



# CLEAR HOLD BUILD

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09.06.2019 - 10.25.2019

Twelve Gates Arts  
Philadelphia, PA  
USA



# CLEAR-HOLD-BUILD

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Philadelphia, PA

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## Introduction

Nataša Prijević and Joshua Nierodzinski

### HEKLER

- a: heklati (verb, Serbo-Croatian) - to crochet;
- b: heklati (verb, Serbo-Croatian, slang) - to shoot from a Heckler & Koch assault rifle; to speak rapid fire;
- c: heckler (noun, Eng.) - a person who interrupts a performer or public speaker with derisive or aggressive comments or abuse; a disruption.

Hospitality and conflict are tightly intertwined. Their knots, when untied, reveal complex societal and governing dysfunctions, as well as vital ways to overcome them. When a person is unwelcome, turned away, or attacked because of their values and identities, it can be said that the host place, country, or person is inhospitable. It is exactly those indifferent or antagonistic conditions that lead to forced migration, psychosis, violence, and death, potentially for both the host and guest. Hospitality is an antidote to these conflicts. The existential act of hosting requires recognition and trust. It requires openness to feel comfortable, to feel vulnerable, and to welcome disagreement in order to co-create a space of extended intimacy where concepts of belonging and ownership converge.

HEKLER is an artist-run platform that fosters the embodiment and critical examination of hospitality and conflict through collaborative programming and archiving. The word “hekler” derives from the Serbo-Croatian verb, *heklati*. Its formal meaning, to crochet, is appropriated in slang speech to reference the act of shooting bullets from a Heckler & Koch assault rifle, as well as to speak quickly, or rapid fire. An additional level of meaning is given by the homophone in English, *heckler*, describing a person who interrupts a performer or public speaker; signifying a disruption. Cross-culturally, crocheting and knitting are done in groups mostly, if not exclusively, by women. These self-organized performative actions of coding became communal spaces for sharing, healing, and conspiring against oppressive regimes. In this lineage, HEKLER’s intent is to examine the symbiotic relationship between hospitality and conflict by providing intimate and public collaborative educational environments.

The exhibition, *Clear-Hold-Build*, came to life in this collaborative spirit, as an extension of Shimrit Lee’s PhD dissertation on the commodification of counterinsurgency. *Clear-Hold-Build* is an opportunity to bring together practices that exist on the intersection of art and social justice born in the transition economies and ideologies, occupied territories and post-war societies. The exhibiting artists — Bisan Abu-Eisheh, Khaled Jarrar (Palestine), Dena Al-Adeeb (Iraq/USA), Shabir Ahmed Baloch (Pakistan), Samia Henni (Algeria/USA), Vladimir Miladinović (Serbia, former Yugoslavia), Farideh Sakhaeifar (Iran/USA), The Propeller Group, and Hồng-An Trương (Vietnam/USA) — diligently employ investigative methodologies to spotlight the violation of human rights, actively fighting against the ideologies of denial and erasure driven by corporate militarized capitalism.

The works in *Clear-Hold-Build* help us visualize a global criminal network, to examine the consequences of historic and ongoing counterinsurgent interventions in artists’ places of origin and regionally, as well as individual and collective resistance methods against colonizers. Physical and historic proximity to the examined points of conflict determines each artist’s medium of choice, research methodologies, and social practices.

The Propeller Group draws attention to The Việt Minh’s subversive and imaginative ways of communicating solidarity among colonized peoples in Vietnam and North and West Africa. Hồng-An Trương celebrates Hanoi Hannah’s subversive English broadcasts on the North Vietnamese Army’s Radio directed towards the inland US troops. Khaled Jarrar and Vladimir Miladinović focus on ties between US militarized capitalism and the advertising industry that commodifies counterinsurgency in Palestine today, and the dissolving Yugoslavia historically. Samia Henni, Bisan Abu-Eisheh, and Farideh Sakhaeifar respond to colonial methodologies of erasure using archival techniques to reconstruct counter-narratives of the Algerian War of Independence, the Israeli illegal settler occupation in East Jerusalem, Palestine, and the Syrian Civil War, respectively. Shabir Ahmed Baloch uses painting to address the struggles of Baloch community under Pakistan’s oppressive regime. Dena Al-Adeeb engages a wider Iraqi diaspora to reconstruct individual and collective memories of enforced displacement and immigrant experience through the forum of shared meals.

The exhibition, accompanied by participatory public programming and a publication, contributes to a process of counter-archiving and sharing.

In addition to individual practices, we wish to emphasize artists' active engagement within their communities emerging as a response to repressive state measures targeting indigeneous, marginalized, and immigrant communities. "Breathing archive," a term that Bisan Abu-Eisheh introduces in his essay in this volume, can be seen as a unifying thread that celebrates the regenerative power of collective effort to weave back together what has been stolen, fragmented, or lost. The perpetual holes in personal and collective histories can be brought to life collaboratively.

The position of an artist is often a paradoxical one, both marginalized and privileged. Throughout the course of several decades, the profession of an artist has been transformed into an ambiguous class, inherently precarious and inseparable from dominant power structures and their capital. We have an opportunity to redirect these mechanisms and experiences by creating and sustaining much-needed solidarity networks. Now, more than ever, we need to go beyond individualized professionalized ambitions towards civic accountability. We need to articulate our positions as workers, caretakers, educators, producers, and active hospitable members of the immediate and larger community in need. This is precisely the mission of HEKLER: to center hospitality in our engagement with conflict, and to disrupt systems of oppression.

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**Joshua Nierodzinski** is an artist, curator, and co-founder of HEKLER based in Brooklyn, New York. Nierodzinski's paintings are characterized by an unsettling familiarity created from a personal archive of collected objects, images, and experiences. These sources are a union of public life and private thought that are transformed by the act of Forensic Painting, a method of painting that integrates traditional oil techniques with forensic photography such as X-rays, infrared, and ultraviolet light. By combining painting, photography, and forensic analysis Nierodzinski aims to create an expressive tool that can test claims of identity, authenticity, and history.

**Nataša Prljević** is an artist, curator and organizer who examines mechanism of political displacement and habitation through a cross-disciplinary lens. Using assemblage as a conceptual framework, Prljević focuses on the regenerative potential of polyvocality that arises through collisions of disparate media, dialogue, and community. From this practice emerged HEKLER. Prljević worked as the Executive and Curatorial Assistant at Residency Unlimited in Brooklyn where she facilitated curatorial, production, and networking support for US-based and international artist and curators in residence. While living in Serbia, Prljević worked as a professor of art history and studio practice. She continued teaching during her MFA studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.



Located in Philadelphia's old city neighborhood, 12Gates, established in 2011, stands out from other galleries for its focus on artists of color. 12Gates has hosted exhibits from artists that explored decolonization, migrant labor, state violence, intimacy, the refugee crisis, and more. But the focus on South Asian perspectives is not a restrictive or isolating one. Instead of operating in an artistic silo, 12Gates has organized exhibits on Black Lives Matter and South Asian anti-black racism, as well as collaborated on and curated art centered on the history of Japanese internment. In these collaborations, we have worked with both South Asian and non-South Asian artists. In its ten years of operation, 12Gates has made an effort to respond to ongoing social realities by providing the gallery as a platform for expressing social injustices, and focus on more conceptual works that don't usually fit the commercial art gallery scene.

As we continue to feature works from around the world that continue discussions of power dynamics and their abuses through the lens of gender, class, race, and religion, HEKLER and Shimrit Lee's proposal for the project, Clear-Hold-Build, examining the lasting trauma of global counterinsurgency is a perfect match for the kind of exhibitions we want to host at 12Gates. We are honored to provide space highlighting works from artists dealing with such trauma and a platform for discussing art interventions.

The US military's Clear-Hold-Build strategy is what has been purportedly used by Pakistani army in North Waziristan very recently under the title of Zarb-e-Azab, displacing millions of people, returning to unfamiliar newly built infrastructure, causing further alienation. Kashmir and Balochistan have similarly been experiencing colonizations and resource exhaustions which do not benefit the locals. Artists in these and other areas such as Palestine and Syria have been responding to their respective conflicts and this exhibition highlights their voices.

## Clear-Hold-Build: Artists Resist a New Normal

Shimrit Lee

Drone strikes beyond conventional war zones. Militarized policing. Total NSA surveillance. These political realities, which once might have been seen as shocking aberrations from the rule of law, now seamlessly blend into the everyday cacophony of the news cycle. But they are by no means expressions of business as usual. On the contrary, they are products of a relatively recent yet pervasive ideology known as counterinsurgency.

Counterinsurgency is not just a military strategy, but a political technique. In his 2006 *Field Manual on Counterinsurgency Operations*, known as *FM 3-24*, General David Petraeus, who oversaw the disastrous U.S. surge in Iraq between 2007 and 2011, summed up the strategy in three words: “clear-hold-build.” This trifold strategy involves removing insurgents from a space using lethal force, sustaining that expulsion by physical barriers, and then pacifying resistance by supporting economic development intended to increase government legitimacy. The spread of government control outward from secured areas is likened, in military circles, to the movement of oil or ink spots across absorbent paper.

The strategy was memorably adopted by U.S. and NATO commanders during the 2007 surge in Iraq and the War in Afghanistan, as well as by Israel’s urban-warfare laboratory in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Yet decades before George W. Bush declared war on terrorism, versions of counterinsurgency were implemented to control anticolonial rebels and to repress anti-imperialist, often Communist revolutions. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, these techniques of war, variously called “unconventional,” “antiguerrilla,” “counterrevolutionary,” or simply “modern,” were put to use in the colonies by Western powers, including in France’s wars in Indochina and Algeria, Britain’s wars in Malaya, Palestine, and Northern Ireland, and America’s war in Vietnam.

Counterinsurgency is a massive departure from the type of warfare waged on the large-scale battlefields of World War I and II. Rather than focus on winning a battle, those engaged in counterinsurgency warfare attempt to win a population. This involves “enemy-centric” measures, such as killing combatants or disciplining civilians, as well as “population-centric” strategies

to “persuade” the civilian population to support the counterinsurgency.<sup>1</sup> This latter approach, part of the “build” component of clear-hold-build, is framed as a “moral conquest” to capture the “hearts and minds” of civilians. To borrow General David Kilcullen’s shorthand, counterinsurgency is “armed social work.”<sup>2</sup> By this logic, a young commander should simultaneously be a combat soldier, cop, and child welfare worker.

When clear-hold-build fails, as it has countless times, some say that counterinsurgency forces must “mow the lawn,” or deal with their adversaries as they continuously return to previously “cleared” territory. That cyclical and destructive process leaves a permanent scar on the places it visits, as the artists in *Clear-Hold-Build* know all too well. They all come from places— Iraq, Palestine, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Algeria—that have been irrevocably altered by counterinsurgency tactics.

Pushing back against metaphors that situate themselves and their communities as passive victims waiting to be rescued and won over, these artists use visual and performative means to document their own experiences with the callous cruelty of counterinsurgency and to reclaim denied spaces and narratives. The exhibit draws unexpected connections across time and space, and focuses on a larger governing paradigm that continues to operate at home and abroad.

### i. Tracing Global Circuits

In the 19th century, strategies of control traveled between different colonial metropolises, through the movement of imperial policemen from one site to the next, doctrinal emulation across borders, and military trainings that institutionalized counterinsurgency knowledge. Inter-imperial conferences, such as those held in Berlin from 1884 to 1885, reinforced these circuits of domination.<sup>3</sup>

The work of The Propeller Group in *Clear-Hold-Build* points to a different type of circulation: that of solidarity. In their piece “Counter Counter Counter,” produced by HEKLER, the group reproduces a pamphlet written by the Viet Minh, urging French colonial troops brought to Vietnam from the colonies of West and North Africa to recognize the interconnectedness of their struggles. “Lower your weapons!” they declare in Arabic and French, “Don’t pursue this useless struggle any longer.” Counterinsurgency has been metaphorically



compared to inkblots, but here the group uses literal inkblots to communicate resistance across physical and linguistic divides. Reflecting a roughness that comes with the lack of printing resources possessed by the Viet Minh, the ink bleeds through the pages of the pamphlet, exposing a palimpsest of previous messages. Beyond the binaries of insurgency and counterinsurgency, the layers of ink form a third space—that of imagined solidarity between colonized peoples.

Today, counterinsurgency knowledge is transmitted through political special-interest groups, private firms, and international arms expositions and conferences. The work of Vladimir Miladinović and Khaled Jarrar spotlight these transnational networks, exposing the commodification of counterinsurgency. Both artists use their body to inscribe a human trace into the sanitized space of the international arms trade. Miladinović's *Archive of the Unmanned* is a hand-illustrated collection of covers culled from *Aviation Week & Space Technology* magazine over the past ten years. The images themselves project a militarized fantasy of futuristic “security” disassociated from human control and impact, but Miladinović's illustrated reproductions re-inscribe the human touch, forcing us to think through the violent impacts of these technologies for sale.

Jarrar takes the human element a dramatic step further with his documentation of a performance staged in October 2018 titled, *Blood for Sale*, in which he sold his blood on Wall Street, priced to match the stock value of America's 15 biggest defense contractors. The Financial District—the epicenter of disaster capitalism whose streets are rooted in North America's colonial past—was the perfect site for Jarrar to engage Wall Street's tourists and stock brokers with an uncomfortable reminder of how human life is treated as disposable capital.

## ii. Building Counter-Archives

While industries of war peddle technologies that kill and surveil from afar, the counterinsurgency model of clear-hold-build has traditionally relied on mechanisms that are advertised as “more humane, as more liberal, and ultimately as techniques for socially engineering the people and places they conquered.”<sup>4</sup> During the Algerian Revolution (1954-1962), the French colonial administration counted, measured, and monitored the population in order to “weed out” unlawful combatants from the general population. This “divide and

rule” policy involved a transformation of the political, social, and spatial landscape of the country. Samia Henni's work, entitled *Discreet Violence*, explores one aspect of this territorial transformation in colonial Algeria—namely, the military-controlled camps de regroupement (regrouping camps) that the French army designed to isolate rural populations from the influence of national liberation fighters. Henni tells this violent colonial and military history of forced displacement through archival records drawn from both state-generated propaganda, media reports, and private records that exposed the wretched conditions of the camps.

As a medium of information gathering, archiving directly engages a core strategy of counterinsurgency: mass surveillance. In 1916, T.E. Lawrence wrote his *27 Articles* to guide British involvement with the Arab Revolt, instructing commanders to “get to know” indigenous populations through “their families, clans and tribes, friends and enemies, wells, hills and roads.” Ninety years later, in a nod to Lawrence, U.S. General David Kilcullen's *28 Articles* similarly advises junior officers in Afghanistan and Iraq to “know their turf”—“the people, the topography, economy, history, religion and culture. Know every village, road, field, population group, tribal leader and ancient grievance. Your task is to become the world expert on your district.”

In *Clear-Hold-Build*, artists Farideh Sakhaeifar and Bisan Abu-Eisheh appropriate the medium of archival knowledge production to challenge contemporary counterinsurgency practices. In *Untitled (Aleppo)*, Sakhaeifar creates a record of what the city of Aleppo looked like before the regime of Bashar al-Assad began conducting a “clearing” campaign in 2011 that effectively wiped the city off the map. The piece consists of a satellite image of the demolished city of Aleppo photo-transferred onto sheetrock. She engraves a carpet-like pattern onto the material as an homage to the cultural destruction of the city's heritage. In *Playing House (Bayt Byoot)*, Abu-Eisheh documents the belongings that have been left behind during the systemic house demolitions in East Jerusalem that are part of the Israeli military's “clearing” strategy in Palestine. By meticulously collecting objects of daily life—shoes, toys, kitchen utensils, and CDs—Abu-Eisheh subverts bureaucratic information gathering techniques used by states to manage, track, and control populations.

## iii. Reclaiming Culture

The inkblot metaphor represents a failure to acknowledge what has always

existed on the paper before the ink of counterinsurgency attempted to spread across it. Every location altered by counterinsurgency contains its own unique political, social, and cultural fabric. There is no such thing as a blank piece of paper.

In her work, Dena Al-Adeeb explores food as an integral part of this evergreen fabric through stories, recipes, and memories that have persisted throughout the Iraqi diaspora. Her *Taste of Displacement* (2014) underlines the relationship between diet and displacement, trauma and healing. The experimental performance, a video of which is presented in *Clear-Hold-Build*, depicts diaspora Iraqis cooking food, swapping recipes, and sharing a meal together while discussing Iraq's past, present and future. Each participant brings a personally meaningful recipe to the table, as well as a story or memory about collective trauma relating to the Iran-Iraq War, the First and Second Gulf Wars, and the recent U.S. invasion and occupation.

The work of Pakistani artist Shabir Ahmed Baloch further challenges the counterinsurgency paradigm that perceives civilians as passive chess pieces to be influenced and won over. His paintings seduce the viewer with bright colors and images of children playing, while telling a much darker story of displacement, enforced disappearances, and extra-judicial killings that comprise the Pakistani government's counterinsurgency operations against the ethnic Baloch groups, of which the artist is a part. At the same time, he uses dark humor to turn his gaze inward towards his community, addressing gender disparity, illiteracy, and poverty—issues compounded by years of counterinsurgency—that make it difficult for the Baloch people to advocate for themselves.

After aerial bombardments and mass displacements, counterinsurgents ultimately use techniques designed to create “a culture in its own image”—a society radically transformed to reflect their own values. Hồng-Ân Trương's audio piece, *War Sonics (How Are You GI Joe?)*, is a direct rebuke of the use of these techniques during the U.S.-led invasion in Vietnam. In it, she splices together excerpts of the voice of Trịnh Thị Ngọc (a.k.a. Hanoi Hannah), best known for her English broadcasts on the North Vietnamese Army's Radio Hanoi network, which were intended to shame U.S. soldiers into leaving their posts.

Hanoi Hannah regularly addressed her broadcasts to black American G.I.s. Yet she wasn't the only one to connect the dots between racism “at home” and

imperial wars fought abroad. In the sixties, the FBI's treatment of the Black Panthers resembled clear-hold-build strategies deployed in Vietnam. As James Baldwin put it at the time, “the Panthers...became the native Vietcong, the ghetto became the village in which the Vietcong were hidden, and in the ensuing search-and-destroy operations, everyone in the village became suspect.”<sup>5</sup>

Clear-hold-build strategies, developed and tested abroad, continue to be deployed across the U.S.—refined, legalized, and normalized through techniques of surveillance and drone warfare that were unimaginable forty years ago. Even as military strategists critique and revise clear-hold-build, these methods have thoroughly permeated the American political imagination. The Trump administration regularly leans on its logic in its rhetoric against undocumented residents, political protesters, American Muslims, and other “internal others.”

The artists in *Clear-Hold-Build* understand counterinsurgency's deep legacy and its destructive power. Together, their work forms a kind of map charting its pernicious layers, like inkblots on the transparent paper of history. But it does not merely serve as a record of devastation. Instead, it is a celebration of all that has improbably survived this terrible ideology, and a resounding call to imagine a future without it.

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 46.

<sup>2</sup> David Kilcullen, “Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency,” Joint Information Operations Center, n.d., 29–35.

<sup>3</sup> Khalili, “The Location of Palestine in Global Counterinsurgencies.”

<sup>4</sup> Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Harcourt, *The Counterrevolution*, 12.

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**Shimrit Lee** is a Brooklyn-based writer, educator, and curator working at the intersection of visual culture, performance, and critical security studies. Her work examines how violence is perpetuated, packaged, and sold in contemporary culture, and the role of visual art and performance in decolonizing and building community. She has served as curator-in-residence at Residency Unlimited, editorial assistant at *Creative Time*, and curator at *No Longer Empty's* Curatorial Lab. She has an MA in international human rights law from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, and recently completed a PhD in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University. The exhibit “Clear-Hold-Build” is an extension of her dissertation research on the commodification of global counterinsurgency.

**Bisan Abu-Eisheh**

**Khaled Jarrar**

**Dena Al-Adeeb**

**The Propeller Group**

**Lana Salman**

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**Shabir Ahmed Baloch**

**Hồng-Ân Trương**

**Chintan Girish Modi**

*Midway 1.*

**Samia Henni**

**Farideh Sakhaeifar**

**Vladimir Miladinović**

**Sagi Cohen**



Figure 1. *Playing house* installation at Les Prairies | Les Ateliers de Rennes, Rennes, France 2012. Courtesy the artist and Teixeira de Freitas Collection

## Archiving as Journey: From Personal to Political

Bisan Abu-Eisheh

In 2001, artist Michael Landy created an exhaustive inventory of his belongings before destroying all of them in a public performance.<sup>1</sup> When I began research for my installation *Playing House* in 2008, Landy's work was at the forefront of my mind. Beyond the destructive element of the piece, I was fascinated with his practice of documentation. I was guided by the possibility that my artwork could also use archiving as a medium to think about disappearance and destruction.

Landy's action evoked feelings of loss, disappearance and marginality — familiar emotions to any Palestinian who grew up in the Old City of Jerusalem under the authority of the Israeli occupation. That was the moment when *Playing House* (2008-present) was conceived. While an archive might be seen as a cold repository of data, *Playing House* aims to bring it to life. At the heart of the installation is a collection of belongings I gathered from Palestinian properties that were demolished by the Israeli authorities in the Eastern part of occupied Jerusalem as part of a counterinsurgency method aimed to forcefully displace the Palestinian population from their homes and lands. As this essay goes to print, Israeli bulldozers have arrived in the village of Dar Salah, sandwiched between East Jerusalem and the West Bank, to tear down ten Palestinian apartment blocks slated for demolition because, according to the Israeli government, they are located “too close to [the] security barrier”.<sup>2</sup>

The belongings that I pull from these destroyed homes range from objects of daily and personal life, such as pieces of clothing, kitchen utensils, and CDs, to parts of the architecture, such as granite, wood, and pipes. The pieces are presented in museum-like vitrines, each with a label describing where it comes from, the date of the demolition, and the number of people displaced from the property. Also, included in each vitrine, is a detailed map of Jerusalem that links each of the objects with the neighborhood where it was collected from. Additionally, a video shows an explosion from the demolition of a five-story building in Beit Hanina, a Palestinian neighborhood in Jerusalem. The forensic nature of the installation appropriates the nature of this format of presentation in order to personalize each of the objects. They are no longer forgotten among piles of numbers and statistics. Each of them has a story to tell: the story of those who once belonged to them (fig 1).

In 2011, a few years after *Playing House*, I began another project, which later became a starting point related to my PhD studies at the University of Westminster in London, England. The research is based off an array of documents belonging to my parents Hussam Abu Eisheh and Latifa Idris.



Figure 2 My Parents; Hussam and Latifa, Beirut 1980.

The documents consist of letters and photographs that my father exchanged between the years 1980-1984 with family members and friends. Most are addressed to my mother, with whom he shared a romantic relationship while they were both students in Beirut, Lebanon in 1980 (fig. 2). I was driven by a personal fascination to uncover my own past. The contents of these documents revealed a spirit of determination and pride, a belief in liberty and freedom that I felt was absent in my generation. My twenties have been filled with despair and defeat, and yet in these letters it seemed that my parents had lived in an era of hope and political power.

I developed a series of artworks between 2014 and 2016 in order to question my own present reality by juxtaposing it with the historical narratives that ran through the letters of my family's past: stories of political prisoners, the collapse

of socialism, and political speeches that changed the course of history. I was moved by these moments of global cultural exchange. How, I wondered, did we get to this present reality defined by isolation and resignation?

Today, thanks to my PhD research under the title *Re-imagining Palestinian Art Post Oslo-Agreement*, these questions are leading me to new realizations.

Now, I am able to understand that my fascination with my parent's archive is not only driven by sentimentalism. It is also connected to the fact that my generation is lacking in sufficient resources to learn about our history. This reality is connected with the continuous tragedies that define Palestinian knowledge production—from 1948 until today.<sup>3,4</sup> These tragedies peaked with the signing of the Oslo Agreement\* at the White House in 1993, which reduced the definition of Palestine to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. All other identifications—"Israeli Palestinians," "Jerusalemite Palestinians," and even "stateless Palestinians" and refugees—were left in a grey zone. As a Palestinian from Jerusalem, where did that leave me? I am from Jerusalem but am considered neither Israeli nor Palestinian in terms of official identification, which is a bureaucratic nightmare when it comes to crossing borders, obtaining basic services, and navigating processes such as obtaining Visas and funding.

It is this loss and fragmentation that make my parent's documents even more significant. The Oslo project has failed, largely due to neocolonial interests that maintain the status quo. Yet, in my opinion, the worst outcome is that it has prevented Palestinians from maintaining direct contact with each other, fragmenting our collective struggle into local politics. This division, as well as the Palestinian Authority's focus on an ahistorical version of "Palestine" that was born in 1993, has created a disconnect between the post-Oslo generations of Palestinians and their shared past of occupation, displacement, and revolution.

This reality has shifted the knowledge produced and distributed about Palestine from a context of occupation and revolution into the context of a national state that only includes the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which is only about 22% of the overall space of what used to be called Palestine before 1948 at the time of the signing of the Oslo-agreement.

Through my PhD project, I aim to work against this fragmentation. As a challenge to the status quo of Palestine's post-Oslo discourse, my project looks at Palestinian artists and their practices as a breathing archive, regardless their

\* Oslo Agreement or Accord: is the declaration of principles on interim self-government arrangements signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on September 13th 1993.

geographical residence. Through a series of dynamics and collaborations with Palestinian artists living between Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, the areas occupied in 1948 (Israel today), and the diaspora, my project aims to map what the Palestinians are communicating to the world through their artistic practices. We resort to art when both history and politics fails us.

The project creates an archive that documents collective discussions on Palestinian art practices across different geographical locations in a way that reveals Palestinian narratives hidden behind the actual artistic outcome of such practices. Beside my intention to use this archive as a base for developing a number of installations and lecture-performances, the archive itself is intended to be preserved as a public resource that belongs to no authority, including myself.

Now, it feels that this chapter of my journey will not only define my future practices as an artist, but will guide my future sense of self as a human being and Palestinian. This is a lifelong project. This is why I became an artist. I no longer feel voiceless. In fact, I feel hungry to change the world.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Landy, M. (2001). Break Down. [online] Artangel.org.uk. <https://www.artangel.org.uk/project/break-down/> [Accessed 28 Jul. 2019].

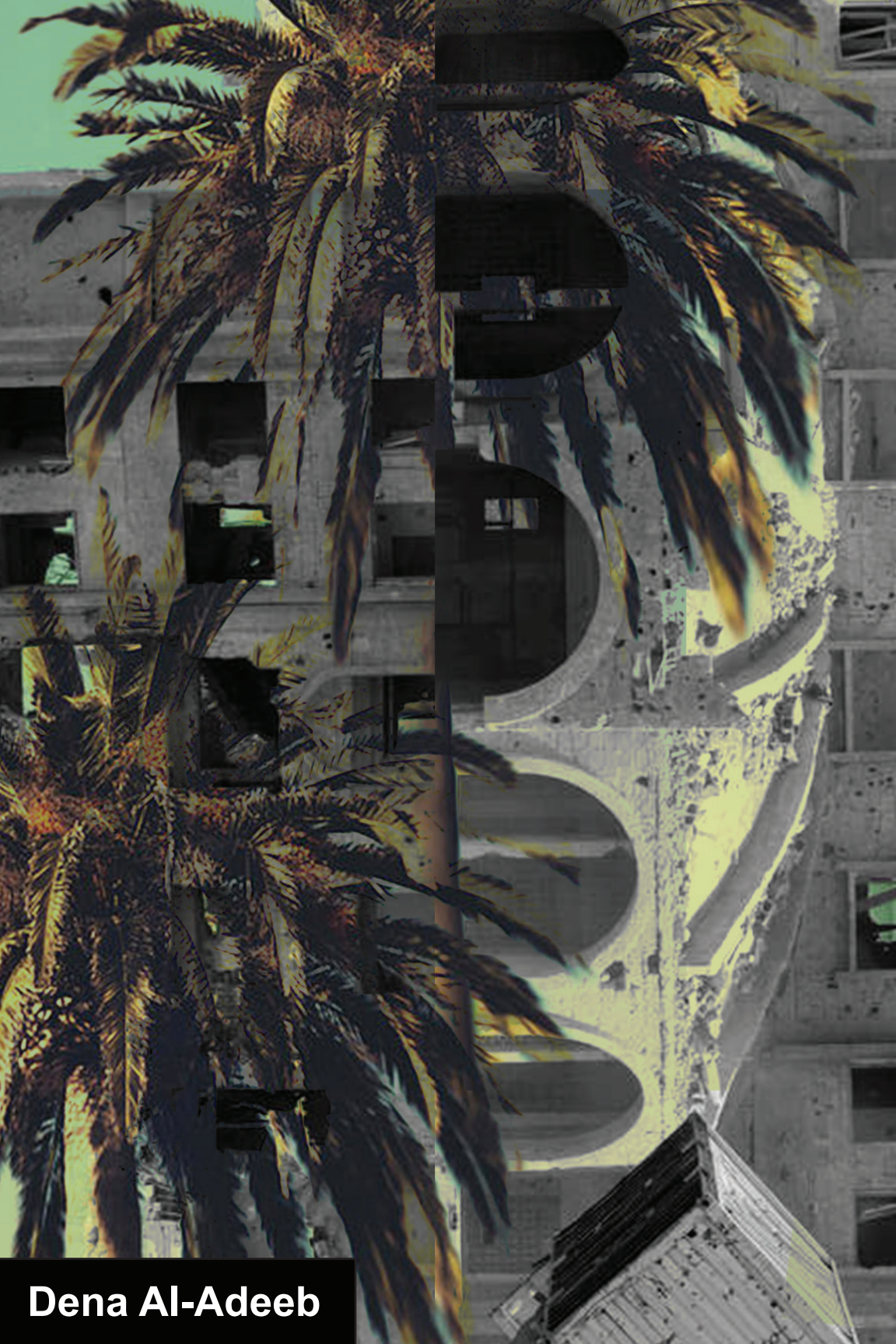
<sup>2</sup> Kershner, I. (2019). Israel Begins Tearing Down Palestinian Housing on Edge of East Jerusalem. The New York Times. [online] Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/world/middleeast/israel-demolition-palestinian-housing.html> [Accessed 28 Jul. 2019].

<sup>3</sup> Pappé, I. (2006). The ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Oxford: Oneworld.

<sup>4</sup> Sela, R. (2017). Looted and Hidden - Palestinian Archives in Israel. [video] Available at: <https://vimeo.com/257286457> [Accessed 6 Aug. 2019].

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*Born in Jerusalem in 1985, **Bisan Abu Eisheh** is a Palestinian artist living and working between Jerusalem and Glasgow. He uses art as a tool to investigate history, society and politics. Working across media, such as video, installations and interventions, with a practice situated both within the gallery space and the public sphere, his work aspires to open a dialogue and seek answers related to several topics such as national identity, mobility, migration and socio-political injustice. For his PhD research at the University of Westminster, Abu Eisheh is investigating how the political situation resulted by the signing of the Oslo Agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Israeli State in 1993 affected Palestinian political art practices.*



## **Sesame Date Balls**

*Date Balls originate from Ancient Mesopotamia, in Iraq today. Date balls are used as a desert and an early evening snack with tea or turkish coffee.*

### *Ingredients:*

*2 pounds dates*

*1/2 cup crushed walnuts*

*1 cup crushed mixed nuts (almonds, pistachios, etc.)*

*1/2 cup crushed sesame seeds*

*2 tsp. cardamom*

*1 cup sesame seeds (for rolling date ball)*

### *Instructions:*

*Blend the dates into a paste in a food processor*

*Add the nuts and cardamom*

*Pulse until a coarse paste forms*

*Form into small balls*

*Sprinkle with cardamom*

*As a finishing touch, roll the date balls in sesame seeds*

*(or any other nuts that you're using. I love the date balls coated with ground pistachios, instead of sesame seeds)*

*Store in an airtight container in a cool place.*

## The Architecture of the Intimate

Lana Salman in conversation with Dena Al-Adeeb

Part I:

*Have your Mother Make you Kibbeh!*

خلي امك تسويك كبه

A mutual friend, who inspired the title “خلي امك تسويك كبه”, introduced us to each other so we can – in her words – “make magic happen.” We began recording our conversations about the physical, temporal, and imagined spaces of cities, memory, and language. These *tête-à-têtes* transpired into writing about movements and collectivities through the self, contributing to a feminist archive that Dena has been experimenting with over the years. Inspired by Assia Djebar’s *L’amour, La Fantasia*, the feminist archive employs a dialogical practice and aesthetic through narrating a past and imagining a future in which the world we inhabit is our own. The experimental archive is a collaborative engagement lending itself as an alternative to official archives, one that centers ephemeral forms of knowledge, experiences, and evidence. The critical exchange between subjects incites an experiential approach to remembrance and memory, archiving and repertoire, and embodiment and performance.

Our exchanges gave birth to a multi-year collaborative project titled *The Architecture of the Intimate*. And “خلي امك تسويك كبه” is the first installment therein which responds to the proposed exhibition theme of *Clear-Hold-Build* with an emphasis on everyday life: the most mundane labor of cooking. This essay developed out of a discussion we started at our favorite café in Oakland, carried into Dena’s backyard, and concluding over a meal we cooked together in Dena’s kitchen for mutual friends who happened to be visiting California. The essay, like the overall project, is forward-looking, inspired by our pasts, and firmly rooted in our broader research projects.

### Ongoing wars

“The memory-smell of wild zaatar (thyme) in her exile kitchen was nauseating. She turned off the burner. Closing her eyes to recall family dinners in her war-torn Syria, the images conjured the smell of zaatar. She deserted her kitchen, fleeing the memory-smell. Not that she ever loved standing at the kitchen sink. Back home, she refused her mother’s generous offers for cooking tutorials. She rebelled against it all: gender norms, separate public/private spaces, subservient roles. Because the kitchen is a battleground.”

In a recent article about war-torn Syria, Rou’a Al Zayat (2019) reflects on “the kitchen as war-space.” On its tiled floors, gendered, ethnic, racial, and class conflicts come to life. Standing at the stove, Rou’a waves off the weight of her thoughts:

المطبخ ساحة حرب، تتجلى فيه آليات صراعاتنا الجندرية والطبقية والعرقية. وأنا «أكش» الأفكار هذي بكفي كذبابة. أريد أن أجد فضاءً غير مثقل بنظريات عن سياسة المكان والنسوية والعنصرية والبطيخ.

Yearning for a space free from the gendered labor which produced it, she finds herself paradoxically returning to the kitchen. Feeding, she writes, is the power of women in her homeland. Her mother’s recipes turn into a treasure she shares with friends, a medium to transport the smell of home into a cold European exile. She cooks to assuage her mother’s longing, to heal her estrangement from her own body, to fill her gaping wound with gratitude for the women – and the fewer men – who taught her the intimacy of ‘doing-cooking,’ of producing the material which will be ingested by an Other’s body.

### *The last threshold of/for empire: the intimate*

“Have your Mother Make you Kibbeh” reenacts Dena’s ongoing participatory performance “The Taste of Displacement,”\* The project defies the ‘cultural turn’ of late modern urban warfare exemplified in the *FM 3-24 Army Field Manual on Counterinsurgency*. Tracing the genealogies of this cultural turn, geographer Derek Gregory explains that the mediatized form of “Clear, Hold, Build” counterinsurgency emphasizes “intimate knowledge” of “adversary culture” to render invisible the violence of war.<sup>1</sup> Its primary audience is a “democratic” American public which may now hold accountable its “democratic” army for waging (or failing to wage) “ethical warfare.” If, as Gregory argues, aerial military operations rescript city space as pixelated coordinates emptied from all people and features, this new type of warfare signals what anthropologist Anne Stoler calls “the rush to the intimate.”<sup>2</sup> It requires “boots on the ground” to repopulate the same spaces with new subjects whose intimacy must be refashioned in the image of empire. *Have your Mother Make you Kibbeh* exposes the same “democratic” American public to the intimate, performed as the most mundane act of ‘doing-cooking’, a threshold of/for empire which refuses to be breached.



### *Doing-cooking as feminist insurgency*

For us, the intimacy of 'doing-cooking' becomes a form of embodied resistance. At the kitchen counter, 'doing-cooking' is a feminist insurgency. French phenomenologist Michel De Certeau (1998) uses the expression "doing-cooking" (a translation of *faire la cuisine*) to emphasize the gendered labor of love, hospitality, and transmission which accompanies "acts of nourishment."<sup>3</sup> We, women who inhabit the estranged present, exiled from our homes, enact these gestures of everyday life in the kitchen to keep alive acts of nourishment, to share recipes, passed on to us by myriad anonymous women who practiced this nourishing knowledge. To honor them, we cook to preserve a fleeting, fragmented memory of a place and time—long gone but ever present. In our mothers' kitchens, we rebelled against gendered roles; we staged disobedience refusing to reproduce both patriarchy and capitalism. But in our own kitchens, in friends' kitchens where we commune, we embrace this role as our defiance to estrangement, as a way of being in the world, of making this world our home.

### *Ingesting intimacy in times of war-peace*

We step into each other's kitchens, the memory-smells and tastes lodged in our bodies waiting for a rebirth. We tie our aprons at our waists and, teary-eyed, dice onions for the three dishes we are confectioning. We take out the frozen *mlukhiyeh* leaves. Without waiting for it to defrost, we cut the softened dark green square and toss it on the translucent onions. We convene around the cutting board. We agree to cut one tomato in cubes and the whole bunch of cilantro. Miraculously, our wine glasses are refilled. We compose words that make our lips move, something about the academic lifeworlds we inhabit, as our hands stir the wilted *mlukhiyeh* leaves in the pot. We separate the chicken from the stock, the bouquet garni from the soup. Attentive to the texture, we smell, we taste. Along the way, we improvise to accommodate dietary restrictions, to satisfy a child's craving, or a lover's desire. We reinvent culinary wisdom one spoonful of *mlukhiyeh* at a time, repeating ritualized gestures over the cooking pot, adjusting the burner, alert to the smell of almost-ready food. At the kitchen sink, we and the innumerable women who stand where we stand every night, suture Baghdad to Beirut, Damascus to Oakland. Late in the evening, too late for dinner by American standards but within our homes' time zones, we take off the aprons, at the kitchen counter, at the dinner table. We, our people, our chosen families and loved ones, sit to eat. More than eating, we ingest intimacy in times of war-peace, already planning tomorrow's performance.

\* *Tastes of Displacement* is an ongoing multi-city video, participatory performance, and socially engaged art project by Dena Al-Adeeb, that brings together a diverse group of exiles, immigrants, and refugees from the Middle East for a shared meal. The participants are asked to provide a personally meaningful recipe inspired from their homelands, which is prepared and served communally.

The project is accompanied by a book art project, which incorporates collective histories of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and elements from Dena's mother's recipe book, a compilation of hand-written recipes of Iraqi dishes that she carried with her—first from Baghdad to Kuwait (1980), and then from Kuwait to California (1991).

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Gregory, Derek. "Derek Gregory: 'The Rush to the Intimate' / Radical Philosophy." Radical Philosophy (blog). Accessed July 8, 2019. <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/the-rush-to-the-intimate>.

<sup>2</sup> Stoler, Ann Laura, and David Bond. "Refractions Off Empire: Untimely Comparisons in Harsh Times." *Radical History Review* 2006, no. 95 (May 1, 2006): 93–107.

"المطبخ كساحة حرب" *الزيت*, رؤى. *Aljumuhiya*, April 25, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Certeau, Michel De, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol. *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vol. 2: Living and Cooking*. First edition edition. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 1998.

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**Dena Al-Adeeb** is an artist-scholar-activist born in Baghdad, Iraq. Dena creates performative, relational works, dedicated to participatory art, socially engaged projects, and collaborative engagements. Her work investigates the intersections of mapping collective memory, exhumed architecture, and necropolis geographies. Dena is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the American Studies Department at the University of California, Davis. She received her Ph.D. in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Culture and Representation track, from New York University. She has been a resident artist at *Light Work* and *Mana Contemporary* and a recipient of numerous awards including the *Knight Foundation* and *Kenneth Rainin Foundation*. Dena's work has been exhibited internationally, at such places as *Mana Contemporary*, *Light Work Gallery*, *Museum of Tunisia*, *OFF Biennale Cairo*, *Bastakiya Art Fair*, *Arab American National Museum*, among others. Her work appears in a diversity of publications including: *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, *We Are Iraqis: Aesthetics and Politics in a Time of War*, *Arab and Arab American Feminisms: Gender, Violence and Belonging*, *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, among others.

**Lana Salman** is a feminist scholar of international development and local governance. Her research agenda draws on her professional experience as well as her fascination with the politics and poetics of cities. She is particularly interested in the category of the intimate as an analytic and lens for understanding feminist global south urbanisms. She is currently completing her doctorate in *City & Region Planning* at the University of California Berkeley. Her dissertation research traces the making of local level democratic politics in post-revolution Tunisia.



**Shabir Ahmed Baloch**

*Nothing is funnier than unhappiness, Oil on canvas. 72x96 in., 2013*

## Slivers of hope

Chintan Girish Modi

The spoils of war are shared unequally. Those who lose most, regardless of which side wins, are the ones who did not sign up to fight in the first place. Their stories too would be lost to oblivion if the act of bearing witness was unknown to humankind, and to artists in particular.

Shabir Ahmed Baloch, who grew up in Balochistan, has built his artistic practice around this sacred act of remembering those who have suffered, and those who are continuing to live until they break or break free. He has trained his eye to focus on the children who have to put up with the mess that adults have created. They encounter the everyday threat of physical violence in addition to poverty and malnutrition. He is based in Lahore, a city in the Punjabi heartland that has given Balochistan nothing but decades of economic neglect, cultural imperialism and ethnic persecution.

On July 2, 2019, the website of the U.S. Department of State published a media note identifying the Balochistan Liberation Army as ‘Specially Designated Global Terrorists’ under Executive Order 13224. The timing was particularly interesting since Prime Minister Imran Khan was scheduled to meet President Donald Trump just two weeks later. They were joined at the White House by Pakistan’s army chief Qamar Jawed Bajwa, and the director-general of Pakistan’s notorious spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Faiz Hameed.

The note stated, “BLA is an armed separatist group that targets security forces and civilians, mainly in ethnic Baloch areas of Pakistan. BLA has carried out several terrorist attacks in the past year, including a suicide attack in August 2018 that targeted Chinese engineers in Balochistan, a November 2018 attack on the Chinese consulate in Karachi, and a May 2019 attack against a luxury hotel in Gwadar, Balochistan.”

What was omitted was the backstory of military occupation and counter-insurgency in Balochistan, carried out by the Pakistani state and funded by American dollars. The BLA’s use of violence cannot be condoned for, alongside attacks on military personnel, it has spilled much civilian blood. Yet a geopolitical context is crucial in order to build any nuanced understanding of the Baloch struggle for self-determination.



*Jashen II*, Oil on canvas, 47 x 36 in, 2019

Pakistan has been using Islamist groups to attack Baloch nationalists, who want to secede from the Islamic Republic. China, which has previously financed Pakistan's nuclear program, is now making heavy investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to exploit Balochistan's natural resources. This equation allows Pakistan to consolidate and legitimize its power in the region but the Baloch have little to gain because China is bringing its own workers.

Malik Siraj Akbar, a journalist from Balochistan now living in Washington DC, explained the situation in an insightful op-ed for The New York Times last year: "After Sept. 11, Pakistan utilized the resources Washington had provided it to fight Al Qaeda and the Taliban to crush Baloch separatists. Since 2004, Pakistan has disappeared, tortured and assassinated thousands of young Baloch students, activists and rebels, as the Americans weren't concerned about Baloch aspirations and needed the military."

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the homegrown Human Rights Commission of Pakistan have documented several human rights violations in Balochistan. These include arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, custodial torture, extra-judicial killings and mass graves, but Islamabad's media blackout and refusal of access to the United Nations and international aid agencies make it extremely difficult for the Baloch people to make their voices heard.

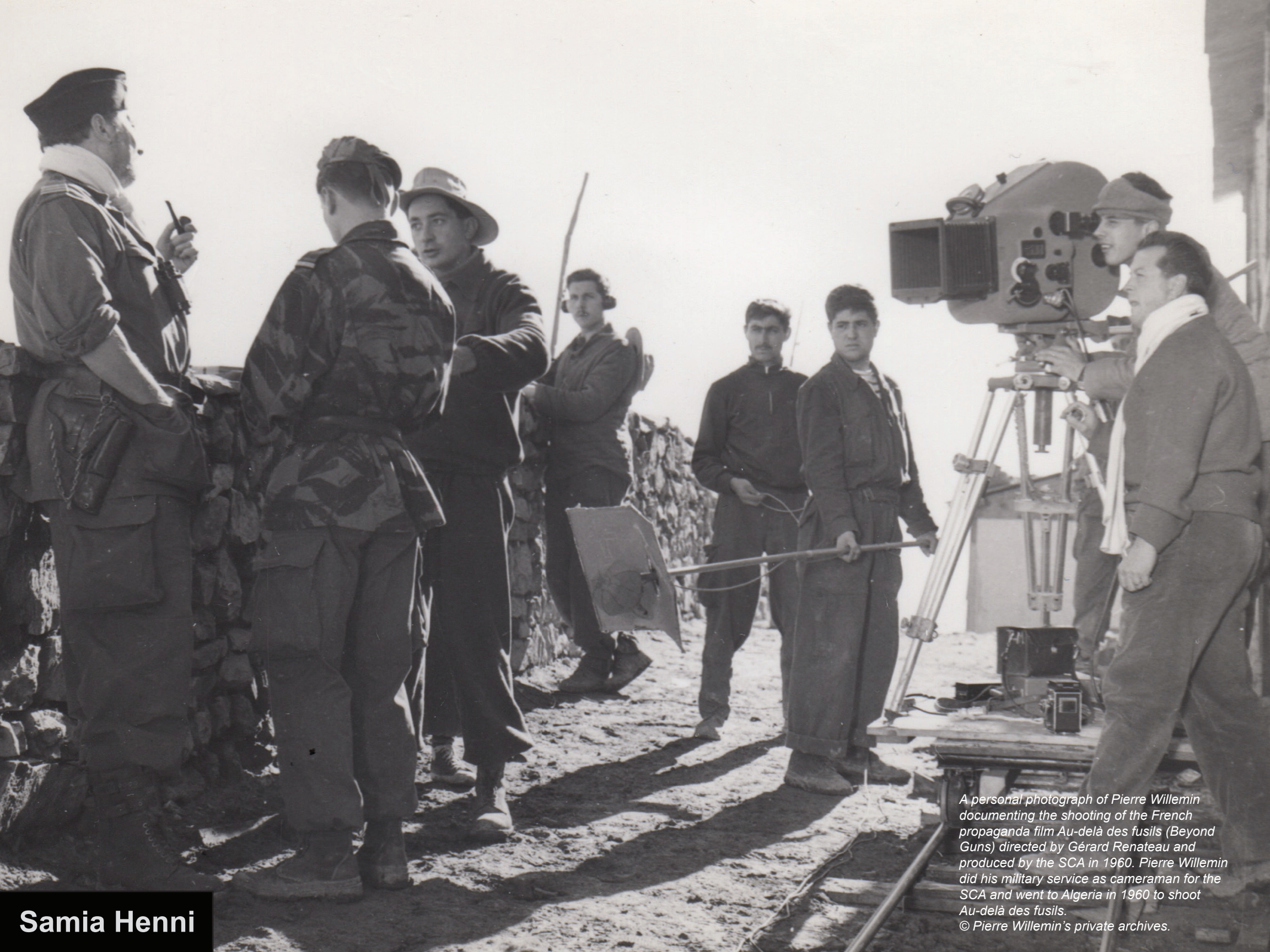
It is in this context that the art of Shabir Ahmed Baloch needs to be seen, appreciated and understood. His work is an antidote to cynicism. The images of childhood he paints are a fervent appeal for a return to joy, play, leisure, even innocence. They are quiet and withdrawn but they hold themselves together with slivers of hope while things threaten to fall apart. They are reminiscent of these lines from Pakistani historian Hamida Khuhro's 2014 book *A Children's History of Balochistan*:

"You see, child, Balochistan is not such a desolate place. It has had Sindhi princesses, Macedonian conquerors, Hindu deities, Buddhist kingdoms, British colonists, even your grandfather trudging through the boiling heat after his plane crash! This land has seen much and its history continues. We are all part of that history -- I am, your parents are, and you are. And we all get to decide what happens next."

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**Shabir Ahmed Baloch** is from Dera Murad Jamali Balochistan which is rough and remote. Born 25th of October 1985 acquiring early and high school education from his hometown. Shabir was a commercial sign board painter before he moved to Lahore, as he was admitted in National College of Arts (NCA), earning his BFA in painting. After graduation Shabir chose to reside in Lahore to continue his creative adventure as a painter. His paintings reveal hardships of human life which are projected in a humorous notion. The idea behind his paintings illustrates human nature of laughing at someone else's pain as the artist says, "Nothing is funnier than the misfortune". Shabir has done many exhibitions throughout the country and abroad.

**Chintan Girish Modi** is a writer, educator and researcher living in Mumbai. He has worked with Seeds of Peace, Hri Institute for Southasian Research and Exchange, and the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development.)



**Samia Henni**

*A personal photograph of Pierre Willemin documenting the shooting of the French propaganda film *Au-delà des fusils* (Beyond Guns) directed by Gérard Renateau and produced by the SCA in 1960. Pierre Willemin did his military service as cameraman for the SCA and went to Algeria in 1960 to shoot *Au-delà des fusils*.  
© Pierre Willemin's private archives.*

## Discreet Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria

Samia Henni

During the Algerian Revolution (1954–1962), or the Algerian War of Independence, the French civil and military authorities profoundly reorganized Algeria's urban and rural territory, drastically transformed its built environments, rapidly implanted new infrastructure, and strategically built new settlements in order to protect France's economic interests in Algeria and keep Algeria under French colonial rule—which began in 1830. *Discreet Violence* features one aspect of these territorial transformations: the construction of militarily controlled camps dubbed the *centres de regroupement* (regrouping centers) in Algeria's rural areas. These spaces resulted from the creation of the forbidden zones—free fire zones—and engendered massive forced relocations of the Algerian population. Special military units called the *Sections administratives spécialisées* (SAS, or Specialized Administrative Sections) supervised the evacuation of the forbidden zones, the regrouping of the Algerian population, the construction of temporary and permanent camps, the conversion of a number of permanent camps into pseudo villages and the monitoring of the daily life of Algerian civilians. The aim of these camps was to isolate the Algerian population from the influence of national liberation fighters and to impede potential psychological and material support.

Based on French military photographs and films produced by the propaganda teams of the *Service cinématographique des armées* (SCA, or Cinematographic Service of the Armed Forces) and other public and private sources, the exhibition features certain aspects of the evacuation of the Algerian rural population, the building processes of the camps, and the living conditions within them. It discloses the ways with which the French colonial regime attempted to divert the military purpose of the camps in the aftermath of a medial scandal of 1959. The exhibition unfolds the intrinsic relationships between architecture, military measures, colonial policies, and the planned production and distribution of visual records. Today, the SCA is called the *Établissement de communication et de production audiovisuelle de la défense* (ECPAD, or Office of Communication and Audiovisual Productions of Defense) and is still active in warzones where the French army is involved.

With the issuing of the first centralized military policy of 1957, under the command of General Raoul Salan, official documents, stamped “secret” or “secret-confidential” or “top-secret,” began to regulate the creation of the forbidden zones and to normalize the forced resettlement of the civilian populations. This was the case with the construction of the defensive perimeter

known as the Morice Line. Named after French Minister of National Defense André Morice, the Morice Line sealed off Algeria's eastern and western borders with neighboring Tunisia and Morocco in order to prevent human movement and material exchanges. Running approximately 450 km along the border with Tunisia and 700 km along the border with Morocco, the Morice Line triggered a rapid and massive expansion of the camps. In 1958, the military Plan Challe fortified the Morice Line with additional electrified wire, minefields, barriers, and checkpoints—systematic counterrevolutionary measures that intensified the imposed evacuation of civilians from the forbidden zones. The number of the camps thus continued to increase throughout the course of the Algerian Revolution.

On February 17, 1959, more than four years after the onset of the Algerian Revolution on November 1, 1954 (All Saints' Day), Michel Rocard, a young Inspector of Finances in French Algeria—who later served as Prime Minister from 1988 to 1991 under President François Mitterrand—submitted a confidential document, *Rapport sur les camps de regroupement* (Report on the Regroupement Camps), to Paul Delouvrier, the newly appointed Delegate General of the French Government in Algeria. In this 1959 account, the twenty-eight-year-old Rocard denounced the outrageous conditions of the French colonial “*regroupement* camps in which a million villagers are parked, more than half of them children.”<sup>1</sup> The report was leaked to the media in France, who belatedly revealed the existence of the militarily controlled “*camps de regroupement*” in Algeria that until then had been kept secret from national and international public opinion. In 2003, Rocard published his report in a book titled *Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la Guerre d'Algérie* (Report on the Regroupement Camps and Other Texts on the Algerian War). Rocard published his report until four decades later, prompted by the alarming invasion of Iraq in 2003. Using the examples of the fiascos of the war in Algeria and the violence inflicted during the forced civilian relocations, Rocard attempted to demonstrate the impossibility of solving political problems by purely military means, as had occurred in colonial Algeria.

The 1959 media scandal resulted in an unprecedented flood of photographs, figures, and descriptions documenting the forced resettlement of Algerian civilians on a massive scale. However, the exact numbers of camps that were constructed during the war, of persons who were forced to leave their homes, and of devastated villages are still disputed to this day. One estimate for 1960 counted 2,157,000 such forcibly relocated persons.<sup>2</sup> Another evaluation from 1961 considered that at least 2,350,000 people had been concentrated into

military controlled settlements, and that an additional 1,175,000 people had been coerced to leave their original homes due to constant and violent military operations, meaning that altogether over 3.5 million people had been forcibly displaced.<sup>3</sup> Another figure for 15 February 1962, just a few weeks before Algeria's independence, reported that 3,740 *camps de regroupement* had been built in French Algeria since the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution in 1954.<sup>4</sup>

In the aftermath of the media scandal of 1959, planning “technicians,” as the military officers called them, became directly involved in transforming the permanent camps into what the army termed “villages,” as well as in designing new settlements for the forcibly relocated populations. Under the authority of General Charles de Gaulle and in prompt reaction to the public outrage, Paul Delouvrier<sup>5</sup> launched an emergency resettlement program dubbed the *Mille villages* (One Thousand Villages). He ordered immediate improvements to the camps' economic conditions, including the establishment of mobile rural planning teams.<sup>6</sup> These teams were expected to study the future of the regrouping process; the economic viability of the camps; the legal status of the occupied lands; the administrative needs of the education and health-care sectors; the extent of immediate assistance that was required; and the military concerns of protection and self-defense.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michel Rocard, *Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2003), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad, *Le déracinement : La crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle en Algérie* (Paris : Edition de Minuit), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Michel Cornaton, *Les camps de regroupement de la Guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: L'Harmattan), 122–123.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 121

<sup>5</sup> After his experience in Algeria, Paul Delouvrier was appointed General Delegate of the Metropolitan Region of Paris between 1961 and 1969, and then Prefect and Deputy Director of the *Aménagement du territoire* (Spatial Planning) between 1966 and 1969. Delouvrier is considered to be the father of the *villes nouvelles* (new towns) in France.

<sup>6</sup> SHAT 1 H 2030 D 1. Paul Delouvrier, Directive no. 3.444 CC, *Regroupement de Populations*, 24 April 1959.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.



*Military officers debating the strategy of regroupement in the military operational sector of Saïda, Region of Oran, Algeria, February – April 1959*

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**Samia Henni** is Assistant Professor of History and Theory of Architecture and Urban Development at the Department of Architecture, College of Architecture, Art, and Planning at Cornell University. She is the author of *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (Zurich: gta Verlag, 2017), the editor of *War Zones* (Zurich: gta Verlag, 2018), and the curator of *Discreet Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria (2017–2019)*, ETH Zurich, The New Institute in Rotterdam, the Archive Kabinett in Berlin, the Graduate School of Architecture in Johannesburg, La Colonie in Paris, VI PER Gallery in Prague, and Cornell University). Henni participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions, conferences, and symposia. She taught at Princeton University, ETH Zurich, and Geneva University of Art and Design. She received her Ph.D. (with distinction, ETH Medal) in the History and Theory of Architecture from the gta Institute, ETH Zurich.



**Khaled Jarrar**

*Blood For Sale, 2018*



## Blood for Sale

Khaled Jarrar

*“All that is solid dissolves into air, everything that was holy becomes profaned.”*

Violence is blooming.

Money was once backed in physical commodities, such as gold. A few dollars, shekels, dinars or pounds could be directly converted to its weight in gold. The value of money was translated from an abstraction to a material means of exchange. With the dismantling of the Bretton Woods system in 1971 and the birth of Fiat Currency, all of that changed. Money was liberated from its physical source, and became an autonomous free-floating agent without connection to any physical substance. Suddenly, money appeared as a pure abstraction, exchange without ground, yet an abstraction that determines everything. But how could that be?

While some might say that the value of money resides in property or labor, in an age of unprecedented military spending, money is also grounded in weapons, military assets, and intelligence programs. And yet, the real cost of war — human life and labor — remains invisible and abstracted. On October 8 – 12 of 2018, I attempted to put an end to this mystery by allowing the source of all value to appear, and be purchased, precisely in the epicenter of its exchange, the place of its disappearance. In a performance titled, *Blood For Sale*, I sold my own blood on Wall Street. Tailored and groomed death dealers, pedestrians and tourists alike all had the chance to “go to the source”, so to speak, and witness one of the rarest marvels of our time: the conversion of their money into its substantial reality.



Blood vials from the performance, *Blood for Sale*, 2018



Stamp with seal and a contract that is received upon purchase of blood vial.

With highly symbolic photographs, videos, and performative interventions focused on his native Palestine, multidisciplinary artist **Khaled Jarrar** explores modern power struggles and their sociocultural impact on ordinary citizens. Born in Jenin in 1976, Jarrar lives and works in Ramallah, Palestine. He completed his education in Interior Design at the Palestine Polytechnic University in 1996, and graduated from the International Academy of Art Palestine with a Bachelor in Visual Arts degree in 2011. The following year, his documentary *The Infiltrators* (2012) won several accolades at the 9th Annual Dubai International Film Festival, and confirmed his importance in global cinema. Jarrar's solo exhibitions include Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2016); Art Bartsch & Cie, Geneva (2015); Galerie Polaris, Paris (2014, 2012); Gallery One, Ramallah (2014); Ayyam Gallery London (2013); Galerie Guy Bartschi, Geneva (2013); and the NEWTOPIA: The State of Human Rights Contemporary Arts in Mechelen and Brussels (2012).



*Aviation Week, January 21 2008, Front page, Ink-wash on paper, 50 x 70 cm, 2018*

## Archive of the Unmanned: Between Consumerism and Militarism Shimrit Lee

Bosnia, summer of 1995: tactics of drone warfare and humanitarian intervention developed in tandem as the first U.S. military drone, known as the Gnat 750, was used to monitor human rights violations from afar. CIA Director Robert James Woolsey wrote about these early test flights with wonder: "I could sit in my office, call up a classified channel and type messages to a guy in Albania asking him to zoom in on things." By the end of 1996, U.S. drones had completed nearly 1,600 missions in support of the joint U.N-NATO mission in the former Yugoslavia.

Years later, the Gnat 750 was equipped with lethal capabilities and developed into the "Predator" drone, America's most lethal weapon in the global war on terror, responsible for countless strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen. Today, there are more unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) - or drones - being transferred between countries than ever before. These transfers form a part of a fast-growing and increasingly privatized counterterrorism industry led by the U.K., the U.S., and Israel. *Archive of the Unmanned* takes the industry of war out from behind the closed doors of conference rooms and the shadowy halls of international arms expositions and into the critical gaze of the public eye. By hand-illustrating visual content found in niche journals intended only for corporate and military audiences, Serbian artist Vladimir Miladinović aims to shed light on how war is sold—as much as a commercial enterprise as a political one. At the same time he illuminates connections between today's brand of aerial warfare and the history of humanitarian intervention that has its roots in the place that he calls home.

Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, catalogues of weaponry and equipment were mainly confined to illustrated manuals made by and for military enthusiasts. After the Cold War, a period marked by increased market privatization and a nascent interest in counter-terrorism, the defense publication industry burgeoned. *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, a weekly magazine reporting on aerospace, defense, and aviation industries, published its first issue in 1916. The numerous arms advertisements peppered throughout the journal reflect militarized fantasies, projections of how technologies could shape the ways in which war is both waged and imagined. Implicit in such fantasies is a rewriting of state violence as a mere exchange of commodities.

*Archive of the Unmanned* presents the public with journal covers and illustrated ads for UAV technologies published in *Aviation Week* by major weapons companies over the past three and a half decades. Many of these images market a dissociative fiction that effectively presents drones as autonomous agents, removing any notion of human control or impact. By hand-illustrating this corporate content, Miladinović inscribes it with the human trace that the aesthetic of corporate militarism often lack. At the same time, he raises questions of accountability and transparency when it comes to the global arms marketplace and drone warfare. Ultimately, the illustrated archive explores the visual culture of corporate militarism and interrogates how arms advertisements shape, and often limit, the perception of warfare and violence.

**Vladimir, what lead you to create hand-illustrated reproductions as part of your artistic practice?**

I have always been fascinated by the split between my collective and personal memory. I was a young child when Yugoslavia dissolved in the 1990s. My family lived in a small town, which was largely untouched by the fighting. However, these events still form a large part of my collective identity. Today, twenty-five years later, there are still so many competing historical narratives surrounding what happened, and feelings of resentment and blame continue to shape national consciousness.

I began reproducing newspaper articles from the 1990s as a way to excavate the past, and my personal relationship to it. I started reading Belgrade daily newspapers, as most state archives were destroyed or remained closed to the public. I created my own archive of articles dealing with war crimes from that period, particularly news about the Omarska camp, a concentration camp run by Bosnian Serb forces in 1992. As I poured over these horrific stories, I decided to trace each word by hand as a way to make visible my own process of reading and discovery. By rewriting every letter, I became physically invested in uncovering my past.

**Your work brings the archive to life. However, there seems to be a constant split between the sterile, “factual” documents within the archive and your artistic rendering of such media. What do you hope to achieve by bridging this gap?**

I want to make this information digestible for a larger audience. I eventually received access to the archive of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and I was overwhelmed by the amount of



*Aviation Week, December 9 1991, Front page, Ink-wash on paper, 50 x 70 cm, 2018*

documentation of war crimes that took place in the Balkans in the 1990s. I uncovered a range of official documents, including witness statements, maps, additional newspapers, and lists of items that were found in mass graves in Belgrade in 2001. While these documents might be seen as leftover scraps from the legal system, I considered them to be rich historical documentation that needed to be shared with the public.

Today, so much information is available—with Wikileaks publishing media from anonymous sources, and groups like Forensic Architecture piecing together political events from satellite images alone. The same information is available when it comes to the atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia, but people don't want to face the facts. Perhaps these stories are too painful to deal with, or they don't fit within dominant national narratives. Through my hand-illustrations, I hope to create a space that brings together historical imagination with “the facts” as they exist in the archive. We have the knowledge we need to confront our past. The question is: Are we willing to do so?

**In *Archive of the Unmanned*, you illustrate a series of advertisements from a military journal. How do commercial advertisements fit into your practice?**

This isn't the first time I have hand-drawn advertisements. When I first started this project, I copied advertisements that were embedded in the Belgrade daily newspapers. Many of these ads were for private banks. Although Yugoslavia was a socialist state at the time, with a state-owned bank, these obscure private banks were offering insane saving rates. Of course, these banks eventually dissolved, alongside the money that people had invested in them. It was later uncovered that this money was used by those in power to wage war.

When I look at these seemingly innocent advertisements, I see war crimes. I also see the violent transition between socialism and capitalism. In *Archive of the Unmanned*, these connections are more obvious. War relies on capital production. Through this project, I want to delve even deeper into the links between consumerism and conflict, militarism and marketing.

<sup>1</sup>Derek Gregory, “Moving Targets and Violent Geographies,” in *Spaces of Danger: Culture and Power in the Everyday*, ed. Heather Merrill and Lisa M. Hoffman, *Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation* (University of Georgia Press, 2015).

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**Vladimir Miladinović** (1981) lives and works in Belgrade, Serbia. He graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade and has completed doctoral level courses in the department of Art and Media Theory at the University of Arts, Belgrade, and has worked as an independent artist since 2007. He was a member of the Working Group “Four Faces of Omarska” an art/theory group that questions memorial production strategies. Miladinović's main interest lies with the politics of remembering, media manipulation and the creation and reinterpretation of the history. His work engages with war and post-war trauma. It deals with media, forensics, political and ethical identification and the presentation of war crimes, but also with current transitional ideologies of denial and erasure. It questions how media and institutions in the post-war societies create public space, consequently shaping collective memory. He is using art as a forum to create a counter-public sphere that raises question about war, media propaganda, manipulation of narrative, historical responsibility and intellectual engagement. He was the laureate of the 53rd October Salon Award in Belgrade and has exhibited widely across Europe, including at the SMBA - Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (Amsterdam, Netherlands), Artium - Basque Museum Centre of Contemporary Art (Vitoria, Spain), Münchner Stadtmuseum (Munich, Germany), Salzburger Kunstverein (Salzburg, Austria), FreiraumQ21 - Museum-quartier (Vienna, Austria), and CACT-Thessaloniki Center Of Contemporary Art (Thessaloniki, Greece).

aux soldats

# Nord-Africains

des T.F.E.O.

Les Français vous ont forcés à faire cette guerre injuste. Vous n'avez rien à y gagner. Au contraire du sang Marocain, Tunisien, Algérien a été versé au profit des colonialistes oppresseurs du peuple Marocain aussi bien que du peuple Vietnamien.

Bas les armes !

Ne poursuivez plus cette lutte inutile.

## Vive l'amitié du peuple Marocain et du peuple Vietnamien.

Armée nationale du Việt Nam

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته  
 يا اخوتي في الوطن العربي  
 يا اخوتي في الجزائر  
 يا اخوتي في تونس  
 يا اخوتي في المغرب  
 يا اخوتي في ليبيا  
 يا اخوتي في مصر  
 يا اخوتي في سوريا  
 يا اخوتي في العراق  
 يا اخوتي في اليمن  
 يا اخوتي في السودان  
 يا اخوتي في الصومال  
 يا اخوتي في ليبيا  
 يا اخوتي في مصر  
 يا اخوتي في سوريا  
 يا اخوتي في العراق  
 يا اخوتي في اليمن  
 يا اخوتي في السودان  
 يا اخوتي في الصومال

1. Sgt. Boudier, Ce Oficié 75/1 Song Son, Vinh Da

Viet Minh propaganda leaflet

## There and Not There

By Brynn Hatton

The extant material of political labor performed in the streets, rather than in the halls of power, is often intermediary and ephemeral. “Ephemera” is the art historical name we give to leaflets, posters and other cheaply produced print publications, portable tapes and recording devices, temporary barricades, Xeroxed and typewritten communiqués, scribbled graffiti. All of these are forms meant to be utilized and then abandoned, to draw attention and then disappear, to burn forever in the mind rather than be preserved in the physical archive. Like the political work it supports, ephemera are often unrefined and rough in nature due to a scarcity of resources at the bottom and a necessary quickness of execution, the conditions of dissident media produced under surveillance. In Tuan Andrew Nguyen of The Propeller Group’s words, that same lack of polish and permanency is also “embedded with a sense of urgency,” and in that urgency there is a creative force, and the seeds of potential worldmaking.<sup>1</sup>

The Viet Minh – aka Việt Nam Độc Lập Đồng Minh Hội, aka the League for the Independence of Viet Nam – formed in the early 1940s under the leadership of then-prime minister Ho Chi Minh, in a period of French colonial proxy rule by Japan. The Propeller Group’s *Counter Counter Counter* (2019), produced by HEKLER, is a reproduction of a piece of Viet Minh ephemera: a leaflet written in Arabic and French, circulated during the French-Indochina War (as it is known in France), or the Anti-French Resistance War (as it is known in Vietnam), fought between December 1946 and August 1954. After World War II, the defeat of the Axis powers delegitimized Japan’s administrative authority over Vietnam, and as a result, the country became legally and technically independent. In a notorious speech addressing a crowd of over half a million in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh quoted the American Declaration of Independence as Japan publicly abdicated the throne. With that speech act, Ho imagined a relation of ideological solidarity between the newly independent Vietnam and its imminent occupier. In hindsight, this is many things: sobering, ironic, haunting, strange. Enduring for its rhetorical boldness, and also dismissible for its incongruence with subsequent historical events. As a political moment, it is both indelible and systematically erased by time.

The text of the leaflet reproduced as *Counter Counter Counter* urges tirailleurs (French colonial troops from West and North Africa) to defect from the French army, and to recognize instead the potential alliance between the Vietnamese and North Africans suffering equally under French colonial oppression.



Review of the 14th July, Our Colonial Troops, illustration from Le Petit Journal, supplément illustré\_ Bibliothèque Nationale de France\_ colour lithograph, 13th July 1913

The Viet Minh were notable for strategically and successfully fighting the French in this manner, reaching out to numerous potential allies in the international community far from the frontlines. Ho personally penned dozens of letters to heads of state appealing to general humanistic concepts like justice, freedom, and the right to legitimate self-rule. Both the party and its figurehead in this case were presciently attuned to what would become a central ethos of global decolonization and solidarity movements worldwide, peaking in the 1950s-1970s. They drew into their collective ranks not only an imagined potential community of third world allies, but locally, built a diverse base of “elders, prominent personalities, rich people, soldiers, workers, peasants, intellectuals, youth, and women.”<sup>2</sup> It was the panoplistic and pluralistic Viet Minh who succeeded in winning Vietnam’s independence, for the second time in first half of the twentieth century, at Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954.

The Propeller Group plans to burn *Counter Counter Counter* at end of its duration in the exhibition *Clear-Hold-Build*. The act of burning eulogizes the precarity and fragility of revolutionary work writ large, but also speaks to the

specificity of Vietnam's colonial encounter with methodical erasure through fire via aerial bombing, defoliation, and self-immolation. As Tuan reminds, through means of weaponized fire, "a lot of these pamphlets also became a part of the jungle," and so in this gesture the work counters itself three times: the jungle is destroyed first to become ephemera, the paper is destroyed by fire and returns to the jungle, and the jungle then produces more paper to reproduce the message as art.<sup>3</sup> The last turnover – from art into fire, smoke, and air – signals death and also initiates a possible space of regeneration. One type of physical disappearance promises travel and re-materialization elsewhere, under new and unforeseeable conditions.

#### Notes

<sup>1,3</sup> Communications between Shimrit Lee and Tuan Andrew Nguyen.

<sup>2</sup> Ho Chi Minh, "Letter from Abroad," June 6, 1941, reprinted in Gettleman, et. al., eds., *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 37-38.

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**The Propeller Group** is an artist collective founded in 2006, performing as an advertising company by day to allow for its engagement with restricted histories and spaces by night. Disrupting the boundaries of artistic expectations and subverting forms of communication, it explores strategies of resistance to forms of political oppression. The collective's work has been featured in exhibitions at the Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, US (2017); Phoenix Art Museum, US (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2016); Venice Biennale (2015); Prospect.3, New Orleans Triennial (2014); New Museum Triennial, New York (2012) and Los Angeles Biennial (2012), among others.

**Brynn Hatton** is the Kindler Family Assistant Professor of Global Contemporary Art at Colgate University. Her research examines the affinities between strategies of protest and conceptual art, and the ways in which artistic work anticipates and shapes political discourse from the 1960s to present.





## War Sonics

Hồng-Ân Trương


*How are you, GI Joe? It seems to me that most of you are poorly informed about the going of the war, to say nothing about a correct explanation of your presence over here. Nothing is more confused than to be ordered into a war to die or to be maimed for life without the faintest idea of what's going on.*

Trịnh Thị Ngọc | Thu Hương | Hanoi Hannah, 16 June 1967

In June 1967, a group of African American soldiers sat in a tent listening to a voice coming through the radio waves, the impeccably accented voice of Trịnh Thị Ngọc, otherwise known as Thu Hương, or Hanoi Hannah to U.S. soldiers. Her voice came through the soldiers' transistor radios, part of the acoustic landscape and contested aural topology of the American War in Vietnam, and upon which ideological battles were waged through words and song. She was the first to report on the Detroit race riots back in the U.S., addressing the soldiers directly: "What are you doing here, soul brother?"

On the other side of the country, sound waves emanating from U.S. military bases, as well from the American units for Psychological Operations (PSYOP) through massive speakers attached to UH-1B helicopters, blasted amplified sounds and messages into the sonic spaces of the war.

To examine the politics of sound and listening in the context of race and war is to examine a political space of making oneself heard – a space of disagreement and contradictions that allow the simultaneity of sound across time and space, traces of memory in its wake. It is a networked space of both social and technical infrastructures, one in which abstract electricity in the ether created audiences that were both disconnected yet communal, atomized yet collective.


**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**  
**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**  
 New York, New York  
 January 18, 1966

*In Reply, Please Refer to File No.*

Ldp  
 Wg  
 [Signature]

~~Radio Stateside~~  
 INFORMANT

On January 6, 1966, [redacted] advised that on [redacted] a story concerning radio broadcasts from Hanoi, North Viet Nam to United States troops in South Viet Nam.

[redacted]

[redacted] -Vietniks in Unistates have begun shipping packages taped radio shows to Red North Vietnam for beaming to American servicemen battling Communists in South Vietnam. A first show offered to supply GGIIS advice on how to 'legally' quit fighting here.

"The new half hour program dubbed 'Radio Stateside' which recently debuted over Hanoi radio described itself as 'an effort by a group of students and young working people' to bring 'the whole truth' on war here to Unistates servicemen in South Vietnam.

"Spinning American popular music between blasts at Unistates policy in Vietnam, the program's two male commentators also told GI here that Negroes and other minorities are being 'deprived of liberty' back home.

"GIS were told that 'the real patriots' are 'those who declare they are not part of the Vietnam war.' In a closing pitch to the American servicemen, the broadcasters quoted a legal clause from article eight of the Nuremburg Trials which they said held soldiers responsible for the actions of their government."

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

ENC [redacted]

b6  
b7C  
b7D

b3  
b7E

1966 FBI File for "Hanoi Hannah"

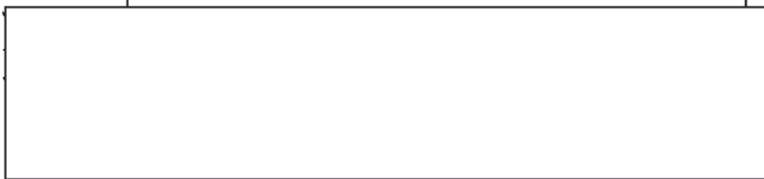
"Radio Stateside"

"Broadcast onwent urge those Unistates servicemen who want to legally disassociate themselves from the war in Vietnam to write 'Radio Stateside' incare of two addresses in America, one in Philadelphia and the other in Losangeles. The station promised to supply in return information on how to legally quit the military action in Vietnam."

"The show which began by identifying itself as 'Radio Stateside comin to you from Watts, Losangeles, in California,' also featured a record entitled 'Universal Soldier,' and anti-war song which it claimed was 'selling number one throughout the Unistates.'

"The new propaganda program augments regular Northvietnamese broadcasts to GIS here by Hanoi Hannah and occasional taped 'message' to Yank servicemen by turncoat Americans residing in Péking. The 'Radio Stateside' gimmick, however, appears be first program originating in Unistates endit."

PA.



b6  
b7C  
b7D

.....  
this story was published on page 2 of the January 5, 1966 edition of the "Daily News". Based on this story, [redacted] was [redacted] that the FM radio station [redacted] was [redacted] KPFK in Los Angeles, California, through [redacted] of Station KPFK.

b6  
b7C  
b7D

RADIO STATION

CACTE

Now for our talk. A Vietnam Black GI who refuses to be a victim of racism is Billy Smith. It seems on the morning of march fifteenth a fragmentation grenade went off in an officers barracks in Bien Hoa Army Base killing two gung ho lieutenants and wounding a third. Smith was illegally searched, arrested and put in Long Binh Jail and brought home for trial. The evidence that clearly showed him guilty of all charges and specifications was this: being black, poor and against the war and the army and refusing to be a victim of racism.

Trịnh Thị Ngọc | Thu Hương | Hanoi Hannah, 30 March 1968

**Hồng-Ân Trương** is an artist who primarily uses photography and video to explore immigrant, refugee, and decolonial narratives and subjectivities. Her work has been shown in both solo and group exhibitions at the International Center for Photography (NY), Art in General (NY), Fundación PROA (Buenos Aires), Istanbul Modern (Istanbul, Turkey), City Gallery (Wellington, New Zealand), Smack Mellon (NY), the Nasher Museum of Art (Durham, NC), The Kitchen (NY), Nhà Sàn (Hanoi), the Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin, Ireland), EFA Project Space (NY), and Leslie Tonkonow Gallery (NY), among others. She has been awarded an Art Matters Grant, a Franconia Sculpture Park Jerome Fellowship, a Socrates Sculpture Park Emerging Artist Fellowship, and a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant. She was included in the New Orleans triennial *Prospect.4: The Lotus in Spite of the Swamp* in 2017-2018. Her collaborative work with Hông Ngô was exhibited in *Being: New Photography 2018* at the Museum of Modern Art. Her work has been reviewed in *Artforum*, *The New Yorker*, *the New York Times*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Hyperallergic*, among others. She was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2019. **Hông-Ân** is based in Durham, North Carolina where she is an activist and a teacher. She is an Associate Professor of Art at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Farideh Sakhaeifar

## You are in the War Zone. 2016-17

Sagi Cohen

*You Are in The War Zone* is far from being innocent. It is a trap, almost an insurgency tactic: it wields the in-betweenness of a conflict-ready, second person address, a pointed finger that oscillates ambivalently between showing and accusing. Nevertheless, this ambivalence carries a logic – cold, precise and consistent – which can be called a logic of *super-imposition*: more than mere juxtaposition, where ‘Middle-East’ meets ‘Occident,’ even more than an imposition, where the former’s suffering impinges upon the latter’s tranquil indifference. *You Are In The War Zone* is a series of photographs in which artist Farideh Sakhaeifar deliberately juxtaposes everyday life of citizens of New York with those of the people of Syria who are encountering a war zone. The hand-traced images from Aleppo, whose atrocities came to symbolize the global disaster of Syria’s civil war, add an unmistakable measure of intimacy to Sakhaeifar’s gesture, especially in an age where politics is often reduced to a single click.

This is not the first time Sakhaeifar has used super-imposition to document catastrophe. In *Clear-Hold-Build*, an image of Aleppo, taken from the weightless flight of a satellite’s super-position, is weighed down by a sheetrock tracing of an Oriental rug pattern: there, with a literally heavy hand, she impresses the accusation of a lost home, slapping this western apparatus in the face with the destruction it presides upon from a safe distance. *You Are in The War Zone* goes a step further, deeper, using super-imposition in a more intimate and invasive way by allowing ghostly images of Aleppo to occupy a New York City park. This is not the morally neutral “look, a war zone!” – affording its audience the convenient position of “viewers,” free to pity or make donations at their leisure – but an infection, a breach, a taking-hostage.

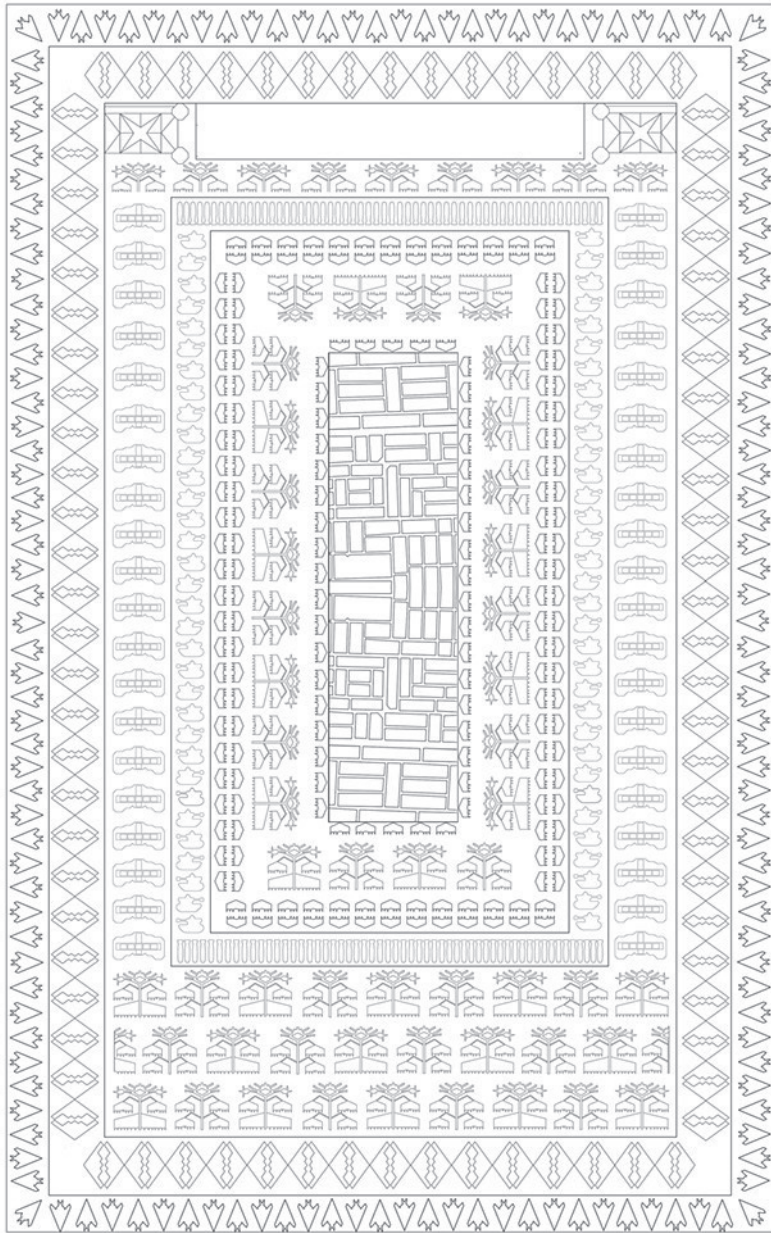
The “war zone” imputed here is neither that of New York, nor even Aleppo, but the conditions of *visibility* that (un)fold between them; a *conflictual mediation* over the possibility of being seen, or counted. *Comme à la guerre*, Sakhaeifar stages this impossible scene so as to balance an otherwise asymmetrical distribution of power between the two locales. On the one hand, her vaguely-traced Aleppo images – depicting figures in the process of evacuating corpses from the scene – aids and abets the resilient ignorance of the New York children playing in the park. On the other hand, despite their happy-go-lucky air, the park photos have the life sucked out of them precisely by this superimposed evacuation of death. They might “occupy” the context that Sakhaeifar had cut



*You are in the war zone, 2016-17*

out, but are thus infected by its hopelessness and death. This logic is known in global politics, but here it is made to *speak*.

This political artist does not mind morally compromising herself and her work, even her audience, if that will get her ethical point across. Sakhaeifar’s medium of super-imposition *forces* her audience to occupy this impossible ‘war zone’, a space often occupied by a Western presence that declares itself to be moral and innocent. In her visual montage, there is only space for this presence in the absence of dead Middle-Eastern children. Sakhaeifar breaches the expectation of her own ability to speak— the easily-digestible position of the well-mannered immigrant who ‘inspires’ Western guilt. Instead, she injects the guilt, making the encounter irreversible, its impositions excessive. This work is as dirty as it is personal, pushing-back against the all-too-familiar media(tion) logic whose basic assumption is that ignorance means innocence or that indifference guarantees justice. Sakhaeifar has no patience for such luxuries of moral hygiene – and it shows.



Layout of Untitled (Aleppo)

**Farideh Sakhaeifar** is a New York-based artist and educator born in Tehran, Iran. She received her MFA from Cornell University in 2011 and her BFA from Azad Art and Architecture University in Iran in 2008. Sakhaeifar's work ranges from photography to installation and sculpture. Her work seeks to produce a translational understanding of the social and political struggles in which she has been involved either directly or indirectly. Sakhaeifar was awarded a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Residency in 2012-13, Bric Media Arts Fellowship, Residency Unlimited, 2017, Queens Museum Studio Program 2018. Her work has been widely covered including in ArtFuse, The Guardian, and Hyperallergic.

**Sagi Cohen** is an Arab-Jewish expat from Israel who found refuge in Canada. His line of flight was Academic, which explains his recent completion of a PhD in Political Science. There, he tried to provide an ethically-centered methodological discourse around betrayal, where the western psyche – typically blinded by its own good intentions (or love) – can finally own up to its own sublimated, systemic hatreds; a first step towards ethical responsibility beyond the auto-sterilizing mechanisms of white guilt. Interested in the more difficult and less institutionally-controlled aspects of ethical encounters, this “Dr. Cohen” can be found loitering at the borders of various academic faculties, a nomadic parasitism which also explains his sordid affairs with political and performative art.

## ABOUT HEKLER

HEKLER is an artist-run platform that fosters the critical examination of hospitality and conflict through collaborative programming and archiving.

HEKLER organizes HOST and MEDIUM programming with cultural workers to create educational and community building environments where cross-pollination of ideas relevant to contributing political contexts can take place.

HEKLER HOST brings together 2+ collaborators to create 4 hours of programming featuring a combination of food, music, exhibition, performance, book launch, spoken word or reading that examines a topic of shared concern.

HEKLER MEDIUM: facilitates round-table discussions, exhibitions, and podcasts that examine the origins, mutations, and consequences of contemporary conflicts through an interdisciplinary lens.

The events are hosted by HEKLER and collaborators. HEKLER production team provides conceptual, logistical and networking support in close dialogue with the collaborator(s) for both types of programming. The events can be invitation only or open to the public, depending of the collaborator's preference.

HEKLER is made possible with the support and active engagement of collaborators, allies, participants, and audience.

Website: [www.hekler.org](http://www.hekler.org)  
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 Instagram and facebook: [@heklerke](#)

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**HEKLER**