



HDK-VALAND – ACADEMY OF ART AND DESIGN

WONDERING AND WITNESSING: ARTISTIC METHODS AS PHENOMEN OLOGICAL SPATIAL TACTICS

الفضب والرفض في الإغتراب،

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Preface

This essay serves as an experimental space in dialogue with my artistic practice, with the intention of creating witnessing and wondering reading experiences for both Arabic and English readers. Arabic is tactically included as a disruptive gesture within the English text and functions as a spatializing mechanism. I integrate the Arabic text within the English text using a methodology of sewing. Sewing the text means that Arabic does not function as a direct translation of what is written in English, nor does it complete or further the English text. Instead, it is a self-contained fabric that patches the body of this essay.

This sewing methodology may produce a power dynamic between the English text, representing the dominant academic and theoretical forms of knowledge¹, and the Arabic fabric, which adopts a subjective approach to knowledge production. However, I perceive the Arabic fabric as an extension of my body; it is a fragment of myself spreading over the space, reclaiming my subjectivity, and embodying my anger, and exploring it as a disruptive gesture. This fabric is meant to create a witnessing and wondering experience for both the institution and the reader as a spatial tactic to challenge academic knowledge and its structures, by enacting a form of knowledge rooted in lived experience. It transforms the essay space by activating it differently; the English text will be influenced by the spatial reconfiguration generated by the Arabic text, which change the organization of the essay space due to variations in punctuation and alignments for each text—Arabic writing and reading proceed from right to left, while English follows a left-to-right direction².

¹ I would like to express the challenges I am experiencing due to the restrictions imposed by the requirement of using English to write this essay. Arabic is the language in which I think and perceive the world and using English limits my capacity to address the knowledge I have formed in my research experience. Thus, I am using English to meet the academic learning outcomes required for this essay assignment.

² This experiment of reconfiguration induces intentional moments of disorientation within the essay space, not aimed at altering the meaning of the English text but rather its orientation. Therefore, readers experience disorientation as they navigate the essay space, compelled to follow unexpected directions to follow the English sentences. It is an experiment for creating a witnessing and wondering experiences about the academic structures for writing academic texts.

Introduction

As a research-based artist, I am examining how social constraints, manifested in architecture, impact women's bodily experiences in marginalised and refugee areas. I employ a feminist lens, recognizing that the limitations faced by women in refugee camps result from a colonial heritage intertwined with imperialist, economic, political, and cultural structures in the Levant region.³ This focus is rooted in my background as a Jordanian of Palestinian descent, raised in East Amman's marginalised areas and refugee camps, and my current experience as a resident in one of Sweden's marginalised and refugee enclaves⁴ in Gothenburg.

I am employing phenomenology as the theoretical framework for my investigation.

Phenomenology, as an experientialist philosophy, studies the structures of consciousness from a first-person perspective.⁵ This framework incorporates the practice of wondering⁶, and, additionally, I integrate the practice of witnessing as phenomenological methodologies to generate conscious subjective experiences. According to feminist philosopher Kelly Oliver, the practice of witnessing relies on the tension produced by eyewitness testimony, complicating the notion of historical truth.⁷ On the other hand, the practice of wondering, as outlined by the queer feminist theorist Sara Ahmed is an affective response to an experience that makes something familiar seem extraordinary.⁸

³ Banan Abu ZainEddin, "Takatoat's Regional Feminist School," Takatoat's Regional Feminist School 2023, June-August 2023, <https://takatoat.org/>.

⁴ Enclaves is the approach for the planning of the Swedish suburb areas, where the buildings are grouped in enclaves. Filip Wikman, "Reimagining a Million," Chalmers University of Technology, 2022, https://projects.arch.chalmers.se/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/wikmanfilip_49874_2193323_Wikman_Filip_MTBooklet_2022-.pdf.

⁵ David Woodruff Smith, "Phenomenology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2018 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/phenomenology>.

⁶ The Living Philosophy. "What is Phenomenology? The Philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger." YouTube video, 11:04. June 13, 2021. <https://youtu.be/IvA9FxsM9G8>.

⁷ Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 2001.

⁸ Bonnie Mann, "Feminist Phenomenology and the Politics of Wonder," 43-61.

In my artistic practice, I employ witnessing and wondering as artistic methods to craft a phenomenological experience for both myself as an artist and the public. I posit that these methods can serve as phenomenological spatial tactics. According to the philosopher Michel De Certeau, spatial tactics are actions that resist and navigate power structures within established systems. In this context, witnessing and wondering can be utilised as spatial tactics as they empower individuals to consciously interact with their surroundings and experiences, thereby revealing the existing power structures within a space.

The main aim of this essay is to examine witnessing and wondering as phenomenological spatial tactics and to contemplate them as trajectories artists can navigate to unveil the construction of hegemonic systems and generate lived experiences through artistic practice. This objective gives rise to a central research question: How can witnessing and wondering, as artistic methods, function as phenomenological spatial tactics? In response to this question, I argue that witnessing and wondering, as artistic methods, can serve as phenomenological spatial tactics when artists employ disruptive gestures to create a lived experience that directs attention towards wondering and witnessing the construction of dominant systems that oppress subjectivity.

The essay is organized into five parts. Firstly, the theoretical introduction to phenomenology. Secondly, I introduce witnessing and wondering as methodologies of phenomenology. Thirdly, I explore witnessing and wondering as phenomenological spatial tactics, where I situate my argument and engage with it practically by discussing three practices: my own work, *Swept Over the Rug*, 2023, the work of the Palestinian artist and architect Sandi Hilal, *Al Madafeh/Living Room*, 2016, and the work of the Palestinian conceptual artist Mona Hatoum, *Homebound*, 2000. Through each artistic practice, I will introduce three different disruptive gestures: singling out, shifting, and contradictions, which are employed to create a lived subjective experience for the public. Disorientation and anger will be introduced in the reflection section as disruptive gestures that are raised to create a lived subjective experience for me as an artist and the writer of this essay. In the final section, I will summarize my thoughts and draw conclusions.

Body

Theoretical introduction

This section introduces phenomenology, which serves as the theoretical framework for **الفضب** **والرفض في الإغتراب،** this study.⁹ Phenomenology, as a discipline, is fundamentally defined as the study of the structures of consciousness within subjective experiences.¹⁰ It studies **،** **تعوينة سياسة** phenomena,' the external appearances of things and how they manifest in our personal experiences. It is concerned with how we encounter and make sense of various types of everyday life experiences, including perception and bodily awareness.¹¹

Sara Ahmed adopts Franz Brentano's **أبقت حضوراً راديكالياً** In their book 'Queer Phenomenology,' assertion that phenomenology is concerned with the 'intentionality'

of consciousness.¹² This refers to the intentionality of conscious experiences from the standpoint of

المرأة عريية في مساحات بيضاء قمعية. the

person who is experiencing them. Conscious experience encompasses the subjective dimension of

لم يكن لهذه التعوينة أن تتشكل perception and cognition, extending beyond mere

⁹The more I research and read about phenomenology and its notions, the more I feel the cognitive momentum that I need to explore further in order to continue investigating my argument. Consequently, I am inclined to view this essay as a platform for exploring phenomenology based on my current understanding of this theory and other related concepts.

¹⁰ David Woodruff Smith, "Phenomenology."

¹¹ David Smith, "Phenomenology."

¹² Sara Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others, 27

observation or engagement. Intentionality implies that consciousness is consistently directed towards

لولا ادراكى للآلية التي تعمل بها انظمة الاضطهاد الموجودة بداخل something, whether it's an object,

المجتمعات البيضاء بشكل عام

a thought, an emotion, or any facet of everyday encounters.¹³

Feminist philosopher Alia Al-Saji posits that phenomenology is a method of 'attending to

تحديدا داخل experience,' aiming to uncover not only the apparent meanings of a certain

مؤسساتها التعليمية الرأسمالية،

experience but also the underlying factors that contribute to that meaning, such as embodiment, affectivity, perception, temporality, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity.¹⁴ In this

التي كشفت مؤخرًا definition,

عن أن قيمها الساعية لتوفير بيئة اجتماعية Alia Al-Saji emphasizes the embodied

مرة عادلة وآمنة aspects of subjectivity as

crucial for revealing factors that contribute to meaning. I align with Alia Al-Saji's insights, as my argument

proposes that witnessing and wondering, as artistic methodologies for generating lived experiences,

¹³ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 27.

¹⁴ Alia Al-Saji, "Feminist Phenomenology," in *The Routledge Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Serene Khader, Ann Garry, and Alison Stone (New York, NY, USA: Routledge, 2017), 143-154.

allow for a more comprehensive exploration of embodied experiences and the factors

للجميع لا تطبق إلا على أبناء جلدتها، influencing meaning-making.

But how can daily experiences be perceived subjectively, given that these experiences are habitual embedded in our perception to the أصحاب البشرة البيضاء والعيون الملونة والشعر الأشقر. encounters

extent that they have become automatic and unquestionable? Especially considering that these everyday interactions are not isolated; they are deeply entwined within interlocking dominant historical, economic, political, and social systems—to name a few—that suppress subjectivity.

provides a framework to investigate how we تناقض الفيلسوفة النسوية كياي أوليفر Phenomenology

can have a conscious subjective experience within these structures through the methodology of

it المفاهيم التي تنتجها علاقات أنظمة القمع والهيمنة عن الذات والآخر wondering.¹⁵ I also add to

the methodology of witnessing, which I believe can function as a methodology of phenomenology as

أو الذاتية والتشيء. well. These methodologies form an

approach that can be employed by artists to not only create conscious encounters with everyday practices but also entail the potential to disrupt and critically engage with the construction of dominant

فتقول أن رؤية الذات كوضوع يتطلب تجريد الآخر systems that influence subjectivity when activated.

من ذاته ما يتيح رؤيته كشيء، بالتالي يبرر قمع واضطهارة والتقليل من إنسانيته.¹⁶

¹⁵ The Living Philosophy, "What is Phenomenology? The Philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger."

¹⁶ Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 2001, 9.

Witnessing فقد ظهر الفضب كرد فعل بد هي and Wondering

Fink called for **ناج عن محاولات انتراع ذاتي من قبل جامعة جو تيرغ** The philosopher Eugen phenomenologists to return to a state of "wonder" before the world.¹⁷ Wonder aligns with the **صوتي الذي لا يشبهها،** fundamental spirit of phenomenology; it encourages us to view the world with a sense of curiosity and

اللتي قوبت بالتسكيت amazement, as if we are encountering it for the first time.¹⁸ Sara Ahmed

describes wonder as an affective response to an experience that makes something **أحياناً** familiar seem extraordinary.¹⁹ Their description of wonder is based on what they call emotional intentionality,²⁰ which responds to the world with feelings, fleshing out subjectivity in turn.

The feminist philosopher Kelly Oliver argues that witnessing enables subjectivity by allowing address- and respond-ability within systems of oppression that objectify our **التجاهل أحياناً أخرى** ability daily interactions,²¹ so that witnesses possess direct knowledge through their lived experiences.²² This practice draws on the tension arising from indulgence with the familiar beyond recognition, disrupting traditional ideas of historical truth.²³

¹⁷ Bonnie Mann, "Feminist Phenomenology and the Politics of Wonder," *AVANT. The Journal of the Philosophical-Interdisciplinary Vanguard* 9, no. 2 (2018): 43-61.

¹⁸ Bonnie Mann, "Feminist Phenomenology and the Politics of Wonder," 43-61.

¹⁹ Bonnie Mann, "Feminist Phenomenology and the Politics of Wonder," 43-61.

²⁰ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 2.

²¹ Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 2001, 7.

²² Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 2001, 85.

²³ Historical truth is what claims the existence of objective historical facts that can be isolated from their political, cultural, and economic contexts and studied and analysed on their own. Dr. Ibtisam Al-Atiyat, Islam

Based on my current understanding of wondering and witnessing as methodologies of phenomenology, I believe they are inseparable practices in phenomenological experiences. Yet, I argue that there is a subtle distinction between the two. The act of wondering is associated with a

propensity بل وبعضها قبول بالرفض.

towards estrangement from the world, while the act of bearing witness entails a direct encounter with it.

wonder with the *الأمر الذي جعلني أبحث في الكيفية التي يمكنني من خلالها* Sara Ahmed contrasts concept of the ordinary,²⁴ inviting us to encounter the familiar with a sense of estrangement. This aligns with French philosopher Descartes's description of wonder as a response triggered by the

unexpected nature of an encounter. تأكيد ذاتي وفرضها.

When we judge something to be new or significantly different from our previous experiences or expectations, it leads to a state of wonder, accompanied by astonishment.²⁵ Witnessing, on the other hand, is a state of being in dialogue with the world by testifying to what we see with the eyes and what we cannot see – what we believe in through faith,²⁶ and I would add to that what we feel in daily life experiences. To put this testimony in tension with the historical truth. To put this testimony in tension

في هذه الامتاء، التقيت بالباحثة النسوية with historical truth. This is what makes the two methodologies

الفلسطينية رنا بركات

integrally necessary to create a phenomenological experience that directs our attention towards questioning the structure of a system while living through it.

Al-Khatib, Souad Aswelem, Hayat Mershad, Nadine Moawad, "We exist and resist in solidarity," *Takatoat*, May 3, 2023.

²⁴ Bonnie Mann, "Feminist Phenomenology and the Politics of Wonder," 43-61.

²⁵ Bonnie Mann, "Feminist Phenomenology and the Politics of Wonder," 43-61.

²⁶ Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 86.

I believe that the estrangement of wondering and the tension of witnessing are what make these methodologies phenomenological spatial tactics. Considering that the mundane attitude accepts what is visible in daily encounters without questioning, **من خلال نصها "أودري لورد في فلسطين: بين مسار المعرفة التوليدية والإقتراع المعرفي"** something which allows phenomena to fade away beneath the surface of the familiar.²⁷ So, how can one encounter the familiar with estrangement or complicate given truth in habitual everyday life experiences? I argue that the role of artists is to implement disruptive gestures via artistic methods to enable the acknowledgment of phenomena.

Phenomenological Spatial Tactics

What I am attempting to do in my artistic practice is create phenomenological experiences by employing witnessing and wondering, both for myself as an artist in the process of investigating my practice inquiry and for the public through my artistic work. But how can witnessing and wondering, as artistic methods, operate as phenomenological spatial tactics?

" حيث تحدثت عن كيف بدأت تعلم امضان الغضب السياسي كإحساس توليدي للمعرفة.

To clarify this question, I will use my artistic practice as an illustration. As I mentioned in the

introduction, my research project examines how social

اودري لورد " لا بد أن تصلي إلى أعماقك، إلى كل ما يغلي في رحمها وتوظيفها فيما قد يفيد."²⁸

constraints, manifested in architecture, impact women's bodily experiences in marginalised

and refugee areas. جعلني أسائل بعمق عن كيفية توظيف الغضب فيما قد يفيد؟ I

began with marginalised and refugee areas in East Amman, Jordan. My chosen medium for this exploration is light, as I believe it's a medium often used by societies to restrict women's

²⁷ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 33.

²⁸ كحل: مجلة الأبحاث الجسد والجنس، 9، عدد 1 (18 يناير 2023): ص. 45- "رنا بركات، "أودري لورد في فلسطين: بين مسار المعرفة التوليدية والإقتراع المعرفي" 53. <https://kohljournal.press/ar/node/383>.

bodily experiences.²⁹ I think light is a medium that can be unintentionally used by societies to restrict women's bodily experiences.

For example, in the Palestinian refugee camps of East Amman,³⁰ light can influence where, when, and how women are allowed to walk or be. The architectural and organizational state of

كأداة معرفية؟³¹ the camps in East Amman is the result of several

factors that have changed over the years, most notably the temporary nature of

the camps.³¹ The camp residents had, for a long time, rejected proposed organizational solutions for the camp's structure due to the political and social sensitivity associated with it.³²

Developing the camp, for them, meant sustaining it, i.e., abolishing its temporary status, or, in

و other words, ³³ taking away their right to return to their indigenous land of Palestine.

Thus, the camp took on a form that the Jordanian-Palestinian researcher and architect Samar Al Maqusi termed "the Palestinian scale."³⁴ A scale that provides a cohesive fabric for the

camp.³⁵ Beyond its political dimensions

and significance, this Palestinian scale directly influences the formation of social values among its inhabitants. In the camp, the residents know each other well, and they are

²⁹ Please note here that this belief has emerged as a consequence of my experiential practise of witnessing.

³⁰ Which emerged in response to the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe) in 1948 and the subsequent Naksa (setback) in 1967, when Palestinians forcibly displaced to Jordan by the Israeli occupation forces.

³¹ Husna FM Radio. "How do camp residents formulate their relationship with the place." YouTube video, 39:12. September 2022. https://youtu.be/Av28pBhJ_Ec?si=6f7edGpyvB11qW35.

³² Husna FM Radio. "How do camp residents formulate their relationship with the place."

³³ Husna FM Radio. "How do camp residents formulate their relationship with the place."

³⁴ Chick Figure 1.

³⁵ Samar Maqusi, "Acts of Spatial Violation: The Politics of Space-Making inside the Palestinian Refugee Camp," *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research* 6, no. 1 (2021): 57-70.

connected by authentic Arab *أن وجود الضمير يعتمد على وجود الضمير أو الآخر لضمان*

استمرارية ذاتية وهيمته. values formed in support, generosity, giving, and solidarity, to name a few. Even the houses are tightly hugging each other, to the extent that a window view from one person's room can be a neighbour's living room. This intertwining of camp spaces blurs the line between the private and the public.

In this context, I find myself, as a woman, subject to social surveillance. One of them is directly connected to light. For example, at night, it is not acceptable for women to be on balconies or rooftops when lights are on. Nor can they be moving freely indoors when the lights are on and the windows are not covered, as this would expose them to the public. From my lived experience in that community, this issue is considered a mundane, unquestionable ethical and social value that the whole community has to be committed to.



Figure 1: Photograph of Mohammad Amin Refugee camp, 2015, East Amman, Jordan. Encyclopedia of Palestinian camps.

In this context, how can I arrive at the point in my practise where I can create witnessing and wondering experiences about restrictions on women's bodily experiences through using light? How can I create a space for a lived subjective encounter where intentionality can be directed towards the structures of the social constraints on women's bodily experiences? In other words, how can witnessing and wondering, as artistic methods, function as phenomenological spatial tactics?

لا ادعي أنني قد وجدت إجابات على هذه الأسئلة

Furthermore, if I am asserting that I am engaging with my own bodily experience in a certain space phenomenologically, I am aware that, in this case, my consciousness is already directed towards the constructions of social constraints over my body due to my interest in this research topic. But still, how have I arrived at witnessing and wondering about structured social complexities that shape my subjective bodily experiences within social constraints?³⁶

ولكنني قد بدأت فعلا في تأملها. In this section, I explore how witnessing and wondering, in

artistic practise, can function as a phenomenological spatial tactic used to create a lived subjective experience for publics. I argue that the ability to witness or wonder about ordinary life activities requires stimulation, and I think employing disruptive gestures can stimulate these abilities. Such gestures activate the abilities of wondering and witnessing as phenomenological spatial tactics when employed to guide attention towards the construction of subjective encounters in a lived experience.

ممارساتي اليومية. eau, According to Michel De Cert جعلني أدرك ظهور حاجة راديكالية للرفض في أبط

tactics are temporal deceptive actions designed as means of intervening and existing within an established system by utilizing the system's challenging power structures

³⁶ I will reflect further on this in the Reflection section of the essay, as well as in the Arabic text.

They are own elements. لم يكن مفهوم الراديكالية بالنسبة لي أكثر من مفهوم سياسي مجرد characterized by their unpredictability and their reliance on seizing advantage of available opportunities.³⁷ Hegemonic systems shape ولكن تجربتي مع محاولات احتضان الفضاء كممارسة سياسية ومنهجية معرفية جعلني أفهم الراديكالية بصورة متجسدة the spatial experiences one can have within spaces. These dominant structures create boundaries that map the space in accordance with its regulations. This causes emphasis to be placed on adherence to these boundaries. Emphasizing these boundaries further فأنا الآن أشعرها و أعني كيف تقودني وتجعل حضوري مختلفاً في الفضاءات المختلفة. familiarizes them, making them more invisible and difficult to question, rather than contemplating their implications for our daily lives and spatial experiences. To challenge these

hegemonic systems, one can employ spatial tactics. Approaching the world with curiosity and complicating historical truth can form an invisible trajectory to challenge dominant structures. This trajectory allows temporal movements in space for living subjective experiences, making the boundaries of dominant systems visible when directing consciousness towards their

أن أصمت عندما أحتاج الحديث

construction. However, I believe that disruptive gestures, such as singling out, shifting, and contradictions, can lead one to such trajectories and enable the. أو أرفض تشيئي. acknowledgment of phenomena. In the three following artistic examples, I explain this on a practical level. أو تشييء من هم مثالي أو أن يزوب لوني البني بالياض

³⁷ Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 34-39.

Swept Over the Rug, 2023

إن هذه الرأىكالية

My artistic experiment Swept Over the Rug, 2023, is an interactive projection that detects

هي تعويذة body motion and reflects

it with a light response which is meant to enhance perceptual sensitivity to bodily movement in space³⁸. The work invites the public to reflect on the dialogue between their body's motion

جعلتني قادرة على رؤية التشيء الناتج عن ما تقوله experience within the interior environment of

أنظمة القمع هذه،

the space. Evolving as a response to my artistic exploration, the project is specifically aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of bodily movement within physical space through light.

والشيء الناتج عن ما لا تقوله أيضاً This exploration seeks to enhance the

The overarching goal is to challenge imposed contextual specificity of the broader inquiry.³⁹ social limitations on bodily movement imposed by physical structures.

In this experiment, I used singling out as a disruptive gesture to stimulate the ability to

فعلى سبيل المثال، في هذه الفضاءات البيضاء wonder about and witness the social constraints

الرأسمالية، يتوجب على العمل دون توقف

³⁸ Follow this link for more visuals to the work <https://raghadresres.com/swept-over-the-rug->

³⁹ The context of marginalised and refugee areas.

on bodily movements in a space. Singling out is a concept defined by Sara Ahmed as the act of relegating things to the background in order to direct attention towards something; bringing that thing to the foreground.⁴⁰

ودون مراعاة احتياجاتي الجسدية والنفسية لأسباب عدة،

In Swept Over the Rug, I tried to single out body motion through using light⁴¹. The projection relegated physical body features, colour, gender, and the fixed objects of the space into the background, bringing movement to the foreground. The projection revealed the focus on motion in order to sustain a conscious direction that retains attention on how body movement, demonstrated through light, is oriented in space in relation to the interior design of the space.

Having showcased this work in various spaces,

I observed that upon entering, people don't immediately recognize **الدراسة لظروف اقتصادية**

that the light projection depicts their bodies until they notice their movements. This

unexpected confrontation, **او نفسية بسبب عدم هوزتي على إقامة أوروبية تضمن إمكانية متابعة**

where light responds to movements, prompts contemplation and **تعليمي في أي وقت أثناء**

questioning about the experience and the social boundaries within the interior architecture of the space. Such confrontations can evoke inquiries about comfort,

control, and the decision-making processes influencing spatial interactions.

Additionally, this temporal act of relegation creates a moment of interaction and a closer

dialogue between the body, **على النقيض تماما من الخيارات المتوفرة لزملائي أصحاب الجنسيات** ،

the space, and its boundaries. It testifies to **الأوروبية أو الحاصلين على الإقامة الأوروبية الدائمة**

how we perceive our body's motion through light, navigating within the invisible limitations

⁴⁰ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 31.

⁴¹I have built this interactive projection by using a coding programme that is specifically designed to detect motion in an abstract form and transform it into only a light response.

of the space. By bringing movement to the forefront through light, it can transform daily interactions within the space, disrupting the familiar and altering the system of possible actions. The emphasis shifts *الذين إذا شعروا بالارهاق من التعليم* to how we move in the space, whether we feel comfortable or controlled. In both situations, we will be witnessing and wondering about the experience.

Utilizing *يمكنهم تأجيل فضولهم الدراسية إلى حين يصبحون قادرين على المتابعة*

singling out as a disruptive gesture can provide an opportunity to witness and wonder about the construction of limitations on the body's embodied experience with motion, consciously through the use of light. In this case, witnessing and wondering can be described as phenomenological spatial tactics, as they render visible the constraints on motion imposed by social limitations in a particular interior space.



Figure 2: Photograph of "Swept Over the Rug," 2023, at Gallery Rotor. "GIBCA Extended"

Al-Madafeh / Living Room, 2016

Another example illustrating the use of disruptive gestures to create experiences of witnessing and wondering is the artwork by Palestinian artist and architect Sandi Hilal, titled Al-Madafeh / Living Room, 2016.

في مثل هذه الاظرفة أجد نفسي مجبرة على تشيبي و زاتي .

Sandi Hilal employs the practice of hospitality in her work Al Madafeh—an Arabic term that signifies the living room. This project challenges traditional roles and dynamics of host and

في حوار جرى بيني وبين صديقي الفنان واللاجئ و

السوري الكويري الكمي الحمد - والذي يصاحبني الرحلة ذاتها نسبياً -

become hosts themselves in diverse places, including homes and art institutions, forming an

alternative common space within these

environments.⁴² For instance, in the Yellow House in Boden, a Swedish town that has

undergone a significant transformation from a restricted military zone to a major destination

for refugees⁴³, the Al-Madafeh

project transforms one of the house's apartments into an alternative space. This space operates

through a distinct hosting process determined by the hosts themselves— mainly the refugees

in this case. وأن حاجتي الماحة لممارسته هي رد فعل على رفضي لأن يتم تشيبي.

I consider that this temporal shifting of roles manifests as a disruptive gesture that Sandi Hilal

uses to stimulate the

⁴² Pelin Tan, "Unconditional Hospitality: Art and Commons under Planetary Migration," *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* 14, no. 1 (2022): 1-13.

⁴³ "Al Madhafah," *Public Art Agency Sweden*, accessed 21 January 2024, <https://publicartagencySweden.com/konst/al-madhafah/>.

ability to witness and wonder about everyday power dynamics and the socio-political implications of hosting in different spaces, especially in the dynamics of the relationship between refugees and host countries. The **المجتمع السويدي الأبيض** living room offers an opportunity for members of the local community, including refugees

and rejected asylum seekers, to be hosts in places where they are guests. **مخشي الرفض جعلته**

الرائيالي

This shift in roles opens a trajectory to live the opposite experience for both the host and the guest, shifting the power dynamics between them. This provides a temporal opportunity for addressability and response-ability in unfamiliar ways, especially for the guest who became

فيجبر نفسه مجبراً على تشييء نفسه ليتمكن من الاندماج، the host. Subsequently,

foregrounding the embodied subjectivity necessary for revealing factors contributes to the construction of power dynamics of social-political relations between the host and the guest.

Guiding attention towards the subjective encounters of refugees within the altered spatial experiences, thus functioning as phenomenological spatial tactics. **مجتمع قادر على في ظل غياب**

إعطائه المساحة الكافية لأن يكون مقبولاً و قادراً على الرفض



Figure 3: Photograph of Workshop on "Al Madhafah/The Living Room" in Prästholmen, Boden. "Public Art Agency Sweden"

Homebound, 2000

ذلك الحوار.

The installation, Homebound, intricately connects chairs, bedframes, utensils, and tables to an active electrical current, creating a precarious environment where individuals who dare to sit, lie down, or dine risk potential electric shocks.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Jessica Fuentes, "Experiencing Objects, Space, and Memory with Mona Hatoum," *Glasstire*, accessed 14 December 2023, <https://glasstire.com/2023/09/23/experiencing-objects-space-and-memory-with-mona-hatoum/>.

In her work, Mona Hatoum challenges societal constructs surrounding safety by juxtaposing

جعلني أستعرض لوظائف عدة يتساءل فيها صد يقني وشريك الفنانه صمونه جبر

elements traditionally associated with security and threat. The title "Homebound" paradoxically connects home, typically associated with safety, with threatening electricity that

عن فكرة الإندماج، can be seen, heard, and

felt in a home setup, creating an unfamiliar sensory experience. This embodied contradiction can enable a first-hand experience of estrangement, directing public consciousness towards wondering about given social notions about home and safety. Witnessing and wondering, in this instance, function as phenomenological spatial tactics; by deliberately exposing

واصفاً إياها بالفكرة الإستعمارية، contradictions, Hatoum

disrupts conventional perceptions of domestic spaces, encouraging the public to witness and

التي سيطر من الأخر طمس صوته وأفقاره وقيمه wonder about given-for-granted notions and

وعاداته الأصيلة في سبيل أن يقبله المجتمع الأخر المختلف.

perhaps feelings of being safe at home. Contradiction as a disruptive gesture in this work opens a trajectory for reconsideration of the historical relationship between safety and home.



Figure 4: Photograph of "Homebound," 2000, "Artforum"

Disruptive gestures can serve as a means to facilitate witnessing and wondering abilities; nevertheless, engaging in such gestures is not a neutral action, as it establishes a power dynamic wherein the artist holds sway, guiding the public's attention toward specific objectives. قد يفيد،

Conversely, phenomenological experience should resist becoming a rigid formula with a foreseeable outcome; its essence is lost if treated as a teleological process. Phenomenological interactions allow for unexpected encounters; ولكنها تشكل مصدر خام أصيل للمعرفة البنية على التجربة الذاتية والتي يمكن استخدامها للخوض في بحث معمق.

artists cannot control how the publics embodies their experiences or practice witnessing and wondering in a predetermined manner.

Reflection

In this section, I am revisiting the question of how I arrived at witnessing and wondering about the structured social complexities that shape my subjective bodily experiences within social constraints.

Exploring this question in this section serves a purpose. Delving into the theoretical resources used in the dialectical discussion of this essay was a reflectively lived experience for my own everyday personal encounters, forming the possibility of attending to the space of my artistic research differently as an artist. This helped me arrive at disorientation as a disruptive gesture.

In their book *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed introduces the notion of orientation as the means by which individuals inhabit and comprehend a familiar space to find their way.⁴⁵

They discuss this concept along with the idea of getting lost, which is "a way of inhabiting space by registering what is unfamiliar."⁴⁶ For Sara Ahmed, orientation is about making the strange familiar. For me, disorientation is an embodied state of getting lost; it is about experiencing the unfamiliar.

Disorientation as a disruptive gesture can arise from life-changing events such as migration. Sara Ahmed proposes that migration might be recognized as a disorienting process, involving unexpected impressions that develop throughout the transition from one space to another.⁴⁷ It puts individuals in a situation where they explore how their bodies get oriented in a space.⁴⁸

My experience of migration opened unfamiliar trajectories to understand how my body engages with social spaces different from the ones I am used to, and I don't have certain social codes for orienting myself within these unfamiliar spaces. When I migrated for the first time in my life, I experienced disorientation, and my social codes were disrupted, redirecting my consciousness to the familiar social codes and guidelines that offer ready-made templates

⁴⁵ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 3.

⁴⁶ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 7.

⁴⁷ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 9.

⁴⁸ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 10.

to navigate and find the correct way and direction in a space. For example, based on my personal experiences of social conduct in public spaces in East Amman, it is considered inappropriate for women to randomly dance on the streets.

Upon my relocation to Sweden, I was unfamiliar with the prevailing social norms governing predominantly white public areas. Consequently, I found myself spontaneously dancing in these spaces and assuming random open postures. However, I ceased this behavior upon experiencing a sense of insecurity, becoming aware of potential judgment from the public. This disorienting experience directed my attention to witness and wonder about the changes in my bodily movements between different spaces and social systems.

In this case, life circumstances enacted disorientation as a disruptive gesture through the experience of migrating, enabling me to arrive at witnessing and wondering about the structured social structures that shape my subjective bodily experiences within social constraints.

In another case, I believe emotions can be enacted as disruptive gestures that enable artists to witness and wonder about systems of oppression and challenge them. For example, my feelings of anger emerged as a response to the objectification I faced by the University of Gothenburg.⁴⁹ Anger became a disruptive gesture that I am activating as an act of reclaiming my subjectivity.

Reading the text written by Palestinian researcher Rana Barakat, which explores the distinctions between generative and extractive knowledge, and influenced by the philosopher and intersectional feminist Audre Lorde, I was able to reflect on my understanding of anger and its role as a political methodology in knowledge production.⁵⁰ This has influenced not

⁴⁹ In response to the University of Gothenburg's silence towards the latest Israeli occupation genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza, began on October the 7th. As a student of Palestinian descent I reached out to the art school faculty administration and the Student's Union, demanding my right to freedom of speech and urging the school to take a stance. The majority of the responses I received from the aforementioned parties, included attempts to suppress my voice, often containing racist content, and frequently ignored my messages and questions.

⁵⁰ Rana Barakat, "Reading Audre Lorde in Palestine: Exploring Differences between Generative and Extractive," *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research* 9, no. 1 (January 18, 2023): 25-31, last accessed November 18, 2023, <https://kohljournal.press/reading-audre-lorde-palestine>.

only how I am engaging with the university space but also how I am approaching this essay as the author, an artist, and as a woman of color producing knowledge in a predominantly white institution.

Revisiting this essay space through anger enabled a closer subjective engagement with my argument, prompting a reassessment of how I characterize witnessing and wondering practices as spatial tactics. For Michel De Certeau, "a tactic is an art of the weak,"⁵¹ considering this phrase through an embodied anger of a woman of colour makes me refuse to frame methodologies of resistance as the art of the weak. I realized that this framing risks perpetuating the same power structures I am attempting to challenge. Using the same system elements, relying on available opportunities, and attempting to make actions invisible as a way to move in space are all manifestations of spatial tactics that confirm the dichotomies of oppressor and oppressed, subject and object, or the other.⁵² These dichotomies, as discussed by Kelly Oliver, trap the oppressed in a need for recognition by the oppressor, achievable only when the othered use something familiar to those in power.⁵³ Framing witnessing and wondering as spatial tactics contradicts the statement of the philosopher and intersectional feminist Audre Lorde, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."⁵⁴ Even if spatial tactics are forms of resistance, they might still be considered tools for emphasising the master's house.

Although anger as a disruptive gesture created a tension that needs further research. Yet, it produced this sewing methodology of the Arabic and English texts, as an act for challenging the dominant academic and theoretical forms of knowledge. Where the Arabic fabric, which adopts a subjective approach to knowledge production⁵⁵, functions as an extension of my

⁵¹ I will criticise this specific sentence and de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 34-39.

⁵² Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 2001, 3.

⁵³ Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 9.

⁵⁴ Nour Shantout, "مذكرات الاغتراب والغضب", *Aljumhuriya*, 9 November 2023.

<https://aljumhuriya.net/ar/2023/03/22/%D9%85%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%BA%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B6%D8%A8>.

⁵⁵ The Arabic text conveys my reflections on anger as a political methodology for knowledge production through my lived encounters and how it produced refusal as a political spell that awakened a radical presence of an Arab woman in an oppressive white space.

body; it is a fragment of myself spreading over the space, reclaiming my subjectivity, embodying my anger and exploring it as a disruptive gesture. This fabric is meant to not only create a witnessing and wondering experience for both the institution and the readers but also challenges academic theoretical knowledge by enacting a form of knowledge rooted in lived experience. It transforms the essay space by activating it differently; the English text will be influenced by the spatial reconfiguration generated by the Arabic text, which change the organisation of the essay space due to variations in punctuation and alignments for each text—Arabic writing and reading proceed from right to left, while English follows a left-to-right direction.

Conclusion

In this experimental space, I have investigated how witnessing and wondering, as artistic methods, can operate as phenomenological spatial tactics when artists enact disruption gestures like singling out, shifting roles, and contradictions to create a lived experience that directs attention towards wondering and witnessing the construction of dominant systems that oppress subjectivity. I've also reflected on how disorientation and anger, as disruptive gestures triggered by life circumstances and bodily emotions, can assist artists in witnessing and wondering about the structures that shape their subjective bodily experiences.

In writing this essay, I have engaged with the tension of framing witnessing and wondering as tactics. This framing may provide a means of challenging existing oppressive systems but also carries the risk of emphasising the master's house. This tension can be seen as a result of witnessing experiences that were raised through my subjective engagement with this research. This engagement has also prompted profound questions for future exploration, delving into the constraints of spatial tactics and their appropriateness as an artistic approach for crafting experiential artworks. It also raises inquiries into the nuanced ways spatial tactics can influence subjectivity across diverse situations, contexts, and circumstances. The experience has deepened my comprehension of employing disruptive gestures in my artistic practice to orchestrate witnessing and wondering encounters at a practical level.

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