

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Warsaw, showing a dense urban grid and a large circular structure, possibly a stadium or arena, in the upper right. A river flows through the city. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

U-jazdowski
exhibition

Everyday Forms of Resistance

Cover

The walled refugee camp of Shu'fat in Jerusalem
© Léopold Lambert, *The Funambulist* (2017)

U–jzdowski

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Everyday Forms of Resistance

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U–jzdowski

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Everyday Forms of Resistance

Artists

Jumana Emil Abboud, Noor Abed,
Ahmad Alaqra, Mirna Bamieh,
Wim Catrysse, DAAR (Decolonizing
Architecture Art Research),
Maja Demska, Forensic Architecture,
Karolina Grzywnowicz, Jumana Manna,
Joanna Rajkowska, Mohammad Saleh,
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Fawwar refugee camp
photo: Kuba Rudziński

Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka

Everyday Forms of Resistance

Everyday Forms of Resistance is a project that affirms everyday life: coexistence, care, and hospitality. It is the result of many years of work by Palestinian artists: Jumana Emil Abboud, Noor Abed, Ahmad Alaqra, Mirna Bamieh, DAAR (Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti), Jumana Manna, Mohammad Saleh, and the international Forensic Architecture research collective. It is also the outcome of five years of artist residencies, travel, research, and work with local communities by female artists from Poland (Karolina Grzywnowicz, Joanna Rajkowska, Jaśmina Wójcik and Marta Wódz) and Wim Catrysse from Belgium. I treated the artist residencies in this project as a medium and a tool for curatorial work. They helped me carry out

activities based on research and an in-depth relationship with the place, the people, the institutions, and the environment, and above all, to come to know and understand the multifaceted Palestinian reality, with its entanglements in politics and history. The project developed alongside the needs of the artists, their observations and their desire to express crucial issues through their statements. We managed to create a community in which the artists, curators, and art professionals formed relationships, often informal ones, and took an active part in co-creating this project by commenting, questioning or supporting with their own knowledge. After years of this organic work, the time came in which we decided to make our observations, thoughts, and experiences from this highly inspiring process public in the form of an exhibition.

In *Everyday Forms of Resistance*, the dynamic and shift in relations between host and guest are written into the very construct of the project. It was initiated during my meetings with Sally Abu Bakr, director of Culture and Social Affairs Department at Ramallah Municipality.

Abu Bakr wanted to set up a residency program in Palestine and I offered her help in this undertaking. During my first journey to Ramallah in October 2016, I realized the importance of working with Palestinian artists, given the stereotypes and lack of knowledge about Palestine in Poland. The very shape of the project left room to adopt various roles and hold changing relations throughout its course. The Palestinian artists were hosted in Poland; they lived in the Castle, but they also visited private homes. Then Polish and European artists were hosted in Ramallah by partner institutions, and sometimes by the residents themselves, who had been back living in Palestine for some months. The project was and remains open-ended, as its finale is to be an exhibition. It has changed,

and keeps changing with the intensity of the relations between the project participants. These, in turn, could be invited to take part in three-month residencies or shorter study visits, both in Poland and in Ramallah. These journeys sometimes had a specific purpose, such as making film documentation or writing a text, and sometimes they did not. The organic, shifting nature of this project is rendered perfectly by Jaśmina Wójcik's piece, *Sarha*, in which the artist took her daughter on a trip through Palestine, traveling at the pace of the child's curiosity—they experience and relate their trip with delight.

This flexible and open form of *Everyday Forms of Resistance* provided a chance not only to change perspective, but also to go beyond, or rather upend the asymmetry. An important step toward overturning the asymmetry and dialogical work was inviting the artists to converse about the exhibition concept, title, and form during the residencies, as well as the public activities in the project framework. The *Everyday Forms of Resistance* project is meant to express not only a desire to show Palestinians in forms that celebrate their subjecthood and agency, despite their daily experience of violence and subjugation, but also equality and dialogue in practice.

The exhibition will gather works exhibiting practices to help preserve humanity and stage resistance in times of social, political, and ecological upheaval, and not just in occupied Palestine.

Sometimes these are major political affairs, like the one addressed in Forensic Architecture's *Stopping the Wall in Battir*, about stopping the construction of a wall in Battir that was to separate the West Bank from Israel along the "Green Line," marked out in 1967 before the end of the Six-Day War. Other times, however, resistance is understood not as political, physical, or armed opposition to lasting oppression, but as surviving, hospitality, and the practice of memory against forgetting. Resistance is also found in small everyday gestures and rituals: preparing meals, growing plants, singing songs, and rebuilding demolished homes.

Following the creation of the Israeli state in the twentieth century and the resettlement of thousands of Palestinians from the historical lands of Palestine, for its many Arab inhabitants basic human rights, such as possessing a passport with a nationality, and thus, the right to travel, became a privilege. The occupants limited Palestinians' access to the land through complex administrative divisions and astronomical prices, meaning that only few of them can farm. Access to water is regulated and even a simple hike through the hills or traveling across Palestinian territory is made enormously complicated.

Only the larger cities in the Palestinian Occupied Territories are in the autonomous “Zone A.” A significant part of the West Bank and Gaza is littered with and ringed by illegally built Israeli settlements. Israel entirely controls the flow of electricity and water to Palestine. Both Jerusalem, which formally remains the capital of Palestine, and the Gaza Strip, which is divided from the rest of the state and most of the rural regions of Palestinian territory, are administratively, politically, and economically dependent on Israel.

For these reasons, in Palestine every action, every gesture, even the most ordinary and survival itself, has political significance. Shared Sunday cookouts in the mountains, planting edible plants on the edge of a refugee camp, and collecting fossils are all actions that give life meaning and help restore a human dimension to a world scarred by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The artists allow these actions to transcend the everyday dimension of human life; they acquire power and the virtue of agency.

The artists taking part in the exhibition evade heavy political rhetoric, focusing on nurturing memory and building a Palestinian identity by drawing from old customs and traditions.

The strategy adopted by Mirna Bamieh, an artist from East Jerusalem, was cooking. By collecting old recipes and cooking them, Bamieh supported collectivity and restored memory to local societies in Palestine. During two residencies in Poland, she explored methods of fermentation, a practice that became her metaphor for life: birth, merging, separating, and death. During the residency, the artist wrote six short stories paired with recipes, in which intimate stories from her life are woven together to make highly evocative and sensory descriptions of reality. The artist approaches it from a female perspective, filters it through her sensitivity, her emotions, her attention to the tastes and smells of childhood, and the affection and warmth of another person.

Mohammad Saleh, a designer and permaculture practitioner, draws from traditional collective methods of sharing and cultivating land. In a work inspired by his stay in Poland, Saleh restores the symbolic and folk significance of plants that are often considered to be weeds, but which once held crucial value in herbal medicine. At the exhibition, in collaboration with ethnobiologist Iwa Kołodziejaska and botanist Magda Chechłowska, he arranges a space where one can experience the peace that comes from communing with nature, and also learn about the properties of the plants grown in the exhibition. In Palestine, plant life is often embroiled in politics; there is a shortage of plant life due to obstructed access to resources like land and water. There is no room for nature, due to the dense concentration of people in the cities

or refugee camps, generation after generation raised far from the countryside are gradually losing the knowledge of how to grow and gather plants. For many contemporary Palestinian artists, this has become a subject for research and reflection. Having been to Palestine twice for residencies, Karolina Grzywnowicz also examined the issue of using nature for political and violent actions. For example thyme and sage, age-old crucial ingredients in Palestinian cuisine, have been put under Israeli protection and gathering them is forbidden. Palestinians face a prison sentence or confiscation of their cars, for instance, simply for possessing these plants or seeds.

The stories and old fairy tales in Jumana Emil Abboud’s projects become a tool with the power to take the listener back to their childhood and to places that were lost after 1948. Courtesy of Mohamad Badwan, a shopkeeper and rock collector from Ramallah, Joanna Rajkowska has created a project that speaks of people’s ties with the earth, the stones, and nature, of the mystical bond nurtured in these areas to stave off political and national divisions. Like Rajkowska, Noor Abed and Jumana Manna hearken back to times when people coexisted peacefully in present-day Palestine and Israel, despite their differences in religion and customs. Jumana Manna tells of ethnomusicologist Robert Lachmann and the search for potential diversity through music, sound, and listening. The right to coexistence and presence is expressed through old tales, legends, and songs that return in the works of these artists in the exhibition. Many of them are inspired by the notes of early-twentieth-century Arab-Palestinian ethnologist Tawfiq Canaan. In her project titled *our songs were ready for all wars to come*, Noor Abed delves into how folklore, being born of certain lands and places, can be a universal tool for human emancipation. A tool that can help them retrieve their history and land, and rewrite reality to be free of discourses that have dominated how the Palestinian identity is conceived.

Grzywnowicz will be presenting the *Bedtime* project at the exhibition. While in Palestine, she met with refugee camp inhabitants who shared their family songs with her. Many of these works were lullabies. When sung in the camps they take on special significance, as they are sung to combat the conditions there, which are hardly amenable to sleeping. Nights in the camps are often disturbed by Israeli army interventions. The lullabies sung in the project often preserve lyrics that have been erased from memory, and memories that have been suppressed. Many express nostalgia for a lost world, some have been created with a need to speak of the refugee experience. Meeting Grzywnowicz allowed many people to recognize the frailty and temporality of their

memory. With the departure of the elder generation, who acted as custodians of the collective memory, the songs that tell of their origins and the Palestinian identity are slipping into oblivion.

Belgian artist Wim Catrysse, who stayed at an artist's residency in Palestine, also wandered over to the Palestinian refugee camps. The result was *Showing Presence*, in which he juxtaposed photographs of bats with fragments of refugees' stories. Bats, often present in Palestinian literature and poetry, symbolize Israeli soldiers entering the refugee camps, most often during the night. The stories, recorded by Wim Catrysse in meetings that lasted many hours, are full of violence, suffering, death, and separation. In viewing this work, we share the artist's opposition and powerlessness against the vast misfortune which is the daily lot of these inhabitants.

In conversations with Palestinians, even about the most trivial everyday affairs, subjects often include *nakbah* (resettlement, the catastrophe of 1948), *hijrah* (migration), and *muqawamah* (struggle). Yet the Palestinian vocabulary of everyday concepts is far richer and more positive. We also find *(one)h* (collectivity), relating to onetime collective work rituals. *Mujawaara* means communal life, wherein relations are based not on mutual exchange, but on communism, understood in David Graeber's fashion as an interpersonal relation, according to the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Other frequently recurring concepts are *madefeh* – hospitality, *holom* – dream, and many other words defining various forms, places, and times of meetings – *lammeh*, *jom'aa*, and *qa'deh*. This hospitality is the second important theme developed by the project participants.

In this context, Sandi Hilal's *Al-Madhafah* is symbolic, the quintessence of Arab hospitality, which we are presenting during the *U–jzdowski* exhibition.¹

The day room, or in Arabic, *al madhafah*, is a space between the public and private spheres, a room for showing hospitality. It has the potential to undermine the traditional division of roles into host and guest, and to give acts of hospitality new sociopolitical significance.

Al-Madhafah is a place you can visit—once at the exhibition, then again in the refugee camp in Boden or in the camp for Palestinian refugees in Fawwar, near Hebron.

¹ Dominika Blachnicka-Ciacek and I wrote about this project in more depth in "My Castle is your Castle: What Does it Mean to Host Artists?" published in *Discover Society* magazine: <https://discoversociety.org/2020/08/05/my-castle-is-your-castle-what-does-it-mean-to-host-artists/>.



Recording at Dheisheh refugee camp,
Karolina Grzywnowicz with Om Nidal Abu Acker
photo: Kuba Rudziński

Yet the key role in Hilal's project goes to the host, regardless of whether this is the artist herself, who has been living in Sweden for years, or Yasmeen Mahmoud, a Syrian who was the first to begin collaborating with Sandi, or Ayat, a young Muslim refugee from a very traditional family, living in Fawwar, or Shafiq Karkar, an Afghan who has been working for years as a porter at Dutch's Van Abbemuseum. In the *Al-Madhafah* project, Hilal reverses the roles ascribed to migrants and refugees by the "hosts" in countries where they seek shelter, and to women in the masculine society of Fawwar.

Hilal's work is an art project—she herself, as its creator, eschews the leading role of the artist, and with it, the decision-making process, which she hands over to other less privileged people: Ayat, Shafiq, and Yasmeen. With this gesture she initiates a transformation and renounces power that might not have the opportunity to flourish in other circumstances. Ayat is maturing as a feminist and women's activist, creating the highly successful Healthy Food company that operates in the camp. She is also generating enthusiasm among her female friends from other refugee camps in Palestine for *Al-Madhafah*.

By inviting the hosts of the *Al-Madhafah*, scattered about the world, for a residency at *U-jazdowski*, we wanted to show them our hospitality, care, and gratitude. Participating in the *Everyday Forms of Resistance* exhibition makes Ayat, Yasmeen and Shafiq co-hosts of *U-jazdowski* and co-creators of the meetings with audiences. These *Al-Madhafah* will symbolically unite in Warsaw, and the hosts, though they will probably not meet, will work in a common space and leave traces of their hospitality and the learning, unlearning, acceptance, and sharing that goes on there during the four-month exhibition.

The exhibition is a step towards building mutual relations between the creative communities of Palestine and Poland. The *Everyday Forms of Resistance* project was originally not intended as an exhibition. But this format seemed the most appropriate way to share my personal experiences from this journey with a wider audience. Along the way, I had the opportunity to learn plenty, but also to unlearn a lot. At the exhibition, we present short films and visual materials that were created during several years of work on this project and share notes from discussions and meetings with people who participated in the process. The publication accompanying the exhibition contains a selection of collected artefacts: posters, brochures, postcards, stories, songs and recipes, allowing you to explore everyday Palestinian life with us.



our songs were ready for all wars to come, film still,
Noor Abed, courtesy of the artist



At the olive oil press in Beit Sahour
photo: Kuba Rudziński

Dominika Blachnicka-Ciacek

The Faces of Palestinian Resistance

For the Palestinians, the notion of “resistance” has a special meaning. It is one of the key forms of existence for a society that has been subjected to uprooting and constant violence for over seven decades. The dispossession of Palestinians has a physical dimension, related to the ongoing displacement that began with the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from their homes in 1948, and then in 1967, and which is still continuing through a systematic process of Israeli colonization of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.¹ But it also has an ontological dimension, as the Palestinian people have been continually denied recognition as a nation that dwells between the Mediterranean

¹ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006).

Sea and the Jordan River and has its own culture, history, and tradition. This form of uprooting is executed through the erasure of Palestinian history from the cities and landscape in what is now Israel (Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, or the over 400 Palestinian villages that were destroyed in 1947–1948) or through the appropriation of indigenous Arab cuisine or architecture.

For the Polish audience, Palestinian resistance usually has the face of armed resistance, which dominates in the media reporting from Israel and Palestine. Once it was the face of Yasser Arafat; today he is replaced with anonymous Hamas fighters. Yet these military and masculinized forms of representing Palestinian resistance do not reflect the diversity and complexity of the forms of subversion practiced by Palestinian society. A vast majority of those practices are peaceful by nature and are woven into the daily actions of Palestinian civilians, including Palestinian women and children. That is why I find it particularly important that Polish viewers have a chance to learn about those diverse and rich forms of Palestinian resistance against occupation and displacement. “To exist is to resist,” reads a slogan on the Separation Wall at Qalandiya checkpoint on the road between Jerusalem and Ramallah. In the Palestinian context, this is not a metaphor. Palestinians’ very presence and endurance in Palestine is a form of resistance.

Living in Palestine and witnessing the overwhelming violence experienced by the Palestinians from the Israeli soldiers and settlers, and witnessing the injustice of the legal system and the brutality of the architecture of occupation, I couldn’t believe how far these media representations of the “Palestinian-as-terrorist” are detached from reality. The Palestinians that I met are the most patient people that I know. They carry unimaginable cruelty and injustice, which they experience daily in a quiet and dignified manner. They themselves refer to this stoic attitude as *sumud*, meaning enduring, not yielding, maintaining integrity despite the cruelty and absurdities of life under occupation and despite the continuous dispossession. As Zoughbi Zoughbi, director of the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre Wi’am in Bethlehem, writes, “*Sumud* has been part of the non-violent struggle of the Palestinian people against the colonial presence in

this land. . . I am here to stay. You cannot uproot me. I am like the cactus. Even when the soil is dry I can live.”² Supporting each other in daily endurance and community-building is also at the heart of *sumud*.

Daily Resistance—Daily Endurance

Palestinian everydayness is tough. It is life in constant tension and constant anticipation, where even mundane activities—going to school or work, or shopping—are fraught with difficulties. A Palestinian’s daily reality involves hours wasted waiting for documents, at checkpoints, driving extra miles because the shortest routes are open to Israelis only and waiting for the power or water supply to resume. Palestinians often refrain from undertaking some activities—meeting relatives in a different city, going to the seaside—purely to avoid soldiers, settlers, and unnecessary risk. Palestinians’ daily life under occupation involves daily senseless violence from settlers and soldiers.

In such conditions, all forms of celebration of everyday life by regaining latitude and the ability to undertake an unrestrained action are significant. The seat presented in the exhibition by Mohammad Saleh encourages us to take a rest, to stretch our legs, to catch our breath—but under occupation such moments of respite are often a luxury. Saleh also shares his knowledge about how to use garbage and waste materials to build micro-gardens that provide access to edible plants and medicinal herbs in drought conditions. This forms a basis for self-sufficiency, which in the Palestine context is hyper-political as it allows the Palestinian people to endure and survive despite continued Israeli colonization and displacement.

Counter-Memory as a Form of Resistance

Memory is a form of resistance particularly cultivated among generations of Palestinians. As the Palestinian journalist Ali Abunimah once wrote, “Palestine exists because Palestinians have chosen to remember it.”³ This Palestinian memory of the Nakba, of villages left and destroyed, of traditions, is a form of counter-memory that emerges at grassroots. It is a form of unofficial memory that arises beyond official institutions and in opposition to the dominant Israeli narrative.⁴ Palestinian folk stories recounted by Jumana Emil Abboud, or lullabies

2 <https://palestine-family.net/zoughbi-zoughbi-about-sumud>.

3 Juliane Hammer, *Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for Homeland* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 40.

4 Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2012).



Stones and Other Demons, Joanna Rajkowska
photo: Marek Szczepański, courtesy of the artist and l'étrangère gallery, London

collected by Karolina Grzywnowicz in refugee camps are grassroots products of everyday counter-memory. They restore people's connection with the land, with history and tradition, re-inscribing Palestinians in the geography and history of Palestine. Particularly moving is the rock collection of Mohamad Badwan, photographed by Joanna Rajkowska. The collection of this shop owner could serve as evidence in the dispute over the history of this land, over who was first here and whose it should be. Perhaps it could also bear testimony of how much the Palestinian-Jewish heritage is a shared one. Surrealistically arranged on shop shelves, Badwan's rocks remind us of one more thing: how much the imperative of Palestinian endurance consists of elements of prime necessity and how the struggle for memory is woven with the uncertainty of everyday existence.

Resistance as Regaining of Agency

Everyday Forms of Resistance deal also with the extremely important aspect of the agency and subjectivity of the Palestinian people. The words of the Palestinian historian Elias Sanbar movingly express the



Qalandiya
photo: Dominika Blachnicka-Ciacek

Palestinian loss of subjectivity: "That year, a country and its people disappeared from maps and dictionaries. . . 'The Palestinian people do not exist', said the new local masters, and henceforth the Palestinians would be referred to by general, conveniently vague terms, as either 'refugees', or in the case of the small minority that had managed to escape the generalized expulsion, 'Israeli Arabs'. A long absence was beginning."⁵ The disaster of 1948 wrecked the Palestinian society, deprived Palestinians of the possibility of political agency, and relegated half of the population to the role of refugees, relying for their survival on third-party aid institutions and the host countries.

In conditions of continued uprooting and occupation, not only are the nationwide attempts to regain political agency important, but also everyday and individual ways of regaining subjectivity. It is the latter that often rise to prominence, offering people a sense of meaning, hope, and being in control of their lives. Palestinians do it by trying to subvert the system in all kinds of ways: by outsmarting it, ridiculing it, and continuing to live

5 Elias Sanbar, "Out of Place, Out of Time," *Mediterranean Historical Review*, vol. 16, no.1 (2001): 87.

as if the occupation never happened. Suad Amiry's short story, which accompanies this publication, touches on the essence of the experience of being objectified—by the occupation, which prevents her from moving freely and deciding about herself, but often also by Palestinian institutions of social life, here embodied by a male vet, who doubts it makes sense to vaccinate a puppy because it turns out to be a female. Amiry pulls two weeds with one yank here, tearing herself free from the bounds of subjugation and patronization. Her next female puppy, Nura, is not only vaccinated like any dog, but also becomes a fortunate owner of a Jerusalem ID. On this basis, Amiry successfully crosses one of the most notorious checkpoints to reach Jerusalem. The moment when she crosses the Qalandiya checkpoint⁶ without proper papers exposes the system's arbitrariness and effectively delegitimizes it.

In another dimension, particularly important for the refugee experience, everyday forms of regaining agency are discussed by Sandi Hilal in her *Al-Madhafah*, the documentation of which you can see during the show. Hilal creates her living room and invites guests, considering both the action and the space as a means of her integration in a new community. "How can we analyze the power of hosting as a means of becoming visible and demanding agency" she asks at the beginning of her experiment. The living-room-as-a-tool reverses the roles ascribed to immigrants and refugees by their hosts in countries where they seek refuge. Here is Hilal reaching out, via her living room, to the people of Boden and other cities not as a guest, but as a hostess. This role reversal enables her to dictate the terms of the meeting and to regain the right to decide who and when makes tea, who controls the remote, and what the conversation will be about. It makes us, the hosting Europeans, and now guests, acutely aware of the asymmetry of the relationships with migrants and refugees where we unconditionally expect them to rehearse the scripts of the "good" guests.

Both in the occupied Palestine and in the Palestinian refugee camps there are many such living rooms, serving as spaces of hosting and being together. And it is precisely there, on a micro-scale, that Palestinians exercise their agency in what is so vital for Palestinian culture: affirmation of life and community, the need to take care of a guest, the desire to share coffee, tea, and the best the host can offer. This takes place with a lot of respect for the guest, but on the host's own terms too. Go and try to refuse a Palestinian hostess a third cup of coffee.

6 The Qalandiya checkpoint looks like the Palestinian-Israeli border. It is illegal under international law and is located inside the occupied Palestinian territories—between Ramallah and East Jerusalem.

What do Palestinians teach us by demonstrating various ways of enduring in conditions of exile and occupation? Is the experience, apart from offering an insight into another society, somehow relatable to the experience of Polish viewers? Until recently, I thought that the key to this connection lay in learning from the Palestinians how to be together and how to be self-sufficient; in imitating their ability to build a grassroots community and to have a relationship with nature that is based on symbiosis rather than subjugation. Today, at a time of social and physical separation necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic, the Palestinian experience of living in isolation, without freedom of movement, becomes intimate in a different way. It can teach us, I believe, a critical affirmation of everyday life and the value of having a sense of agency in all things that constitute it. It teaches us to see this new everydayness not as a substitute of real life, which was elsewhere only a moment ago, but rather as a return to its essence. This critical affirmation is certainly not an ode to the coziness and comfort of the "stay at home" experience. I believe that *Everyday Forms of Resistance* offer an insight into how much the Palestinian—but also Polish and global—everydayness is political, and how much it highlights social inequalities and systemic injustices, exposing the nature of the power wielded.



Al-Madhafah at the Women's Center,
Fawwar refugee camp
courtesy: DAAR

Sandi Hilal

Notes

Al-Madhafah/The Living Room

Located between the domestic and the public sphere, *Al-Madhafah*, in Arabic, is the living room dedicated to hospitality. It has the potential to subvert the role of guest and host and provide a different socio-political meaning to the act of hospitality. It seeks to mobilize the condition of permanent temporariness as an architectural and political concept capable of challenging the binaries of inclusion and exclusion, public and private, guest and host. It activates the rights of temporary people to host and not to eternally be a guest; the right to claim a life in their new destination without feeling obliged to revoke the desire of belonging to their life back home.



Al-Madhafah, Boden, Sweden
photo: Elias Arvidsson

Al-Madhafah project has grown from a very personal need that became clear when I moved with my family to Sweden, where I carried with me the fear of living in the condition of what Edward Said beautifully describes as being “out of place.” Living in Europe, I’m constantly faced with, and challenged by, the description of integration as if it were something that will arrive sooner or later. That before too long I will consider myself part of the place where I live, if I behave properly; like a good guest. But from my own experience, in the way it is understood within the framework of European nation-states, integration is more like a race toward something; a perfection that few can ever attain. After moving to Sweden, I decided not to run that race, but rather to explore other ways of understanding, defining, and practicing integration. I decided not to accept my assigned role as a perfect guest, but to look for alternatives; to comprehend inclusion by questioning who has the right to include or to exclude. Who has the right to host, and who is told they need to behave like a perfect guest? How can we analyze the power of hosting as a means of becoming visible and demanding agency? How can we understand visibility as a precondition for political subjectivity? How can we understand participation from the position of an outsider in Europe today without waiting years, sometimes even generations?



Al-Madhafah, Boden, Sweden
photo: Elias Arvidsson

Arrival in the North of Sweden

Boden was first mentioned to me during a Skype conversation with Marti Manen and Joanna Zawieja from the Public Art Agency Sweden in July 2016. It was they who suggested the possibility of working together on a project with refugees who were arriving in a city called Boden in the far north of the country. They also mentioned that Boden is well known in Sweden as an important military stronghold that for a very long time was responsible for protecting Sweden from potential attacks by Russia during the Cold War. They also told me that the Swedish government was interested in creating public art in certain marginalized areas.

I arrived in Boden, 40 kilometers from the Arctic Circle, in November 2016 wrapped up in fear and anxiety. I doubted my ability to engage with such an unfamiliar place and landscape. I was afraid that I simply lacked the basic skills.

What I was unable to realize back then was that this seeming lack of connection with Boden allowed me to engage with both the city and its inhabitants in an extraordinary way. It also offered me the opportunity to reflect on my life and work in Palestine and Italy in a completely different way.

The Yellow House in Boden

In the commission from the Public Art Agency, they mentioned the Yellow House, which was well known in Boden for hosting refugees, as a possible starting point for the project. I was told that the Yellow House was a place with a bad reputation, that it caused problems ... that refugees living there spent their days packed like sardines in small rooms, with cold weather and a dark sky outside and a winter that never seems to end. Social isolation was a serious problem, too. One resident of the Yellow House I spoke with told me: "I live with my wife and children all alone. No one knocks on our doors here, while in Syria we never closed our doors." Another told me: "My deepest wish is for my wife to find a reason to leave this dark room every now and then." I was frustrated and saddened by what I saw but did not lose hope. I kept knocking on doors. A young Iraqi man, Ahmad, invited me into his room. We sat on his bed, and he told me that he was waiting for his wife and children, and that when he received family reunification papers and they finally arrive, they would move to the south of Sweden where the weather is nicer and people are more open. I could not help but exclaim, almost out of desperation: "Everybody wants to escape Boden! Doesn't anyone want to stay here?!" I wasn't expecting an answer, but Ahmad responded, to my amazement: "You must meet Ibrahim and Yasmeen. They are not living in the Yellow House, but are considering staying in Boden."

Yasmeen and Ibrahim's Living Room in Boden

Yasmeen and Ibrahim live in a green house with a church on the second floor in the center of Boden. Ibrahim came out to greet us and welcomed us inside. Yasmeen was waiting for us in the corridor. I shook hands with her and looked shyly into her eyes before entering their living room. Suddenly the sadness of the Yellow House disappeared. Marti and Joanna were with me during our visit. Looking around me I realized that I was accompanied by representatives of the Swedish Public Art Agency, in other words, by members of the government. In that small living room, by hosting us Yasmeen and Ibrahim simply switched familiar social roles: instead of being refugees hosted by the government, they played the role of host, hosting the Swedish government. Their living room gave them the opportunity to reject their role of obedient guest, complying with norms and rules, and exercise their right to be hosts.

Yasmeen, her mother and Ibrahim were our hosts, and they were hosting us with pride in their house as if they had never lost their home. In this living room, I found the strength that I had been searching for but was unable to find in the Yellow House. How can we convey this feeling

to those around us? Is there a way to imbue others around us with this feeling? How can we bring hospitality back to the Yellow House as a means of creating agency? Ibrahim told me that when they first arrived in Boden, they desperately tried to invite everyone they would meet into their home. He explained: "In our house we are humans, but in public, we feel that we are just numbers. I wanted people to see me as a human and to appreciate who I am. This was possible only in our home."

The Living Room of Yasmeen and Ibrahim in Boden and our DAAR in Stockholm

The encounter with Yasmeen and Ibrahim marked the beginning of the project. However, reducing it to something about a Syrian refugee couple would have been to limit the potential of their performance and their experience. Their living room made me realize how important it would be to use our own living room in Stockholm as a way to discover and settle into our new Swedish life. As their living room and ours are part of the same whole, it became more difficult to narrow the project down to something that is exclusively about refugees.

This encounter made me understand better why, more than a decade ago in 2006, my partner Alessandro Petti and I decided to open up our house and initiate DAAR, which means "home" in Arabic. Our home back then in Beit Sahour, meant the creation of a quasi-institution (DAAR) in our own private space as a response to the lack of public space in Palestine. A place where we could discuss how to live under colonialism and how to rethink struggles for decolonization and the creation of common spaces. Our DAAR in Stockholm would still aim to function as a quasi-institution, as a response to the lack of political agency in the public sphere in Europe today.



Road sign
photo: Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka

Suad Amiry

A Dog's Life

It was one of those rare moments when I could easily have killed someone. But to kill Dr. Hisham, the only vet in Ramallah (probably the only one in the whole district), would have been a national scandal. It probably would have caused a rural uproar, though perhaps not one as important as the renowned 1834 Peasant Revolution against Ibrahim Pasha (the son of Muhammad Ali Pasha, the ruler of Egypt). It all started in the peaceful town of Jericho, where Salim and I spent most of our weekends away from troubled Ramallah during the 1987 uprising.

We were driving along Khidaiwi Street (I wonder if the name has any connection with the Egyptian Khidaiwis, the descendants of Muhammad Ali Pasha) when I glimpsed two puppies cuddled up in a ditch on the side of the road. I quickly stopped the car and rushed out towards them. One was dark-haired and one blond, and they were sitting on top of one another, keeping each other warm, in the already very warm town of Jericho. I held one in each hand and, with great

excitement, looked at Salim. With a very worried expression, he looked me straight in the eye and said firmly, “NO.”

“Poor little things—sooner or later they’ll be run over by a car,” I replied.

“No, they won’t,” insisted Salim.

“Look at them, they are so absolutely cute,” I said as they dangled with their soft tummies exposed.

“I know,” Salim replied, looking away from them.

“Why not, then?” I insisted.

“Who is going to take care of them?” asked Salim.

“I will, of course,” I said joyfully, seeing that I was starting to win the case.

“You’re busy and traveling most of the time. Dogs are worse than babies, they need constant attention... and affection,” he added.

Oh, God, how this argument reminded me of the many arguments Salim and I had had over having or not having children.

But this time I was not willing to compromise.

It was heartbreaking to make the choice. There was no way I could have convinced Salim to adopt both puppies.

The dark brown puppy was left behind, and ‘Antar the blond (of course) accompanied us home to Ramallah. The joy and excitement over acquiring ‘Antar was for a long time mixed with a lot of guilt. Perhaps that’s why ‘Antar behaved the way he did. He probably never forgave me for separating him from his brother (or sister).

“You can tell how big a dog will grow up to be by the size of his paws,” said a friend of mine as he held two of ‘Antar’s huge paws. That was not reassuring, as ‘Antar’s paws were one-third of his size. He also told me that I should change the name (‘Antar bin Shaddad, a classical poet hero in Arabic literature, was known for his chivalry and heroic military deeds—in other words, a symbol of machismo), as ‘Antar turned out to be a she. But it was too late.

As a matter of fact, for years we continued to treat ‘Antar as a he.

“Is four in the afternoon a good time? I’ll be there,” said Dr. Hisham when I had explained to him ‘Antar’s need for an anti-rabies vaccine.

It was four o’clock sharp when vet Hisham rang the bell. I quickly opened the door and ushered him into the sitting room. There followed half an hour of typical Palestinian small talk: complaints about the terrible political situation, how selfish Palestinians had become, especially the younger generation, and about the lack of vision (except, of course, for Dr. Hisham and me) in the whole area.

Another quarter of an hour was spent bragging about Dr. Hisham’s success stories: saving the sheep of Abu el-’Abed in the village of Surda, and the newly born twin cows in the village of ‘Atarah (I had

absolutely no idea how many cows are born at a time and did not dare ask), and Abu Nizar’s sick horse, which Dr. Hisham brought back to life after Dr. Khaldun, from Nablus, told the owner that his five-thousand-dollar animal could not be saved.

I was quite reassured by his successes, but I also took note that none of them involved a dog.

“Dr. Hisham, I need you to give ‘Antar an anti-rabies vaccine,” I found myself interrupting.

“Yes, of course,” he replied, suddenly recognizing my growing impatience.

“What breed is ‘Antar?” asked Dr. Hisham authoritatively as he sipped his coffee.

“Ahh... breed... mmmmm... I am not so sure he has a breed. Can one consider a baladi dog a breed?” I mumbled apologetically.

To me he is ‘Antar, a lovely, mischievous, rambunctious puppy.

As Dr. Hisham stared at me, I thought to myself, Why can’t a baladi dog be a breed? “Never mind, Doctor, can I bring ‘Antar in? Or shall we go out to the garden?” I was trying to rekindle Dr. Hisham’s interest in the mission he had come for.

“Doesn’t matter—bring him in,” he replied.

In no time ‘Antar was all over the place. After knocking down the tray with his long wagging tail, and splashing coffee all over the place, he rolled over on his back and waited to be patted on his very round tummy. Typical ‘Antar, I thought to myself.

I could see Dr. Hisham looking at ‘Antar’s genitals.

“‘Antar is a bitch,” said Dr. Hisham with great disappointment.

“You mean she is a female,” I tried to correct him.

“That’s what I meant,” said Dr. Hisham.

“So...?” I said in an irritated, high-pitched voice.

“Do you really want to waste a thirty-dollar vaccine on a baladi bitch?”

“I can’t believe this, Dr. Hisham,” I said, my anger mounting.

I kept quiet, amazed at how defending a female dog had aroused in me national, feminist and pro-animal rights emotions.

As Dr. Hisham bent down to give ‘Antar her vaccine, I was on the verge of breaking the tip of another rabies vaccine and sticking it in his big, protruding backside.

A Few Years Later

It was almost 10:30 at night when I heard squeaking sounds outside.

I opened the garden door, and immediately jumped back as a tiny black creature came running in. In no time, it had disappeared behind

the many plant pots in the front veranda. I switched on the light, and cautiously started looking behind every pot. It was not long before I spotted two huge, bat-like ears stuck on a tiny little black puppy. I stretched out my slightly trembling hand to pick up an even more trembling puppy. She was the size of my palm.

It took only a few hours for Nura and me to become forever inseparable. She became my tiny, nervous shadow. Nura, who grew to be a little bit bigger than my two palms, still accompanies me everywhere: to work, to construction sites, to my mother-in-law's house and to some, but not all, of my friends' houses.

Soon I had a huge collection of books on dogs: *All You Want to Know About Your Dog*, *Admit Sleeping with Your Dog*, *Loving Your Dog More than Your Husband*, *Can My Dog Become My Heir?*, *Cheating on Your Dog*, *What Breed Is Your Dog?* My latest book was *Growing Up with a Lesbian Master*.

I also subscribed to *Bitch* magazine.

Unlike the late 'Antar, Nura was obviously of a very special breed: a toy Manchester terrier. Reading and learning so much about Nura's special breed obviously did not change the one reality on the ground: Nura still needed the anti-rabies vaccine and there was no one apart from Dr. Hisham who could give it to her. Because he was so openly sexist and undoubtedly racist, I had taken a decision not to deal with Dr. Hisham ever again.

After a few months of not knowing what to do, I had to make up my mind. I did not know which was more difficult: to end my boycott of the sexist Doctor Hisham, or to start dealing with an Israeli vet—probably racist against Arabs but not dogs—located in 'Atarut, an Israeli industrial zone (illegal Jewish settlement) built on Palestinian lands on the Ramallah-Jerusalem road. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was located just a half mile or so away from the Jerusalem checkpoint established in March 1992, at a time when the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks were taking place in Washington, D.C.

"She is a toy Manchester terrier," I bragged to Dr. Tamar, an Israeli vet with an English accent.

"She is absolutely gorgeous; what is her name?" asked Dr. Tamar as she cuddled Nura.

"Nura," I say proudly.

"And yours?"

"Suad."

"Isn't she absolutely cute?" I said, trying to act as calmly as possible despite feeling nervous that someone I knew would see me sneaking into

'Atarut's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Looking at the sign, I was relieved to see that Arabs were not considered animals.

"Let's see now, we need to check her eyes, her ears, and her tiny teeth, and then give her the rabies, flu and cocktail vaccines," said Dr. Tamar, as she placed Nura on a special operation table in the middle of her clinic.

"A nonalcoholic cocktail, I hope," I joked nervously.

"What about her blood pressure and diabetes?" I added.

Dr. Tamar totally ignored my remarks and walked out of her office. Maybe I was stupid to make such silly remarks, but I wanted to release some of the tension I was feeling.

It was not long before Dr. Tamar came back empty-handed.

"Suad, we seem to have a little problem here," she said in her rather serious English accent.

"What is it, Doctor?" Wanting to know what the problem was, I did not correct my name.

"Did you say Nura lives in Ramallah?" she asked.

"Yes, with me of course," I answered nervously.

"But the Jerusalem municipality vaccines are only for Jerusalem dogs."

"But you know it is illegal for us to live in Jerusalem, Doctor, as we have Ramallah IDs," I said, interrupting Dr. Tamar in a panic.

"No need to change residency. Would you be willing to pay for the vaccine?" she asked.

"Of course I would," I said, enthusiastically taking all the money out of my purse.

"A hundred and twenty shekels," she said, and I handed her the money. She took it and walked out of her office again.

I cuddled the trembling Nura and collapsed onto a chair next to the window. I looked at the surprising number of Palestinian women and men who had come in with their dogs and cats to seek vet Tamar's help. I wondered if they were also running away from Dr. Hisham. They all looked much more relaxed and self-assured than I did.

"We still seem to have a little problem here," I heard Dr. Tamar say before I even saw her.

"What is it?" I asked, nervously standing up.

"Well, this certificate is issued by Jerusalem municipality, and I am not sure whether it is recognized by the newly established Palestinian National Authority in Ramallah."

She must be kidding, I thought to myself, but unfortunately Dr. Tamar looked damn serious (at that time people were still taking the Oslo Agreement seriously).

Not knowing what to make of Dr. Tamar's English seriousness, I could not help laughing.

"Don't worry, Dr. Tamar. It would be good enough if the Palestinian National Authority recognized its own certificates, let alone Arab dogs holding Jerusalem certificates."

I jealously watched Dr. Tamar filling in Nura's yellow and black Jerusalem passport.

First name, name of father, name of mother, age, own breed, breed of father and mother, a list of vaccine types, date of injection, date of next injection, remarks, doctor's name and, lastly, owner's name.

"Do you have a photograph?"

"My photograph? Or Nura's?" I was hoping it would work.

"Nura's," answered Dr. Tamar.

Neither Nura nor Dr. Tamar realized how damn serious I was about replacing Nura's photograph with mine. I don't think either of them knew how difficult or impossible it is for Palestinians to acquire a Jerusalem ID, let alone a Jerusalem passport. I was thinking of my Jerusalemite friend Nazmi Jubeh, whose wife, Haifa, had spent sixteen years waiting for her Jerusalem ID.

I'd definitely have to hide Nura's passport from Samir Hulieleh, who after twenty-four years of marriage to Sawsan, a Jerusalemite, had not yet succeeded in getting a Jerusalem ID.

I did not want to think about adorable little Yasmin, Sawsan and Samir's only child. The Israelis would not give her a Jerusalem ID because her father had a Palestinian Ramallah ID, and the Palestinian Authority would not give her a Palestinian ID because her mother had an Israeli Jerusalem ID.

If Jewish and Arab traditions were respected, Yasmin should have two identity cards, one after her mother and one after her father. But she has none.

I was also thinking of my dear friend 'Attallah Kuttah, who had recently lost his Jerusalem ID because he married Ebba, who is German. I was thinking of the tens of thousands of Palestinians who have lost their Jerusalem IDs, and the many others who have been waiting in vain for years to acquire a Jerusalem ID.

And here was little Nura with a Jerusalem passport.

"Lucky you, baby." I picked her up and gave her a big kiss.

"Don't lose it. Take it with you when you travel abroad."

"You mean the passport?" I was just checking.

"Yes," Dr. Tamar replied.

Both Nura and Dr. Tamar gave me a strange look, as neither of them were that political. It drove me crazy how both took being a Jerusalemite for granted. I walked out, carrying tiny Nura in my left hand and her passport carefully in my right.

"You know what, Nura? This document will get you through the checkpoint into Jerusalem while I and my car need two different permits to get through."

Nura looked at me, slightly tilting her tiny head, wagged her long tail, put her head out of the car window and sniffed.

It was not long before I decided to make use of Nura's passport.

"Can I see your permit and the car's?" requested the soldier standing at the Jerusalem checkpoint.

"I don't have one, but I am the driver of this Jerusalem dog," I replied, handing the soldier Nura's passport.

"Maze (What)?" asked the soldier, making a funny face.

He looked pretty amused by the thought. He took Nura's passport and started flipping through it.

"I am the dog's driver. As you can see, she is from Jerusalem, and she cannot possibly drive the car or go to Jerusalem all by herself."

"And you argh hergh dghiver?" he said, rolling his r's in the way that Israelis do when they speak English and dissolving into laughter.

"Yes, somebody has got to be her driver," I laughed back.

The soldier looked closely at me, patted Nura's head, which was still sticking out of the window, handed me her passport and in a loud voice said:

"SA'A...Go."

I pressed my foot on the accelerator, Nura stuck half of her tiny body out of the window, and to Jerusalem we both flew.

All it takes is a bit of humor, I thought to myself as Nura and I passed the same soldier when we drove back to Ramallah that same afternoon.

A Dog's Life is reprinted from *Sharon and My Mother-in-Law: Ramallah Diaries* (London: Granta, 2005) with the author's permission.



our songs were ready for all wars to come, film still,
Noor Abed, courtesy of the artist

Artists' bios

Jumana Emil Abboud

Her creative practice deals with oral histories, drawing on Palestinian folklore and its integrated relationship with the land and water, with humans and non-humans. Jumana is currently pursuing a practice-led PhD at the Slade School of Fine Art at UCL. She has participated in numerous exhibitions over the last two decades, including the Venice, Sharjah, Istanbul Biennales, as well as the Jerusalem Show/Qalandiya International.

Noor Abed

An interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker born in Jerusalem/Palestine. Her practice examines notions of choreography and the imaginary relationship between individuals, creating situations where social possibilities are both rehearsed and performed. In 2020, she and Lara Khaldi co-founded the School of Intrusions, an educational platform in Ramallah, Palestine.

Ahmad Alaqra

He studied architecture at Bir Zajt University and the University of Edinburgh. He currently lives in Ramallah and Paris, completing a doctorate in architecture and spatial anthropology at Université Paris Diderot VII. During his creative stay in Helsinki (September—November 2019), Ahmed continued his research on the Qalandiya refugee camp in Jerusalem. He wants to better understand the unusual

spatial deconstruction by the camp's residents, who seek to free themselves from the politicized nature of the disputed geography.

Mirna Bamieh

An artist and performer from Jerusalem/Palestine. Her work contemplates the politics of disappearance, the ever-shifting status of the "in-between". Using her diploma in culinary arts, she has developed works that use the mediums of storytelling and food to create socially engaged projects. Through these, she aspires to create artworks where food/eating/sharing create an innovative and fresh way for people to experience themselves and their surroundings, such projects include: Maskan Apartment Project, Potato Talks Project, and Palestine Hosting Society (mirnabamieh.info).

Wim Catrysse

A Belgian artist and filmmaker. He has worked in various media, but since the late 1990s has focused on film in the form of multi-channel video installations and single-screen works. His films are rarely the result of a preconceived idea, but arise from direct and intuitive interactions with the geographical and socio-cultural aspects of a place and its inhabitants. Wim's approach is an attempt to fulfil a catalytic role in the development of an artistic mind map with regard to the complex relations of a globalized world (wimcatrysse.com).

DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Research)

An architectural collective that combines conceptual speculation and pragmatic spatial intervention, discourse and collective learning. The artistic research of Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti falls between politics, architecture, art and pedagogy. In their practice, art exhibitions are both sites of display and sites of action that spill over into other contexts: the building of architectural structures, the shaping of critical learning environments, interventions that challenge dominant collective narratives, the production of new political imaginations, the formation of civic spaces and the re-definition of concepts (decolonizing.ps).

Maja Demska

A graduate of the University of Arts in Poznań, Maja is a graphic designer by education and a curator, author of texts and diagrams by practice. She focuses on information visualization and non-linear narrative forms. She uses diagrams as a communication and artistic tool, creating hand-drawn documentations of art projects, group processes

and archives. The founder of the art space Groszowe Sprawy located at Bazar Namysłowska marketplace in Warsaw.

Forensic Architecture

A research agency, based at Goldsmiths, University of London, investigating human rights violations, including violence committed by states, police forces, militaries and corporations. FA works in partnership with institutions across civil society, from grassroots activists to legal teams, international NGOs and media organizations, to carry out investigations with and on behalf of communities and individuals affected by conflict, police brutality, border regimes and environmental violence (forensic-architecture.org).

Karolina Grzywnowicz

A visual artist with an interdisciplinary approach. Her practice is research-based, making use of archival materials, interviews, oral histories and bibliographic records. Her works often deal with situations of migration and exile. She is interested in the practices of weak resistance, everyday activities and those seemingly unnoticeable gestures that have the power to resist oppression. She creates installations and situations, works in public spaces and holds artistic interventions (karolinagrzywnowicz.com).

Jumana Manna

A visual artist working primarily with film and sculpture. Her work explores how power is articulated through relationships, often focusing on the body, land and materiality in relation to colonial inheritances and histories of a place. Jumana was raised in Jerusalem and lives in Berlin (cargocollective.com/jumanamanna).

Joanna Rajkowska

An artist based in Warsaw and London. A versatile artist, Rajkowska is best known for her work in public spaces, where she uses real-life situations, energies, organisms and materials to construct sites, installations and ephemeral actions. De-familiarizing, de-humanizing and relating are her operating devices. She is interested in the limitations and the limiting of human activities, the multiplicity of agencies and human and non-human relations (joanna.rajkowska.com).

Mohammad Saleh

A permaculture designer, activist and educator with more than 10 years of full time hands on experience. He founded Mostadam Eco

Design, a social enterprise that provides ecological solutions through taking a practical, bottom-up approach tailored to fit the Palestinian culture, climate and challenges, by introducing various techniques to achieve local sufficiency and foster an appreciation of nature (facebook.com/MostadamEcoDesign).

Studio Lekko

Runed by Kuba Rudziński in Berlin, Studio Lekko designs typefaces, visual identities, publications and websites for artistic and cultural institutions, such as LACMA, the United Nations, the Evens Foundation and others. Studio has received the STGU Project of the Year award in the Social Impact category. Studio's work has been presented in *Print Control* and *Slanted* magazine (studiolekko.com).

umschichten

An artistic practice based in Stuttgart and Hamburg, Germany. The studio uses temporary architecture as an approach for immediate action and creates built interventions in order to display local needs, ideas or passions. umschichten comprises Alper Kazokoglu, Lukasz Lenzinski and Peter Weigand (umschichten.de).

Marta Wódz

A visual artist and art historian. As a fellow researcher, she cooperates with the Lieven Gevaert Research Centre for Photography, Art and Visual Culture in Belgium, conducting research on topics such as radio in visual art or the political use of plants. Her works have been presented during the Fotobookfestival in Kassel, Krakow's Photomonth and the Narrations Festival in Gdansk, among others (martawodz.com).

Jaśmina Wójcik

A visual artist, director and educator. Her work deals with the (in)visibility and self-representation of marginalized communities. She is involved in alternative education by developing authorial practices in the creation of children's artistic expression. At the same time, she works towards building interactivity within cultural institutions, by treating visitors as co-creators and interlocutors in cultural dialogue (jasminawojcik.pl).



Karolina
Grzywnowicz
Bedtime

U-jazdowski

exhibition, residencies, assembly

Everyday Forms of Resistance

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Karolina Grzywnowicz

Bedtime

When we can't dream any longer we die.

Emma Goldman

In the dark times

Will there also be singing?

Yes, there will also be singing.

About the dark times.

Bertolt Brecht

Paweł Mościcki

Sleep in Resistance

These songs come from the very eye of the storm. Aida, Dheisheh, Fawwar, al-Arroub, Balata, Jalazone, Qalandiya – those are the Palestinian camps where they were recorded. The first two are at the top of the list of places in the world with the highest concentration of tear gas in the air. All share – besides the ethnicity of their residents – the experience of a permanent state of siege and ever new forms of harassment invented by the Israeli authorities. These songs can be heard in places of brutal – and actually double – oppression, for historical violence (the *Naqba*), which has forced thousands of Palestinians to leave their homes, overlaps here with actual violence, directed against the refugees who live in the camps. As if it

weren't enough to drive the people out of the country, but to drive the country out of the people as well. To disconnect them from their own culture, strip them of their civil rights, and then to make their life untenable.

In the streets of the camps, overt violence against and unjustified arrests, not only of adults but of kids as well, are a daily occurrence, while at night Israeli commandos carry out home searches under the pretext of anti-terrorist operations, fire at alleged militant positions, and disturb the silence. Sleep deprivation, a torture method used by intelligence services all over the world, is employed here against whole neighborhoods. As in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Guantanamo, the purpose is to keep the subjugated populace in a state of constant agitation, to keep their minds occupied, to never let them forget about their humiliation. Dream deprivation is also a way of cutting off the targets from the realm of regeneration and relaxation, of refusing the terrorized people a chance to let their imagination fly. It is not enough to occupy a territory: the refugees also need to be refused access to soothing oblivion, to an inner emigration that could at least partly alleviate the pain of the physical one.

In those places, Karolina Grzywnowicz has recorded lullabies sung by residents (usually women) in spite of two techniques of power: cultural uprooting and sleep deprivation. Quiet and tender, these songs are also acts of subversion and resistance for which one can be punished. The compilation includes songs from different regions and periods: some are recent, some traditional, and some a creative mix of the two. Protest is not only inscribed here in the very fact of their being sung, but also encoded in their recurring motifs. A ballad about separation from a loved one speaks of nostalgia for the homeland, a children's rhyme turns into a political pamphlet, streaked with references to the current situation in the region. Sometimes these songs adopt the form of a parable, at other times they wish the children being lulled to sleep a better future than the reality that surrounds them at present.

Listening to these recordings, one can clearly feel that the lullabies are neither separate from reality, nor can they be reduced to an object of consumption. This can be heard when they blend smoothly with fragments of conversation, or trail off when memory has failed the singer and he or she makes a break to discuss the next stanza. This joint searching for fragments

of tradition dispersed in memories is the very core of resistance; it is the actual political statement of these modest singers. It is here that the firmest *no pasarán* is declared, one that seems to render all the drones, stun grenades, and tear gas ineffective. The power of a tender collectivity making sure that the youngest ones sleep tight is irresistible indeed.

Perhaps, in order to ensure the survival of a community, it is first necessary to protect its flickering existence, woven with dreams, fantasies, and memories, suspended between dream and reality, between the past and the present, in a realm where Palestine simply still exists. Falling asleep, one can persist precisely in staunchest resistance, regaining one's strength for further struggle, even if it is to preserve one's ordinary, everyday dignity.

As we know, the Palestinian camps expand only upwards, with the roofs of existing buildings constantly turning into the floors of new storeys. Such is the fate of those who, year after year, piece by piece, are being stripped of the part of their homeland that has been left to them. But on each successive floor this homeland's hidden anthem resounds, sung as a lullaby. How many more floors must be built for the world to truly hear the cry that these songs convey?

Yalla tnam

Come now, Reema, and sleep. Come now, sleep, come to Reema
Come now, love the praying. Come now, love the fasting.
Come now to Reema, good health, each and every day

Come now, sleep; come now, sleep
I'll slaughter pigeons for her,
Go away, o, pigeons: don't believe what I say
I'm tricking Reema to get her to sleep

Reema, Reema, you bright kid
Your hair is blond and pure
He who loves you will kiss you
He who despises you will gain nothing

O, seller of grapes
Tell my mother; tell my father
The gypsies have kidnapped me from under Majdaliyyi's tent

O, cutie pie, o, cutie pie; peaches under apricots
Every time the wind blows, I pick an apricot for Reema

Hey, hey, hey, Lina; lend us your tub and basin
So we can wash Reema's clothes, and hang them over the jasmine bush

Singing

Tohfa Abo Ebyea with her daughter Dima

Place and date

Balata Refugee Camp, Nablus, Palestine
29/06/2019

Yalla tnam is the most renowned lullaby in Palestine, allegedly in the entire Arab region. It was popularized after Fairuz, the legendary Lebanese singer, sang it for her daughter Reema in the film *Bint Al Hariss*. The piece originally comes from Palestine.

Tohfa Abo Ebyea is an Arabic teacher and a refugee living in Balata, the largest refugee camp in the West Bank. Tohfa is a wonderful, generous person, and a strong voice of the Balata camp. We recorded many songs, including the lullaby *Yalla tnam*, with which she sang her children to sleep. This time she sang it with her daughter Dima.

Time

1:52

Palestinian Samer

She appeared on the high porch without a veil
And her face, my sisters, lit up like a lamp

She appeared on the high porch with her lamp
And smiled and laughed, with her father by her side

Take your sheep in, girl, your face is cold
We, the foreigners, will let our sheep graze and repeat

Don't think the distance made me forget the way to my folks
I shall mount the steed and ride slowly

He passed by the neighborhood, with the pretext of playing ball
No ball did we play, nor did the loved one open the door for him

He passed by our doors, with the pretext of buying oil
No oil did he buy, nor did the loved one open the door for him

May God help those white folks flocking to the valley
Her daughters have come to hunt my horses

May God help those white folks flocking with friends
Like a pack of slaves who have come to divide up the harvest

O family of this little girl, may God not forgive you any sins
What made you blind to the son of the uncle and aunt?

O family of this little girl, may God not alleviate any of your hardships
What made you blind to this smart cousin?

The day I can mount my homeland on camelback
I shall leave and go wherever you are, you peaceful people

Singing

Ghada Azzeh

Place and date

Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
13/11/2019

The above verses allude to the traditional style of singing known as the Palestinian *samer*. The two-line stanzas are mostly unrelated; according to the *samer* formula, they refer to diverse issues of social life. Themes include those of love, disappointment, war, death, and the longing for one's home.

Ghada Azzeh is a refugee living in the Aida camp, right next to the separating wall, surrounded by the grim realities of checkpoint 300 between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. In their commute to work Palestinians wait in endless queues every day, crammed into caged corridors. In their occupation, the Israeli army conducts night raids several times a week, searching houses and issuing arrests. This camp is considered to be one of the places in the world most exposed to tear gas.

I recorded with Ghada Azzeh a few times. Our sessions were often interrupted with the sudden arrival of Israeli soldiers, shots and tear gas. Ghada would stop singing, frantically trying to determine if her children were safe. However, during this recording session it was not the appearance of soldiers, but the verses themselves, verses which described a desire by Palestinians to hoist their country on the backs of camels, to carry it to a place where there is peace and safety, that made her unable to continue singing.

Time
1:58

Taq, taq, taqiyyih

We were once free in our land
And would play a popular game:
We'd gather around, as little kids,
And play: "hat, hat, hatty"

Hat, hat, hatty
We have no identity (card)
Hat, hat, hatty
The name of the game is America
Hat, hat, hatty
This is what democracy looks like
Hat, hat, we're surrounded
The resolution came but we didn't wake up
And the wall that surrounded us
Took away the West Bank

Hat, hat, hatty
We have no identity (card)
Hat, hat, many hats
We cannot find any bread
They attacked Iraq
And claimed it's for nuclear reasons

Hat, hat, hatty
This is what democracy looks like
Hat, hat, hatty
The name of the game is America
Ring, ring, ring the bell
A dagger stabbed us in the back
They placed a checkpoint and some guards
Around East Jerusalem

Hat, hat, hatty
We have no identity (card)
The Arab states are all convened
All twenty-two of them
They are having soirées in hotels
To western tunes

Our government, my brethren,
Has issued the first statement,
Announcing a price hike
Of one hundred and ninety percent
In percentage: a hundred ninety
They applied it at the beginning of October
The price of sugar and flour went up

And that of all the necessities
Hat, hat, hatty
Now both the worker and the teacher
Claim that life is unsurmountable
The price of both diesel and gas went up
At the onset of winter
Hat, hat, hatty
The merchant is acting all macho
While people are boiling inside
They even raised the price of a dishwashing sponge
By the VAT amount.

Singing

Abu Nasser

Place and date

Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
09/11/2019

The song is a parody of the popular children's game *Taq, Taq, Taqiyyih*, in which a group of children sits in a circle facing one another. One child, dubbed the Hatter, remains outside the circle and circles around, wearing a hat or other head covering, while the rest of the group sings the song. At a certain point, the Hatter drops their hat on one of the sitting children. The selected child tries to catch the Hatter. If the Hatter manages to occupy the empty place in the circle, the chosen child becomes the new Hatter. The game continues.

Abu Nasser is a refugee living in the Dheisheh camp. In his youth he wrote and sang songs during crucial moments in the history of the camp. He sang at weddings and during celebrations, when political prisoners were released from Israeli prisons. For this reason he was oppressed and spent many years under house arrest.

Time

1:45

La tibki, tbakkini

Don't cry and make me cry,
Fatima, my sister,
Don't cry and make me cry.

You bruised my cheek
with your absence
You bruised my cheek

O, Rwedeh, Rwedeh
We love you
O, Rwedeh, Rwedeh

You bruised my cheek
With your absence
You bruised my cheek
O, Rwedeh

Singing

Leila Daayna

Place and date

Fawwar Refugee Camp, Palestine
13/11/2019

La tibki, tbakkini is an old Palestinian lullaby made in a traditional manner. It is how women in Palestine sing folk songs, for instance at weddings or during harvest season. As with many Palestinian songs, the theme of this one remembers enforced distance and a longing for loved ones who are far away.

Leila Daayna is from Beit Jibrin and is a refugee living in the Fawwar camp. The song was recorded in Al Madafah, a living room initiated by Saldi Hilal, to which we were invited by the host, refugee and feminist Ayat Al Turshan.

Time

0:59

Ala Taree' Aytit

On the road to Aytit, oh, mother
Two people interrupted my prayers
One was my soul's love, oh, mother
And the other, my life.

We tasted torment, oh, mother
We tasted its different flavors
And he who forgets his land, oh, mother
Puts an end to his life

Singing

Tamara Abu Laban

Place and date

Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
12/11/2019

Aytit is a village in southern Lebanon, to which more than 100 thousand Palestinians escaped in 1948. Today, 453,000 registered Palestinian refugees live in camps across the country.

The song *Ala Taree' Aytit* narrates the life of a girl who lost her brother and her lover in their fight for freedom.

Tamara Abu Laban is a film director, young mother, and refugee living in the Dheisheh camp. She sings the song *Ala Taree' Aytit* to get her children to sleep. The recording was made in the studio at the headquarters of the Shoruq organization, which was created by the refugees, residents of the Dheisheh camp. During the session we repeatedly heard Israeli F16's flying over the camp, on their way to shoot at Gaza, located 60 km away from the camp.

Time

1:00

Safayeh, Safayeh

Safayeh, safayeh
On the prophet's road
Safayeh, safayeh
Exuding fragrance
I bring you, oh, prophet

Safayeh, safayeh
Because you brought your master
Oh camel, oh camel
Because you brought your master
I shall increase your hay
And keep you tied for two months

Because you brought your master
I shall keep you tied for two months
Because you brought this tanned man
I shall keep you tied for two months
Near the green beans

Singing

Ghada Azzeh

Place and date

Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
12/11/2019

Sfiha (pl. *Safayeh*) is a type of salty pastry.

The song belongs to the genre of *tarwida*. The pieces have diverse themes, they are composed in honor of those who returned from Mecca, of political prisoners leaving Israeli prisons, and for various celebrations. What connects them is a specific melody. The slow rhythm originates from the manner in which these pieces were first performed. The *tarwidas* were sung by women putting their children to sleep.

The lullabies sung by Ghada Azzeh are very old; in her family they were passed down from generation to generation. She inherited these lullabies from her aunt.

Time

1:14

Hatha waqtu nnawmi, ya ibni

It is time to sleep, my son
Have a long and blissful sleep
Sleep in the crib of happiness
Oh, happy child
Sleep on this pillow
I wish I were a child again
Oh, little angel in his bed
Sleep in God's care
Sleep, oh angel, sleep, oh love
Sleep in God's care
Sleep until the coming morning
Sleep with blissful eyes
Oh God, keep my loved one safe
during sleep
Oh God, keep my loved one safe
during sleep

Singing

Em Elias

Place and date

Palestine

23/10/1998

The lullaby comes from the Popular Art Center's sound archive.

For years, Palestine has unsuccessfully fought to reclaim its archives from other countries. The whereabouts of many documents, photographs, films, books, newspapers, maps, and manuscripts are unknown. A vast majority are in the possession of Israel, which means the state also controls their accessibility, regulating the ways these materials are used, or otherwise destroying documents as they see fit. Israeli forces plundered extensive archives kept by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in Beirut. Leaving Lebanon, the PLO took the remainder of the archives (containing documentation on the daily life of Palestinians, as well as documents of property deeds from before 1948) to Algeria, and kept them in desert camps, where allegedly a large part of these were further destroyed.

These archives could be a powerful tool in the hands of Palestinians. On the one hand they could serve in an ideological struggle, opposing the Israeli-propagated myth about state-building in a no-man's land inhabited by nomadic, cultureless barbarians. On the other hand, possessing these documents could serve a very practical dimension, strengthening the individual and public rights of Palestinians under occupation. If they were supported by documents, neither Israel nor anyone else could contest Palestinian claims. Thanks to these archives, Palestinians would be able to prove that they are the rightful owners of houses (including those in Jerusalem and Nablus) and of the lands that have been illegally seized by settlers.

From the outset, the activity of the El Funoun group and their Popular Art Center was aimed at protecting Palestinian cultural heritage against appropriation and loss. The founders of both organizations recognized the need to document customs and traditional Palestinian culture to strengthen the cultural bond between Palestinians everywhere. Despite it being prohibited, they created an audio archive, recording and collecting traditional Palestinian songs, believing in the crucial role of art and culture to counter the systematic oppression of Palestinian identity by Israeli occupation.

Time

1:48

Yimma, Mwel Lhawa

O, mother, this love ballad,
this love ballad of mine, o mother.
I'd sooner be stabbed with daggers
Than be ruled by a lowlife.

And I walked under the rain,
And the rain quenched my thirst
And when summer came
It lit up my fires
At least my life was redeemed
As a vow to freedom

Singing

Tamara Abu Laban

Place and date

Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
12/11/2019

It is difficult to determine the origin of this song, but it is certainly strongly identified with the fate of Palestinians. Tamara Abu Laban, a refugee living in the Dheisheh camp, often sings it to get her children to sleep.

Time

1:09

يَلدُ تَنام

يَلدُ تَنام ربما، يلد بيجوها التَّوم
يَلدُ تَنام الصلاة، يلد تحب الصَّوم
يَلدُ تَنام بيجوها العوافي، كل يوم بيوم

يَلدُ تَنام، يَلدُ تَنام
لأبجدِها طير الحمام
روح يا حمام لا تصدق
بضحك ع ربما تَ تَنام

ربما ربما الحنَّة
شعرك أشقر وممق
اللي جَرك بيوسك
اللي بقضك شو يترقِّ

يا رِباع العنب والعنبية
قولوا لأمي، قولوا ليبي
خطفوني الفجر، من تحت خيمة مجدبة

الْتَشْتِشَة والْتَشْتِشَة، والخوخ تحت
المشتمشة

كل ما هب الهوا، بقطف لربما مشمِشَة
هيه هيه هيه لينا، دستك لكك عبرينا
تَ تَغْتِيلُ ثياب ربما، ونشترهن ع
الياسمية

طاق طاق طاقيّة

كأ فم بلدنا حار
ونالعب لعبة شعبية
تجمع ولد صغار
ونالعب طاق طاق طاقيّة

طاق طاق طاقيّة
واحا بد هويةX
طاق طاق طاقيّة
اللعبة أمريكية
طاق طاق طاقيّة
هذي السيمفونية
طاق طاق طوقنا
وصار الحل وما فقنا
والحدار اللي طوقنا
أخذ الصفة العريّة

طاق طاق طاقيّة
واحا بد هوية
طاق طاق صواقي
خيز ما عم بللق
هجموا على العراق
وقالوا حداهم ذرّة

طاق طاق طاقيّة
هذي النيقراطية
طاق طاق طاقيّة
اللعبة أمريكية
زان ران يا جرس
خنجر في ظهورنا الفرس

لا تبكي

لا تبكي، تبكي
خيتي يا فاطمة
لا تبكي، تبكي
ع خدي سمطيني
بغياك عني
ع خدي سمطيني
يا رويدة، رويدة
يا رويدة، رويدة
أحنا لحتك
ع خدي سمطيني
بفراقك عني
ع خدي سمطيني
يا رويدة

هذا وقت النوم

هذا وقت النوم يا ابي
نم طويلا في المنام
نم عن مود الشعادة
أيها الطفل السعيد
نم على هذي الوسادة
ليتي طفل اعود
يا ملاك في سرير
نم بحفظ الله واسلم
نم ملاكي نم حبيبي
نم بحفظ الله واسلم
نم إلى الصبح القريب
نم قرر العين نم نم
رثا احفظ لي حبيبي
سابقا وقت المنام
رثا احفظ لي حبيبي
سابقا وقت المنام

على طريق عيئات

على طريق عيتيت يمي
قطعوا صلاتي
واحد حبيب الروح يمي
وواحد حباتي
نحن ذفا العذاب يمي
ذفا حالاته
ذفا نسي ارضه يمي
يعدم حياته

يما مويل الهوى

يما مويل الهوى
يما مويلنا
صرب الخاجر ولا
حكم الأذل قيا
ومشيت تحت الشتا
والشتا رواني
والصيف لعا آني
وлаг من نيراني
بيطل عمري أفدي
نذر الحزبه

صفايح

صفايح صفايح
يا طريق النبي
صفايح صفايح
مبههب روايح
محملك يو ابي
صفايح صفايح
ولان جيت سيدك
يا حمل يو حمل
لان جيت سيدك
لازود علقك
واربطك شهوزين

لان جيت سيدك
لايرطك شهوزين
لان جيت الاسمر
وع الفول الأخضر
لايرطك شهوزين

حظوا "محسوج" وحرس

على القدس الشرفية
طاق طاق طاقيّة
واحا بد هوية
ودول العرب مجتمعين
يعتوا اثنين وعشرين
بالفنادق سهرائين
ع الارتصات الفريّة

حكومتنا يا إخوان
أصدرت أوّل بيان
وطلع الفلا يا إخوان
ميّة وتسعين بالميّة
بالميّة ميّة وتسعين
زادوها بأوّل تشرين
وأغلو الشكر والتّرحين
والأشياء الصّروية
طاق طاق طاقيّة
وصار العامل والأستاذ
يقولوا العيشة ما يتجّاز
وأغلو السّولار مع الكار
بأوّل السّتوتية

طاق طاق طاقيّة
الناج صرار يو علي
والشّعب عم يبغلي علي
حتى لبة الحلي
زادوها القيمة الإضافة

السامر الفلسطيني

طلت من الزوشن العالي بلا مدبل
يا وجهها يو خواتي يضوي
كما القنديل
طلت من الزوشن العالي بمصباحهو
وانبسمت بالضحك
وابوها موهو
يا بنت ضّبي غمك وصدغك بار

لا تحسبوا الرهد نساني
طريق أهلي
لركب على الهيجن
واتدج على مهلي

مرق من الحارة تحجج
يلعب الطّاب
لا طاب لعينو ولا المحبوب
فتح ليه الاباب
مرق من بوانيا، تحجج
بشري الأرت
لا زيت شربنو ولا المحبوب
فتح ليه الاباب

الله مع البيض
والنطاجين
على الوادي
بناتها مرّوا
واجين صابرات
لحوادي
الله مع البيض
والنطاجين
مع الخنّة
سرية مماليك
واجين يقسموا
القلّة

يا أهل البيوت
لا بيريلكو ذمّة
شو الي عمالكو
عن ابن العم
والعمّة

يا أهل البيوت
لا بيريلكو خاطر
شو الي عمالكو
عن ابن العم
هالشاطر

ع اليوم
لأه الوطن
ينشال فوق جمال
لارحل واجي
عندكو يا هادين
ابال

Mirna Bamieh

What is a Mother



Mirna Bamieh

What is a Mother

The curator gave the artist her mother, she said: take care of her, make her a creator, let her give life. The artist hoped to nurture the curator's sourdough starter, and make a beautiful bread of a mother, a mother that would beget new possibilities.

This would be the artist's first sourdough bread. She was not a baker, she was a cook, a hot kitchen cook, who could handle cooking for 60 people but had always been intimidated by bread; western breads in particular, with their rectangular or dome-like structures, technical, measurable and visible for evaluation, loaves that are meant to be displayed. Earlier that year, the artist had managed, with far less anxiety, to make traditional breads; breads that are smaller, less arrogant and more forgiving than western breads. She had followed recipes that didn't demand a mother starter, in a way, this freed her from the responsibility of being a narrator, a contributor to a lineage.

The mother in fermentation is the starter, without her, the process cannot begin, she carries the DNA of whatever follows. The mother is demanding, she needs to be taken care of, she needs to produce, or else she dies. A mother in fermentation gives herself away for the new creation, but needs

to be part of it. There is no way around it, if you fail to create another mother from the mother, the story ends. Intent on not being part of an ending this time, the artist carefully took in the curator's caring instructions, and resolved to create her first sourdough bread.

It all started at night. The artist had just started the residency and the kitchen she would be using was new territory. She warmed up in the kitchen by roasting the leaves of a fermented tea. The tea came out beautifully, giving her confidence: the kitchen was hospitable. She took the curator's baby, opened the jar and inhaled, it smelled tenderly sour and somehow alive. She mixed it with rye flour and water, and it became sticky like the curator said it would, she covered it with a cloth, put it in a warm place, made peace with the total loss of control, and slept.

She woke up early and checked the bread that had been fermenting all night. It had risen beautifully and it was time to add the rest of the flour and water and work it into a loaf. It was coming together when she remembered that she had to take a piece of the dough and create a mother out of it, but she had already added some seeds to the dough. She panicked a little, would some seeds ruin a mother? She hoped not. The process was intense and full of uncertainty, she didn't know what the dough should feel like, she had never used rye bread before, is it supposed to stay this sticky? Should she keep adding flour? Did she need to knead it more with her hands, with the machine? She eventually decided to stop feeding the dough with flour as it was greedily eating it all without coming together, she put it in the bread mold, and left it to rest.

Afterwards she felt drained and confused. She decided to go back to sleep while the dough was resting. It was then that she had a very particular dream. She dreamt of a past lover with whom she had had the longest story of her life to date. In the dream he was kissing her and starting to make love to her, but there was a small boy in the room, the lover didn't seem to be bothered by him and she was not asking any questions. She woke up with an urge to call him and without questioning this urge, she did and he picked up. They had not spoken in two years. Are you happy, he asked. Do you have a son, she said. My son is due to be born today, he said.

There are incidents in the artist's life that have led her to believe that she is not capable of being a mother, not to children, nor to broken men. She thought that having children would put an end to many things she wouldn't like to end. Her family too had lovingly joked that she would not be able to tolerate a child, which felt like a punch in her womb, a punch she received and gave in to. The only son she had ever imagined loving was

from the lover in that dream, the lover who was becoming a father. She cried on the phone, she did not hide her tears, as he was used to them.

Through her tears she checked on the bread, it had rested and fermented beautifully. She heated the oven and put the loaf in. She spoke to her new lover, at the same time calculating the baking heat intervals; he and the bread symbolised beginnings; beginnings that she was determined not to mess up. The loaf of bread came out of the oven and was beautiful. It had cracks on the top as she had forgotten to score it, but she forgave herself for that minor mishap. She left it to cool down and left for a walk.

While walking, the artist thought about her mother, the one person she cannot imagine living without. Her mother's footsteps coming down the stairs in the morning to make coffee would always be the greatest sound in life, and her mother's rice would always be her refuge in the hardest moments, and the only thing she could digest when life is at its darkest. The artist is blessed with a mother who always listened and never judged, to a degree that made it seem that dark, complicated, layered emotions were unknown to her. Her feelings seemed simple, when she is happy, she is happy, when she is sad, she is sad, when faced with an emotion that lay beyond that dichotomy, her face would show astonishment then nothing. Yet, there are days when she wallows alone in sadness in her bedroom without making so much as a ripple in the life around her. Sometimes she would carry this sadness down with her to the kitchen while making coffee, and the artist would catch it and feel helpless, and feel her mother's sadness from feeling like she was never granted what she deserved, how her life had been a compromise. The artist's mother would sometimes say that life is passing her by and that she never really lived, but then, she would shake herself away from such thoughts, and go back to the altered state where nothing can touch her. She created this space very carefully, with a cigarette in her hand and a beautiful smile on an ethereal face. The artist has always felt that she has the most beautiful mother and that her beauty is what has always held her life together.

Without mothers, stories never start.



Bread from a small baking tray
photo. Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka

Mother recipe

Ingredients

For a small baking tray (20x10x7.5 cm) use:

325 g whole grain 720 rye flour
290 ml water
200 g mother starter
1 tsp of salt

or

325 g whole grain 2000 rye flour
325 ml water
200 g mother starter
1 tsp of salt

Your choice of seeds to top it with
(sesame seeds, flax seeds, poppy seeds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds...etc.)

Recipe yields half a kilo of sourdough bread

For a large loaf tin (31x10x7 cm) use:

750 g whole grain 720 rye flour
590 ml water
200 g mother starter
1 tbsp of salt

or

750 g whole grain 2000 rye flour
750 ml water
200 g mother starter
1 tbsp of salt

Your choice of seeds to top it with

Recipe yields one kilo of sourdough bread

Instructions

Use a glass or plastic bowl, metal slows down bacterial activity. Mix 70% of the flour and 70% of the water with the mother. Using the hook fixture of a mixer, fold the ingredients until just incorporated, it is alright to see traces of flour, the bacteria will process this. The dough will be very sticky at this stage, cover it with a cloth and leave it at room temperature overnight or for 9-12 hours.

Once the dough has rested add the remaining flour and water (30% flour, 30% water) and the salt and mix. Now take 50g of the dough; this is now the new mother. Leave it to rise, then deflate, then put it in the fridge and feed with one tablespoon of rye flour and one tablespoon of water every 5 days. Use within a week, make a new batch and a new mother.

Fold in anything else you might want to add to the bread (e.g.: dried tomatoes, olives, dried fruit, seeds). If your baking tray is new or you are afraid the bread will stick to it, line it with parchment paper or grease it with oil. You can also sprinkle the base with seeds.

Place the dough in the baking tray and sprinkle the top with seeds too. Once more, leave it to rest, this time for 3-4 hours at room temperature, or 6-7 hours in the fridge. (If you choose to refrigerate, make sure you allow it to warm to room temperature before the following steps and keep it covered with a plastic bag in the meantime.)

Brush the surface of your bread with olive oil, and carefully score it.

Scoring your bread will allow it to break along the top nicely while baking.

Preheat the oven to 200 °C for 50-60 minutes. If the oven has no humidity option, place a tray filled with water at the bottom of the oven.

The very warm oven will cause the bread to rise and the water will keep your bread moist while baking.

Now bake your loaf for 10 minutes at the maximum temperature setting of your oven. Then bake for another 10 minutes at 200 °C (or at the temperature setting that is second to highest on your oven). Now bake for 20-35 min on 150C or 180C, depending on how hot your oven is.

Take care not to face the oven door directly when opening it, the vinegar fermentation will be underway and you don't want the hot acidic air in your face.

Once your loaf is ready, take it out of the baking tray and place it on an elevated metal rack. When it is just slightly warm, cover it with a cloth. Wait until it has completely cooled down before you slice it, it is even better to wait for 12 hours before you eat it, as most of the vinegar from the natural fermentation will have dissipated and it will be less acidic.



Mirna Bamieh

*A Very Very Very
Long Relationship
with a Pickle*

U–jzdowski

exhibition, residencies, assembly

Everyday Forms of Resistance

Text

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Mirna Bamieh

A Very Very Very Long Relationship with a Pickle

The artist was in a very very very long relationship with a pickle. If you are wondering how long exactly “very very very long” is, she will tell you that “very very very long” begins with a “start” that is impossible to forget, and that doesn’t exactly end, but which does result in a space you reside in, in place of closure, that others expect you to display.

He wasn’t always a pickle. At the time they met, he had a freshness and kindness in his eyes that would serve the artist as a reference, to later measure her lovers against. Nothing has ever been more valuable to her than kindness in the eyes of others. The kindness in her mother’s eyes, the kindness that she never saw in her father’s eyes, the kindness in the pickle’s eyes, and the kindness that manifests through people’s selfless acts towards strangers.

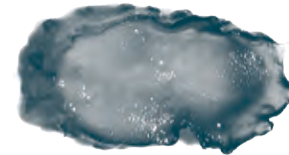
Nevertheless, she was able to understand the difference between kindness and goodness; the pickle was never good, but always kind. Goodness can be oppressive, but kindness always redeems people.

The pickle was never good at anything, not even before he became a pickle. This statement might shock you, and you might even sympathize with how hard it must have been for someone to be described as such. You might also think that the artist is extremely harsh. You would be right on all counts; indeed, those are the facts that fed her emotional rollercoaster and subsequently turned a man into a pickle.

The silence of the artist's man was oppressive, it would push her to build her own prison, he would let the artist wallow in her insecurities, laboring her way through those heavy blocks of disappointment, and disappear, without walking her out of it, without interrupting her. He would just be there, fermenting.

Those fermentation sessions would last the whole night. She would boil with anger and words, in hot salty tears, while squeezing expectations out of her pores, and his. Tormented with restlessness, she would ask him for a reaction, for an act, for a protest, for any sign that he cared. Instead he would just stand there, with dead eyes and silence, he would then sleep, leaving her to reach the bottom of the pit of sadness and disappointment, and with a persistent thought to end on, leave it all behind, him and her life, not that there was a separation between the two on such nights. In the morning he would wake up, make her forget it all with a smile; he would hold her close and make her go through another day with his love fix. The artist wouldn't realize that her man was fermenting a little more with the passing of such nights. She would be too drained to feel anything, neither sadness nor despair, nor the pain that his silence inflicted.

The pickle was not good at being angry, not good at forgiving, not good at giving, not good at keeping friends, not good at sharing, not good at taking care of himself, not good at taking care of others, not good at creating a career, and not good at contributing to any cause. The pickle thought: to be is to survive.



Candied pickles
Photo: Mirna Bamieh





Mirna Bamieh

*Inside the Jar,
Fermenting*

U–jazdowski

exhibition, residencies, assembly

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Mirna Bamieh

Inside the Jar, Fermenting

In the autumn of 2019, the artist was a resident at Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw. At the start of the residency, she was asked to contribute to their annual thematic diary for 2020. The inspiration for that year was the future in 2050. It was an invitation to a game of anticipating the future. “As the authors,” they wrote “we have the power to shape and predict the future as we want – at least on paper.”

Dear Dominik,

I apologize for taking too long in sending my response. Thinking that we might be the oldest generation to survive, or not to survive 2050 in 30 years, wasn't easy! Below are the two images I would like to include in the diary. The dates I would like to mark on the calendar: 4/8 the artist turns 66, 27/11 the thirtieth anniversary of meeting a lover who died in the future. 22/4 Earth day, global prayer.

Dear artist,

Thank you so much for your contribution! You're right, when we proposed the title 2050, two months ago, we thought it could be a nice game to play with the future. But the deeper you dig into the subject the more problematic it becomes... Therefore, we appreciate that you made it.

Big thanks again

Stay in touch!

Little did the artist know that those anxieties were mere evocations of what humanity would be facing in less than six months. That autumn, she had been dwelling on thoughts of nature taking back control and avenging the harm done to her over the centuries, of the sun raging against injustices committed by people under its very eye, of us hiding in our houses from the fear of our blood boiling from heat and shame. Come spring, the artist would be building up her pantry, taking measures against an uncertain future, a future not of her imagination, but that of apocalyptic cinema and literature.

"We are all fermenting in quarantine." The statement sprang up during a tarot reading session. The question the artist had posed to the cards was in relation to stagnation in relationships. The question led to an inner journey that somehow turned her quarantine days into an opportunity to tune-down the noise of the daily mundane, and to redirect her efforts towards resolutions. She hadn't spent time in one place for quite a while, her body was relaxing with the passing of days. She cleaned, painted walls, redecorated every corner, planted, cooked, meditated, worked out, chose the incense that would start and end the day, selected the coffee blends she enjoyed the most. Somehow her house became the jar she was preparing for a successful quarantined fermentation.

To initiate fermentation, the artist had learned that all she had to do was to be a good host to the bacteria, those tiny beings who colonize and cultivate; everything from her digestive system and beyond. The jar is a microsystem of successive bacteria cultures that fight battles to nurture themselves and to thrive, one after the other, until it is time to slow down and enjoy the ferment. Salt and sweetness are the artist's assets in creating this hospitable environment for generations of good bacteria in her jar to eventually dominate. But no matter how inhospitable an environment is, there is always an organism that is able to inhabit it. All the artist has to do is set the right tone, then let go.

It is never easy to be oneself, whether you are alone or you have someone, the artist realized. Being confined to one space with all of one's emotions

and thoughts can make it even harder, and the struggles that ensue are not unlike those waged by the bacteria cultures. The artist wondered about the salt she was choosing to fight the undesired bacterial thoughts, about them taking control, and about the fabric of self-care she was using in her fermentation.

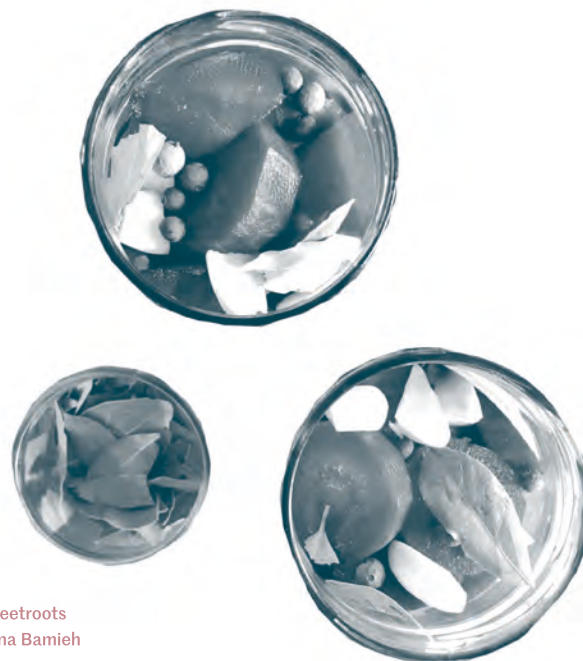
Fermentation time is the time a jar of ferment sits on your counter and undergoes a transformation, a curing. It is also the time when people face their doubts and questions while they wait. The artist began to understand how the future had never been and never will be under her control, that planning and imagining future scenarios go against the very nature of life.

In times of crisis, the connective tissue of us as groups, and communities, is being tested. We lean onto that which comforts us, what reminds us of what is important, and what seems always to be linked to food, the people we love, our habitat, and the truth of feeling. When the world was flipped upside down, those jars were the artist's anchor, an enduring presence. While the artist was confined between walls, those jars opened a boundless space before her, turning into vast landscapes, speaking unlike ever before of graceful struggles and of the mundane quest of being alive. For that the artist held herself responsible, going through this multi-feeling, multi-liberating, multi-scale journey, all happening from the clusters of confinement.

The Artist's Personal Timeline of the 3-month Quarantine Through Fermenting Jars and Weekly Tarot Readings:

- 07/03 The World: What Goes Around Comes Around
- 08/03 Finishing up a jar of white cabbage sauerkraut with carrots and cumin seeds
- 14/03 Five of Wands: Clearing the Air
- 20/03 Pickled beetroot with mustard seeds, garlic and peppercorns
- 21/03 Nine of Wands: The Journey of the Nine of Wands
- 22/03 Pickled sardines with green olives and carrots
- 23/03 Fermented goat yogurt with coriander, red onion and garlic
- 23/03 Kimchi 3 ways: with eggplants, with Brussels sprouts, with mushrooms
- 27/03 Fermented roasted bell pepper paste
- 28/03 Four Cups: Time for Change
- 28/03 Pink sauerkraut: a mixture of red and white cabbage with coriander seeds
- 29/03 Pickled mung and pea sprouts with ginger, colored peppers and carrots
- 04/04 The Tower: The Past Is Crumbling but the Future Can be Bright
- 05/04 Pickled green string beans with mustard seeds and garlic
- 06/04 Fermented drink: pineapple skin in water with star anise and wild honey
- 08/04 Fermented grated carrot, olives, walnuts and lemon in olive oil
- 10/04 Fermented garlic in honey and raw apple vinegar
- 11/04 King of Swords: A man of Intellect
- 17/04 Fermented eggplants with carrots, olives, walnuts and lemon
- 17/04 Fermented stuffed jalapeños with carrots, olives, walnuts and lemon in oil
- 18/04 Seven of Cups: A Time of Uncertainty
- 25/04 Eight of Wands: The Journey of the Eight of Wands
- 02/05 The High Priestess: Tune in and Turn up Your Inner Voice
- 08/05 Finishing up the fermented eggplant, carrots, walnuts, olives and chili mix
- 09/05 Page of Wands: Your Heart Knows the Way

- 09/05 Finishing up the 3 jars of kimchi
- 12/05 Reviving the kefir grains
- 16/05 Nine of Cups: Attitude of Gratitude
- 19/05 Second fermentation of kefir water: adding fruits to first ferment
- 21/05 Fermented drink: pineapple skin in water with cane sugar
- 22/05 Second fermentation of kefir water with raspberries
- 23/05 Sound of Silence: The Hermit
- 25/05 Fermenting watermelon rind with garlic, fennel leaves and unripe apples
- 26/05 Fermenting red and white cabbage with Za'tar (dried thyme, sesame seeds and sumac)
- 27/05 Finishing up the pink sauerkraut
- 27/05 End of quarantine regulations In Palestine



Fermenting beetroots
Photo: Mirna Bamieh

The first recipe the artist prepared at the beginning of the three-month quarantine period.

Beetroot Pickles

Ingredients

4 heads of beetroot

A pear or a green apple
(optional)

Spices: choose the spices you like: garlic, ginger, pepper, bay leaf, allspice, lemon or orange zest. If you use pear or apple, than anise stars and fennel seeds or rosemary make a great addition.

For the brine:

1 tbsp of salt per liter of water.

Instructions

Thoroughly wash the beetroots, scrubbing their skin with a clean sponge. Cut them into 1 cm thick disks, half disks, or strips Stack the vegetables in a jar very tightly. You can add a pear

for extra sweetness, or some zest and ginger for an extra kick. These additions flavor the beetroot brine very nicely.

Pour in the salty brine, making sure all the vegetables are submerged with 4 cm of brine on top, leaving 1-2cm of air space

Leave to ferment at room temperature, away from direct sunlight. The beetroots can be eaten 2 weeks later, but reach their best flavor and probiotic goodness after 4 weeks.

You can leave your jar fermenting for up to one year, but once opened make sure you store it in the fridge to slow down the fermentation process, and to keep undesired bacteria from spoiling the ferment after exposure to air.

Beetroot kvass recipe

Beetroot kvass is simply the juice (brine) from fermented beetroots. It is a delicious powerhouse of probiotics. To increase the amount of the liquid yield, simply increase the proportion of the brine vs beetroot.

After fermenting for at least a month, you can drink the brine as you would juice, or add it to smoothies, soups and salad dressings. Just make sure not to heat it, as heat will kill the probiotic life in it, diminishing its health benefits.

Mirna Bamieh

*Of Tears, Brines
and Fears*



U–jzdowski

exhibition, residencies, assembly

Everyday Forms of Resistance

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Mirna Bamieh

Of Tears, Brines and Fears

The artist would shed hot, salty tears: in her bedroom, at the restaurant, at the theater, at the cinema, on the balcony floor, in a gallery bathroom, with her mother, with her sisters, with her lovers, with her friends, at school, at weddings, at funerals, at...

She was fifteen years old when she first encountered those non-stop tears burning on her cheeks. She was at the funeral of her classmate's father. She was sitting there and could not stop her tears; it was her first time in that tunnel of sadness, which trapped her in darkness. The classmate even came to comfort her, and to ask where those tears were coming from. The classmate was pale, but not crying, unlike her mother who looked like a body that had lost all light, lost all its strength. The image of the mother, who seemed like she had no muscle to hold herself up, the image of what loss does to the body, of how it steals life from those who stay, remained the image of death for her. When the teenage artist went back home that day, she was surprised that she could continue her life without even mentioning that death, those tears and that tunnel, to her parents. She watched herself have lunch and she contemplated life. That day, through those hot salty tears, she encountered the fear of loss and the absurdity of life.

When the artist was around ten years old, her father told her she could not join the swimming classes at summer camp because she had a hole in her ear through which the water would enter. Her father was a doctor and he deemed the water in the pool contaminated by chemicals and by people's biological waste. She did not argue with her father's decision as she did not want the water entering her through that hole in her ear. She knew that her ear had a hole in it. She believed a bee lived in there, keeping her awake during long nights with its constant buzzing. She definitely didn't want to drown the bee in her ear and to have a dead bee living inside of her. She'd rather tolerate the buzzing than the death of that annoying creature living inside of her. The artist believes that the hole left her ear, but not her body; the artist believes that this hole moves around her body, and has been in her stomach for the last two decades.

Growing up, she stayed away from water. That desire to go swimming she had as a child was replaced by fear and distrust. During one family vacation, she had almost drowned under the gaze of her parents, who thought she was playing around in the water. When the lifeguard noticed her screams and pulled her out, the only thought in her head was one of shame. She had developed body hair, armpit hair, which she had been trying to hide, but which was now visible to all while she was pulled out by this man.

It was not until she was in her thirties that she decided to face this fear of water. She enrolled in a class and was gently prompted by her tutor to trust the water to hold her up. It was months before she did, until one day, it happened.

Every now and then, the artist experiences an event with such intensity that she can later recall the details with the utmost clarity. That first moment of her floating was one of those events. She felt the border between her and the water disappear; she felt her body expand and connect to the water. Her body experienced lightness for the first time; she closed her eyes and somehow she was out of time. She had found her element, and it was water. Since that day, her body had demanded to be in the water.

However, the artist cannot imagine how people trust the sea, rivers or even lakes. Open waters are waters of death. Maybe cinema put that thought in her head, or the stories she had heard of waves and currents dragging people into oblivion. She did try, she did swim in rivers, lakes and seas, but always cautiously. For her, the scariest of seas was the Dead Sea. When she tried to swim in it, the briny water was so heavy that she felt she was cutting through it. You can't really drown in the Dead Sea, but one droplet of its water enters your eyes and you are blinded by

excruciating pain. For the artist, to be blinded at night in the sea was the ultimate loss of control, the ultimate nightmare.

Brines, like tears and sea water, are a highly concentrated solution of salt in water. Within that salt life happens, but also stops.

Brines are used for preservation. Flesh that is marinated in brine becomes tender, she thought.

To create a brine for preserving pickles you need to make the water taste like the sea. In there, life takes hold, transforms and is preserved.

Cucumbers, radishes, chilies, turnips, tomatoes, cauliflower and eggplants all transform in brine and through time.

The artist thought herself to be rather introspective, attuned to her emotions and opposed to bottling and pickling feelings and thoughts. One evening, during a mindfulness meditation class, she felt as if she had been pushed into an abyss when the teacher asked: "What are the feelings you are not trying to feel?" The question created a physical reaction in her being; she felt her throat closing in on itself, forming a ball, in which all of the unfelt feelings were trapped. She felt the tears build up in her body and she mustered all of her strength to keep them from flowing. She did not want to drown the room with her hot salty tears. But she knew that the pain in her throat was real. She realized that she had been fermenting emotions that she did not want to feel, emotions that were nevertheless directing her actions. She had not seen them before, those dark, deep waters inside of her, where those feelings were preserved. The question had uncorked a jar of pickled emotions that she had not known were inside.



Dried herbs at Zielska Kolonia, Knyszewicze 2019

Photo: Mirna Bamieh

Sauerkraut Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 kg (one medium) red or white cabbage, or an equal mix of both for a light pink Sauerkraut.
- 1 tbsp of salt

You may want to make your first batch a classic one, but, think of the flavor notes you like and get playful.

Some optional ingredients for extra flavor:

- 2 medium-sized carrots, grated (for a Russian style Sauerkraut with white cabbage)
- Aromatics (no more than two): cumin seeds, dill seeds, caraway seeds, fennel seeds, chili flakes, rosemary, za'tar (a Middle Eastern thyme mix), or sumac.

Experiment with the spices you like.

- Half a beetroot, grated, and half a cup of dried cranberries
- One grated green apple
- Grated ginger and beetroot (half a bulb)
- 1 tbsp grated turmeric and 1 tbsp grated ginger

Instructions

1. Peel the outer layers of the cabbage, and cut away any bruises, but do not wash it. Chop the cabbage in the desired shape. To speed up the process, it is recommended to chop it into long thin strands with a sharp knife or a mandolin.
2. To each 1 kg of cabbage add 1 tablespoon of salt. Rub the salt into the cabbage and squeeze, until the cabbage begins to release its juice. Leave the cabbage to “sweat” for a couple of hours.
3. One hour later, the cabbage will have released plenty of juice. Rub it again to squeeze out even more liquid, if possible. Add the flavors of choice and mix everything well.
4. Add the cabbage and juice to the jars, packing the cabbage in as tightly as possible. You will need to press it until the cabbage is entirely submerged in its own juice. If there is not enough liquid (this mostly happens with red cabbage) put some weights on top.
5. Cover the cabbage with a cheesecloth and leave it to ferment at room temperature for 3-5 days. Each day, take a wooden fork and pierce the cabbage to release the gas. Try the sauerkraut each time; only your tastebuds will tell you when it's ready to eat.
6. After fermenting at room temperature, cover the jars with lids and keep in the fridge for 21 more days, for a whole cycle of probiotic maturation. The sauerkraut will stay good in the fridge for several months.

Mirna Bamieh

Water of Life



U–jazdowski

exhibition, residencies, assembly

Everyday Forms of Resistance

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Mirna Bamieh

Water of Life

A certain anticipation always fills the artist's gut when a jar is first opened, slowly opened after incubating life for a month or so. It was the closest sensation to "butterflies in the stomach" she would feel for quite a while. She had come to recognize her attraction to the vitality of fermentation. The thought of creating a situation of aliveness that continues beyond her intervention was the closest she could come to what gods and mothers must feel. For her, it was the near-est she could come to procreation.

The artist had brought back a small jar of bacteria from Warsaw, where she had run out of time to put them to work in some water kefir bottles. The bottle of bacteria sat in the fridge of her hometown house for seven months, a time during which she was constantly in and out of airports. Those little bacteria were neglected, along with other things in her life.

But when the artist, along with everyone else in the world, was forced to alter her annual plans and confine herself in her house for months on end, she once more paid attention to all the things she had neglected during the years of movement: her body, her health, the walls of her home, the level of comfort of the couch, the position of her furniture in relation to her and to each other, the tense ties with her family, her bitterness towards a paternal past, her appreciation of a maternal present, and that little jar of bacteria in the door of her fridge.

She was working around the house when a thought nudged her. What if she gave them some sugar to see if they would show any sign of life? She brushed the thought aside, thinking there was little hope that those microscopic creatures would have endured the months of starvation she had imposed on them.

But eventually she did take a spoon of sugar, with which she would test the threshold between life and death. The bottle fizzed when she opened it. The bubbles must indicate aliveness, she thought. She smelled it, took a sip. She had never tasted kefir water before, but it did feel right; it had that seductive smell of sweet funk and the taste of transformation that the artist had come to love. She added the tablespoon of sugar, closed the bottle, and left it on the kitchen counter. In the days that followed, she would look at it, hoping that the bacteria was happily eating the sugar. Two days later, she opened the bottle and took a taste. It was more sour and tart than sweet, the bacteria had indeed persisted, over the past seven months; it had been generating its own energy despite the scarcity. The artist was in awe; those bubbles of aliveness signaled resilience, forgiveness and hope.

The moment called for celebration. The artist went for a second fermentation, one that could be flavored with whatever freshness her heart craved. She strained the kefir grains, looking closely at the small jelly-like granules, their aliveness unperceivable to her eyes. In another jar, the artist submerged an apple, a peach and some raspberries in the kefir water before tightly closing it. Although the kefir grains were no longer in this water, their culture was, and the sugar in the fruits would feed it. Three days later, the artist enjoyed the tender taste and whispers of her carbonated drink, all the time thinking about the fine grains of difference, the multitudes of life expressed in paradoxes, of granules that reside in between spaces that we hurriedly disregard. Everything is everywhere, she thought, we just need a genuine encounter.



Water kefir with sage and cranberry
Photo: Mirna Bamieh

Water Kefir Recipe

Ingredients for first fermentation

- 2 tbsp water kefir grains (you'll need a starter culture, find a friend who has some grains, or buy some online)
- 4 cups water
- 2.5 tbsp sugar (unrefined cane sugar, coconut sugar, jaggery, or white sugar)
- (optional) 1 dried fig/ dried prune/ date
- (optional) 4 tbsp of lemon juice

1. Mix the sugar into the water until fully dissolved.
2. Spoon the water kefir grains into the sugar water. Drop in the dried fruit and add lemon juice. Let it culture for at least 24 hours and up to 72 hours (depending on the room temperature), cover loosely with a lid. Note: when your dried fruit floats, your ferment is ready.
3. Strain the kefir grains through a nonreactive strainer into a pitcher. Discard the fruit.
4. Serve the kefir right away or continue with the secondary fermentation below.

5. Reserve the water kefir grains, storing them in some sugar water in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. The kefir grains will stay healthy as long as you keep feeding them with healthy sugars (alternate between cane, coconut and brown sugar, don't feed them only white sugar).

What you need for the second fermentation

After you've made the basic water kefir from the first fermentation, you can experiment with new flavors for a more enjoyable drink. You can flavor your basic brew with sweetened herbal teas, fruit juices or fruits like cherries, raspberries, strawberries, mangos, red grapes, pineapple, prunes, peaches or apples.

Creating a natural fizzy soda from water kefir relies on a second fermentation, i.e., after you brew your initial batch. The natural fizz comes from the release of carbon dioxide during fermentation. When carbon dioxide is bottled up, the lemonade becomes naturally fizzy. Depending on how long you allow it to ferment, that fizziness can range from an effervescent tickle to a frenzied foaming.

Celebratory Mixed Fruit Natural Soda

Ingredients

This is the recipe the artist followed to create a sweet, slightly bubbly, probiotic, mixed fruit natural soda.

- 1 cup of finely chopped apple, peach and raspberries. You can also experiment by using one cup of fresh fruit juice or herbal tea.
- 4 cups of water kefir
- Optional: 1/4 tsp fine sea salt. It adds minerals and flavor, in addition to supporting the bacteria in the water kefir

Instructions

1. Insert the finely chopped fruit or the juice into flip-top bottles, then add the salt and water kefir, filling the bottles but leaving 2-4 centimeters of air space.

2. Seal the bottles and set them on your countertop to ferment for 2-3 days, bearing in mind that warm temperatures will speed up the fermentation process, while cool temperatures will slow it down. Transfer the bottles of water kefir to the fridge for 3 days to allow the bubbles to set.
3. Open carefully over a sink, as the liquid in the bottle is under pressure and may fizz and foam.
4. Strain and serve chilled on ice. The soda will keep well in the fridge for 2 weeks.





Mirna Bamieh

*How to Tell When
Things are off*



Rotten tomato sauce with lines

Photo collage: Mirna Bamieh

Boiled eggplants

Photo: Nadine Muhtadi

U-jazdowski

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How to Tell When Things Are Off

The artist's jars are on the counter and she is watching, waiting and wondering when they'll be done. Are they ok? Some of them hold a fizzy fermentation, showing through the glass. Others show no signs of life. It is during this waiting time that things can go a little sideways. Only the artist's senses will tell her if things are off. She must listen to, look at, taste, smell, touch and feel her fermentation. Trusting her senses has led her through the toughest moments of doubt. Even with the most tried and trusted recipes, she must rely on those senses to read the signs of the microbial life inside her jars, and register them in her body as physical memories of experience, embodied knowledge that will guide her through the journey.

Some jars are a joy to watch, they bubble, offering a pleasing effervescence, they are extroverted in nature and need to let the artist know that something is happening, that they are working. Other jars are more introverted, they are quiet and work hard without letting her see or hear what they are up to. In turn, the artist needs to understand the nature of her ferments, and to accept them.

The artist's nose is the first to tell her what a ferment is up to. If it has a sour, pickly smell, that is a clue that things have acidified and that transformation is underway. If the smell is not only pungent, but bad, like rotting potatoes or compost, then the ferment is up to no good. Her eyes will see things that are off-color or otherwise unappealing. She has to monitor the brine's color, its changes through time. Green vegetables will wash out or turn a dull olive color, cabbages and onions will look a little translucent, purple or red radishes will lose their color to the brine, carrots and red peppers, which have oil-soluble pigments and which will not change color, might smell and taste acidic. The artist might see a layer floating atop the ferment, it may be yeast, foam or mold. A white layer is not alarming, it simply indicates that the top layer has been exposed to oxygen, and that next time the artist needs to make sure that her vegetables are totally submerged in brine. Underneath, the wonderful flavors of the ferment will still be intact. If the layer has a yellow or a darker fungal color, then it is always safer to toss the ferment away. Her mouth will read the texture under her teeth, if it feels soft or slimy, then the artist's survival instinct will signal to her not to eat it, and if she attempts to, it will feel and taste wrong, and she will probably spit it out. Her gut feeling is another clue to pick up on, but that is another, longer story.

Taste also helps her decide when to stop the fermentation depending on whether she would like the pickles to be more crisp, more sour, less sweet or more salty. It takes the probiotics a moon cycle of 28 days to mature, but you may choose to open the jar after only two weeks for a crisper vegetable, but never during the first week (unless you are fermenting fruits) as bad bacteria will still be in control at that stage.

Expanding her body to include the bodies of her jars is what made the artist a bold and playful fermenter. She would pick vegetables and fruits at the end of their seasons, prolong their lives and alter their flavors. She would read their monthly and seasonal cycles, the temperature and how climate affects the sugars in the vegetables, and decide how much salt and time are needed to protect her jars. Fermentation is a perpetual state of transformation and becoming, similar to the artist's body with its hormonal changes, irregularities, intrusions and unpredictability. The artist's body is her site for sense-making and cultivating knowledge. There is no

set recipe for that. The knowledge of making a pickle is not only in her mind, but in her hands, her eyes, her mouth and nose. It was only then, when she let knowledge live in and on her body, that she was able to distinguish mold from age spots, to let go, and to forgive herself for when things had gone off, or had become too sour.



Rotten tomatosauce
Videostill: Marta Wódz

Makdous (Pickled, stuffed eggplants)

Ingredients for first fermentation

- 1 kg of baby eggplants
- For the stuffing:
- 5 cloves of garlic with a pinch of salt
 - 1 cup of walnuts
 - 1 cup of fresh, grilled red peppers (a combination of sweet and hot peppers works best)
 - salt

Instructions

1. Wash the eggplants and cook them in boiling water, on a low heat, for about 5 minutes until slightly soft. Make sure to not overcook them, if you do they will fall apart during the fermentation process.
2. After the eggplants are boiled, you will need to remove as much water from them as possible. To do this, make a small incision in each of the eggplants and rub 1/4 teaspoon of salt in the opening. Then position them in a colander with the cut down and put some weight on top, leaving them overnight.
3. Prepare the stuffing. Crush the garlic with a bit of salt, mash the grilled peppers and chop the walnuts. Mix all the ingredients together, they need to form a chunky paste.
4. Take the salted eggplants and drain the excess water. Make some space inside the eggplants and stuff them with the prepared paste. Be generous with the stuffing, and try to close the eggplants, so that the stuffing doesn't fall out.
5. Arrange the stuffed eggplants in a colander and put them under pressure overnight again, so that even more excess water comes out.
6. The next day, stack the eggplants in a jar as tightly as possible. Add some weights on top if necessary.
7. Pour equal amounts of olive oil and a neutral oil (sunflower, corn, canola, etc.) on top, until the eggplants are completely submerged.
8. Keep checking on your jar for the next two days and add more olive oil if necessary. The eggplants need to be submerged in the oil entirely and at all times.
9. Leave to ferment at room temperature for one month. During the first two weeks the ferment will be more extroverted, and the eggplant will even have a fizz that will be felt on the tongue. After that period the fermentation will slow down and the activity of the bacteria will be calmer. Make sure to keep the jar in the fridge after opening.



Fermentation Station, Mirna Bamieh
during her residency at U-jazdowski, 2019
Photo: Bartosz Górka
Drawing: Mirna Bamieh

Stacja Fermentacja, Mirna Bamieh
podczas rezydencji w U-jazdowskim, 2019
fot.: Bartosz Górka
rysunek: Mirna Bamieh

To Subvert, To Deconstruct: Agency in the Qalandiya Refugee Camp

In April 2018, heavy rain destroyed part of the wall near the Shu'fat refugee camp in Jerusalem. In videos that circulated on social media, children seized this opportunity to cross over the ruins of the destroyed wall and play football on the security road beside the fallen wall. This separation road – its function and its meanings – ceased to exist for a moment: the children managed to replace the existing meanings of the wall and the adjacent separation road, embodying daily needs and ephemeral aspirations. What constituted the wall – its meaning, history, structure, political signification, and boundaries – was transformed for a moment and for these children – not for city dwellers or other refugees, but only for them – into a playground. This transient character of the space is an essential part of the agency of deconstruction for the refugees in Qalandiya, which responds to daily life aspirations along with political questions.

The daily practices of Palestinian refugees have long been understood as a direct reaction to the influences of the political and social structures that exist in Palestinian refugee camps (Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, 2014). Anthropological studies conducted on similar cases have tended to strip the inhabitants of their agency and reduced them to “victims” or humanitarian subjects. In this article, I argue that the practices of daily life in Palestinian refugee camps are forms of reclaiming collective and individual agency. They are not only reactions but also attempts toward affirming political rights and achieving daily aspirations in an environment that has been constantly subjected to exception, control, and surveillance (Petti, 2013). The daily practices of the inhabitants of the Qalandiya refugee camp can be understood as a protest against the political and social powers that manage, control, and surveil the camp (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2015). These political and social powers manifest in common spatial circumstances of Palestinian refugee camps, producing spaces of control and surveillance to serve their purposes (Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, 2017). Meanwhile, with the prolongation of exile, a fourth generation of refugees has been born into overpopulated camps, surrounded by an oppressed, contradictory, and underdeveloped environment (Bshara, 2014).

Framing Everyday Life: From Passive to Active

There is no doubt that Palestinian refugee camps are places of exception, control, and surveillance (Hassan, 2014). Many scholars have discussed the contribution of the different political and humanitarian structures in instituting a “permanent-temporary” reality for the Palestinian refugees (Ramadan, 2012). The inaccessibility to many Palestinians of the three “traditional” solutions for refugees – return to the country of origin (rejected by Israel), host country citizenship (rejected by Palestinians), or resettlement in a third country – has prolonged their exile (Ramadan, 2012).

The prolongation of exile and the persistence of the political question has allowed the emergence of different political structures that see Palestinian camps as either an asset or a threat to their political narrative (for the Palestinian Authority and Israel) or subjects of humanitarian intervention (for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East – UNRWA – and other humanitarian agencies). The influence of political structures in Palestinian refugee camps has established what Nasser Abourahme and Sandi Hilal call the extraterritorial and extrajudicial state of the Palestinian camps (Abourahme and Hilal, 2009).

Stripped of political power vis-à-vis states, refugees became active political agents advocating for their rights through embodying their political struggle in their everyday practices. Abourahme and Hilal, drawing on Eyal Weizman's notion of “liquid geographies,” write of the inhabitants of the Dahaysha camp: “In flexible territory a variety of actors and actions can, with varying effect, ‘all physically challenge the envelope of political space and transform it.’ It is in the space of relative maneuverability that Deheishans consciously produce a space that challenges their marginalization as political actors in city and nation.” (Abourahme and Hilal, 2009). The everyday becomes a way to establish new systems of meaning that allow the emergence of new forms

of what can be described as the ordinary – an ordinariness that is only ordinary within the boundaries of the camp (Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, 2014).

The Camp, Political Structures, and the State of Exception

The Qalandiya camp was established as a refugee camp by the Red Crescent in 1948. Its administration was handed over to UNRWA in 1951, its 1,500 inhabitants being officially designated as refugees at that time (UNRWA, 2015).

By the mid-1960s, camps took on real and symbolic significance as lasting evidence of the Nakba and incubators of armed resistance, challenging the legitimacy of Israel as a democratic state before the international community (Mubayd, 2010). The PLO thought of refugee camps as a fertile environment to lay down a base for its armed resistance, seizing the despair and anger, especially after the loss of the 1967 war, to mobilize armed resistance and pressure Israel to recognize Palestinian rights, among them the “right to return.” (personal communication, July 2015).

After the Oslo accords of 1993, Israel still exerts a form of remote control over the refugee camps through the closure of streets, isolation, night raids, and military provocation. Yet refugees in the West Bank found moments of opportunity in the withdrawal of the Israeli army from cities and camps. In the case of the Qalandiya camp, this is exacerbated by the fact that it falls partly within Area C (under full Israeli civil and military control according to the Oslo accords) and partly within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. The Qalandiya camp is therefore excluded from municipal services, whether provided by Israel or the PA. The political structures in the Qalandiya camp have thus imposed control, surveillance, and exceptionality, producing an extraterritorial, extrajudicial, and permanently temporary space (Abourahme and Hilal, 2009).

An Agency of Everyday Practices: A Response or Reclaiming Space?

While there is a need to lead an “ordinary” life in Palestinian camps, and at the same time embody the various political rights within those needs, the production of the ordinary happens on several levels and through different, sometimes contradictory, modes of agency. Writing on “everyday activism” during the first intifada, Iris Jean-Klein argued for the “potentiality” of individual agency to drive daily practices, whether “oppositional, emancipatory, or hegemonizing” (Jean-Klein, 2001). Even in the most turbulent times, people try to lead ordinary lives in the camp as a means of resilience and acts of resistance (Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, 2014). Beyond the regimes of control and exception imposed on the camps, inhabitants feel a need to improve their living conditions, evoking “tensions” seen in the camps’ physical and discursive expressions (Sivan, 2005).

In her study of perceptions and reproduction of the ordinary in times of crisis in the al-Am'ari refugee camp, Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska frames the ordinary as a state that refugees practice in their daily life to achieve and reclaim agency (Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, 2014). I would expand this definition to assume that the ordinary is a state people construct while negotiating with the cause of the extraordinary. The complex sociopolitical nature of the Palestinian camps imposes a (relatively) extraordinary context on their inhabitants, yet the act of creating the ordinary from the imposed extraordinary is itself a tool to restore collective and individual agency. What is ordinary for the refugee does not have to be for others. During my field work in the Qalandiya camp, I identified two modes of agencies in the camp: a collective agency that subverts and affirms, and an individual one that deconstructs. In the following sections, I examine how both modes of agency – the agency to subvert and affirm and the agency to deconstruct – manifest on a spatial level in the Qalandiya camp.

Agency to Subvert and Affirm

The suspension of everyday life is a form of subverting established systems of meaning imposed by the Israeli military. Collectively, refugees decide to suspend their daily routine as a way of expressing solidarity with each other. This was seen frequently with regard to festive events like weddings, for example: camp inhabitants chose not to celebrate any weddings as a means of strengthening their solidarity and not due to a lack of opportunity (Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, 2014). Where the Israeli army sought to control and pressure camp residents to abandon resistance by imposing measures meant to suspend daily life, the refugees subverted the meanings of such impositions to their favor (personal communication, August, 2018).

In the camp, development carries different significance than other spaces. While development typically carries associations with permanence and sustainability, development in the camp corresponds to a momentary need of the collective. Development and construction are meant to be temporary until the dismantling of the camp as a whole. Permanence and sustainability are diminished through the materials used, the quality of construction, or simply through perception and the assumption of temporariness. As one landlord in the Qalandiya camp told me: “Do you see all those new commercial buildings at the entrance of the camp? . . . They are as temporary as the camp, even if they seem new, once we return everything will be gone.” Even if this happens soon? “Even if this happens tomorrow.”

The spatial character of the Qalandiya camp could be understood as the ultimate manifestation of the agency to affirm. Take, for example, the main public space of the camp. This space was not planned as a public space; rather, it is a portion of a street that extends from the entrance of the camp toward the main mosque. This street is wider than others, giving it the potential to become a common space. The various social, political, and economic inputs in this public space affirmed its temporary status. The various Palestinian political institutions (the PLO, Fatah, Hamas, and so on) have presented a discourse that, along with the collective view of the inhabitants of the Qalandiya camp, has sought this space to be a space of political mobilization and affirmation of Palestinian claims and rights. The various political factions in the Qalandiya camp held events, raised flags, and organized parades. They painted political graffiti and hung posters of leaders and martyrs all around. These collective social endeavors did not oppose the Palestinian political narrative; rather, they affirmed it (Lehec, 2017). For camp inhabitants, it was important to keep spaces in the camp politicized for the sake of their “right to return.”

Agency of Deconstruction

Political Dimensions

In a radio sketch played on Radio Dona Taraddod [meaning both Without Hesitation and Without Frequency], a stranger in his twenties opens the front door of a private house in an unnamed refugee camp in Palestine. The family of the house sits on a sofa in front of the television. The stranger joins the family. He takes the remote control and starts changing the channels while eating some of the snacks lying on the table. The family continues as if nothing out of the ordinary is taking place. Later the stranger stands up and walks to the main door. As he opens it, the father asks, “Are you sure they're gone?” The stranger replies “maybe” and leaves. It thus becomes clear that the young man was being chased by Israeli soldiers, and had entered the home to seek refuge from their presence in the common space of the camp.

The sketch sheds light on sociopolitical phenomena intertwined with the deconstruction of space and architecture in the camp. The stranger's “invasion” of private space during family time is specific to the moment (characterized by the invasion of public space by the Israeli military) and to him (his vulnerability to arrest or assault as a young Palestinian man and, perhaps, an activist). In this moment,

the assumed notions of spaces (in particularly regarding private property) are unmade by the young man and replaced with new ones. Space is reduced to its abstract form – its absolute form, mathematical space momentarily stripped of its function, history, and its notions – as part of the process of reconfiguration that allows the young man to mold the space to the needs produced by his current and past conditions. Another manifestation of the agency of deconstruction on a political level can be found in the alleys of the Qalandiya refugee camp. The semipublic alleys that constitute the camp spaces can momentarily be transformed into “private” refuge for those who are persecuted by various political structures (figure 5). While usually these alleys have specific functions constrained by social considerations of privacy, at certain moments the alleys can acquire other functions, reinvented as strategic escape and supply routes when it comes to supporting the resistance movements in the camp. During the second intifada, the Israeli army demolished large swathes of the Jenin refugee camp in an attempt to undo the spatial order of the alleys.

Social Dimensions

Women's access to the camp's common space is limited by implicit and explicit social norms. Apart from the associations that provide space for women in the Qalandiya camp, like the Women's Programs Center (Markaz al-baramij al-nisawiyya) and the Child Center for Culture and Development (Markaz al-tifl li-l-thaqafa wa al-tanmiya), women also manage to find a common space in the private spaces of their houses. M.A., a 37-year-old married mother of four and an active member of the Women's Programs Center, explained that every day she and other women in the camp meet in different living rooms inside their houses in the Qalandiya camp (personal communication, July, 2015). These living rooms become like a public space – anyone who is not a man can enter.

Thus, women turn these private spaces momentarily into public space. They have altered the boundaries of common space and associated it with time. They have unmade the private nature of living rooms temporarily, and established a network of common spaces that are not fixed as either public or private, but are dynamic and flexible. The map below (see figure 6) shows various living rooms in the camp that together form a temporary public space for women.

Individual Aspirations

K.S. is a 28-year-old man who lives in the Qalandiya camp. During the second intifada, he was injured and lost both of his legs; now he mainly moves around by wheelchair. K.S. noted that the spatial characteristics of the camp do not correspond to his needs for accessibility (personal communication, July, 2015). The agency to deconstruct emerges as a way for him to negotiate his daily needs, to produce a space that neither the physical environment of the camp nor the collective agencies of affirmation or subversion could provide him.

Practices of daily life required K.S. either to ask the local community council and UNRWA to provide proper infrastructure for public amenities and for his house – which was not possible due to lack of funds – or to unmake the camp the way it is. This latter process entailed signifying the spatial and architectural elements of the camp in a way that would correspond to the needs specific to his disability. “I don't not see what others see,” K.S. told me. “We see the same forms, but we identify them and process them differently.” K.S. deconstructed the meanings and the functions of the architectural elements that constitute his space and reinvented them to improve accessibility.

Conclusion

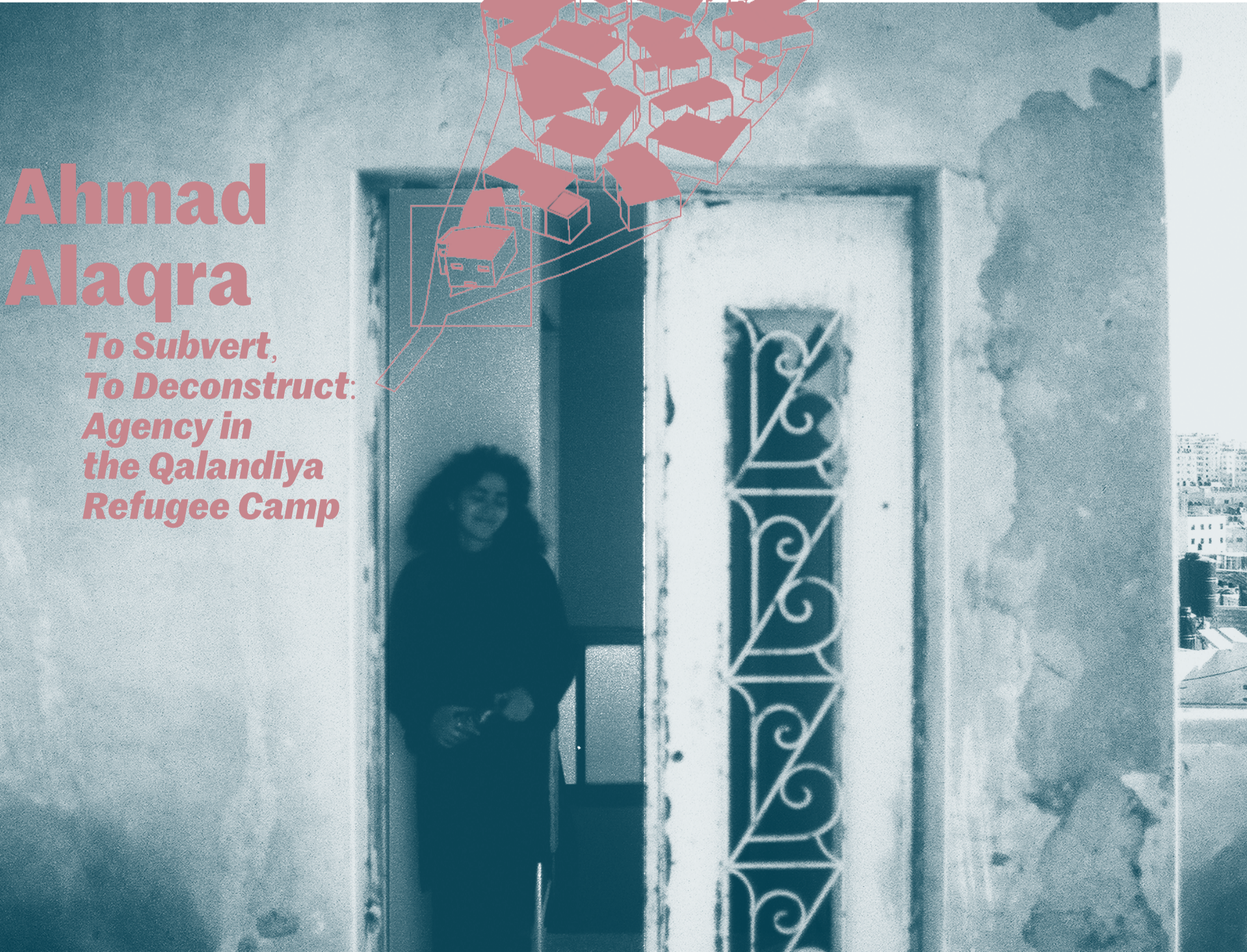
The inhabitants of Palestinian camps have found themselves in a permanent-temporariness, caught between the need to have an ordinary life and the need to sustain and embody their right to return, between policies of exception and the need to maintain a symbolic image of the camp. This has led to the emergence of different modes of agency that allow the inhabitant to subvert, deconstruct, and reproduce existing systems of meaning to achieve political aspirations and the needs of daily life. One mode of agency is associated with subverting existing systems of exception to embody political rights. This agency protests efforts to control the camps, normalize crisis, and foster future aspirations. Such agency is manifested in the insistence on the temporary nature of the camp in the production of spaces there. The second mode of agency has a wide set of embodiments associated with social, political, or simply daily life needs. It is more individual and temporary, corresponding to the need of the moment. Such agency deconstructs the existing systems of meanings, allowing inhabitants to construct their own meanings, thoughts, experiences, and needs in the spaces opened up.



il. 6

Ahmad Alaqra

*To Subvert,
To Deconstruct:
Agency in
the Qalandiya
Refugee Camp*



U–jzdowski

exhibition, residencies, assembly

Everyday Forms of Resistance

Ujzdowski Castle
Centre for Contemporary Art

Jazdów 2, Warszawa
www.u-jzdowski.pl

Noor Abed

*nasze pieśni były gotowe
na każdą nadchodzącą
wojnę*
[our songs were ready
for all wars to come]



U–jazdowski

wystawa, rezydencje, zgromadzenie
[exhibition, residencies, assembly]

Codziennie formy oporu [Everyday Forms of Resistance]

Noor Abed

nasze pieśni były gotowe na każdą nadchodzącą wojnę

KCA: *Nasze pieśni...* tworzyła Pani w Palestynie i w Warszawie, w ramach dwumiesięcznej rezydencji w Zamku Ujazdowskim. Proszę opowiedzieć, jak to wyglądało.

NA: Podczas pierwszej fali pandemii, wiosną ubiegłego roku, oprócz załatwiania dokumentów związanych z podróżą do Polski planowałam, a później kręciłam materiał, który musiał być gotowy przed moim wyjazdem. Aranżowałam i filmowałam sceny w starożytnym rzymskim plenerze w położonej na północny zachód od Jerozolimy wiosce Al Jib, gdzie się znajduje – dzisiaj nieczynna – olbrzymia studnia. Kręciłam kamerą analogową Super 8 mm, a potem, w trakcie rezydencji w Warszawie, wywoływałam filmy i wreszcie przystąpiłam do montażu.

KCA: Efekt Pani pracy można teraz obejrzeć na wystawie. Co to właściwie jest?

NA: Dzieło finalne – projekcja filmowa z wielokanałową instalacją dźwiękową – przedstawia inscenizowane sytuacje, oparte na podaniach ludowych Palestyny. Narracja wynika z kolażu, który stworzyłam, badając palestyńskie legendy dotyczące studzien i ich związku z rytuałami wspólnotowymi zbudowanymi wokół zagadnień takich jak zniknięcie, żałoba i śmierć. Próbuję odpowiedzieć na pytanie, w jakim stopniu podania ludowe mogą stać się dla człowieka narzędziem emancypacji służącym do obalania dominujących dyskursów, odzyskiwania historii i pisania rzeczywistości na nowo.

KCA: W filmie występują głównie kobiety – tańczą lub przeprowadzają dziwny rytuał, być może pochówku. Mówi się, że kobieta odgrywa główną rolę w kształtowaniu i pielęgnowaniu życia i rytuałów społeczności.

NA: Staram się przyglądać roli kobiet z dwu perspektyw. Po pierwsze, z punktu widzenia obecnej rzeczywistości, w której kobieta uchodzi za najbardziej wiarygodne medium przekazu ustnego pamięci i folkloru. Po drugie, interesuje mnie badanie społecznego, psychologicznego i nadprzyrodzonego przedstawienia kobiet w samych podaniach ludowych. Próbuję też ustalić pozycję podań ludowych w dziejach; z jednej strony ich relację ze współczesnością i wyobrażeniami, z drugiej – tożsamość społeczno-polityczną. Skupiając się na figurze kobiety i ujawniając jej nieustanną obecność, usiłuję akcentować nieobecność „figury bohatera”, pojęcia głęboko zakorzonego w dziejach Palestyny.

KCA: Co oznacza tytuł pracy?

NA: Tytuł *nasze pieśni były gotowe na każdą nadchodzącą wojnę* wynika z potrzeby krytycznego przyjrzenia się przeszłości i ingerencji w nią. Szukałam historii na marginesach, próbując znaleźć wektory tworzenia alternatywnych dyskursów. Praca ta w moim zamyśle ma odzwierciedlać przeszłość, ale też sugerować zdecydowany związek z przyszłością – jest jak gdyby wspomnieniem tego, co nadchodzi. Ujmując rzeczywistość, w której dziś żyjemy, jako udręczoną, tytuł prowokuje zmianę w naszej pamięci.

our songs were ready for all wars to come

KCA: You worked on *our songs were ready...* both in Palestine and Warsaw, during your two-month residency at the Ujazdowski Castle. Can you tell me how it developed?

NA: Apart from working on my papers to travel to Poland during the first wave of the pandemic last spring, I was busy planning a film production and then shooting my work, which I had to get done before I left. I choreographed scenes and filmed them in an ancient location from the Roman era, where there is a huge water well that is now empty. It is located in the Palestinian village of Al Jib, northwest of Jerusalem. I shot using an analogue super 8mm camera and then, while on the residency in Warsaw, I managed to process the films and start editing.

KCA: We can now see the result of your work at the exhibition. What is it, exactly?

NA: The final work is a film projection with a multi-channel sound installation showing choreographed, staged scenes based on collected folktales from Palestine. The narration comes from a collage I created while researching Palestinian folktales based mainly around water wells and their connection to communal rituals concerning disappearance, mourning and death. I try to answer the question about how folktales can become a common emancipatory tool for people to overturn dominant discourses, reclaim their history and land, and rewrite reality.

KCA: In the film, there are mostly women – seen dancing or conducting a strange ritual, a burial perhaps. Women are said to play a crucial role in building and protecting community life and rituals.

NA: I think I am interested in exploring the role of women from two angles: first, from our present reality, in which women are credited with being the most reliable sources of oral transmission of memory and folklore. Second, my interest lies in examining the social, psychological and supernatural portrayal of women in the folktales themselves. I am also interested in questioning the position of the folktale in history; its relation to the present and the imaginary on the one hand, and the socio-political identity on the other. By focusing on the female figure and unfolding her continuous presence, I aim to underline the absence of the 'hero figure', a notion that has been deeply rooted within Palestinian history.

KCA: Could you explain the title of your work?

NA: *Our songs were ready for all the wars to come* came from an urge to look critically into the past and intervene in it. I was searching for stories on the margins, trying to find clues to create alternative discourses. I wanted the work to reflect the past, and yet to suggest a decisive connection to the future – as if it is a remembrance of things to come. Thinking of the reality we currently live in as haunted, the title invites a shift in our memory.

Wywiad [Interview]

Klara Czerniewska-Andryszczyk

Kuratorka [Curator]

Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka

Redakcja [Editing]

Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka

Tłumaczenie [Translation]

Paweł Łopatka

Korekta [Proof-reading]

Jan Koźbiel

Nick Faulkner

Projekt graficzny [Graphic design]

Studio Lekko

Reżyseria [Directed by]

Noor Abed

Reżyseria dźwięku [Sound Composition]

Dirar Kalash

Operator kamery Super 8 mm

[Super 8 mm camera operator]

Hamoudi Trad

Kamera cyfrowa [Digital Camera]

Donna Hawa

Dźwięk na planie [Sound on set]

Shadi Zahran

Pieśń [Song]

Maya Khaldi

Kadry 35 mm na planie [35 mm Stills on set]

Dina Mimi

Kadry cyfrowe na planie [Digital stills on set]

Mahmoud Trad

Reżyseria artystyczna [Art Direction]

Noor Abed, Hamoudi Trad

Produkcja [Production]

Yusef Abed, Felipe Steinberg,

Hamoudi Trad, Noor Abed,

Donna Hawa

Postprodukcja [Post-production]

Ujazdowski Castle

Centre for Contemporary Art

Obsada [Cast]

Felipe Steinberg, Maya Khaldi,
Yusef Abed, Qadar Abed, Dina
Mima, Shadi Zahran, Donna Hawa,
Ala' Abed, Jamileh Abed, Noora
Baker, Joanna Rafidi, Yusef Trad,
Mahmoud Trad

Kostiumy [Clothing]

El-Funoun Dance Troupe

Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej
Zamek Ujazdowski
[Ujazdowski Castle
Centre for Contemporary Art]

Jazdów 2, Warszawa
www.u–jazdowski.pl

Joanna Rajkowska

Kamienie i inne demony
[*Stones and other Demons*]



U–jazdowski

wystawa, rezydencje, zgromadzenie
[exhibition, residencies, assembly]

Codzienne formy oporu
[Everyday Forms of Resistance]

Joanna Rajkowska

Kamienie i inne demony

Joanna Rajkowskiej piękne fotografie kamieni są enigmatyczne i niepokojące. Zdają się unosić w przestrzeni na tle głębokiej czerni. Jednak im dłużej się im przyglądamy, tym bardziej przypominają upiorne głowy, podwodne stwory czy ptaki. Na myśl przychodzą wykonywane przez surrealistów fotografie przedmiotów znalezionych, takie jak *Rzeźby mimowolne* (1933) Brassai'a czy jego widoki fantastycznych formacji skalnych niedaleko Cadaqués w Katalonii. Do tych obrazów przedmiotów znalezionych artystka dodała znalezione podpisy: wyimki z napisanego w 1922 roku przez arabsko-palestyńskiego etnologa Tawfiq Canaana artykułu *Nawiedzone źródła i studnie Palestyny*. Podpisy te, mocno niejasne, dodatkowo pobudzają wyobraźnię widza. Jak o swoich znalezionych przedmiotach powiedział André Breton, „jest naprawdę tak, jakbym był zagubiony, a one zjawily się, by opowiedzieć mi o mnie samym”.

Fotografie te uzmysławiają widzowi, jak kamienie mogą wpływać na wyobraźnię. Rajkowska zrealizowała też jednak cykl całkiem innych fotografii, dokumentujących wnętrze sklepu, w którym – w trakcie niedawnego pobytu artystycznego w Ramallah – odkryła kolekcję kamieni. Zgromadził ją właściciel sklepu, Mohamad Badwan. Kamienie, starannie poukładane na półkach, zostały zebrane w okolicach Ramallah.

Poszukując informacji o tradycyjnych wierzeniach i przesądach wspólnych dla muzułmanów, żydów i chrześcijan, Rajkowska natrafiła na twórczość Canaana, który pisał regularnie w „The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society” na temat lokalnych rytuałów i wierzeń. Jego reakcja na syjonizm nie była natywistyczna ani nacjonalistyczna; podkreślał raczej „istniejące do dzisiaj punkty styczności między dziedzictwem biblijnym (a nawet tradycjami wcześniejszymi) i palestyńskimi zwyczajami i wierzeniami ludowymi”. We wspomnianym artykule z 1922 roku Canaan badał powszechne przekonanie, że demony zamieszkują świat podziemny. Niektóre elementy krajobrazu – źródła, studnie, rozpadliny skalne, drzewa – są powiązane z krainą zmarłych i w związku z tym nawiedzają je demony. Są to miejsca liminalne, graniczne, gdzie tradycyjnie wznoszono świątynie i odprawiano rytuały. Demony i zamieszkiwane przez nie miejsca kojarzone są z najbardziej złowrogą planetą, Saturnem, więc rytuały zapewne miały na celu odpędzenie złych mocy. Canaan zdał sobie sprawę, że te tradycyjne wierzenia, wiążące ludzi z ziemią i ze sobą nawzajem, stopniowo słabną. Dzisiaj praktycznie zanikły. A jednak Mohamad Badwan i jego kolekcja kamieni opowiadają inną historię – trwałości, konsekwencji, obecności mimo prób wymazania. Ten kontekst zmienia oblicze kamieni. Nie należą już jedynie do przestrzeni osobistych skojarzeń, ale odwołują się do szybko zanikającej zbiorowej formy życia codziennego.

Tekst [Text]

Margaret Iversen

Kuratorka [Curator]

Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka

Tłumaczenie [Translation]

Marcin Wawrzyńczak

Korekta [Proof-reading]

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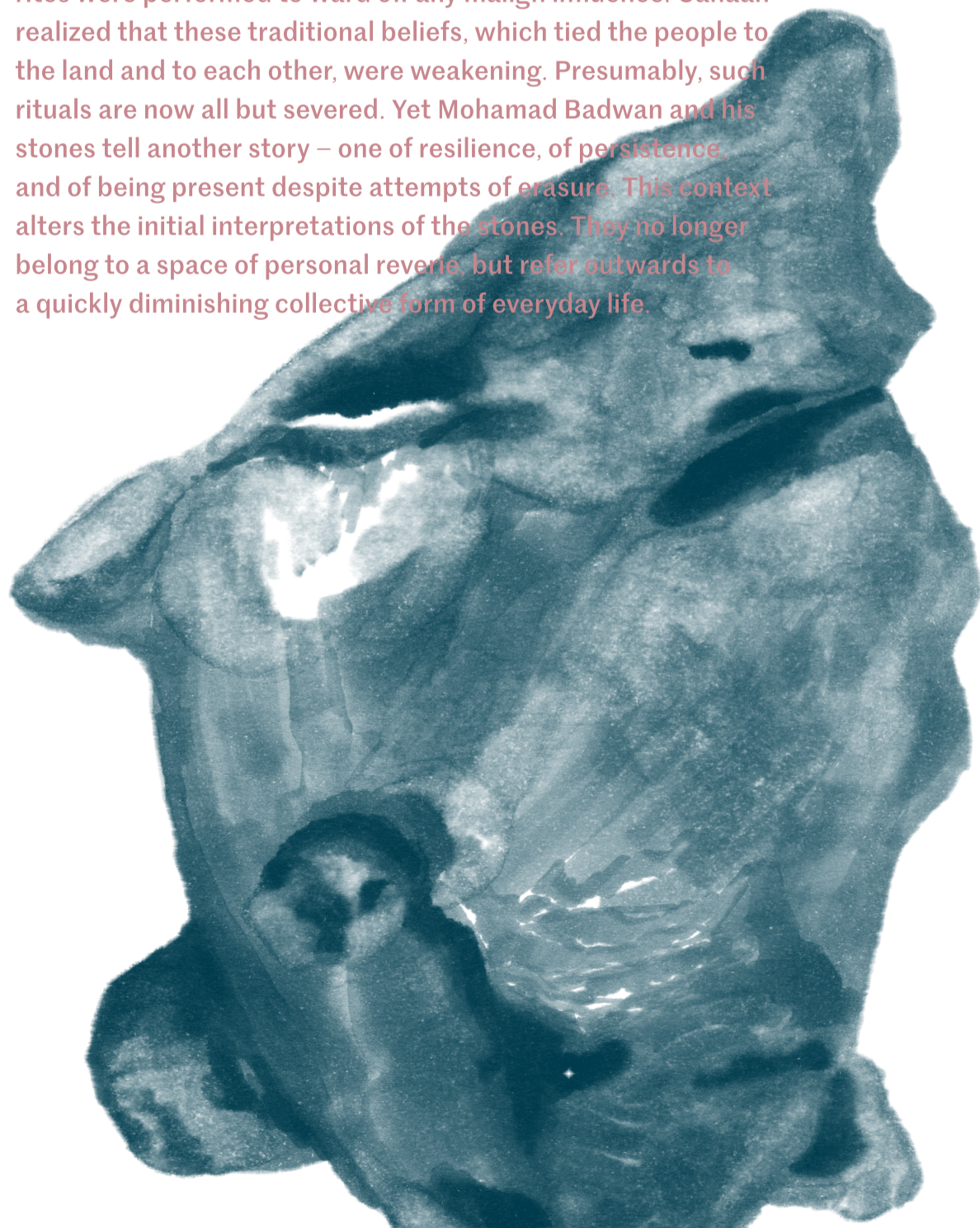
www.u-jazdowski.pl

Stones and other Demons

Joanna Rajkowska's beautiful photographs of stones are both enigmatic and troubling. Set against a deep black background, they seem to float in space. The more one studies them, the more they escape one's grasp and begin to take on the forms of ghastly heads, phantom sea creatures or birds. They are reminiscent of surrealist photographs of found objects, such as Brassai's curious *Involuntary Sculptures* (1933), or of his views of the fantastic rock formations near Cadaqués in Catalonia. The artist added captions to the images of these found objects; they are excerpts found in an article titled “The Haunted Springs and Wells of Palestine,” written in 1922 by the Arab Palestinian ethnologist, Tawfiq Canaan. The captions, far from explanatory, stir the viewer's imagined projection and reverie. As André Breton said of his own found objects, “it is really as if I had been lost and they had come to give me news about myself.”

The photographs convey a sense of the power that stones can hold over the imagination. Yet Rajkowska made another, very different, series of images that document the shop where, during a recent residency in Ramallah, she discovered the collection of stones. The collection had been assembled over many years by a shopkeeper, Mohamad Badwan, who found them on the Palestinian hills and carefully arranged them on shelves in his convenience store. She became curious about their significance.

Researching traditional beliefs and ancient superstitions common to Muslims, Jews and Christians in Semitic countries, Rajkowska discovered the work of Canaan, who regularly published *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, about local rituals and beliefs. His response to Zionism was not articulated through nativist or nationalistic ideology; rather, he emphasized “presentday continuities between the biblical heritage (and occasionally pre-biblical roots) and Palestinian popular beliefs and practices.” For instance, in his 1922 article, “The Haunted Springs and Wells of Palestine,” he explored the common belief that demons inhabit a subterranean domain. Certain natural features – springs, wells, crevasses, trees – are connected to this netherworld and are thus haunted by demons. These are the liminal places where shrines were traditionally erected and rites performed. The demons and the sites they inhabit are associated with the most ill-omened planet, Saturn, and the rites were performed to ward off any malign influence. Canaan realized that these traditional beliefs, which tied the people to the land and to each other, were weakening. Presumably, such rituals are now all but severed. Yet Mohamad Badwan and his stones tell another story – one of resilience, of persistence, and of being present despite attempts of erasure. This context alters the initial interpretations of the stones. They no longer belong to a space of personal reverie, but refer outwards to a quickly diminishing collective form of everyday life.



Jumana Emil Abboud

***Dawno, dawno temu
byli sobie...
bardziej niż nie byli
[Once there was...
more than there wasn't]***



U–jazdowski

wystawa, rezydencje, zgromadzenie
[exhibition, residencies, assembly]

Codzienne formy oporu
[*Everyday Forms of Resistance*]

Jumana Emil Abboud



Dawno, dawno temu byli sobie... bardziej niż nie byli

Trzej bracia, którzy mieszkali niedaleko stąd/od niej.

Wszyscy trzej uwielbiali polować. Zanim jednak opowiem wam o polowaniu, kilka słów o ich matce, królowej. Matka była wielką królową, ale wiedziała, że jej czas się kończy. – Słuchajcie! – powiedziała. – Niedługo umrę. Obiecacie mi, że będziecie rządzić tak jak ja – sprawiedliwie i miłosiernie.

I rzeczywiście, minął dzień, potem jeszcze jeden, i królowa umarła.

Pochowali ją obok jej czwartego męża, młodego rolnika, u stóp nigdy nie wysychającego źródła zwanego *Ain Qinya*. Minął dzień i na jej grobie wyrósł cudowny dąb.

Bracia odwiedzali drzewo codziennie, okazując szacunek źródłu, które osłaniało swą rozłożystą koroną.

Któregoś dnia (wczoraj czy jutro) ujrzeni przed sobą gazelę. Ach, jakże była piękna! Zaczęli się spierać, który z nich powinien na nią zapolować. – Jest moja! – powiedział jeden. – Wcale nie, bo moja! – krzyknął drugi. I tak dalej. W końcu ustalili, że ten, obok którego najbliżej przejdzie, będzie miał wyłączne prawo puścić się za nią w pogoń.

Muszę wam wyjaśnić, że tak naprawdę nie było to gazela, lecz młoda dziewczyna z zaświatów, potrafiąca zamieniać się w dowolne zwierzę.

Spojrzała na nich, a ponieważ dobry człowiek zawsze się wyróżnia, wybrała najstarszego z braci, o imieniu Alqaader, i przeszła mu wprost przed nosem.

– Bracia – oznajmił Alqaader. – Wracajcie do domu. Gazela jest moja. Ruszył za nią w pogoń i gonił ją, ale w gęstych zaroślach na terenie nowego nielegalnego osiedla stracił ją z oczu. Natknął się za to na lwicę, która rodziła młode, ale ciężko jej to szło. Poprosiła go o pomoc, co ten uczynił, a ona z wdzięczności podarowała mu trzy kosmyki sierści z grzywy dwojga nowo narodzonych lwiatek. – Jeżeli kiedykolwiek znajdziesz się w tarapatkach, potrzyj je dłońmi, a natychmiast przyjdziemy ci na pomoc.

Rano gazela znowu się pojawiła i sytuacja się powtórzyła. Przeszła mu przed nosem i umknęła. Alqaader gonił ją i gonił, zapomniawszy o bożym świecie, aż wreszcie czwartego dnia gazela doprowadziła go do swego miasta.

Ta gazela ma zalotników na całym świecie. Widzicie jej zamek? Za każdym razem, gdy jeden z nich pojawia się, by prosić o jej rękę, jej ojciec mówi: – Ten, kto poruszy tę górę, zostanie jej mężem; kto nie zdoła tego uczynić, zostanie uwięziony w słoju.

Opowiedziałam o tym Alqaaderowi i wiecie, jak zareagował? – Poproszę o jej rękę! – zawołał.

Inspiracją powyższej opowieści były prowadzone przez Abboud badania nad palestyńskim folklorem i podaniami ludowymi. Artystka zachęca do odczytywania jej w sposób alegoryczny, łączący przeszłość z teraźniejszością i rzeczywistość z mitem.

Once there was... more than there wasn't

Three brothers who lived not too far from here/her.

Once there was... Three brothers who lived not too far from here/her and they enjoyed a good hunt. Before I tell you about the hunt; a few words about their mother, the great Queen. Their mother was a great Queen, but she knew her time would soon be ending. She said to them, – Listen! I'm about to die. Promise me to rule as I have ruled, with fairness and compassion.

And sure enough, a day came and a day went, and another day came and another went, and the Queen passed away.

They buried her alongside her fourth husband, a farmer in his boyhood, at the foot of the faultless water spring of *Ain Qinya*. A day came and a day went and a miraculous oak tree grew where her body lay buried.

And each day the brothers would visit the tree respecting the water she skirted with her massive trunk.

Then, one day (yesterday or tomorrow), a gazelle suddenly sprang before them and Oh, how she filled their eyes! All three brothers argued over who should hunt her. This one said – She's my prey! – and that one said, – She's mine! – Finally, they agreed that if the gazelle passes near one of them, then she's his and his alone to hunt.

I have to tell you that she was not really a gazelle. She was a young lady from the spirit world, and capable of transforming herself to her animal form at will.

She gazed at them, and, since a good person always stands out, she picked one of the brothers, the eldest, Alqaader, and she passed right under his horse.

– All right, brothers – Alqaader announced. – You must go back now. She's mine.

He chased the gazelle and chased the gazelle, until he lost her in the wilderness of a new illegal settlement, and there, he came upon a lioness giving birth and having a difficult time with it. She begged the young man for help and so he did, and in return the lioness gave Alqaader three hairs from the mane of her two newborns. "If you're ever in a tight spot, just rub this mane, and before you know it, we'll be there."

In the morning, gazelle appeared again and they did as they had done before. She filled his eyes and ran. Forgetting the world and the word behind him, Alqaader jumped and chased after her, until, on the fourth day, gazelle led him into her own city.

This gazelle has suitors all over the world. See her castle? Every time one of them comes asking for her hand, her father says, – He who can move this mountain can have her hand; and whoever fails will immediately be imprisoned inside a jar.

I told the same story to Alqaader, and do you know what he said? He said: – I'm going to ask for her hand!

This tale is inspired by Abboud's extensive research interests into Palestinian oral history and folkloric practices. The artist encourages a re-reading of the oral narrative through allegorical devices and through a merging of the past with the present, the real and the mythical.

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Tłumaczenie [Translation]

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Jaśmina Wójcik

**Sarha, czyli Palestyna
z dziećmi**
[**Sarha, or Palestine
with Children**]



Mohammad Saleh

Sumoo

Czakra 5
[Chakra 5]
Borago officinalis
ogórecznik lekarski
[Borage]

Czakra 7
[Chakra 7]
Scopolia carniolica
lulecznica krajińska
[European scopolia]

Czakra 6
[Chakra 6]
Atropa belladonna
pokrzyk wilcza jagoda
[Deadly nightshade]

Czakra 3
[Chakra 3]
Gentiana lutea
goryczka żółta
[Great yellow gentian]

Czakra 4
[Chakra 4]
Convallaria majalis
konwalia majowa
[Lily of the valley]

Czakra 1
[Chakra 1]
Tropaeolum majus
nasturcja większa
[Garden nasturtium]

Czakra 2
[Chakra 2]
Calendula officinalis
nagietek lekarski
[Pot marigold]



Sol
(ne
Solanaceae
Hyoscyameae)

Taf. 19.

BORAGO OFFICINALIS. COMMON BORAGE.

Gentiana lutea L.

Tropaeolum majus var.

Calendula officinalis

Citronellah: G. Sauer

433

00:25:16 > 00:25:20

We crawled closer and stole
a bag of gas canisters.

434

00:25:20 > 00:25:23

You didn't want to come near us be-
cause we carried gas.

437

00:25:32 > 00:25:36

Imagine walking around with gas and the
army stands in front of you.

435

00:25:23 > 00:25:24

Oh dear!

438

00:25:37 > 00:25:38

You start to imagine that you are in the
middle of a war.

436

00:25:26 > 00:25:30

We felt as if we were playing in a
Rambo game. Rambo Counter strike!

439

00:25:39 > 00:25:43

And you start throwing gas canisters at
them. You throw them all.

U-jazdowski

wystawa

[exhibition]

Codzienne formy oporu

[*Everyday Forms of Resistance*]

23/07–21/11/2021

Wim Catrysse

Showing Presence

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Handwritten musical score on aged paper. The score consists of several staves of music with lyrics written below. The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely Georgian. The score is partially obscured by two rectangular pieces of red fabric with a woven texture, which are placed over the music. The fabric pieces are positioned diagonally, one on the left and one on the right, overlapping the staves.

on ni ts ki bi san — ja

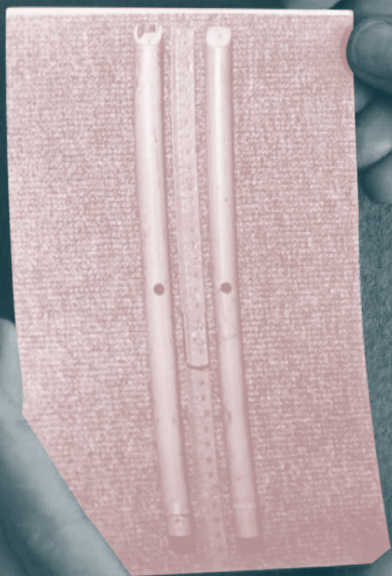
mpaton unepāts cō.
ga antpa

ni so ki be day —

ant hā — tū

ji be ni ū žaf —

sā — be sa



U-jazdowski

wystawa

[exhibition]

Codzienne formy oporu

[*Everyday Forms of Resistance*]

23/07–21/11/2021

Jumana Manna

A Magical substance
flows into me

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شهرت ذکر الہ

یا قہوی

کدیس

U-jazdowski

wystawa

[exhibition]

Codzienne formy oporu

[*Everyday Forms of Resistance*]

23/07–21/11/2021

DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Research)

Refugee Heritage

Fot.: [Photo:]

Luca Capuano

Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej

Zamek Ujazdowski

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Battir

-  1949 Linia zawieszenia broni
[1949 Armistice line]
-  Mur
[Separation barrier]
-  Nielegalne osiedla izraelskie
[Illegal Israeli settlements]

U-jazdowski

wystawa

[exhibition]

Codzienne formy oporu

[*Everyday Forms of Resistance*]

23/07–21/11/2021

Forensic Architecture

The Wall in Battir

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