

TERRITORIAL

SUBJECTS:

TWENTY YEARS

OF YAYA

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WE SHALL BE MONSTERS
THE YOUNG ARTIST OF THE YEAR 2018 (YAYA)
THE HASSAN HOURANI AWARD

EXHIBITION

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Venue: A. M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Centre,
Al-Tireh, Ramallah
Dates: 6th November – 27th December 2018

CATALOGUE

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Produced in Palestine
First published in 2019
© A. M. Qattan Foundation

ISBN 978-9950-313-87-3

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-

300
300
300

B1.19
INTERIOR GARDEN LEVEL -1 (165.65 m²)

-1 FLOOR
FFL: -5.25 (+781.20)
SSL: -5.35 (+781.10)

FIRAS فرايس
○
○
○
○

PROJECTED IMAGE
210CM X 330CM

pte. 12

LEILA ليلى
PROJECTED IMAGE
ROTATED AS PORTRAIT
53.5
17.75

YUSEF يوسف
3M X 2M CORNER PIECE

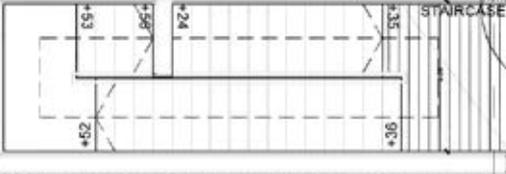
DIMA ديمة
120CM X 300CM
200CM HEIGHT

WOODEN PALLET
10CM X 10CM

ALAA علاء
SOUND DOME
20
BENCH
200CM X 45CM X 45CM

PROJECTED IMAGE
210CM X 330CM
39.3

HAITHAM هيثم
BODY SUIT
10CM X 130CM
WOODEN BOX
30CM X 40CM X 40CM
42" PLASMA



-1 FLOOR
FFL: -5.25 (+781.20)
SSL: -5.45 (+780.80)

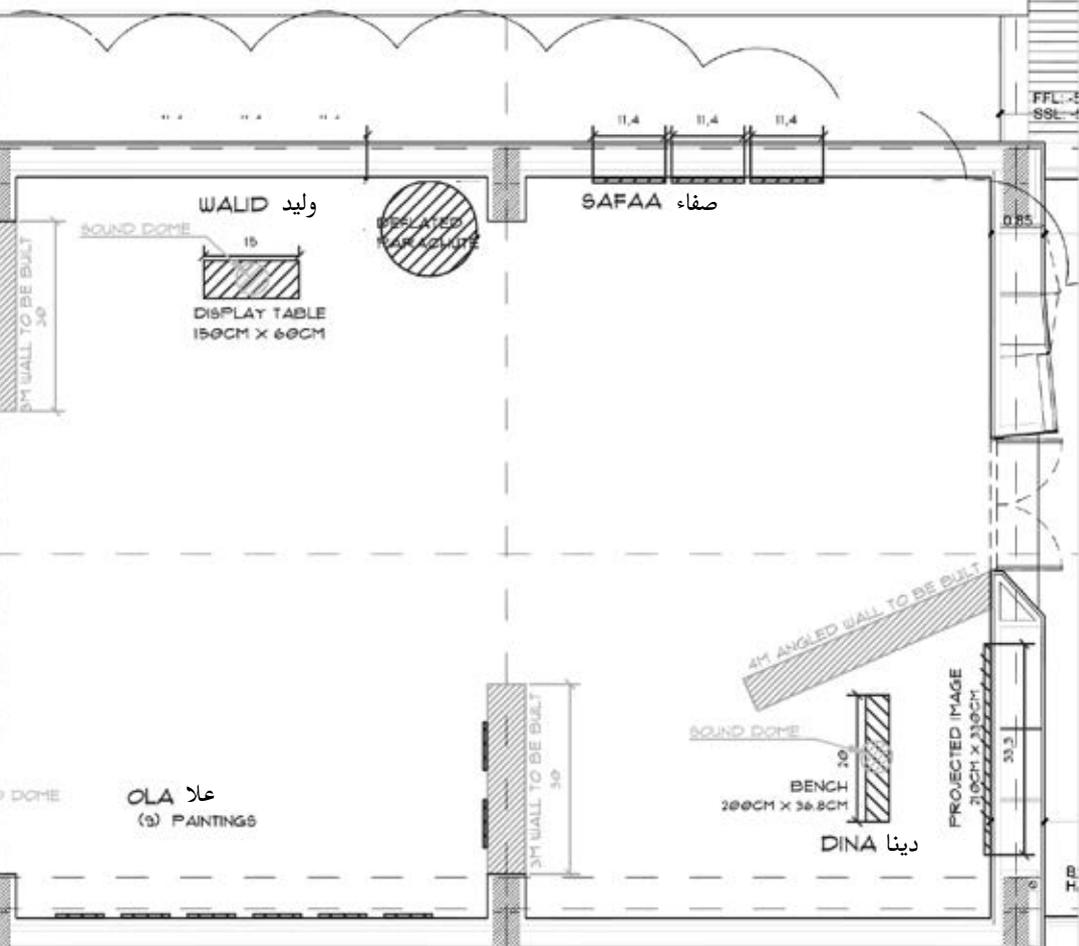
B1.18
OPEN TERRACE LEVEL -1 (249.12 m²)

B1.22
STAIRCASE 05 (14.4 m²)

pte. 12

B1-20
EXTER

FFL: 3
SSL: 4



OLA علا
(3) PAINTINGS

SOUND DOME
20M X 30M
BENCH
20@CM X 36.8CM
DINA دينا

PROJECTED IMAGE
210CM X 230CM

Elev. 1

Elev. 1

Previous pages: Plan for placement of artworks, *We Shall Be Monsters*, A. M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Center

WHAT DOES THE TENTH EDITION OF YAYA MEAN? MAHMOUD ABU HASHHASH

This tenth edition of the Young Artist of the Year Award (YAYA) means nineteen years of continuous work, a long journey of dialogue and of questioning the experience so that it can be taken forward. It also means a rich process of building a broad and fruitful partnership network with jury members, lecturers and distinguished figures from Palestine and other countries around the world, all of whom have contributed to creating this experience as it is now, and to establishing its status as an important art event in Palestine and the region.

Most importantly, perhaps, with each new generation of emerging and young artists it is always an interesting and enjoyable adventure of discovery and exploration. YAYA has helped each generation to develop their language and tools, motivating them to engage in new artistic forms and practices, and to realise projects that are at the heart of their questions and concerns. It launched a new era for the present unprecedented institutional interest in supporting and nurturing young artists and their projects and careers.

Before being a final exhibition and awards, YAYA is a journey of learning, research and production. It is a first step, followed by further steps of long partnership with these young artists, in publishing and promoting their works, supporting their participation in residency programmes abroad or extending support for their new projects, even leading to inviting some of those artists to later be members of the YAYA jury themselves.

Since it is not feasible to elaborate extensively here on the legacy and all the accomplishments of the YAYA, especially as it has been able to attract some very important figures in the field of the visual arts to be part of consecutive juries, and has effectively regenerated the art scene with tens of young artists, enhancing new artistic forms and practices and enabling the production of many new exciting art projects, I will merely resort to mentioning some numbers to help give a grasp of the bigger picture of YAYA.

The number of applicants who have submitted applications to all the YAYA editions is 404, both Palestinian artists and artists from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights; 87 of those have participated in the final stages of the Award, producing 99 new art projects that have been shown to the public in Palestine, and a selection of those final works have been exhibited in the Foundation's Mosaic Rooms venue in London and in other places around the world. Eight catalogues have been published documenting these editions. A total of 62 jury members have participated in the various YAYA editions, including renowned Palestinian and international artists, critics, curators and intellectuals.

In its last four editions, the YAYA has also engaged with a wide range of artists, lecturers and art professionals who have made a significant contribution to the learning programme of the Award.

We are very proud of our partnership with each and every one of them. They all deserve thanks and appreciation because they have enriched this experience and been an important part of its construction and its progress. Even the applicants who have not had the chance to participate in the final phase of the Award have had a positive impact, and the Culture and Arts Programme (CAP) has worked with many of them in other contexts than the Award and within the framework of various forms of support.

The 2018 YAYA, besides being the tenth one, has a number of distinctive features, making it a much more celebrated one than its predecessors. This will be the first time that all the artworks in the final exhibition will be shown together in one professional gallery space, the new gallery that is an integral part of the A. M. Qattan Foundation's Cultural Centre, compared to previous Awards when the works have been presented in a diverse range of places – in cultural spaces, commercial structures, buildings still under construction, and public open space. In previous years, the final exhibitions have been shown in all the cultural institutions that were, or still are, active, including the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, the Al Mahatta Gallery, the International Academy of Arts Palestine, the Baladna Cultural Center, the Municipal Theater, the Ottoman Court, and Beit Saa, as well as the Foundation's own premises. What also differentiates this version has been the invitation that was extended to ten artists from previous YAYAs to select and shortlist the young artists for this edition. This collaboration between these twenty artists was initiated to create additional opportunities for learning, research and dialogue. YAYA 2018 also comes within the context of the Foundation's new Public Programme, within whose framework the final exhibition is being organised.

With the inception of Qalandiya International in 2012, the YAYA became part of this international visual biennale in Palestine, and beyond, and therefore responded to the general QI theme. For 2018, however, following the proposal by this year's curator, the renowned artist Emily Jacir, whom we have been especially happy and proud to work with, it was decided to restore the YAYA to its former nature – as an open competition that allows young artists to express freely and unconditionally their original questions and their artistic concerns. In view of the diversity of the participants' backgrounds and geographies, which makes it almost impossible for them to meet together in Palestine itself, a meeting was held under Emily Jacir's supervision at the University of Ideas at the Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella, Italy. Here, they were able to physically meet each other, and the curator, after many virtual meetings.

YAYA 2018 also comes in the context of the assessment process

of CAP over the last ten years, and an evaluation of the Programme's interventions in the field of the visual arts, including the Award, is at the heart of this process. This edition is therefore an important moment for contemplation of the YAYA, its legacy, and for the consideration of other possibilities.

Many thanks should be extended to all those who have been part of YAYA 2018 and in making this special edition happen. I begin by thanking all the participating artists: Leila Abdelrazaq, Alaa Abu Asad, Walid Al Wawi, Yusef Audeh, Haitham Haddad, Safaa Khateeb, Dina Mimi, Firas Shehadeh, Dima Srouji and Ola Zaitoun. I especially thank the curator, Emily Jacir, who has led this edition with passion and competence. I thank the former YAYA artists, Majd Abdel Hamid, Noor Abed, Omarivs Ioseph Filivs Dinæ, Inas Halabi, Mohammed Joha, Dirar Kalash, Jumana Manna, Shada Safadi, Ahlam Shibli and Hani Zurob, all of whom had no hesitation in accepting CAP's invitation to shortlist the artists for the second phase of the Award. They all gave generously of their time and attention to accomplish this mission on time. Special thanks must also go to the jury members for this year, Sandi Hilal, Declan Long, Eva Scharrer, Ahlam Shibli and Jorge Tacla and I hope the guest jurors will find their experience in Palestine exciting and enriching, and we hope that it allows them to build new cultural and artistic links with the local art scene.

The 2018 YAYA, like all the previous editions, would not have been possible without the great efforts of many colleagues from the Foundation, especially Nisreen Naffa and Lamis Shalalkeh from CAP; Yazid Anani, the Director of the Public Programme; colleagues in the Public Programme, Communication & Public Relations, Department of Finance and Administration; and all those who have contributed to making this tenth edition such a special and rewarding process of collaboration.

Mahmoud Abu Hashhash is a writer, a poet, and the director of the Culture and Arts Programme at the A. M. Qattan Foundation. He holds an MA in Art Criticism and Art Management from City University in London, and a BA in English Literature from University of Birzeit in Palestine. He also writes lyrics, articles and catalogue essays on art and visual culture in Palestine.

1

TERRITORIAL
SUBJECTS

UNBELIEVABLE THINGS
KHALED HOURANI

Writing about the Young Artist of the Year Award (YAYA) calls for retrospection looking back on its life. But it also calls for looking ahead to consider the contemporary artistic practices which have influenced it and have been influenced by it from the beginning, as well as the artistic creations that continue to be born by artists associated with the award.

Preserved in Palestine's art register are the Spring Fair and exhibition of supporting artists. These annual events were held by the Palestinian Artists Association throughout the 1980s and 90s before coming to an end. They had an unmistakable impact, offering solo shows, workshops and seminars, alongside a joint exhibition where artists compete to present their most novel works. But the exhibition did not have the feel of an open contest, despite the fact that the Spring Fair offered an award or two in several editions.

Often, art events -regular exhibitions, contests or talent shows- impact the art scene in ways that surpass our expectations. Memory can only preserve so much, and we scarcely find a periodic art event in Palestine that has stood the test of time and bloomed in the same way YAYA has. Few among us can forget the Beiruti show Studio El Fann (Art Studio), the voices it presented tastefully and its impact on the music we began listening since then. Egypt's public radio stations played a similar role, offering opportunities to rising talents through their diverse programs.

This was instrumental for neighbouring Palestine which endured military occupation, and whose cultural scene was restricted and faced great difficulties as a result of the occupation and the absence of national art institutions. Individual initiatives and voluntary activities by artists and art-enthusiasts became an alternative, but they too were hindered by the obstacles imposed by the occupation, from banning art exhibitions to confiscating artworks and even arresting artists.

Against this turbulent backdrop, came the initiative of A. M. Qattan Foundation (AMQF) to launch YAYA in 2000, under its Culture and Science program then. The award became an established and consistent art event serving not only young artists eligible for participation in exhibitions, but also the general public of actors in the art scene, particularly in visual arts. AMQF gave the first round of the award in 2000 a promising and elegant slogan: Towards a new visual horizon in Palestine. And I had the honor of curating the event in its first two editions. The award was announced in newspapers and magazines in late 1999. Acts of creativity ran through the whole endeavour: the wording of the announcement, the exhibitions, jury discussions, the catalogue of the event and finally, the final show in 2000. It was all

extremely professional, indicating that something new had been born, creating a tradition that was here to stay.

From the start, the process proved to be a successful turning point, far from a fluctuating experience that would take time to find its way. It started strong and remains strong, seeing minor adjustments with each round, which is evident in the books documenting each exhibition with graceful texts and photography. Still, this progress does not mean that each edition was necessarily better than its predecessor. The quality of the participating artworks, the energy of each exhibition and the circumstances of its curation all varied from one year to the other, which was visible to the audience interacting with the exhibited works. Invisible, however, was everything happening backstage: exhibition production operations, participants, applicants, pitches and project presentations, application reviews, jury discussions and decisions, curator's role, artworks conceptualization and thematization, learning processes, shortlists selection, venues, audience engagement and voting, final shows, anticipation and announcement of results. These processes and the political and social contexts in which they operate in each edition are just as crucial as the exhibitions themselves. In fact, the exhibitions can be seen as significant details in a much larger operation that does not end with each edition. We can also notice the progress in the creative careers of each participant after taking part in the award. Where are they now? What happened to them? These points need to be considered as we observe the evolution of Palestine's art scene as a whole.

The award came at a time when the national discourse dominated the Palestinian art scene, prioritizing the political above all. Throughout the years, YAYA served as a platform for a new discourse, one that needed to be firmly grounded. The artistic language and tools had seen significant innovations, and participating artists created diverse works that were connected to this new artistic language. Painting, photography, video, installation, sculpture and conceptual art forms all went side by side. The artists' arguments, research and interpretations were integral parts of their artworks. Sharp insights, intelligence and ardent talent, and not just skill, were at display here. The award, among other past and present initiatives, of course, has transformed the practice of art from a leisure activity into a field of knowledge, an instrument of social and self critique, and a call for reflection, far from a mere display of technique.

Perhaps the art created through YAYA over time provides the best evidence of the impact it had on the scene and of its creations' connection to reality. Artists have expressed in numerous ways the questions that haunt them. Anxiety, identity, land, freedom, irony, were all tackled in new and contemporary ways, speaking to art scenes everywhere. While the artworks themselves were not consistent, a shared human quest branded these contributions, opening up for participants terrains that were far from reach. Some dared to take

roads less travelled: self critique, addressing social issues, preferring mundaneness and sarcasm over grimness and seriousness, raising questions instead of fixed answers, and moving away from rhetoric towards direct acts of resistance. This is evident through catalogues of past years. One can clearly see the first signs of break with Palestine's dominant art register, with its paintings, easels, and prioritization of the national issue above all. Once previous experiences began to be recalled and reviewed, Bashar Khalaf revisited the works of Sliman Mansour from a present-day perspective. So did Noor Abu Arafah, who documented testimonies and experiences of artists from the past generation, reflecting on the representations they chose within their contexts.

Following the pace of a changing reality, artists' efforts manifested in using the needed tools, techniques, media and perspectives to the world around them, utilizing landscapes and architecture. Photography was Steve Sabella's medium of choice, while recycling was Mohammed Al Hawajri's and Mohamed Abusal's. Mikhail Hallaq chose hyper-realistic painting, while Raeda Saadeh, Manal Mahamid, Rana Bishara and Hani Zurob all used mixed media. Ashraf Fawakhry used sarcasm, Rosalind Nashashibi made short films, and Shadi Habib Allah opted for sculpture and animation. Video, abstraction, print, use of space and sound, all provided a new lexicon for practicing art. Even the diversity of art spaces and galleries helped to enrich the YAYA experience. All this was visible in the artworks of participating artists. The ordinary was shunned and inspected. Exhibitions sites were opened up for rethinking. Shuruq Harb displayed her work in a well to be observed from above. Live performances were present too. Land, orchards, hallways and skies have been used in Iman Abou Hmid's works. The list goes much longer, but what is important is that reminiscing, melodrama, and appeals for help have faded away, clearing up the path for exploration and competitiveness.

The first YAYA jury included three artists and one writer; the late poet and professor of comparative literature at Birzeit University, Hussein Barghouthi, who was an outsider to the mainstream visual arts field. His contributions have given the award a new dimension: it became a bridge between art on one side and critique, intellect and literature on the other. Thus, YAYA became a platform for a conversation that sees art as knowledge. This principle was reflected in the diversity of the backgrounds of jury members. This has fueled profound unprecedented dialogues on the nature of art and its connection to other fields of knowledge, to which Hussein Barghouthi, Mona Hatoum and others have contributed. There will always be works that end up eliminated. Out of 48 applications, only 10 are chosen for the final show. What about the others? Do they keep on applying? Participating in YAYA has become a key milestone that preoccupies young artists. It has become a reference point that validates their artistic practice before they find their own paths

in life. It is safe to assume that almost all of these young artists who follow contemporary art practices, in a way or another have exchanged ideas, and been transformed by this event, transforming it as well. This is a crucial condition for the vitality and evolution of art in any part of the world. One participant once told me that he was always keen on joining YAYA, not only to win, but to learn too.

Art is not a marathon. Despite the debate around the idea of art competitions themselves, this award particularly have been widely accepted and welcomed. Not only because it grew beyond the unpalatable image of an art competition, but also because its organizers, jury and curators have taken this debate into consideration. And perhaps because it has become an event that represents much more than winning and losing, offering a strong incentive for participation in a country where art still has a long way to go for it to flourish and evolve. YAYA was, and perhaps still is, necessitated by the times.

YAYA's experience has produced a collective knowledge which is worthy of inspection as one of the key milestones in the evolution of the visual arts scene in Palestine. And despite the reservations to the idea of art competitions, this experience was one of the rare cases where such a competition was justified and needed, making it vital and valid in ways that we scarcely see in similar events around the world.

This award has noticeably influenced the history of art practice in Palestine, constantly providing the art scene with fresh names, and acting as an esteemed art reference at home and abroad. It has impacted not only its young participants, but also what it represents as a cultural event, moving past its conception as an award, towards an event for education, curation, adjudication, display, documentation, and publicization, etc. I have lived this experience as a curator of two editions, as a jury member in one and as a spectator, activist and visual arts enthusiast in most editions. I have witnessed how crucial YAYA is as a reference point and an incentive for artists in a place where reference points and incentives are few. Can awards be useful in one place and not in others, even though they are present in the minds of artists everywhere? Art integrates, and competitiveness is no vice if it is aimed at pushing the limits of quality, research and knowledge production, while maintaining the freedom of choosing medium, style and topic.

In the first edition of YAYA, my brother, Hassan Hourani, was one of the participants. The award took his name after his tragic death in a drowning incident in the Mediterranean that took his life along with his nephew, the very young artist, Samer Abu 'Ajamiyah. I was the curator of that first edition, and had to stand at one distance from all participants, not as a jury but as a curator and an assistant in the production and display of their works. What was to be done, then? Of course, I cannot cease to see Hassan as my brother, nor should I put him at a disadvantage as such. I was very much impressed by his work and way

of thinking, and I was very enthusiastic for his generation. The answer I gave the participants then was for me to relate to them all as my brothers and sisters.

Sadly, Hassan was not the only person we lost during the lifetime of the award. We lost Hussein Barghouthi; a brother and mentor for a whole generation of Palestinian creators. We also lost Layan Shawabkeh, who participated with powerful heartfelt artworks; Samir Salameh, the generous educator and kind-hearted artist; and finally the great late Kamal Boullata. Each of these artists have had their own unique and special contributions to the award and the Palestinian art scene in general. Entire lives have been lived here, crossing paths, exchanging conversations, views, stories and interests. Their dear connection to this award has given it a signature character of rare vision and sensibility, that extends to Palestine's art register itself. Crude politics was not their main goal; the wide horizons of life were. This was a clear common denominator between their works. Hassan, Hussein, Layan, Samir and Kamal were unquestionably people of great poetic visions.

I do not envy those deceased for leaving life. I envy life, YAYA and its participants whose creativity is a constant reminder of the potentials and limits of art, which makes life a little bit better.

Many stories deserve to be told; to be brought out of the shadows and into the light. Not only because they are an important part of this award's history and environment, but also because of the major significance of art creation stories which constantly give art new meanings. I was the curator of YAYA 2002, which was given the slogan "Hope and the Aesthetic Moment". Preparations for event took place at a very difficult time when the country was living under aggressive repeated Israeli policies: Curfews, shootings, raids, sieges, demolitions and bombings. We were about to receive contributions, and it was almost time to begin organizing the exhibition. But the circumstances were getting more and more complicated: Ramallah and Al Bireh were being repeatedly invaded, curfew was imposed, and Al Muqata'a, the presidential residence of Yasser Arafat, was besieged. Our decision was to keep working as long as we can to ensure all was set for the inauguration. After all, when was Palestine not under extraordinary conditions? We managed to get a truck with a yellow Israeli registration plate to collect the artworks and bring them to Ramallah. The plan was for the short-tempered driver to enter the city, coming from Haifa and Acre during the three-hours when curfew is lifted. He was given the artists' numbers and addresses to contact them ahead of time to coordinate the transportation. He was racing against time to move what he assumed would be paintings and frames, he said. Only to be surprised with other things: strange objects, kites, a five meters long and half a meter wide red mattress, a construction tool kit, some paintings, ropes, fabrics, etc. He was confused as to why these things belong at an

exhibition. He even was less sympathetic towards the whole thing. On his way to besieged Ramallah, he said: "I brought this weird junk and a boxing mattress for some reason. I just want to unload them and go back to Jerusalem before the curfew." The art truck reached Al Sahel street in Ramallah moments before the military was deployed to enforce the curfew. We stored the artworks at Al Ajlouni's house, who is a cousin of Mr. Ziad Khalaf, the executive director of AMQF at the time. Ziad, Muhib Barghouthi and I, along with other volunteers were waiting for the truck. The driver wanted to unload it quickly so he can escape the curfew, and so did we, but we also wanted to do so carefully so as not to damage the artworks. "What art? I swear this job wasn't even worth the ride. And what is this huge red mattress for anyway?" he lamented. We said nothing and started to unload the truck with his help. While the four of us, the driver included, were carrying the mattress, a patrol passed by, announcing the curfew and threatening those who break it. We could not run, so we put down the mattress with its wooden platform against the street and hid behind it. It protected the four of us from the soldiers' eye and perhaps their bullets. In what sounded like poetry, Muhib turned to the driver and said: "Here's your answer, my dear driver. This mattress, this artwork, is here to protect us from evil." The argument was over, but the day was not.

We worked during curfew and the few hours in which it was lifted. The new Abaraj Al Wataniyah building, which had a few empty floors at the time, was the main venue being prepared for the show, with the help of some participating artists and assistant technicians. We would move back and forth during curfew, sometimes taking ambulances,¹ sometimes walking between private yards, and sometimes taking a car that belongs to AMQF. During preparations at Abaraj Al Wataniyah, under strict curfew and siege imposed on the presidential residence of Yasser Arafat, Miguel Moratinos, the EU's special envoy for the peace process, came to the building to visit Yasser Abed Rabo, who was at the time a member of the PLO's executive committee, and whose office was on the fourth floor of the same building. With much bewilderment, Moratinos and his convoy noticed what was happening downstairs: an art event being made ready, paintings hung up, videos displayed and installations put together. He wandered quickly around the place not sure of what was happening there. But he came back about an hour later

1 Speaking of the ambulance's role in putting together an art show, some related contemporary artworks come to mind, particularly Joseph Beuys' "I love America and America loves me" which was moved to the art gallery and back to the airport in a designated ambulance, forming one of the most prominent contemporary visual artworks. He did not do so because he was sick, and there was no curfew in New York. Many conceptual artworks are born from reality's ironic paradoxes. By connecting what happens in Palestine with what happens around the world, these stories and practices can be held in the memory of world art for as long as possible.

with Abed Rabo after finishing their meeting to have an official tour this time. The peace envoy walked between the artworks being installed and asked what was happening there. We told him that this was about to be an exhibition, as part of YAYA, and explained that it would take place on a certain day, if the curfew was lifted. We said that it would include 12 artists, some of whom were there at the time if he would like to speak to them, and he did. One of them was seven-months pregnant Manal Mahamid. The looks on this unexpected guest's face were filled with astonishment. He could not hide his bewilderment: "This is unbelievable. This is unbelievable," he kept saying, as he was leaving. What was nothing more than usual for the organizers and participants was mere madness for our international visitor.

Fortunately, the curfew was indeed lifted during the exhibition. But the city was still suffering the trauma of repeated invasions and raids. Participants, their families and friends, and the general audience attended the final show at AMQF's garden. The show started with the national anthem and a minute of silence to mourn the lives of martyrs. Before reading the jury's statement announcing the results, with everyone on their toes, and while Mr. Omar Qattan was speaking of the circumstances imposed by the occupation under which this event was held, gunshots and bombs were heard from across the street, offering tangible evidence of the speech. Attendees and journalists left those speaking about liberation and the art of living under occupation, and ran to the balcony overlooking the new developments, watching this absurd situation unfold under their eyes.

It may not be possible to measure the exact impact YAYA had on life in Palestine, particularly on the lives of young Palestinians, the same way we can measure its impact on the artists who took part in it. But art is always an investment in the future, not a momentary reward, at least according to what is conserved in the art memory and history around the world. It is a long-term investment, one where we sow today what we will reap a generation later. I say this seeing questions arise around the point of competitions and of art itself, seeing doubt reach the purpose of doing all of this. This is a call for the continuation of this award. Its *raison d'être* is still intact, and we cannot imagine the art scene in Palestine without it. Of course, there is always room for progress and for rethinking certain processes, but patience is a means of building future, looking forward with eyes filled with hope.

Khaled Hourani is an artist, curator, and art critic, as well as founder and former director of the International Academy of Art Palestine. Among his projects *Picasso in Palestine* and *Searching for Jamal Al Mahamel*.

PALESTINIANNES
ALA YOUNIS

“It is in this conflictive context of negotiating the spatio-visual regime and its new forms of expressivity that the [A. M. Qattan] Foundation invited young Palestinian artists to submit new artworks for the competition. The resulting works cohere into a symptomatic set that celebrates the ephemeral, the transitive and unstable matter. In a sense, their celebration is a melancholy one in which what is enchanting is the black sun, namely their ever failing ‘Palestine’.”¹

This text explores the definition of Palestine as a tangible but ever-shifting piece of land, with a regime of self-governance yet to be allowed to morph into a state, and situates artworks created as part of an art competition that has taken place in a consistent cycle. How are these artworks (and their interpretations) influenced by this new centralised regime of governance, its cultural, social, political and economic transformations, as well as the occupation’s interventions? Are these artworks expected to reflect the context of these events accurately? What is the relationship of exile, and/or its (cultural) legacy, to the present of this context? And how deeply are the interpretations of these artworks affected by consecutive rounds of evaluations and jury reviewing processes?

The Palestinian National Authority was established in 1994, when 60% of the people in Palestine were not 20 yet years old (i.e. mostly born after 1974). It was to stretch from Gaza to Jericho and saw the return of many of the PLO leadership and their families from diaspora. It also saw the birth of a scene that brought together veteran artists and intellectuals, newcomers and young talents, and allowed the emergence of local cultural institutions, and perhaps a brief phase of cultural normalisation with Israel. The Foundation was registered as a UK charity in 1993 (or 1994) and was registered as a non-profit organisation in Palestine in 1998. It had two major projects: a cultural centre in Gaza and a research centre in Ramallah.

The Foundation, based in Ramallah, launched the Young Artist of the Year Award in 2000, and it accepted applications from participants between 22 and 30 years old, i.e. participants born between 1/1/1970 and 31/12/1977. The award was seen as a biennial event, giving five chances to an artist to be accepted into the competition’s shortlist. This included allowing time for project development, working with an art curator, a \$1,000 contribution for production costs, participation in

1 Esmail Nashif, “Images of the Fragmented,” *Transitions: Young Artist of the Year Award*, catalogue, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2006) 28.

the final show, meeting a specialised jury, a chance to win one of the financial awards and finally, the publication of the artwork in the award catalogue. An artist who had won the first award of the previous edition was not eligible to apply to the following edition.

I had learnt about the award in 2003 through a group of Gazan artists who came to Amman to participate in the Summer Academy led by Marwan Qassab Bachi at Darat al Funun. They brought a copy of the catalogue of the first edition, which had the slogan “Towards a New Visual Horizon in Palestine.” They spoke about the loss of their friend Hassan Hourani (1974–2003), who had won an award in the first edition and had taken part in a previous edition of the summer academy with Marwan at Darat. He had drowned in August 2003 on the shores of Jaffa, when he wasn't yet 30 years old. The artists also spoke about their and other participants' projects and how they competed with other Arab artists on impressing and thus befriending Marwan. What they learnt from him was visible in their art, and as a group, all projects seemed unintentionally coherent somehow. They had also formed their collectives back in Gaza. It was a phase of learning through meeting, workshoping and tracing lineages, mostly of young Palestinian artists whom we did not see much of their work.

As we looked at the cactus paintings of Mohamed Abusal (b. 1976, Gaza), we were also becoming acquainted with the cactus works of Asim Abu Shakra (1961–1990, Umm El Fahem) and his short life artistically secluded from the Arab art scene due to his Israeli documents. Our conversation discussed this history of seclusion, and how Abu Shakra's work (and the work of some of his peers) was retrieved from the 'accepted' category in the Israeli art scene into the diversity of a newly accepted hybrid Palestinian identity, as a result of the fragmentation of the relationship with land and exiles.

Abu Shakra died at the age of 29 and would remain a young artist forever, although, as per the late Kamal Boullata, Abu Shakra's art had already “moved the articulation of Palestinian dispossession to new grounds”² by choosing to paint cactuses—plants that grow in depopulated villages—in pots. The works demonstrated an emblem of a domesticated status combined with an indigenous identity.³ Boullata also saw that the cactus series “reveals that the memory of looking that Asim nurtured all his life was not divorced from contemplating either the intrinsic significance of the indigenous plant or the way this emblem of his national dispossession had been appropriated and reduced to a decorative element sitting in a pot among slabs of concrete. For a Palestinian Arab living in Israel, just as the presence of cactus in nature

2 Kamal Boullata, “Asim Abu Shaqra: The Artist's Eye and The Cactus Tree,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 2000/1, vol. 30, no. 4: 68.

3 Ibid, 78.

recalls the absence of a village, the presence of a cactus in a pot recalls its absence from nature.”⁴ Palestine, in Abu Shakra’s story, was a hybrid imagined space which lies at the juxtaposition of an axis of memory coupled with the citizen status in an entity that is waging a war against this memory and its stimulants. Thus, the artist witnessed conflicting realities: his Palestinianness was formed “within a beleaguered fragment of society, where he was both cut off from the history of contemporary painting within his own culture and absorbed by the oral imagery of his community.”⁵ What Abu Shakra was awarded in the process was the growing acknowledgement of his art’s Palestinianness.

The use of the word ‘oral’ in this context evokes the significance of the word as an intangible alternative to real (or physical) land from which we were dispossessed. It is also used to refer to the moment when tradition meets modernity, the same historical moment when land was lost. Boullata was a jury member in the second edition of YAYA in 2002, and wrote in its catalogue that he saw that the nature of participants’ works reveal how they have established oral cultural traditions lured by visual expression, emphasising the hybrid nature of these unique entities. Boullata argued that, “through the metaphor of two parallel meanings, each participating artist to their first steps towards their independence. Here, we see how hybrid visual elements emerge in a field of memory and fragmentation. Each of the resulting artworks reflect the reality of life, lived in a gap between two worlds.”⁶ These two worlds can be the political context of art production and the land presence within these productions.

As context for their creation, Boullata juxtaposed the artworks with a timeline of the year’s political events in Palestine. It was indeed an eventful year: The Palestinian Authority’s presidential residence was besieged, its airport runways were destroyed, camps were demolished with their residents inside and a curfew was imposed, during which the final YAYA show took place. To link these to the art event, for example, Boullata saw the spectators’ choice of attending the inauguration of the show, which also fell between curfew hours, as an ‘aesthetic moment’ that was extended beyond the artist’s act of creating the work, representing a judgement day of sorts when this work was to be tested. He borrowed the notion of the ‘aesthetic moment’ from the critic John Berger, who had come to Ramallah with photographer Jean Mohr upon an invitation by the Foundation, to give a workshop titled “Another Way of Telling in Palestine” at Birzeit University. Berger, Boullata and the

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid, 68.

6 Kamal Boullata quoting YAYA jury member Gerardo Mosquera in “Hope and the Aesthetic Moment: An Introduction,” *Young Artist of the Year Award*, catalogue, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2002) 14.

award jury members attempted to interpret the art as testimonies of the dominance of political violence and traced its influence in/on the works. These artworks had parted with the accumulated history of Palestinian art and political posters that accompanied the Palestinian revolution between 1965 and 1993. With Palestine taking over an administration of a land regained, it could not also remain an ethereal entity of decades-long projections of lost-land narratives, projects of education, documentation and political agency. Intellectuals have long attempted to revisit the relationship with this entity, acknowledge a 'special' land (non)physicality in light of their relationship to the lands from which and to which they were exiled. Edward Said, for instance, articulates this aspect of Palestinianness as an equal relationship between language and space. He writes that part of the universality of the Palestinian experience is related to territory, contested space and dispossession. This means, "you have to do certain things because you don't have the space or the place. It's hard to regain some substitute or equivalent for space if you don't have it. And the relationship between language and space becomes an issue."⁷ The emergence of YAYA may have represented the remains of the Palestinian oral register (which was constructed on the notions and situations of lost land), negotiating its retreat to a land regained and finally exercising some autonomy. These negotiations could not but continue because of constant confrontations with the occupation that continues to control and shift the Palestinian Authority's borders, destabilising and effectively hindering its self-governance.

If your past is your experience,
make the future sense and vision!
Let us move forward, towards our future,
confident in imagination's sincerity.⁸

Noting guilt towards his expectations of the participant artists, Gerardo Mosquera, a former YAYA jury member, "confessed" his "surprise at not seeing pamphleteer art or nationalistic paintings."⁹ The founder of the Third World Biennial thought that the selected artworks employed contemporary artistic potentialities to deal with the overwhelming present that affects the artists and their relations to heritage. Moreover, he thought that the artists demonstrated an awareness of being the first

7 W. J. T. Mitchell and Edward W. Said. "The Panic of the Visual: A Conversation with Edward W. Said," *Boundary 2*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1998): 26.

8 Mahmoud Darwish, "Counterpoint: Homage to Edward Said," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2005, <https://mondediplo.com/2005/01/15said>.

9 Kamal Boullata quoting YAYA jury member Gerardo Mosquera in "Hope and the Aesthetic Moment: An Introduction," *Young Artist of the Year Award*, catalogue, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2002) 14.

generation in the 21st century which was characterised by displaying (and displacing) the historical, aesthetic and economic values that a new Palestine could present. Hotels and residential towers were the most prominent manifestation of this display.

When Gaza's new towers were bombarded, worries began to replace optimistic tones. That was the starting point of the events, fears and isolation that would follow. After the Gaza siege, many Gazan artists could not reach Ramallah or send their artworks to participate in the award. Participants had to be replaced with mediators, i.e. curators who were key in communicating with the besieged or distant artists how to bring their projects to reality. Envisioning mobile or reproducible artworks, artists needed to articulate their ideas to jury members remotely. The image of the divided land was accentuated, which added a division of the art scene to the geographic and political division.

"During the first uprising (Intifada), schools were closed because of strikes. Fiction novels were the only available books. Series such as *Rajol al Mustaheel* (The Man of the Impossible) and the pocket novels were sold for a half Shekel. I used to draw portraits of Abu Ammar and others for kids at school. Behind Al-Ahli Hospital, next to the Baptist nursing school there was a hall at the walls of which hanging a poster of Jamal Al Mahamel¹⁰ painting. The first time I laid eyes on that painting, I gave a whoop; it was the moment that I discovered the existence of Palestinian art. I felt jealous when I saw Fathi Ghaben's painting that depicts Intifada; I thought I would like to be the painter who created that work. When I saw that man carrying his land and walking away, I wondered where [the] resilience is. In many occasions I asked: is that a normal scene or is it a unique relationship between the artist and the artwork? My first exhibition at YMCA was attended by Sliman Mansour and other artists. During the Nakba, my grandfather was not sure what to take with him as he fled from his house. He wished he could carry his land on his shoulders and walk away with it. I remembered this story and connected it with the story of the figure in Jamal Al Mahamel. It might be that Sliman Mansour felt a need to paint that man in that particular way."¹¹

Sohail Salem's (b. 1974, Gaza) words illustrate the image of the land in exile that contextualised Palestinian art during much of its 'formation'. It did not only develop outside Palestine, but also within it in the absence

10 A reproduction of a famous artwork by Sliman Mansour that was circulated as a poster.

11 Intervention by Sohail Salem during an online discussion between Gazan artists and Khaled Hourani on his book project, *Finding Jamal Al Mahamel*. 26 January 2019.

of national curricula, art academies, cultural institutions or even freedom of expression before 1994. Salem's words show his surprise upon encountering Palestinian artwork—in this case, Jamal Al Mahamel's poster—before finally seeing Palestinian artworks presented in exhibitions throughout historical Palestine at its emerging art institutions. One such opportunity for Salem to take part in these shows was the Young Artist of the Year Award in 2004 after returning from Marwan's workshop in Amman. In his statement in the award's publication, he dilutes any borders between his work and reality because these same borders prevent him from travelling to Ramallah to install his work, titled *Jidar* (Wall). The work is thus a "possibility of producing a territorial object, if you like, or a territorial location,"¹² as Edward Said put it, "Robinson Crusoe, where, in talking, he revisits, he repopulates, he reenacts both the shipwreck and the establishing of himself on the island."¹³

The siege on Gaza made the role of the curator further important: they were to mitigate the concerns that might haunt the artist in the production, installation and explanation of his work. The artist nevertheless is required provide clear ideas backed up with plans that explain the way they intend to produce and exhibit the work. This space of extra study of the possibility of achieving a vision of a work "gradually leads the artist to make realistic compromises,"¹⁴ had been a translation of the physical borders that stand in the way of inherited art mediums, and with new mediums becoming a necessity for movement, came new exhibition possibilities that compensate the readiness of the available art spaces.

After Khalid Hourani in 2000 and 2002, curator Khalil Rabah in 2004 had to seek the "best possible conditions within realistic limits" to ensure the work was presented in a way that pleases the artist and "allows the public to encounter with the work itself."¹⁵ That introduced new environments and facilities to the art space which expanded to include the gardens of organising institutes, their parks, wells, historic sites, followed by commercial centres, billboards in a Manara square, state buildings and other sites.

In 2006, all participants utilised mixed media in their works, such as video, photography and installation, except for one artist who used drawings; only one Gazan artist participated that year. The jury members pointed out an intensity in the topics and materials in all the works. They commended the artists' experimental techniques, noticed the limits of artistic mastery and further decided that no work stood out above the

12 W. J. T. Mitchell and Edward W. Said, "The Panic of the Visual", 26.

13 Ibid.

14 Mahmoud Abu Hashhash, "Aesthetic Spaces and Practices," *Preoccupying Zones: Young Artist of the Year Award 2004*, Hasan Hourani Award, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2005).

15 Ibid, 112.

others. The jury therefore suspended the first award that year, granting a joint second and third award.

Esmail Nashif attributes “this systematic technical approach to the medium” to the lack of an institutional infrastructure at the educational and training levels in Palestine. In this regard, he thinks that the “absence of a theoretically sophisticating critique is only symptomatic of this lack.” He also argues that “the attempt to reshape historical realities according to certain models, in this case, the Western one, could hardly result in more than a statement of indictment.”¹⁶ Nashif believes that the art topic should emerge from its historically rich technical and conceptual accumulation. Scrutinising the artworks, he arrives at a belief that what is needed in the Palestinian context “is a thorough and deep analytical and practical turn by the artists and the institutions that cater for them—a turn that dives into the forms of the logic of art as such, and at the same time breathes the socio-historical existence of the collection self [and emerges from it] only to decompose it to its constitutive parts.”¹⁷

Nevertheless, participation in that year came in new shapes. Some artists participated in pairs. Yazan Khalili (b. 1981, Syria) and Mohanad Yaqubi (b. 1981, Kuwait) presented a joint work: *State of Waiting*. The work’s statement articulated their relationship as “two travellers, sitting in the same stop, trying to pass time in a place [they] have no relationship with.”¹⁸ This place of waiting was the safe space for Salma Samara (b. 1981, Tira) and Salim Shehade (b. 1977, Jaffa) to present their joint work, *No Redemption*. In this work, their love relationship, which is disapproved of in their society, is for once publicly accepted in the West Bank. In this way, the West Bank becomes Palestine, the land that citizens with Israeli documents (among which are the artists’ families) are not allowed to enter.

Representing the relation with the land reflects renewable dimensions of the land. These dimensions pertain to the activation of boundaries that are established and demolished by forces other than its own autonomy. The first duo considers their relationship a stage of continuous travelling, meaning that boundaries are standing but open. This vision is perhaps influenced by the fact that they grew up in cities outside of historic Palestine and thus move outside it. On the other hand, the second pair of artists choose to traverse closed borders (to a Palestinian city) and to use that as a temporal residency for revealing and expressing their feelings.

16 Esmail Nashif, “Images of the Fragmented,” 28.

17 Ibid.

18 Mohanad Yaqubi and Yazan Khalili, “State of Waiting,” *Transitions: Young Artist of the Year Award 2006, Hasan Hourani Award*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2008) 68.

I am manifold . . .
Within me, my outer self-renewed.
But I belong to the victim's interrogation.
Were I not from that place,
I would have trained my heart to raise metonymy's gazelle there...
So take your birthplace along wherever you go
and be a narcissist if need be.¹⁹

Exhibition sites were a connecting point that put together the curatorial efforts and the audience, who flooded to an exhibit at a shop in Plaza Shopping Center in 2006. The crowd's voices mixed with the artists'. People examined artworks to relate to them according to their own knowledge, political values and living conditions. Some criticised the relationship between artistic projects (carried out by artists, organisers and institutes) against the problems of life. One of the responses was a letter by an anonymous woman from Ramallah sent to Omar Qattan, director of the Foundation. She began by emphasising her belief of the importance of supporting young people in improving their life, but at the same time she thought the timing of the exhibition was bad as it came after months of famine resulting from withholding civil servants' salaries. In light of this, she saw that the exhibition did not sound realistic; it did not touch people's needs, concerns and wishes. "Your last event," she notes, "with its high expenses, elegant attendants and upper-class organisers distances itself from the reality of ordinary Palestinians."²⁰ This letter was published on the pages of the Award catalogue by the Foundation itself, among other questions and thoughts that voice the Foundation's support to this argument while also refuting it.

- Were you afraid, and of what?
< I cannot meet loss head on.
[...] But he is a reader who reflects on what poetry has to tell us in times of disaster.
[...] Do not describe your wounds as the camera sees them [...]
Create a cardinal point or a mirage that prolongs hope.²¹

The fifth edition of YAYA, which was organised in 2008, introduced new territorial expansion. Artists from occupied Golan were invited. Five of the 12 participants were Golani that year. Discussions compared the art education between artists. The International Academy of Art opened its doors in 2007. The academy provided specialised art classes, organised

19 Mahmoud Darwish, "Counterpoint".

20 Omar Qattan, "Culture in a Time of Hunger," *Transitions: Young Artist of the Year Award 2006*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2008) 21-23.

21 Mahmoud Darwish, "Counterpoint".

exhibitions for student artworks and invited international guests.²² Many new independent art projects constituted the scene that year. One of them was Al-Mahatta Gallery, which hosted seven YAYA artworks. This gallery in Ramallah, as well as at Eltiqa Group and Shababeek for Contemporary Art in Gaza, provided another mode for artist-led initiatives that relied on collaborations between artists and funding opportunities.

In 2010, the Foundation received 62 applications. Ten of the applicants were chosen to develop their projects. Among these candidates was one duo. They all resided in Palestine. The artists had six months to realise and develop their works. For the first time, the award included performance work. Ibrahim Jawabreh (b. 1985, Arroub refugee camp) filled this category with his work, *Anxiety*. The artist imprisoned his own body in a narrow glass box and moved within the confined space. During the performance, he hid parts of his body in muddy holes in the ground. The stage on which he performed was also covered with mud. The artist attempted to choose times that worked best for a live performance. But because the performance was physically and emotionally exhausting, it was instead recorded and displayed during the exhibition. The stage, however, was kept as an installation. The live performance was executed twice: during the opening ceremony and with the presence of the jury members.

This central focus of revealing the works to the audience and announcing the 'best' work collapsed in that edition. Responding to the fact the half of the participants were Gazan, the Foundation organised another version of the exhibition in Gaza. Participants presented their works, or copies of them, in Gaza. Abdallah Al Ruzzi (b. 1983, Gaza) took the audience on a 25 km walk toward an abandoned water tank in Khan Younis to show them his work, *The Germ*. Photos and video documenting this work were exhibited in Studio Windows for Contemporary Art in Gaza and Al-Mahatta Gallery in Ramallah. While this allowed the work to be shown in different places, deconstructing the geographic centrality of exhibiting works, the image of the land was at the same time divided into pieces that consider the accessibility of people. These fragments met together again with Ayed Arafah (b. 1983, Jerusalem) who asked people with access to the sea to carry some of its water to Ramallah to connect the sea and the West Bank for his project *Sea Package*. Granting both Arafah and Jumana Manna (b. 1987, United States) the third prize showed that Palestine is an archipelago of spatial and personal islands in which unification is a collective goal, even if achieved partially or individually.

22 The academy was established in Arif al Arif's house, a former art gallery that the Israeli military forces shut down, then it became an unofficial place for artists. After the formation of the Palestinian Authority, the place hosted the Plastic Art Department at the Ministry of Culture. Before it housed the International Academy of Art, for 10 years.

In her work *Cast Out of Your Tomb*, Manna used bronze to resculpture abundant gravestones around Ibrahim Abu Lughod's tomb. Abu Lughod came back to Palestine after achieving academic success in the United States. He died in 2001 and requested to be buried in Kazakhani graveyard in Jaffa, in an attempt to revoke the Nakba's displacement when Israelis forced him to leave his land. The jury perceived the strong concept, elegant implementation and complex composition in this work, yet criticised it for being overwhelmed by Abu Lughod's story.²³ "Whilst this reflects on the difficulty of where Palestinians will be buried and the fulfilment of Ibrahim Abu Lughod's right of return, the jury felt that this was a competing narrative."²⁴ The jury considered this work a reversed discourse that did not represent the general condition of difficulties that Palestinians face in choosing their graveyards, and not how the work highlights the fulfilment of Abu Lughod's right of return. The jury found it important that the work reflects reality instead of providing an individual solution according to the artist's own vision. Should the work have included a disclaimer clarifying that burying the Palestinian refugee in Jaffa is not part of the collective reality? Should we demand the dominance of the image and the priority of the land and the collective reality over the artistic vision?

This sense emphasises the relation that the jury indicated between this work and *Sea Package*, which "is characterized by a collective signification." Although the latter shows a similar work style, it is approached from the perspective of West Bankers, who, unlike Jerusalemites, Gazans and Palestinians of 1948 occupied Palestine, do not encounter borders that separate them from the coast. Here, Ramallah occupies, even temporally, a central position in both vision and narrative, whether in the artwork or the jury report. However, the difficulty of returning (and maybe the impossibility of burying) is applicable to most Palestinians without being easily available for the rest of them. This gave the jury a ground to go on, stating that the collaboration between those who have access to the sea with those who do not give *Sea Package* a light sense of "humour towards foreign aid in Palestine."²⁵ This expression nods to the concept of the land/homeland as a place that has a certain inside where people live and a certain outside from where aids and donations come. Could that be an applicable description of the Palestinian Authority?

In the following edition in 2012, Manna was granted the first award for her work *Imagined Cities*. In this work, the artist meant to confuse the truth and find other possible worlds by using the image interpretation

23 Jury report, *Brief Encounters: Young Artist of the Year Award 2010*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2011) 30.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

trick. It was a video work depicting a Palestinian bourgeois family during a costume party in 1943. In this video appear many art practitioners wearing different costumes all in the same colour, black and white. While it's claimed that the image was taken in the pre-Nakba past, one of the jury members wrote that, "it is not clear whether the work depicts a true or fabricated scene, but that is not of any importance."²⁶ The artist writes that her work tackles "the illusionary perception of both cities, Jerusalem and Los Angeles as two examples of the promised land." Although the costume party was organised in Jaffa, she saw a growing relation to Jerusalem in the image. She found a transformation of "the spirit of what they represent, into three dimensional objects or lived experiences is an attempt at spatially inhabiting or resurrecting these nearly dormant archives, and disrupting a linear perspective of time."²⁷ Palestine could be traced in archives, Palestinianness could be animated by coming together, in an expected image (land/semi-public space) from the past, and in familiar (contemporary/new dwellers) faces translating the relations between inhabitants.

This edition was entitled "To Animate the Silence" and was curated by Reem Shilleh and Yazan Khalili around the theme of "Oscillation Between Two Presents." They did not choose the works, but were in charge of supporting the short-listed candidates to produce their art projects and to find a suitable environment for exhibiting. They worriedly wondered what criteria created a successful event. Was it the size of the audience? The quality of the production? The exhibition space? The promotion? Or the knowledge of the young artists? Or maybe the experience of their society?²⁸ Like Manna, they also understood that this event was an attempt to create a context to discover the knowledge that results from the art-production process—a context that could explain, for example, the development of the work. The curators wanted to introduce the artworks before they were finalised and exhibited. They wanted to show the changes that these works had undergone and discover their reasons. They aimed to show "how concepts bend to the force of technical/spatial/time challenges and vice-versa."²⁹ They were contemplating on the declining communist ideological domination, the tendency towards violence, and the performance of the collective body in the public space that was shown in a movie that one of them watched

26 Negar Azimi, "Palestine after Pasolini," *To Animate the Silence: Young Artist of the Year Award 2012*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2013) 24.

27 Jumana Manna, "Imagined Cities," *To Animate the Silence: Young Artist of the Year Award 2012*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2013) 110-11.

28 Reem Shilleh and Yazan Khalili, "Oscillation Between Two Presents," *To Animate the Silence: Young Artist of the Year Award 2012*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2013) 16-17.

29 Ibid.

in Beirut. They compared that with the domination of liberal economy in Palestine (the land) and its denial of ideologies and what we can read in this denial today—especially that this kind of economy spells the general rule of using the collective body in the public space of Ramallah.

They experimented with the same method used in Manna's three-dimensional spatial experiment. They created three trajectories along which one could stop by graffiti and furniture sites. They documented the violent (unartistic) acts against the furniture. Notwithstanding the agreement between the Foundation and the Ramallah municipality, the resting benches in the streets were removed on the pretext of safeguarding public morality.

- "Aren't all displaced: the artist, the artwork and the viewer?"³⁰
- "Maybe an exhibition has to address these issues every time it is actualised; it has to be able to bring the different aspects together in order to succeed in doing its main task: to create a context for its existence? But then again, this is a dominant and institutional discourse, very pedagogical, very patriarchal. What an exhibition needs to do, in the case of institutional art exhibiting, is to display to the public the knowledge that this institution contains and to ensure its power through this display; to provide, but also to appropriate those to whom they provide."³¹
- "I forgot about another removal. You were absent when this one happened. It was an umbrella-like structure made out of wire that was placed in the centre of a very large tire; it was meant to have a climbing plant grow around it so it provided shade for passers-by to sit under. It was placed in the Clock Square (which now, by the way, is called Yasser Arafat Square). We received a phone call from the Municipality to ask us to remove the structure ASAP in order to clear space for the forthcoming 'popular' support for Abu Mazen's bid to the UN to recognise 'Palestine' as a non-member observer 'state'. We were asked to immediately clear the stage for a widely attended farce. I was teleported back to my thoughts at the Metropolis Cinema in Beirut and the rules of public performativity."³²

This edition was characterised by a congregation of displacement performances. The exhibition was expanded along a trajectory that required movement. There was a displacement in the concept of an art exhibition in the way that it wanted to show its making, a process that displaced itself again in integrating elements from outside the art domain. These street furniture elements witnessed another displacement to 'clear

30 Ibid, 18-19.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

the public space' for a 'popular' demonstration that supported seeking the United Nations' recognition of Palestine. The image of Palestine was displaced through its archival images. These displacements resurrected (seemingly) inactive archives across Palestine when the Qalandiya International committee, including the YAYA organising institution, decided that archives were to be the theme of the festival in 2014. Projects that evoke archives in artistic methods, mix with other materials and integrate Palestine and the surrounding countries. The YAYA events expanded to include online seminars that provided a platform for participants to contribute with archiving and documenting methods. It was a festival of artworks feathered with personal and national stories that deconstruct historical moments and reinterpret them.

Palestine has become a dynamic world of images, animation, audio and personal, historical and modern collections, which emphasised the so-far-yielding paradox of its physicality. It exists in all forms, in all places and personal stories are extremely poignant. In the 2016 edition, artworks focused on tackling a scattered narrative. In her video *Mnemosyne*, Inas Halabi (b. 1988, Jerusalem) featured the contradictions in stories told by the artist's family members about a scar on her grandfather's forehead. ~~Narratives, contexts and events alter~~ according to the relation of each storyteller according to the source of knowledge, the time of receiving that knowledge and the impossibility of verifying this knowledge without a reliable source. Visitors watched the video while sitting in the grandfather's chair that appears in the video. Some of the artist's family touched their own foreheads while talking about the scar while telling their story.

In her improvised audio performance, *Homeland is...*, Asma Ghanem (b. 1991, Damascus) attempted to "render audible the stagnation in, and the disillusionment with, the Oslo process that from 1993 was meant to lead to a negotiated agreement with Israel and which Palestinians thought would bring about an independent state."³³ Ghanem wanted to use the sounds of silence, stagnation and procrastination in building the state. She mixed tunes and electronic music with the sounds of bombing, sirens and gunfire, prompting confusion and evoking a state of anticipation. The artist had recently moved between Damascus and Ramallah, before the Syrian war hinders the ability to travel. The echo of promises responding to each other and the act of touching our own scars to feel the wounds of others are what YAYA exhibitions present, all in developing the relationship between the verbal and the earthly in the art scene.

"The four sculptural lions in Ramallah's Manara Square [...] were manufactured in China."³⁴

33 Asma Ghanem, "Homeland Is..." *Recognizing Patterns: Young Artist of the Year Award 2016*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2016) 9.

34 Negar Azimi, "Palestine after Pasolini," 25.

The last edition of YAYA, “We Shall be Monsters,” allowed for international participants. Throughout the process of producing their work, Emily Jacir, who curated this edition, asked each artist to choose online meeting materials and to invite a guest or curate a reading that would help them develop their projects. Minimising alienation towards the other participants’ projects, Jacir created more of a working group; a community curated from several communities that has the ability to curate more voices while, most importantly, decentralising the Ramallah platform in the process. Ethereal space (i.e. the Internet) becomes the meeting space. Voices (or verbal expression) become bodies that meet in their Palestinianness (essential criteria for participation). It is this process, a different version of which Shilleh and Khalili had once attempted to make the exhibit, that rendered the Palestinian bond as borders. Communities could be a mix of sparse belonging, races, artistic styles and interests, as much as being shocked at hearing Hebrew-infiltrated side discussions, or mesmerised by the fact that Palestinian artists may live a long life without meeting each other.

He said: If I die before you,
I urge you to cling to the impossible!
I asked: Is the impossible distant?
He replied: A generation away.³⁵

The organisation process of YAYA—that had once been dependent on its physical existence and operated in Ramallah and Gaza—was preparing a meeting for all its participants in Biella, Italy, where participants from the Diaspora met with and worked together with those traveling from the Palestinian territories. Setting the process as a guide, rather than a guiding theme, the curatorial statement was born from the practices of the artists themselves. In other words, they reclaimed the (organisational) land on which this exhibition stands, their “stitched, broken, ruptured, wounded, dismembered and buried bodies and their parts” were moving the exhibition forward. Most importantly, perhaps, was that it was “locating the broken body in a multitude of identities and topographies.”³⁶

Alaa Abu Asad (b. 1989, Nazareth) utilises the protagonist of Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* that cannot engage in society yet, on the flipside, gains the power to travel through time and space. His video work, *The Untranslatable Words of Love*, could be interpreted as a 20-minute work about four lives, juxtaposed, successive or jostled into one entity. The four chapters of the project do not share a connecting plot, aiming for each to stand as a separate video work. Within each of

35 Mahmoud Darwish, “Counterpoint”.

36 Emily Jacir, “We Shall be Monsters,” Young Artist of the Year Award 2018, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2018) 11.

these lives, an audio-visual superimposition of earthy, complicated details include characters, animals, documents, maps, geographic and archival movements, bombardment and explosion, and other juxtapositions.

The artist reformed the present in the shape of archaeological layers that show the effects of time on a place. The same intention can be found in a work by Dima Srouji (b. 1990, Nazareth) entitled *The Rule of Superposition*. Srouji's installation digs into emotional and personal records of Jerusalem by looking at it both underground and aerially. The work implies a response to the Israeli archaeological practices that depend on underground-level and aerial detectors to achieve its settlement project. The installation requires that visitors climb up to look at a gypsum structure. She shifts the vantage point, sections the land and critiques the archaeological overtake by the occupier. Similarly, Dina Mimi (Jerusalem) follows in her video work, *In Order to Talk With the Dead*, the skulls of Algerian martyrs that the French Army took with them as trophies in 1849. These skulls that ended up in the Natural History Museum in Paris among a collection on human evolution provides a complex relationship to their museological presentations. The skulls observe the visitors who were observing them. The video brings up thoughts with the moments of history ~~that it narrates and prompts~~ questions on death—and after death—in the public sphere, themes that are very present in Palestine. Haitham Haddad (b. 1989, Galilee) imagines the alteration of habits and social behaviours in Palestine during a tour of a future embroidery exhibition in 2170 Ramallah. During this tour, visitors of *The New Mode* learn about the life in Palestine between the years 2050 and 2078 in areas with names that indicate a geographical division when the land was under a great 'siege'. "Face was covered with protective symbols and charms to lead the Thob into rest."³⁷

"Places like inner thighs, armpits and inner areas were not recommended to be worked with during [their] lifetime but at death they will be embroidered with traditional patterns that usually were used for textile designs."³⁸ "Hand[s] and feet were covered by henna design patterns with tread tattooing\burning techniques or scarification."³⁹ The work questions ethical and anthropological issues that we experience collectively and its effects on the individual as it becomes a theatre of resistance deliberately hidden on the surface of the body. It also questions public acknowledgement of resistance, revolution and the body that makes itself the land of this resistance and continues to carry its scars. While in the work *Necrosis*, Ola Zaitoun looks at assigning limited social roles based on services and aesthetics, causing

37 The artist's website: <https://mnjnk.com/The-new-mode>.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

premature death of active elements in living tissue. She deforms life and transparency by applying a layer of golden colour over her drawings of women's faces so that the audience sees their own reflection inside the paintings. Safaa Khateeb shows in *The Braids Rebellion* how young Palestinian girls detained in Israeli prisons donate their braids for cancer patients by smuggling them outside the prison as a revolutionary act that defeats the prison system, silence and limited movement. Leila Abdelrazaq (Chicago) uses animation in her work *Still Born* to reproduce a text written by her mother in 2002. She rereads the text that revolves around mothering a stillborn baby in the context of nostalgia and imagines that form in Palestinians' life in diaspora. If we decided to cast off this burden, would we be freer to imagine the future; She wants to imagine the future unburdened by this heavy heritage of nostalgia. These works resist dismembering, specially of those who cannot but remain distant. Walid Al Wawi (b. 1988, Sharjah) grew up in Sharjah, interested in a Middle Eastern hybrid identity and the ramifications of the geographical narrowness of culture. His work *EOUP*, or *The Embassy of Unofficial Palestine*, is an architectural representative of an unofficial organisation that works to provide relief for Palestinian refugees residing outside of the PLO mandates or UNRWA jurisdictions. Located on the shores of reality and imagination, his embassy provides Palestinians with social, medical, legal and psychological aids alongside many other forms of community-based assistance. His installation resembles the Dome of The Rock, deconstructed as a parachute hanging from the centre. Documents are placed in the space.

In his video work *Never Here Cool Memories*, Firas Shehadeh voices two alienations: one through the structure of feelings for a Palestinian living in Amman, a "hybrid Palestinian Sphere" of inheriting imagined memory, trauma and shock; the other is "the Palestinian state project and the consequences of the Oslo agreement [that] work against more than two-thirds of the Palestinian population, [in how] it eliminates the Palestinian entity/identity through narrowing it down to a 'state' narrative, thereby leaving Palestinian refugees and those in diaspora isolated and abandoned in a permanent state of waiting."⁴⁰ The video images are of a Palestine captured as a forbidden land through the eyes of a wanderer looking at it from the "East Bank" with hovering drones shooting aerial photographs of the land. The artist creates a sense of wandering the land using materials he collected through his journeys. Shehadeh suggests multiple locations from which Palestine can be looked. None of them are on the land itself. "Don't try to escape. Forget the sea. Stop dreaming of ships. There is no need to look any further. Sky is inhabited by drones."⁴¹ Shehadeh writes, "and it made me

40 Firas Shehadeh, "Never Here Cool Memories," *Young Artist of the Year Award 2018*, A. M. Qattan Foundation (Ramallah: 2018) 30.

41 Firas Shehadeh, *Never Here Cool Memories*, 2018, lines from the video script.

wonder what do the Palestinians usually do in Amman.”⁴² The answer is perhaps the image of a movement hidden behind the trees of al Nasser Camp, an emotional, social and political site of his upbringing that falls physically opposite to the UNRWA school where the artist received his education. Meanwhile Yusef Audeh’s work *BTCOIN HUSTLER* expresses another relationship with technology and disproved transactions. A hustler discovers an online portable that allows him to get paid in Bitcoin—digital currency that is not internationally recognised. He uses mixed media and paints with oil on a melted graphic processing unit. Imaginary events form the story set somewhere between Dubai and Moscow, arousing questions of aesthetics, desire, the need for money and human nature as expressed in passwords and visual patterns. Can we not speak about our Palestinianness? “One might wish the poem could become a home or homeland that puts an end to exile, but the poem is no place, its borders are not closed. [... it is] something that has been invented for language.”⁴³

“The particularity of the Palestinian situation requires determining a certain definition of the Palestinian. Neither origins nor geography or its shadow—history represents any valuable element in the definition of the Palestinian as long as the features of the ancient Palestinian Palestine have been destroyed and the coming Palestinian Palestine is a mere future project. This point of view confirms that the Palestinian is the one who does not belong to Palestine in a geographical sense, but the one who belongs to the Palestinian case as a cultural-political case.”⁴⁴ The 10th edition of *YAYA* came to challenge the centrality of ‘Palestinian art’ that appeared as part of the ‘state formation’ and reconsidered Palestine as a Palestinian entity that extends beyond the postcolonial geographical imaginaries. Future editions might expand to open participation to those who belong to Palestine more as an idea than an identity.

42 Ibid.

43 Judith Butler, “‘What Shall We Do Without Exile?’: Said and Darwish Address the Future,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 32 (2012) 30-54.

44 Faisal Darraj, *The identity, the culture, and politics: a reading in the Palestinian State* (Amman: Dar Azminah, 2010).

Ala Younis is an artist with curatorial, film and publishing projects. Her work deals with collective experiences that collapse into personal ones, and looks into how archives’ lacunas and mishaps manipulate the imagination. She curated Kuwait’s first national pavilion at the Venice Biennale and “Museum of Manufactured Response to Absence” which responds to the Palestinians’ history in Kuwait. She is member of the Academy of Arts of the World, and co-founder of the independent publishing initiative, *Kayfa ta*.

Award	2000	2002
Title	New Horizons in Palestinian Art	Hope and the Aesthetic Moment
Curator	Khaled Hourani	Khaled Hourani
Artists	Maisara Baroud Rana Bishara Aissa Deebi Ashraf Fawakhry Mohammed Al Hawajri Hassan Hourani Noel Jabbour Jawad Al Malhi Mohammed Musallam Raeda Saadeh Tina Sherwell Ahlam Shibli	Iman Abou Hmid Abdel Nasser Amer Ashraf Fawakhry Raed Issa Mikhail Hallaq Mohammed Al Hawajri Manal Mahamid Rosalind Nashashibi Steve Sabella Hani Zurob
Jury	Hussein Barghouthi Mona Hatoum Sliman Mansour Vera Tamari	Nabil Anani Kamal Boullata Rema Hammami Gerardo Mosquera Khalil Rabah
Awardees	1. Raeda Saadeh 2. Hassan Hourani 2. Noel Jabbour	1. Iman Abou Hmid 1. Raed Issa 3. Manal Mahamid 3. Rosalind Nashashibi 3. Steve Sabella
Dates	Summer 2000	30/9–14/10/2002
Venues	A. M. Qattan Foundation Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre Al-Mattal Gallery Baladna Cultural Centre Ziryab Gallery	A. M. Qattan Foundation Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre Al-Wataniah Towers

2004	2006	2008
Preoccupying Zones	Transitions	Fragile Bodies
Khalil Rabah	Nicola Gray	Mahmoud Abu Hashhash
Mohamed Abusal Shadi Al Zaqzouq Shadi Habib Allah Alexandra Handal Shuruq Harb Mohammed Joha Mohammed Musallam Steve Sabella Sohail Salem Mohanad Yaqubi	Fouad Aghbaria Shadi Alzaqzouq Ayman Azraq Mohamad Fadel Shadi Habib Allah Wafa Hourani Ahmad Malki Salma and Salim Mohanad Yaqubi and Yazan Khalili Wafaa Yasin	Majd Abdel Hamid Hani Amra Jamil Daraghmeh Akram Halabi Hazem Harb Diala Mdah Halabi Randa Mdah Layan Shawabkeh Shada Safadi Salama Safadi Jad Salman Wafaa Yasin
Suad Amiry Sacha Craddock Okwui Enwezor Hosni Radwan Sharif Waked	Catherine David Adila Laidi-Hanieh Taisir Masrieh Salwa Mikdadi Samir Salameh	Ibrahim Muzayen Esmail Nashif Jack Persekian Michelangelo Pistoletto Tina Sherwell
1. Mohammed Joha 2. Shadi Habib Allah 3. Mohanad Yaqubi	2. Mohamad Fadel 2. Shadi Habib Allah 3. Wafa Hourani	1. Layan Shawabkeh 2. Wafaa Yasin 3. Shada Safadi
SM: Mohamed Abusal		
20–30/9/2004	19/9–3/10/2006	15–30/10/2008
A. M. Qattan Foundation Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre Ottoman Court Friends School (Bireh) Al-Hallaj Gallery (Palestinian Artists Association)	A. M. Qattan Foundation Al-Hallaj Gallery Al-Manara Square Ramallah Municipality Hall International Academy of Art Palestine Meedical Relief Society Plaza Shopping Center	A. M. Qattan Foundation Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre Al-Mahattah Gallery Ramallah Municipality's Old Building International Academy of Art Palestine

Award	2010	2012
Title	Brief Encounters	To Animate the Silence
Curator	Nicola Gray	Yazan Khalili Reem Shilleh Mohammed Musallam
Artists	Issa Abdallah Majd Abdel Hamid Noor Abu Arafah Ahmad and Mohammed Abu Nasser (Tarzan and Arab) Ayed Arafah Ibrahim Jawabreh Jumana Manna Dina Matar Salman Nawati Abdallah Al Ruzzi	Majd Abdel Hamid Dia' Azzeh Mirna Bamieh Inas Halabi Omarivs Ioseph Filivs Dinæ Dirar Kalash Jumana Manna Abdallah Al Ruzzi Stéphanie Saadé Shada Safadi
Jury	Rajie Cook Jean Fisher Emily Jacir Hasan Khader Raeda Saadeh	Negar Azimi Nicola Gray Rula Halawani Khaled Hourani Marco Nereo Rotelli
Awardees	1. Ahmad and Mohammed Abu Nasser 2. Abdullah Al Ruzzi 3. Ayed Arafah 3. Jumana Manna	1. Jumana Manna 2. Dirar Kalash 3. Inas Halabi 3. Mirna Bamieh SM: Omarivs Ioseph Filivs Dinæ, Abdullah Ruzzi
Dates	18–31/10/2010	3–15/11/2012
Venues	A. M. Qattan Foundation Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre Al-Mahatta Gallery The Ottoman Court Popular Art Centre Eltiqa Artists House Studio Shababeek Gaza Khan Younis Water Reservoir	A. M. Qattan Foundation Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre Al-Mahatta Gallery Idioms Film The Franco-German Cultural Center YMCA (Gaza)

2014	2016	2018
Suspended Accounts	Pattern Recognition	We Shall Be Monsters
Viviana Checchia	Nat Muller	Emily Jacir
Noor Abed Noor Abuarafeh Aya Abu Ghazaleh Iman Al Sayed Hanadi Azmi Hamody Gannam Bashar Khalaf Majdal Nateel Farah Saleh	Noor Abed Abdallah Awwad Asma Ghanem Inas Halabi Aya Kirresh Majd Masri Majdal Nateel Ruba Salameh Somar Sallam	Leila Abdelrazaq Alaa Abu Asad Walid Al Wawi Yusef Audeh Haitham Haddad Safaa Khateeb Dina Mimi Firas Shehadeh Dima Srouji Ola Zaitoun
Kamal Aljafari Samia Halaby Asunción Molinos Gordo Michael Rakowitz Nida Sinnokrot	Sven Augustijnen Katerina Gregos Nadia Kaabi-Linke Oraib Toukan Ala Younis	Sandi Hilal Declan Long Eva Scharrer Ahlam Shibli Jorge Tacla
1. Bashar Khalaf 2. Noor Abuarafeh 3. Noor Abed 3. Farah Saleh SM: Majdal Nateel	1. Inas Halabi 2. Somar Sallam 3. Asma Ghanem	1. Safaa Khateeb 2. Firas Shehadeh 2. Dima Srouji 3. Ola Zaitoun
23/10–15/11/2014	8–31/10/2016	6/11–27/12/2018
Ramallah Municipal Theatre	Beit Saa	A. M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Centre

a Metro in Gaza



MAIN LINES DIRECTIONS

- 1 BEIT HANOUN - RAFAH TERMINAL
- 2 SHATI - ABU ALHEIAN
- 3 BISHRIY VILLAGE - BOYA C/P
- 4 AZATNA - SHARYOUNS
- 5 MAKSORA - MARIJATI RAFAH
- 6 SALATIN - MAGROULA
- 7 KAFARNA - GAZA AIRPORT

- Shared Point
- ▭ Big Crowd
- ⚡ Military Check Point
- Travel Point Non Palestinian
- ⚡ Commercial Tunnels
- ⚡ Shared Point



Mohamed Abusal, *Metro in Gaza*, 2011.
Courtesy of the artist.

WITH MINIMAL FORCE
ADANIA SHIBLI

A play in one act

- Muhannad is a thin man in his early thirties.

- Nafez is a short man in his late forties.

- Act One-

Muhannad approaches a white jeep, in which Nafez is seated behind the steering wheel.

Muhannad (to Nafez): I can't take it any longer. I'm suffocating.

I want to play.

-The End-

This essay explores some aspects of playing and cunningness as measures for challenging political oppression and countering tyranny, exploitation and deep inequality. Specifically, it follows how Palestinian artists often rely on playing and cunningness as elements in their art, echoing the impulses which Palestinians in general rely on to guard their existence against the Israeli settler state and its attempts to restrict and even eradicate such existence.¹ In this context of political oppression and colonisation, cunningness especially surfaces when a Palestinian is faced with the register of 'law', 'legal permits', 'correct addresses' and 'restricted access', all of which are components in decades-long processes of disavowal, dispossession and expulsion. But before proceeding to the situations that raise such proposals, some notes on the history of the terms 'cunningness' and 'playing' are required.

In his 1934 essay "Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties," German playwright Bertolt Brecht suggests that we must act so cunningly that the enemy—be it the state, a ruler or a class—will not discover and hinder our attempts to challenge it. Brecht reassures us that, "there are many cunning devices by which a suspicious State can be hoodwinked."

One can identify Brecht's reliance on cunningness as a device to hoodwink the state in his testimony at the House Un-American Activities Committee, summoned in 1947 to investigate communist propaganda and its influence in Hollywood. There, as recordings of the proceedings confirm, Brecht relies on cunning language as manifested in his promise to the committee: "I will try to answer your questions as well as I can." Later, as a committee member reads one of his poems that they suggest incites violence against the state, Brecht replies: "I didn't write this poem; I wrote a German poem."² Another linguist strategy that Brecht follows throughout the hearing is commenting on the act of translation rather than the content of what is translated, repeatedly arguing that the English translation is not accurate from the German, and vice versa. In so doing, he keeps all being said within the domain of probable

mistranslations. In other instances, he simply opts to play with words, evident in the following dialogue:

Committee member: Have you attended any communist party meeting?

Brecht: No. I do not think so.

Committee member: You don't think so...

Brecht: No. I am certain I think so.

Committee member: You're certain, you never attended...

Brecht: Ya, right, I think so...

Committee member: You're certain?

Brecht: I think I am certain.

Indian economist Amartya Sen³, likewise, suggests that games, playing and playfulness can be important elements in people's attempts to counter tyranny, exploitation and inequality. Sen also alludes to the House Un-American Activities Committee to support this argument, referring to U.S. artist-activist Jerry Rubin, who, like Brecht, was accused of communist leanings. On the day of his summons, Rubin entered the room dressed in a rented 18th-century American Revolutionary War uniform, proudly declaring himself a descendant of Jefferson and Paine and telling the committee: "Nothing is more American than revolution." Rubin, showing the least concern, blew soap bubbles as members of Congress questioned his communist affiliations. He later appeared before the committee as a bare-chested guerrilla fighter in Viet Cong pyjamas, donning war paint and carrying a toy M-16 rifle, then again as Santa Claus.

Returning to the Palestinian context and the short play that opened this essay: Muhannad, addressing Nafez seated in his jeep, declares, "I can't take it any longer. I'm suffocating. I want to play." From what is Muhannad suffocating, we may wonder, and what does he mean when he says he wants to play?

A short video shot around al-Khalil (Hebron) may lead us to the answer. In this video, a group of jeeps cross a tiny, muddy pond.⁴ This is done solely for fun. Ponds like these, found in the mountains, are one of the only places where Palestinian men like Muhannad can "play" and have fun. These areas out of reach of the Israeli military and settlers allow young men to finally live an existence away from the oppression too familiar to residents of al-Khalil, especially those living in the old city. It's not only that they aren't allowed to drive on some roads, which are maintained for settler use only. Even if Palestinian children biked on these roads, the Israeli military will confiscate their bikes. A video shot by Raed Abu Ramileh on 25 July 2016 attests to this. Abu Ramileh is a neighbour of 8-year-old Anwaar Burqaan, whose bike was seized by an Israeli officer, and who later hid the bike in the bushes.⁵ Anwaar, her

parents and seven siblings live in a small house, leaving no place for the children to play on their bikes other than the nearby street, which sees hardly any traffic. The Israeli officer, however, seized Anwaar's bike since the paved road is reserved for Israeli settlers. The Israeli military instead leaves the Palestinians with a very narrow dirt alleyway, which is too small and too rough for the children to bike on. The Israeli army also erected a fence along the street in September 2012 to ensure Palestinians did not use the paved road. However, Anwaar and two of her siblings, 11-year-old sister Saja and 7-year-old brother Ibrahim, sneaked in through a hole in the fence to play on the paved road.

Similar to Anwaar's story, thousands of Palestinian children are confined to cramped spaces as a result of land confiscation and restrictions imposed by the Israeli state. However, often there are no holes in any fences that may allow them to escape. Instead, they are often left with the only option of engaging in activities that would minimise the effects of these imposed restrictions. However, while it's not possible to play with a bike on a narrow dirt alleyway, it might be possible to play with marbles, for instance.

It's common to see children engaged in more minimal activities, like playing with marbles can often be spotted, in cramped areas that lack basic infrastructure. In Palestine, such areas are especially common in refugee camps, built decades ago to accommodate Palestinians driven out of their homes in the aftermath of Israel's the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, and later on, following the occupation of remaining Palestinian lands in 1967. Since then, the number of inhabitants in such camps in some cases have multiplied by seven. At the same time, the size of the camps remains unchanged, as they weren't allowed to extend beyond the borders allocated to them in 1948 or 1967. The result is that residents are left with hardly any space to maneuver except for narrow alleyways. Yet, those alleys are ideal for playing with marbles.

Writer John Berger noticed the game during one of his visits to Palestine and reflected on it in his essay "Undeclared Despair," written in 2006:

One tends to forget the geographical scale of the tragedy in question; its scale has become part of the tragedy.

Listen...

Three boys squatting and playing marbles in the corner of an alley in a refugee camp. In this camp many of the refugees originally came from Haifa. The dexterity with which the boys flick a marble with one thumb, the rest of the body motionless, is not unconnected with the familiarity of very cramped spaces.⁶

Indeed, by turning their backs to the walls defining the narrow alleys as they play, the children defy the oppressiveness of the camp structure

imposed on them to some extent. They turn it into a necessity so that the game works. Playing with marbles, in this case, emerges as the ultimate method for countering oppression in its spatial manifestation. Palestinians are thus often excellent at playing with marbles. One such master marble player is artist Mona Hatoum. Marbles are used as a material in some of her work. These include: *Turbulence (Black)* (2014), comprising a 250 cm diameter circle made up of black glass marbles, and *Map* (2015), depicting a world map using clear glass marbles.

The practice of land confiscation by the Israeli state continues in different forms, and so is the division of the Palestinian landscape into cramped spaces, to which the presence of Palestinians is confined and their movements restricted. Subsequently, Palestine is witnessing the formation of new types of refuge. This results in Palestinians playing different types of games to counter the constantly shifting methods of expulsion:

In Kufer Aqab, in Jerusalem, 9 October. 7:38 pm. there is a flat on the fifth floor. To the right, children's toys are thrown on the carpet and in the refrigerator is a bottle of water, yogurt and cheese. The bed in the master bedroom is unmade. A laptop is sitting on the table with its screen upright. This is supposed to be a friend's flat, but in reality they live somewhere else—in a less crowded and less neglected neighbourhood in Ramallah, with a big front yard. They merely play as if they're living here, visiting almost daily for a couple of hours before leaving for their other flat. They're doing what thousands of others in the neighbourhood do: while living at a different address, they rent a property in Kufer Aqab, which until few years ago used to be a small village. In so doing, they're able to guarantee themselves a Jerusalemite address allowing them to keep their Jerusalem IDs or apply for one for a new family member. For Jerusalemites to find a flat in the actual city of Jerusalem is impossible. The Israeli authorities don't grant permission for Palestinians in the city to build new homes. This is different in Kufer Aqab. While still technically part of Jerusalem but practically adjacent to Ramallah, Israeli authorities decided not to control the construction of new buildings there.

While The Israeli-controlled municipality collects taxes from the Palestinian residents in this neighbourhood, but it does not provide them with any services, such as water, electricity and rubbish collection, as one can notice in photographs by artist Yazan Khalili.

Apart from being a filthy neighbourhood with newly built buildings Bbecause of the lack of municipal serviceslaw enforcement, Kufer Aqab, which also lacks law enforcement, suffers from a very high crime rate, primarily related to drug and sexual abuse. For any Jerusalemite family

that wishes to keep their Jerusalem IDs, Kufer Aqab provides a dark setting to raise a family. But they can evade this situation, by paying high financial and emotional prices as they engage in one particular game: Beit Biut, or “Dollhouse.” While normally children play dollhouse, here, it is their parents that do so. One may say that Kufer Aqab has become the biggest theatre district in the world, with its increasing high-rise buildings acting as stages for Palestinian Jerusalemites to enact plays before the Israeli ministry of interior. Most buildings in Kufer Aqab likely have at least one flat engaged in performing the play of ordinary family life. It’s important to note that a Jerusalem ID grants its Palestinian holders free movement, which more than half of the Palestinians in Palestine/Israel are deprived.

Yazan Khalili, Kufer Aqab.
Courtesy of the artist.



ADANIA SHIBLI

WITH MINIMAL FORCE

Palestinians must cross a number of checkpoints to move around Palestine/Israel. The ability to cross a checkpoint depends on the colour of one’s ID. If you don’t have a blue ID—the colour for the Jerusalem ID—the Israeli military will be turn you down; that is, unless, you can play another game called “Hide and Seek.” In these cases, Palestinians go literally underground, choosing to cross tunnels used for sewage and rainwater drainage to avoid detection by Israeli soldiers. The short filmvideo artwork *Journey 110* (2008) by artist Khaled Jarrar follows a tunnel on the side of the road between Ramallah and Jerusalem, used by Palestinians who hope to get to Jerusalem without needing a permit.⁷

Sometimes, Palestinians need to walk tens of kilometres to reach a location due to the checkpoints.

The photography series *ID 925596611* (2003) by Raed Bawaya depicts the journey of Palestinian workers who were forced to cross

about 40 kilometres on foot to enter Tel Aviv and work in construction without Israeli-approved permits. They were also forced to be invisible as they work, hiding from the Israeli military and police.

In Gaza, this game of hide and seek reached an even greater degree, with a full-fledged system of tunnels that were dug under the entire territory to counter the Israeli-led blockade on the residents for more than a decade. Artist Mohamed Abusal, however, has already designed plans for use of these tunnels once Gaza is liberated, as his artwork *A Metro in Gaza* (2011) shows.

The obstruction of movement experienced by Palestinians and their attempts to counter it by finding alternative, normally longer, routes, has eventually resulted in a different experience of time. The time it may take an Israeli to reach point A to B, is much shorter than that of Palestinians trying to reach the same distance. Some Palestinians can be faster than others, depending on the ID. If a Palestinian has a Jerusalem ID, they can travel faster than those with a Ramallah ID, who can certainly travel faster than those with a Gaza ID. This unequal experience of movement has necessitated the invention of different devices for the measurement of time for each group of Palestinian. The art installation *Hourglass* (2012) by artist Majd Abdel Hamid is a precise depiction of that.

But the fantasy to cross any checkpoint without having to play hide and seek, nor having to take a longer or dirtier route, has never left the mind of some Palestinians. This fantasy had been played out for more than a decade in a number of works. Amongst the most notable is the Palestinian film *Divine Intervention* (2002), directed by Elia Suleiman. In one scene, a Palestinian femme fatale crosses the checkpoint and manages to destroy it with just one long gaze from her eyes.⁸ If dressing chic is the trick, Palestinians won't hesitate to opt for this. They would even consider engaging in a game of dress-up to avoid being strip-searched. The short filmvideo artwork *Chicpoint* (2003) by artist Sharif Waked attests to this. The work is a fashion show for Israeli checkpoints that also shows the inspiration for each fashion. Artist Khalil Rabah, on the other hand, proposed a solution that annuls all these efforts. In his work *3rd Annual Wall Zone Auction* (2004), which launched an ongoing artwork by the same artist entitled *The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* (est. 2004), Rabah put materials on auction used in the construction of checkpoints and the Separation Wall, or parts of objects that were destroyed as a result of building these, including barbed wires, soil and olive trees. However, it's important to note that Rabah not only played with structures built by the Israeli military and state, he did the same with Palestinian cultural institutions built from 2004. He curated the A. M. Qattan Young Artist of the Year Award in 2004 and the Riwaq Biennale that was launched in 2009 at the Venice Biennale,⁹ all treated as personal artwork.

It can be concluded based on these instances, both from life and from the field of art, that cunningness is being employed as a means to hoodwink an oppressive apparatus as identified by Brecht. Also, as Sen noted, games, playing and playfulness can all be important elements in people's attempts to counter tyranny, exploitation and deep inequality.

Cunningness and playing seem to unmask state oppression and reveal its effect on the ground. Yet most importantly, they seem to provide people with the tools for resistance not derived from the logic of the oppressive state apparatus. True, playing and cunningness don't eliminate the risks to one's life, but they allow for a potentiality of life that has been otherwise deprived. They are there for the young and the adults, for artists and non-artists alike and requires minimal force.

- 1 The majority of Palestinian artists mentioned in this article have participated in one of the editions of the A .M. Qattan Young Artist of the Year Award since its start in 2000. They participated either as finalists, curators of its final show or as a member of its jury. This includes: Mona Hatoum (jury member, 2000) Yazan Khalili (curator, 2012), Mohamed Abusal (finalist, 2004), Majd Abdel Hamid (finalist 2008, 2010, 2012), Sharif Waked (jury member, 2004) and Khailil Rabah (jury member, 2002; curator, 2004).
- 2 "Bertolt Brecht speaks in the House Committee on Un-American Activities,"1947. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkicGxD4CZ8>. Accessed 1 May 2017.
- 3 Amartya Sen, *The Country of First Boys and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- 4 "Palestine Legions Team 2011-12-16", 20 December 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9IY4qzzdvY>. Accessed 10 October 2016.
- 5 Btselem, "Border police officer grabs girl's bike, tosses it into bushes, Hebron, July 2016," 1 August 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MWiPhRylGg>. Accessed 5 October 2016.
- 6 John Berger, *Hold Everything Dear: Dispatches on Survival and Resistance*. London: Verso Books, 2007, p. 136.
- 7 Khaled Jarrar, *Journey 110*, 2011. <https://vimeo.com/28051296>. Accessed 24 April 2017.
- 8 Elia Suleiman, clip from *Divine Intervention*, 2002. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDVo7ZCU1Dw>. Accessed 6 March 2017.
- 9 In the first Palestinian participation at the Venice Biennale, Palestine c/o Venice (2009), a show of five Palestinian artists curated by Salwa Mikdadi (also a Young Artist of the Year Award jury member in 2006).

Adania Shibli (1974, Palestine) has written novels, plays, short stories and narrative essays. Her latest is the novel *Tafsil Thanawi* (Beirut: Al-Adab, 2017, forthcoming as *Minor Detail* by Fitzcarraldo Edition/ Uk, and *New Directions/USA*, 2020). In addition to writing fiction, Shibli is engaged in academic teaching at Birzeit University, Palestine, and is a researcher in the field of cultural studies and visual culture.

Firas Shehadeh
Building inspired by the House of Wisdom, of ancient Baghdad,
Minecraft video game. Courtesy of the artist.



QUESTIONS TO ARTISTS
HANAN TOUKAN

When Ala Younis invited me to contribute my reflections on The Young Artist of the Year Award (YAYA) for this publication, I was sceptical of reflecting on one of Palestine's most important cultural events. This is because I reside outside of Palestine and can't spend an extended period of time there to undertake the research I felt was needed for a scrupulous reflection on the meaning of the award and how it has panned out. Not because one cannot conduct research about a place from another location, but because I considered the specific questions I had about YAYA—a very particular material and nonmaterial site of production, experimentation and conversation—could only be articulated face to face. I felt it required lengthy and intermittent conversations with the myriad artists, patrons, curators, funders, organisers, translators, writers and technical support teams that constitute YAYA. In a dream world, I imagined these meetings would take place when I could escape my faculty post at university with a fully funded research grant that would help me uncover all I needed to know to actually write about it. Alas, that was a nonstarter for a reflective YAYA anniversary publication piece. Instead, and probably just as well, I reached out to friends and friends of friends, artists mostly, that partook in YAYA in diverse ways over the course of its 19-year history. I believed that a more sporadic form of dialogue would better reflect their position and mine in regards to geography, experience and sentiment.

In my communication with these artists that generously agreed to share their thoughts, a set of questions were used as a prompt in the hope of starting a conversation to be held at a later time. The beginnings of this conversation will not be relayed in my contribution, however, because it was not a conversation that emerged. Rather, what I present here are staccatos of short, quick contemplations on questions on the condition and constitution of an art award that has become an institution in its own right. In times of global revolution, continuous colonialism in Palestine and persistent yet increasingly illegitimate neoliberal frameworks of global capital circulation that have been blamed in large part to the rise of global populist politics and right-wing movements, the meaning and purpose of a prestigious art award takes on more urgency. This urgency is multiplied in the case of Palestine not only because it lives a precarious life under a complex and violent colonial system, but rather because of its ability and particular context to provide a site of experimentation on different forms of consumption, circulation and critique of art and consequently, as Yazan Khalili puts it, "on what [the art] can actually do." Whether artists have succumbed to the allures and glories of competition as Hani Zurob observes, or whether audiences began to encounter YAYA's artwork in more unpredictable ways as the

show evolved as Noor Abu Arafeh insinuates, the award itself is part of the larger discursive fabric that is constitutive of Palestinian cultural production's very being. This is precisely because of observations like Abu Arafeh and Zurob's that comment on the effects that YAYA has had on the sensibilities and tastes of artists and their audience.

Does this inscription within a competitive and institutional framework of production that results in exposure for the winner mean that art and the encounters with it must always be neutralised? Is it not sometimes that the variable forms of institutionalisation allow for the circulation of works and encounters with them in ways that become sites of learning about art's position in relationship to the institution itself? What I am proposing, as part of my thinking on the set of questions I posed to my interlocutors, as well as some of their answers to them, is that by attempting to wrest art from its institutionalisation through a standardised award process we may be neutralising it. We often do this by critiquing its detrimental impact on more social forms of art instead of uncovering how it may intervene in existing social structures by reconfiguring them. I acknowledge that this reconfiguring of social structures and how it is shaped through encounters with art is a generally unappreciated and perhaps even more worrying, an understudied theme in art practices.

If we started with the latter assumption that art is possibly reconfiguring the social world through its inscription in the institution, it may alter how we see the transformation and institutionalisation of YAYA. Yet, if we start with this alternative logic, are we then simply thwarting the very necessary discussion on how, to quote Khalili, "art's claim to be political has been co-opted by the market?" Or are we alternatively insisting that in this urgent time in Palestine and the world's history of ideas and social change, the more relevant idea to interrogate would be, quoting Khalili once again, "about art as a field that is thought of outside of the political economy, a field that aims to have its results from within it?" For Khalili, it is the ingrained understanding that art needs to stay in its home institutional setup, which in effect reproduces its very icons, language and terminology, that he suggests we pay attention to.

Firas Shehadeh and to a lesser extent Jumana Mana'a take the conversation in a different direction. Shehadeh speaks the language of a growing global intellectual and political movement of students, artists, academics, writers, activists and poets directed at the decolonisation of the languages and structures of thought embedded in the process of domination and exploitation of the capitalist/patriarchal/imperial Western metropolis that has governed the production of knowledge in the rest of the world in the past 200 years. In a quintessentially decolonising move, he highlights the Bayt al-Hikma (House of Wisdom) of ancient Baghdad to reclaim the art competition as an element of a longer genealogy of art competitions in Arabic/Islamic culture. Yet this decolonising methodology to reclaim the art competition shifts the conversation from

one of historical significance and contextual politics to one of origins. To be provocative on my part, this defensive reaction to reclaim what is in fact a universal history of art rather than a particular Western experience and its assumed imposition on the rest of the world has the effect of emptying the conversation of the elements that also shape it: the twin effects of capitalism and nationalism. Yet both Shehadeh's point and my retort are relevant discussions to be had in their own right and time.

Inas Halabi's thoughts on YAYA could be read as suggesting that for all our theorising about the nature of the award and its significance on its 10th anniversary, that at least in that year's edition, the relationships formed were possibly more valuable than any object (or film) produced for the show. The relationships indicate that the dynamics of camaraderie, friendship, community and solidarity that arose were, in Halabi's experience, one of the most enduring impacts of the award process itself. Whether then, we start with the social and political context of YAYA, or the social and political impact of YAYA, we seem to be starting our conversation from outside of the art created through YAYA. But what happens if we—to quote art historian Kirsten Scheid's novel idea—"start from the art" and ethnographically follow it to see where it leads us?¹ In each of the questions I posed as well as the responses I received, there is a hint that art can do much more than represent or even embody. This life of art and the routes it flows can sometimes nurture, instigate, inspire and provoke—and at other times silence, co-opt and make visible what it wants. Ultimately it does any or all of this through the passage of its making which includes what is made, how it's made and how we receive it and act upon it.

QUESTIONS TO ARTISTS

1. Is there a shift in the way artists today perceive the award and how they did when the first edition began 19 years ago?

2. The award, no doubt, allows artists to display their work among their peers, have it reviewed by esteemed judges and sometimes receive exhibition opportunities and monetary incentives, all the while exhibiting it to the public from which these artists are so often engaging with in their works. Yet the award is also part of a longer history of Western art traditions rooted in patronage offered by monarchs and rulers to artisans, painters, architects, scientists and musicians, even if it takes place in

1 I am indebted to Kirsten Scheid for allowing me to borrow from her idea that creatively asks us to shift the foundation from which we have been studying art. She elaborates on this idea in *Start with the Art: New ways of understanding the political in the Middle East*, from the *Routledge Handbook of Middle East Politics: Interdisciplinary Inscriptions*, ed. Larbi Sadiki (New York: Routledge Press, forthcoming 2020).

another place and time when YAYA is referenced. What significance does this history rooted in Western governance of civil society have for Palestinian artists today? I ask this question in light of the wave of decolonising attempts and provincialising efforts occurring at the level of art institutions and academic scholarship as a way to revise, remake and rewrite the history of the world at the margins. I query not the impact of the award but rather it's potential to decentre universal history in the format it is in today.

3. The 10th YAYA edition decentred the process of art making of the competition by involving previous artists and leaving the process without an identified theme; at the same time and for the first time, it exhibited the open day in the hosting organisation's new space, located outside of the centre of Ramallah, thereby centralising the highlight of the entire process, the exhibition itself. What are we to make of this process in terms of the global flows to the periphery from the centre and vice versa?

INAS HALABI

The 10th edition of YAYA proved different in various ways, at least in the process of how the ten artists were initially selected to be part of the competition. Some of the key differences involved a jury team composed of artists who had participated in YAYA competitions since 2009, including myself, a participant in 2012 and 2016. After two very lengthy yet valuable group calls on Skype, between the jury team that was in Palestine and those of us abroad, ten artists were selected as finalists, receiving a production grant to create new work. Each of the jury team was asked to be a 'mentor' to one of the artists, allowing for exchanges that were not necessarily tied to the competition itself but rather to the process of creating. A second jury team of five members selected the winning artists after the opening of the final show. Even though the process culminates in the final show, it certainly does not end there. Relationships that grew out of and from participating in YAYA are not less (if not more) valuable than any object or film produced.

The spotlight of the 10th YAYA edition eventually fell on the final show, merged with the inauguration and opening of the new Qattan building, thereby reinstitutionalising the process that had been previously decentred. In 2016, the location of the YAYA exhibition was Beit El Saa, a traditional house in the centre of Ramallah that was built in 1910 and restored in 2014. The choice of this venue exemplified how various forms of 'decolonisation' can be practiced by institutions through active engagement with alternative communal spaces that are simultaneously 'revived'. What defines an institution as 'decolonised' is how robustly intertwined it is with the community it is supposedly engaged with,

how it manages itself both financially and thematically, how it breaks down hierarchies and class within and outside its premises and how it defies the remains in its own roots that (in most cases) have grown from Western governance of civil society. Although the YAYA award, like all artist awards, is rooted in a history of Western traditions of patronage, of controlling sectors of the economy and exemplifying differences in class, its efforts to disrupt social and political conditions of the occupation in Palestine should be highlighted, where civil society is dominated by NGOs and cultural (amongst all) sectors rely heavily on international funding. By bringing together ten participating artists, either residing abroad and having never been able to enter Palestine, residing in Palestine but constrained within Gaza, or residing within Jerusalem and inside the borders of 1948, a fragmented society is momentarily pieced together, forming relationships which can be more beneficial than an exhibition. How local organisations work together (rather than independently) and the political position they take to move a society forward is how the history of the world at the margins can be remade and rewritten.

YAZAN KHALILI

Being once a young artist who was a finalist in the 2006 edition of YAYA, and being involved a second time as a co-curator and production manager of the 2012 edition, I have seen YAYA from different sides and positions. But perhaps my answer comes from my recent rethinking and critique of artistic practice separate from cultural and knowledge production that is more able to challenge the limits of art's ability to create and produce politics. In recent years, I'm becoming more doubtful of what artistic practices can do. Art's claim of being political has been co-opted by the art market and certain formulas of translating and representing politics and critical theory into artistic practices that can then be commodified by a flourishing market has become the backbone of contemporary art. Since the 1990s, the art economy has depended on either institutional funding or market demand—or a combination of both—and therefore its production has been conditioned by this economy. The production of the individual star artist, the 'genius' that has made it despite this highly competitive economy has to be questioned, and YAYA isn't separate from this global approach, and therefore, similarly needs to be critiqued.

I don't think the issue is about whether to show the final product or the process—both in the end are related to the promotion of the individual. It is rather a question of art as a field that is thought of outside of political economy, a field that aims to have its results within it. Art that stays within art contexts, working with its topics and producing its icons—this is what I am questioning here.

FIRAS SHEHADEH

Awards in an art and cultural context are not exclusively a Western tradition. They're just more highlighted within the modern Eurocentric history. These art and cultural competitions as a form of economical support existed long time before the West/North existed as a political and economic power. The Baghdad-based Bayt al-Hikma (The House of Wisdom) was founded as private collection for the Caliph Harun al-Rashid in the late 8th century, which was then turned into a public academy. Bayt al-Hikma was an essential cultural hub that offered awards for academics, poets, artists, architects, mathematicians and more, to exchange, create and develop—but also to receive economic and political support. Current Palestinian art awards are not separated from this history, when considering colonial and/or anticolonial context before the Nakba, during the Palestinian revolution or in the post-Oslo Accords era. The 10th YAYA edition challenged centralised 'Palestinian art' as part of 'state building' and its capital Ramallah into a Palestinian entity beyond postcolonial borders.

Regarding the margin, I quote Bell Hooks in her essay "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," in which she wrote: "I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance - as location of radical openness and possibility. This site of resistance is continually formed in that segregated culture of opposition that is our critical response to domination."

JUMANA MANNA

My participation in YAYA on both occasions (2010 and 2012) was a way for me to remain present and in touch with the Palestinian scene and Ramallah in particular. Being in the midst of my studies abroad, I realized that exhibiting in Europe and the US was becoming the new norm while invitations to show and talk about my work in Palestine were limited. Palestine was my centre emotionally and politically speaking, and YAYA was a platform to exhibit my work there. My urge to partake in the award was part of my wish to remain anchored in Palestine and receive recognition from my peers in the place I grew up, not only in my places of study. While the genesis of any convention or protocol is always important and worth clarifying, the impact of the Western tradition on the format of the prize was secondary then, and somewhat remains so. Both because the intertwinement of power and patronage to the arts has existed across civilisations far beyond the Western world, but also because the contemporary issues of governance—the politics of these institutions today, to what extent they reflect the needs of cultural practitioners and impact the society they are in—is more important than the question of origins.

HANI ZUROB

Being one of the participants of the second edition of YAYA, which took place in 2002, and also one of the jury members for the latest edition of the award, I believe I've seen a great shift in the way artists address YAYA. Artists were participating because of questions pursued through their practice, whether as an individual initiative or as a reflection of a regional or international condition. Only minimal resources and tools were available. I followed the editions that came after mine and stayed in touch with newer generations of artists; I find that artists today are in a state of fragmentation. They load their works with broad texts, theories, forms and tools, perhaps to manifest a certain contemporaneity, or perhaps to respond to a demand or expectation. Instead, I feel they'd need to research further for their own visual tools that allow them the ideas they want to present. All of this, in my opinion, could be clearly seen in the works in the last edition. I also believe that this is an outcome of indirect pressure exercised by cultural foundations that could be held responsible for these productions. This creates an overpowering view towards making art—one that does not pursue committed artistic research, but prompts artists to research specific methodologies and ways of seeing, all of which leads to purely institutional art.

NOOR ABUARAFEH:

Since the first edition of YAYA nearly 19 years ago, I was 14 years old, I've attended the biennial exhibitions with my father. YAYA was different than any other art exhibition that we would attend in Jerusalem or Ramallah. While most of the others were based on paintings and sculptures, YAYA was full of experimentation in medium and subject and created debate and conversation around art and the exhibited artwork.

Throughout the years, YAYA has become a highlighted activity of the Palestinian art scene through its awards and the opportunities of the YAYA participants after their acceptance. The award has, therefore, become more than a space to experiment with and exchange experiences. The competition spirit might affect both the energy of the artwork and the artists themselves. It can also affect how visitors perceive artwork displayed in an exhibition, limiting the debate on who deserves the award rather than the artwork.

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WE SHALL BE
MONSTERS
THE YOUNG
ARTIST OF THE
YEAR AWARD
2018

WE SHALL BE MONSTERS

EMILY JACIR

We Shall Be Monsters brings together newly commissioned works from the ten artists who were shortlisted for the 10th anniversary edition of the 2018 Young Artist of the Year Award (YAYA 2018). The locus of the exhibition was derived from the artistic practices of the participants whose works were developed over a period of ten months in close collaboration with the curator.

It was a great honor and a privilege to be the curator for this special edition of the Young Artist of the Year Award. I cannot thank the A.M. Qattan Foundation enough for giving me the opportunity of curating this project, and above all of working with these ten young artists over the course of twelve months. I am not sure if the A.M. Qattan Foundation is aware of this, but I often lecture internationally on the Young Artist of the Year, whose work and vision I find exemplary as an arts initiative in Palestine. I have carefully followed and attended the YAYA in all its iterations since the first edition in 2000. I served on the jury alongside my dear friend, the late Jean Fisher, and Raeda Sa'adeh, Hasan Khader and Rajie Cook of the 2010 edition, after which I gave a lecture about that experience and my views on the YAYA at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London in 2011. I recently reread my notes from that lecture and I would like to recount and update here a couple of points that I made then, which I stand firmly behind today.

In my view, this is the most important arts initiative that occurs regularly in Palestine. YAYA is long-term and has a solid history of eighteen years and ten editions, each one with documentation, brochures and catalogues. In and of itself this is an extremely valuable component in the context of the historical amnesia and fragmentation we seem to be continuously grappling with here in Palestine and it also contributes to a dynamic and flourishing Palestinian art scene with its history and lineage recorded. Another important aspect is that the YAYA is a Palestinian-funded project with parameters set from *within* (unlike so many projects that are created to satisfy funder/donor requirements). The project is also important because it is open to Palestinian artists under thirty years old, and this means all Palestinians – as defined by us and not by others. This is a particularly important element when you consider the displacements and divisions that have been strategically imposed upon us as a divisive measure by those in power in an effort to limit and locate us in time and space in order to eradicate our very existence, as well as isolate us. So all of us are included, whether our travel documents say we are West Bankers, Gazans, Jerusalemites, Israelis, Americans, Hondurans, Chilenos, Swedes, Britons, Lebanese, Jordanian, Syrian, etc. We know who we are and where we come from.

I would also like to emphasize here that the international component that has always been an integral part of this exhibition operates beautifully and creates a real situation of critical engagement and exchange. After the production period, when the exhibition is up, internationally renowned artists and writers and curators from around the world, alongside locals of the same calibre, comprise the jury. The decision-making process gives each young artist the opportunity to meet with this jury individually to discuss their work. So for these reasons and more, the YAYA represents for me an outstanding achievement in the field of contemporary art here in Palestine and why I was so proud to have been given the chance to serve as the curator for 2018. It is an example of the kind of institutional structure that I support wholeheartedly and with which I am happy to engage.

I would like to commend Mahmoud Abu Hashhash and Nisreen Nafaa from the Foundation's Culture and Arts Programme for their exceptional involvement and hard work in the planning and careful coordination of every part of this project, from conception to final exhibition, to organizing the jury, and finally, to producing the various publications. Mahmoud, who has been involved in all ten editions of this prize, and Nisreen with seven, have been steady in their undying commitment to every aspect of the process, as well as being willing to take risks with each edition, and being open to rearticulating and reformatting it and yet always managing to keep its foundation solid. I thank them for their support and for trusting me with this great responsibility as well as for supporting my vision in all ways possible. They supported me in every stage of this process and trusted me, even when I was unable to give them a theme or exactness when we began because so much of my personal process takes place in the space of precarity and depends on interactions with the participants themselves, thereby rendering it essential to remain uncontained in order to be able to adapt and shift accordingly. I work through a process of exchanges and that is what defined the project and the final exhibition.

On a personal note, I would also like to mention that it was especially meaningful to me that the YAYA is named after my very dear friend and colleague, an artist of my generation: the late Hassan Hourani. Our friendship spanned the space between Ramallah and New York City, and I was one of the very few people who knew him well in both places. At that time he always wore a necklace that had a white spoon hanging on the end. Inside the spoon was blue glass. Blue blue, like the sea. He told us all how he wore it so that he could take the sea with him wherever he went, so that the sea was always with him. Hassan has remained with many of us wherever we go. When I went to his family's home in Ramallah the day after his death, I wondered if they knew what Hassan's life had been for two years in New York, how he had lived and how he had affected everyone there. Upon visiting New York and going

to the memorial for Hassan there later, I also wondered if those New Yorkers had any idea of the profound affect Hassan had on Ramallah.

THE WORK PERIOD

When I was initially invited to take this project on, there were several stipulations that I requested so that I would be able to work and create a process for the participants that would match my methodology. Firstly, I made clear that I would not be working with these young artists as a “curator” per se, but that I would discuss and plan their works with them as an artist. I am not a curator and I approached this challenging task as an artist and as an educator. I find it crucial in this particular moment in Palestine to engage these young artists in a pedagogical way, as I find the spaces for such exchange almost non-existent and this was an opportunity to gather these young artists together and have these exchanges. Speaking as one of the founders of the International Academy of Art, where I worked for ten years as a professor, serving on its academic board for six, the loss of this special place when it closed its doors in 2017 has been tremendous as it was truly a venue for experimentation and a space for meeting thinkers and cultural practitioners from around the world. As a professor there, I had the freedom to create and design my classes as I saw fit. It was a vital aspect of my pedagogy in those days to try to collect in my classroom the fragments of trans-generational local knowledge and educators, histories and identities, as I saw that each generation has been cut from the historical knowledge of what preceded them and there seemed to be a cyclical amnesia. So, part of my work has always been finding ways to resist this forgetting and to bring together researchers, artists, filmmakers, historians, etc., from the various generations around us to try to connect us all to each other in a participatory approach. Therefore, for this edition of the YAYA, we set up a special mentorship program to connect these young artists with previous YAYA participants in order to foster a cross-generational dialogue and exchange of knowledge.

Another stipulation in taking on this position was that no theme would be imposed on the YAYA artists. Instead, the locus of YAYA 2018 would be on themes deriving from the artistic practices of the participants themselves. After the selection process, the theme/s would be decided through our interactions and exchanges. My intention was to create a discourse and discover possible themes based on what these young artists were themselves already exploring in their practices today, rather than imposing a theme onto them. Their research topics would become part of our collective discussions and exchanges. Each participant would be expected to share the body of knowledge behind their project with the group, and this would be accompanied by in-depth conversations around the methods and motivations behind the work. The

goal was to encourage the artist participants to contribute to a collective space of knowledge production and to re-evaluate and enhance their practices in the context of a broader artistic discourse with their peers as well as with our invited seminar guests.

With this participatory pedagogical approach of collective exchange and artist-driven processes accepted, I presented my work plan to Mahmoud and Nisreen. I had planned weekly group seminars with the participants and individual meetings with me as well as invited guest thinkers and artists. We were surprised to find out, after the ten young artists had been selected, that for the first time in YAYA's history seven out of the ten were living outside the country and so gathering as a group would be impossible. Not only that, but three of them would be forbidden to enter the country by the occupying powers. This required a fast re-articulation and rethinking of my plan, and I created an online seminar platform in which we would gather virtually each week in order to speak to each other. The focus during the work period was the creation of a platform, based on the cultural, political and social histories these young artists were exploring, and in fostering a space in which each of their research topics was furthered and became part of lively collective discussions and exchanges. We read and spoke with Franco Berardi, Naeem Mohaieman, Ala Younis, Lena Al Meari and Basma Alsharif (another Palestinian who would not be able to gather with us on the ground). Our guest interlocutors were chosen by myself and by the participants. They are the next generation of Palestinian artists and it was essential for me (perhaps even urgent) to foster a space in which they would gather and speak to each other as they will be colleagues for the rest of their lives and will be speaking to each other through their work, if not face to face. I also firmly believe that this generation has a lot to teach us and we should be ready to listen and learn. Because of this strong personal belief, and because we would not be able to gather as a group in Palestine, I suggested to the Foundation that we meet as a group outside of the country. Mahmoud and Nisreen were quick to support this idea and started organizing right away. In June, our group seminars and individual meetings with myself and the mentors culminated in a ten-day workshop in Biella, Italy, at the University of Ideas at Cittadellarte, which focused on full-day discussions on each artist's project, as well as film screenings and walks. In tandem with the daily group meetings to discuss each project and the ideas behind it in depth, there were also smaller group discussions organized and daily individual meetings with myself. Gathering together in Biella was an especially poignant moment during our work process, as some of the YAYA participants had never had the opportunity to sit and discuss their work with other Palestinian artists before. It was an incredible experience for them to share their very different living and working conditions and challenges.

A small intervention by me took place in the exhibition brochure and this YAYA catalogue, where I insisted that birthplace would not be listed for any of the young artists. What has “birthplace” come to mean in our contemporary condition, and what exactly would it mark? Many of the artists have no relation to the place they were born in, and for Palestinians especially it is not a marker of our patria or identity. However, where the young artists live and work is an important marker of their engagement in the world and can reflect on the works that they make, so I chose that as a marker in their biographies. In the spirit of the ten months we worked together, I wanted an interrogation into what a biography is and who determines its apparatus. How could I open up space for a more accurate reading of who we are and where we come from? Surely not through the typical art world way of listing someone’s birthplace, which at best confines us to something that does not define us, nor does it offer insight into who we are.

THE EXHIBITION

“It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another.”

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

What came to the fore in the projects in *We Shall Be Monsters* were explorations of stitched, broken, ruptured, wounded, dismembered and buried bodies and their parts. Many of the works focus on the position of the eye and on collapsing and shifting perspectives and points of view. Power, history and the question of who is seeing were examined through narrative experiments into rupture, glitches, and locating the broken body in a multitude of identities and topographies that are reflected throughout the exhibition. The works oscillate between excavations and burials, reaching to the past and into the future simultaneously.

In the works of these artists, the personal and collective are deeply intertwined, as in Ola Zaitoun’s psychologically charged paintings depicting the disfigured bodies of women, or in the dismembered braids of hair presented as evidence of resistance in Safaa Khatib’s photographs. These pieces speak not only of dead cells intertwined with living tissue but very much about the cells’ continued growth. The buried, stitched body becomes a document serving as a time capsule and message to the future in Haithem Haddad’s work as the eye of the drone threatens above. Trans-generational transmissions, memory and challenges to how we collectively and individually construct our history are also prevalent in the works of the other artists. Drones pass through Firas Shehadeh’s video, where the eye of a wanderer constantly negotiates different proximities from the border zones. Dina Mimi investigates the gaze of the skulls of Algerian resistance fighters that

were violently removed from their bodies and kept in a museum in Paris. Leila Abdelrazaq's animated comic collapses time through narrating the personal tragedy of a stillborn baby to question collective memory, loss and survival. Others base their work on exploring the possibilities of an empowered critical cartography. Dima Srouji collapses space and time and reveals a personal record of Jerusalem through bodily excavations beneath the surface of the city. Yusuf Audeh's objects and paintings follow an anonymous, sexualised male body in the traverse between economy and cryptocurrency. A hart (deer) and a blue heron poetically narrate physical movement through spaces and a slow movement across time in Alaa Abu Asad's video. Meanwhile, Walid Al Wawi challenges the status quo through the parallel metaphor of a parachute's objective as a mechanism to slow down the fall of a human body.

Isolated and alone now more than at any other point since 1948, being/becoming a monster/s embodies both disfigurement as well as the creation of something new from dismembered parts that produce a force that threatens and confronts. This force disrupts, unravels and contaminates inside and outside, death and burial, and opens up multiple physical, social and political configurations. Emerging from these configurations is a community of monsters (*wahsh*; pl, *wuhush*) abandoned by the world and left to face unspeakable violence on its own.

The exhibition title refers to the exact moment in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* when the monster or wretch asks his creator, Victor Frankenstein, to make him a companion – a point in which the monster is hopeful in what they will be. The monster's demand embodies an acceptance of the condition of monstrosity yet refuses to relinquish the relation to the other, companionship, hope. In this moment the monster is hopeful that he will not be alone, insisting on the experience of love through a connection to another being like himself – outcasts together.

The quotation from Shelley implies that perhaps we are monsters already, and that we will become monsters and that we will continue to be monsters together in our isolation and wretched state. There is hope and love for those who inhabit a decimated and isolated space, in the companionship of each other. "We shall be *wuhush*", emphasizes the plural – an empowering declaration that could function as a threat.

The We Shall Be Monsters exhibition took place in the A.M. Qattan Foundation's new building in the al-Tireh neighborhood of Ramallah, a few hundred metres from Nelson Mandela Square, an apropos location to assemble together these parts that both unearth the past and envision the future as we reflect on this fraught transitional moment.



YAYA SEMINARS

10 April 2018

The work of Naeem Mohaiemen

Guest Naeem Mohaiemen

Proposed by Emily Jacir

Screening of Naeem

Mohaiemen's *Two Meetings and a Funeral*

17 April 2018

Franco Berardi's The Uprising:

On Poetry and Finance

Guest Franco Berardi

Proposed by Yusef Audeh

+ pre-seminar reading:

Franco Berardi, *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (ch. 2)

29 April 2018

Mapping Systems

Proposed by Dima Srouji

+ pre-seminar reading:

Lola Kantor-Kazovsky, *Piranese as interpreter of roman architecture and the origins of his intellectual world*

7 May 2018

Collective Conceptions of The Nakba

Proposed by Leila Abdelrazaq

+ pre-seminar reading:

Anaheed Al-Harda, *Palestinians in Syria: Nakba Memories of Shattered Communities*

11 May 2018

MEMORYSCAPES: Architecture, e-/motions and Archive

Guest Ala Younis

Proposed by Firas Shehadeh

+ pre-seminar readings and films:

Timotheus Vermeulen, *The New "Depthiness"*

John Smith, *The Black Tower*

Yung Lean, *Kyoto*

Ala Younis, *Men of Bronze, Homes of Concrete*

Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir*

M.I.A., *Come Walk With Me*

15 May 2018

The work of Basma Alsharif

Guest: Basma Alsharif,

Proposed by Alaa Abu Asaad

+ pre-seminar films and readings:

Basma Alsharif, *Home Movies Gaza* and *Deep Sleep*

Suzy Halajian, *Basma Alsharif: Under the Influence*

Rasha Salti, *Home Movies Gaza Series Regarding the Pain of Others*

18 May 2018

The Museum as Battle Field

Proposed by Dina Mimi

+ pre-seminar film

Hito Steyerl's lecture "Is the Museum a Battle Field"

21 May 2018

Experiences of Palestinian Women Political Prisoners

Guest: Dr. Lena Meari, proposed by Safaa Khateeb

+ pre-seminar readings:

Dr. Lena Meari, *Resignifying 'Sexual' Colonial Power*

Techniques: The Experiences of Palestinian Women Political Prisoners

26 May 2018

On the Legitimacy of Palestinian Embassies

Proposed by Walid Alwawi

+ pre-seminar readings and media:

Ruba Salah, *From Bare Lives to Political Agents: Palestinian Refugees as Avant-Garde*

First 5 minutes of Yousef Chahine's *El Nasir Salah Ad-Din*

Jonas Staal, *New World Summit*

28 May 2018

Future Palestine: why now?

Proposed by Haitham Haddad

+ pre-seminar films and media:

Rabih Mroue, *Pixelated Revolution*

Larissa Sansour, *In the Future, They Ate From the Finest Porcelain*

JURY STATEMENT

We, the five jury members, are very honoured to be on the jury of the 2018 Young Artist of the Year Award. Over the course of the past 18 years, the YAYA award has become one of the most celebrated and sustainable cultural events in Palestine. We wish to warmly thank the A. M. Qattan Foundation for inviting us to avail of this welcome opportunity to come to Palestine and for trusting us with this responsible task. We are particularly grateful for the support and assistance of Nisreen Naffa, Lamis Shalalkeh, Mahmoud Abu Hashhash and Yazid Anani.

We wish to especially thank Emily Jacir for her extraordinary efforts in curating this show: for creating a safe, inspiring situation for the artists to come together and share ideas, using this platform to cultivate a sense of community that, we hope, will have long term value for them. Together with Emily, the ten artists have created a carefully considered and coherent exhibition.

We were impressed by the overall high quality of the works and the various dynamic trajectories that could be followed at different points – especially taking into consideration the very different backgrounds of the artists, living and working under very different conditions in Palestine and throughout the Palestinian diaspora.

In a wide variety of media, and through the individual voices of these artists, a set of diverse narratives unfolded, connecting personal stories with the pressing questions of Palestine and the postcolonial, globalised and digitalised world. The works represent distinctive, individual artistic sensibilities, but they also show intriguing points of connection.

We, as jurors, might evaluate and connect those narratives differently, but we want to emphasise – especially those of us who came to Palestine for the first time on this occasion – that we learned a great deal about the situation here from each of these artists.

We were lucky to have been given the chance to talk

to seven of them in person in front of their works. Three artists currently living in the diaspora (in the US and Europe) were not able to come to Palestine, but at least we could connect with them via digital communication. This mixture of different possibilities of encounter and conversation is itself an inevitable issue in reflecting on the conditions of contemporary Palestinian art.

Given the impressive range of work that had been shortlisted, it was a challenge to reduce that list to a small number of prize-winners, and needless to say this was not possible without compromise. Although each position has its distinguished qualities and deserves a special mention, we decided to keep to the first, second and third prize places, but we took the liberty of dividing one prize into two.

Making our announcements in reverse order, we award the Third Prize to Ola Zaitoun's *Necrosis*. We were moved by the artist's bravery to put intimate moments of family life and her personal vulnerability on display, and by her ability to find a compelling balance between meticulous execution, using the unforgiving medium of the ball-point pen, and a more destructive impulse to distort and erase the personal features of depicted characters, smudging their faces with gold paint (a medium that carries many cultural and historical associations, from make-up to death masks), and presenting the resulting pictures within commercially commonplace gold frames. The domestic familiarity of the display format is combined with more anxious and unsettling content.

Following a long discussion, the jury decided to give the second prize to two artists who respond to different aspects of Palestinian reality in very different ways and from significantly different positions. Our second prize goes equally to Firas Shehadeh and Dima Srouji.

The work of Firas Shehadeh is based on personal experience as a refugee between Jordan and Palestine. In his absorbing film *Never Here Cool Memories*, Firas has found a compelling form of audiovisual expression with which to trace experiences of displacement and to contemplate the vexed issue of the right to return, exploring imagined memory and

transgenerational trauma through text and images. His filmic style is richly poetic in its means of addressing the political complexities of being a Palestinian refugee. Subtly staging his gallery intervention, Firas puts the viewer in a position to reflect on landscape and its accessibility, and on stillness and movement as conditions that are not always chosen voluntarily.

Dima Srouji has also produced work that is concerned with the representation of the politics of landscape. Although mainly practising within the field of architecture, Dima works in an experimental mode entirely appropriate to the exhibition. Her presentation, entitled *The Rule of Superposition*, dually focusing on the mapping of the city of Jerusalem and its archaeological excavation, is an exploration of the role of the map in the assertion of colonial power. Her striking minimal structure – combining survey models of sites in Jerusalem – is an inventive sculptural attempt to interrogate cartographic politics and regimes of visibility, inviting us to both occupy the raised viewing position of the coloniser while also studying landscape ‘from below’.

In choosing the first prize for the 2018 YAYA award, there was considerable discussion – but our choice of winner is one who, in different ways, impressed all of the jury members. The winner of the 2018 prize is Safaa Khateeb. Safaa’s project, *The Braids Rebellion*, was commended by the judges for both its technical and conceptual sophistication. It is exceptional, striking work, employing the unusual practice of scan photography in a rigorous and challenging manner. Principally, however, it was Safaa’s profound and affecting achievement in creating an oblique form of aesthetic and political representation that impressed the jury. By picturing braids of hair donated to a breast cancer campaign by incarcerated Palestinian women (in February 2017), Safaa focused on an act of human generosity and a form of solidarity between prison life and the outside world. The resulting photographic installation has a concentrated, pared-back aesthetic intensity that is nonetheless powerful in its evocation of resistance and empowerment.

Safaa is to be congratulated for her outstanding contribution to YAYA 2018 – and we wish to congratulate all four of the prize-winners in the belief that the YAYA serves as both a symbolic and a practical tool of empowerment at the beginning of their careers. We strongly believe, however, that participation in the exhibition We Shall Be Monsters is a great, empowering achievement for everyone involved – and we keenly look forward to following the future endeavours of all ten participating artists.

Sandi Hilal, Declan Long, Eva Scharrer,
Ahlam Shibli, and Jorge Tacla

Left to right: Eva Scharrer, Ahlam Shibli, Declan Long, Sandi Hilal, Emily Jacir, Jorge Tacla, and Nisreen Naffa, during YAYA jury sessions at A. M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Centre.



BIOGRAPHIES

ARTISTS

Alaa Abu Asad lives and works between the Netherlands and Palestine. He received a BFA from the Department of Photography at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, and his MA from the Dutch Art Institute (DAI), ArteZ University of the Arts in Arnhem. Alaa's work is focused on the image and its various uses and readings. His work has also featured in many exhibitions and events in cities around the world, including Aarau, Arnhem, Athens, Beirut, Berlin, Bethlehem, Biella, Brussels, Cairo, Haifa, Jerusalem, Limassol, London, Milan, Nazareth, New York City, Oslo, Ramallah, Rotterdam, Salvador de Bahia and Zurich.

Leila Abdelrazaq is a Detroit-based graphic novelist who was raised between Chicago and Seoul. Leila received her BFA in Theatre Arts and her BA in Arabic Studies from DePaul University in Chicago in 2015, and is currently pursuing her MA in Contemporary Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Michigan. She is the author and illustrator of *Baddawi* (Just World Books 2015), which was shortlisted for the 2015 Palestine Book Awards and has been translated into three languages. She is also the author of *The Opening* (Tosh Fesh 2017), which was awarded a Tosh Fesh grant, as well as a number of zines and short comics. Her most recent solo exhibition 'Drawing in the Diaspora' was held at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn in 2016. Her work has also been displayed in a number of group exhibitions in New York, London, Montreal and Beirut.

Yusef Audeh is an artist who explores technological systems, using motifs from architecture and space, cinema and fiction, vision and perception, ergonomics, and other artistic and representational enigmas. His subject matter has ranged from machines and automation, to animal-human relationships, software and language, hyperreality, and

architectural modernism. He has exhibited at Townhouse Gallery, Egypt (2013), Red Bull Studios, New York (2015), *CONTROL: Experiment*, Sweden (2016) and Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Italy (2018). He studied on the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology, and lives and works in New York.

Haitham Haddad is an illustrator and visual designer who lives and works in Haifa, Palestine. He earned a bachelor's degree in Fashion Design from Shenkar, the college of engineering and design, in 2011. He has since participated in several collective and solo exhibitions, including Qalandiya International and 2OG gallery. His work is influenced by costume history, queer culture, religious iconography, and his immediate surroundings. Haitham began working in graphic design in 2012 through collaborating with local crews and culture producers. Currently his works fluctuate across the spectrum of visual arts, combining video art, illustration and animation and creating images that tackle and discuss our identity/mentality in the new world and how it is shape-shifting under the circumstances of time/location/sphere.

Safaa Khateeb lives and works in Jerusalem and the Galilee village of Kfar Kanna. She has a Bachelor of Arts in photography from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem (2016), and is currently completing her Master's degree in cinema studies from the University of Haifa. In 2016, Safaa participated in an artist's residency at La Cité Internationale des arts in Paris. She has exhibited her *Baghdad Studio* project six times in 2016-2017: at Henri Frick Square, Saint Joss ten-Noode in Brussels; L'Uzine in Casablanca; Padedco Gallery in Ramallah; the French Institute in Nablus; Fattoush Gallery in Haifa; and Jeune Création Gallery in Paris. In 2016, she exhibited *Palestine World Cup 2034* at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and her *Dome of the Rock* video installation at the Bezalel Gallery, Jerusalem. Safaa is the 2016 winner of the Palestine In & Out Festival in Paris –

Photography Category and recipient of the 2018.

Dina Mimi is a visual artist, living and working in Jerusalem, Palestine. Her practice is multi-faceted and uses video, sound, performance and text. For the past three years, Dina has been interested in issues of death and human remains in the public sphere, such as the normalisation of death in public sites, suicide subject; martyrdom, body protest and self-immolation specifically in Palestine. She emphasises that when the body settles to perform the right to exist becomes non-negotiable. Mimi obtained her Bachelor's degree from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem in 2016, and her MFA degree in art in the public sphere from ECAV (École cantonale d'art du Valais) in Switzerland. During her studies, Dina has participated in several international art workshops and group exhibitions, such as 'En Marche', the Art Museum of Valais, Sion, 2017. In addition to receiving the Kanik Chung Legacy Fellowship, Boston in 2017, she has also participated in Qalandiya International in 2016.

Firas Shehadeh is an artist based in Vienna, raised between Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and with a background that developed from being a resident of a Palestinian refugee camp in Amman. His work explores his relationship with the space and the influence of authority on the alteration of the collective consciousness and identity. He is interested in post-colonial effects, technology and history. Exhibitions include 'Sentences on the Banks and other Activities', Darat al Funun (2010); the 64th Berlinale (2014); Qalandiya International (2014); La Capella, Barcelona (2015); Body Politics, Loop Barcelona (2015); Colectivo Acciones de Arte (C.A.D.A.), Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid (2016); /si:n/ festival of video art and performance, Ramallah (2017); Truth is Black, Write over it with a Mirage's light, Darat al Funun, Amman (2018).

Dima Srouji is an architect living and working between Ramallah and Sharjah, where she teaches architecture at the American University of Sharjah. She received a Bachelor of Architecture, with Honours, from Kingston University in 2012 and a Master of Architecture from Yale University in 2016. At Yale she received the nomination for the Bass Scholar in 2016, and the H.I. Feldman Prize for her Advanced Studio project with professor Peter Eisenman. Since graduating she has worked for Cino Zucchi in Milan, Riwaq in Ramallah, and has exhibited at Amman Design Week and Dubai Design Week. Her writings have been published in Jerusalem Quarterly, Brownbook, Pulp, and Paprika. Her work lies in the expanded context of interdisciplinary research projects. It acts as a form of political commentary and as a place-making or unmaking tool. She questions ideas of identity and globalisation through historic strata and spatial edges, in connection to the spirit of a place and displace through architectural projects, installations, product designs, and through her writing.

Walid Al Wawi lives and works in London, UK. In 2018, he received his MFA from Central Saint Martins College of Art in London. In 2011, he was awarded The Sheikh Manal Young Artist Award. Since then he has collaborated on group exhibitions and contributed to international and local art festivals. His first live performance was in late 2014 at FIAC in Paris. After obtaining his MFA from Central Saint Martins, Walid was awarded a scholarship from the Sheikh Salama Art Foundation in Abu Dhabi that enabled him to go on many residential experiences, including the 2017 Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Residency for International Artists in Seoul, South Korea. Walid's work has been added to many collections, including a recent acquisition in the collection of his Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Ola Zaitoun lives and works in Cana of Galilee. She received her BA in psychology and women studies in

2012 and an MFA in 2017 from Haifa University. She has participated in several exhibitions: The Gift Exhibition at Al Ma'mal Foundation, Jerusalem, (2015); 'Artnatura' at Limner Gallery in New York; Beautiful View Art Fair in Haifa (2016); and 'Pyramid Platform' at Pyramid Contemporary Art Center in Haifa (2018).

CURATOR

Emily Jacir's work investigates histories of colonization, exchange, translation, transformation, resistance, and movement. Jacir has built a complex and compelling oeuvre through a diverse range of media and methodologies that include unearthing historical material, performative gestures and in-depth research. She was awarded a Golden Lion at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007) for her work *Material* for a film; a Prince Claus Award from the Prince Claus Fund in The Hague (2007); the Hugo Boss Prize at the Guggenheim Museum (2008); the Alpert Award (2011) from the Herb Alpert Foundation; and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Rome Prize at the American Academy in Rome (2015). Jacir has had recent solo exhibitions at Alexander and Bonin, New York (2018); IMMA, Dublin (2016–17); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015); Darat al Funun, Amman (2014–15); Beirut Art Center (2010); and the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2009). Her work has been in major international group exhibitions, including at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; dOCUMENTA (13) (2012); five consecutive Venice Biennales; Sharjah Biennial 10 (2011); 29th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2010); 15th Biennale of Sydney (2006); Sharjah Biennial 7 (2005); Whitney Biennial (2004); and the 8th Istanbul Biennial (2003). In 2003, *Belongings*, a monograph on a selection of Jacir's work covering the period from 1998 through 2003 was published by Ok Books, with original essays by Edward Said, Stella Rolig, Christian Kravagna and John Menick. A second monograph, *Emily Jacir*, featuring original texts by

Murtaza Vali and Roland Wäspe, was published by Verlag Fur Moderne Kunst Nurnberg in 2008 in conjunction with the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum in St. Gallen. Buchhandlung Walther König published Jacir's book *ex libris* in 2012 in connection with dOCUMENTA(13). In 2015, The Khalid Shoman Foundation in Amman, Jordan, published *A Star is as Far as the Eye Can See and as Near as My Eye is to Me* (IdeaBooks, Amsterdam), the most extensive monograph to date on Jacir's work in English and Arabic, with essays by Yazid Anani, Ahmad Zaatar and Adila Laïdi-Hanieh. In 2015, Whitechapel and IMMA co-published with Prestel a fully illustrated catalogue, *Europa*, which included newly commissioned essays by Jean Fisher, Lorenzo Fusi, Omar Kholeif, Graziella Parati and Nikos Papastergiadis, as well as an excerpt from Franco Cassano's "Southern Thought" chosen by Jacir. *Europa* features almost two decades of sculpture, film, drawings, large-scale installations and photography, with a focus on Jacir's work in Europe, in particular Italy and the Mediterranean. NERO in Rome, Italy, published *TRANSLATIO* about the permanent installation *Via Crucis* at the Chiesa di San Raffaele in Milano in 2016. Jacir has been actively involved in education in Palestine since 2000 and is deeply invested in creating alternative spaces of knowledge production. She is the Founding Director of Dar Yusuf Nasri Jacir for Art and Research in Bethlehem. She is one of the founders and was a full-time professor at the International Academy of Art Palestine in Ramallah from 2007–17 (when the Academy closed) and she served on its Academic Board from 2006–12. Jacir led the first year of the Ashkal Alwan Home Workspace Program in Beirut and created the curriculum and programming for 2011–12, serving on its Curricular Committee from 2010–11. Between 1999–2002, she curated several Arab and Palestinian film programmes in New York City with Alwan for the Arts, while also teaching several workshops at Birzeit University. She conceived of and co-curated the first Palestine International Video Festival in

Ramallah in 2002. In 2007 she curated a selection of shorts, 'Palestinian Revolution Cinema (1968–1982)' which toured internationally.

JURY

Sandi Hilal has developed, with Alessandro Petti, a research-project based artistic practice that is both theoretically ambitious and practically engaged in the struggle for justice and equality. Together, they founded Campus in Camps, an experimental educational programme hosted in Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem, which aimed to overcome conventional educational structures by creating a space for critical and grounded knowledge production connected to greater transformations and the democratisation of society. In 2007 Hilal and Petti founded DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency), with Eyal Weizman, in Beit Sahour, Palestine, with the aim of combining an architectural studio and an art residency able to bring together architects, artists, activists, urbanists, filmmakers and curators to work collectively on the subjects of politics and architecture. Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti have participated in various international exhibitions, including a mid-career retrospective at New York University Abu Dhabi Art Gallery (2018), the Venice Biennale (2003/2008/2009/2013/2015), Istanbul Biennial (2009), Home Works Beirut (2010), Bienal de São Paulo (2014), the Asian Art Biennial (2015), Marrakech Biennial (2016), and Qalandia International (2016), among many others. They have been the recipients of the following awards: Keith Haring Fellowship in Art and Activism at Bard College; Loeb Fellowship, Harvard University; and the Prince Claus Prize for Architecture. Hilal was the head of the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program in the West Bank at UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) from 2008 to 2014. She is the co-author (with Petti and Weizman) of *Architecture after Revolution* (Sternberg, 2014).

Declan Long is Programme Director of the MA in Art in the Contemporary World at the National College of Art & Design, Dublin. He is a regular contributor to Artforum International, Frieze and Source Photographic Review. He is a board member of both the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin and the EVA International biennial of contemporary art in Limerick, Ireland. His book *Ghost-Haunted Land: Contemporary Art & Post-Troubles Northern Ireland* was published by Manchester University Press in 2017. In 2013 he served as a member of the judging panel for the Turner Prize.

Eva Scharrer is an art historian, freelance curator and writer based in Berlin. She has organised exhibitions internationally, among them "Random Walks" at Kunsthal 44 Møen, Møn, Denmark (2016); "Unfolding Constellations" at CoCA Torun, Poland (2016); "Gustav Metzger – Mass Media Yesterday and Today" at Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2015); and "To Paint is to Love Again" at Deutsche Bank KunstHalle in Berlin (2013). From 2009 to 2012 she was agent, curatorial researcher and writer for dOCUMENTA (13), and in 2007 was co-curator of the 8th Sharjah Biennial, "Still Life – Art, Ecology and the Politics of Change". She has been a nominator for and member of several international juries, such as the Documentary Film and Video Festival, Kassel (2009–2012); Future Generation Art Prize (2012); and the Zurich Art Prize (2014). The author of numerous catalogue essays on renowned and emerging artists, she has also been a contributor to international contemporary art journals such as Artforum and artforum.com, Frieze d/e, Spike Art Quarterly, Modern Painters, Texte zur Kunst and Kunst-Bulletin.

Ahlam Shibli was born in 1970 in Palestine. Through a documentary aesthetics, her photographic work addresses the contradictory implications of the notion of home; it deals with the loss of home and the fight against that loss, but also with the restrictions and limitations that the idea of home imposes on individuals and communities marked

by repressive identity politics. Shibli's work has been presented in solo and group exhibitions internationally. Her work includes the following series: *Heimat* (2016–17) referred to expellees and refugees of German descent, and to guest workers from the Mediterranean region, both of whom migrated to Kassel and the surrounding area as a result of the Second World War; *Occupation* (2016–17) is based on the destruction of Palestinian livelihoods in al-Khalil/Hebron and the occupied territories by the Israeli colonial regime and the actions of Zionist settlers; *Ramallah Archive* (2014) pointed to ways of reorganising collective and individual existence encountered in files and photographic negatives found in the Ramallah Municipality Archive, and in the contemporary city; *Death* (2011–2012) showed the efforts of Palestinian society to preserve the presence of those who have lost their lives fighting against the Israeli occupation; *Trauma* (2008–09) started out from the monuments that commemorate members of the French resistance against the Nazis together with French soldiers who fought in the colonial wars against the colonised peoples who were demanding their own independence; *Eastern LGBT* (2004/2006) showed how the bodies of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from Oriental societies are a contested primary home.

Jorge Tacla studied at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad de Chile in Santiago. In 1981, he moved to New York and has since exhibited his paintings in museums, biennials and galleries throughout the world. Recent exhibitions include "Jorge Tacla: Todo lo sólido se desvanece", CorpArtes, Santiago, Chile (2017–18); "Jorge Tacla: Sign of Abandonment", Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York (2017); "Informe de Lesiones", the Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación, Santiago, Chile (2016); "Identidad Oculta", New York City Center (2016); "Tales of Two Cities: New York & Beijing", Bruce Museum, Greenwich, CT (2014); the Emergency Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013); Dublin Contemporary, Dublin

(2011); Sharjah Biennial 10 (2011); and the 798 Biennale, Beijing (2009).

Tacla completed a residency at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, Italy (2013). Notable awards include New York Foundation for the Arts (1987, 1991), the Eco Art Award, Rio de Janeiro (1992), and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1988), among others. He lives and works in New York City and in Santiago, Chile.

Left to right: Leila Abdelrazaq, Safaa Khateeb, Alaa Abu Asaad, Firas Shehadeh, Dima Srouji, Walid Al Wawi, Yusef Audeh, Haitham Haddad, and Dina Mimi. Biella, Italy. Courtesy of Emily Jacir



Left to right: Nisreen Naffa, Firas Shehadeh, Walid Al Wawi,
Emily Jacir, Haitham Haddad, Safaa Khateeb, Dina Mimi,
Leila Abdelrazaq, Dima Srouji, and Ola Zaitoun, Biella, Italy.
Courtesy of Emily Jacir





Participants during a ten-day workshop at the University of Ideas at Cittadellarte, Biella, Italy, June 2018. Courtesy of Emily Jacir

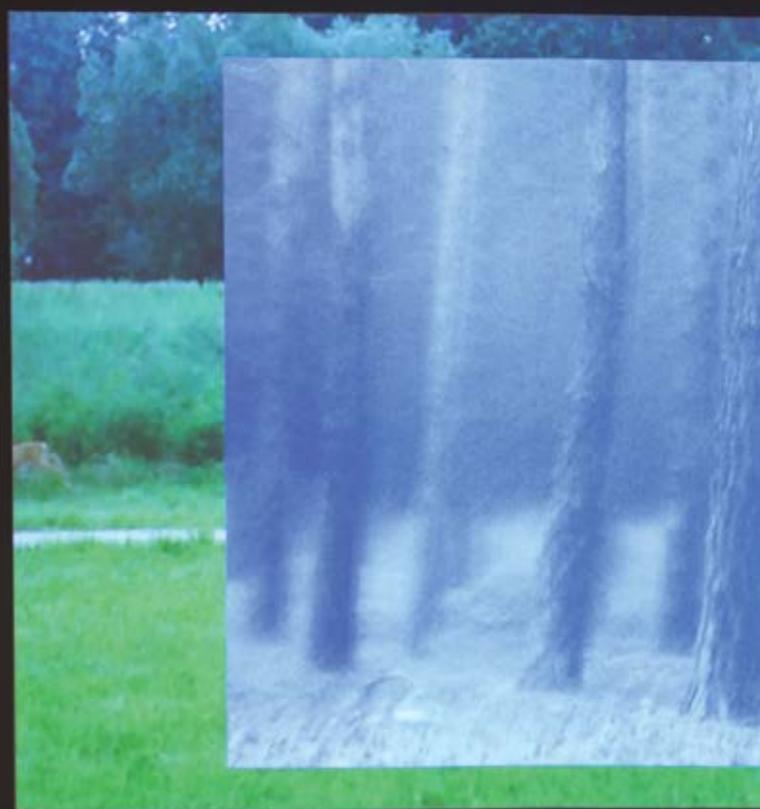




ALAA ABU ASAD
THE UNTRANSLATABLE WORDS OF LOVE
2018, SINGLE CHANNEL VIDEO, 20'25"

This work stems from an experimental place: both visual and verbal languages are inconsistently 'at stake'. Yet, despite the fact that the video is segmented into 4 chapters, it requires effort to follow its development—there is no desire to weave a coherent narrative. Each of the chapters feels as if it aspires to become a separate video work on its own. There are many distinguished characters that feature throughout the video, but two of them can be aptly considered protagonists: the hart (deer) and the blue heron. This is due to their recurring appearances and because of the dual role they play, simultaneously. Each is a captured object, or a mere character, but they are also witnesses to the chronicle of events. Formally, the work is influenced by Franz Kafka's novella *Metamorphosis* from 1915. But it doesn't consider metamorphosis as a state of physical transformation only, but rather as a means of physical movement between spaces and progression in time. The work also hankers to deliver a visual experience where the personal/private and the political/collective are firmly intertwined, and to challenge both the use and viewing of (still and moving) images and their (semantic) translations at the same time.











A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored sweater, is sitting on a wooden bench in a dark room. She is facing a large screen that displays Arabic text. The text reads: "المساءلة مسألة ناس عم بدافعوا عن حالهن ضد حكومة فاشية". The room is dimly lit, with the light from the screen illuminating the woman and the bench.

المساءلة مسألة ناس عم بدافعوا عن حالهن ضد حكومة فاشية

علاء أبو أسعد

مشمش قلبي

٢٠١٨، فيديو، ٢٥:٢٠ دقيقة

تتجلى مزايا هذا العمل في مكان تجريبي، إذ لا يوجد انسجام في اللغتين البصريّة والسمعية، أو في ما يجمعهما. وعلى الرغم من أنّ الفيديو مقسّم إلى أربعة فصول، فإنّه من المتعذّر استتباع تطوّر الأحداث فيه: ليست هناك أيّ رغبة في حياكة حبكة لنصّ الفيديو، ويبدو كأنّ كلّ فصل من الفصول الأربعة يطمح إلى أن يصبح عملاً فنياً بحدّ ذاته. تظهر العديد من الشخصيات المختلفة في الفيديو، لكن اثنتين منها تتميزان بطابع مختلف عن الباقي؛ ألا وهما الغزال وطاقر مالك الحزين، وذلك بسبب ظهورهما المتكرّر، وبفعل الدور ثنائيّ الجوهر الذي تلعبانه، وبالتالي يمكن اعتبارهما «بطلتي الرواية». من جهة، يمكن رؤية الغزال وطاقر مالك الحزين كمجرّد شخصيتين تظهران في الفيديو، لكن من جهة أخرى، يقوم كلّ منهما بدور الشاهد على الأحداث المسجّلة في الفيديو. يستوحي هذا العمل أحداثه من رواية «ميتامورفوسيس» (المسخ) لفرانز كافكا التي كتبها العام ١٩١٥، ليس فقط باعتبارها حالة من التحوّل الفيزيائي في جسم الإنسان، وبالتالي عجزه عن تلبية متطلبات المجتمع، بل كأداة تساهم في التنقل من مكان إلى آخر، والتقدّم في الزمن. يطمح هذا العمل في النهاية إلى تقديم تجربة مشاهدة مختلفة، يتمّ من خلالها اختبار استعمال الصورة والفيديو وعملية ترجمتهما، وكذلك التساؤل عن وطد العلاقة بين المكان الشخصي والسياسي العام.

DIMA SROUJI
THE RULE OF SUPERPOSITION
2018, PLASTER, WOOD, AND STEEL

Titled after a basic axiom used in the science of geology, this work subverts the violent use of the practice of archaeology in Jerusalem by mapping surfaces, relying on memory and spirit, and taking viewers beneath the surface of the city to distort time and space. By shifting perspective, the Rule of Superposition (old on bottom, new on top) and the assumed modern temporal grid of linear time are questioned.

The mapped surfaces rethink the city as a homogeneous object and reveal a heterogeneous network, a fabric of traces that questions scientific processes and problematises the singular surface narratives constructed and censored by agencies of power. The traces are used as an access point to an alternative understanding of Jerusalem through its tactile ground. These traces, shown on the bottom surface, reveal a personal and emotional record of the city that relies on memory and spirit rather than scientific method.

The work *reveals* by tracing and excavating the ground of Jerusalem. The pure cartography presented on top acts purely as a blanket covering, or censoring, of what lies beneath the ground. The installation brings the viewers from the aerial perspective of the enlightenment to the levels of the subterranean as an act of excavation in itself.













إن هذا العمل يزعزع الاستخدام العنيف لعلم الآثار في القدس، من خلال عملية مسح الأسطح بالاعتماد على الذاكرة والروح، ومن خلال الطريقة التي يؤخذ فيها المشاهدون إلى أسفل سطح المدينة بهدف خلخلة الزمن والفضاء. من خلال تحريك المنظور، تتم مساءلة «قانون تعاقب الطبقات» (القديم من الأسفل، والجديد بالأعلى) والشبكة الحديثة التي تفترض خطية الزمن.

تعمل الأسطح المسووحة على إعادة التفكير بالمدينة كشيء متجانس، بينما تكشف عن شبكة غير متجانسة ونسيج من الأثر الذي يسائل السيرورات العلمية، ويؤشكّل سردية «السطح الفردي» التي يتم بناؤها ومراقبتها من قبل وكالات القوى. هنا يتم توظيف الأثر كنقطة بدء لفهم مختلف للقدس من خلال أرضها الملموسة. إن هذه الآثار، التي تظهر على السطح السفلي، تكشف عن سجل شخصي وعاطفي للمدينة يعتمد على الذاكرة والروح بدلاً من المنهج العلمي.

يقوم العمل هنا بالكشف من خلال التقصي والتنقيب في أرضية القدس. تعمل الخريطة المنقولة الصافية في الأعلى كغطاء يغطي، أو يفرض رقابة على ما يقبع تحت الأرض. يجلب العمل التركيبي المشاهدين من المنظور الجوي التنويري إلى مستويات ما تحت الأرض كفعل تنقيب بحد ذاته.

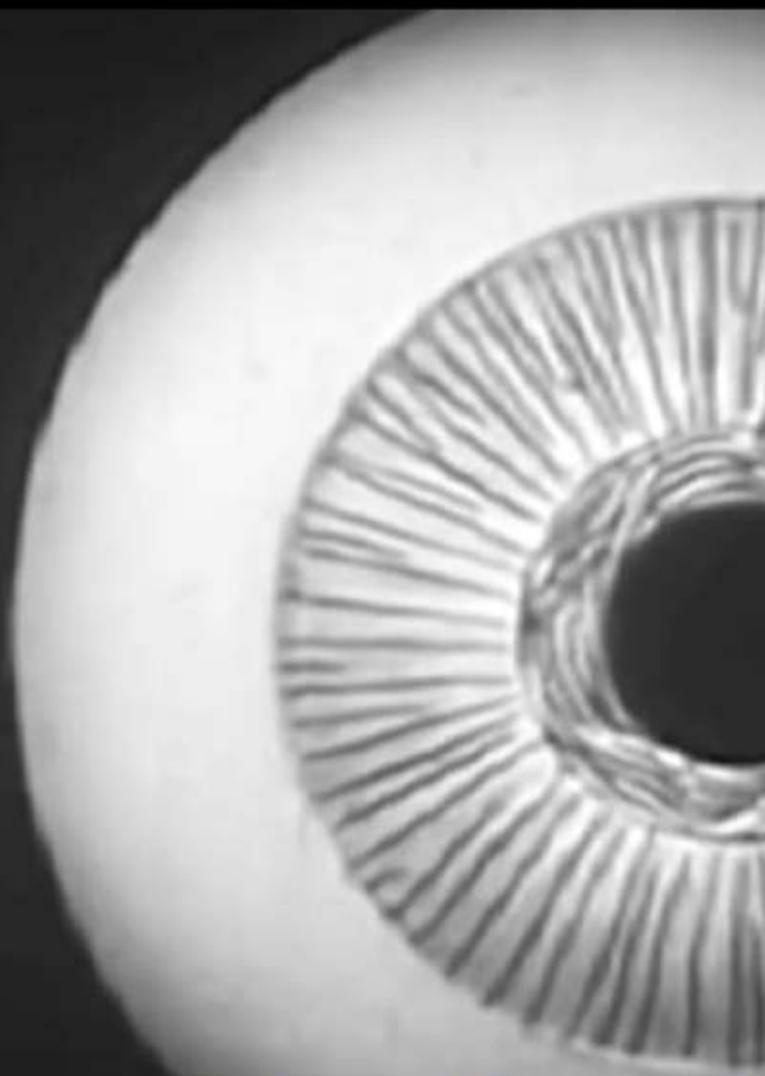
DINA MIMI
IN ORDER TO TALK WITH THE DEAD
2018, SINGLE CHANNEL VIDEO, 4'42"

This project navigates through the French colonial control over the skulls of Algerian victims killed during the battle of Zaatcha in 1849. The French army left Algeria for Paris, taking these heads with them as “trophies” of their victory. The skulls were exhibited in the Natural History Museum in Paris for decades, under the heading “The Evolution of Humans and Human Societies”.

In Order to Talk with the Dead follows the circulation of these “trophy” skulls in relation to their home origin and the visitors to the museum. French colonialism is forever replicated in the museum by turning the skull into an object devoid of history. This erasure anaesthetises the skulls into pieces of art, leaving them without an origin, any explanation or a name.

The video was shot in three locations: the Jericho desert, and the Musée de l'Homme and the Catacombs in Paris. Some of the found footage is archival, while other scenes have been filmed by the artist. The work examines the relationship between the museum viewer perceiving the skull as an object, and the skull gazing at the viewer as a mortal. Is the gaze between them reciprocated? Is the visitor seen by the skull? The museum is the site of these encounters, it possesses powers that alienate and disorient the viewer from their own history.





I shut my right eye and y



you were no longer there







يستكشف فيديو «طرق التكلم مع الموت» السيطرة الكولونيبالية الفرنسية على جماجم الضحايا الجزائريين الذين قتلوا في معركة الزعاطشة العام ١٨٤٩. غادر الجيش الفرنسي الجزائر إلى فرنسا حاملين معهم هذه الرؤوس كغنائم حرب تعبيراً عن نصرهم. وضعت هذه الجماجم في متحف التاريخ الطبيعي في باريس لعقود، تحت عنوان «تطور الإنسان والمجتمعات البشرية».

يقتضي «طرق التكلم مع الموت» مسيرة هذه الجماجم/الغنائم من خلال علاقتها مع موطنها الأصلي، ومع زائري المتحف. إن الكولونيبالية الفرنسية ما زالت حية في المتاحف، وتظهر من خلال وضع الجمجمة كغرض منزوع من سياقه التاريخي. إن هذا المحو هو ما يجمد هذه الجماجم إلى قطع فنية، بدون أصل، أو شرح، أو اسم.

تم تصوير هذا الفيديو في ثلاثة مواقع: صحراء أريحا، متحف الإنسان، المدافن الأرضية في باريس. يتكون الفيلم من مقاطع فيلمية أرشيفية، وأخرى من تصوير الفنانة، ويفحص العلاقة بين جمهور المتحف الذي يتفرج على الجمجمة كغرض، وعلى الجمجمة وهي تحدد في المشاهد ككائن فان. هل النظرة بينهما تبادلية؟ هل ترى الجمجمة المشاهد؟ إن المتحف هو موقع هذه اللقاءات، ويحمل قوى تتوه المشاهد وتغربه عن تاريخه الخاص.

FIRAS SHEHADEH
NEVER HERE COOL MEMORIES
2018, SOUND, VIDEO, 12'19", PLASTIC CHAIRS

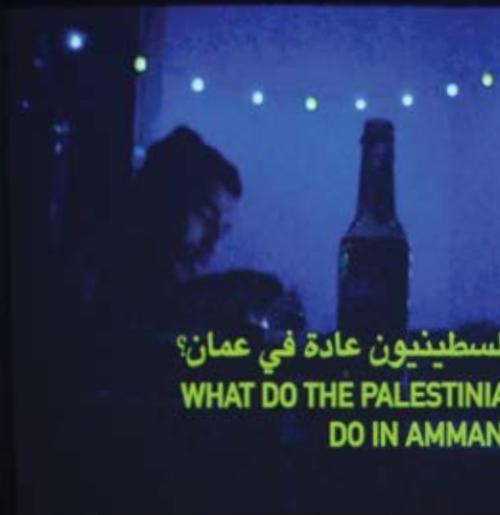
This work investigates the structure of feelings of a Palestinian in Amman in a way that Jordan's capital turns out to be a hybrid Palestinian sphere. In this sphere, imagined memory and trans-generational trauma work to construct and visualise real concrete moments that are connected to colonialism, displacement and alienation.

The Palestinian state project and the consequences of the Oslo agreement work against more than two-thirds of the Palestinian population. It eliminates the Palestinian entity/identity through narrowing it down to a "state" narrative, thereby leaving Palestinian refugees and those in the diaspora isolated and abandoned, in a permanent state of waiting. The structure of feelings is captured in a constant oscillation between two points, between memory/"nostalgia" and memento/"reality".

Never Here Cool Memories is a register of capturing a forbidden land through the eye of a wanderer looking at Palestine from the East Bank to see what "a homeland" looks like, through emotions formed out of nostalgia and geographic displacement.

uncertainty boredom patience







ماذا يفعل الفلاسفة؟
PHILOSOPHERS USUALLY
ASK?







٢٠١٨، فيديو، صوت ثنائي القناة، ١٩: ١٢ دقيقة، ٤ كراسي

يستكشف عمل «لا ذكريات رائعة هنا» بنية الشاعر لفلسطيني يعيش في عمّان بطريقة تجعل من عاصمة الأردن فضاءً فلسطينياً هجيناً. في هذا الفضاء، كل من الذاكرة المتخيلة والصدمة المتوارثة عبر الأجيال، تعمل على بناء وصنع صور بصرية للحظات حقيقية مرتبطة بالاستعمار، والنزوح، والاغتراب.

يقف مشروع الدولة الفلسطينية وتبعات اتفاقية أوسلو ضد أكثر من ثلثي الفلسطينيين. فهو يغيب الهوية/الكينونة الفلسطينية من خلال اختزالها في سردية «الدولة»، جاعلاً من اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في الشتات معزولين ومهجورين وقاطني حالة دائمة من الانتظار. يلتقط العمل بنية الشاعر من خلال التذبذب بين نقطتين: الذاكرة/النوستالجيا، والتذكار/الواقع.

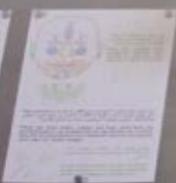
«لا ذكريات رائعة هنا» هو سجل يلتقط أرضاً ممنوعة من خلال أعين متجول ينظر إلى فلسطين من الضفة الشرقية، ليرى كيف يبدو «الوطن» من خلال المشاعر المكونة من النوستالجيا والإزاحة الجغرافية.

HAITHAM HADDAD
THE NEW MODE
2018, MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION

“... What you are about to see is a projection displaying the events and life in areas A–G between the years 2050 and 2078 when the land was under The Great Siege. The tour in the embroidery museum in Ramallah in the year 2170 is about to end, and this is the last chapter in the tour before entering the renaissance hall celebrating the awakening of our culture and stepping into what we know as “The New Palestine”...”

The New Mode is an installation leading the viewer through the main events, changes and societal habits that developed through a short timeline during the years mentioned above, utilising an exaggerated speculative future to display and question ethical and anthropological issues that we encounter and carry both collectively and individually. Examining the conceptual image of the body as it becomes a canvas for an alternative approach to activism, and the shift in notion from activism for public acknowledgement, with thundering expressions, to private individual acts of resistance that are intentionally made to go unnoticed. These changes function as a reflection of our current ideas of international exposure, revolution and the body as a means of existing living resistance. Inspired by museum aesthetics, nature documentaries and narrative TV reports, *The New Mode* presents a report about a future that might not happen, of a reality that unfortunately might be real.





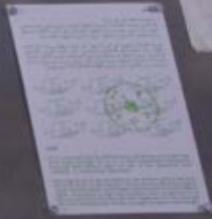
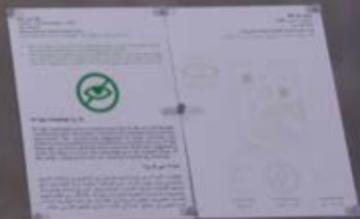
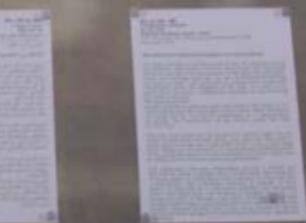
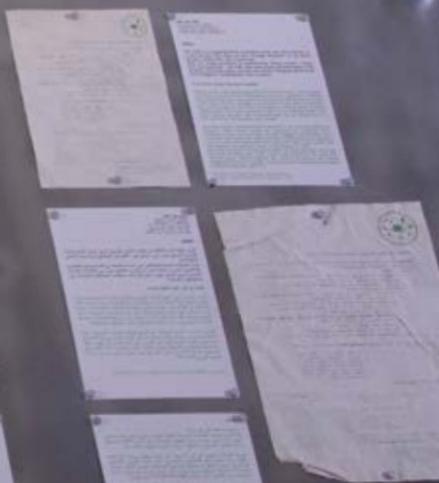
Text in Arabic, likely a description or explanation of the garment or the patterns shown in the images.

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مَمْنُوعُ إِرْتِدَاءِ أَيِّ
شَارَاتٍ وَطَنِيَّةٍ





هيثم حداد

الطراز الجديد

٢٠١٨، تركيب متعدد الوسائط

«أنتم على وشك أن تشاهدوا فيلماً يعرض الأحداث والحياة في مناطق أ-خ بين سنتي ٢٠٥٠ و٢٠٧٨، حين كانت الأراضي تحت (الحصار الكبير). نحن الآن في متحف التطريز في رام الله في العام ٢١٧٠. الجولة على وشك أن تنتهي، وهذا هو الجزء الأخير فيها قبل دخول قاعة التنوير التي تحتفي باللحظة التي شعت فيها الثقافة ودخلت عصر ما يعرف بـ (فلسطين الجديدة) ...».

الطراز الجديد عبارة عن عمل تركيبتي يأخذ المشاهد في رحلة خلال الأحداث الرئيسية، والتغيرات، والعادات الاجتماعية التي تطورت خلال فترة زمنية قصيرة في السنوات المذكورة أعلاه. يوظف العمل نظرة تنبؤية مبالغاً فيها نحو المستقبل، لعرض ومساءلة القضايا الأخلاقية والأنثروبولوجية التي نواجهها ونحملها بشكل جمعي وفردى. إلى جانب ذلك، يتفحص العمل الصورة المفهومية للجسد وهو يتحول إلى أساس لتوجه بديل نحو النشاط السياسي، إذ يعرض التحول في مفهوم النشاط السياسي من ذلك الذي يأخذ شكل تعبيرات مضخمة، ويقام من أجل الاعتراف العام بذلك الذي يأخذ شكل أفعال مقاومة فردية وشخصية ومعمولة بنية أن تمر دون أن تحظى بالانتباه. هذه التغيرات تعمل كانعكاس للأفكار الحالية حول الانفتاح العالمي، والثورة، والجسد، كطرق لوجود المقاومة الحية. العمل مستوحى من جماليات المتاحف، والأفلام الوثائقية عن الطبيعة، والتقارير الإخبارية السردية، ويقدم تقريراً عن المستقبل الذي قد لا يحصل، للأسف، عن واقع يمكن أن يكون حقيقياً.

LEILA ABDELRAZAO
STILL BORN
2018, SINGLE CHANNEL DIGITAL
ANIMATION, 4'02"

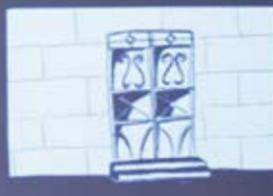
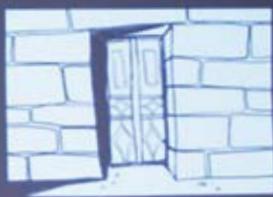
Using excerpts from my mother's 2002 essay, "How To Be the Mother of a Stillborn Baby", Still Born merges the comic form with animation in order to bring parallel realities and storylines into focus. The family's personal tragedy is positioned within the wider context of life in the Palestinian diaspora to ask questions about loss, survival, collective memory and identity formation, of hope beyond hope, and the seemingly impossible challenge of letting go. What remains is a question: If one day, all our false nostalgias and imaginaries get up and walk away, is that a kind of liberation? What futures would we be free to imagine without the weight of all our 'what ifs' bearing down on our consciousness?

You will have steeped yourself in briny
grief for so long, it will have soaked
into your pores and become a part of you.



At that last
ecstatic push,
you'll listen for
her cry.



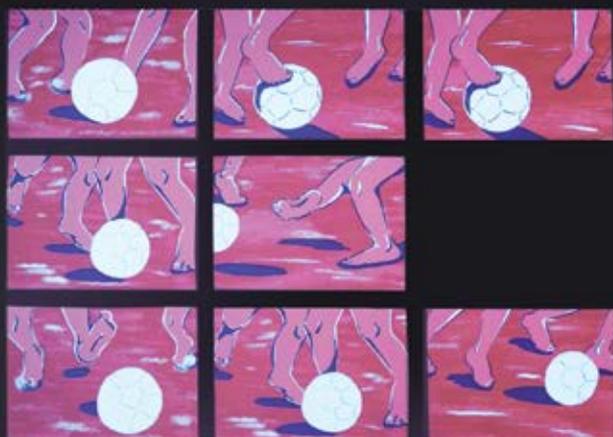


But there is nothing
quieter than this
birth.





Small, illegible text label on the right side of the projection.



ليلى عبد الرزاق

مولود ميت

٢٠١٨، رسوم متحركة رقمية، ٤:٠٢ دقائق

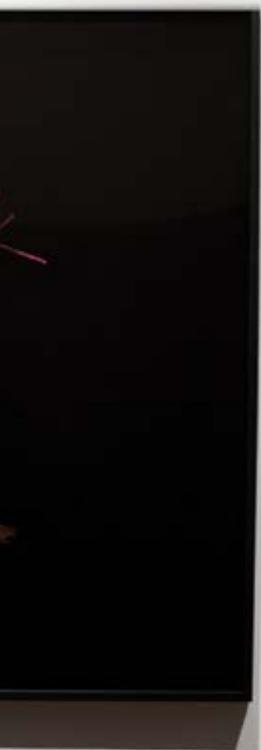
بإستخدام مقاطعٍ من نصٍ مقالةٍ لأُمِّي من العام ٢٠٠٢ بعنوان «كيف تكونين أماً لطفل ولد ميتاً؟»، يمزج عمل مولود ميت بين الكوميدي والرسوم المتحركة من أجل وضع قصص عدة وأكثر من واقع في الواجهة. يضع العمل مأساة العائلة الخاصة ضمن السياق الأوسع للشقات الفلسطيني، ويطرح أسئلة حول فقدان، والنجاة، الذاكرة الجمعية، وتشكيل الهوية، حول الأمل ما بعد الأمل، وحول التحدي المستحيل الذي يتطلب منا أن نتحرر مما يأسرنا من دون أن نتخلى عن الأشياء التي تعيننا على الاستمرار. ما يتبقى هو سؤال واحد: إذا استيقظنا ذات يوم لنجد جميع أشكال النوستالجيا والتخيل المستحيلة قد اختفت، هل يعتبر ذلك نوعاً من التحرر؟ ما هي أشكال المستقبل التي سنكون أحراراً لتخليها دون وطأة جميع أسئلة «ماذا لو» التي تنوء بثقلها على وعينا.

SAFAA KHATEEB
THE BRAIDS REBELLION
2018, SCANNED PHOTOGRAPHS, SOUND 7'

The Braids Rebellion is a research trip that has been artistically recreated of 25 original scenes of Palestinian girls – all under the age of 18 – who were arrested and imprisoned during 2015 and 2016. These scenes were originally encountered as real news items that appeared in our daily scrolling – which we no longer care about. The project demonstrates the concept of “life as origin”. The work is based on an event in February 2017 when prisoners in Hasharon prison cut off their braids after hearing an announcement on a local radio station urging people to donate their hair for cancer patients. Focusing on the prisoners’ refusal of any expression of sympathy towards them and their insistence on not being isolated from the act of resistance through reinforcing the continuity of life inside the occupation’s prison cells, the girls again use their bodies as a tool of resistance through this revolutionary act represented by cutting off their braids and smuggling them outside the prison so that others may live.













٢٠١٨، صور فوتوغرافية بتقنية المسح الضوئي، عمل صوتي ٧ دقائق

هذا المشروع هو ملخص بحث استقصائي أعيد إنتاجه فنياً لـ ٢٥ مشهداً أصلياً لفتيات فلسطينيات تحت سن ١٨ عاماً، تم اعتقالهن خلال العامين ٢٠١٥ و٢٠١٦. هذه المشاهد الأصلية التي أنتجها الواقع لأغراض ليست فنية، كانت بمثابة أخبار اصطدمنا بها أثناء قراءتنا السريعة اليومية، التي لم نعد نلقي لها بالاً.

يرتكز هذا الإنتاج على واقعة قصّ الأسيرات لضفائرهن بنية التبرع بها لمرضى السرطان في شباط ٢٠١٧، حين مرّ على أسماعهن في إحدى زنازين سجن هشارون إعلان صوتي من إذاعة محلية، يحث على التبرع لمرضى السرطان.

تستعرض الفنانة فكرة «الحياة هي الأصل» كملخص لهذا المشروع، التي تجسدها هذه الأسيرة المتهمّة بتهم أمنية خطيرة، تحت ظروف سيئة وقاسية عبر نفيها أي استجداء عاطفي تجاهها، وتصر على عدم عزلها عن فعلها المقاوم عبر تعزيز استمرار الحياة من داخل زنزانه في سجون الاحتلال، مستخدمة جسدها مرة أخرى كأداة للكفاح عبر هذا الفعل الثوري المتمثل بضميرتها، وتهريبها إلى خارج السجن كي يحيا الآخرون.

WALID AL WAWI
EMBASSY OF UNOFFICIAL PALESTINE
2018, CANVAS PARACHUTE, MIXED MEDIA
INSTALLATION

This work mixes the iconography of the Dome of the Rock with the mechanism of parachuting in an architectural image that identifies its purpose as a body of aid to Palestinians.

Playing the role of an unofficial representative, *EOUP*, or The Embassy of Unofficial Palestine, is an organisation that works to provide relief for Palestinian Refugees residing outside of the PLO mandates or UNRWA jurisdiction.

The Embassy is set to be run by Palestinians for Palestinians through organised voluntary work and services. It will mainly provide social help in the form of medical advice, legal work and many other forms of assistance for Palestinian Refugees around the globe.

In its current standing, the work balances itself between the possible and the absurd, by composing itself through analytical research and theoretical study within the conceptual parameters of art.







State

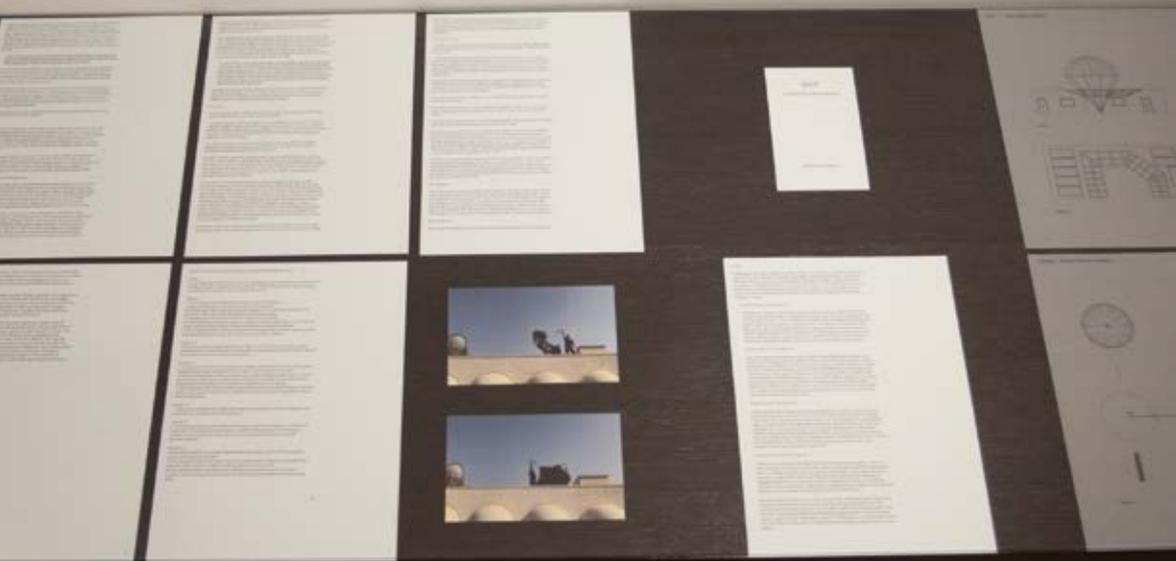
The Palestinian
in Dubai, the

of Palestine

an Consulate General
United Arab Emirates

الرسالة تخاطب السفارة المصرية بأن تجدد الوثيقة
لأن صاحبها ليس لديه جواز سفر فلسطيني

Sample of the sole possible correspondence from the Palestinian Embassy
to the (subject) in his country of birth



وليد الواوي

قنصلية فلسطين غير الرسمية

٢٠١٨، مظلة باراشوت، تركيب متعدد الوسائط

يخلط عمل «قنصلية فلسطين غير الرسمية» (EOUP)، بين قبة الصخرة وميكانيكية القفز بالمظلات في صورة معمارية تُعرّف هدفها كجسم داعم للفلسطينيين.

قنصلية فلسطين غير الرسمية عبارة عن مؤسسة تلعب دور ممثلية غير رسمية، وتعمل على توفير المساعدة للاجئين الفلسطينيين الذين يعيشون خارج حدود سلطة منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية، أو نطاق الأونروا.

أسست القنصلية كي يديرها فلسطينيون من أجل فلسطينيين، وتأخذ شكل خدمات تطوعية منظمة. ستقوم، بشكل أساسي، بتوفير مساعدة اجتماعية على شكل تقديم مشورات طبية، وأعمال قانونية، وأشكال أخرى من المساعدة لكثير من اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في أنحاء العالم.

في شكله الحالي، يوازن العمل نفسه بين الممكن والعبثي، فهو مكون من بحث تحليلي ودراسة نظرية ضمن الحدود المفهومية للفن.

YUSEF AUDEH
BTCOIN HUSTL€R
2018, PAINTING INSTALLATION

BTCOIN HUSTL€R features symbolic elements and motifs – a metallic bed, passwords, a melted graphics processing unit (GPU), and oil paintings – from a written fiction set somewhere between Dubai and Moscow. In the narrative, a young, Arab-looking hustler discovers an online portal which allows him to get paid for his services in Bitcoin (BTC), a new, digital currency which is not backed by government and is completely anonymous. The character who is trapped within the narrative and represented in the abstract painting *Hustler Lying in Bed*, must grapple with a surreal paradox: the submission of his sexualized body, in exchange for an ethereal and intangible form of currency whose value is turbulent. *BTCOIN HUSTL€R* questions the extremities of beauty, desire and financial dependency today, which is none other than a metaphor for the human condition.





DISTORTS REE

FUD
MONEY

INVENTS
ALITY

YAS
+970.

VALUE W

A R



منصر ف
YASSIN
+970-504397
FS-VALUE WITHOUT
A BODY
WITH





VALUE



يوسف عودة
محتال بيتكوين

٢٠١٨ ، لوحات وتركيب متعدد الوسائط

«محتال بيتكوين» يقدم عناصر رمزية -سريير معدني ، كلمات سر ، بطاقة شاشة مذوبة ، ولوحات زيتيه- مأخوذة من نص متخيل يقع بين دبي وموسكو. في القصة ، يكتشف شاب بملامح عربية بوابة إلكترونية تسمح له بأن يتقاضى أجراً على خدماته في عملة ال بيتكوين ، وهي عبارة عن عملة رقمية غير مدعومة من قبل أي حكومة ، ويمكن لها أن تكون مجهولة تماماً. الشخصية العالقة في السرد والممثلة في اللوحة التجريدية «محتال مسلتق على السريير» ، عليها أن تصارع تناقضا سورياً: إخضاع جسدها الجنساني مقابل شكل أثيري وغير ملموس لعملة قيمتها متقلبة باستمرار. يطرح محتال بيتكوين أسئلة حول حدود الجمال ، والرغبة والاعتماد المالي في الوقت الحالي ، وهي مواضيع تشكل رمزاً للظرف الإنساني.

OLA ZAITOUN
NECROSIS
2018, MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER

“Necrosis” is a form of cell injury which results in the premature death of cells in living tissue by autolysis. This project is derived from Ola’s daily life in her village, in a society that may be slowly undergoing a transition from a patriarchal society to one that has greater equality between men and women, but where nevertheless women are still forced to “become women”: wives, sexual objects, mothers and housewives. The artist uses painting in multiple ways to create her artistic language. Her painting practice is not systematic; sometimes it depends on instincts, and at other times relies on research. She works on paper with oil paint as well as ballpoint pen, a medium she has an intimate daily connection with. She applies a layer of golden oil colour over the women’s faces to deform the perfect image. Unlike ink, which allows light to pass through it, the golden masks reflect light so that the audience sees their own reflection inside the paintings.

The gold mask is marketed as a cosmetic product that revitalizes the skin. In previous cultures it was linked to death. Women appear to be alive but they look like the dead, who do not live as they wish; their dreams and desires have been killed.













«التنخر» عبارة عن إصابة في الخلايا لعضو معين يؤدي إلى الموت المبكر لهذه الخلايا في الأنسجة الحية، من خلال الانحلال الذاتي. هذا العمل مستقى من حياة علا اليومية في قريتها وفي مجتمع ينتقل بشكل بطيء من مجتمع بطبركي إلى مجتمع أكثر مساواة بين النساء والرجال، ولكن لا تزال النساء فيه مضطرات إلى أن «يصبحن نساء»: زوجات، أغراض جنسية، أمهات، ومربيات. توظف الفنانة الرسم بطرق مختلفة من أجل خلق لغتها الفنية، فهي تتبع أساليب غير منهجية في ممارستها الفنية؛ أحياناً تأتي من غريزتها الفنية، وأحياناً أخرى تعتمد على البحث. تعمل زيتون على الورق باستخدام ألوان الزيت، إضافة إلى قلم الحبر الجاف، وهي أداة تحمل علاقة حميمة يومية مع الفنانة. تضع زيتون طبقة من الألوان الزيتية الذهبية على وجوه النساء من أجل تشويه الصورة المثالية. على عكس الحبر، الذي يسمح للضوء بأن يعبر من خلاله، فإن الأقنعة الذهبية تعكس الضوء مُتيحة للمتفرج أن يرى انعكاسه في اللوحات.

يتم تسويق القناع الذهبي كسلعة تجميلية تعيد بناء البشرة. في ثقافات أخرى، يرتبط القناع الذهبي بالموت. فالنساء يظهرن كما لو أنهن أحياء، ولكنهن يبدون كأموات، لا يعشن كما يشأن، وقد قتلت أحلامهن ورغباتهن.



EXHIBITION VIEWS FROM WE SHALL BE MONSTERS







قَمْلُوحُ اِرْتِدَاءِ
شَّارَاتِ وَظَلَمِ





MONEY
DISTORTS REALITY

TASSIN
+970-543917
VALUE WITHOUT

مَمْنُوعُ إِرْتِدَاءِ أَيْ
شَّارَاتِ وَطَنِيَّةِ

