family who owned the site prevented the laborers from entering. Despite the initial agreement, he had changed his mind and decided to sell the abandoned plot after it had received so much renewed attention. The Popular Committee and leaders of the camp spent several weeks with the family, trying to find a solution to preserve the site, but in a single night all the shelters were demolished, shocking not just the people involved in the project but also the wider community. Through the collective process that had been generated on and around the site, the present was revealed by its erasure, making clear the importance of the urban fabric as a historical site of narrative and value.

CONSERVATION THROUGH REVERSAL

The notion of "routes" or "cultural itineraries" as being part of cultural heritage started to emerge at the beginning of the 1990s. Heritage routes are considered to bring "strengths and tangible elements, testimony to the significance of the route itself and
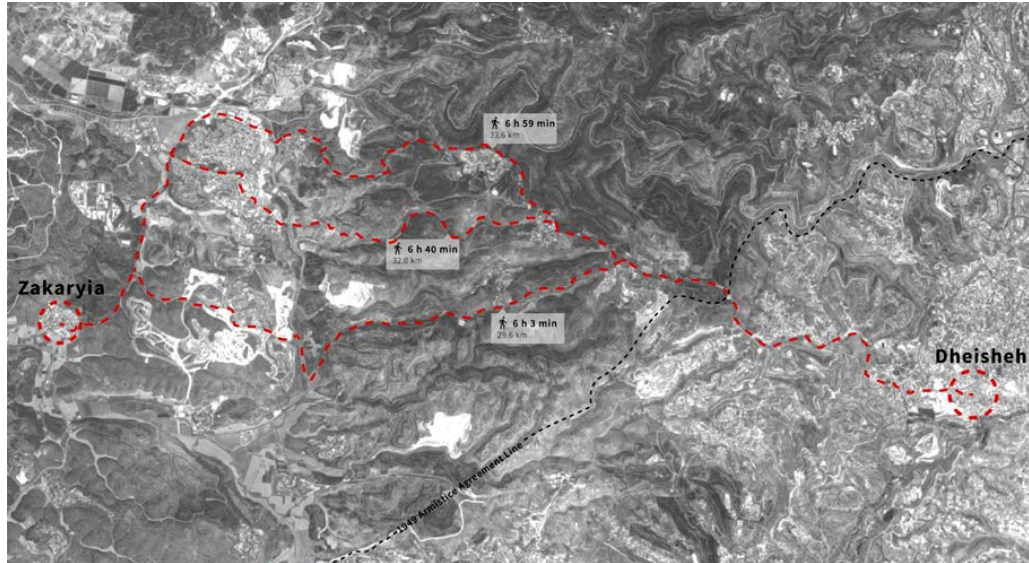
REVERSAL | *Routes of return from Dheisheh to Zakaryia*

RESISTANCE | *Dar Odeh* | 2017

offering a privileged framework in which mutual understanding, a plural approach to history and a culture of peace can all operate."[2] In this sense, Campus in Camps performatively reenacted the route of displacement that inhabitants of Zakaria took from their village to Dheisheh in 1948. Dheisheh is visited daily by hundreds of activists, who with their international passports can cross territorial borders that Palestinians cannot. The establishment of this route of return also imagines a possible reversal of displacement and serves as an antidote to the commodification of heritage sites.

CONSERVATION THROUGH RESISTANCE

Murad is a third-generation refugee and member of the Odeh family. About two years ago he finished his master's degree in the United States and decided to go back to Dheisheh, where he was born and raised. Like many others before him, he was forced to adapt to a life in exile under occupation. He thought about living outside the camp, but realized "I will feel lost… I only wish I could build my home in my village of origin." Just like the two generations before him, Murad started to think about building onto the family's house in the camp. After sharing his worries with DAAR about building on top of a poorly built house with weak foundations, and after consulting with a structural engineer, we found that the home could support another floor, which Murad asked us to design. He wanted the house to be ready for his wedding with Maia, a Jewish American woman from Minneapolis. With very little money but with support from the camp, the extension was built. Designing the house for Murad and Maia preserved the values of a family who has faced intolerable conditions for generations.

1. Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile" in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 185.

2. UNESCO, *Report on the Expert Meeting on Routes as a Part of our Cultural Heritage* (Madrid, Spain, November 1994), http://whc.unesco.org/archive/routes94.htm.
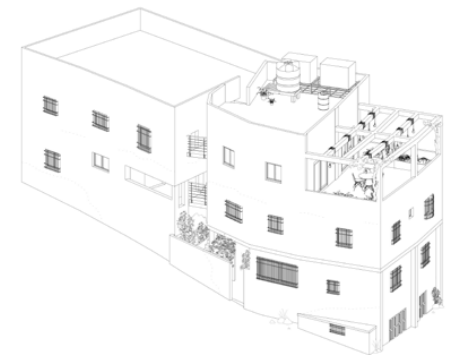
Interlude V

DAAR IN EXILE | ALESSANDRO PETTI |
Sandi Hilal | STOCKHOLM | 2018

Since the establishment of DAAR, the idea of a residency as a space of temporary cohabitation has provided the conditions, resources, and modalities to challenge the limiting economic and political situation of Palestine. Despite the restrictions of Israeli border regimes on Arabs, Muslims, and other categories of "unwanted" people, the residency became a space not simply to plan for a different future, but to live it within the present. The residency created a community that broke the isolation Israel forced upon Palestinian areas.

Despite the limitations and restrictions of living under a regime of military occupation, for over a decade, we have been able to create spaces for critical action and thought. Invitations to participate in art exhibitions provided the necessary context to start or develop projects, and the minimal economic infrastructure needed for production. Having an artistic practice helped us resist the NGO-ization of our interventions, since an art practice that aims to be transformative and bring about long-term changes does not fit with the short-term needs of the humanitarian industry. However, with time, our projects came to be noticed by donors and international organizations frustrated by the inverse relation between funding invested and results on the ground. The perpetuation of the regime of occupation has unfortunately made non-governmental organizations increasingly complicit in a situation they were unable to change. Is the ultimate goal of local and international organizations to get rid of the Israeli occupation, or is it to make it more tolerable?

Based on our collective work in Palestine, we felt the need to use the residency as a method of building connections and alliances with different organization and groups. In the summer of 2010, we organized the first residency outside of Palestine, in Albissola, a small town on the seashore in Liguria, Italy, known for being where members of the Situationist International would gather. In the same spirit, our gathering in Albissola aimed to offer a lived space where preoccupations and desires for the future could be shared. Collective dinners opened our space to the local community and allowed for unplanned conversations to take place. The residency sought to escape the productive modality imposed by cultural production today, instead aiming to create a space that allowed for reflections that do not need to be presented as outcomes or results.

In the summer of 2011, we were invited by Iaspis, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee's International Program for Visual and Applied Arts, to host a second residency on the island of Väddö, Sweden. Our proposal for unplanned gatherings with no predetermined activities challenged guests and organizers alike. The aim was to create a space of refuge from productivity. Our erratic walks in the countryside, made possible by the Swedish *allemansrätt* (the right of public access) and the long summer days provided the setting for discussions on different notions of common and public space in diverse cultural geographies. In the summer of 2013, the residency took the form of gatherings in public parks in Cologne between participants of Campus in Camps and local and international artists. This was the first time that the discussions of Campus in Camps were held outside of the camp. The context of the São Paulo Biennial in 2014 offered another opportunity to explore the residency form in different temporalities and modalities by activating a collaboration with Grupo Contrafilé and *quilombolas*, descendants of former slaves who are reactivating spaces with autonomous self-governance and the landless movement.

The predominant interests of these residencies were knowledge production and historical experiments in pedagogies of liberation. In 2015, in the context of Estudio SITAC: School Under a Tree, organized in collaboration with Alumnos47, we stayed in Tepoztlán, a small town close to Cuernavaca, Mexico, a city that has hosted several radical education experiments, including CIDOC, the Intercultural Center for Documentation that was established by Ivan Illich. In the same year we worked with the Indian Institute of Human Settlement in Bangalore and reflected on the possibility to design a curriculum for the newly established university that could be based on the knowledge that emerged from the local community.

All these experiences let to the creation of DAAR in Exile. One consistent characteristic of DAAR has been the creation of a group consisting of people that "cannot be together." DAAR in Exile continues and accelerates these "profane collaborations." DAAR in Exile is a cross-disciplinary platform for research and cohabitation for architects, artists, and cultural producers that do not live in their places of origin. Exile is often understood solely as a condition of alienation, nostalgia, and postponement. Instead, we aim to mobilize exile as condition from which to rethink and redefine the notion of borders, refugeeness, heritage, and hospitality. We seek to practice exile as an operational tool for actions taking place in the present, transgressing borders and forced dislocation to overcome limiting economic, political, and social conditions.

ITALIAN GHOSTS

2014–

During its Fascist era, Italy employed modern architecture to represent its imperial ambitions in Libya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia. The presence of Ancient Roman ruins in Libya was used as a political anchor to legitimize the "return" of Italy to these territories and the creation of a "new Roman Empire." However crucial it was for the colonial project and for Italy's history and identity, the modernist architecture of Italian colonialism is not well known. The embarrassing elegance of this architecture contrasts with the crimes perpetrated through colonization that have yet to be acknowledged. The afterlife of these buildings helps to unpack and reveal the problematic relation between modernism and colonization. The confessional, a religious–psychological apparatus for personal redemption, can serve as a political tool that calls for the exposure of the neo-colonial relations that still tie Europe to Africa.

CONFESSION   PROFANATION

DECOLONIZATION

RETURNS

HERITAGE

BARACCA, ALBA (EL FAGER), BEDA, BREVIGLIERI, CRISPI, AND BIANCHI │ *1930s (left) and 2009 (right)*

THE AFTERLIVES OF FASCIST-COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE |

ALESSANDRO PETTI | 2018

The struggle of decolonization, once primarily located outside of Europe, has today moved within its borders and peripheries. What the media calls the "refugee crisis" is, in reality, the inability of Europe to come to terms with five hundred years of colonialism. It is impossible to understand today's displacement of people, its flows of migration, and contemporary fascism, without a thorough knowledge of Europe's colonial heritage. *The Afterlives of Fascist-Colonial Architecture* is a research program that proposes an innovative, comparative, and interdisciplinary approach to the study of colonial architecture, expanding on the notion of colonial space to interrogate present realities. The program has two main areas of investigation: looking back into the past, through an exploration of the ways in which colonial architecture was re-used during the process of decolonization; and looking forward into the future, through a study of spaces of resistance within European cities.

Under the fascist regime between the two world wars, Italy built a vast number of public buildings, housing, and monuments—architecture that has helped influence and shape Italian cities as well as those of its former colonies: Asmara, Addis Ababa, Rhodes, and Tripoli. In Italy, the amnesia of Italian colonization paradoxically corresponds with the well-preserved and continually used fascist architecture.

With the re-emergence of fascist ideologies in Europe and the arrival of populations from North and East Africa, it becomes urgent to ask: what kind of heritage is this fascist heritage? How do the Italian empire's material traces acquire different meanings in the context of migration from the ex-colonies today? Should this heritage be demolished, simply reused, or re-oriented towards other aims, including reparations from Italian colonization?

Most literature on colonial architecture focuses on the specific period of colonialism. Looking back through history books, it is as if colonial cities, infrastructures, and houses disappeared with the disappearance of the colonial regime. Italy lacked a decolonization period that would have framed and made urgent a public and intellectual debate on Italian colonialism. As a result, critical studies on Italian colonial architecture only started to appear in the late 1980s.

To understand the complexity of the architectural transformation of evacuated colonial spaces it is important to explore their historical dimensions by tracing the multiple histories and processes of decolonization they registered in the built environment. Drawing on a wealth of literature, recently discovered archival materials, and empirical research undertaken on the subject in the fields of geography, urban studies, politics, sociology, and anthropology, this research will employ architectural methodologies to rethink the complex territorial, urban, and architectural realities that constitute the background and sources of this process of spatial and political transformation.

This research aims to challenge the classical material and aesthetic framework for understanding colonial architecture and instead treat architectural space as the product of social, political, and economic transformation, and thus a privileged site of analysis. It will expand upon and re-conceptualize colonial experience by investigating the continuities and discontinuities between past and contemporary forms of colonial space. Research will be based on written texts and accompanied by relevant visual apparatuses that will make the research more accessible to a broader and non-specialist public. Art exhibitions will be used simultaneously as display and experiential urban conditions. The project is conceived in four phases.

The first phase is focused on agricultural colonies built on the coast of Libya in the early 1930s by the Italian fascist regime, and the complementary displacement and deportation of two thirds of the entire Libyan population to refugee camps in the east. The sophisticated modernist architecture of Italian fascist-colonialism could only exist on a tabula rasa created by such a treatment of the local population, who were perceived either as a threat and anti-modern or in need of civilization. This phase was aimed at unpacking the fundamental link between modernity and colonialism, modern architecture and refugee camps, tabula rasa and displacement. Moreover, on the occasion of the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, it reflected on the device of the confession used by Silvio Berlusconi in 2009 to re-establish colonial relations with the Libyan government, to control migration and access to resources.

The second phase moved the gaze from former colonies to Italian towns in southern Italy. The population of southern Italy has been depicted as backwards, underdeveloped, and lazy; a similar trope to what is applied to colonized populations. Within the framework of the academic course Decolonizing Architecture at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, and on the occasion of Manifesto 12 in Palermo, this phase took the form of an architectural prosthesis and discursive exhibition at the Casa del Mutilato in Palermo, a fascist building inaugurated by Benito Mussolini in 1936. A prosthesis is required when there is a deficiency in the body. Thus, a scissor lift, providing access to different parts of the building where new interventions are possible, acted as a tool to reorient the future uses of the building and pragmatically start a much-needed restoration process. The scissor-lift also functioned as a "mobile balcony," providing a platform for invited guests to recount mutilated histories, from genocides in the former Italian colonies to the internal colonization of southern Italy.

The third and fourth phases will be centered around Asmara and Addis Ababa as case studies for the re-appropriation of colonial fascist heritage. The analysis of the ways in which colonial architecture has been re-utilized represents a privileged new arena to understand broader political and cultural issues around national identity, a sense of belonging, alienation, social control, and urban subversion.

THE TREE SCHOOL

2014

For Louis Khan, schools began with a person under a tree who did not know he was a teacher, sharing their realizations with others who did not know they were students. *The Tree School* is a place where people gather for communal learning and producing knowledge that is grounded in lived experience and connected to communities. The tree, a living being with its own characteristics and history, creates a physical and metaphorical common where ideas and actions can emerge through critical, free, and independent discussion. *The Tree School* reclaims a different way of learning, one that cuts across conventional disciplines of knowledge and welcomes marginalized forms. By activating a critical and egalitarian learning environment, *The Tree School* operates according to the interaction and interests of the participants. It is consequently in constant transformation, and can last days, weeks, months, even years.

MADAFEH/HOSPITALITY

MUJAWAARA/NEIGHBORING

PARTICIPATION

DECOLONIZATION

RETURNS

THE BAOBAB'S RETURN

31ST BIENAL DE SÃO PAULO | *São Paulo* | 2014
TAINÃ CULTURE HOUSE | *São Paulo* | 2015
SERRALVES MUSEUM | *Porto* | 2015–2016

THE BAOBAB'S RETURN

written by
SANDI HILAL WITH SAMA
AND TALA PETTI
illustrations by
MARIA CAMILA
SANJINES

estou voltando pra casa com um pé de laolá, estou voltando pra casa com um laolá, ola ola lá ola ola lá

One night Sama, Tala and the children
of the Tree School were sitting around a
campfire at the beach singing along to
beating drums.
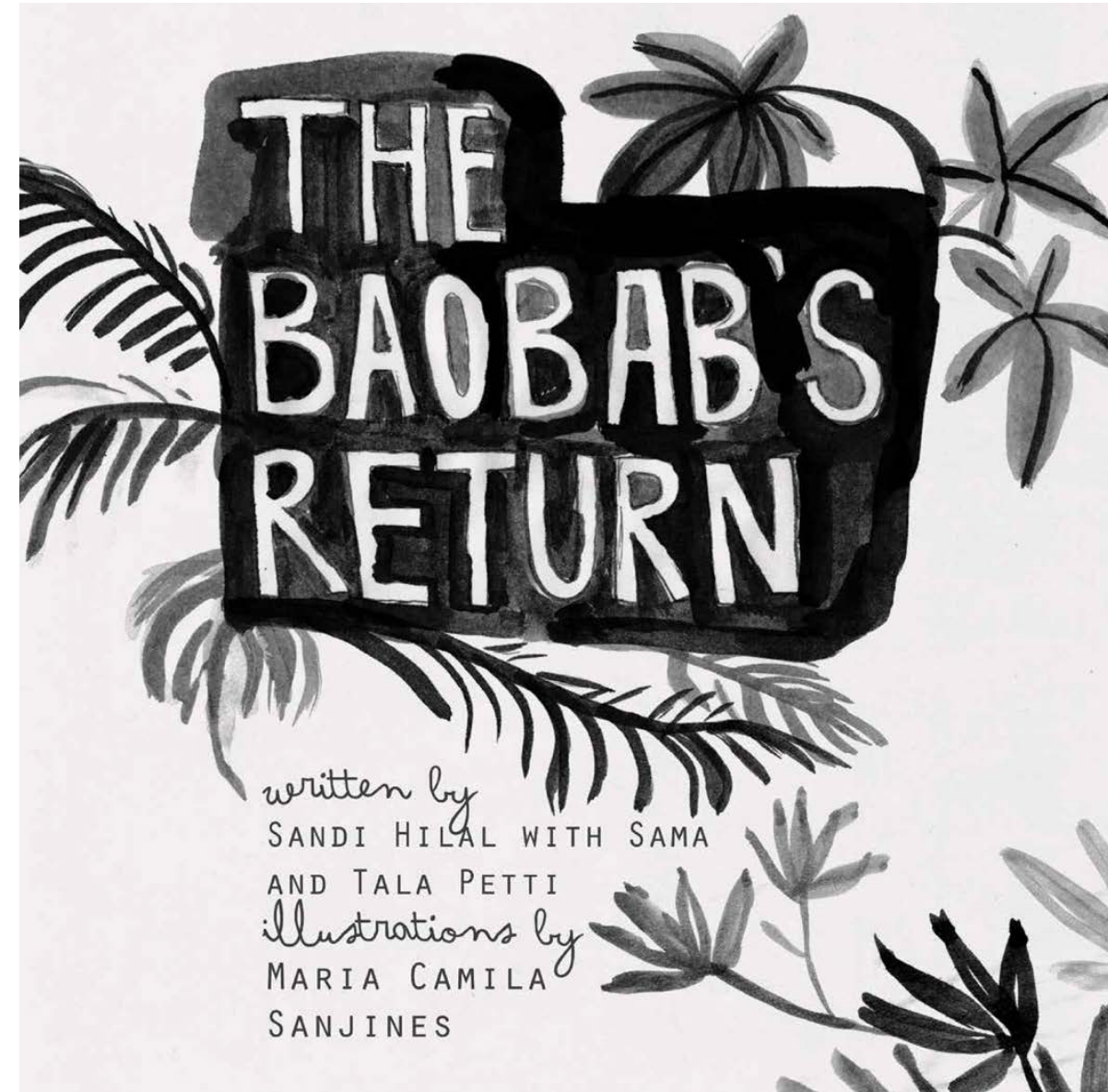
um pé de baobá, estou voltando pria ca com um baobá, ela ela lá ela ela lá...

estou voltando pria ca com

SAMA AND TALA SANG ALL THE WAY HOME...

ONCE TALA AND SAMA WERE IN BED THEY ASKED THEIR MOTHER: "mama can you tell us the story of the baobab tree?"

"i do not know the story of the baobab but i can try to invent one" THEIR MOTHER ANSWERED.

Once upon a time there was a baobab tree that was forced to leave her home in Africa and was sent to Brazil on a very big boat.

In Brazil the soil was very different, the water tasted weird and nothing was familiar. The Baobab was very sad.

Slowly slowly the Baobab made friends and learned to like the taste of the water, to enjoy the soil and was happy again. However every time she went to the sea it reminded her of Africa.

One day, the children of the tree school, Tala, Sama Seba, Gil and Ramiro, were playing drums under the Baobab tree singing

Seeing the Baobab so sad, the children decided they would build the Baobab a big boat so she could return to Africa.

"estou voltando pra casa com um pé de laolá, estou voltando pra casa com um laolá"

The drums reminded her of Africa and she was missing home.
The Baobab said to the children: "i miss africa"

After thinking a long time, the Baobab told the children: "i am very thankful that you built this boat for me, but if i leave to africa i will miss you all. i prefer to stay here. i even now like the taste of the water, the soil and i have many friends"

The Baobab stayed in Brazil but still missed Africa everyday.   THE END...
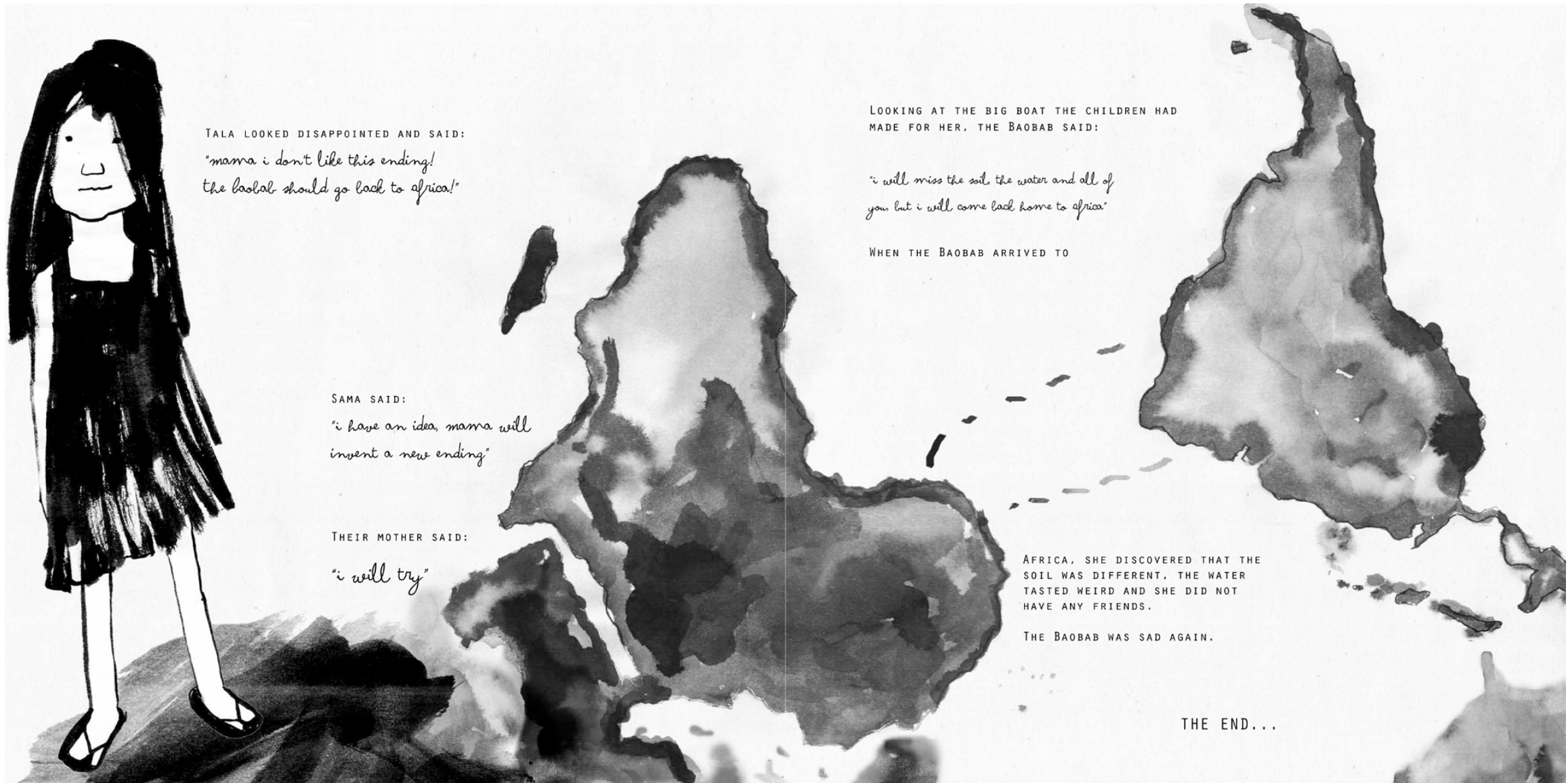
Tala looked disappointed and said:

"mama i don't like this ending!
the baobab should go back to africa!"

Sama said:

"i have an idea, mama will
invent a new ending"

Their mother said:

"i will try"

Looking at the big boat the children had
made for her, the Baobab said:

"i will miss the soil the water and all of
you but i will come back home to africa"

When the Baobab arrived to

Africa, she discovered that the
soil was different, the water
tasted weird and she did not
have any friends.

The Baobab was sad again.

THE END...

THE GIRLS WERE DISAPPOINTED AGAIN.
THIS WAS NOT THE ENDING THEY HAD HOPED FOR.

"i don't like this ending either!" SAID TALA.

AND SAMA SAID: "i have an idea, mama invents another ending"

THEIR MOTHER SAID: "i am sorry girls but there is no other ending. you have to choose, either the baobal stays in his home in brazil and misses africa or the baobal goes to his home in africa and misses brazil."

TALA AND SAMA WERE AGAIN DISAPPOINTED.

"i have an idea, let's ask other children to invent different endings to the story, they might come up with an ending that makes everyone happy"

MUJAWAARA | CAMPUS IN CAMPS |
Grupo Contrafilé

THE BAOBAB CREATION | EUGÊNIO LIMA

Many are the myths about the baobab. Originally from Africa, it is one of the world's oldest trees. The adult baobab is the tree with the thickest trunk, sometimes reaching up to twenty meters in diameter. Baobabs are living witnesses of history, guardians of the memories of the world. They may live up to six thousand years and grow up to thirty meters tall. In their gigantic trunk, they can store up to one hundred and twenty thousand liters of water. This is why they are also known as the "bottle tree." In many parts of Africa, they are sacred.

The elders say there are no young baobabs; they are all born old. The baobab I know is a young-old-kid, and while I sat against its trunk, it confirmed the story I had heard about the upside-down tree:

At the dawn of life, the Creator made everything in the world. First he created a baobab and only then did he continue making everything else. Next to the baobab there was a pool of still water. Sometimes its surface was as a mirror. The baobab stared at itself in that water mirror. It stared at itself and complained:

"Well, maybe my hair could have more flowers, maybe I could have bigger leaves." So the baobab decided to complain to the Creator, who listened carefully.

Whenever the baobab took a breath and interrupted its complaining, the Creator commented: "You are a beautiful tree. I love you, but let me go, for I must finish my work. You were the first being to be created and therefore you possess the best features among all creatures."

Still the baobab begged him: "Please, make me better here, make me better there..."

But the Creator, who had to make people and all the other creatures of Africa, left him alone. So the baobab followed him everywhere he went, wandering to and fro (and this is why the tree exists all over Africa).

The baobab looked at everything that had been created and continued begging for improvements: "Creator, make that tree over there a

little better! Creator, that river is too dry, can't you put more water in it? Creator, is that mountain high enough?"

Of all beings, the only one that was never satisfied was precisely the one the Creator thought was so wonderful, the one that didn't resemble any other, the first to be created! One day the Creator became very, very angry, for he didn't have time to do anything else. He was furious. So he turned to the baobab and said: "Stop bothering me! Stop complaining and stay quiet!"

But the baobab didn't stay quiet.

So the Creator grabbed it, pulled it out of the ground and planted it again. But, this time, upside-down, with its head in the ground, so it would remain silent. This explains why today the baobab looks so strange, as if its roots were on its head… The baobab is an upside-down tree!

And still today, it is said that its skyward pointing branches resemble arms that continue complaining and begging the Creator for improvements to the planet.

They also say that those who sit under the baobab may listen to its stories.

ARRIVAL IN BAHIA | JULY 9, 2014

Our collaboration aimed to cultivate and produce knowledge that emerges from regions of the world that rarely speak to each other, despite the fact they have very much to learn from one another. Particularly in this historical moment following the revolts in Arab and South American cities, these "two worlds" share similar urgencies in terms of social justice and equality. Though both regions have accumulated large amounts of wealth in recent years, its distribution remains dramatically unequal and power is still arrogantly detained by an elite. Colonialism is not just a ghost of the past. At the same time, the history of social movements in Brazil and the resistance to colonialism in Palestine are essential experiences to be shared and from which to learn.

We were interested in drawing analogies and identifying differences between two exceptional spaces: Brazilian *quilombos* and Palestinian refugee camps. Quilombos were communities established by enslaved Africans and Afro-descendants who fled their oppressors as an active form of resistance. Later, they became spaces of refuge for many other groups in Brazil. Palestinian refugee camps were established in 1948 as a consequence of the Nakba in order to provide shelter for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were exiled and had to leave their homes located in what today is Israel. After over sixty-five years, these camps have developed into semi-autonomous dense urban environments that are no longer simple recipients of humanitarian aid but rather active political spaces.

A shared interest in these spaces and their communities provides a key for reflecting on and understanding the relationships between community, territory, and politics beyond the idea of the nation state.

In order to explore these questions, we visited and conducted fieldwork in Southern Bahia, where important *quilombola* communities were historically established and where, today, new communities are experimenting with different forms of life and knowledge production. Bahia is the "birthplace of Brazil," manifesting and maintaining its fundamental link to Africa. We met with quilombolas, thinkers, artists, and activists from the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) in order to discuss the practice and theory of issues such as displacement, exile, right of return, identity construction, and subjectivity building, amongst others, that integrate the contemporary definition of collectivity.

We formed a tree school, where new forms of knowledge production are made possible, where teachers and students forget who they are.

UNDER THE TREE | JULY 10–11, 2014

Education must begin with the solution of the teacher–student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. To resolve the teacher–student contradiction, to exchange the role of depositor, prescriber, domesticator, for the role of student among students would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation.

—PAULO FREIRE, *PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED*, 1968

PAULO FREIRE The only one who can liberate the colonizer is the colonized. If you do not have the power to free the colonizer, the colonizer can never be freed. Let's create a liberation movement of the colonizer!

TC SILVA That's what we're searching for. I want to exist and to say that, until the end of my existence, I won't agree with colonization. I want to exist for myself, not in accordance with how someone else wants me to be or not. When we're talking about what oppresses us, it's neither because we deny the fact that we are victims nor that we wish to accept this position. We understand that we're all victims of colonization. When we propose other forms of thinking, we're looking for decolonized forms of thinking. We don't want to integrate; we want to build something new. Therefore, we need to have different references from those of the colonizers, so we can decolonize ourselves and help them become decolonized too. After all, who is the victim of what?

CIBELE LUCENA And how, from this perspective, can we think about a radical situation of learning? Because I'm not able to disconnect a learning environment from the image of an "intersection of worlds," a place that allows us to go through so many processes

and still meet. Which doesn't mean a place devoid of conflicts, but rather all the impossibilities and possibilities existing together.

MUNIR FASHEH *Mujawaara* and wisdom are two basic ideas that are both largely absent from academia and educational institutions. Mujawaara as a medium of learning, and wisdom as the overarching value. A basic ingredient in both is the stitching together of the social, intellectual, and spiritual fabric within communities. This embodies the spirit of regeneration in the most important aspect of life: learning. It demonstrates that another vision of education is possible and crucial. A great challenge in today's world is how to live, express, interact, think, and converse beyond professional terminologies, academic categories, and institutional logics. Critical thinking is thinking in context, and mujawaara is a form of organization where there is no hierarchy at any level.

LOUIS KAHN I believe that schools began with a man under a tree, who did not know he was a teacher, sharing his realizations with others, who did not know they were students.

SANDI HILAL By expanding on what you are saying about the beginnings of schools, I would like to advance the idea of a "tree school." In fact, we ourselves are forming a school. What we are doing right now is a school under a tree! *The Tree School* that we are forming now should not be presented as a model, because each school under a tree will have different urgencies and ways of producing knowledge.

JOANA ZATZ MUSSI *The Tree School* is a collective of people that defines the "what" and the "how" of our common learning. Living beings have become great schools for us!

ALESSANDRO PETTI In fact, the school should be, first and foremost, a gathering place, a common space, where ideas and actions can emerge through critical, free, and independent discussion among participants. A tree school could exist only through the active participation of its members. We call this space *al jame3ah* (Arabic for university), which literally means "a place for assembly." We understand al jame3ah as a gathering place, a space for communal learning, where knowledge emerges as a group effort, rather than from only external sources. Hence, the structure, constantly reshaped by the participants, allows for the accommodation of interests and subjects born from the interaction between the participants and the greater social context. For many, knowledge is based on information and skills; al jame3ah, on the contrary, places a strong emphasis on the process of learning based on shifts in perception, critical approaches, visions, and governing principles.

RAFAEL LEONA In order to imagine this tree school, one of the conditions is that there must be no pedagogic time measured in lecture hours. In this sense, the pedagogic time expands into our own lives. Just like with mujawaara, each person added into the group brings the possibility of destabilizing everything. The decision to not have a closed format also opens up the possibility of creating knowledge and building lessons within this destabilization. This means that the lessons don't start at a specific point, such as someone speaking, and they are not necessarily attached to a homogeneous and predetermined time. Rather, they correspond to a sequence of nonlinear events that produce knowledge.

CL We understand that obtaining a "space of collaboration" is significant since it by and large means having access to a "space of freedom." Games and playing reclaim a kind of landscape potency within the body that has been lost in adults and children. And we believe that it is this same landscape potency that allows us to imagine and invent our own city, giving way to the unpredictable. Playing is understood as an exercise in smashing down the walls ingrained within ourselves and our society.

JZM A tree school needs an interventionist character that not only "observes" a certain situation, but activates some "potentially rupturing" element in order to better comprehend the situation. A more pointed understanding of the social sphere follows from the assumption that it is necessary to actively stand in the center of a certain problem, challenge reality according to the sensations it evokes in the body, and build a shared understanding of it. The intervention then occurs as evidence of a symbolic character, by triggering an "element" which, as it synthesizes a shared sensibility, causes the established situation to rupture. The result is ultimately evidence that there is a collective body sharing a new sensibility that makes itself known.

AP To not normalize knowledge production should be one of the principles of *The Tree School*. It is an important concept and practice in relation to the idea of diaspora and exile. We have to work with what we have and we have to do it now, without getting trapped in the messianic idea of future salvation, be it communism or religion. We need to accept the idea of a continuous struggle for justice and equality, never being satisfied by the status quo and therefore never being assimilated or normalized.

JZM What would it actually mean to transform our understanding of essential values, such as beauty, wealth, and wisdom? The baobab could be the "great school" because it evokes the dimension of the common, of communication, community; as if it created a territory that isn't necessarily or simply physical, but also a symbolic territory of connection. I ask myself what knowledges are constituted, what institutions are formed "in diaspora." We do not have to be, as a rule, cured from the diasporas, since they traverse us and can politicize us. What is this thought, this school, this lesson, this happening in this action and in this diasporic reality, be it Palestinian, black, or Jewish?

THE BAOBAB ANTENNA | JULY 12, 2014

JZM It's interesting that we have such a strong being, capable of making us imagine so many stories. I wonder if there is one true story. TC, what is your baobab story, how did you first encounter it?

TCS I was born with the baobab story inside me. I can't really explain it, but as far as I remember, the fact of being black always made me react to situations where someone felt they were better or bigger or more deserving of rights than the next person. I was expelled from kindergarten when I was six years old for manifesting my indignation against acts of injustice and disrespect. The spirit of the baobab was already in me. I have three-year-old twin granddaughters and the last time we met one of them said: "Voyô looks like a baobab!" I didn't need to get to know the baobab; as my granddaughter said, the baobab was inside me from the beginning. My first physical encounter with the baobab was in 2006, when a friend, Francisco de Assis, a friend who is a "lord of trees," gave me a young tree. I drove to his place in my Beetle and, stuck in a traffic jam near Campinas, I composed this song:

> I'm coming back home with a young baobab tree
> I'm coming back home with a baobab
> Oba oba bah
> Oba oba bah
> Oba oba bah
> Oba oba baobab

When I arrived at Tainã Cultural Center, a children's steel drum orchestra from Trinidad and Tobago happened to be visiting. Though they only spoke English, they immediately learned my song. Together we planted the first baobab in Tainã's ground. Soon after, someone came from Mozambique bringing me more seeds, so I started drawing the baobab route. When I zoomed in on the map to find the exact line connecting Inhambane, where the seeds came from, to Tainã, I realized the line passed right above the house where I live and the house where I was born.

One day, when I already had two hundred young trees, I was talking to a Senegalese Pan-Africanist, and he asked me why I planted baobabs. "Were you born in Africa?" he asked me. "No," I said, "I've never been there. I carry Africa inside me." He was moved and said that the baobab is a symbol of Senegal because when the colonizers invaded African territory, the elders went around the villages saying, "Let's plant baobabs! They can take us from our land, but they can't take the baobabs."

Sometime later, another Senegalese friend was moved when he saw the same place. He had come from the land of baobabs but had never seen so many baby trees together. What I want to say is that this goes far beyond what I can explain. The baobab helps me gain access to a place only made possible by the baobab itself. I think it's an instrument that connects us to ourselves, so from there we can transform anything.

I started planting baobabs all over the country. Wherever one is planted, it becomes a key that allows everyone to fit in there. If you plant baobabs, you liberate your territory, opening it up to everyone. By eliminating all borders, the baobab itself does not establish any borders. The baobabs we plant in quilombos and other communities create a network of communication, like antennas.

ON THE ROAD | JULY 13, 2014

TCS One of the largest historical quilombos in Brazil, Quilombo dos Palmares, dates back to 1630 and lasted almost a hundred years before it was destroyed. There were almost 30,000 people living there, and it came to be known as the first democratic republic in the Americas. The quilombo is born out of the phenomenon of people becoming refugees and autonomously finding and choosing a place of their own. Nowadays, in Brazil, there are at least three thousand communities remaining from the original quilombos. Most of them are located in rural areas. These are huge territories and there is the possibility of sustainable living because there is only collective land and no private property.

PEETSSA Terra Vista, the settlement we are going to visit, aims to become a reference, just like Quilombo dos Palmares or the Zapatista movement. It isn't exactly a quilombo, but like Palmares, the inhabitants are Afro-indigenous. They are an example of the integration of different struggles not only in that they are united against a common enemy, but they also represent a more subtle and subjective form of integration, in the sense that they have shared dreams.

TCS Terra Vista is part of MST, the Landless Workers' Movement, which occupies abandoned, non-productive land. In 1993, about two hundred families occupied this territory and have since been implementing strategies for the survival of the community. They began producing organic food and reclaiming the land, making it productive again. Today, after twenty-one years, they have the best cacao bean and cocoa production in Bahia.

RL It will be interesting to see how, from an experience of extreme oppression and persecution, they have been able to open up a space for creativity and autonomy in a totally austere space that didn't seem to offer any resources.

P Since 1993, the greatest dream at the Terra Vista Settlement has been to build a school that can award graduate diplomas or master's degrees. The idea is that, together with the neighboring communities, a child could start from kindergarten and receive their full education there. If we can get communities to work together, we can combine knowledge.

SH Managing expectations is crucial. What they expect from us and what we expect from them are very sensitive questions that must be kept in mind.

AP At the same time, we need to be careful not to idealize these experiences, losing our sense of criticality. We must continue problematizing what we are going to see. One of

the dangers is falling into the trap of feeling like an archaeologist from the nineteenth century, going to the jungle, finding interesting things, and showing them in a museum.

TERRA VISTA SETTLEMENT | JULY 13, 2014

JZM I've been thinking and realized that the first thing Joelson showed us at the Terra Vista Settlement were two trees. This is how he welcomed us, not with a formal speech.

PEDRO CESARINO This is a way of building a new spatial cartography, a new social memory. Yet this doesn't mean that trees are simply inanimate, external objects, which could only be understood as discourse devices. They are also sort of "almost-subjects" that move within distinct worlds. The outside world isn't only manipulated and directed by discourse, because the "almost-subjects" also have their own vitality and capacity for affection.

AP The first tree that Joelson showed us was a small baobab that the community planted to celebrate their connection with Africa and the quilombola movements in particular. The second tree, a pine tree, has a more ironic story. Joelson said that it was given to the community directly from the hands of Yasser Arafat, whose name the tree took after his death. It's quite a strange story considering that the pine tree has been used as an instrument of colonization in Palestine ever since the British Mandate. The pine tree was chosen because it grows quickly and does not need much maintenance and, most importantly, prevents other vegetation from growing nearby. This creates a virtual monoculture on the ground level that reduces the variety of wildlife and the possibility for animals to graze. The Jewish National Fund has massively used the pine tree for its forestation programs. In most cases, pine forests are used to create "fences" around Israeli communities and their surroundings. Also, with the establishment of national parks, pine trees were used to hide the ruins of demolished Palestinian villages.

SH Why would Arafat have given a pine tree instead of an olive tree, which is the symbol of resistance in Palestine?

AT THE SCHOOL | JULY 15, 2014

ARTHUR DE OLIVEIRA NETO It's challenging for us to adapt state policies to the settlement's reality, because the state's educational policy is predetermined. Within the school, we have some flexibility to work together with the settlement's projects, for instance, the chocolate biofactory and the agroecology course. Through them, we can work on dimensions of local knowledge. Our greatest challenge is that urban students carry the vices of city life; they don't really understand what it's like to live in the countryside. But when we place students in internships and they share practical experience with settlers, there is an exchange, and interactions can happen.

SH I can understand that it is a big challenge not to get trapped into becoming a totally bureaucratic project. Even when it is simply translated into the way students sit and teachers lecture, there is a total disconnection with the understanding of what it means to live in a collective. As the principal, have you ever tried to understand, through small things like the organization of the space, how to bring part of the spiritual idea of the settlement into this place without being totally disconnected from the settlement?

ADON Here at the settlement, we have many people possessing great knowledge of the land, so we invite some of them to become teachers. Unfortunately, in Brazil, there is a terrible system for hiring public servants. But this is the system. We can only hire settlers who have university degrees. The state is bureaucratic and doesn't recognize the fact that people possessing other forms of knowledge should also be "graduates."

SOLANGE BRITO SANTOS There aren't so many elders in the settlement. I enjoy listening to them and I've even written down some of their experiences in this region. They are full of stories from the time of cacao and colonialism. When they die, they will take these secrets with them. Once an elderly woman, for instance, cured my child with a home remedy. She made a pineapple jam and whenever I gave it to him, I also had to eat it myself. She would tell me, "If you only knew what's inside this jam." The elders use many things they find in the forest. But they are dying and taking this knowledge with them. My mother knows all the herbs. Every plant has its use.

CL By writing down these stories and making them part of the school's projects, wouldn't this be a way of acknowledging them as forms of knowledge from the land that "graduates" people, as Arthur said? How do these forms of knowledge make their way into the school? How does the school relate to the knowledge of the elders? Some thoughts have emerged from our conversations with students. For example, how important is it to benefit from this already existing integration between young people who are from the settlement and young people who come from outside the settlement? Through this connection, can they reduce and reinvent bureaucracy from inside this gathering, *this school*, which comes from a connection "with the land," and not from being "landless?"

...

CL Hi! My name is Cibele, I came with this group to visit your school. We're working on an art project that will become a book and an exhibition reflecting upon issues like land, education, and spaces of collective construction. We come from São Paulo and from Palestine. Some of us live in refugee camps and we are very interested in the experience of the settlement. Do you study here? If so, which courses?

FEMALE STUDENT We study different subjects, some study zoo technology, others agroecology.

CL Do you all live in the Terra Vista Settlement?

MALE STUDENT No, most of us come from outside, from neighboring towns.

CL Really? And what is it like to study in a school within an MST settlement? How does it impact your families and the communities where you live?

MALE STUDENT It's interesting. Nowadays, we feel they respect it much more because this is one of the best schools in the region. But there's still a lot of prejudice. People don't understand what a settlement is. They say we study in "landless" schools. They think everyone here is violent.

FEMALE STUDENT We learn many things about land in Brazil in a way we wouldn't learn elsewhere.

DECONOLIZING CHOCOLATE | DEYSI FERREIRA

People usually tell the story of cacao and cocoa production in our region beginning a century ago. They speak only vaguely about the last two hundred and fifty years of cacao production in the south of Bahia. In the years following the occupation, the devastation of the country's hinterland intensified. The whole territory from Porto Seguro to Ilhéus used to belong to the Tupinambás, while the Camacã people and the Pataxó people inhabited the area around Arataca. After much genocide, these people began fleeing and refugee villages were established. These were improvised villages, where today one finds many towns uniting three tribes: the Pataxós, the Hã-hã-hães, and the Camacãs.

In order to introduce cacao, the pioneers came and opened up huge areas, colonizing—I wouldn't even say colonizing because, in fact, they came to kill—and destroying many families who were living in these areas because they wanted to establish villages here, harvest cacao, and occupy the space, claiming territory. Many indigenous women were raped; they slaughtered the men and took the women. This happened to my great-grandmother, who was a captive Indian. In the Tupinambá territory, where she used to live, not only she, but everyone was killed. Those who weren't killed escaped, and those who were caught or left behind were forced to go to other territories, forced to abandon their indigenous life and identity.

After this turbulent period of conflict, one hundred years ago, the production of cacao beans and cocoa started growing considerably. But the only people who benefited from it were the *coronéis*, who accumulated plundered land. They were given this name because they had as much power as the state and the army.

Once cacao was firmly established in the region, the coronéis struck the final blow by expelling smaller landowners, indigenous peoples, and quilombolas who lived there

with their families. They would send henchmen to hunt down and destroy indigenous refugees.

Their private militia was even more powerful than the police. Their power was based on cacao. The more cacao they had, the more power they had. At some farms, they murdered employees because they didn't work hard enough. My grandfather wanted to quit farming, but was threatened with death by the *coronel* who employed him. He could either try escaping and end up being killed by some henchman, or continue working like an animal until he died of exhaustion.

Then, thirty years ago, the Witches' Broom plague struck the area. There are many theories as to how it was introduced: some say it was a competition among coronéis; others believe that it was bacterial warfare initiated by the United States because Brazil didn't fit in with their imperial project; some claim that it was God's will, while others say it was simply a result of the change in the farming system after the *cabruca*-style farming, a method of scattering cacao trees within the forests, was abandoned. This fungus destroyed the whole area and thus ended the rule of the coronéis, who lost all their power.

Many of them committed suicide, but those who had already invested elsewhere moved to big cities like Salvador, Rio, and São Paulo. Their children had no interest in their lands, since the region was ruined. So suddenly, all the big farms were abandoned. The abandoned farms were maintained by *burareiros* or *meeiros*, former employees who took care of them and gave part of the production to the *coronel*, keeping some for themselves. This was the case of the Terra Vista Settlement, formerly known as the Bela Vista Estate, which had been inherited by three sisters living in Rio de Janeiro.

The local population of the area was disoriented and had lost its way. For many, the only alternative was to migrate to the big cities, which resulted in a massive rural exodus. During this crisis, the region became vulnerable, not to attacks but to people returning from the big cities back to the land, as organized groups like MST called them. People who didn't identify themselves as farmers anymore wanted to return to agriculture and to producing their own food.

As part of a very systematic strategy of massive occupations by the Landless Workers' Movement, the Terra Vista occupation took place in 1992. Its tactic was not simply "to occupy and resist," but rather, it considered the role of the human being, questioning how the territory could be liberated in order to liberate an even larger one. Two hundred and fifty years later, there was a return to agriculture by people who had lost the practice.

For some time, we tried to reproduce the colonizer's logic, since we were used to monoculture and hierarchic forms of organizations. And we failed. But in 2000, our motto became "start again," that is, start again with a new perspective of cultural humanity. The settlers, who in the past would only follow an imposed farming methodology,

now understood that they had power. For fifty years they had worked for the coronéis' cacao, but now they could work for themselves. They took the tool that the coronéis had used to exploit them and used it for their own benefit.The quilombolas, indigenous and landless people who are familiar with the history of this region, know that cacao initially symbolized slavery. This is the only way to name the practice of building empires using cheap or unpaid labor. After the crisis, cacao reappeared using the cabruca system inside the forest. It reappeared with women's and men's hands working the land, without anybody telling them that they could only produce cacao beans. A part of the population understood the process, while another part stagnated. We reinvented ourselves though cacao. Cacao reemerged, this time symbolizing freedom. It is rebellious chocolate!

RETURN TO THE SEA | JULY 16–24, 2014

SH Yesterday, during Dona Ana's funeral, and listening to you, Solange, speak about your attempt to collect stories of the elderly, I reflected on the fact that Palestinians try to document as many stories of the past as possible, before the old people pass away. In 1948, Palestinian refugees were forced to leave their villages and cities in what is today Israel, and many lost access to the sea. The symbol of the Palestinian refugee became the key of their lost house. It represents the right to return to their homes. Now the key seems to represent only the lost private property. We lost much more that was not private but collective, such as cities like Haifa, Yafa, and Akka. And the sea. It is time to think of the return to the Mediterranean Sea as a common right that all Palestinians, refugees and non-refugees alike, have lost. I'm not a refugee, I did not lose my home, but I lost the Mediterranean. The desire to return to the sea is a common desire among all Palestinians. A sea where your eyes are able to gaze beyond the closure and the borders that are all around us in our daily lives. The sea is where all Palestinians go, when they finally have the chance to cross the border.

SBS When it comes to "return," sometimes I think about my mother, who has a great knowledge of herbal medicine, but she denies her own culture. She is black and suffered a lot in her childhood, because her parents gave her away to a white family who always told her, "Never marry a black man!" So she internalized this and thought that her color was to blame for her suffering. And in order to relieve this pain, she became evangelical and started to deny her whole history. She loathes candomblé and drumming, for instance; she thinks paradise is in heaven. I'm aware that my mother can't return, but I have to understand her process, because after a certain age, for many, it doesn't seem to make any sense. Therefore, seeing people who were able to return makes me happy. I'm happy when I see Dona Maria Muniz, an indigenous woman from the Hã-Hã-Hãe people, who lives nearby and is the same age as my mother. As a child, she was expelled and had to live in the city with her mother. But recently she has reclaimed her land, she has returned. She had the privilege of returning.

SH Coming from Palestine, when we hear the word "occupation," it's strange for us that you, as the Landless Workers' Movement, are the "occupiers." We consider the Israelis occupiers because they took something that isn't theirs. This is something we reflected upon when those movements in Europe and the US called themselves "occupy movements." It made us feel uncomfortable. You can only occupy something that isn't yours. So when I hear you speaking, I feel it's not an occupation but a return. If indigenous people were on this land before colonization, then re-appropriating the land after so many years is a sort of return.

SBS You can say "return," I find it an attractive word, but I also like the word "occupy." Historically speaking there was an inversion of facts. When you talk about invasion and link it to our movement, it's offensive to us. It hurts, because, in fact, the invaders were the colonizers who prohibited black and indigenous people from having land where they could live.

TCS I feel it's always about a return to one's roots instead of thinking of return as the building of new roots. In quilombos, they do not want to return to somewhere else; they feel that where they are is their place already. The quilombo is my place, I am attached to my memory and my roots are here. The process of colonization made us lose the African references we had. We don't know where we came from so the desire to return to Africa died even if we still carried an African feeling inside us. But where in Africa would we establish ourselves now? The idea of return exists, but it's a different return, a return to a place within us. A return to the indigenous or African cosmic vision, so we can reconstruct our society. It is not a return to a specific place.Isshaq Al Barbary In Palestine, return for some people means going back to a perfect past, for others it means going to a perfect future. But in between, we say return to the common, return to the Mediterranean Sea. There's a search for identity.

AHMAD AL LAHHAM This time, from this dialogue, I feel that our generation, the third generation after the Nakba, is like the new generation of the baobab tree. We were both born in exile and we are both trying to redefine ourselves. We both know nothing about our original context, we both drank the water and ate the food of exile, built our entire lives in exile, so what does homeland mean to us? What does return mean to us? We are both asking ourselves: return to what? We are both asking ourselves what to do with the lives that we have been building in exile in the case of return. We are both asking ourselves if we have to take exile with us wherever we go and if exile should return with us. Maybe the baobab tree in the Brazilian context did not really ask these questions, but the Palestinian baobab did.

EUGÊNIO LIMA For me, the baobab symbolizes neither a return to Africa nor the formation of Brazilian identity; the baobab is not a tree in exile, it's a world-creating tree.

THE BOOK OF EXILE

| 2016

The Koutoubia Mosque in Marrakech takes its name from the large numbers of calligraphers who use its courtyard to conduct their work. It has played an important role throughout history as a space for writing, transcribing, translating, publishing, and distributing books. *The Book of Exile* is an assemblage of stories, scribed by calligraphers, of refugee life in Palestinian camps since the Nakba. These stories are an expression of a vital culture that emerged in exile in spite of suffering and deprivation. The book tells the story of the camp as a distinctive site of knowledge production, a source of social and political inventions and spatial configurations away from the stereotypes that have long described the camp solely as a site of poverty and repression. Among the authors of the texts are Campus in Camps participants living in Dheisheh, Arroub, Ayda, Beit Jebrin, and Fawwar refugee camps. Their stories of exile derive from everyday experience, observations, reflections, and interactions within the refugee community, and assert the vitality of life in exile.

AL MASHA/COMMON

MUJAWAARA/NEIGHBORING

CAMP

EXILE

HERITAGE

CREDITS
│ SANDI HILAL AND ALESSANDRO PETTI

TEXTS
│ CAMPUS IN CAMPS—MARWA ALLAHAM, QUSSAY ABU AKER, ALAA AL HOMOUZ, SALEH KHANNAH, ISSHAQ AL BARBARY, SHADI RAMADAN, AHMAD AL LAHHAM, AYSAR DAWOUD, BISAN AL JAFFARRI, NEDAA HAMOUZ, NABA AL ASSI, MOHAMMED ABU ALIA, IBRAHIM JAWABREH, AYAT AL TURSHAN, MURAD OWDAH, MUNIR FASHEH

CALLIGRAPHY
│ ABDELGHANI OUIDA (MARRAKECH)
│ SAHER KABI (QALANDIYA)
│ MOHAMED BIN YEHYA (ABU DHABI)

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
│ LEATHER-BOUND BOOK (CA. 450 X 600 MM) AND CALLIGRAPHY PERFORMANCE (DURATION VARIABLE)

EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS
│ FIND A CALLIGRAPHER
│ COPY OF *THE BOOK OF EXILE*
│ CONDUCT THE PERFORMANCE AT A SITE RELATED TO ARABIC KNOWLEDGE
│ PRODUCTION
│ PRODUCE TWO NEW BOOKS

الخيمة الاسمنتية

تم تشييد هذا في مايو 2015 الموافق ل رجب شعبان 1436 هجري

جامعة في المخيم ، جمعية الفينيق الخيرية ، مخيم الدهيشة ، بيت لحم ، فلسطين

الخيمة هي مكان للتجمع والتعلم الجماعي ،
تستضيف الخيمة نشاطات ثقافية ومكان للعمل
بالإضافة إلى أنها استعمل كمكان مفتوح
لعقد اللقاءات المجتمعية . الإشارة هنا
إلى أن الفكرة جاءت كنتيجة للنقاشات التي
دارت مع مشاركي جامعة في المخيم
والذين بدورهم يرون في هذه المناسبة
فرصة وإمكانية لتجسيد وإعطاء شكل
معماري لروايتهم الجديدة عن المخيم ، هذه
الروايدة التي تذهب إلى ما هو أبعد من . أن

ONE HUNDRED STORIES | MURAD

ODEH

"WHAT CAN WE DO?"

Before the First Intifada, the Israeli army waged a fierce campaign against books in refugee camps. Political and intellectual books were not easy to find at the time, except at the annual book fair in Bethlehem, where prices were exorbitant. Even though books were expensive, we still dedicated ourselves to them. At the time, the occupation soldiers would storm houses, and whatever books they found were shredded or burned. So I asked my husband: "What can we do?" and was absorbed in thinking of alternatives.

Several days later, my husband was seized by the Israeli army and detained, and my aunt and I were alone in the house. Anticipating that soldiers would come back to our house, I decided to protect the books, putting them in a bag and burying them next to the house.

A few days later, soldiers raided our home. They tore through everything, but they didn't find our library. We were overjoyed to have protected our books.

But later that evening, the rains began.

We couldn't go out to our library until we knew it was safe, so days later we began to dig up our books. They were all destroyed, covered in mud, their pages molded. We couldn't salvage a single one of them.

We grieved, asking ourselves, "What can we do?" and blamed the occupation for all that had happened that day.

"BOO!"

During the First Intifada, there were often long periods of curfew imposed by the occupation army on refugee camps. So, when moving from one house to the other, people would avoid using the streets. We would share essential goods (salt, sugar, flour, etc.) with one another when we could.

Once, it just so happened that my cousin planned to come visit us, and he asked us to watch the road to make sure that his way was clear of soldiers. We stood guard on the roof and let him know that the street was safe. After he'd gone halfway, he thought he heard his father's and uncle's footsteps around the corner, so he hid in a bend in the street.

A foot patrol of occupation soldiers, enforcing the curfew, came up the same alley. From our watch on the roof, we tried to warn him that soldiers were coming his way, but if we shouted to my cousin, the patrol would hear us. The soldiers came closer. Suddenly, like a monkey, my cousin jumped out into the road, hoping to surprise his father and uncle, and screamed "Boo!" The soldiers panicked and beat him fiercely. He was crying, but also laughing, while we watched from the roof, crying, but also laughing.

VIA DOLOROSA

A long time ago, water didn't come directly to the houses in the camp, so we had to walk to the well in the nearby village of Irtas, fill our buckets with water, and carry them back. We would go down in groups, "flocks," as we'd call them, from the camp to the spring. The girls from Irtas would shout out at us "you've emptied our spring!"

We would carry the buckets of water on our heads, climbing up the rugged mountain road full of rocks and mud. We would often slip, as if we were blind, and when we tripped, the buckets of water on our heads would spill onto our faces. We would cry, because our family survived on this water. We were eager to go back to the well, to fill our buckets and cry.

MULUKHIYAH WAR

When we were children, merchants would wander the camp streets selling goods from their cars. Most of them were from a village south of Hebron called Beit Awa, but many of them lived in Bethlehem. At the time, we were always playing outside in the streets. When we would hear or see one of the *mulukhiyah* sellers, we would burst with joy, as if a wedding feast had descended from the sky.

The women in the camp would bargain over the price until a deal was made. We would circle around them and enjoy the moment, but each of us had our eye out to steal some of those green mulukhiyah stalks. What would happen is, after the car passed on, bits of the stalks would lay discarded in the street, which would become our best weapons in the "mulukhiyah war." Others would peel and dry these stalks to smoke them. They had many uses. One time, we stole an entire truckload of mulukhiyah, and ran off with enough stalks for a whole month. That car, and its driver Abu Shanab, and those mulukhiyah stalks brought us such happiness in our childhood days. The "day of the mulukhiyah" was one of the happiest.

THE FIRST FOOTBALL IN THE CAMP

As children, when we wanted to play football, we would blow up a balloon and stretch a pair of socks over it so that we had something strong to play with. Our football would last from one week to ten days, but at some point, it would always pop. One time, after our ball popped, we thought about getting a real one. We wondered how we could get the money to buy a proper football. We decided to put together all of our pocket money, but it was just a few cents, much less than half a shekel. So we started saving money. Each day for three months, we collected our money and counted it together, working out how much we had and how much more we needed. It was strange and exciting, but also wonderful.

After three months we had collected about two and half dinars. But this is when conflict started: who would go and buy the football? To stop fighting, we put everyone's name in a hat and picked out three names. Those three then went to Bethlehem, to what was then called Al Cinema to buy the football. We bought the ball from a Dheisheh retailer there, but then another conflict began. Who would carry the ball? We decided that each of us would carry the ball for a little bit, and in order not to anger the others, we agreed not to play with it until we were all together back at the camp. At the time, Bethlehem was less built-up, with more open spaces around the camp. When we arrived, we saw lots of people waiting for us on Anton Mountain. They started to shout and wave at us, as if we had returned from a long, long journey, or as if we had liberated Palestine!

THE "PACKAGE"

A long time ago, UNRWA distributed clothes to each family in the camp. The clothes came in a kind of "package" that was tied at the top. Sometimes the package would be a sheet or a cloth, sometimes just large clothing tied up by its corners. The day the "package" came was always a day of celebration, as if the sack was infused with chance, a long-lost treasure (whose true owner could never be found). We would immediately open the package and turn it upside down, looking for something that would suit us. One time, I was excited to find a pair of pants that were just my size. I went out into the streets of the camp, proudly wearing pants without rips or patches. Some of my friends, however, looked at me strangely, and I felt as if I didn't belong. All of their pants were torn, scuffed, and patched up. I rushed off toward my house, picked up a piece of glass, and ripped my pants from the knee to the pocket. After my mother sewed up the tear, I felt better, no longer different than the rest of the kids. Of course, there's no need to say what my mother did when she saw the rip.

"UNTIL THE HOMELAND RETURNS"

Once, I was sitting with my grandmother and her cousin when she asked my grandmother: "Khadija, do you remember how you were married?" Khadija answered: "Oh, we suffered a lot until we managed to get married… Abdullah and I were engaged back in the 'Days of the Homeland,' but after the Nakba happened in 1948, we were kicked off our land and started living in the camp. My uncle kept pressuring my father, saying: 'Come on, Abu Mohammad, we need to let the kids marry.' But my father would say: 'They will not marry until we return home.' Were people even allowed to marry outside of their homeland? Weeks passed, and then months. Finally, certain notable families insisted that my father should accept the wedding, but he held his ground and refused: 'Until the Homeland returns.' It was not until our story had dragged on endlessly, not until the notable families had convinced my father that our stay here would be prolonged, not until then, did my father let us marry."

AL NADA SOCIAL HOUSING

| 2016

Reconstruction is often imagined as being the counterpoint to destruction, as opposite moments. In Gaza, these moments are linked in a cycle. Since 1948, Palestine has been constantly destroyed and reconstructed. It is within the intersecting force fields of destruction and reconstruction, displacement and return, refugeehood and citizenship, informality and formality, public and private that we were commissioned to produce a reconstruction plan of the Al Nada neighborhood in Beit Hanoun. The objective was to rehabilitate the remaining 386 residential units that were partially damaged during 2014 and previous attacks and to construct 207 additional housing units, as well as regenerating urban infrastructures and open spaces. Four years later, the project continues to be held up by bureaucratic machinations, while the ruins still stand as testament to a future in stagnation.

AL MASHA/COMMON

MUJAWAARA/NEIGHBORING

PARTICIPATION

RETURNS

TAWTIN/NORMALIZATION

CREDITS
| DAAR—ALESSANDRO PETTI AND SANDI HILAL WITH RICCARDO MAROSO AND GADOR LUQUE, WITH STUDIOAZUE (VALENTINA RESENTE AND FEDERICO DE NARDO) IN CONSULTATION WITH THE AL NADA AND AL ISBA NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES, THE BEIT HANOUN MUNICIPALITY, AND THE JOINT SERVICE COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN AREA

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
| HOUSING (CA. 25,430 M²)

LOCATION
| AL NADA, BEIT HANOUN, GAZA

PRIMARY MATERIALS
| CONCRETE MASONRY UNIT

CLIENT
| MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING

DONOR
| ITALIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

IMAGES
| VALENTINA RESENTE P. 334, 335,
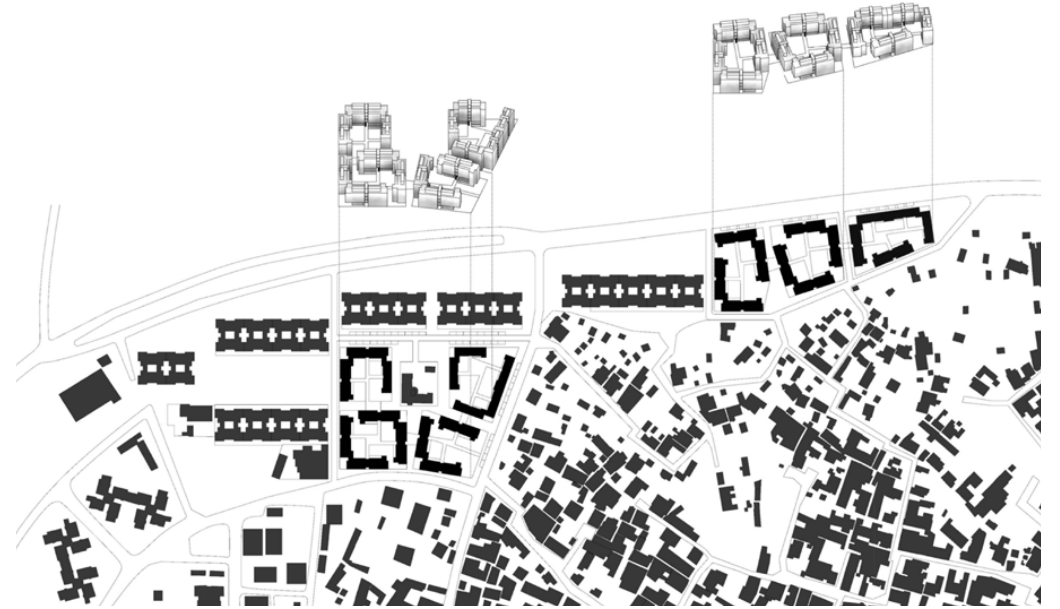
AL NADA NEIGHBORHOOD | 2016

DESTRUCTION, DISPLACEMENT, RECONSTRUCTION, AND RETURN

ALESSANDRO PETTI

On a hot summer day in 1994, Yasser Arafat returned to Gaza after twenty-seven years in exile. The Al Nada neighborhood, located in the very northern part in Beit Hanoun, was among the few social housing projects built to host Palestinian returnees; material evidence of the attempt to transform refugees into citizens. The politicians of the time wanted the architecture of Al Nada neighborhood to look like the informal architecture of a refugee camp. Instead, an orthodox modernist design was used to contrast with the informality of the Bedouin community that lived in the area. Its location was chosen to counter the expansion of a nearby Israeli settlement, located just a few hundred meters from the Eretz checkpoint.

Twenty years later, in 2014, half of Al Nada was destroyed by the Israeli army, yet again displacing hundreds of families. The fifty-one days of the Israeli military operation between July and August 2014 caused the destruction of approximately 18,000 housing units throughout Gaza, killing 2,251 Palestinians, the majority of whom were civilians and many of them children. Only 73 Israelis were killed, most of whom were soldiers.[1] In Al Nada and the adjacent informal settlement of Al Izba, the invasion left 192 homes destroyed and 72 families displaced.

Reconstruction is often imagined as the counterpoint to destruction. While the two are often seen as opposites, in reality, and particularly that of Gaza, these moments are linked in a cycle. Since 1948, Palestine has been constantly destroyed and reconstructed. In most cases, the effects of reconstruction were more destructive than the destruction itself. Think of the Israeli settlements built on the ruins of depopulated Palestinian villages—the destruction of destruction. At the same time, destruction has the potential to foster new alliances and a different sense of collectivity among people. A project of reconstruction reframes power relations and imposes a different kind of space, social structure, and mentality.

What does it mean to reconstruct in a territory that is not only under a blockade, but also faces the imminent threat of yet another war? Architecture cannot prevent a new war; it cannot even pretend to be smart. Building concrete-reinforced shelters underground in Gaza would expose people to even more danger, since the Israeli army last acted upon the pretext that underground structures are used to hide arms or transport illegal materials, turning them into shelling targets.

Architecture is usually called upon to intervene after conflict. But what role can architecture play *during* conflict? Is it possible to imagine an architecture that

preserves a sense of collectivity, in spite of the fragmentation and confines of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM), which only allows for the use of ABC materials (aggregates, bars, and cement)? In which ways can architecture play a central role in the processes of reconstruction, where new relations are established and forms of collectivity are reconstituted? Reconstruction might also force Gaza to be understood beyond a military gaze. Reconstruction forces us to think about life beyond, or in spite of, war. Reconstruction forces us to see things from the ground and from the perspective of the community, rather than from a distance or above. Reconstruction forces us to consider longer temporalities of transformations, rather than short-lived events cultivated by the media.

It is within the intersecting force fields of destruction and reconstruction, displacement and return, collaboration and resistance, refugeehood and citizenship, informality and formality, public and private, that in 2016, along with Studioazue, we were commissioned by the Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation to produce a reconstruction plan for Al Nada Neighborhood in close collaboration with the technical team of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Gaza. The objective of the project was to rehabilitate the 386 residential units that were partially damaged during the wars, construct 207 additional housing units, and regenerate urban infrastructures and open spaces. The preparation of the community-based master plan involved the Al Nada and Al Isba Neighborhood Committee, the Beit Hanoun Municipality, the Joint Service Council for the Northern Area, local families, and individuals.

CYCLES

Throughout the British Mandate period, Beit Hanoun was a small agricultural village with around 2,000 inhabitants. This reality dramatically changed in 1948 when Beit Hanoun was entirely destroyed and depopulated. What follows is an account of the condition of Beit Hanon in 1950, given by Paul Johnson, field director of Palestine Desk:

> The village was systematically and completely destroyed by burning each individual home. The roofs of wood and thatch were of course consumed quickly, and the heat of the burning destroyed the texture of the mud walls so that with time and rain they have been pretty much washed away. There are in the village perhaps six intact shells of buildings, all concrete. All doors and window frames are of course gone. These include the mosque, the school buildings, one residence, and a coffee house or two.[2]

The inhabitants of Beit Hanon became refugees and were forbidden to come back to their original homes. Their territory, once an integral part of Palestine, was turned into a border zone—a no man's land. The armistice signed between Egypt and Israel

separated the village from its agricultural land. The line was not designed as a political or territorial border, and therefore should not have had any effect on rights and claims. However, as in many other territories in Palestine, over time, these "transitory" lines of separation and division have solidified into walls, security zones, borders, and checkpoints.

As lawless, no man's land, Beit Hanoun was a challenge for both Egyptian and Israeli authorities. "Infiltrators" and shootings were threatening its territorial control. For this reason, the dimension of the armistice line was reduced, changing the no-man's-land status of the place. The redrawing of the line paradoxically allowed for a return to Beit Hanon. "The first returnees" to Beit Hanon were made up of its original inhabitants, as well as other refugees from villages that had become part of Israel. The Quakers, who were involved in the assistance of the refugees at the time, presented this and the reconstruction of Beit Hanoun as a "model of return" for refugees to their destroyed towns and villages. This "first return" formed the first cycle of Beit Hanoun's destruction, displacement, reconstruction, and return.

ARCHITECTURAL MODERNISM AND STATE BUILDING

In the summer of 1994, another incomplete return took place in Beit Hanoun. Surprisingly, or maybe strategically, Israeli authorities allowed for the return of PLO members and affiliates, presumably those who were "the most dangerous" in the eyes of the Israelis, while leaving the vast majority of the Palestinian population in exile, a quarter of which still precariously lived in refugee camps. Was this return another "model" for a larger return that never happened?

The naïve modernist blocks still standing in Al Nada today were built to host PLO returnees from Tunis and other locations. In 1994, the choice of an already obsolete urban model that had failed miserably in so many urban peripheries throughout Europe after the Second World War was likely based on the need both to demonstrate the presence of a working state and to clearly distance oneself from the informal architecture of refugee camps. Although the construction of the Al Nada complex was an important step in providing housing to refugees, and was a way to counter the Israeli colonization of Gaza, the state was not strong enough, due to the persistent Israeli occupation, to provide services to residents. Public spaces were never built in between or around the buildings. The modernist scheme could not respond to the specific demands of common space existing in Palestinian society, where public and private space is not so sharply defined. It flattened the rich articulation of common spaces into one single category—the public—making it impossible for the emerging state apparatus to ever render them functional.

URBAN ISLANDS

One fundamental principle of our intervention was that reconstruction would not produce any new displacements, nor disruptions of the already fragile social structure. For this reason, the first proposition that we submitted to the Ministry aimed to find a balance between their desire for a rational and well-organized neighborhood and the vital informality of Al Isba.

Palestinian returns have not been and never will be about arriving to an ancestral, uncontaminated, idealized pastoral landscape, but rather a return to a complex, dense, and imperfect urban condition. The returnees of 1994 did not return to their original homes in what is today Israel, but to Al Nada in Beit Hanoun—an already inhabited village with its own history of displacement and return. The returnees of 1994 had to find ways of cohabitating with the Bedouin encampment at Al Isba. The returnees where originally looked upon as "intruders," but the Al Nada complex eventually found its place within the sea of Al Isba's informal architecture.

In Palestine, construction happens organically and incrementally, wall by wall, room by room, house by house. It is because of this that, even during a time of destruction, people can already begin to think about reconstruction. Al Nada, however, is one of the first attempts in Palestine to use a top-down design process to house returnees. In building Al Nada, the PLO wanted to signal its presence in Gaza, which is still perceived as just another big refugee camp. In 1950, Gaza had 80,000 inhabitants and 250,000 refugees. Today, the Gaza Strip is home to a population of more than 1.76 million people, of which 1.26 million are refugees.

The 2014 war had the effect of creating solidarity among the inhabitants and a new sense of community. Something we heard a lot in Al Nada was: "We are not the way we were when we arrived here. Now we know each other and we share things differently." People in the community described what they experienced together, the war, as a journey that made them feel closer and more connected to one another. Our intervention took this new sense of collectivity into account, beyond the impersonal approach of the humanitarian intervention. We recognized the refugees as a community, not just as individuals in need of shelter.

During the lengthy participation and design process, we provided material evidence of the immaterial work that was happening between the Ministry, the community, and us. We painted one tower that was still standing, but heavily damaged, in red. Red, a color that was used to mark which parts of buildings to demolish, was here used to bring attention to the hidden relation between destruction and reconstruction. This building was the site of our meetings with the community. It was a gateway to the project in the making.

From the outset, the red paint started a process of collective interpretation. Community members said that the red paint had something to do with signaling something across the border to Israel, or with narrating the destruction and bloodshed caused by the military offensive (as in a music video made by a Gazan rapper in front of the building). Many people gathered and questioned the structure. Their attention was the beginning of a process of carving out a space for collectivity, and of transforming these interpretations into a sense of belonging and participation in Al Nada's reconstruction.

Collective space is a crucial part of the Palestinian culture of resistance. During the First Intifada, the Israelis closed schools and universities, arguing that any place where more than five people could gather had revolutionary potential. In response, places beyond the eyes of the regime and the occupation, private spaces, became public. These places were where decisions were made and a sense of collectivity was maintained. After all, collectivity is not just about big public spaces. Thus, we proposed a series of collective spaces that did not need to be mediated, or taken care of, by the state.

We imagined the design of the ground floor as a common space where rituals such as weddings or funerals could take place, as well as commercial activity. We refrained from overly designing these spaces, from thinking of them as public spaces. Knowing that there will be no public to take care of these common spaces, we offered the possibility for the neighborhood to activate them in different forms of appropriation.

These common spaces differed from public spaces as they could only exist with the active participation of people. They were a contemporary and urban reinterpretation of the hosh, private courts that different families would share in an ongoing organization made of conflict and appropriation. What miraculously still exists in Palestinian society, despite years of ongoing violence and occupation, is a functional social fabric. Rooted in family and tribal connections, this self-regulated form of civil cohabitation and conflict resolution effectively prevents Palestine from descending into civil war like Syria or Iraq. The hosh, or urban islands, as we refer to them, aim to preserve the social fabric necessary for the constitution of a civic space of resistance; fragments of a city that could be formed only after Gaza is liberated from the military occupation and reconnected with the rest of Palestine and the world

1. United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict—A/HRC/29/52* (June 24, 2015), https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/coigazaconflict/pages/reportcoigaza.aspx.

2. Ilana Feldman, "The Quaker Way," *American Ethnologist* 34, 4 (2007): 689–705.

AGENCY | IN CONVERSATION WITH RANA
ABUGHANNAM | *Beit Sahour* | 2018

RANA ABUGHANNAM How did the design process for your housing project in Gaza begin?

SANDI HILAL When we first arrived in Gaza, we met with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and their architects who were going to approve the final design. During our meeting, the architects suggested that Al Nada neighborhood should be rebuilt as it was, with seven-story towers. We argued that this was impractical, since at that time, Gaza only had three hours of electricity per day, so the elevators wouldn't work most of the time. We also argued that there was a way to build three-story housing units that could accommodate the same number of people in the same surface area. However, the Ministry kept arguing in all ways imaginable that the seven-floor plan was the only affordable option. But in Gaza, the type of building and the type of environment you live in is also a sign of your social status.

RA So it was also a class issue?

SH Yes, they wanted to maintain the same class status of the neighborhood. But we knew that anything more than three or four floors would be unserviceable, so we would not compromise on that. Finally, after long negotiations and many tough conversations, we were able to convince the Ministry of the viability of our shorter buildings, which would have a common courtyard to be used for community events. When I went to the Al Nada community with this proposal, I was expecting another negotiation session. But surprisingly, as soon as I showed them the plans, there was a moment of silence in the room. Once they realized we were able to give them three-story buildings, they were overjoyed. It was a victory.

RA You offered them more than they imagined they would get.

SH Yes. When I asked them if they wanted to see the plans and discuss any changes they would like, they replied: "if you managed to get us a three-story building, we can trust you with everything else." In this moment, we all realized that instead of having a designer, what they had was a good lawyer who understood architecture. I don't think that we acted as architects in the process of participation. We were effectively appointed as spatial lawyers. This was the game we were playing and because we understood architecture, we were able to negotiate and get the community what they never would have even imagined asking for.

RA What was the motivation behind painting one of the ruined buildings red? And what was the public's reaction?

SH This happened at a point in time when our Italian collaborators wanted to announce that they were doing a project in Gaza. But instead of doing a banner as requested, we decided to paint a section of the destroyed structures. People's reactions were very diverse, and rumors started to spread. Some people associated it with danger and imminent demolition. Others thought that the color acted as a reference point for a satellite that would use the structure as a coordinate marker. People were thinking of the paint in a technical matter. But with time, the structure became more of a landmark, to the point that a Gazan rapper filmed a video in front of it. Two years have passed, and still only the red is there; nothing else has changed. People are still waiting for building materials to be brought and for the area to be reconstructed. The red has become the symbol of a place waiting for something to happen.

RA I agree, the red structure has not only become a landmark of destruction, but also the symbol of the possibility of reconstruction.

SH Exactly! For me, destruction and construction are not opposite things. It's not black and white. They happen at the same time in Gaza. We were very much aware of this while designing the project—that we were rebuilding a community, while at the same time destroying the social ties that were there. It was a serious dilemma, how to rebuild in a destroyed place. On many occasions I asked myself how we could reconstruct in order to avoid more destruction. I still remember how painful it was when I attempted to discuss the design with the community and all they wanted to know was if there was a way that they could sign a contract with the Israelis so that their new houses wouldn't be destroyed in the next war. In that sense, as an architect, I was powerless. I had to tell them that there is no contract that can be signed with the Israelis. This made them afraid to dream. They didn't want to dream of a home and then have it demolished in six months. So, as an architect, I started wondering what I was doing there if I couldn't help get the contract they were looking for…

RA Why even dare?

SH Yes, why even dare to be there.

RA This really intensifies the question of the role of the architect and the problem of ethics in architectural practice.

SH I still remember when we responded to their questions, their request for protection, by proposing the idea of building bunkers under the houses. The Ministry told us that this would jeopardize them even more, since they would be the first thing to be bombed if an attack were to happen. And keep in mind, any design proposed for Gaza must be shared with the Israelis in order for the building material to be approved. So, it seems like there is no architectural answer to how we could protect the people. Not to mention the anxiety of the design process and thinking that what you are building might eventually be destroyed and fall on their heads!

RA Have you kept in touch with the community? What kind of relationship do you have with them now, after the plans have all been submitted and you're all waiting for the Israelis to approve them?

SH When we were there, we created a Facebook group with the community, so now I feel their frustration over the delays. They are constantly asking me if I know anything or not, despite the fact that our role as designers is over. But I'm as frustrated as they are! Being part of this group and being part of that community, it's something that I take with me emotionally wherever I go. When we started the project, I knew it would be a heavy and difficult task, but I never imagined the emotional complications that would come it.

RA I would imagine that it is not just difficult dealing with the emotional implications and the community, but the mechanisms, the systems, and the regulations coming from Israel and the Ministry are even more frustrating. I see the architect as a Daedalus-like figure: a cunning master who can navigate between the many regulations and constraints.

SH From the moment of our first meeting with the Ministry, we understood that the battle would be with them, not the people. This was illuminating, since "participation" then wasn't necessarily going to be with the community, but rather with the system, in breaking down certain walls in order for the community to have better living conditions. Usually, in these types of situations, you are told to go to the community and find out what they want, but in this case the community was in a powerless position and all they wanted was a roof over their heads. Everyone knew that the community had no voice. So instead of going there as an architect who wanted to give a voice to the community, which in the end wouldn't change anything in the system, what we felt was that the real participation, or the real battle, was to figure out how to navigate conflicts.

RA You mentioned that you saw your role as an architect in Gaza as being more of a spatial lawyer than just a designer. Could you reflect on that term and what the role of the spatial lawyer entails?

SH I don't perceive participation as a moment of consensus, but rather as a process of negotiating conflict. That is where the spatial lawyer comes in. We usually speak of the community as one entity, but it's not, and spatial lawyers find themselves between opposing needs and wants within the same community. For example, in Fawwar there was a group of women who wanted to have a plaza to themselves, but a group of men were against it. I found myself having to choose a side and support their needs. While some people would argue that a vote is an adequate way to establish the needs of the community, this tends to give voice to the powerful and exclude the marginalized. But once you are in the community, you start to realize that there are marginalized voices which need someone to defend them. I often took the side of those marginalized communities and tried to find a way to implement their needs without creating conflict.

In fact, I found myself working to negate conflict. What we are taught in universities is that the architect should maintain distance, but a spatial lawyer can't. What I try to do is to take the position of the marginalized and defend their needs from a position of power; to give power to those who don't have any. Accepting your position as a spatial lawyer means picking sides, choosing your battles, and defending your point of view no matter what, using all the means at your disposal within the law, finding whatever crack in the system you can. You look at the space and its assets and you try to shift things, to change the status quo.

RA I recently saw the work of an artist who used photomontage to criticize the rapid transformation and the badly planned housing expansions in Gaza.[1] His work discussed the problem of the haphazard donations and forms of assistance that come into Gaza without any planning or respect for future generations and their needs. What can the role of the architect be there?

SH After recently receiving another plea from the community group on Facebook to begin the project, I thought for a second that maybe if we had simply designed the towers that the Ministry originally wanted, they would have been built by now.

RA I doubt that. The mechanisms would have still been an obstacle.

SH Well, when you take this role of the spatial lawyer, you fight for something, and you see that the community is happy about it, yet it's never completed, you begin to ask yourself if you did the right thing. It probably wouldn't have been any different, but you still feel responsible. The waiting seems endless.

RA But this reflects the condition of Palestine, right? The idea that we are always looking forward but never arriving. There is anticipation, caution, and anxiety all at the same time. I appreciate the project as it stands even now though, because of the red paint; it is a statement about the Palestinian condition. I would like to connect this to the idea of permanent temporariness. How do you see the architect's role in creating something that is impermanent?

SH This question is not only about Palestinians. We had this exhibition in Abu Dhabi where it was clear that this condition of permanent temporariness not only applies to Palestinians; almost all of the students and staff we met at NYU Abu Dhabi are living it as well. Even the families who came to Abu Dhabi to settle with their children; if the father was to lose his job, he would have to leave the country. They all identified with this issue in their own thought process of whether they should build a house or even buy a sofa. It's amazing to what extent this condition is part of life in the Gulf, but also the rest of the world. It's really becoming a prevalent contemporary condition. So, in that sense, I believe it is time for architects to think beyond what we are doing as making great architecture, such as churches and mosques that will last forever, but rather to understand what permanent temporariness entails and what we as architects

can provide in such a situation. We cannot wait for clients to come and knock on our doors. Not to mention that in a place like Palestine, most can't afford to have an architect. It's time for us architects to break out of our offices, so that architecture can become something that is not just for the elite. We need to break down certain walls and reach people who cannot reach us, but who nevertheless need our professional experience, perhaps even more than anyone else.

RA I would like to reflect with you on the issue of the Gazan ruin as a piece of evidence of violence and how this may reflect the way in which the city is rebuilt. Ruins have recently become pieces of evidence used in courts of law to prove humanitarian violations, and are expected to be presented objectively and dispassionately. For example, after the attacks in 2009, the Ministry of Public Works documented the destruction of Gaza through photographs and forms. The forms attached to the photographs of each destroyed house had different boxes which could be ticked to describe the way it was destroyed and the amount of damage inflicted. This system is unemotional and doesn't describe the human condition, but it does describe objective realities, which work very well in courts of law. The problem is, however, that once the same methods are transferred onto the mode of reconstruction, then reconstruction becomes a systematic project, designed more for the regime of the court than the people. This frequently happens in Gaza, where building structures are merely proof of reconstruction, proof that the funds coming from foreign aid are being used. If reconstruction becomes a process of building for the sake of evidence, then it will fail. In my opinion, the only way to reconsider how reconstruction should be done is by, first of all, reconsidering what evidence is, and by, secondly, acknowledging that there is a human element in the process. Maybe this can happen by becoming a spatial lawyer, someone who uses law on the ground, within the community, instead of in the courtroom!

SH I absolutely agree. To design on an evidentiary basis is to accept the fact that you are only designing for victims. I would argue that this is how relief architecture came into the picture in the first place, where the question is how to build the quickest tent, the best one-room shelter, and so on. As if this is only a response to victimhood! But we cannot accept this as the only way to operate in such a condition. There is war, and there is an urgency to respond immediately, but is there not also a way to recognize that victims have agency? It is exactly because they lived through war that those people have the agency to become strong members of society and live their lives. No one can live as a victim forever. In that sense, our projects try to understand how we can make space for agency rather than respond to victimhood.

RA And I would argue that architecture is what allows the victim to become an agent. When a building is designed for just sleeping and eating, instead of interaction and activity, it inhibits people from being active members of society.

SH From being human!

RA Yes! This is a big problem since humans have now become evidence as well, as victims. They have become numbers, data, information, rather than human beings. If you look at the news, the stories are often about the number of people injured and killed rather than the personal stories of singular events. What can architects do to challenge this? Have other architects attempted to reconsider the question of reconstruction Gaza?

SH Since we simultaneously work in more than one discipline, we often need to give words to what we are doing. And a big part of decolonization is to rename certain things, to understand where we stand in terms of certain concepts. I would argue that we, as architects, come together in places like Gaza because we believe that it is possible to do something differently, to effect change. We might not have a name for it, but we intuit that it is the right thing to do. We were attracted to this idea of what it means to reconstruct and deconstruct and how we can engage with these questions as architects. There are probably other architects and realities. I'm convinced that many things happening that have no name. But I hope that our experience can begin to open up that discussion and begin to give names to these things. The project in Gaza doesn't only begin when the people move in: it began the moment the destruction began. The whole project is the red paint, the fact that is not built yet, waiting to get cement in, the frustration of the people, our frustration.

RA I agree, I see the project as more than just the structure. It starts with the destruction of the city and continues till today. All of the different conditions, the moments of the project, become a way to reconsider space, architecture, and the role of an architect. Can you tell me about the idea of including public plazas in the design?

SH One of the major differences I noticed between Gaza and the West Bank was the use of public space. In the fifteen years that we have been working in the West Bank, we have struggled with the idea of public space in occupied areas. But in Gaza, we could see that public spaces were where a sense of community flourished. Plazas were an important aspect of our design. We went around to interview people in public spaces in Gaza. In one interview, I was asking a group of women if they usually stay in their houses or go out, and one replied that since they only have electricity for three hours a day in Gaza, both men and women leave the house and spend most of their time in the public sphere, on the beach, in the parks, between buildings, and so on.

I was concerned about this idea of creating a plaza in the courtyard, but the community wanted this as a place to have weddings, funerals, and meetings. But the question about public space is always: who manages it? In places where there is a functioning government, it is clear who is responsible. But who will manage public spaces in Gaza? From my experience in Fawwar, I learned that if you don't have a threshold that registers entering, then people won't manage it. What are the necessary architectural elements for such a public space?

RA Let's return to the fact that the red structure is still standing, while the reconstruction has yet to begin. For this project you had to deal with the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM). The GRM is a temporary agreement between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government brokered by the UN to allow for the entry of building materials that are considered as "dual-use"—materials which have an inherent civil use but could also be used for military purposes. On the GRM's website your project is "fully confirmed," which is the level just before the project becomes active and the material acquisition begins. The first phase, Lot 2, was confirmed on February 13, 2018, about three years after it was originally submitted. The other two lots were confirmed on April 1 and 2. To find this information, we needed the internet, electricity, and a computer. I wonder how much of this information is actually shared with the community in Gaza…

SH The GRM feels almost inhuman; it has no scale. Working with all the corporations active in Gaza, it feels like you are dealing with a machine. In order for anyone to fit into this system, they must have the means, the architects, and the power to submit such proposals. It's usually only huge projects, which are funded by large organizations, that can go through the GRM. One of the most frustrating things I encountered in Gaza was that people would receive funds to rebuild their houses, but not enough to hire an architect to design their one-bedroom shelter; to create a "Bill of Quantities," calculate the amount of materials needed, and then apply through the GRM to get the materials through the border. Without that support, what people end up doing is not dealing with this system at all and going to the black market; they buy cement and iron at prices six times higher than the real cost. So the funds that were given to families, which was supposed to be enough to build a three-bedroom apartment, barely end up being enough for a one-bedroom apartment.

RA The larger issue is who validates such systems. When the UN brokered the system, its purpose was to speed up the importation of construction materials into Gaza while satisfying the security concerns of the Israeli state. But what the GRM really did was legitimize Israeli control. Some of the materials for your project were not approved. The mechanism is not necessarily one of support, but more a system of control.

SH I feel completely alienated by all this. You have to consult the website in order to understand the status of the project and which materials can get in. It's become a real bureaucratic cover to ensure that Gaza does not get the building materials it needs.

RA It is such a shame. One can only hope that the project and process can highlight this bureaucracy.

SH It feels like architecture is completely absent in Gaza, while at the same time it's a major actor in everything that's happening there. It's all about politics and policies for getting construction materials. I think the only thing we can do is try to find cracks

within the system. I wonder if there are other ways to deal with this, or if one should even reject the system outright.

RA It's a question that any architect who deals with the system has to ask themselves. It's important to note that the GRM applies to all projects in Gaza—from small repairs and one-bedroom shelters to large housing projects and schools. They have created four different streams: shelter repair, residential, finishing, and project. It's also interesting to see who the funders for such projects are; money mostly comes from humanitarian relief organizations, because as you mentioned, those are the ones who can afford to hire architects and engineers and apply through the GRM, which for a typical resident would be very difficult and time-consuming. The mechanism that was designed to shorten the process to a couple of days has instead complicated the process taking weeks, months, even years for a project to be approved.[2] One big issue is that Gazans and the Hamas government weren't involved in the process of establishing the mechanism. In fact, they only found out about it a year after its conception.[3] They weren't even given the option to resist, to participate.

SH You dream and think together with people, and then you realize that you are as powerless as everyone else.

RA And in a way, it feels like the whole thing is a charade. They make you feel like you are there to help. You become fully invested, you go and do interviews and you fight for their rights, you become a spatial lawyer, but in the end it's all part of a much larger, sterile, unemotional system. And you never know, the project might have to be amended because some materials weren't approved.

SH I would love to know which materials weren't approved in our case.

RA They say that the website is there to clarify things, but it doesn't tell you which materials they are talking about, or explain why they were not approved.

SH Sometimes it's the most irrational explanation. When we were in Gaza, they were already telling us that we can't use this, we can't use that, because they knew that some materials would be rejected for security reasons. The GRM was always there, but we tried as hard as we could to ignore it, because if we had accepted those as our guidelines, we would have given up from the start. We would have gone with copy-and-paste designs.

RA But I doubt that copy-and-paste designs would have been any better. You would have been forced to deal with these tedious mechanisms of approval anyway.

SH The question from the beginning was whether to embark on the project and get involved or not. For me, there is no other option but to be active, to be positive.

RA The project was a breath of fresh air, an opportunity to dream.

SH The community loved participating since it allowed them to vent their frustrations. It opened the possibility to change; a possibility to not accept the de facto situation. In that sense, I think that architecture has this potential of dreaming and thinking of other realities and being able to bypass the impossible. When I went to Gaza, I tried to push some of the young architects from the Ministry to come with me and meet the community. But the Ministry was not happy with this. Maybe they were worried about the emotions of their architects, because they wanted them to still be able to deal with such inhumane mechanisms. The moment you arrive there and you meet the people, it becomes much more difficult to go back to your desk and deal with such systematic mechanisms and processes. In places like Gaza, where there is war, the world has already decided that the people living there are not human. But you have to see the human side of it.

RA The world is much more comfortable with data than with emotions. The information presented objectively through this GRM website speaks much more to some people. And I believe that the Palestinian Authority thinks this website is a method of resistance, because it shows the control over materials and projects. But it alienates architecture from the people it's designed for.

SH This is an issue in many relief projects that work based on data. They look at the number of households, the number of refugees, the number of shelters that need to be built, the number of people that need to be fed, etc; no matter who you are, where you come from, and why you are where you are. This overproduction of data about people is systematically confirming their victimhood. It seems like data is there to help defend the victims of international regimes, but I have a feeling that the more we work in this way, the more we will come to accept the fact that victims can only be victims, that they are not really human. If we let ourselves be governed, be directed by data, all we are doing is perpetuating victimhood instead of finding ways to shift the dynamic between who the victim is and where the power is coming from. Architecture can bestow value on marginalized communities that have been pushed aside and kept out of sight. If there is any need for architecture, it is this.

1. Mohammad Abusal, *A Metro in Gaza* (The A. M. Qattan Foundation, 2014).

2. Shlomi Eldar, "Why Young Gazans Need Cement to Get Married," *Al-Monitor (*December 3, 2015), www.web.archive.org/ web/20151205014206 www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ originals/2015/12/israel-gaza-cement-housing-shortage-youngsters-tunnels.html.

3. Sultan Barakat and Firas Masri, "Still in ruins: Reviving the stalled reconstruction of Gaza," B*rookings Doha Centre* (August 22, 2017), https://www.brookings.edu/ research/reviving-the-stalled-reconstruction-of-gaza/

AL MADAFEH/ THE LIVING ROOM | 2016–

CREDITS
| DAAR—SANDI HILAL AND ALESSANDRO PETTI

HOSTS
| YASMEEN MAHMOUD AND IBRAHIM MUHAMMAD HAJ ABDULLA (BODEN)
| SANDI HILAL (STOCKHOLM)
| AYAT AL-TURSHAN (RAMALLAH)

MEDIUM AND DIMENSIONS
| PERFORMANCE (VARIABLE DURATION)

EXHIBITION REQUIREMENTS
| FIND EITHER A PRIVATE SPACE AND MAKE IT MORE PUBLIC OR A PUBLIC SPACE AND MAKE IT MORE PRIVATE
| HOST OTHERS IN THAT SPACE

SUPPORT
| PUBLIC ART AGENCY SWEDEN AND THE ARAB FUND FOR ART AND CULTURE

IMAGES
| ELIAS ARVIDSSON, P. 361
| STELLAN HERNER, P. 361

The living room is where the private home opens itself to the guest, the foreigner, the outsider. It functions as a transitional space and a passage between the domestic and the public. In Arab culture, the living room is a space always ready to host unexpected guests; it is the most ornamented part of the house, never in disorder, and often has fruit, nuts, and black coffee ready to be offered at all times. It might be the space that is least used, yet still the one that is most symbolic, curated, and cared for. Boden, in northern Sweden, is largely viewed by its refugee community as a transitory place. Yasmeen and her family, however, want to stay. In claiming the right to host and welcome diverse people into their home, their living room allows them to combine their lost life in Syria with their new life in Sweden.

AL MASHA/COMMON   MADAFEH/HOSPITALITY

MUJAWAARA/NEIGHBORING

PARTICIPATION

THE GUEST APARTMENTS AT NYU ABU DHABI | *Abu Dhabi* | 2018
THE HOUSE OF SANDI AND ALESSANDRO | *Stockholm* | 2018
THE HOUSE OF YASMEEN AND IBRAHIM | *Boden* | 2017
THE YELLOW HOUSE | *Boden* | 2018
ARKDES | *Stockholm* | 2018
THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM CENTER | *Fawwar Refugee Camp* | 2018

THE RIGHT TO HOST | SANDI HILAL

It was November 2016 when I first visited Boden. I had bought a down jacket and boots to protect myself from the cold, which can reach twenty to thirty degrees below zero. After taking a flight from Stockholm to Luleå, we took a taxi to Boden. The fifty-minute journey went through beautiful nature that conveyed a sense of loneliness and nostalgia. The taxi brought us to Bodensia Hotel. We dropped off our luggage and went out immediately.

Boden was first mentioned to me during a Skype conversation with Marti Manen and Joanna Zawieja from the Public Art Agency Sweden in July of 2016, who mentioned the possibility of working together on a project with refugees who were arriving to this city in the far north of the country. They told me that the Swedish government was interested in creating public art in particular marginalized areas. I didn't know what to expect, or if it was even possible for me to do a project in such a place, one that I wasn't able to imagine. The white snow that surrounded me upon my arrival made me feel like I had stepped outside of the world I once thought I knew. I was lost, but I adored it.

Boden was anticipating the arrival of government officials and the government-appointed artist from Stockholm with an official reception. We took another taxi to a cultural center where a small group of people were waiting. The nine of us—Marti, Joanna, myself, and six others—boarded a bus, which had the capacity to seat fifty passengers. The tour guide on the microphone celebrated the first snowfall of the year in Boden, which was enough to make us feel the importance of the event. The tour took us around the city's military landmarks. We moved from one bunker to another in the mountains, and then to some fortresses where soldiers were staying to protect the city. From there we went to some underground areas where there were mannequin soldiers dressed in historical uniforms.

An entire life in Boden was built around waiting for war, yet one that never came. "The Russians must be coming," but the Russians never came, and the war didn't either with those who did. I exclaimed to our tour guide: "All this effort and the war did not come!" The tour guide smiled, frustrated at the question. The bus had to take each tight bend in the mountain road as a three-point turn, stopping in the middle in order to adjust. We were on a bus that was not fit to roam these rugged mountains in a place prepared for a war that never arrived on a dark white day.

I wondered how the people of Boden felt when the government decided to build a military base in their city. Did they feel that Boden had been taken over, or were they happy with the arrival of the soldiers, generals, and their families who might help bring prosperity to the town? I could not find answers to these questions, but it was clear that even though Boden's history and culture was based on a war that never arrived, the refugees did.

I was eager to visit the Yellow House, which was well known in Boden for hosting refugees. I was told that the Yellow House was a place with a bad reputation, that it brought problems to Boden. When we left the hotel the next morning, snow covered the streets and the dim light added a sparkle to the place. At the Yellow House I was met by a few journalists who asked what I was going to do.

The weather was very cold outside and we all stood in a narrow, dark passage at the entrance to the main door, waiting for two people from the immigration office who would accompany us on the visit. We could hear the sound of washing machines in the shared laundry room on the first floor. It was not the best start. I felt alienated. The only answer I gave to the journalists was that I did not know what I was going to do yet. I explained that I had come to Boden hoping to start my story with the city and its people, to dream and think together about what to do there.

The journalists left once the immigration office staff arrived. I didn't feel comfortable paying my first visit to the place in the presence of the immigration officers, but I was a guest and I had to respect my hosts. I wanted to speak with those who would accept hosting me, so I asked if we could visit an Arab family, as the common language would help. They told me that they did not know who lived here, and that we should knock on peoples' doors and ask about their nationality. This was surprising since they had told me that they were officials from the immigration office and were in charge of the Yellow House. They informed me that they came from time to time to inspect the place and make sure things were working properly, but that they had no interaction with the residents.

We started from the top floor. The official knocked on the door. After a few minutes a young man in his twenties came out in pajamas. He looked at us for few seconds before the official talked to him in Swedish, which he did not understand. I asked him in Arabic if he was an Arab, but he did not understand that either. His tension increased. I had no language or words to assure him that we were there for an art project, that this had nothing to do with his request for asylum. Everyone remained silent for a few endless seconds. The tension did not appear on the face of the official, who after a while said to the young man, "Okay, thanks," and then looked at us, urging us to go. We followed him. I looked over my shoulder to find the young man still staring at us, and finally I heard the door close.

We knocked on another door and I slipped back a little. The door opened, and the employee indicated with his hand that we could go in. We entered the house, which was dark. I was invited into the living room of the man, a Syrian-Palestinian who had lived in Gaza Camp in Jordan. He was also wearing pajamas. He greeted us and invited us to sit. His wife was in a nearby chair and there was a woman looking at us from the next room. The man told us that they shared the house, which is not more than sixty-five square meters, with an Afghan family, and that it was difficult for them to establish friendly relations with this other family due to the lack of a common language.

They explained that the smells of their food vary and their cooking methods are quite different. Both families were suffering.

They had fled via the Mediterranean on a difficult journey. I asked the man why they left Jordan when the situation there is still safe. He told us that he was originally from Haifa, that his father fled to the Gaza Strip during the 1948 war, and that they were then forced to move again to Gaza Camp in Jerash, Jordan. They were never able to obtain any official documents in Jordan, nor were their children, who were born there. He said that their situation was fine because their children could still go to school, but after the Syrian war and the refugee crisis, Syrians were given priority and there was no room left for anyone without documents. I asked him about his condition in Boden. He answered me, frustrated. "There is no life for me here. I am here for my children. I don't think I'll be able to build a life here. I eat and drink and my children go to school. It's hard to build a social life here again. I accepted my isolation for a better future for my children. That's all I care about."

His wife sitting next to him was nodding her head in agreement. I asked her about her state of mind and if she had started learning Swedish. She replied: "Yes, I am learning a little through the internet and with the help of my young son who started going to school here. He helps us understand some of what was is going on around us." I asked her why she hasn't decided to take a language course that might help her start building a social life and getting to know the city better. "I can't do that," she said. "The Swedish government does not offer Swedish language courses for free until our request for asylum is approved." "How long does that take?" I asked, astonished. She replied that it could take a few years. "What!" I uttered aloud, surprised. "What do you do during these years?" "We wait," she answered quietly, as if my declamation did not surprise her.

I was eager to translate everything that was said to the immigration office staff. I asked them if it was true that refugees were not given Swedish language courses? They answered me quietly, as if I were the only one who didn't know: "Yes. There are some small institutions in the town trying to provide some independent Swedish courses, but it's not enough." I asked about the reason for this regulation. They responded that what they had heard was that the Swedish government couldn't spend too much of their resources on those who cannot stay. "But children are allowed to go to school?" "Yes, yes, their children have the right to attend Swedish schools."

Boden is a city that glorifies years of waiting for a war that has never come. At the same time, it is a place that refugees crossed seas, rivers, and forests to get to, yet it is not what they imagined, what they dreamed of. During my work in refugee camps in Palestine, I experienced the strength of refugees who had never lost their desire to live and struggle for a better future. But in Boden, I met people who made me feel as if they had lost just that. In Boden I was searching in vain for the political and social agency I encountered in Palestinian refugee camps.

Most of Boden's refugees spend their days like sardines in small rooms, with cold weather and a dark sky outside and a long winter that never seems to end. There is social isolation, too. One resident I spoke with told me: "I live with my wife and children all alone. No one knocks on our door here, while in Syria we never closed the front door." Another told me: "My deepest wish is for my wife to find a reason to leave this dark room every now and then."

I was frustrated, saddened by what I saw, but did not lose hope. I kept knocking on doors. A young Iraqi man, Ahmad, invited me into his room. We sat on his bed, where he told me he is waiting for his wife and children, and that when he receives family reunification papers and they arrive, they will move to the south of the country where the weather is nicer. I could not help but exclaim, almost out of desperation: "Everybody wants to escape Boden! Does no one want to stay here?!" I wasn't expecting an answer, but surprisingly, he said: "You must meet Ibrahim and Yasmeen. They are considering staying in Boden." I could not believe what he was saying. Who were these people? What is it that they saw in Boden that others didn't?

I kindly asked if Ahmad could call Yasmeen and Ibrahim. He called Ibrahim but couldn't reach him. I asked if he knew Yasmeen's phone number. He didn't, but he did tell me that Yasmeen is an architect. I spent more than an hour in Ahmad's room waiting for Ibrahim to return the call. I asked him to try again, but he still didn't pick up. I felt that I had to meet with Yasmeen and Ibrahim before I left, which was in just a few hours. We sent Ibrahim a text message, asking that he call us, and we did same thing from Marti's phone. But after waiting for a while with no response, we left the Yellow House and went for lunch before heading to the airport.

I went with Marti and Joanna to a restaurant, where I shared my fears of failing to implement any project in a place like the Yellow House where residents don't dream of change, but are rather just waiting to leave. While we were chatting, Marti's phone rang. He answered, speaking in Swedish, but I was able to understand that it was Ibrahim on the line. He finished the call and said that we were invited to their house, which is nearby. We finished our lunch and rushed there.

Ibrahim came out to greet us and welcomed us inside. Yasmeen was waiting for us in the corridor. I shook hands with her and stared shyly into her eyes before entering their living room. We met Yasmeen's mother, whose face did not hide the looks of wonder and curiosity at the nature of our visit. She was sitting with a small girl, who was watching an Arabic cartoon. She looked at us in surprise and went back to watch TV. I asked her name:

"My name is Lin"

"How old are you, Lin?"

"I am six years old."

"Are you happy in your school in Boden?"

"Yes," nodding her head bashfully.

I told Yasmeen and Ibrahim that their daughter is almost the same age as my own, and that children adapt quickly to new spaces.

"You are right! Lin quickly adapted to living here. By the way, Lin is not our daughter, but we love her as if she were ours."

"What? Whose daughter is she?"

"She is Yasmeen's cousin's daughter."

"Where is her family?"

"In Turkey"

"How did that happen?"

"They could not come to Sweden. Lin came with us in the same boat almost a year and a half ago. Lin has submitted family reunification documents. Hopefully they will be coming soon."

"But why did they send her alone?"

Yasmeen said to me, nervously: "They did not send her alone. She joined me on our boat. She sat in my lap. Our boat took us to the right destination. We began the journey with Lin's family, but their boat didn't arrive."

I was confused, trying to imagine the story. Yasmeen's mother was offering us coffee, fruits, and sweets. I looked at Marti and Joanna and began translating the story of Lin into English to try and include them in the conversation.

Over coffee, I said: "In Beit Sahour, we usually offer coffee to our guests before they leave. Is it similar in Syria?"

Yasmeen responded: "No, we offer our guests coffee when they first arrive. But we also offer it to them again before they leave. First, we offer sweets or dates, and then fruit."

"We usually offer coffee in the beginning if the gathering is a coffee gathering, which usually takes place in the morning."

"We do it differently in Syria."

I explained Arab hospitality to Marti and Joanna, and then went silent. I looked around and thought to myself: I entered the house of Yasmeen and Ibrahim with Marti and Joanna, who are representatives of the Swedish government. Yet here, Yasmeen and Ibrahim, in their small living room, can change the familiar roles: instead of being refugees hosted by the government, they can play the role of host, hosting the Swedish government. Their living room gave them the opportunity to refuse their role of obedient guest, complying with the norms and rules, and exercise their right to be a host.

I asked Yasmeen: "Do you have a job?"

"I am training in an architecture office some sixty kilometers away from Boden. I take the bus every morning to get there but I am not happy there. I often enter and leave the office without speaking to anyone. But I continue to go because I have to start somewhere!"

"Would you like to work with me?" I asked.

I saw signs of surprise, not only on her face but on those of all who were in the room. It was a surreal moment, as if events of a film were happening in front of me. I felt that everyone around me was having the same experience. In this living room, I found a strength that I had searched for but was unable to find in the Yellow House. How can we convey this feeling to those around us? Is there a way to infect others around us with this feeling? How can we bring hospitality as a means of creating agency back to the Yellow House?

Yasmeen replied: "Yes, I would love to work with you. But what do you want me to do?"

"We will decide together what to do! What is important now is to know whether you would want to do it."

She answered, with a smile: "Yes!"

THE LIVING ROOM NETWORK

The encounter with Yasmeen and Ibrahim marked the beginning of a project. However, reducing it to something about a Syrian refugee couple would have limited the potential of their performance and their experience. Their living room made me realize how important it would be to use my own living room in Stockholm as a way to discover and settle into my new Swedish life. As their living room and mine are part of the same whole, it became more difficult to narrow the project down to something that is exclusively about refugees.

This collaborative process led the municipal housing company BodenBo to offer us a ground floor apartment in the Yellow House to create a public living room. At the same time, I was invited to take part in an exhibition at ArkDes, the Swedish Center for Architecture and Design in Stockholm. This invitation gave me the opportunity to "amplify" my own living room as a public space in the museum while Yasmeen and Ibrahim could do the same in the Yellow House.

The challenge in both spaces was to give a public dimension to the private sphere. In the Yellow House, we asked the engineer to tear down all of the walls and keep only the load-bearing ones. Yet at ArkDes, the need was the opposite: by building a threshold of four walls and three doors, a private space was created in the already public space of the museum.

The design of the living room in ArkDes was inspired by the square that we designed in Fawwar Refugee Camp. There, it became clear that in the absence of the state, the only way to manage the public space in the camp was to create a threshold: four walls and four doors that could create the intimacy people needed to use as well as manage the space. Another living room is in Fawwar Refugee Camp itself and was set up by Ayat Al Turshan, a former participant of Campus in Camps. Her living room is slightly different from ours in Sweden. In Fawwar, the madafeh are typically run by men, and Ayat had long been invested in working for the right of women to be in the public. Thus, the concept of *madafeh* and a space of public hospitality owned by both men and women, where women can claim the right to host, is highly controversial.

Another living room took place on the NYU Campus in Abu Dhabi. We arrived as perfect guests, but decided to open the temporary home the university gave to us to the community and become hosts. We invited students and faculty members into our living room and created a sense of intimacy that helped question the relation between professor and student, between guest and host, as well as creating a sense of belonging to the campus, to the exhibition that we were there for, and to the meaning of permanent temporariness in a place like Abu Dhabi.

As I write, a new living room is being established in Ramallah in collaboration with the municipality. In the context of Qalandya International, and as a guest of the municipality, I am claiming to be a host in a public space, in the house of Beit Al-Saigh, and invite guests who will also host in the madafeh. Young artists and architects will discuss how artistic practice in Palestine can be a critical force today without becoming either complicit in a regime of occupation and oppression or hostage to capitalism. Ayat will also bring her madafeh from Fawwar to Ramallah.

It is important to think of the project as a network of madafehs that generates a movement of people who see the possibility to fully exercise their own agency in the act of hospitality. The presence of Ayat in Ramallah is a perfect example of this. By bringing her madafeh from Fawwar to Ramallah, Ayat's living room will gain a public dimension and hence greater legitimacy in her own community. Moreover, her presence will bring the voice of the camp to the very heart of the city, and thus gain the political and social recognition that Ayat craves and needs to continue her work. This collective recognition is at the core of the idea of the network, as each living room brings strength and visibility to the others. As Yasmeen gave me strength through her hospitality, I am now giving strength to Ayat. This network allows us to look at ourselves in the mirror and understand our own lives through the experiences and stories of others, however different they may be. None of us were capable of creating a sense of belonging to the public by ourselves, but we all shared the desire to contribute to the life of the place we live in.

The creation of a network of living rooms is at the core of a political movement that puts hospitality at its center. This is not an abstract thought, but something that starts with the creation of physical spaces: living rooms that can activate hospitality. Many people exercise the right to host without realizing the power it carries. Thus, the creation of a network is not relief, but rather recognition of the universal right to host.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE

1999 | As Architecture students at the Università Iuav di Venezia (IUAV) in Venice, Sandi and Alessandro are both elected to the "student senate," a student representative body instituted as a result of the student movements in the early 1990s.

2000 | In the senate they establish an independent student-centered cultural program. Avanguadie Permanenti is the name of the conference series, as well as the later architectural collective formed by Alessandro Petti, Matteo Ghidoni, and Luca Racchini. Sandi finishes her graduation thesis entitled *Jerusalem: Intolerance as Anti-City* on the Al-Aqsa mosque, pointing to the fact that at the center of the colonial struggle stands the notion of public space. After graduation, Sandi returns to Palestine and begins to work as an urban planner at the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in Ramallah on the project Urban Scenarios for the City of Jerusalem. The Second Intifada begins.

2001 | Alessandro's graduation project on the geopolitical dimension of the Giardini of the Venice Biennale and Sandi's graduation project on the extraterritorial dimension of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem become the foundation on which they conceive the project *Stateless Nation*. After graduation, Alessandro is employed as assistant scenographer for the movie *Secret Passage* starring John Turturro. With *artway of thinking* and university colleagues, he participates in the public urban project *Ms3*. Sandi moves back to Italy to enroll in the master's program Management and Control of Intervention of the Regulation and Re-qualification of Urban Areas in the Third World at the University of Sapienza, Roma, Italy. While completing her master's degree, she collaborates with the Stalker collective for the exhibition entitled *Islam in Sicily*. In September, both Alessandro and Sandi are teaching assistants to the courses led by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Stefano Boeri at IUAV. Alessandro is nominated to the advisory board of the 11ᵀᴴ Venice Biennale of Architecture directed by Massimiliano Fuksas and begins to work at the Milan Triennale. September 11 happens and Afghanistan is invaded.

2002 | Alessandro gets hit by a car. On the way to the hospital he decides to leave Milan. In a deconsecrated church used by the municipality of Rome for civil weddings, Sandi and Alessandro are married by the vice president of the European Parliament, Luisa Morgantini. The celebration takes place on a beach close to Roma Fiumicino airport and continues in Palestine, where Sandi's uncle Issa, a Greek Orthodox priest, marries them. In September, they begin their PhDs: Sandi at the University of Trieste and Alessandro at the University of Venice. Bush launches the so-called "war on terror."

2003 | On their second trip to Palestine, they shoot *The Road Map* with Salvatore Porcaro. For *Stateless Nation* they travel to several countries to interview Palestinians in exile. The results of these discussions are published as a book, *Senza Stato una nazione*. In June, they participate in the Venice Biennale both with the project *Stateless Nation* and with *The Road Map* in collaboration with Multiplicity. They meet Eyal Weizman for the first time in Venice. A trip to Cairo becomes the honeymoon that they never had. Iraq is invaded.

2004 | *Stateless Nation* is inaugurated at the Bethlehem Peace Center and Birzeit University. Time is spent reading, researching, and writing, living between Venice and Bethlehem. First trip to Dubai. Mahmoud Abbas succeeds Yasser Arafat. The International Court of Justice declares that "the construction of the wall, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law."

2005 | They meet Giorgio Agamben for the first time. Trip to the City of the Dead in Cairo. Participate in "Heterotopia and the City," the international symposium organized by Lieven De Cauter and the exhibition *Liminal Spaces*, curated by Reem Fadda, Galit Eilat, and Philipp Misselwitz. They move from the room where they were living with others in Venice to a house in Mestre. Sandi becomes pregnant. Trips to Paris and Barcelona. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wins Iran's presidential election. Israel evacuates 8,000 Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip.

2006 | Tala is born in a small clinic in Beit Sahour. The family establishes its home in a small apartment on a rooftop close to Souq Al-Shab. They travel with Tala when she is forty days old to discuss their PhDs in Italy. In April, Sandi obtains her PhD in Urban Sociology from the University of Trieste, and in May, an Italian passport. In June, Alessandro obtains his PhD in Urbanism from the IUAV University of Venice. Sandi is offered a job at the UNRWA Camp Improvement Program. They submit a postdoc application to the University of Berkley without success. Hamas wins the Palestinian legislative elections.

2007 | *Stateless Nation* is exhibited at the European Parliament in Brussels. Alessandro publishes *Arcipelaghi e Enclave*. They travel to Leipzig with Tala for the opening of *Liminal Spaces*. They submit a postdoc application to the Humboldt University in Berlin without success. They attend conferences in Galizia and the Festival Letteratura e della Filosofia in Italy, and meet Saskia Sassen. In August, Alessandro undergoes a knee operation. After a conference in Berlin, they discuss the urgency of proactively mobilizing research with Eyal Weizman. A few months later, they start the Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency (DAAR). The Mortgage Crisis begins.

2008 | They meet Munir Fasheh and teach for a semester with the students of the Art Academy in Ramallah on the decolonization of *P'sagot*. They attend Home Works in Beirut, and conferences in Ljubljana, Heidelberg, and London. During the summer they launch the first residency and collaborate with Yazeed Anani and his students. The model of *P'sagot* and *Oush Grab* is produced for an exhibition in The Hague. First solo show in Brussels at Bozar in collaboration with Lieven De Cauter. After working as a researcher at UNRWA for two years, Sandi is appointed head of the Camp Improvement Program in the West Bank, which expands connections to refugee camps in the West Bank and the rest of the Middle East. She makes her first trip to Lebanon to work on the reconstruction of Naher Albared with UNRWA. The global financial crisis hits. Israel invades the Gaza Strip.

2009 | Lectures given in London, Exeter, Rome, and Berlin. Alessandro starts researching about Italian colonization in Libya and writes a program for an atlas of decolonization. In May, Salwa Mikdadi, curator of the first Palestinian Pavilion in Venice, invites them to present the *Ramallah Syndrome*. Their second daughter Sama is born in Venice. The second residency program begins with thirteen residents working on *Oush Grab* and *Returns* projects. *Returns* presented at the Istanbul Biennial. Dialogue begins with Ruba Saleh and Elena Isayev. They meet Thomas Kennan for the first time. Students are recruited for the program of Al Quds-Bard University, where Alessandro teaches two courses. Obama's speech in Cairo. Israel attacks Gaza.

2010 | CAMP (Center for Architecture Media and Politics) conference in Dheisheh Refugee Camp. First residency collaboration with Delfina Foundation and Lorenzo Pezzani. Conferences attended in Dubai, Toronto, and New York. First prototype of a DAAR book is produced with Diego Segatto. Alessandro continues living on a tourist visa. Sandi transforms an invitation to produce a ceramic plate for the Biennale Ceramica into the first DAAR residency abroad. Exhibition at the Oslo Triennale. Summer residency in Battir. Continue working on the project of *Returns* with Sara Pellegrini. Conferences at Columbia University and Abu Dis. *The Lawless Line* is exhibited at the Sharjah Biennial, curated by Rasha Salti. Inauguration of their house extension. Sandi makes her first visit to Syria with UNRWA to collaborate on the extension and improvement of the Neirab refugee camp in Aleppo.

2011 | Alessandro visits the border of San Diego/Tijuana. Summer program in the Stockholm archipelago. Conference in Arles. They host a summer school in Beit Sahour, where *Common Assembly* is produced. Teaches at the Berlage Institute. The Arab world revolts.

2012 | Campus in Camps begins. Lectures given in Paris, Berlin, and Rotterdam. Exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary. They buy a piece of land in Jericho adjacent to Hisham's Palace. Lectures in the US at Columbia University, MIT, CUNY, and Bard College. Michel Agier, Ruba Saleh, and Ilana Fieldman are invited to participate in Campus in Camps. Two long months of holidays in Capri, the Pyrenees, and Termoli. *The Collective Dictionary* is written. Alessandro travels to Lima with the Foundation for Arts Initiatives. Gaza is invaded. Costa Concordia sinks off the coast of Italy.

2013 | Publication of *Architecture after Revolution*. First public presentation of Campus in Camps. Participants convince the camp community that Campus in Camps is not a project of normalization. Sandi and Alessandro write the principles of the school for Tala and Sama. They meet Achille Mbembe at Duke University. Campus in Camps initiatives are presented at Al Feniq. Trip to Johannesburg and Cologne Academy of Art. Alessandro's mother passes away. *Al Masha* workshop takes place at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. Nelson Mandela dies at age 95. #BlackLivesMatter.

2014 | First visit to São Paulo, where they meet Grupo Contrafilé. Unsuccessful application of Campus in Camps to the Open Society Foundation. Residence at Delfina Foundation in London. The idea of a Studio in Exile comes into being. Sandi ends seven years of work at UNRWA. *Italian Ghosts* is exhibited at the Venice Architecture Biennale. Participation in the São Paulo Art Biennial with *The Tree School* in Bahia. Sandi gets a clear vision of the next phase on the beaches of Bahia. Inauguration of *Shu'fat Girls' School*. Alessandro works on a DAAR archive and Sandi registers DAAR as an NGO. Lectures at the New School in New York and in Paris. Sandi intensively involved in Tala and Sama's school as a board member. Stone Extraction Report is presented to the Ministry of Planning and the Stone and Marble Association. Alessandro conceives of the idea for *The Concrete Tent* and design begins. Trips to Bangalore and New Delhi open new possible collaborations based on shared urgencies. Gaza is invaded and 2,143 Palestinians are killed.

2015 | Trip to Cuernavaca, where they explore alternative forms of education. The residency model becomes unable to provide the professional work needed. In June, *The Concrete Tent* is inaugurated in Dheisheh Refugee Camp. Alessandro thinks of the project of nominating Dheisheh as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Chicago Architecture Biennial provides a lesson on how to avoid the trap of making artworks out of architectural projects. Difficult summer, reflecting on being inside or outside institutions. Alessandro declines the invitation to return to teach at Al Quds-Bard. Receives institutional grant from the Foundation for Arts Initiatives. David Harvey, Pelin Tan, and students from Mardin visit. *Common Assembly* is exhibited in Taiwan. Alessandro becomes a board member

of the Foundation for Arts Initiatives. They write a DAAR research program with the aim to resist NGOization. Lectures in Chicago, Bard, and Athens. *The Tree School* is exhibited in Porto. Young Palestinians start stabbing Israeli soldiers, knowing that they will most likely be killed. Existential and regenerating trip to Marrakesh.

2016 | With Isshaq Al Barbary, Elsa Raker, and Sandy Rashmawi, DAAR starts working on the UNESCO nomination dossier of Dheisheh. They decline to participate in biennials that do not offer time, space, and resources for new projects. With Riccardo Moroso and Gador Luque, DAAR, in collaboration with Sudioazue, designs the Al Nada housing project in Gaza. They are awarded the fellowship in Art and Activism at Bard College. At the same time, Alessandro gets the Loeb Fellowship at Harvard GSD and a Professorship in Architecture and Social Justice at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. Sandi is commissioned by the Public Art Agency Sweden to begin working with refugees in Boden. DAAR commissions Luca Capuano and Carlo Favaro to document Dheisheh for the UNESCO dossier. Valentina Bonizzi and Driadt visit Campus in Camps. Arrival in Cambridge, Massachusetts brings the beginning of a new phase, changing dynamics and habits. Sandi undergoes a personal crisis for leaving Palestine. Sandi meets Yasmeen and Ibrahim on her first trip to Boden. Standing Rock and the Dakota Access Pipeline protests take place. Trump is elected president of the United States. The Syrian refugee crisis. Hottest year on record.

2017 | Arrive at Bard College and start teaching at the Center for Curatorial Studies and Human Rights program. Alessandro works on and publishes *Refugee Heritage* with e-flux Architecture. Sandi begins to conceptualize and work on *Al Madhafah/The Living Room*. They meet Tania Bruguera, Theaster Gates, and Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi. With Marta Cacciavillani, they work on the DAAR archive and the Abu Dhabi show. *Refugee Heritage* event takes place at documenta in Kassel, where they meet Paul B. Preciado. They spend the summer in Palestine during Eid, where they work intensively with Sandy Rashmawi on the Abu Dhabi show. Arrival in Stockholm, and managing another transition. The course of Decolonizing Architecture: The Afterlife of Italian Fascist Architecture begins at the Royal Institute of Art. Decolonizing

North conference at the Royal Institute of Art. Invitation to exhibit *Al Madhafah/The Living Room* in ArkDes, Stockholm. Sandi gives the Keith Haring Lecture in Art and Activism at Bard College. Trip to Beirut. Sandi awarded the Arab Fund for Art and Culture grant to activate *The Living Room* in their home in Stockholm.

2018 | Inauguration of *Permanent Temporariness* exhibition in Abu Dhabi. They meet Jamal Akbar, and travel to Zagreb and Boden, where *The Living Room* begins to be activated. Inauguration of *The Living Room* in ArkDes. Sandi awarded fellowship at ArkDes and Iaspis.

As part of Manifesta 12 in Palermo, the Decolonizing Architecture Advanced Course, a sequence of research courses on the afterlife of fascist colonial architecture, presents a project for critical re-use of the Casa del Mutilato. Summer in Palestine, working with Nick Axel and Maria Nadotti on the publication *Permanent Temporariness*. Marie Louise Richards becomes an adjunct in Architecture at the Decolonizing Architecture course in Stockholm. DAAR in Exile continues with Husam Abusalem. Exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum and the publication of this book.

SELECTED PUBLIC LECTURES AND SEMINARS

"Permanent Temporariness," New York University Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi (February 25–26, 2018), with Khalil Allaham, Zaki Aslan, Nick Axel, Leila Chahid, May Dabbagh, Charles Esche, Ilana Feldman, Diana Franssen, Sandi Hilal, Zina Jardaneh, George Katodrytis, Kieran Long, Salwa Mikdadi, Alessandro Petti, Nathalie Peutz, Jad Thabet, Deepak Unnikrishnan.

Sandi Hilal, "Al Madhafah: The Hospitality Room," Bard Center for Curatorial Studies, Annandale-on-Hudson (November 30, 2017).

Sandi Hilal, "Who's the Guest in the Living Room?," Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem (November 2017), https://vimeo.com/242364625.

Alessandro Petti, "The Architecture of Exile: Rights, space and politics in refugee camps," Harvard University, Cambridge (September 15, 2017), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1w_fjDutWqE.

"A Century of Camps: Refugee Knowledge and Forms of Sovereignty Beyond the Nation-State," Kassel (August 12–13, 2017), curated by Rasha Salti and Paul B. Preciado, with Isshaq Al Barbary, Mohammed Allahham, Niklas Goldbach, Sandi Hilal, Elias Khoury, Alessandro Petti, Lorenzo Pezzani, Rasha Salti, Jad Tabet, and Eyal Weizman, http://www.documenta14.de/en/calendar/24162/a-century-of-camps.

"What is an Artistic Practice of Human Rights?," Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago (April 29, 2017), with Lola Arias, Jelili Atiku, Tania Bruguera, Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, Carlos Javier Ortiz, Laurie Jo Reynolds.

"The Architecture of Refugees: The Question of Ethics," The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, School of Architecture and Planning (April 27, 2017)

Sandi Hilal, "On Education," Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah (March 13, 2017), https://vimeo.com/167690282.

"Displacement and Creative Activism," Watson Institute, Brown University (February 28, 2017) with Sandi Hilal, Khaled Malas, Marcos Ramírez ERRE.

"The Architecture of Exile: Refugee Heritage," e-flux, New York (February 24, 2017), with Suad Amiry, Nikolaus Hirsch, Thomas Keenan, Jorge Otero-Pailos, Alessandro Petti, and Sandi Hilal, https://youtu.be/KdeOsCruYoM.

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, "Spatial Ordering of Exile: The Architecture of Palestinian Refugee Camp," The New School, New York (November 17, 2014), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wArQkM4j74k.

"Architecture After Revolution," Tate Modern, London (June 28, 2014), with Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, Eyal Weizman, Ilan Pappe, and Okwui Enwezor. http://www. tate.org.uk/context-comment/audio/ architecture-after-revolution.

Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, "Decolonizing Architecture: Interventions in the Field of Vision," Visible Evidence, New Delhi (December 13, 2014).

"Al-Mashaa' or the Space of the Common," Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (October 30–November 1, 2013), curated by Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, with Qussay Abu Aker, Hanna AlTaher, Ayat Al Turshan, Yazid Anani, Hisham Ashkar, Mansour Aziz, Gautam Bhan, Musquiqui Chihying, Kegham Djeghalian, Ilana Feldman, Elena Isayev, Nedaa Hamouz, Iyad Issa, Yelta Köm, Vasif Kortun, Thameur Mekki, Omar Nagati, Sahar Qawasmi, Dina Ramadan, Felicity Scott, Urok Shirhan, Pelin Tan, Hanan Toukan, Toleen Touq, Bettina Vismann.

"The Life of Forms," Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism, Johannesburg (June 23–July 2, 2013), with Ackbar Abbas, Arjun Appadurai, Teresa Caldeira, Josh Comaroff, Ntone Edjabe, David Goldberg, Jane Guyer, Sandi Hilal, William Kentridge, Moises Lino e Silva, Achille Mbembe, Trinh Minh-ha, Neo Muyanga, Alessandro Petti, Edgar Pieterse, Ato Quayson, Kabiru Salami, Bernd Scherer, Sue Van Zyl, James Webb, Eyal Weizman.

"Rethinking Occupations," Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University (March 28–29, 2013).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, "Beyond the Public: A Common Space in Fawwar Refugee Camp," Columbia University, New York (12 October 2012).

"A Common Assembly," Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (January 28, 2012), with DAAR, Rasha Salti, Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri (16 Beaver Group), Sari Hanafi, Lieven De Cauter, Lorenzo Pezzani, Nishat Awan, and Berlage Studio, https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=_hi49EprqWw.

Alessandro Petti, "Decolonizing the Mind," TEDxRamallah, Ramallah (April 16, 2011), https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=xcfdqtOq6IA.

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, "Architecture and Revolt," American University of Sharjah (March 14, 2011).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, "Decolonizing Architecture," Iaspis, Stockholm (February 3, 2011).

Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, "Profaning Colonial Architecture," Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, New York City (November 10, 2010).

"Decolonizing Architecture," Tate Modern, London (May 25, 2010), with DAAR, Lorenzo Pezzani, Abdoumaliq Simone, and Rasha Salti.

"In and Out of Education: What Can We Teach Nowadays," Ashkal Alwan, Beirut (April 26, 2010), with Okwui Enwezor, Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, and Walid Sadek,

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, "Palestine Syndrome," Global Art Forum, Dubai (March 17, 2010), https://vimeo.com/14119393.

Alessandro Petti, "Decolonizing Architecture," The Human Rights Project, Bard College (March 9, 2010).

Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, "Architecture, Pedagogy & the Politics of Spatial Knowledge," Al Feniq Center, Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem (January 12–13, 2010).

AUTHORED BOOKS AND SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS | Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, and Eyal Weizman, *Architecture after Revolutio*n (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013).

Alessandro Petti, *Arcipelaghi e Enclave* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2007).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, *Senza Stato una nazione* (Venice: Marsilio, 2003)

PUBLICATIONS | DAAR, *Refugee Heritage* (e-flux Architecture, 2017).

Alessandro Petti, "Campus in Camps: Knowledge production and urban interventions in refugee camps," in *The Routledge Companion to Planning in the Global South* (London: Routledge, 2017).

Sandi Hilal, "Abu Ata, Architect: A play in Four Acts," in *Architecture is All Over*, ed. Marrikka Trotter and Esther Choi (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016).

Sandi Hilal, "Roofless Plaza," in *Housing after the Neoliberal Turn: International Case Studies* (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2015).

Alessandro Petti, "Decolonizing Knowledge," in *Volume* 45 (2015).

Alessandro Petti, "School in Exile," in *Volume* 45 (2015).

Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman, "Dheisheh (Cisjordanie). Retours. Penser le futur dans l'extraterritorialité (un projet architec- tural)," in *Un monde de camps*, ed. Michel Agier (Paris: La Découverte, 2014).

Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, Eyal Weizman, and Nicholas Perugini, "The lawless line," in *London Review of International Law* 1, Issue 1 (March 2014).

Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, "Reimagining the Common: Rethinking the Refugee Experience," in *The Human Snapshot*, ed.

Thomas Keenan and Tirdad Zolghadr (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013).

Alessandro Petti, "Spatial Ordering of Exile: The Architecture of Palestinian Refugee Camps," in CRIOS 1 (2013).

Alessandro Petti, "Beyond the State: The Refugee Camp as a Site of Political Invention," *Jadaliyya* (March 26, 2013).

Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, and Eyal Weizman, "The Morning After: Profaning Colonial Architecture," in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*, ed. Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (New York: Zone Books, 2012).

Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, Eyal Weizman, and Nicola Perigini, "Linea verde, il limes senza legge," *Limes* 3 (2011).

Alessandro Petti, "Spaces of Suspension: The Camp Experiment and the Contemporary City," in *State of Exception and Resistance in the Arab World*, ed. Sari Hanafi (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2010).

Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, and Eyal Weizman, "Decolonizing Palestine," *Abitare* 504 (July 2010).

Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, and Eyal Weizman, "Future Archeology," in *Afterall* 20 (2009).

Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, and Eyal Weizman, "Unhoming," in *Considering Forgiveness*, ed. Aleksandra Wagner and Carin Kuoni (New York: Vera List Center for Art and Politics, 2009).

Alessandro Petti, "Asymmetry in Globalized Space: Postscript on the Society of Control," in *The Impossible Prison: A Foucault Reader*, ed. Alex Farquharson (Nottingham: Nottingham Contemporary, 2008).

Alessandro Petti, "Temporary Zones: Alternative Spaces or Territories of Social-Spatial Control?," in *Post-it City* (Barcelona: CCCB , 2008).

Alessandro Petti, "Dubai Offshore Urbanism," in *Heterotopia and the City*, ed. Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter (London: Routledge, 2008).

Alessandro Petti, "Trans-Israel Highway," *Carta* 16 (June 2007).

Alessandro Petti, "Wall Architecture," *Domus* 900 (February 2007).

Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal, and Salvatore Porcaro, "The Road Map," *Equilibri* 2 (August 2004).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, "Stateless Nation," in *Archis* 4 (2003).

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, *POSITIONS #4*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (December 1, 2018–April 28, 2019).

Public Luxury, ArkDes, Stockholm (June 1, 2018–January 13, 2019).

Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, *Permanent Temporariness*, New York University Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, Abu Dhabi (February 24–June 9, 2018).

This Sea Is Mine, Qalandiya International, Ramallah and Birzeit (October 5–31, 2016).

Not New Now, Marrakech Biennale, Marrakech (February 24–May 8, 2016).

Unstated (or, Living Without Approval), BAK, Utrecht (January 30–May 1, 2016).

Taking Care: Designing for the Common Good, Italian Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale (May 28–November 27, 2016).

How to (…) things that don't exist, Serralves Museum, Porto (October 10, 2015–January 17, 2016).

The State of the Art of Architecture, Chicago Architecture Biennial, Chicago Cultural Center (October 3, 2015–January 3, 2016).

Artist Making Movement, Asian Art Biennial, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan (September 19–December 6, 2015).

How to (...) Things That Don't Exist, Ciccillo Matarazzo Pavilion, Bienal de São Paulo (September 6–December 7, 2014).

Monditalia, International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Biennale (June 7–November 23, 2014).

Meeting Points 7, MuHKA, Antwerp (October 25, 2013–February 16, 2014); Beirut Art Center, Beirut (January 3–March 5, 2014); 21er Haus, Vienna (May 10–August 31, 2014).

Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency, *Common Assembly*, the James Gallery, the Graduate Center, City University of New York (March 14–June 2, 2012).

Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency, *Common Assembly*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (January 28–April 15, 2012).

Lines of Control, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University (January 14-April 1, 2012).

Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency, *Common Assembly*, Centre d'art Neuchâtel, Switzerland (September 17–October 28, 2011).

Plot for a Biennial, Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah (March 16–May 16, 2011).

21st Century: Art in the First Decade, Gallery of Modern Art, Australia (December 18, 2010–April 26, 2011).

Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman, *Decolonizing Architecture*, REDCAT, Los Angeles (December 7, 2010–February 6, 2011).

Man Made, Oslo Architecture Triennale, Oslo (2010).

Ramallah – the fairest of them all?, the Ethnographic and Art Museum, Birzeit University, Birzeit (July 12–December 20, 2010).

Istanbul, Open City, DEPO, Istanbul (March 12–May 9, 2010).

Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman, *Ungrounding*, Architekturforum Tirol, Innsbruck (8 May–26 June, 2010).

Home Works 5, Beirut Art Center, Beirut (April 21–May 1, 2010).

The Jerusalem Syndrome, The Jerusalem Show, Jerusalem (October 11–20, 2009).

Palestine c/o Venice, Palestinian Pavilion, Venice Art Biennale (June 7–September 30, 2009).

Open City, International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, Rotterdam–Amsterdam (September 25, 2009–January 10, 2010).

What Keeps Mankind Alive? Istanbul Art Biennial, Istanbul (September 12–November 8, 2009).

Islands+Ghettos, nGbK, Berlin (14 March–26 April 2009).

Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman, *Decolonizing Architecture*, Bozar, Brussels (October 31, 2008–January 4, 2009).

Out There: Architecture Beyond Building, International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Architecture Biennale (September 14–November 23, 2008).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, *Stateless Nation*, European Parliament, Brussels (January, 2007).

On Disappearance, HMKV, Dortmund (August 27–October 30, 2005).

Emergencies, MUSAC, Leon (2005).

Making Things Public, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe (March 20–October 3, 2005).

Biennial of Mediterranean Landscape, Pescaro, Abruzzo (May 19–21, 2005).

The Subject of Palestine, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago (February 24–May 6, 2005).

Experiments With Truth, the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (December 4, 2004–March 12, 2005).

Art and War, Holon Digital Art Lab Center, Tel Aviv (November 27, 2004–January 1, 2005).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, *Stateless Nation*, Birzeit University, Birzeit (2004).

Brain Cells, 1st Architecture Biennale, Beijing (September 20–October 6, 2004).

Border Device(s), Festival Filosofia, Palazzina dei Giardini, Modena (September 17, 2004).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, *Stateless Nation*, Bethlehem Peace Center, Bethlehem (2004).

Territories, Malmö Konsthall (May 28–August 22, 2004).

Territories, Witte de With, Rotterdam (November 14, 2003–January 4, 2004).

Border Device(s), R.O.O.M.A.D.E., Brussels (2003).

Attitudes, Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva (November 7–December 20, 2003).

Déplacements, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (July 2–September 28, 2003).

Territories, Kunst-Werke, Berlin (June 2–September 7, 2003).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, *Stateless Nation*, Officina Giovani, Prato (November, 2003).

Utopia, International Art Exhibition, Venice Art Biennale (June 15–November 2, 2003).

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal, *Stateless Nation*, Palestinian Pavilion, Venice Art Biennale (June 15–November 2, 2003).

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Keith Haring Fellowship in Art and Activism, Bard College (recipient, 2017)

Loeb Fellowship, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University (recipient, 2016)

Visible Award (shortlist, 2015)

Anni and Heinrich Sussmann Artist Award (shortlist, 2015)

Curry Stone Design Prize (shortlist, 2015)

Prize for Art and Politics, Vera List Center, The New School (shortlist, 2014)

Foundation for Art Initiatives (recipient, 2014, 2012, 2010)

The British Council Grant (recipient, 2014)

Rosa Luxemburg Grant (recipient, 2014)

Curry Stone Design Prize (shortlist, 2012)

Shortlisted for Visible Award (shortlist, 2011)

Delfina Foundation Grant (recipient, 2011)

Prince Claus Prize for Architecture (recipient, 2010)

Iakov Chernikhov International Prize (shortlist, 2010)

COLOPHON

The Royal Institute of Art (RIA) in Stockholm is a leading art institution of higher education located in Stockholm with a long artistic tradition dating back to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The education offers both undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Fine Arts and postgraduate studies in Architecture.

Permanent Temporariness was originally organized by the art gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi (2018), and curated by Salwa Mikdadi and Bana Kattan.

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