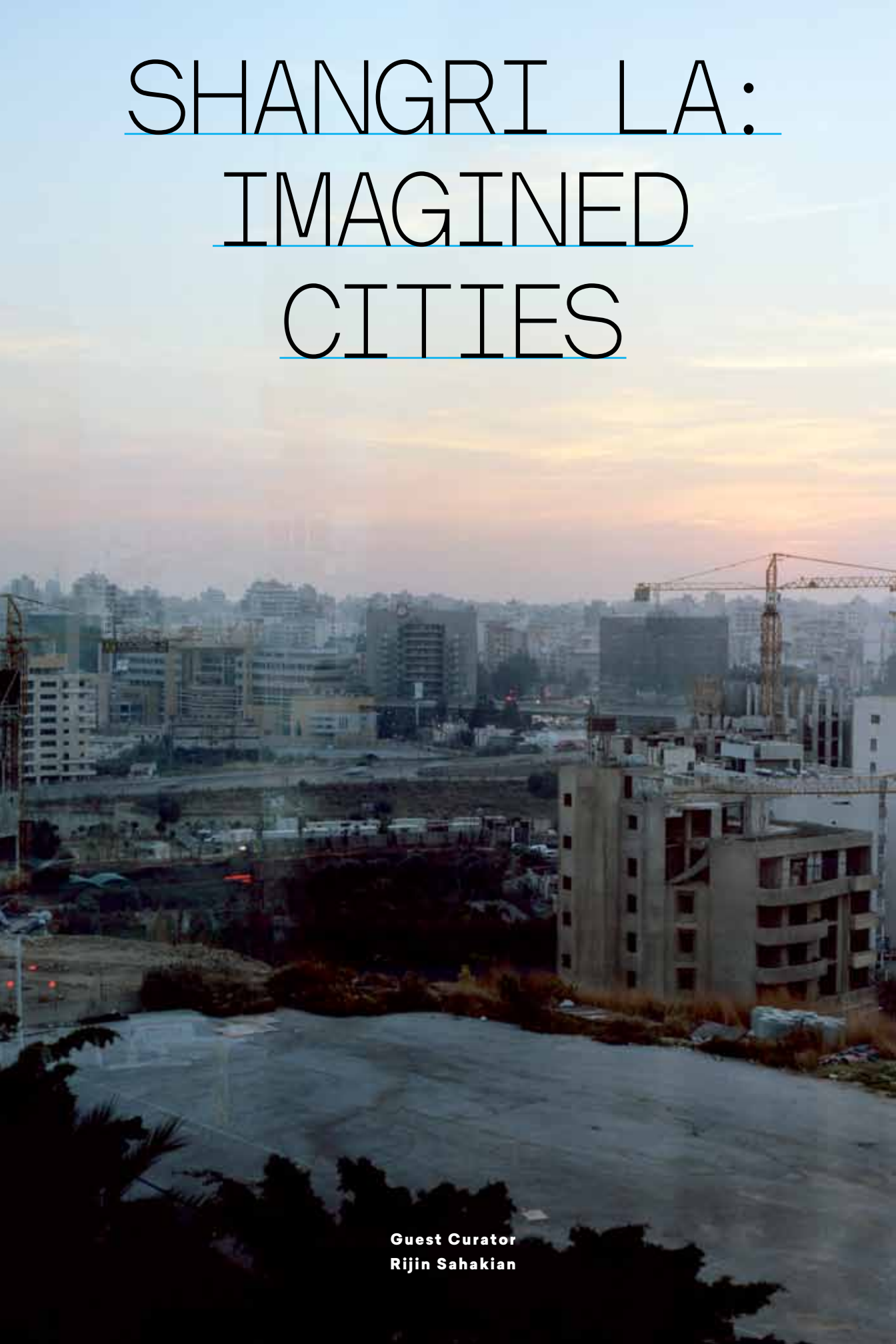
SHANGRI LA: IMAGINED CITIES



Guest Curator
Rijin Sahakian

LA
ISLAM
ARTS
INITIATIVE

Shangri La:
Imagined Cities

front cover:

George Awde
Untitled, Beirut (2013), 2014
Inkjet print, 30" × 38"
Courtesy of the artist

SHANGRI LA: IMAGINED CITIES

Guest Curator
Rijin Sahakian

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery
October 26 – December 28, 2014

LA ISLAM ARTS INITIATIVE

The Los Angeles / Islam Arts Initiative is presented by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) with major support from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Community Foundation, the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), the Barnsdall Art Park Foundation, and the Sister Cities of Los Angeles Organization.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

Anchoring this initiative are two connected exhibitions, *Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape and Islamic Art* and the DCA-commissioned contemporary art exhibition, *Shangri La: Imagined Cities* held at DCA's Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG) at Barnsdall Park.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

Los Angeles / Islam Arts Initiative

Shangri La: Imagined Cities is an anchor project of the *Los Angeles / Islam Arts Initiative* presented by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) with major support from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Community Foundation, the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), the Barnsdall Art Park Foundation, and the Sister Cities of Los Angeles Organization.

Olga Garay-English
Project Director

Amitis Motevalli
Project Manager

Shangri La: Imagined Cities

Rijin Sahakian
Guest Curator
Catalogue Editor

Mostafa Heddaya
Catalogue Co-Editor

Jessica Fleischmann / still room
Catalog Designer

City of Los Angeles
Department of Cultural Affairs
201 North Figueroa Street, Suite 1400
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213.202.5500

culturela.org

Table of Contents

Introduction

This catalogue includes several groups of texts both commissioned and reprinted to act as a reader for the works in the exhibition as well as a critical consideration of the nature of the exhibition itself.

Essays on the works of the artists provide a more comprehensive context within their larger oeuvres and/or link investigations and utilization of artistic strategies and aesthetics. These include pieces by Daniel Berndt, Mostafa Heddaya, H.G. Masters, and Jason Waite.

Reprints of critical texts include Jessica Winegar's critique of the rise in exhibitions on and about the Middle East since 9/11, as well as compellingly divergent writings by Walid Raad, Uzma Z. Rizvi, Jalal Toufic, and Krzysztof Wodiczko that question motivations and possibilities of art within the inextricable terrain of politics. Two essays written in the 1990s, Ella Shohat and Robert Stams' "The Imperial Imaginary" and the essay by artist Charles Gaines, both remain strikingly relevant and rooted in the city of Los Angeles: the former for its seminal take on the film industry, the latter for its profoundly productive discussion of suppositions of marginality.

Several commissioned artist contributions engage on a more intimate plane with the reader. Gelare Khoshgozaran taps into the conjurings of both fantasy and collapse that inevitably accompany the fleeting premises of pleasure and escape, finding new possibility within these gaps. An illustrated text from Haig Aivazian, in addition to a conversation with Los Angeles-based artist Pascual Sisto, take up the threads of a story of hunted boys and a grown superstar, weaving together a narrative in ever recurring times and territories. The transcripts and conversations of Mariam Ghani, with and by both her collaborators and subjects, explicate intersecting systems of policing, imprisoning, and ordering: dual acts of strike, of protest, of arrest, and of precarious proximities to hegemonic definitions of guilt.

A contributed section by Gulf Labor is included as part of the catalogue. Members of, and contributors to, Gulf Labor include artists participating in the *Doris Duke* and *Imagined Cities* exhibitions (Haig Aivazian, Charles Gaines, Mariam Ghani, and Walid Raad), as well as contributors Molly Crabapple, Guy Mannes-Abbott, and Andrew Ross. The work of Gulf Labor concerns itself with migrant worker rights and labor conditions in the construction of museums (the Guggenheim, Louvre, and Sheikh Zayed National Museum in collaboration with the British Museum) taking place specifically on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi—a very particularly imagined city—but linked to boycott and rights movements at a number of geographic and historic points.

—Rijin Sahakian

Foreword

Rijin Sahakian

> This is the double-edged sword of marginal discourse, producing the paradox of identity and stereotype. This, however, is a fact of the deterritorialized position. Marginality is then not an essentialist discourse, but a complex co-presence of textual spaces. Critical writing and curatorial practice must address this paradox so that we can all realize that the concerns of the minority artist concern us all.
>
> —Charles Gaines, *The Theater of Refusal: Black Art and Mainstream Criticism*, 1993

Where, in the increasingly converging planes of capital, policing, migration, and war making, can the lines of marginality be drawn? Is it at queerness, color, gender? A body that is physically emancipated yet comprehensively surveilled? Can a landscape live in the margins, its borders redefined by environmental trauma, movement of peoples across its terrain, the occupation of its histories, or the desecration of its ruins?

"A complex co-presence of textual spaces" guides the works presented. Each bring forth a particular investigation into notions of marginality, a marginality that might broaden or question if the works, concepts, or ideas generated do not, or should not, concern us all. It is not a matter of bridging a perceived distance, but of presenting works as potential textual spaces that may communicate to the viewer that this distance is itself constructed, is itself a means of deflecting concerns, whether aesthetic, political, or, inextricably, both.

The collapsing of boundaries and definitions to make room for a more critical, nuanced engagement with artworks and their surrounding discourse forms a central axis in the planning for this Los Angeles-sited exhibition, *Shangri La: Imagined Cities*, and for the catalogue that accompanies it.

This also serves to deflect an expectation of answers, representational definitions, or "authentic" stances often associated with a group show organized across a certain identity matrix—whether geographical, religious, gender-specific, or other. Instead of pretending that there is any practice, form, or artist that can do the work of answering these kinds of queries, this exhibition seeks to do away with this line of interrogation altogether. Rather than obfuscating the works by participating in a performance premised on false notions of fixed identities (whether coming from the Islamic World, Middle East, Southwest Asia, or however one might delineate a part of the world or people that lies perhaps most accurately in the imagination), it focuses on the multi-variant premises of the works themselves. There is no indexical checklist of regions, genders, or religious beliefs of the artists—no set of problems that the works might together bear the burden of solving or opening a window to.

The placement of this exhibition alongside *Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape and Islamic Art*, provides a unique opportunity to invoke a dialectical conversation within the works of the exhibitions and the contexts of their acquisition. Doris Duke's collection was built during her travels in the early part of the 20th century, at a time when voyaging through many of the countries she collected from—i.e., Syria, Iraq—was possible. Today, some of the most critical sites where this collection was drawn from are marked not simply by intense destruction and loss of life, but also by far-reaching migration and cultural eradication. Very few have the possibility of traveling in these areas; for many, it is impossible.

This historic eradication may only be met, in terms of size and extremity, by the rapid acceleration of war-making in these aforementioned areas (in partnership with the United States and its allies), along with cultural engineering within and without their borders (predominantly by the Arab Gulf states). A region not to be ignored in any discussion of acquisition and display, the monetary and institution-building capacity of the Arab Gulf has rapidly shifted the landscape of the international art eco-system - a system that is global in nature, follows the circulation of capital, and cannot be isolated. These co-escalating shifts necessitate broader critical discourse relating to labor rights, the political-cultural uses (and potential ramifications) of art production and acquisition, and what relationships these phenomena have to the branding of new and long-standing museums and contemporary art initiatives, wherever they may be located.

Eradicated distance does not simply speak to locale, however. George Awde's portraits compress the physical moments between romantic love and friendship, burgeoning masculinities and unfixed hard and soft labor marked by shared experiences of cyclically unmoored existence. Mariam Ghani's bodies are bound in transcriptions, in archives and translations of what it means to be an informant, collaborator, "native," or suspect, particularly in the floating legal islands of the international U.S. military and government prison systems in the era of Homeland Security and the War on Terror.

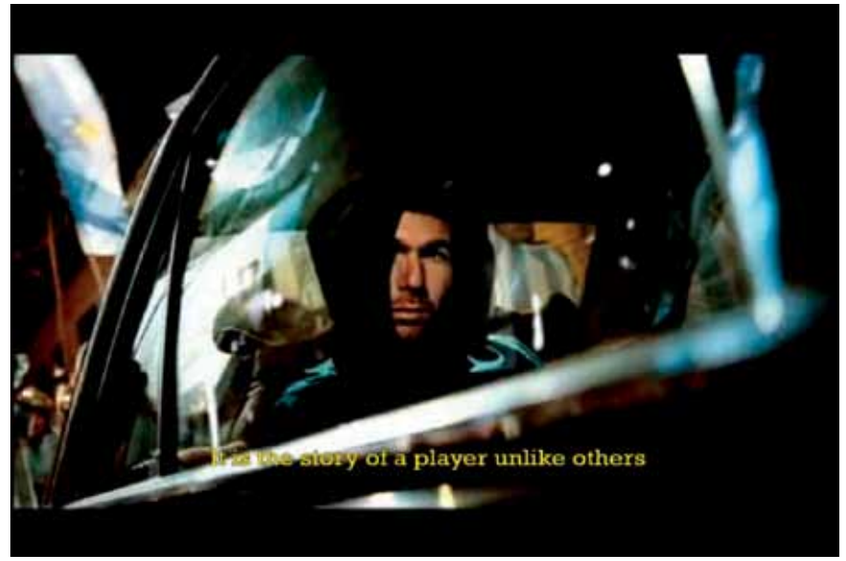
The potential erasure of bodies, or of the trauma of their loss, is embodied in Jananne Al-Ani's aerial views. Al-Ani's images belie the possibility of a benign landscape unmarked by intervention; her stills compose sites of remain both inextricably current and fundamentally antiquated. Both Taysir Batniji and Gelare Khoshgozaran evoke remains of a different kind – of home, family, and transitory memory, Batniji with quiet, poignant delicacy, Khoshgozaran with humor and a wry, seeking wisdom—mining the spaces between the indelible etchings of the past and the blankness of un-inscribed futures and inevitable forgetting.

Video works from Adrian Paci and Haig Aivazian speak to the transmission of fables while insisting on the explicit experience of the individual. Paci explores this through a simultaneous act of art making and invocation of art history, never losing sight of the labor involved, while Aivazian's work draws together seemingly disparate moments of protest, policing, and myth-making using the magnifying framework of sport. Both videos establish the twinning of sculpture as an identity—for visual construction and permanence, physical altercation, and public spectacle.

Charles Gaines grounds the exhibition in his presentation of formative political and social texts as civil-rights era musical scores, literally noting the ever-repeating necessity of resistance. In returning to Gaines' argument that "the concerns of the minority artist concern us all," consider that these works, developed in disparate locations, come together in Los Angeles. An always-evolving, hyper-American Shangri-La, L.A.'s film and entertainment industries —its biggest export—have created altitudes of visibility and marginality that establish its dominance in the making of imaginary cities and identities. But it is within the imaginaries of each of the artist-articulated works laid forth here, that we may find the very real linkages that concern us all.

Exhibition Artists and
Images from the Exhibition

Haig Aivazian
Jananne Al-Ani
George Awde
Taysir Batniji
Charles Gaines
Chitra Ganesh and Mariam Ghani
Mariam Ghani
Gelare Khoshgozaran
Adrian Paci



Haig Aivazian
How Great You Are O Son of the Desert!, 2009-ongoing
Video stills
Video. Color, stereo sound, 60:00
Courtesy of the artist

Jananne Al-Ani
Aerial I, 2011
Production still from the film *Shadow Sites II*
Archival chromogenic C-Type Print, 69" × 87"
Photography by Adrian Warren. Courtesy of the artist

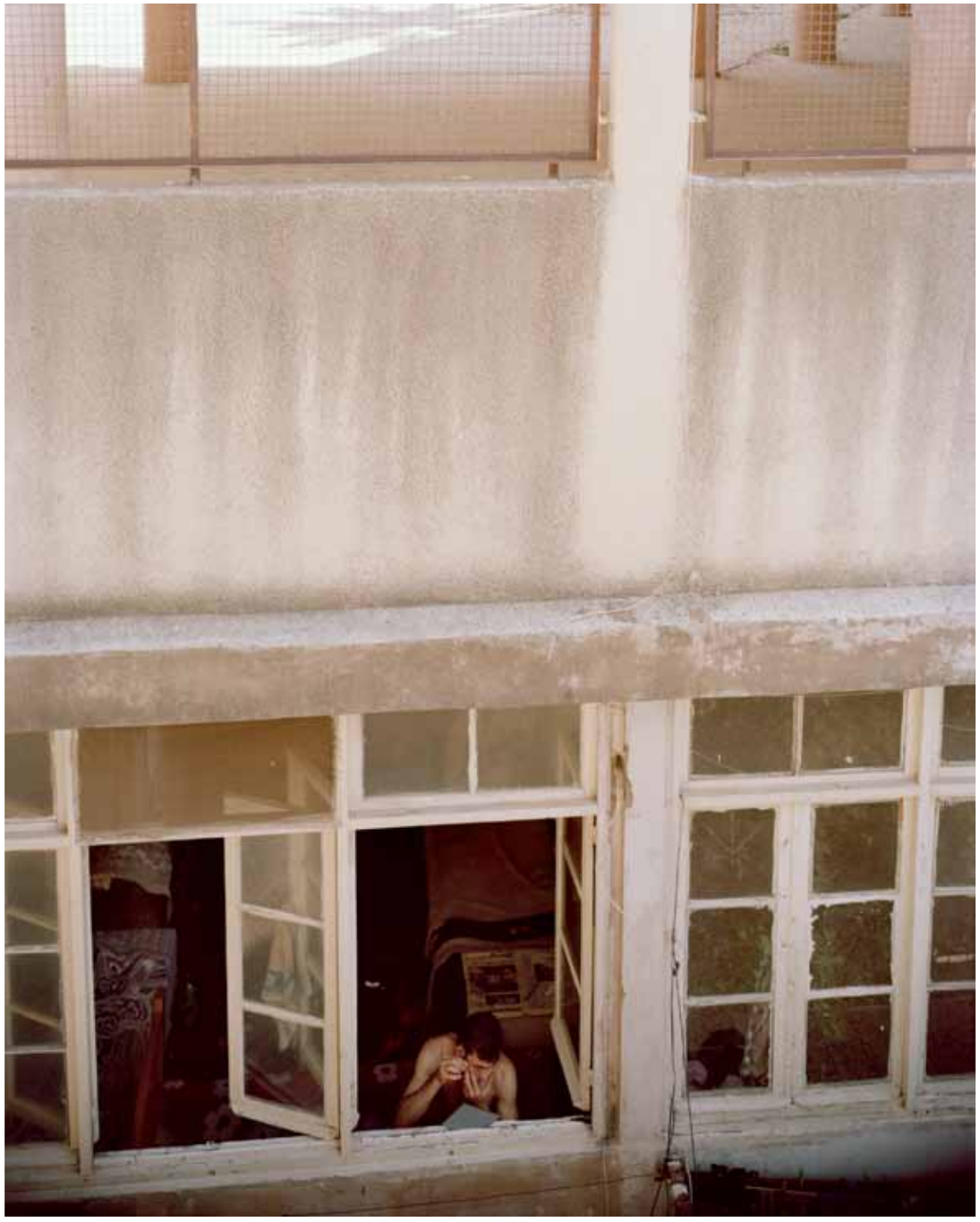
Jananne Al-Ani
Aerial IV, 2011
Production still from the film *Shadow Sites II*
Archival pigment print, 18" × 22"
Photography by Adrian Warren. Courtesy of the artist

Jananne Al-Ani
Aerial III, 2011
Production still from the film *Shadow Sites II*
Archival pigment print, 18" × 22"
Photography by Adrian Warren. Courtesy of the artist

Jananne Al-Ani
Aerial VI, 2011
Production still from the film *Shadow Sites II*
Archival pigment print, 18" × 22"
Photography by Adrian Warren. Courtesy of the artist

George Awde
Untitled, Beirut (2013), 2014
Inkjet print, 30" × 38"
Courtesy of the artist

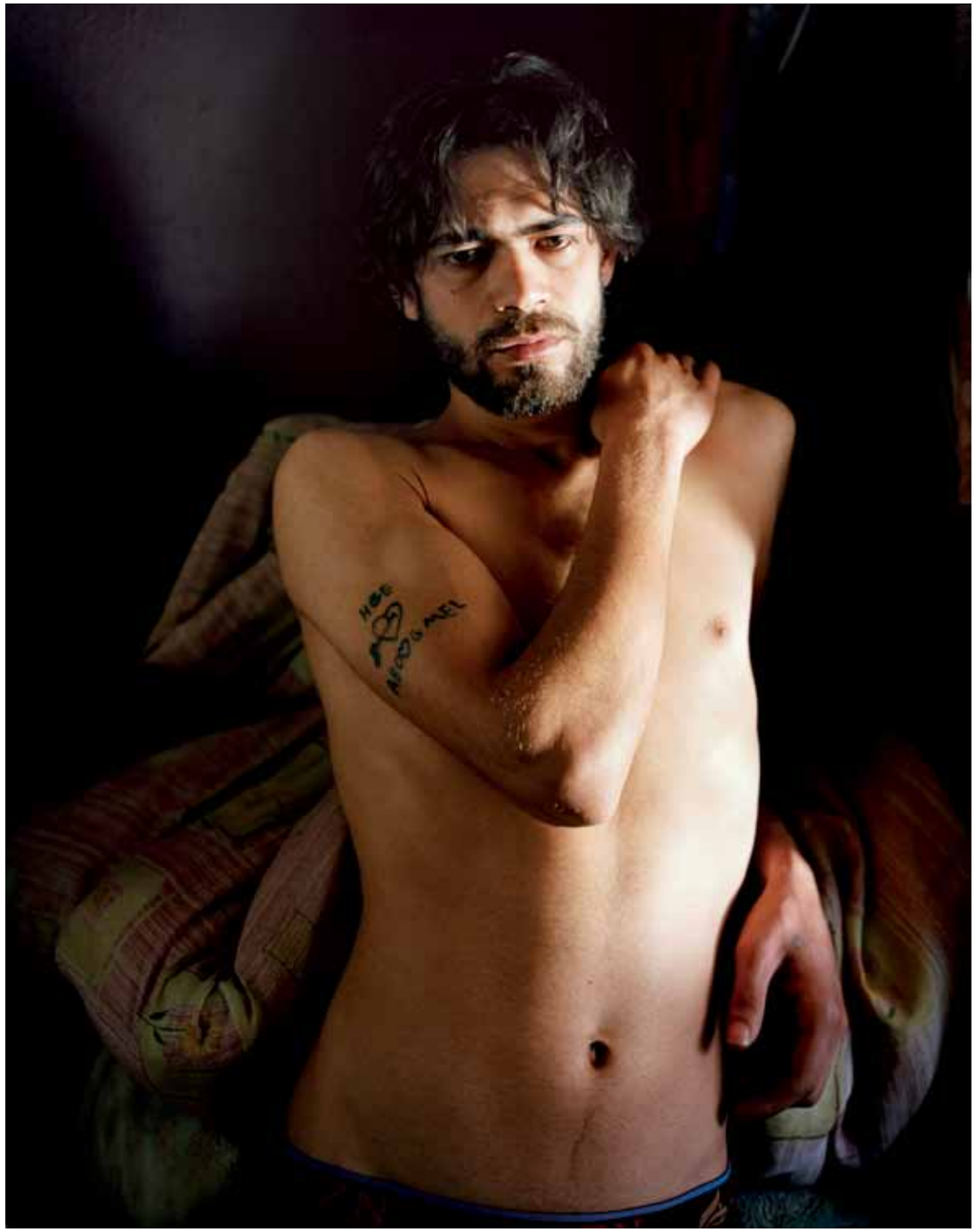
George Awde
Untitled, Beirut (2014), 2014
Inkjet print, 30" × 38"
Courtesy of the artist



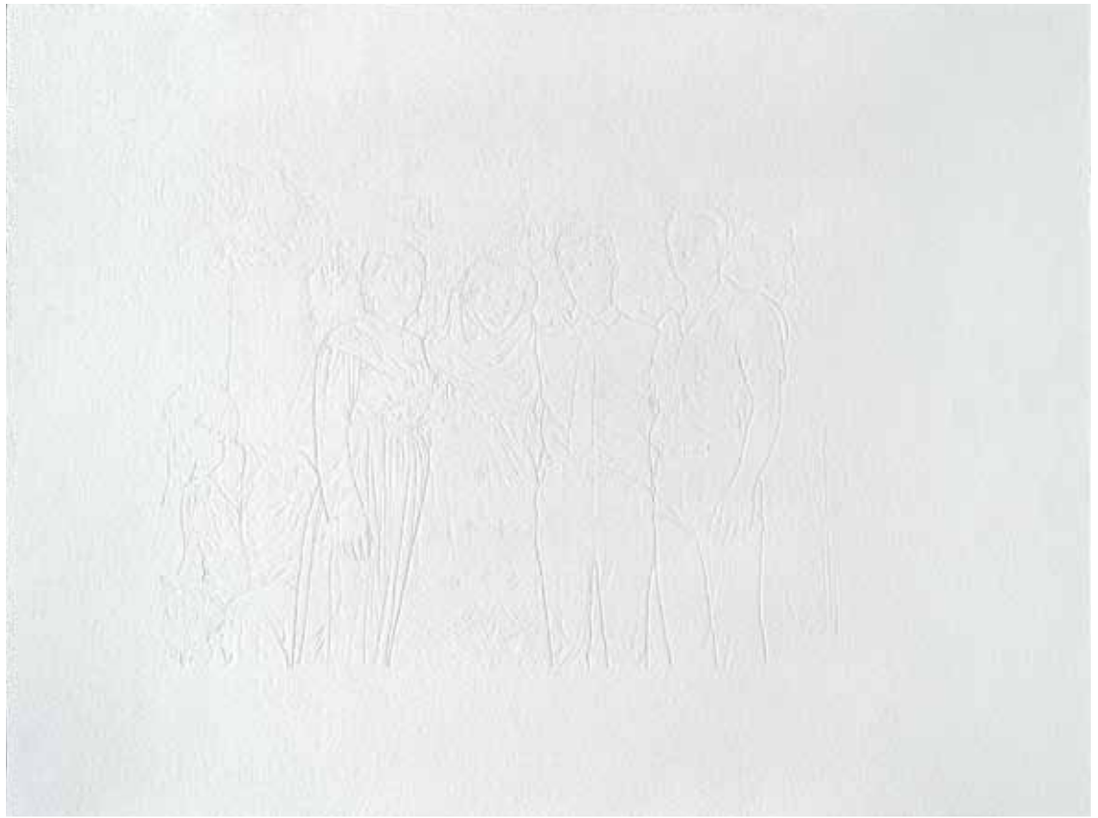
George Awde
Untitled, Beirut (2012), 2014
Inkjet print, 38" × 30"
Courtesy of the artist

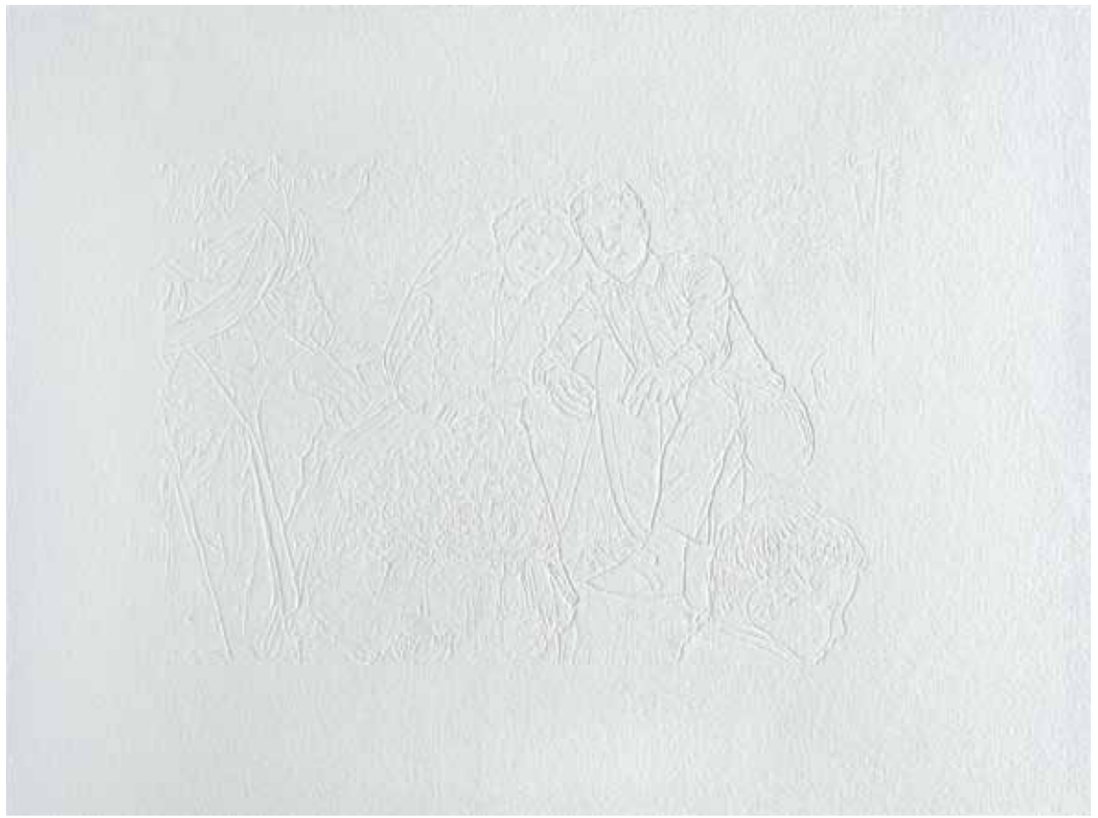
George Awde
Untitled, Beirut (2013), 2013
Inkjet print, 30" × 38"
Courtesy of the artist

George Awde
Untitled, Beirut (2010), 2014
Inkjet print, 30" × 38"
Courtesy of the artist

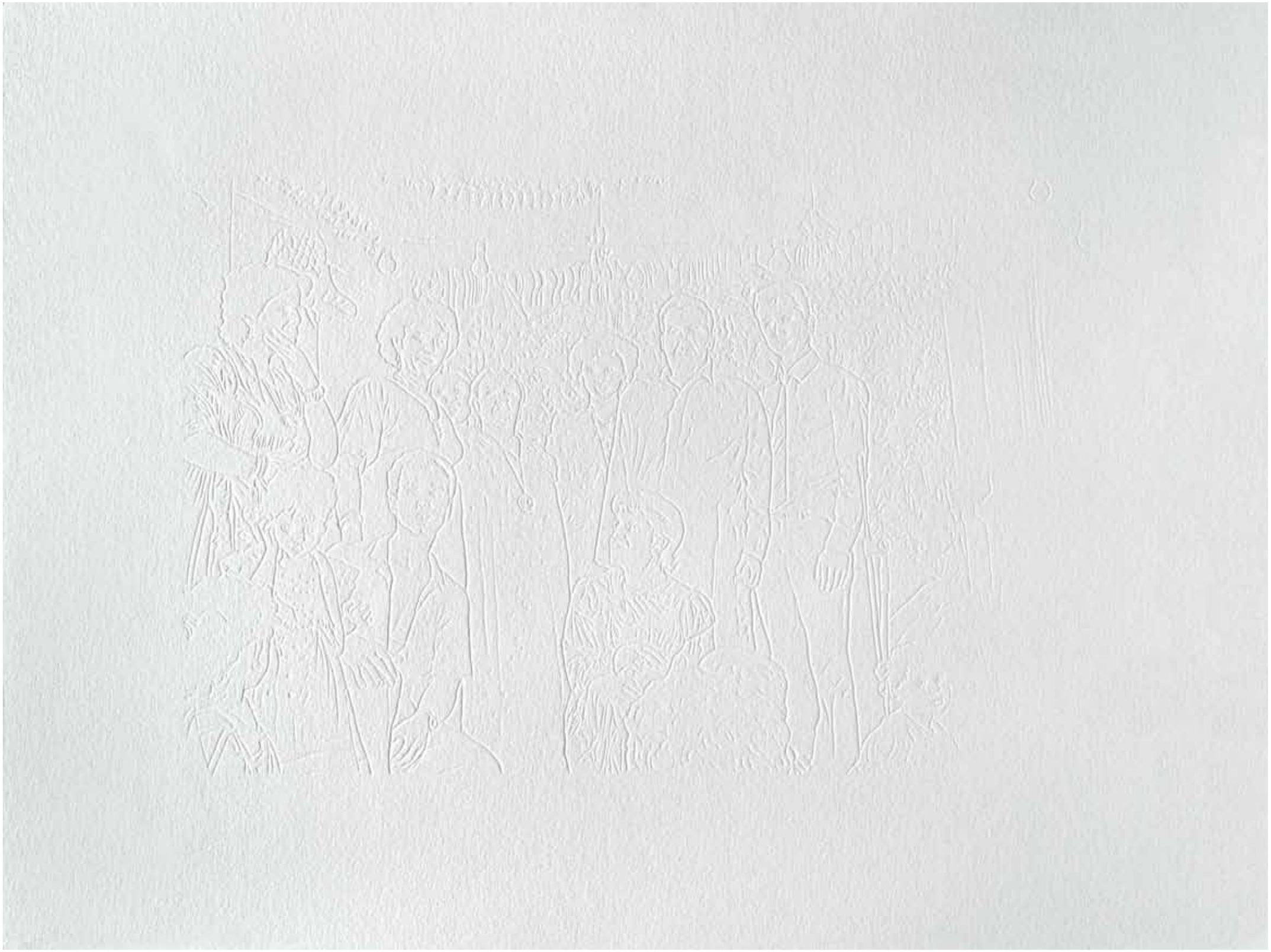


George Awde
Untitled, Beirut (2012), 2014
Inkjet print, 38" × 30"
Courtesy of the artist

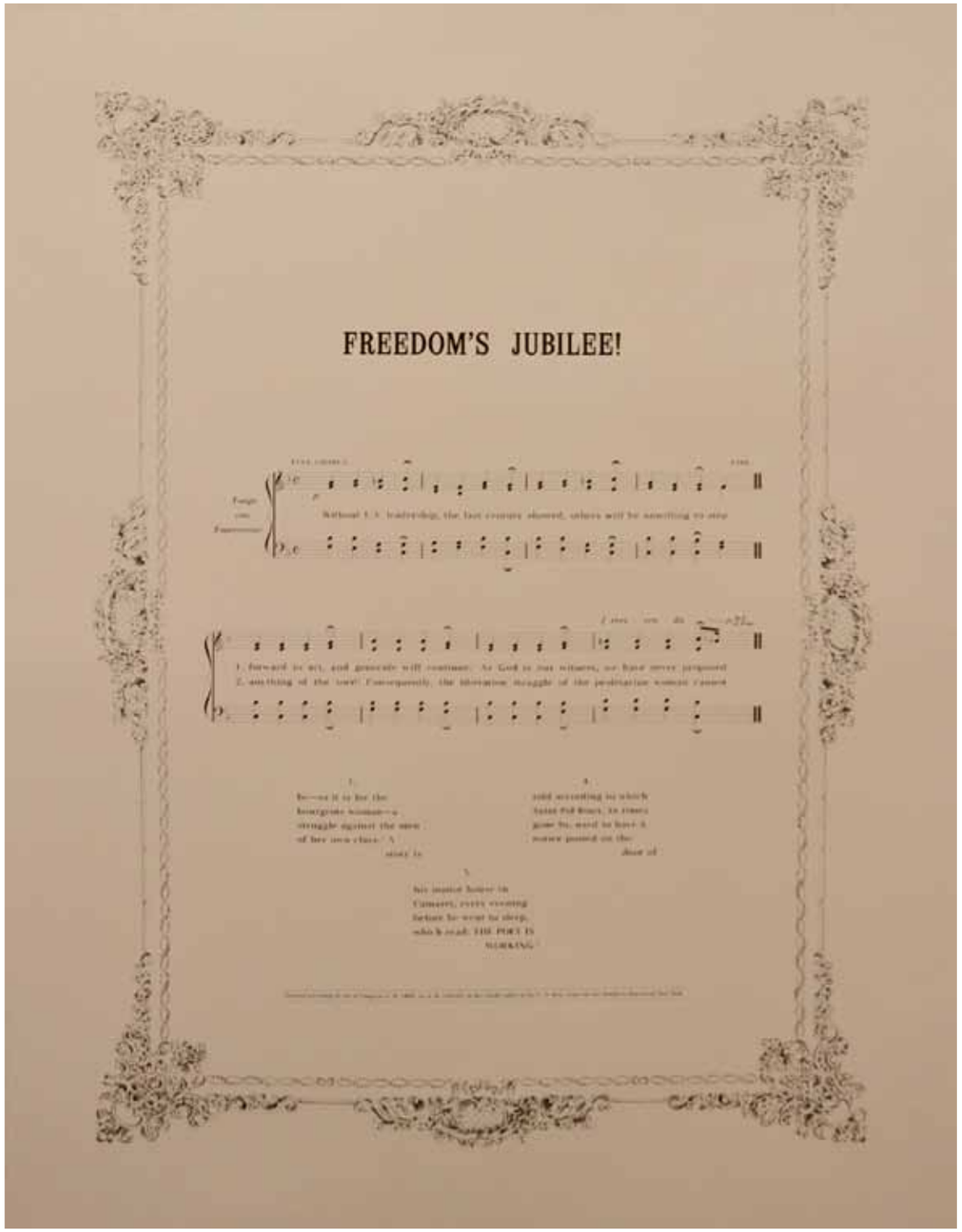




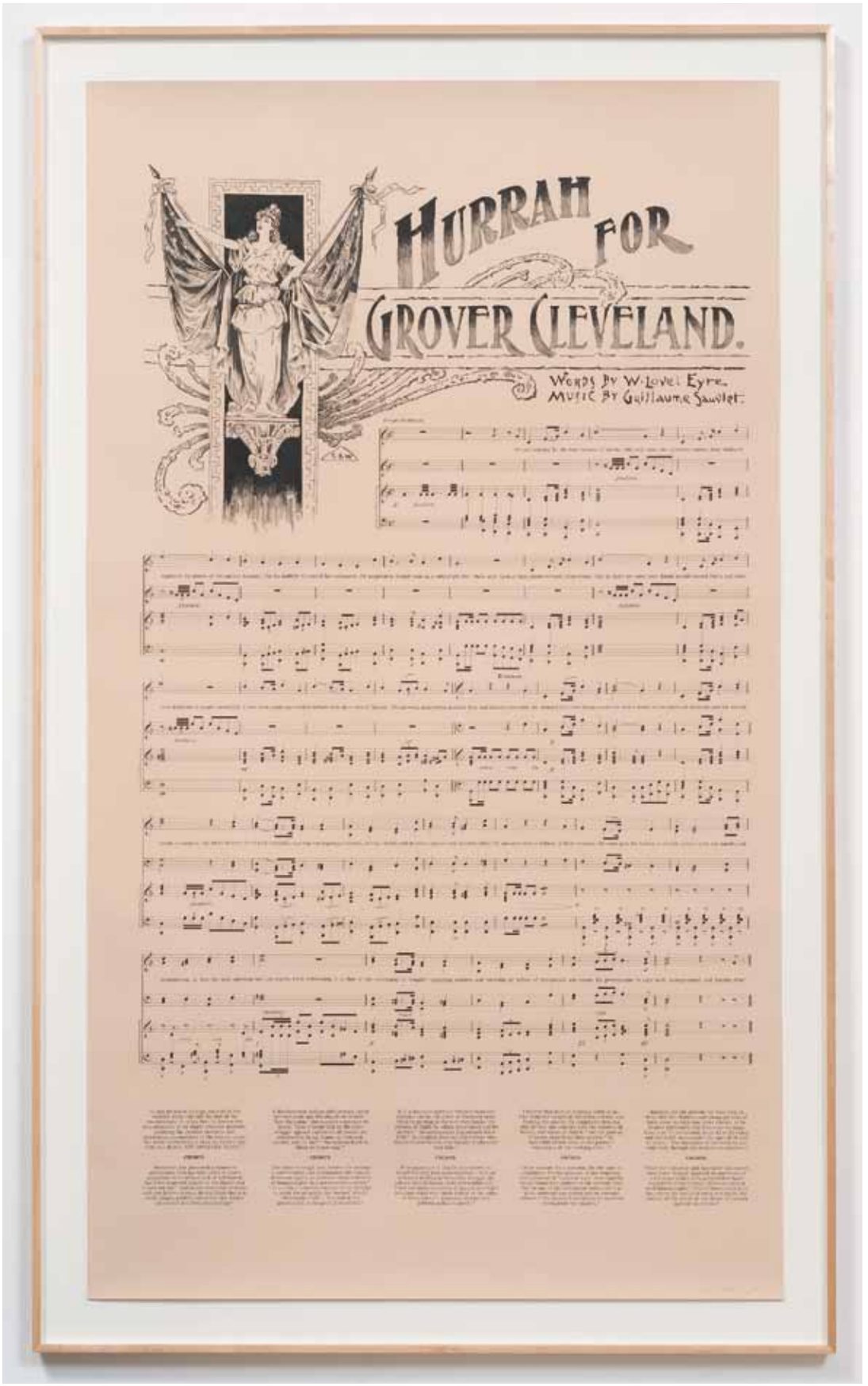
Taysir Batniji
Selection from *To My Brother*, 2012
Hand carvings from photographs on paper, 17" × 13"
Courtesy of the Abraaj Group Art Prize. © Jean-Louis Losi, Paris



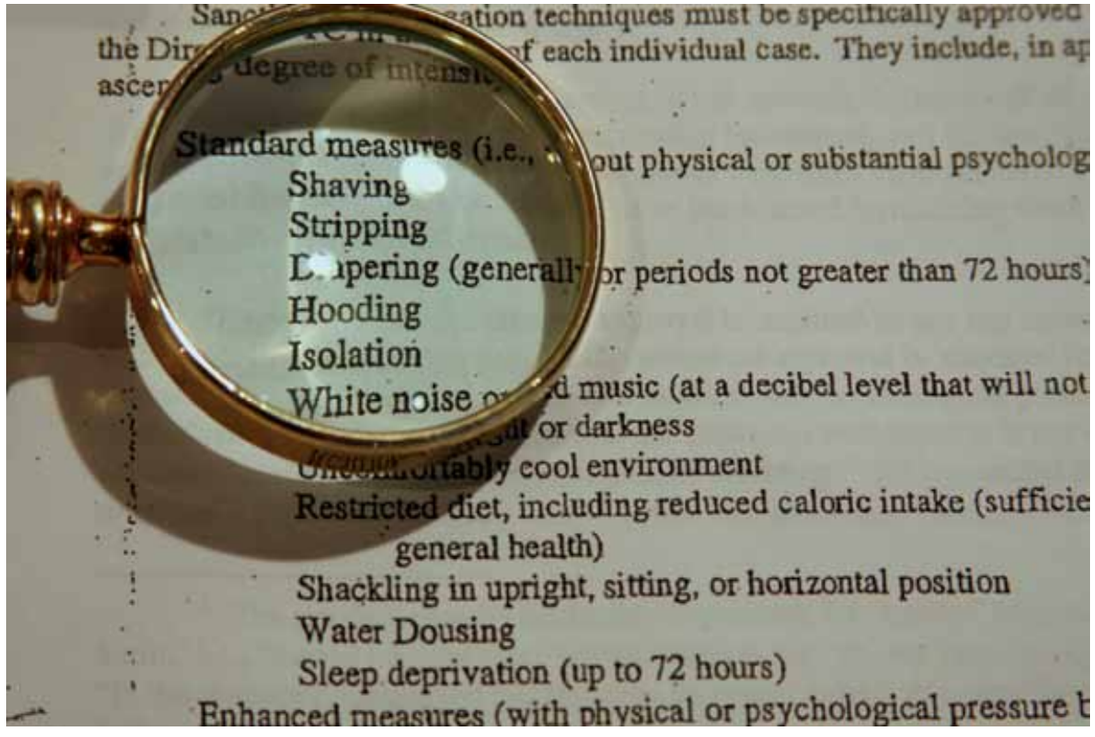
Taysir Batniji
Selection from *To My Brother*, 2012
Hand carvings from photographs on paper, 17" × 13"
Courtesy of the Abraaj Group Art Prize. © Jean-Louis Losi, Paris

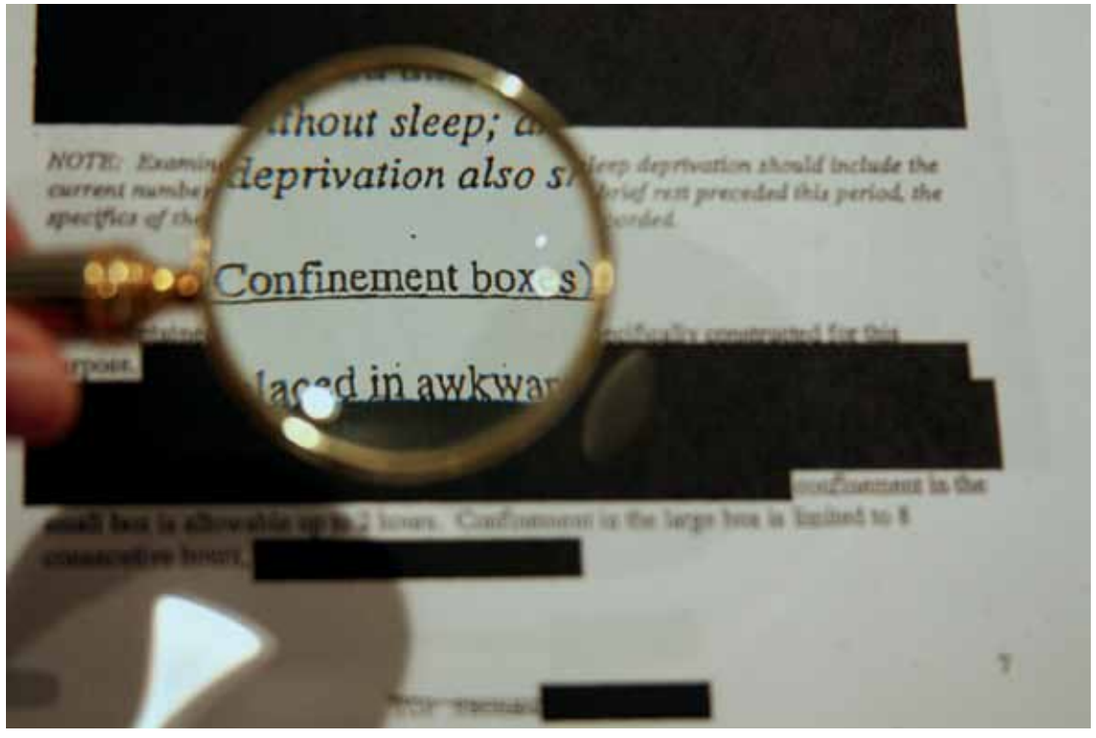


Charles Gaines
Notes on Social Justice: Freedom's Jubilee! (1865), 2014
Ink on Strathmore paper, 48" × 35"
Courtesy of the artist

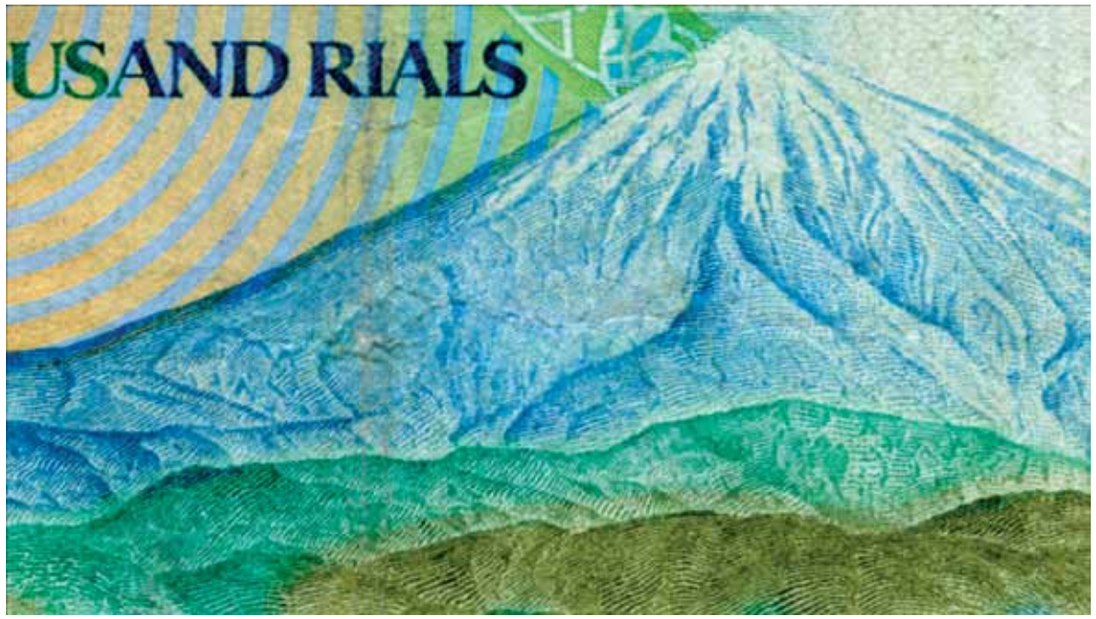


Charles Gaines.
Notes on Social Justice: Hurrah For Grover Cleveland, (1892), 2013
Ink on Paper, 76" × 46"
Courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects





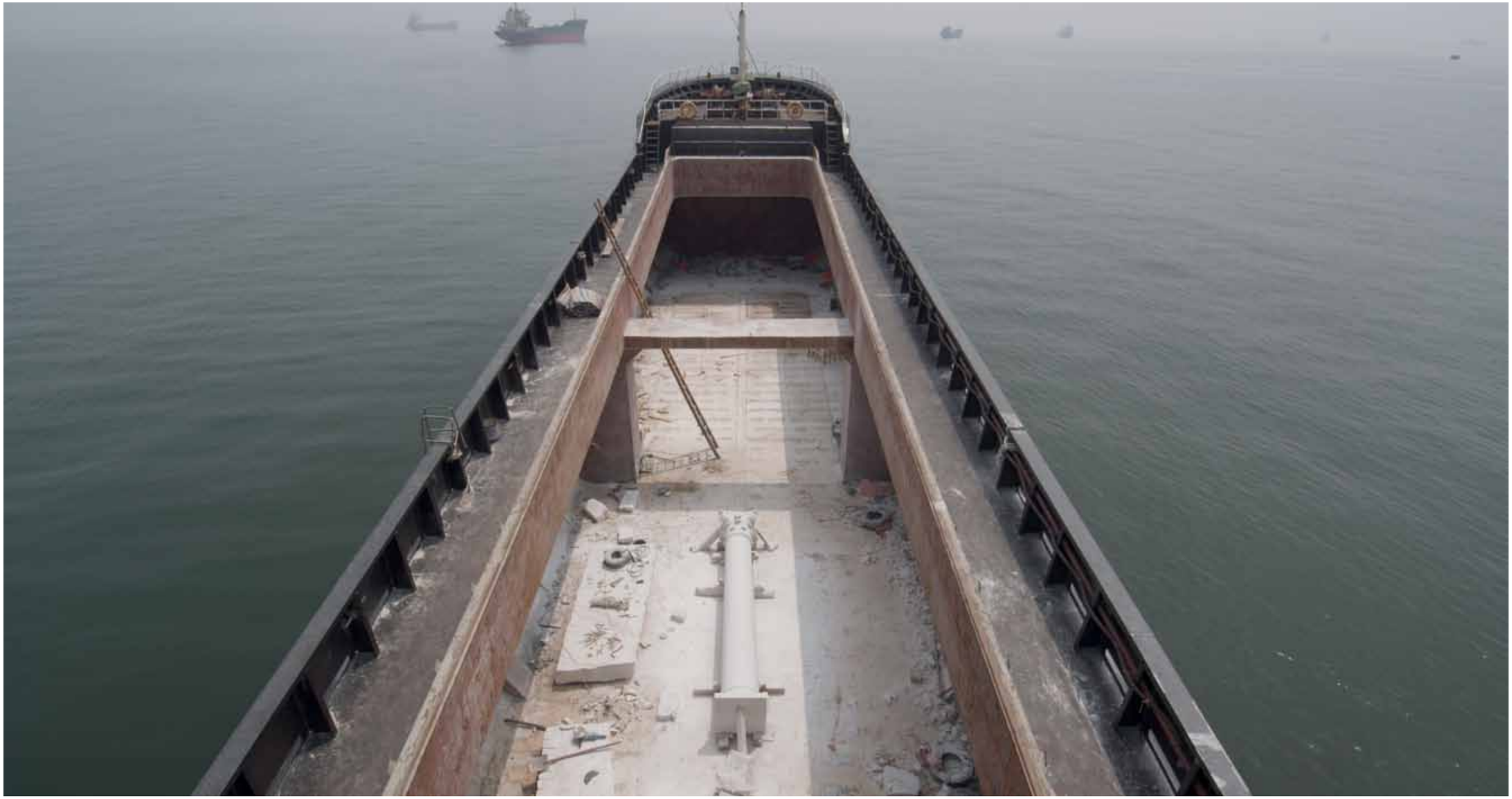
Mariam Ghani
The Trespassers, 2011
Video stills
Single channel video, 95:00
Photography by Alfredo Rubio
Courtesy of the artist



Gelare Khoshgozaran
rial & tERROR, 2011
Video stills
Video. Color, stereo sound, 16:27
Courtesy of the artist

Adrian Paci
The Column, 2013
Production shots
HD video projection. Color, sound, 25:40
Photography by Roberto Marossi
Courtesy of the artist and kaufmann repetto, Milan

Adrian Paci
The Column, 2013
Video stills
HD video projection. Color, sound, 25:40
Courtesy of the artist and kaufmann repetto, Milan



Adrian Paci
The Column, 2013
Production shot
HD video projection. Color, sound, 25:40
Photography by Roberto Marossi
Courtesy of the artist and kaufmann repetto, Milan

THE THEATER OF REFUSAL: BLACK ART AND MAINSTREAM CRITICISM

CHARLES GAINES

1.

Current critical writing and curatorial practices marginalize the work of minority artists by treating the subjects of difference and identity as variants from a mainstream. One profoundly positive result is establishing and giving voice to difference. On the other hand, the discourse of marginality—be it in critical writing, exhibitions or works of art—buttresses the almost implacable edifice of the mainstream. Additionally, it proposes that there is no difference between aesthetic judgments and political judgments; to put it more precisely, it suggests that the idea of the mainstream and the idea of aesthetics are built upon the same foundation of absolute "truth." Marginal discourse reveals through its complex relationship with the mainstream that "truth" can more accurately be defined by the Nietzschean and Deleuze/Guattarian term "power." Power (maintenance) is the underlying structure responsible for the mainstream's frequent complaint that marginal discourse addresses only minority concerns. Marginality, therefore, is political, is always seen politically by the mainstream.

The intent of this exhibition and essay is to reveal the strategies of marginalization in the critical writing about a group of contemporary black artists, and to propose an alternative. The title suggests that the critical environment surrounding the works of these artists intentionally and unintentionally limits those works, creating a theater of refusal that punishes the work of black artists by making it immune to history and by immunizing history against it. The status of the mainstream is vigorously maintained not only by the discourse of the authorial voice—modernism—but by a politics that surreptitiously introduces the Other through a dialectical framework (Self-same/ Other, identity/difference, mainstream/ marginal).

Race problematizes critical theory. The best evidence for this is found in the work of black artists and theorists who claim that modernism militates against difference in favor of homogeneity, and that postmodernism, which generally promotes "difference," in so doing militates against the idea of the self-as-subject. Counter to the belief that postmodernism provides a critical language for the construction of identity and the valorization of difference, consider this comment by Adrian Piper:

> I really think post structuralism is a plot! It's the perfect ideology to promote if you want to co-opt women and people of color and deny them access to the potent tools of rationality and objectivity.[1]

Racism is in part the practice of excluding from political and social power those groups that have an ethnic identity different from that of the dominant race. With this in mind, it does not seem that the amelioration or the obviation of the subject is in the political best interest of the minority. To do so would leave the minority either outside representation, or continue her subjection. The presence of a subject is essential for the implementation of political power.

We find support for Piper from Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd. In their introduction to *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* they are critical of postmodernism, without finding solace in modernism, thus taking exception to Piper's reference to "the tools of rationality and objectivity." Western culture has used rationalism as a tool of oppression, and although postmodernism critiques modernism as a centralizing theory that colonizes difference, it is essential not to confuse post-modernism with the minority theoretical concerns.[2]

Cornel West warns us of his suspicions about postmodernism's relation to racial oppression:

> From my own view point, I remain quite suspicious of the term "postmodernism" … because the precursor term, "modern" itself has not simply been used to devalue the cultures of oppressed and exploited peoples, but also has failed to deeply illumine the internal complexities of these cultures. Under these circumstances, there is little reason to hold out hope for the new term "postmodernism" as applied to the practices of oppressed peoples.[3]

In spite of a postmodern critique that privileges difference over universality, the work of black artists continues to be marginalized. Nancy Hartsock, in fact, argues that postmodern theory is antithetical to minority discourse because of its critique of the authorial voice and centralized knowledge.[4] For a minority discourse, however, the search for a voice, a voice that is heard, is equivalent to a "will to power." The marginalized voice takes form in its search for power and in so doing introduces a dilemma. Will gaining this voice make the minority complicit in a morally specious theoretical posture? Can this voice be maintained only at the expense of other voices, in precisely the same manner that mainstream culture presently does, through the colonization and oppression of the Other? The only way to maneuver is either to accept the "will to power," to take solace in the marginal as a necessary part of the archeology of power whose landscape is formed and informed by the dialectics of

mainstream/ marginality, or to reject this posture for a new framework that does not condemn marginality to complicity with power.

Both solutions valorize marginality, which seems to be an essential step for those who occupy the margins. However, this attitude is fraught with difficulty. Both Adrian Piper and Fred Wilson see marginality as a discourse that participates in the mechanisms of power, something like the European avant-garde. In response to a question regarding the long overdue attention that she and other artists of color have received, Adrian Piper remarks:

> It is clear...that the most exciting, most innovative work is made by those on the margins, so it is not surprising that in the search for something new we go to what is now on the margins ... The question for me is whether it is going to be possible for our discovery of this work to alter the power structure sufficiently so that power gets shared with these individuals, just as it did with the Cubists when they were groundbreaking... The test of whether the foregrounding of marginalized art is merely a fad, or whether it is a new development, will be proved if and when we are accepted into the canon...[5]

Also, consider this comment on Fred Wilson's work:

> [Fred] Wilson, an African-American artist, necessarily referenced his own relatively marginalized position as a cultural producer "of color," suggesting that criticality could be constructed at [the] margins ...of the cultural sphere.[6]

If we consider these statements as a manifestation of a "will to power," this suggests at the very least a utopian vision of the future, where power shifts can occur within the mainstream even in the face of an intractable and systemic racism. It is essential to this argument that the bio/organic structure of race be subsumed by the systemic operation of dialectics. In other words, a social environment that is constituted by both a dominant culture and a minority culture can be influenced by a theoretical binarism which would then give the hope of assuaging social tensions. However, it is at the least questionable that a social pathology such as racism would follow the exigencies of a theoretical operation like dialectics: even though it is structurally possible to mediate difference in dialectics, it may not follow that racial difference could also be mediated.

Nancy Hartsock explains that the social position of minorities as the marginalized Other provides them an opportunity to articulate a new discourse that avoids appropriation either by modernist totalizing theory or the poststructuralist decentered subject,[7] an imperative for her since she believes that the history of minorities makes them especially sensitive to totalizing theories. Although Hartsock fails to provide a cogent argument for her thesis, and so becomes another victim of dialectics' ability to set the terms for any discourse, I am nevertheless convinced that it has greater potential than the form/content synthesis that would be required for the shift of power from the majority to an oppressed minority. (Dialectical opposition as the structure that realizes racism as one instance of its cultural expression.)

The impact of the dialectic structure on a term like marginality needs closer scrutiny. In dialectics a notion such as Being is placed together with its negation, Non-Being. Being cannot be considered an autonomous idea, but an idea "in relation." Being and Non-Being are now spoken in the terms of a selfsame/ other or presence/ absence relation. The negative term defines the positive; without the negative the positive could not exist. The "other" relation is what Derrida calls alterity; the construction of the selfsame is depended on this alterity.

This hegelian structure suggests a heterogeneity of meaning, because of the conflicting expropriation of each term by its "other." Alterity and difference become privileged. However, in a "cunning" fashion, the other-relation is turned into a self-identity of the concept. Being, constituted by the terms of the other-relations, becomes the defined and concrete principle. Michael Ryan explains this.

> This "cunning" is perhaps why a thinker such as Derrida finds the hegelian dialectic to be at once fascinating and pernicious. It recognizes the mediated nature of all supposedly proper entities, their constitutive expropriation (nothing is self-sufficient), but it orders this potentially heterogeneous differential into a system of simple binary oppositions or contradictory negations (Being/Non-Being, Cause/Effect) and suppresses the heterogeneity of alterity and difference in favor of a theology of truth as self-identity or "propriation," which arises from the process of mediation—that is, the return of the other-relation into the self identity of the entity, concept, or subject.[8]

Most theories of marginality are influenced by a dialectic structure that positions the margin in relation to a mainstream. The only term actually defined by this relation is the mainstream: marginality serves to delineate the contour of the mainstream, and in fact has no critical voice that could realize an independent discourse.

If meaning, according to Jacques Derrida, is a product of the forces of dialectics, then the future of Hartsock's theory seems dismal. However, were it possible to move beyond dialectics, a discourse might be possible that could challenge conventional notions. Rather than surrendering to the hegelian system and its penchant for universalizing, we might look toward Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of the deterritorialized minoritarian subject, and the heterogeneous subject proposed in the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin, Jean-François Lyotard and Julia Kristeva.

A fascinating critique of hegelian discourse and the manner in which it constructs polarities is found in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, which provides a less limited construction of marginality than those informed by dialectics or its deconstruction. We may say not only that race problematizes discourse but that race is also problematized *by* discourse because it is interwoven into a network of hegelian identity assertions that are themselves caught in layers of paradoxical ambiguity. This locates race as a trope of deterritorialization. The radicalizing effect of race remains unrecognized in most critical writings on the subject because of a fear that the recognition would prevent or make moot a desired hypostatization of identity. Instead, race itself is taken to be a discrete attribute that may modify the universal subject. Deterritorialization, on the other hand, strategically and adventurously eschews identity constructions.

Deleuze and Guattari add to the structure of minority/ majority the condition of becoming-minority. In this sense minoritarian is a process of becoming whereas majoritarian is defined as having the dominant position. The intractability of the majoritarian state is weakened only by deterritorialization, i.e., change. The minority (minoritarian) is a function of this movement and is thus informed by majoritarian conditions. The process of becoming is then a process of deterritorialization. This differs from positioning the minority (e.g., the black) as a discrete subject. The black is in the process of becoming (a minoritarian posture), and becoming is a deterritorialization of the state of being (majoritarian). Consider Deleuze and Guattari's comments:

> It is important not to confuse "minoritarian," as a becoming or process, with a "minority," as an aggregate or a state. Jews, Gypsies, etc., may constitute minorities under certain conditions, but that in itself does not make them becomings. One reterritorializes, or allows oneself to be reterritorialized, on a minority as a state; but in a becoming, one is deterritorialized. Even blacks, as the Black Panthers said, must become-black. Even women must become-woman. Even Jews must become-Jewish... But if this is the case, then becoming-Jewish necessarily affects the non-Jew as much as the Jew... Becoming-Jewish, becoming-woman, [becoming-black] etc., therefore imply two simultaneous movements, one by which a term (the subject) is withdrawn from the majority, and another by which a term (the medium or agent) rises up from the minority. There is an asymmetrical and indissociable block of becoming...the [black] and the [non-black]...enter into a [becoming-black]...[9]

Deleuze and Guattari further explain that there is no subject of the becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of the majority, and there is no medium of becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of a minority.[10] This not only explains the interdependence of minority and majority subjects, but also the reason why change is possible only from the standpoint of the majority: the majority changes but it is not in the process of change; the minority, on the other hand, is always in the process of change. This is true not just of race but of various majority/minority distinctions. However, the conditions of race deterritorialize critical theory when that theory constitutes a mainstream subjectivity. Race destabilizes mainstream subjectivity, but in so doing does not make politics irrelevant, for the destabilization is itself an act of politics: "Becoming-minoritarian is a political affair and necessitates a labor of power (*puissance*), an active micropolitics."[11]

A theory of heterogeneity also provides an interesting critique of hegelian dialectics. With the help of Bakhtin and P.N. Medvedev, R. Radhakrishnan suggests in his essay "Ethnic Identity and Post Structuralist Differance" that an ethnicity defined by a heterogeneous reading has a greater relevance to lived experience than a unified notion of ethnicity, and suggests a discourse that does not allow a "theory of mastery, but enables an articulation of historically determinate and intentional, but non-authoritarian, attitudes to 'reality' and 'knowledge.'"[12] Radhakrishnan engages the problem of unified ethnicity by asking whether it is possible to realize identity within the reality of the marginalized.

> ...ethnic reality realizes that it has a "name," but this name is forced on it by the oppressor...[I]t gives itself a name...from within its own point

> of view; and it ponders how best to legitimate and empower this new name. [This] brings up a complex problem...I call it the problem of "in the name of." In whose name is the new name being authorized, authenticated, empowered?[13]

Radhakrishnan articulates the conditions for what he calls the monologic ideology –a problematic notion because it falsifies the dialectic of real life. Identity (or the marginalized subject) must be less monologic, i.e., less centralized, and more dialogic if it is to conform to lived experiences. As Trinh T. Minh-ha writes:

> No system functions in isolation. No First World exists independently from the Third World; there is a Third World in every First World and vice-versa.[14]

Monologism occurs in the absence of a continuous process of self criticism. Discourse must remain skeptical in order to know whose interests are being served by each articulation. The marginalized subject is constituted by the presence of many voices, some in complete opposition to others.

Marginalization and the mainstream are related in exactly the same way that Trinh T. Minh-ha suggests. There is marginalized representation in the mainstream, and vice versa, producing a text of sometimes conflicting and sometimes unifying ideologies. (I am not suggesting that representation is so open-ended that one cannot distinguish the mainstream from the marginal.)[15] Unlike the system of mediation in hegelian dialectics, which results in a suppression of alterity in favor of the "theology of truth and self-identity,"[16] identity that is deterritorialized produces a dynamic marginality that constantly seeks to define itself.[17] This dynamic state reflects one's real experiences, for who is absent of conflict and contradiction?

2.

Before reading the reviews and catalogue essays related to the artists in this exhibition, I anticipated finding language that would overtly or covertly marginalize the work. In fact, I found two types of discourse. One viewed the marginal as having a potentially positive effect on art and history. The other utilized the stereotype, and tended to have a more coercive, negative and limiting effect on the work. Writing by both critics and artists showed marginality to be the central theme. Whether the critical writing was racist, or relied on stereotype, or whether the writing attempted to construct a positive identity on the margin, the common ground was a battlefield: both sides at war.

Marginalization is a sword with two edges: as we use it to attack racism, we wound our villain with each down-stroke, but each time we raise the sword for another blow, we wound ourselves. It is virtually impossible to invoke the discourse of marginality without buttressing the implacable edifice of the mainstream. The black artist is engaged in a battle for her identity, and there is no possible victory, for to be marginal is to be in the battle.

The first series of citations attempt to view marginality as an historical force (like the avant-garde) that in time will change the face of mainstream culture. We can hear the overtones of this position in Elizabeth Hayt-Atkins' question to Adrian Piper, as well as in descriptions of David Hammons.

> In the United States, there is growing interest in your work as well as in the conceptual photography of Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems. What was once marginalized in art—the work of black women—is now being mainstreamed as part of the larger epistemological examination of the Other." Does this development signal a genuine change in attitudes toward race and gender, or is it merely a benevolent token of an otherwise oppressive culture?[18] [David Hammons] has created an art of marginality.[19]

Marginality is also valorized in the following comments.

> [Hammons] is not exactly a total unknown, but neither has he found a way to address marginality without demonstrating it in his own life. The cultural drift finally seems in his favor. This summer he ended up at the grandest "alternative" space, the Venice Biennale.[20]

> Being both black and female, [Lorna] Simpson's all too aware of her marginality and vulnerability; this is largely the subject of her work.[21]

> Distinguished by race and culture, these photographers are also marginalized as women in a male-dominated society.[22]

> Simpson is a young photographer who has begun to receive considerable attention for her photo-and-text works drawn from her own experiences as a black woman in a white world.[23]

> These ...[exhibitions]...inevitably (raise) the question of whether the mainstream itself has become receptive to [Fred Wilson's] ideas or simply inured to them.[24]

A more negative type of critical writing is exemplified in the following examples:

> Talk like Adrian Piper's is refined and polite... but it's about as racist as anything you can expect to hear these days...Imagine someone with one Chinese ancestor, say, like Piper's, a great grandfather (maybe in the 1850s tea trade). Imagine this person proclaiming her Chinese identity...come off it honey, you're as "white" as I am... Piper projects her own obsession with race onto the environment. The "nightmare" is her own. The people I know ...would be, at worst, enchanted to discover a friend or acquaintance had a *little something exotic* [italics mine] in her background.[25]

Marjorie Welish has problems with Piper's installation and videotape work, *Out of the Comer*, because it employs certain rhetorical techniques to trick the viewer into believing that he is uncomfortable about blackness. Welish believes that if the viewer is disturbed or frustrated by the accusatory language of the work, it is not a sign of racism (as suggested in the text of Piper's work), but instead the frustration caused by an irritating rhetorical structure.

> The logic of "Out of the Corner" consists of asserting the premise as though it were a conclusion, meanwhile elaborating it rhetorically, yet in a way suggestive of partial logical structures ("if, then"), setting up expectations of logic that then go unfulfilled. The materiality of the belief shows itself not in logic but in logic camouflaged through rhetoric. Frustration over such tactics and the provoked resentment they cause cannot then be attributed to distress over the issue of race.[26]

Welish compares Piper's text with a news report she heard by reporter Vertamae Grosvenor in which she discusses the issue of biracialism. She lauds Grosvenor's report for being empirical and experimental, in stark contrast to Piper's ideological approach. Finally, Welish comments:

> Piper's mode is first and last rationalist, and ideologically driven, in the belief that conciliatory patterns of the liberal intellect may lead to empathy but not to substantive practical change. With her oppositional stance she falls into stereotypy herself, however, insofar as biracial means black.[27]

This comment, of course, ignores Piper's stated position in relation to breaking down stereotypes. She has said that it is her intent to eliminate racism and prejudice by attacking the Other as a tool of the stereotype. Piper's work is about how stereotyping sets up expectations. *Out of the Comer* challenges the manner in which whites identify blacks as the Other by pointing out that we are all "black." Welish concerns herself only with the issue of biracialism, when for Piper biracialism is only a means to address the subject of stereotyping. As Piper says, "If someone can look and sound like me and still be black, who is safely white?"[28]

> Does the acceptance of being black call for collapsing specifics into generalities? Does the acceptance of being black furthermore, foreclose on criticality?[29]

> By analyzing my work solely in terms of my racial identity, and evaluating it in terms of its shock value, [Elizabeth Hess] portrays me as the racist stereotype much of my work targets: the aggressive, alienating, sexualized black [artist].[30]

Adam Gopnik limits the complexity of Jean-Michel Basquiat's work by considering it only within the debate about his "real" or "false" primitivism.

> ...The big Basquiat question—is it art or vandalism?[31]

> The African Masks, the coarse, zappy line, the scarifications, the scribbling intensity: these are not just the primitive clichés of 1984. They are the primitive clichés of 1948—or, for that matter, of 1918.[32]

Gopnik goes on to put us in a damned-if-you-do-and-damned-if-you-don't position.

> The pictures are crowded tightly together, three or four to a wall, and no sense of development, change, or variation is allowed to intrude on the show's attempt to force on them an air of *"savage" vitality* [italics mine].[33]

What about the work of some of the "bad boy" artists: why not call those cluttered installations "savage"?

> For several months after leaving Nosei's gallery, Basquiat represented himself, working and selling out of a new loft on Crosby Street in lower Manhattan...According to Suzanne Mallouk, "Jean-Michel thought [selling directly to rich collectors] was a joke at first. Then, when he got sick of it—he sensed the racial thing that [collectors] saw him as a cute little

black boy—he'd lock himself in the bathroom and make me deal with them.[34]

Will [Basquiat] be the story of the black wild child exploited by the greedy art world? The raw, animalistic talent caged in heartless dealers' basements, fed canvas, paint, and drugs...Collectors eagerly lining up to sample this exotic virility...?[35]

Norman Mailer, an early and sworn supporter, wrote in his 1974 book, *The Faith of Graffiti*, that the phenomenon was a tribal rebellion against an evil industrial civilization.[36]

Maurice Berger and Lorna Simpson show how the mainstream censors and excludes marginality.

The exhibition "Strange Attractors: Signs of Chaos," [was] what the curator called an exploration of "some of the most compelling issues raised by the new science of chaos as they relate to recent works of art." ...The catalogue reverberates with the jargon of "the new chaos science" ...As one reads through the catalogue, one recognizes the names of white, male academics. And while curator Laura Trippi maintains that "the discourse of postmodernism sets up within the aesthetic a situation of extreme urgency and indeterminacy," nowhere are the systemic, institutionally defined conditions of racism discussed. Without the Hammons piece [Malcolm X, the only work by a black artist in the show] the sensibility of "Strange Attractors" would have been very different, more typical of the splashy group show of contemporary art that simply ignores the issue of race. That one image threw the entire show into question and [exposed] the racial bias of its institutional context.[37]

Trevor Fairbrother: Have you noticed a difference between the way black people and white people respond to *Gestures/ Reenactments* ? Lorna Simpson: One white critic wrote that I was very involved with a secret semiotics, that I deliberately created a puzzle in a secret language.[38]

Susan Kandel tries to distinguish politics from aesthetics and in so doing unintentionally participates in the mainstream's act of exclusion.

The trouble with Gary Simmons's mixed media work on racism...is that it sees the world in black and white. Metaphorically, that is; look at the *Us/Them* robes—plush and white, hanging side by side, compelling the viewer to line up on one or the other side of the divide. But literally, too; no colors here, no messiness or fuss, just clean lines and minimal forms. Of course, the problem with Minimalism was that it tidied things up a little too much, eliminating interiority to explore the exterior, shoving out the subjective to pursue a dream of pure objectivity. This seems to be Simmons's dream, as well. But at what cost?[39]

Susan Kandel likes neither Simmons' position on race nor his aesthetic judgments. Work, she suggests, should be multivocal (revealing, I suppose, the true complexity of any particular subject). She is suggesting that if the subject of racism is treated in a work of art as a multivocal text, then racism should be represented complexly. But Simmons does not choose to treat the subject this way. I imagine that to treat racism with a nuanced complexity instead of in the in-your-face manner that it is *experienced* by blacks would cause Kandel less grief: after all, this would mean that everyone is not a racist.

Kandel suggests that social ideas in works of art are expressed through an aesthetic language, and that there should be conformity between ideas and language. That is why she believes that Simmons' "simple" view (of race) is expressed through the aesthetic language of minimalism, thus establishing the priority of aesthetic judgments. Is it true, however, that aesthetic judgments are different from social/political ones? Can she separate her feelings about racism from her aesthetic judgments, particularly aesthetic judgments about a work whose subject is race?

The last passage, questioning Renée Green's aesthetics, could be used to question the methodological approach of this entire exhibition.

The danger in this show is that in exposing the way blacks have been considered out of context, Ms. Green has taken remarks and information out of context herself. Her show makes no distinction between the unknowingly offensive remarks about race made by critics and ethnologists and the offensive remarks about race in "The Great Gatsby" that are intended by F. Scott Fitzgerald to expose the insularity and brittleness of Tom Buchanan, the character making them. Rummaging through cultural artifacts to find offensive statements that immediately stigmatize their authors politically has a nasty history. It should be done with extreme care.[40]

Now, the insistence on distinguishing between intended and unintended racism usually allows the perpetrator to blame the victim. Green's approach, if viewed from a structuralist/ post-structuralist critique, actually exposes the racism in the structure of language. Whether or not an individual is racist, whether or not an individual has good intentions, is secondary to whether or not the ideological framework within which an individual functions is racist. Renée Green is attacking systems, not individuals: the complaint that she should take into account whites who are not racist ignores this.

3.

Marginality is not a simple theory, but a complex construction of overlapping social, philosophical, biological and historical ideas. Much writing on the subject is reductionist and essentialist because the politics of the subject almost requires simplification. It almost begs a simpler form, a diagram, perhaps, that will give shape to an impossibly complex machine, a coding that will make the difficult choices for us, to relieve us of the annoying spectacle of its insurmountability.

As I have tried to show, a theory of marginality is part of the lexicon of ideas that frame our world view. It is an old theory, reaching as far into the past and across as many cultures as its parent, dualism. But it is a complex theory, a theory whose purpose is to idealize its subjects. And since idealizations can be either positive or negative, any particular theory of marginality can function as well to liberate as to enslave.

Works of art are complex events; their true complexity is revealed in criticism and its attempt to circumscribe the boundaries of art. Criticism idealizes representation and consequently distances the viewer from actuality. This is evident in the way marginalized discourse has been used to reduce complex experiences to over arching themes that relieve us of the responsibility of having to deal with the works themselves. For example, Peter Plagens' review of the 1993 Whitney Biennial focused on the "overarching" theme that the works selected for the exhibition represented the "artist-as-victim [which is] increasingly demanded by the contemporary art scene."[41] This is clearly an attempt further to marginalize an exhibition already marginalized by the curators and to simplify and essentialize all of the work in the show.

Although Plagens may be guilty of negative idealizations (negative idealizations are often called stereotyping), positive idealizations are just as problematic. This is the double-edged sword of marginal discourse, producing the paradox of identity and stereotype. This, however, is a fact of the deterritorialized position. Marginality is then not an essentialist discourse, but a complex co-presence of textual spaces. Critical writing and curatorial practice must address this paradox so that we can all realize that the concerns of the minority artist concern us all. Let me end with this comment from Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

In one sense, there really is not much difference between negative and positive idealization; they are equally far from reality, except in opposite ways. It makes little difference if a black person is represented as a King or god on the one hand or as a devil and a force of evil on the other. Both sets of images serve equally to create an unreality in the life of a black person. It doesn't matter if a white person encounters an actual black human being though a positive or negative stereotype: the actuality is still removed. I don't think that enough of us who try to critically analyze black images have taken account of this paradox.[42]

Notes

1 Maurice Berger, 'The Critique of Pure Racism: An Interview with Adrian Piper," *Afterimage*, 18:3 (October 1990) p. 4.

2 Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, "Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse," in JanMohamed and Lloyd, eds., *Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press,1990), pp. 15-16. JanMohamed and Lloyd argue that post-structuralism attempts to deconstruct the notion of identity. Minority discourse, on the other hand, attempts to critique the notion of the bourgeois subject. The difference lies in the fact that the deconstruction of identity constitutes for minorities a trope of their invisibility. This is not the deconstruction of the subject but a description of a powerless and oppressed subject.

3 Cornel West, "Black Culture and Postmodernism," in Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani, eds., *Remaking History*, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1989), p. 91.

4 See Nancy Hartsock, "Rethinking Modernism: Minority vs. Majority Theories," in JanMohammed and Lloyd, *op. cit.*

5 Elisabeth Atkins, "The Indexical Present: Conversation with Adrian Piper," *Arts Magazine* (March 1991), p. 50.

6 Joshua Deeter, "New York in Review," *Arts Magazine*, 65:10 (Summer 1991), p. 92. The reference to Fred Wilson and the previous reference to Adrian Piper suggest that the margins of society are similar to the margins described by avant-garde practices. But this comparison has problems. The societal margin is a construct of the dominant culture itself, not of the people who occupy that margin. Can a minority culture that creates itself due to the forces that excludes it from the mainstream counterpart ultimately position itself (through revolution or slow social change) so that it is different from but equal to that counterpart? Can the terms mainstream and marginal be equivalent and still maintain difference?

7 Hartsock, *op. cit.*, p. 35. Hartsock comments: "It may be objected that I am calling for the construction of another totalizing and falsely universal discourse. But that is to be imprisoned by the alternatives posed by Enlightenment thought and postmodernism: either one must adopt the perspective of the transcendental and disembodied voice of Reason, or one must abandon the goal of accurate and systematic knowledge of the world. Other possibilities exist and must be...developed by hitherto marginalized voices."

8 Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 67.

9 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 291-292.

10 *Ibid*., p. 292.

11 *Ibid*.

12 R Radhakrishnan, "Ethnic Identity and Post-Structuralist Difference," in *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse, op. cit.*, p. 51.

13 *Ibid*., p 59.

14 Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Of Other Peoples: Beyond the 'Salvage' Paradigm," in Hal Foster, ed., *Discussion in Contemporary Culture: Number One*, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), p.138.

15 We should consider the mainstream to be similar to Deleuze and Guattari's idea of majoritarian. We should also consider the relationship between the mainstream and the margin to be similar to the deterritorialized minoritarian subject and the reterritorialized majoritarian subject. Minor does not designate a specific race but the revolutionary conditions that locate a minority in relation to a majority. See, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans., Dan Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), esp. chapter 3.

16 Michael Ryan, *op. cit.* p. 67

17 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *op. cit.* pp. 142-145.

18 Elizabeth Hayt-Atkins, "The Indexical Present: Conversation with Adrian Piper," *Arts Magazine* (March 1991), p. 50.

19 Kay Larson, "Dirt Rich," *New York* (January 14, 1991), p. 68.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Lenore Malen, "The Real Politics of Lorna Simpson," *Women Artists News* (Fall 1988), p. 4.

22 Maxine Walker, "Trading Places, Transatlantic Traditions at Camerawork, London," *Creative Camera*, No. 10 (1988), p. 36.

23 Eleanor Heartney, "Lorna Simpson at Josh Baer," *Art in America*, 77:11(November1989), p. 18.

24 Debra Bricker Balken, review of exhibitions at Gracie Mansion and Metro Pictures, *Art in America* (July 1991), p. 114.

25 Barbara Barr, "Reply To Piper," *Women Artists News* (June 1987), p. 6. Barr's example of the person with one Chinese ancestor indicates that she thinks Piper is either biracial or white. However, Piper has stated that her family was "one of the very last middle class light-skinned black families left in Harlem." Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black," *Transition,* 58 (1992), p. 6.

26 Marjorie Welish, "In This Corner," *Arts Magazine*, 65:7 (March 11, 1991), p. 47.

27 *Ibid.*

28 Adrian Piper, "Who Is Safely White?," *Women Artists News* (June 1987), p.6.

29 Welish, *op. cit.,* p. 46.

30 Adrian Piper, "It's Not All Black and White" (letters to the editor) *Village Voice* (June 9, 1987), pps. 4, 6.

31 Adam Gopnik, "Madison Avenue Primitive," *The New Yorker* (Nov. 9, 1992), p. 137.

32 *Ibid*., p. 138.

33 *Ibid.*

34 Andrew Decker, "The Price of Fame," comment by Suzanne Mallouk, *Art News* (January 1989), p. 1OO.

35 Allan Schwartzman, "Banking on Basquiat." *Arts Magazine* (November 1988), p. 26.

36 Suzi Gablik, "Report from New York: The Graffiti Question," *Art in America* (October 1982), p. 34.

37 Maurice Berger, "Are Art Museums Racist?" *Art in America* (September 1990), p. 69.

38 Trevor Fairbrother, interview with Lorna Simpson, *The Binational: American Art of the Late BO's; German Art of the Late 80s* (Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, 1988), p. 176.

39 Susan Kandel, "L.A. In Review: Gary Simmons," *Arts Magazine* (October 1991), p.103.

40 Michael Brenson, "Renee Green: "Anatomies of Escape," *The New York Times* (May 25, 1990) p. C 19.

41 Peter Plagens, "Fade From White," *Newsweek* (March 15, 1993), p. 72.

42 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in Maurice Berger, "Speaking Out: Some Distance To Go..." *Art in America* (September 1990), p. 81.

UNSOLVED ANTAGONISMS

MOSTAFA HEDDAYA

The basic levels of experience that motivate art are related to those of the objective world from which they recoil. The unsolved antagonisms of reality return in artworks as immanent problems of form.
—Theodor Adorno, 1962[1]

I was a lover of loss I tossed
The boot in the capital of suffering
—Fady Joudah, 2013[2]

1.

Before Shangri-La there was Babel. The fall of the first city imagined was the metastasis of tongues, proliferation of language being the punishment meted out by the god of Genesis. Thus were translation and alienation paired, man's diasporic abjection linked to the limits of expression. Babel, writes Jacques Derrida, "exhibits an incompletion, the impossibility of finishing, of totalizing, of saturating."[3] So when we speak of Shangri-La,[4] or of any such lost and unknowable idyll, we invoke the original rupture of Babel.

These symbolic conditions, ancient as they may be, articulate in general the stakes of expression in a world defined by difference. It is the capacity to speak, argued Aristotle, that is the *sine qua non* of politics. This doubling of expression and fragmentation provides a framework for addressing the work of the artists at hand: Haig Aivazian's *How Great You Are O Son of the Desert!* (2014), Taysir Batniji's *To My Brother* (2012), and Mariam Ghani's *The Trespassers* (2011).

Though educated in Europe and the United States, these three artists, and their practices, are bound up with the conditions of what we might call the Middle East and North Africa, or for that matter the "Islamic world"—a zone of decided subalterity but indeterminate geography, extending as it might from Kabul to Paris and beyond. But to address this art, or these artists, as indelibly born of a particular world, and thereby distant or particularized, would be to commit what amounts to a neocolonial error of categorization. Indeed, the unifying importance of the work in question is the way it insistently punctures the hermetic delusions persistent at the long end of the Anglo-European imperial project.

The fixity of this Eastward gaze is unwavering, and its spectrum wide-ranging, from Napoleon's *Déscription d'Egypte* to Doris Duke's Shangri-La. The putative passivity of the subject in such an imaginary is here strategically renegotiated: the singular and emphatic character of Aivazian, Batniji, and Ghani's practices is a vigorous insistence on accounting for that which is otherwise erased. Their commitment to give form in the face of various regimes of alienation is not, however, a surrender to broader agendas but a humanistic return to aesthetics. As Jacques Rancière writes, recasting the Aristotelian notion of the aesthetic wellspring of politics, "It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience."[5]

2.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault describes the archive as "first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events." Mariam Ghani's *The Trespassers* assays this chasm of apparent speech at its widest: the vicissitudes of the space between what is said in the American military's interrogation rooms and what is released in the official record. The titular notion of "trespass," at once metaphysical and juridical, refers to the installation's focus on the role of translators and translation, a relation whose form is above all elusive: The translation itself is spoken, because the records released by the United States government are in English, and not, because the presence of the translator is fully obscured in official transcripts. Meanwhile, the translator, recruited from diasporic communities in the United States, is instrumentalized for her simultaneous proximity to the hegemon (those with the highest security clearances were often second-generation Americans), and a putative fluency in a strategic "mother" tongue and culture.

This dyad of assimilation that underlies what is otherwise presented as objective record has serious consequences for both the process of translation and the way the translated outcome is represented. The "native" speakers recruited as translators via private military contractors on behalf of the American state are often not as conversant as they claim. Speaking in some cases what Ghani calls a

plainly inadequate "kitchen Pashtu," recruits are incentivized by high compensation and extensive community outreach efforts undertaken by military contractors looking to ingratiate themselves with target communities.[6] Moreover, several different translators might be used in the course of a single multi-day interrogation, further destabilizing the possibility of building a consistent narrative from the subjects of interrogation.

The ordered element of Ghani's installation—its organized binders and modernist IKEA furniture—directs our attention to the pure contemplation of the warped and inconceivable universe the archive bears witness to. Here the cliché expression *stranger than fiction* expresses something about Ghani's archival methodology, which is to "select, collect, and connect" from a corpus of declassified government documents, then inject brief fictional(ized) text pieces to preface their presentation. The latter dimension recalls Walid Raad's The Atlas Group, whose "parafictional" documentary and archival focus on the contemporary history of Lebanon churns the productive borderlands of verisimilitude and veracity.[7] All the while, the video component of the installation returns the official transcripts to three possible languages of origin: Arabic, Dari, and Pashtu. The differing lengths of the translations, and their cacophonous spoken layering, thus plays out the trauma latent in the text, giving form to that which had previously been lost.

The ghostly dimension of the original speech echoes the status of the prisoners being interrogated, themselves "ghosts." Transferred from "black site" to "black site" under "extraordinary rendition,"[8] they are hooded specters, existing outside of not just international law but language itself, having lost sovereignty over the meanings of their own tongues. The horror of this condition abuts the deliberate choice by Ghani to present the documents in an environment composed of IKEA furniture, a gesture of familiarity that echoes the strategies of Thomas Hirschhorn. The Swiss artist's public installations in impoverished urban neighborhoods, each dedicated to presenting the work of individual thinkers (e.g. Antonio Gramsci, Baruch Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, Georges Bataille), adopt an informal, do-it-yourself design, a slapdash of raw materials and scrawled words that position the material at hand in an ostensibly non-threatening manner attuned to its milieu.

Thomas Hirschhorn, *Gramsci Monument*, 2013. "Gramsci Archive and Library." Forest Houses, Bronx, New York. Courtesy Dia Art Foundation. Photo: Romain Lopez

Though the material presented by *The Trespassers* is distinct from Hirschhorn's theoretical orientation, composed as it is of publicly available information about a major war effort, the simple modernist furniture chosen by Ghani similarly presents a strategic antagonism with the archive's daunting contents by couching it in a sympathetic lexicon—in this case the language of mass-produced modernism. The dialectic enacted between the traumatic destabilization of bodies that the archive itself bears witness to and the clean contours of consumer design has some precedent. Hal Foster, in his 2004 essay addressing the "welcome" renewal in artistic practice concerned with archive,[9] notes the use of readymade modernist design in the work of Sam Durant, who juxtaposes plumbing fixtures and diagrams with furniture by Eames and IKEA: "in near literal fashion, [Durant] plumbs 'good design,' reconnects its clean avatars with the unruly body as if to unplug its cultural blockages."[10]

But the implications of Ghani's installation do not pack so flat. State violence is humanitarian scatology, and here *habeas corpus* is invoked legally and literally. This law, under which certain "enemy combatant" detentions were challenged in US courts,[11] drives the disclosure of some of the material used in *The Trespassers* archive. These legal battles continue to be fought by human rights activists and lawyers with whom Ghani is in contact, and for whom this work has become an important public touch point—a vivid instance of what Lucy Lippard called "archival activism" in 1979. But in addressing the contingencies of language as it passes from interrogation to record, what Foucault calls the "statement-event" between the "system of its enunciability" and "the system of its functioning,"[12,13] *The Trespassers* renders an aesthetic dimension that operates in tandem with the "activist" one. And so the action is not merely logistical: *Habeas corpus*, "you may have the body," expresses a more complete topography, one tracing the ineffable terrain of language, displacement, and loss.

3.

The regulation of bodies is not limited to their oblique interface with language and power; it proceeds as public spectacle in professional sports, an arena whose disciplinary mechanisms are squarely confronted by Haig Aivazian. In *How Great You Are* (2014), the circumstances surrounding an infamous incident from the 2006 World Cup, in which the French player Zinedine Zidane head-butted the Italian Marco Materazzi in the chest, are juxtaposed with the riots that engulfed France's impoverished North African communities in 2005. Opening with a sportscaster's laudatory Arabic exclamation about Zidane—"How great you are, oh son of the desert!"—the piece immediately frames the fraught interplay of identity within the nationalist discourse of a global sporting event like the World Cup. Spoken by a Tunisian commentator on a Saudi-owned channel about a French man of Berber origins,[14] the phrase immediately twins the circulation of identity and image, invoking the expanded field of the game. And it presages the insult allegedly uttered by Materazzi that provoked Zidane at the end of the game: "fils d'une pute terroriste" (*son of a terrorist whore*).

But the piece turns on a more proximate series of events the preceding year, where two youths playing soccer in housing projects not far from the World Cup's Stade de France ended up dead after a police pursuit. The interaction with the French officers began when a group of 10 friends, heading home after an informal game, were approached in a routine identity-card check. With their government-issued ID not on them, the teens, aged 13 to 17, would be taken to the precinct until their parents could come pick them up. And so the group ran away, dispersing as the police gave chase. Seven were apprehended in short order, while the remaining three ran into a forested area, and, finding themselves surrounded, hopped a fence into an electric transformer. Two were killed and the third severely injured by the voltage. The incident provoked rioting throughout the country, with images of upturned cars burning against the night beamed around the world in the news media.

Set against the backdrop of Zidane in the World Cup and France's racial politics, the riot police's taunts noted in the video—"Where do you think you are, Afghanistan?"—"We are not in Gaza here!"—express the sinister undertow of displacement and belonging, spoken as they are to French citizens. Thus was the public mythology constructed around Zidane after his triumphant contributions to France's 1998 World Cup victory, with its politicized message of racial harmony ("Zidane for president!") dramatically deflated.[15] The breakdown of the social order is then linked to the breakdown of rules in general. These are the moments of truth that Aivazian finds especially fertile in his broader practice—be it elsewhere in sport, like the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, or the infamous incident when Iraqi journalist Muntadhar Al-Zaidi threw his shoes at George W. Bush during a press conference in Baghdad.

Haig Aivazian, *Parting Kisses (Muntadhar Al-Zaidi's first then second shoe)*, 2013
Bronze, marble, and copper 30 x 42 x 20 cm
Courtesy the artist and Sfeir-Semler Gallery

The idea that a sort of transcendent reality appears in such moments of transgression is as much an aesthetic question as it is a political one. Disciplinary systems can only operate on that which is made apparent to them; in sports as in politics, law operates at the level of what is seen, surveilled. The tension between these two might surface in a soccer player's dissimulation of foul play,[16] or at the level of the political public sphere, where surface adherence to rules of acceptability results in what Timur Kuran has called "preference falsification"—policy seemingly dictated by the public will obscuring powerful undercurrents of suppressed beliefs. These lurking truths threaten to explode

unpredictably, and at seemingly unrelated or minor provocations.[17] The ordering of bodies under the rule of law, though seemingly concrete, implies more spectral forms.

In Zidane's case as in that of the two French teenagers electrocuted outside of Paris, a chain of events that may appear as a string of causality is in fact a kaleidoscopic image, textures of representation between perception and cognition, of what is said and meant. It is what Alain Badiou has called "the realm of suspicion when a formal criterion is lacking to distinguish the real from semblance," a condition subject to a moment when the truth comes into being through a disruption of appearances.[18] Such a destabilizing rupture, drawn out by Aivazian in the form and structure of the piece, subtracts the more parochial questions of identity politics, marginalization, or stereotypes, in favor of probing the conditions of reality that arise from the ordering of bodies.

4.

On Dec. 18, 1987, nine days after the start of the First Palestinian Intifada, an Israeli sniper killed Taysir Batniji's brother. Leaving the house two hours before his death, he had drawn in Batniji's sketchbook a picture of a soldier holding a gun.[19] A quarter of a century later, the artist sat down in his studio to carve —by tracing—the lines of 60 family photographs onto paper. In so doing, he considered his brother's memory for the first time from within his practice, one that encompasses drawings, paintings, photographs, performances, installations, and videos.

Bodies are at once images and vehicles thereof, appearing in the world as others appear to them. For Batniji, the artist's body is a sort of living archive, containing within it the potential for giving form to the fleetingness of sense perception, of memory. Yet not only memory is fleeting—his brother's drawing was immediately lost, leaving behind only ghostly impression, faint indentations on the following page. The (im)materiality of loss was thus rendered, an exit having left an opening in the form of an etched shadow.

"In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds": The final line of the modernist poet Wallace Stevens's "The Idea of Order at Key West" (1934) is here instructive. Not as a command to abstraction, but as a wedge inserted between the real and the perceived, a speculation about the aesthetic sharpness of loss. Viewed from beyond a few paces, the delicate etchings on paper of *To My Brother* fall out of relief, flattened onto the white plane of plain paper. This telescopic quality is a recurring preoccupation of Batniji's, notions of proximity and visual fidelity that appear even beyond the grouping of works the artist identifies—*Transit*, *Gaza-journal intime*, *Ma mère*, *David et moi*—as bound up in intimacy and loss: the familial, the familiar, and the strange.[20]

Taysir Batniji, *Watchtowers* (Israeli military miradors in West Bank, Palestine), 2008
Series of 26 B&W photographs, digital prints, 16" × 20" Installation view, ourtesy the artist

This tendency surfaces most strikingly in the series of twenty-six photographs called *Watchtowers, West Bank/Palestine* (2008), in which Batniji, inspired by Bernd and Hilla Becher's black-and-white pictures of water towers, hired a Palestinian photographer to shoot pictures of Israeli surveillance towers. In contradistinction to Trevor Paglen's elaborately conceived telephoto images of surveillance technology and drones, these are shot with a relatively unsophisticated camera kit at high levels of zoom, bearing a less easily conceivable sort of witness. Their lossy quality and frankness of composition nonetheless penetrates the panoptic violence of the structures themselves, reinscribing the artist's body—both distant and very close at hand—into the physical and epistemic landscape.

"Those who have no name, who remain invisible and inaudible, can only penetrate the police order via a mode of subjectivization that transforms the aesthetic coordinates of the community by implementing the universal presupposition of politics: We are all equal," writes Jacques Rancière, to whom we turn again for a sense of Batniji's potency.[21] The vagaries inherent to memory and representation may eternally reposition the image-maker into and out of history, but this is not a prison of pure passivity. The lightness of this touch is never faint or indecisive; it is epistemologically considered, conscious of the body's coordinates as it plumbs the conditions of truth.

5.

In considering the works of these three artists, we arrive less at a nodal fixity of purpose than a plane of recurrent preoccupations. The question of difference then arises not from the periphery but from the origin. As Ghani's *The Trespassers* demonstrates, the matter of translation is not one that merely concerns the peoples who are its subjects, nor is *The Trespassers* rudely concerned with a singular question of marginality. In a similar vein, Aivazian and Batniji operate at the level of traumatic aesthetics—but their works, though undeniably grounded in the social and the emotive, hint in their intellectual discipline at Sol LeWitt's memorable formulation that the artist is merely "a clerk cataloguing the results of his premise."[22]

For Aivazian, Batniji, and Ghani to be addressed as speaking from marginality, however modish, would be to reify the order from which they recoil. As Edward Said put it in *Freud and the Non-European*, "identity cannot be thought or worked through itself alone; it cannot constitute or even imagine itself without that radical originary break or flaw which will not be repressed…"[23] Indeed, whatever diasporic condition this group of artists and their work has can be understood at the point of this original rupture, an ontology stemming from marginality but not delimited by it.

The return of the periphery to the center in this "mode of subjectivization" is at the core of the work at hand. In Ghani's *The Trespassers*, the humanitarian issue abuts a more intersubjective and humanistic question of aesthetics—after all, Derrida writes, "nothing is more serious than a translation."[24] For Aivazian, the intersection of socio-political conditions and the dimensions of rule-bound sport gives rise to an investigation of the conditions of reality and representation. Batniji's *To My Brother* constructs out of personal history a very specific hypothesis about the epistemological position of the artist. These are not provincial genuflections to alterity, but a steadfast refusal of it.

Mostafa Heddaya (b. 1988, Boston) is a writer and editor in New York. His reporting, criticism, and essays have appeared in print and online at the *New York Observer*, *Paris Review*, *Salon*, *Syria Deeply*, and *Hyperallergic*, where he is managing editor. Heddaya has been an invited participant in talks and public programs at the Eyebeam Art & Technology Center (New York), Triple Canopy (New York), and the National Endowment for Democracy (Washington, D.C.). In 2011 he co-founded *American Circus*, a Pushcart Prize-winning journal, after taking his B.A. in Government and Arabic from Dartmouth College.

Notes

1 Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1997) p. 6
2 Fady Joudah, "After" (2013) in *Alight* (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 2013)
3 Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel" in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 218
4 I refer here to the conception of the mythic Eastern paradise of Shangri-La as presented by British author James Hilton in his 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*, from which Doris Duke's 1935 Hawaiian residential project drew its name.
5 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), p.13
6 Author's interview with Mariam Ghani in New York, Aug. 10, 2014
7 Carrie Lambert-Beatty, "Make-Believe: Parafiction and Plausibility." *October* vol. 129 (Summer, 2009)
8 See, for example: "Fact sheet: Extraordinary rendition," American Civil Liberties Union (online)
9 Which Foster defines (in a rather limited sense) as follows: "archival artists seek to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present."
10 Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse." *October* vol. 110 (Autumn, 2004)
11 cf. *Rasul v. Bush*, 542 U.S. 466 (2004) and *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507 (2004)
12 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of* Knowledge (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 128
13 Jacques Derrida's definitional comments in "Archive Fever" are also salient: "*Arkhe*, we recall, names at once the commencement and the commandment," which is to say the "physical, historical, or ontological principle" and the "nomological principle." [trans. Eric Prenowitz, *diacritics* 25.2 (Summer 2009), p. 9]
14 Author's telephone interview with Haig Aivazian, Aug. 13, 2014.
15 See John Samuel Harpham, "Soccer Bleu" (2013). Published in *American Circus* (online, January 2013) and *Africa's World Cup: Critical reflections on play, patriotism, spectatorship, and space*, Peter Alegi and Chris Bolsmann, eds. (University of Michigan Press, 2013)
16 This cuts both ways: Aivazian tells me that Zidane's red card was delivered after an unusual delay, suggesting that the three referees on the pitch did not see the altercation, and only learned about it over their headsets from a fourth official monitoring a video feed—even though FIFA rules hold that a red card can only be issued if the offending act was seen by the naked eye of the referees on the field.
17 See Timur Kuran, "Sparks and Prairie Fires: A theory of unanticipated political revolution," *Public Choice 61: 41-74* (1989) and Timur Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995)
18 Alain Badiou, *The Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007) p. 54
19 Author's interview with Taysir Batniji in New York, Aug. 16, 2014.
20 "In Lieu of Absence: Taysir Batniji in conversation with Silke Schmickl." Ibraaz, 29 (online, June 2012)
21 Jacques Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 13
22 Sol LeWitt, "Serial Project #1, 1966," *Aspen Magazine*, nos. 5-6, ed. Brian O'Doherty (1967)
23 Edward Said, *Freud and the Non-European* (New York: Verso, 2004) p. 54
24 Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel" in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 226

SUSPENDED DISCLOSURE: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF GEORGE AWDE

DANIEL BERNDT

Daniel Berndt

George Awde's photography, though rooted in a documentary tradition, is anything but "straight." Neither staged nor wholly spontaneous, it rather creates a tension between these categories[1] to eventually undermine them. Awde's photographs leave us with ambiguity, assessing the relationship between aesthetics and politics in times and places of continuous conflict and political rupture. Through looking at the everyday life of a group of boys and young men in the Middle East, he primarily explores notions of migration and mobility but also of home: home as defined and obscured by family, social conditioning, national and sexual identity, language, education, and faith, as well as by gestures and poses; home as the way humans interact and relate to each other, perceive themselves to be and aspire to be perceived by others, fluctuating between longing and belonging.

Using various camera techniques, Awde produces portraits, landscapes, and still-lifes in color and black-and-white, which, apart from noting the place and date of their origin, remain untitled. The names of the series, or groupings of which they are a part, provide the only additional form of verbal contextualization and accentuate the moment of fluctuation, the "in-betweenness"—or a sense of situatedness—functioning as captions and brackets simultaneously: *The Calm Before* (2006), *Quiet Crossings* (2007-09), *Shifting Grounds* (2011-13), *Windows* (2011-12) and the more recent *Cairo I* (2012-13), *Cairo II* (2014) and *His Passing Cover* (2013-14). These visual units can be conceived as a succession of chapters in a progressing narrative. But instead of establishing a chronology, Awde describes and depicts a widening field of places and protagonists in the form of an "expanded field of photography"[2] enfolding with time as a continuous work-in-progress.

In the context of the exhibition *Shangri La: Imagined Cities*, this is further emphasized by Awde in the way he proposes a discursive approach towards the medium by displaying his own photographs alongside "found photographs"[3] and digital snapshots that have been taken with and sent to him via smartphones. Thus, photography in the context of Awde's practice should be understood as a reading of actions, not only a medium of representation. It appears as a *dispositif*[4] in the form of an ongoing dialogue or conversation, ingrained in long lasting relations and friendships to create meaning beyond the surface of an image.

Born in Boston but of Lebanese origin, Awde first studied painting at the Massachusetts College of Art, later obtaining his MFA in photography from Yale University. His graduation project, *Homeland America* (2007-09), on Arab and migrant communities in the U.S., became in many ways the point of departure for his emerging concerns with identity formation in specific social-political and cultural circumstances. Consisting of eight color prints of the same dimensions (30 × 40 inches, a format consistently used by Awde), in identical, plain white wooden frames,

Homeland America is probably the only one of Awde's series that is concluded. Certainly it condenses the most autobiographical essence of his whole oeuvre so far, as it tackles his family's history while giving insight into his immediate surroundings, family members, and neighbors, as well as local Muslim communities in Massachusetts. The series asks what it means to grow up as part of a Diaspora within post-9/11 American society, at a time when Arabs and Muslims are not only considered a minority, but also a threat. As the billboard in one of the pictures of *Homeland America* proclaims: *Sharia law threatens America*. Apart from this and maybe above all, *Homeland America* tells us the story of Awde's moribund father and the close relationship Awde had with

Untitled, Beirut 2012, Inkjet print, 30" × 38", 2014
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled, Ohio 2009, Inkjet print, 30" × 38", 2009
Courtesy of the artist

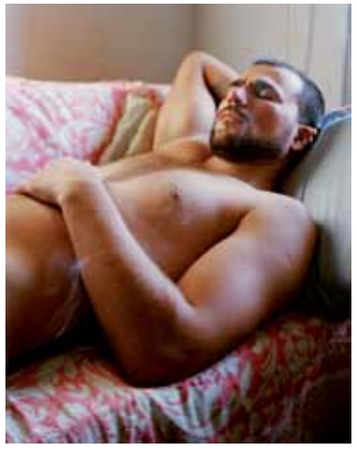
him. This is emblematically depicted in a self-portrait of Awde, who carefully assists his paralyzed father smoke a cigarette.

Untitled, Qamishli (2011), 2012, Inkjet print, 30" × 38"
Courtesy of the artist

After the passing of his father, Awde returned to Lebanon, where he had initially moved in 2004 but had been forced to leave in July 2006, due to the Lebanon-Israel war. He began to focus his work on a group of young men, most of them migrant laborers coming from Syria and Syrian Kurdistan. In *Quiet Crossings* (2007-09) and *Shifting Grounds* (2011-13), the precarity and uncertainties in which these men live emerges as a primary concern in Awde's works. With an emphatic eye and the vivid colors and dramatic compositions already poignant in *Homeland America*, these two series capture the process of coming of age these young men go through—their desires, hopes, and aspirations facing an often disenchanting, and at times brutal, reality. Driven by their needs and that of their families as well as their ambition to overcome socio-economic limitations, they live in a state of instability and volatility between their rural homes in Syria and the urban environment of Beirut.

Since the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Syrian men have traveled to Lebanon to work as laborers, mainly on construction sites in Beirut. While their wages in Beirut are significantly higher than those in their home country, they are still paid relatively little for the strenuous and insecure work they undertake. They are cheap labor, which Lebanese contractors and businessmen have been benefiting from, summated in the popular expression, "Lebanon was built with Syrian muscles."[5] As the Lebanese writer and visual artist Etel Adnan described in her 1978 novel *Sitt Marie Rose,* Syrian migrant workers have always, even during the time of a prevalent Pan-Arab ideology, experienced marginalization and exploitation.[6] With the involvement of the Syrian army in the Lebanese Civil War that ended in a 29-year-long military occupation of Lebanon, their status was not only politicized, but they also increasingly became targets of a general anti-Syrian sentiment. This sentiment progressively worsened after the Syrian uprisings of March 2011, which later developed into that nation's ongoing civil war, the ensuing violence spilling over into Lebanon.

While the photographs of *Quiet Crossings* formulate a prelude to this development, Awde's *Shifting Grounds* approaches it with a strong sense of immediacy. Since the turmoil started in Syria, the number of Syrians in Lebanon has increased. More and more men who used to work in Lebanon only seasonally are staying permanently, bringing with them their families to keep them out of the war's proximity. This is in addition to many other Syrian citizens seeking refuge in Lebanon, which has had a significant impact on the Lebanese economy. The job and housing markets are more than saturated, and wages have dropped as rents and living costs continue to increase. On top of this, many Syrians in Lebanon frequently experience assaults and abuse, and deal continuously with xenophobia, prejudice, and politically biased racism. Given the current circumstances in Syria, however, it is for many, including the men and boys in Awde's portraits, a matter of choosing the lesser of two evils.



Untitled, Beirut (2010), 2012, Inkjet print, 38" × 30"
Courtesy of the artist

Shifting Grounds conveys this feeling of being trapped, stuck in an impasse while everything in one's surroundings is subjected to constant change beyond individual reasoning and control. Rather, being increasingly at the mercy of the situation as the options to take charge of it narrow, the lives tof Awde's protagonists become more and more precarious. In order to survive they take on dubious jobs: hustle, deal drugs, or in some cases go back to Syria to fight as mercenaries. Despite or because of this hardship, they appear confident, tough, reckless, ostentatiously manly, or "hyper-masculine"— tattooed, muscular, and rugged. Yet Awde manages to contradict this accentuated, as much as performed, masculinity by insinuating fragility, pensiveness, or even tenderness at the same time —without any polishing or embellishment.

Untitled, Beirut (2013), 2014, Inkjet print, 30" × 38"
Courtesy of the artist

Awde's photographs stand paradigmatically for a kind of seeing that Susan Sontag described as "intense and cool, solicitous and detached."[7] His subjects appear that way, too, but while interacting with them through his camera, Awde finds a balance between those two poles that is self-aware, without being necessarily self-centered. In doing so, he puts all the suppositions of power, authority, and machismo associated with (hyper-) masculinity into question. This is underscored by the landscapes, still-lifes, and urban views of Beirut with which Awde combines his portraits. They are not only context-ualizing elements of Awde's photo series, but in conjunction with the portraits suggest a narrative thread. They also signify the living conditions of Awde's protagonists, and provide in an almost symbolic manner an impression of their transition or passage from Syria to Beirut, and also from child to adulthood. As in Awde's portraits, the atmospheric fusion of color and light, scenic settings as well as classical compositions, should not lead to the assumption that they are representing acts of aesthetic or even introspective rapture. Though infused with a melancholy undertone that like the photographic medium itself expresses a *memento mori*,[8] or could be read as a representation of a romantic "withdrawal of the world," they remain analytic records of urgent socio-political conditions —especially given their precision and the dense visual information presented by the large-format photographic process.

Awde's pictures should be considered as investigative accounts, accounts that closely examine faces, bodies, spaces, and objects. These are not only investigations on the surface of physical and visual manifestations, but also of a deeper, almost psychological level. If Awde leaves the protagonists of his portraits anonymous, often literary stripped bare, "reduced" to frozen gestures, poses, and gazes, he doesn't objectify them, either. In his process, Awde is gradually feeling his way towards genuineness, allowing intimacy and trust to be imperative rather than tactical and directive. This approach has already been crucial for the artists associated with the Boston School, like Nan Goldin, Mark Morrisroe, Jack Pierson, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia, who all visited either the School at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts or, like Awde, the Massachusetts College of Art throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In their photography they consistently scrutinized the conditions of the medium itself, redefining the relationship between the photographer and his or her subjects as well as "both the technical process by which the photographic image can emerge, and the relationship and phenomena it seeks to capture."[9]

This conduct is also essential to Awde's handling of photography. Apart from any autobiographical aspect (most explicit in *Homeland America),* the element of Awde's work most strongly in common with the Boston School is articulated in "the rule of intimacy"[10] which, according to Norman Bryson, is along with "identification, closeness" and "empathy"[11] (attributes that can be similarly applied to Awde) the principal "convention" of its aesthetics. Intimacy here can be seen not as a strategy but a "means of transmission." A way to formulate a "material understanding of the body and the body's interaction with its surrounding world."[12] Over the years, Awde has established and continued close relations and friendships with the boys and men he portrays, in some cases following their trajectories for more than seven years, continuously photographing them in Beirut and during trips to their home villages. Like the circle of friends and lovers that became the most relevant subjects in the photography of Goldin and Morrisroe (to an almost voyeuristic extent), Awde's protagonists appear in the most intimate and personal moments: upset and injured, tired and vulnerable, seductive and coy, stoned and sleeping.

If the Boston School artists looked to their friends, members of the notorious under- or misrepresented outcasts of American society in the 1980's and early 90's (specifically the gay and queer subculture of New York during the AIDS crisis), Awde turns to the urban subaltern of Beirut. The capturing of the city

Untitled, Beirut (2014), 2014, Polaroid, 5" × 4"
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled, Beirut (2014), 2014, Polaroid, 4" × 5"
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled, Beirut (2014), 2014, Polaroid, 5" × 4"
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled, Beirut (2013), 2014, Inkjet print, 38" x 30"
Courtesy of the artist

in its constant transformation becomes enfolded in "a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way."[13] Photographing in public and private places, Awde reveals both the changing cityscape and the effect it has on the Syrian boys and men living there. With at times more than five men sharing a small room or studio apartment, most social interactions take place on the streets, or, if in need of greater privacy, dodgy hotels—a refuge that Awde also uses as the setting for some of his portraits in *His Passing Cover* (2013 -14) series, implying homoeroticism and sexual tension.

Taking account of the latent homoerotic is not only a subject of this series but a topos throughout Awde's oeuvre. Beyond the Boston School artists, the work of Lebanese multi-media artist Akram Zaatari has been a significant influence for Awde in this regard. Zaatari consistently deals with the "uneasy subject" of homoeroticism and the "codes of masculine behavior and homosociality"[14] in the Middle East. His video *Majnounak (Crazy of You)* (1997), in which he interviews a group of young men living in the suburbs of Beirut about their sexual experiences,[15] might be considered as a foundation for Awde's treatment of masculinity and sexual ambiguity.

Awde's reflection on the technical process and material aspect of photography forms another link to both the Boston School and Zaatari's practice, in particular the latter's work related to the Arab Image Foundation and its collection.[16] But instead of applying a predominantly historical and pluralistic point of view, as Zaatari does, Awde is creating a photographic dispositif mainly concerned with his own usage of the medium and the sporadic inclusion of pictures relating to his production of images from a stronger "authorial" point of view. By working with different camera techniques, from analogue large- and mid-format to vintage Polaroid cameras, Awde creates a set of images embedded in different regimes of representation. Large-format photography demands time-consuming preparation, and the construction and composure of an image with a large depth of field that is close to the principles of the tableau.[17] Instant or Polaroid photography, on the other hand, allows for spontaneity and impulsiveness, resulting in the production of small, snapshot-like impressions with mostly arbitrary light and color qualities.

These regimes are presented in a combination of vertical and horizontal displays, demanding different means of engagement. The large-format prints invite a closer observation and detailed examination of the depicted situations. The Polaroids, displayed on tables in combination with contact sheets, found photographs shot with 35mm cameras, and prints of digital images reproduced in the equivalent screen-sizes of the smartphones with which they have been taken, offer an overview and comparative study. Both components together form space and time vectors, creating a place for scrutiny and reflection, highlighting in tandem the physicality of photography in general and Awde's work specifically. Disrupted by the gaps between the images and distorted by the visible chemical traces left by partially damaged Polaroid cameras, as well as marks of overexposure from having negatives x-rayed on airport security checkpoints,[18] this process consequently presents far more than a documentary project.

Though motivated by a strong commitment to point out socio-political contexts rendered invisible by mass media and ignored by political elites, Awde does not rely on the indexical nature of photography as a factual point of view. Rather, Awde's work is suspended in his consideration of photography as a medium highly susceptible to, and reflective of, chance and abstraction. At the same time, he avoids the reduction or extension of his subjects to the allegorical. In this regard, the inclusion of the found photographs and digital images becomes fundamental. Having been shot by his subjects instead of Awde himself, they add perspectives that dovetail with his own narrative. They are the result of a constant exchange and conversation between Awde and his protagonists. Particularly the digital photographs are comprised of visual messages and updates, an "instant sharing" of one's whereabouts

Untitled, Qamishli (2014), 2014, Inkjet print, 4" × 5"
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled, Qamishli (2014), 2014, Inkjet print, 5" × 4"
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled, Tripoli (2013), 2014, Inkjet print, 4" × 5"
Courtesy of the artist

that result in capturing "both the spectacular and the mundane."[19] Some of the pictures were recently taken in Syria, showing a few of the men Awde previously portrayed in Beirut with weapons in heroic poses or boyishly eating candy. Another photograph sent to him corresponds directly with one of Awde's compositions, as one man playfully stages a mise-en-scène of his own portrait.

This form of dialogue complements and condenses the impression we get of Awde's subjects and the circumstances they live in from his self-authored photographs. They become recurrent characters in a larger narrative with a strong socio-political impact. Awde "makes" them present, but by leaving them anonymous, he prevents them from becoming "representative." He averts the risk of what Abigail Solomon Godeau called "a double act of subjugation" taking place "first in the social world that has produced its victims; and second, in the regime of the image produced within and for the same system that engenders the conditions it then re-presents."[20] By doing so, Awde insists foremost on intimacy, letting us observe but not giving us full disclosure or initiating the viewer completely. Centering secondly on ambiguity, Awde's work reminds us that there are no fixed categories, no fixed identities, no fixed territories, but only crossings, passings, and shifting grounds.

Notes

1 For different critical perspectives on the "documentary legacy" of photography, see for example: Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Martha Rosler, "In, Around, and Afterthoughts (On Documentary Photography)," in: Richard Bolton (Ed.), *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), pp. 304-333; Hilde Van Gelder and Helen Westgeest, "Photography's Social Function. The Documentary Legacy," in *Photography Theory in Historical Perspective* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 152-189 and Allan Sekula, *Photography Against the Grain: Eessays and Phphoto Wworks* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984). The term "straight photography" was established by the end of the 19th century, to describe a kind of photography that is non-manipulated, committed solely to "reality" and produces images "in which the emphasis is on its direct documentary character." See (also in relation to staged or composed photography): Hilde Van Gelder and Helen Westgeest, "Representation in Photography: The Competition with Painting," in *Photography Theory in Historical Perspective* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).. And particularly on "staged photography" see Michael Köhler and Zdenek Felix (Ed.), *Constructed Realities: The Art of Staged Photography* (Zurich: Edition Stemmle, 1995) as well as Lori Pauli, *Acting the Part: Photography as Theatre: A History of Staged Photography* (London/New York: Merrell Publishers, 2006) and on the concept of "staging" in photography see Michael Fried, "Three Beginnings" in: ibd. *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 10-11

2 George Baker described photography's expanded field in his essay of the same name, published 2005, as a "tearing of photography between oppositional extremes" to define a structural field "of new formal and cultural possibilities, all of them ratified logically by the expansion of the medium of photography." See George Baker, "Photography's Expanded Field," in: *October* 114, Fall 2005, pp. 120-140

3 On different modes of artists' uses of found photographs see for example Mark Godfrey's essays "Photography Found and Lost: On Tacita Dean's Floh," *October* 114, Fall 2005, pp. 90-119 and ibd. "The Artist as Historian," *October* 120, Spring 2007, pp. 140–172

4 Jean-Louis Baudry established this term in his essay on the ideologies of presentation and reception in cinema (1975). Michel Foucault soon started to use the term, which has been translated widely as "apparatus," to refer to the institutional mechanisms and knowledge structures that augment and assert the exercise of power within society. In connection to photography, the Belgian photo and film theorist Philippe Dubois called the photograph itself an integral component of a "dispositif de présentation." And the German PhD program The Photographic Dispositif, chaired by photo historian Katharina Sykora, considers photography categorically not "only from the perspective of the resulting image, but as a complex act grounded in historical, medial, technological, social, cultural, and aesthetic specificities, which has at the same time the inherent potential for the disruption and modification of these very specificities, in order to describe the specific constellation between images, devices of display, spatio-temporal surroundings and the audience." See Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus," in: *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Winter 1974/1975), pp. 39-47; Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh" (1977) interview, in: Colin Gordon (Ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Vintage, 1980), pp. 194–228; Philippe Dubois, "Von einem Bild, das Andere oder über den Einfluss des Kinos auf die zeitgenössische künstlerische Photographie," in: *Eikon. Internationale Zeitschrift für Photographie & Medienkunst*, 7/8, 1993, p.22-36, p. 25. (Orig.: "D'une image, l'autre ou De l'influence du cinéma sur la photographie créative contemporaine," in: Jean Rault and Philippe Dubois (Eds.): *De l'instantané à la durée: séminaire de photographie* janvier 93-juin 93 (Le Havre: D.R.A.C. Haute Normandie: Ecole d'art du Havre, 1993); http://dasfotografischedispositiv.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Photographic-Dispositif_Summary3.pdf

5 John Chalcraft, "Of Specters and Disciplined Commodities Syrian Migrant Workers in Lebanon," in: *Middle East Report* 236 – Inside Syria and Lebanon, Volume 35, Fall 2005, p. 28; for further, more comprehensive reading on the topic of Syrian migrant workers in Lebanon, see also John Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage: Syrian Migrant Workers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

6 Adnan's novel takes place during the Lebanese civil war and describes its course and the murder of a woman named Sitt Marie Rose by a group of Christian militia fighters. The first part of the novel, which is set shortly prior to the war, tells the story of Mounir, who wants to shoot a movie based on the life of Syrian immigrants in Beirut. Etel Adnan, *Sitt Marie Rose* (Sausalito: The Post-Apollo Press, 2011) (first published in 1978 by the Editions des femmes, in Paris.)

7 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar , Straus and Giroux, 1977), p. 99.This ambivalent point of view on photography or "photographic seeing" is symptomatic of Sontag's take on the medium, in which she simultaneously contests its meaning in the face of a desensitizing flood of images but grants it the potential to provoke affective reactions, too.

8 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), p. 15: "All photographs are memento mori [...]", see also Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 96: "By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. (...)Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe." And Eduardo Cadava, "Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History", in: *diacritics* fall-winter 22, 1992, pp. 84–114, here p. 90: "There can be no photograph without the withdrawal of what is photographed. The conjunction of death and the photographed is the very principle of photographic certitude: The photograph is a cemetery. A small funerary monument, the photograph is a grave for the living dead. It tells their history—a history of ghosts and shadows—and it does so because it is this history."

9 Michael Jay McClure, "Prima Facie: The Photograph, the Unphotographed, and the Boston School," in *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 15, London 2014, pp. 103–120, here p. 104

10 Norman Bryson, "Boston School," in *Boston School* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art 1995), p. 38–39

11 *Ibid.*, p. 39

12 *Ibid*, p. 22

13 Lauren Berlant identified this "process" as the main "aspiration" of intimacy. See Lauren Berlant, "Intimacy: A Special Issue," in: *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Intimacy (Winter, 1998), pp. 281–288, here p. 281

14 Juan Vicente Aliaga, "What a body exudes: Reflections on the social and public dimensions of images, homosociality and affection in the work of Akram Zaatari," in: Juan Vicente Aliaga (Ed.), *Akram Zaatari: The Uneasy Subject* (Milan: Charta, 2011), p. 71

15 All of Majnounak' s protagonists likewise deliver flimsy reports of seduction and casual encounters, presenting themselves as superior conquerors, performing a similar ostensive masculinity as Awde's subjects partially do.

16 Zaatari, who is co-founder of the Beirut-based Arab Image Foundation (AIF), which was established in 1997 with the mission to collect and preserve photography specifically produced in the Arab world and by its ddiaspora, continuously works with photographs from the AIF collection, combining ethnographic and archeological methods in order to study and (re-)contextualize photography, its conventions of representation as well as its material properties in the frame of exhibitions, publications, and artworks.

17 For further details on the "tableau" in photography see for example Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2008).

18 These marks can be considered as a visual manifestation of Awde's own "crossings" and "passings," as he consistently travels between the Middle East and the U.S., where he has worked for years with the same photo laboratory.

19 Jared McCormick, "The Whispers of WhatsApp: Beyond Facebook and Twitter in the Middle East," http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15495/the-whispers-of-whatsapp_beyond-facebook-and-twitt. Among other aspects, McCormick highlights the fact that WhatsApp can in this context also be regarded as an outlet and vehicle of intimacy.

20 Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 176

JANANNE AL-ANI: DISEMBODIED PERSPECTIVE

H.G. Masters

Immersing yourself in Jananne Al-Ani's 15-minute film *Shadow Sites I* (2010), you feel like a soaring predator. Beneath you there is a dry riverbed, a few scrubs in the sandy soil and a lone tree. A path leads through rows of crops resembling thin green scratches on the landscape. The stone walls of an old settlement divide what were once rooms. The land becomes patterns, formations—information—but exactly what it is revealing, you do not know. What are those mounds that come after the ruins? A long-disused fort? An ancient settlement in the lone and level sands? As you become mesmerized by this voyage, the land becomes alien and abstract, a place seemingly without people, but marked by civilizations, old and new. Slowly you feel less and less like a corporeal being, and closer to the disembodied eye of the camera.

Halfway through the film, the sound of an airplane's propeller kicks in, which jolts you out of deep absorption. As you soar over a large excavation site—perhaps an extinct mine—you begin to feel as if you are on a reconnaissance mission. You find yourself looking for clues, trying to make sense of the structures. A network of roads around plots of land could be a housing development in the making. Rows of sheds are surrounded by thousands of sheep. Around 12 minutes into the film, you come upon the circular green patterns identifiable as an industrial farm, a welcome burst of color in the muted landscape.

Formally beautiful and subtly sinister in equal measure, Al-Ani's *Shadow Sites I* reveals how seeing the landscape from above creates a feeling of physical disembodiment, and how accustomed we are to viewing the earth and sky from a fixed position on the ground. It quickly becomes apparent how this unique vantage point gives access to places and information one is not afforded by traveling along the ground, and how we intuitively associate aerial images with those places that are otherwise off-limits—whether it is the Iranian nuclear facilities at Natanz and Qom, or the Baba Amr neighborhood of Homs, to take two locations whose aerial depictions have been frequently in the news this year. These pictures, captured by remotely operated cameras represent the visualization of the continuing mechanization and virtualization of espionage, warfare and the media coverage of foreign affairs. They are the pictures that in turn shape the political and ethical dialogue about conflicts.

Shadow Sites I, 2011, Digitized Super 16mm film. Single channel projection. Photo by Adrian Warren. Courtesy of the artist

In mid-January, Al-Ani was in Istanbul where *Shadow Sites I* was being screened at the research center Salt in conjunction with an exhibition about Ottoman-era archaeological practices. At an evening lecture, she described the process of shooting the film over the course of ten days in southern Jordan, near the borders with both Saudi Arabia and Israel, from a small airport in the Wadi Rum area. Al-Ani explained how she and her crew attached a camera to a strut on the wing of a small plane, and how recording in super-16mm film meant she could only film for up to eight minutes before the pilot had to land to change the roll.

She referred to French cultural theorist Paul Virilio's writings on military technology and film, particularly his book *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (1980), and Virilio's interest in Edward Steichen's World War I reconnaissance photographs of the trenches on the Western Front taken from the air—several examples of which she showed. Virilio summarizes Steichen's ventures as a project that "blends motor, eye and weapon," and quotes artist and writer Allan Sekula's essay, "The Instrumental Image: Steichen at War" (originally published in *Artforum* in December 1975), in which Sekula writes: "The meaning of the aerial photo, its reading, depends on all that can be drawn from the rationalized act of interpretation as a source of military intelligence… few pictures, except possibly in the medical field, are as 'free,' seemingly, from a meaning higher than that of their usage." For Al-Ani, Steichen's photographs had something like the opposite effect: "I was struck by how this scene of carnage

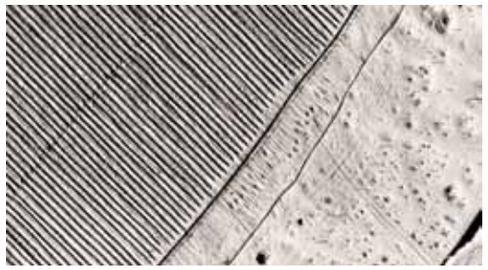
H.G. MASTERS

and horror could be transformed through the distancing of the photographer, of the camera, into something really beautiful."

Al-Ani has uncovered other uses for aerial photography, albeit ones still connected to the history of warfare. "Shadow sites," she explained, is a term that comes from aerial archaeology, referring to locations that are revealed from the air only very early in the morning or late in the evening when the shadows are longest. This practice dates back to the first and second World Wars, when pilots who were flying sorties from the United Kingdom to continental Europe discovered archaeological sites on the ground that no one had ever seen before. After World War II, archaeologists and universities enlisted a number of these pilots and planes to begin surveying the newly found locations. Al-Ani said she was surprised that, "out of conflict, could come a revelation, or something redeeming, maybe."

The film, along with its companion works—*Shadow Sites II* (2011), made from still aerial images of the same sites, and *Excavators* (2010), a short video of ants building a nest—are part of a larger ongoing project begun in 2008, "The Aesthetics of Disappearance: A Land Without People." Each piece shares, in the artist's words, "an extreme vertical perspective that doesn't allow you to see anything expansive of the landscape." While the title comes from Virilio's text, and particularly references his notion of what Al-Ani glosses as the "trickery and magic of cinema," it also refers to how, from certain perspectives—physical or ideological—the body disappears into the landscape. She notes that the phrase "a land without people" comes from a very famous and controversial comment that is attributed to early Zionists in Palestine, "the idea that Palestine is a land without people, for a people without a land. So it's also this idea of the poetics of the place. The way in which a place is occupied but the people who are occupying it are in the way." Thinking about the region at large, she also notes that the "disappearance" of large populations of civilians is a feature of civil conflicts in Lebanon and Iraq, the Syrian uprising of the early 1980s, the Armenian genocide, as well as in Palestine, where whole villages were razed and people were cleared from the landscape in 1948 at the time of the formation of the state of Israel.

Excavators, 2010, Digitized Super 16mm film.
Courtesy of the artist



Photographic still from *Shadow Sites II*, 2011,
Single channel digital video projection.
Courtesy of the artist, Abraaj Capital Art Prize, Dubai

Al-Ani's thinking and research into the representation of foreign conflict is entwined with events of the last three decades in the region and, quite plainly, her own biography. She was born in 1966 in Kirkuk, in northeastern Iraq, to an Irish-English mother and an Iraqi father, who worked for the Iraqi Petroleum Company in the city where huge reserves of oil were discovered in 1927. In a conversation with Al-Ani the day following her talk in Istanbul, she recalled that, "Kirkuk was then a diverse city." However, as the region sought more independence from Baghdad in the early 1970s, tensions between the Kurdish majority and the ruling Ba'ath Party intensified, as the Iraqi military sought to retain sovereignty over the region. "We had a very happy childhood, and the conflict was in the background, but we were used to it." She does remember a period in 1975 when the whole city had to black out everything, with curtains covering the windows and the car lights had to be painted out. However, she remarked:

> In fact, for us growing up, the big threat was not the Kurds—who were the most likely cause of a real attack—but the Israelis. Israel was the big evil. We were totally brainwashed. We would imagine that if a fighter jet flew over it could be the Israelis coming to bomb us. We had these scenarios as kids where we would say when the Israelis come we're going to lie down and play dead.

In the summer of 1980, Al-Ani, her mother and sisters left Iraq for a holiday in the UK, coincidentally just a few months before the Iran-Iraq War began that September. Ultimately they never returned to Iraq. Instead, Al-Ani spent her teenage years in England where she studied painting at London's Byam Shaw School of Art, following a very conservative path of painting primarily from the human figure before graduating in 1989.

While at Byam Shaw, she and fellow students organized a feminist reading group, and hired a professor (Roxanne Permar) to give them a lecture on female artists through history, since the requisite art history classes didn't mention any. In her own painting projects, she began reworking iconic and mythological stories from a feminist perspective, critiquing how the image of the female body was constructed. She describes taking Rubens' *The Three Graces* (1639) and making them into male figures based on images from bodybuilding magazines.

Asked to elaborate on the milieu at that time, Al-Ani vividly remembers that Mona Hatoum—who had been a student at Byam Shaw in the mid to late 1970s—came and gave a talk. Hatoum had just finished making her video *Measures of Distance* (1988), in which she reads letters (translated into English) from her mother in Beirut, as the Arabic text is overlaid on top of footage of Hatoum's mother in the shower. Al-Ani remarks that she was, "completely blown away by it. I hadn't seen anything like it. And coming from the Middle East, it was the first time I had seen anybody using Arabic text or hearing someone speaking Arabic in a work of contemporary art. It was really important for me."

For her graduation show, she made what she calls "a tacky, gallery-cum-shopping-experience" by re-photographing famous paintings of female nudes, putting them in tawdry gold frames and displaying them with Muzak playing in the background, "making a very crude parallel between general consumerism and consuming women's bodies in art." Her career got underway when one of these five works—comprising Ingres' painting of women in a female Turkish bath, displayed "sandwiched" between her photographs of shop fronts—was accepted for the 1989 Whitechapel Open. Following that show, Al-Ani started to receive invitations from curators and art spaces around the country. From the beginning of her practice as an artist, Al-Ani has been interested in interrogating the logic and construction of a picture, and its layered meanings.

But the event that galvanized her art production was the 1991 Gulf War, which, Al-Ani says, "shifted everything for me, in terms of my critical thinking about photography and film. That was the point at which I started looking at the history of photography and how to deconstruct the image." She remembers from childhood how the Iraqi news media was full of obvious, crude media manipulation and political spin, and her shock that these same techniques were being used in England at the time, in "a horrible reliving of this nightmare of propaganda." She adds, "All the things I had been looking at in Orientalist paintings and the construction of this fantasy of the Middle East—it was so 19th century, somewhere in the past. But suddenly the British media are talking about Saddam Hussein like 'that big guy with the beard and the sword in that painting.' It was ridiculous, it was such a caricature. It radicalized me in looking at photography and changed how I thought about making work."

Untitled May 1991 (Gulf War Work), 1991,
20 framed silver gelatin prints, 6" × 6" each.
Courtesy of the artist

From that experience came *Untitled (Gulf War Work)* (1991), which comprises 20 black-and-white photographs, arranged in four rows. The images on the top row depict archaeological artifacts from Ur, an ancient site in southern Iraq. The second row has old family pictures from Iraq, while the third features portraits of herself, her three sisters and her mother, taken at that time. The bottom row contains photographic appropriations of newspaper images that were taken when the war was over—which, she explains, "was the first time that you saw the body in the landscape, because up until then, the way in which the war was represented was through these extraordinary video-game-like aerial images of trucks being blown up on bridges; you never saw the body, there was no reference to civilians on the ground or what it means when the communications or water or sewage systems are destroyed. So this

piece for me was about trying to re-contextualize something that was so complex but that people had no notion of or interest in."

During her MA studies at the Royal College of Art (1995–97), Al-Ani became interested in 19th-century photographers, and in the process she realized that the history of photography in North Africa and the Middle East was deeply intertwined with the representations created by the famous European Orientalist painters, with many photographers deploying similar visual tropes and objects as studio props. Al-Ani remarked: "As a European in the 19th century, what would you have thought about seeing those images? The photographs became a verification of the paintings, which were a total fantasy, because of their indexicality." She combed through photographic archives at the Bibliothèque Nationale and other libraries in Paris. "That's where I became interested in this obsession with the veil, and the way the fantasy of the veil is played out through photography."

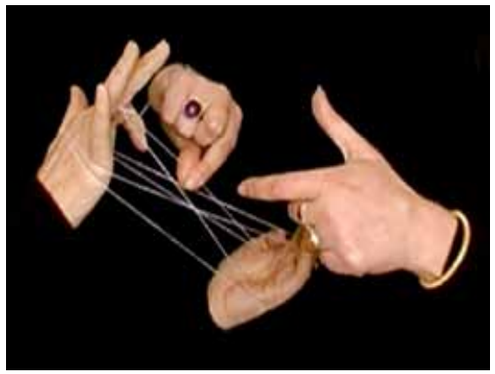
From that research came several new artworks, including *Veil* (1997), which is an installation of black-and-white slide projections showing five women's faces in a row. The figure on the far left wears a full *niqab*, her eyes covered by black mesh. Each successive figure wears less covering, until the final figure on the far right has no head covering at all. Over the course of the piece, the five portraits slowly fade in and out, as each figure is shown wearing these different configurations of the veil or headscarf (*hijab*), in a cycle of revealing and concealing. *Veil* is far from a polemic about whether women should or shouldn't wear the veil or headscarf and whether this is a sign of oppression—the typical terms of the Anglo- European discourse. Instead, the slow cycle of revealing/concealing in *Veil* discharges the exotic—and, one could also say, erotic— undercurrents normally associated with Orientalist depictions of covered women. Over the course of the piece, one starts to wonder whether the different representations of the five women, veiled or unveiled, are really that different, which is itself a process of humanizing the subjects.

The video and photographic works that Al-Ani created in the second half of the 1990s and early 2000s share several distinguishing characteristics. The actors or subjects are primarily herself, her three sisters and mother—although Al-Ani has said in prior interviews that this is not an important component of the work. Most of the works are filmed against a black background, giving the heads a floating appearance, a disembodiment or dislocation from any context, as if they themselves are apparitions. Many of the pieces are based on the structure of a game, and are at times very much like a hybrid of film and portrait photography, in each case investigating how the person behind the camera builds narratives about the subject.

She Said, 2000, Five channel video installation. Courtesy of the artist

In the video *1001 Nights* (1998), the five women are shown together with their eyes closed. One by one, they open their eyes and recount a recurring dream about Iraq (Al-Ani left each of them alone with the camera to record by themselves). Remarkably all of the women relate a dream about fleeing in a car from some kind of war or danger. In *A Loving Man* (1996/99), the five figures appear again against a black background. The first figure, on the far left, begins with the line, "A loving man, who broke my heart." The next woman repeats the first line, adding another, and this process continues with each trying to remember all the words, sometimes smiling or laughing awkwardly as they watch each other. *She Said* (2000), also a multichannel piece, shows the family whispering in one another's ears, as in the game of Telephone, passing a phrase from one to the other. "Where should I go?" becomes "How far back do I go?" "Tell us how we started" becomes "so that's where we started." *Fair* (2002) shows the heads of the four sisters each simultaneously having their hair brushed by a pair of hands.

In several shorter, less narrative works, the female body is depicted only in parts. *Reel* (2001) is a two-minute video of five pairs of feet dancing what appears to be a traditional Irish jig, with some moving more adroitly than others. In the two-channel video *Cradle* (2001), two pairs of hands, set against a black background, are playing the game Cat's Cradle, in which a looped string held around the thumb and index finger of each hand, is arranged into complex webs, and passed back and forth between the two players. The hands in the left channel are adept at the game, while those on the right struggle. *Untitled* (2002) is a video of a woman brushing her long dark hair, which has been flipped over in front of her face, so that the viewer is momentarily confused whether it is the front or the back of the woman they are seeing. These works at first seem to have little connection with *Shadow Sites I* and *II* and Al-Ani's preoccupation with the landscape. However, they share a deeply rooted concern with how the confines of the camera's lens (whether on film or in video), determines the representation of the given subject. In that sense, what the camera does not reveal becomes as crucial as what it does.



Cradle, 2001, Single channel digital video and 5" LCD monitor. Courtesy of the artist

A Loving Man, 1996, Five channel digital video installation. Courtesy of the artist

Events in Iraq in the early 2000s again prompted a shift in Al-Ani's work. In her talk at Salt, she described her 2004 video, *Muse*, as a transitional work and "a response to the war in Iraq, in 2003." This is one of a two-part work, shown in the UK at the Norwich Gallery in 2004 and in London at Tate Britain in 2005, called "The Visit." It is at this time that Al-Ani returned to the absence of the body—the de-humanization of the landscape—or as she says, "the Western fantasy idea of the desert as an unoccupied space." While referring to European Orientalist attitudes, this view, in the context of the Iraq War and its representation in the Western media, has clear ethical ramifications for how invading countries tend to overlook, or de-prioritize, the impact of war on civilians.

Filmed in eastern Jordan, in an area close to the Iraqi border, *Muse* begins in a bleak desert landscape, a landscape Al-Ani chose because "it didn't represent an Orientalist ideal. It didn't contain beautiful rolling sand dunes, no oases in the distance, no caravan; a very bleak, dry and empty place." Into the frame, a man wearing a gray suit appears from the left. It's windy; he's smoking. He walks slowly from the right to the left of the frame, as if confined by the camera. His shadow is long; he turns and paces back to the right. He walks back off camera to the far right, and when his shadow is gone, the screen fades to black. There are seven scenes like this, each time his shadow is longer and the landscape grows darker and darker. What he is doing there or waiting for is unclear, but he resolutely inhabits the ostensibly "empty" space, even as he appears trapped.

While filming this work Al-Ani had become curious about something else she noticed in the desert: black basalt stones arranged and stacked, though it wasn't clear by whom or why. This led her to discover aerial photographs of the area by archaeologists who were documenting Jordan's historical sites. It was this research that led in turn, several years later, to "The Aesthetics of Disappearance: A Land Without People."

The second major work from this ongoing series, *Shadow Sites II*, is made from very high-resolution digital stills that were shot on the same survey flights over southern Jordan. The tone of the video is even more sinister than *Shadow Sites I*. The colors of the landscape are highly contrasted, and in each of the images there is a digital zoom effect, by which the camera appears to be falling or locking onto an object on the ground below—whether a modern house, a circle of crops or the unidentifiable "W" shapes in the landscape (which Al-Ani speculates are trenches used by the

Al-Ani doesn't relinquish her ability, as an artist, to create abstractions—which are the most disembodied representations of all.

Muse (from the video installation *The Visit*), 2004, Digitized Super 16mm film. Single channel projection. Photography by Effie Paleologou

Jordanian military for training). The ominous, droning soundtrack is made from ambient sounds collected during the trip to Jordan—animal sounds, a whistling wind—mixed with bits of audio from a "friendly fire" incident in which US troops fired on their British colleagues early in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In this work, even more than *Shadow Sites I*, there is the clear implication that these beautiful images are also intrusions—ones made by highly sophisticated, remotely operated machines, which produce images of pure information, devoid of the human form.

Looking ahead, Al-Ani explains that she has done preliminary research and flights in the southwestern deserts of the United States, as well as in the UK, and that she would like to make the next parts of the film series in these locations. "The ideal for me would be to create these three films that look very similar, and then the only thing you know about them is that they are these three different places." I remark that the two films she has made so far—when you know nothing about them, their context or creation—are strongly abstract, formal even. She replies in something like a lament: "Not so many people see that. I just love that Jasper Johns-like target that appears halfway through *Shadow Sites II*." Even when she is the person behind the camera,

TRANSPOSI-TIONS

Gelare Khoshgozaran

Delay is an indispensable part of the process of being understood as queer.
—The last sentence I heard in a dream, June 22, 2014

Switching between tabs on my Internet browser, I move back and forth among information that takes the form of numbers: numbers that denote body count, bombshells on Gaza, my Facebook feed and music player. Under my fingertips, I feel the friction of a machine's constant translation turning into heat, mathematics hiding behind the luminous surface of the images.

Each image is framed in the rectangle screen of my computer, everything beyond the rectangle an extension of the frame. The smells of coffee, the taste of pastry, overhead conversations, dykes, hipster dads with their babies, the neighborhood of Highland Park, Los Angeles.

I came to L.A. on an August day in 2009 and lived here a few years as an alien. Later I became an "asylee," and Los Angeles my asylum. By the time I realized that there was no going back for me I found it inevitable to think about dying in this city, my asylum. What does it mean to die in a city where the most famous landmark is a massive sculptural structure hiding behind the flatness of language? Every time someone sees this sign from a distance and reads "HOLLYWOOD," three-dimensionality is being forgotten.

I first met Los Angeles on a CRT TV screen. After the revolution in Iran, the Iranians in showbiz and pop music were exiled onto a 3:4 screen, an island behind a semi-flat vitrine called Los Angeles. Los Angeles was a place where images and sounds of a different possibility of Iranian-ness were being prolifically produced. Year after year, telegraphs from Tehrangeles to Tehran arrived in the form of music videos produced by Caltex Records, once located only as visual noise, a logotype on the bottom right corner of the frame, today a record company in the Valley, 30 miles from where I now live.

Screenshots from YouTube: Andy & Kouros—Topoly
اندی و کوروس—توپلی

GELARE KHOSHGOZARAN

Mural of the Former U.S. Embassy in Tehran
Photograph: Philip Maiwald

Screenshots from YouTube: Tehran Iran dance 1

Growing up during and after the Iran-Iraq War, in the years of public mourning and depression, these popculture telegraphs were images from life on another planet. America was an idea, the sum of so many disparate things: my parents' nostalgia for a country that we were once on good diplomatic terms with; the violent colonizer contaminating the thoughts and hearts of pious Iranian youth (at least according to daily official school re-minders); the producer of '80s and '90s fashion products, both contraband and objects of collective longing.

My America was a negotiation between having to march on the American flag painted on the school ground every morning, and appreciating the colors of the same flag on the jackets and shoes of break-dancers. America was somewhere between the jars of Skippy peanut butter out of my grandmother's luggage and the mural of the Statue of Liberty depicted as a death skull on the wall of the former American Embassy (the "Den of Espionage"), in Tehran.

In those days the television that announced the news of the war, of death tolls and casualties, was the same entry point to a world of "just fun" and fantasy I entered through mixed music videotapes smuggled into the country. Every few years the tapes would arrive amongst the peanut butter jars, Scotch-Brites and T-shirts emblazoned with images of a smiling California sun, unpacked from grandmothers' suitcases.

The Betamax VCR was a magic apparatus, making it possible for me to look at Cyndi Lauper dance on the street, just wanting to have fun! The heads of the girls, "done with their working day," tilting to the right and left, right and left, right and left, the screen folding outwards and turning into a globe, the globe turning around on the screen, flattening and becoming the screen again… as I was a six year old watching 1985 New York unfold in 1992 Tehran.

The lag in my exposure via proxy to American pop culture, and the exuberant "fun" that it offered me prior to any understanding of its content or context, was a crucial aspect of this experience. This delay allowed me to revel in the anachronism: war and fun, death and dance, mourning and celebration, here and there, then and now.

Lagging behind, having to look up the references in jokes and conversations, a retroactive way of understanding and making sense of things, is an inevitable part of an immigrant's life; it was of mine. When this inability to synchronize turns into a conscious refusal of synchronicity, is it possible that it takes up a form of queer resistance?

This inability to fully attune to the beat and pace of "fun" and pleasure, and the acknowledgement of falling behind, creates new possibilities not only for viewing the past, but also for imagining the future. New possibilities for queerness, "a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see the future beyond the quagmire of the present."[1]

Screenshots from YouTube: Cyndi Lauper, *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*

Notes

1 Jose Esteban Munoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: NYU Press, 2009)

Still Waters Run Deep.

studies for a film.

October 27, 2005

In the Seine St-Denis district of the Parisian suburbs, near Clichy-sous-Bois, a group of boys aged between 10 and 17 have just finished playing soccer in a local park.
As they make their way home at dawn, they find themselves being chased by the police. Most of the boys are caught, but three of them take refuge in a high voltage transformer.
That evening, Clichy-sous-Bois experiences a series of black-outs. One boy, Muhettin, suffers shock and severe burns. The two others, Zied and Bouna, are killed by the electric charge.
The unsettling drone of this charge would be felt throughout France's suburbs.

June, 2014

After defeating South Korea 4-2 and drawing 1-1 with Russia,
the Algerian national team qualifies to round of 16 of the
World Cup for the first time in its history.
Faced with the mighty German squad in Brazil, Algeria forces
an over time, when it equalizes with their opponents 1-1.
Germany eventually wins the match with a second goal
in the 120th minute.
A few days after exiting the competition, the Algerian team
announces it will donate its $9 million prize money
to the people of Gaza.


TAÏDER
19
FEGHOULI
20
SOUNNI

October-November, 2005
The electricity that killed Zied and Bouna does more than spark the riots that sweep through the projects of France. The charge from the transformer produces a strange interference, scrambling identities, histories and geographies. Police officers are heard making incoherent assertions: ‘‘this is not Gaza!’’ and, ‘‘where do you think you are, Palestine?’’ A journalist is overheard saying, ‘‘but you’re talking about a real Intifada!’’


POLICE
POLICE

"I grew up in the hood too, when he says he want to clean up with a kärcher water hose, Sarkozy might not realize what he is saying. I take it personally […] Violence is never gratuitous, one has to understand where the malaise is coming from"
Lilian Thuram, 2005

"Starting tomorrow we're going to clean up the projects with a *kärcher* water hose. We will source the necessary manpower and the take the time that is needed, but they will be cleaned up"
Nicolas Sarkozy, 2005

"Go get fucked you dirty son of a whore."
Nicolas Anelka, 2010

"I was less shocked by the insult than by the fact that he used it towards me …It broke a barrier of positions, ages, hierarchy…. Anelka killed the squad."
Raymond Domenech, 2012

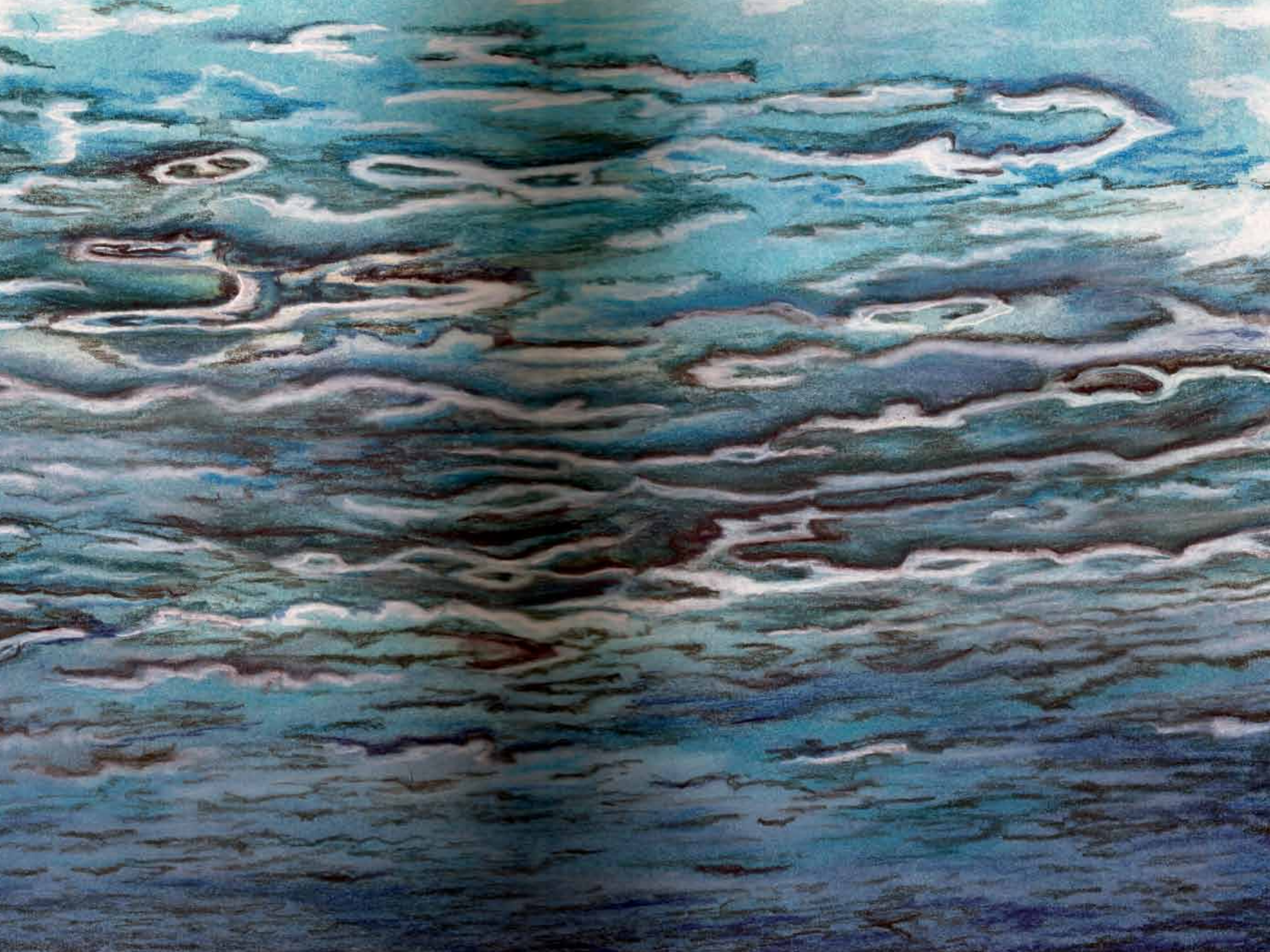
"Some words are harsher than deeds. They are words that affected me to my very core. It was very personal. When one touches the mother or the sister… I would have rather been punched right in the face"
Zinedine Zidane, 2006

"What is for sure is that I didn't call him an Islamist terrorist. I am not a cultivated man and I don't know what an Islamist terrorist is… And I certainly didn't insult Zidane's mother either, for me the mother is sacred."
Marco Materazzi, 2006

November 8, 2005
The government declares a state of emergency and imposes
a curfew exclusive to the projects.
As a eulogy for their dead boys, the inhabitants of these
projects have been burning cars on a nightly basis.
They do so to break the obscurity of nights intensified by
the black outs of Clichy-sous-Bois.
If indeed these fires were meant as a means for the
inhabitants to ward off the suffocating darkness felt in their
neighborhoods, then the curfew – this *couvre-feu* –
is an attempt to asphyxiate them.

October 5, 1961
The government declares a state of emergency and imposes
a curfew exclusive to French Algerians.

October 17, 1961
French Algerians demonstrate peacefully
against the curfew in Paris.
They are met with disproportionate violence.
Many of them have their hands tied behind their backs
and are drowned in the Seine River.



2005-1961
Water and electricity come into contact through the bodies
of the demonstrators as the electric interference
from the transformer in 2005 transposes them to the bottom
of the Seine in 1961.

1956
In order to extract intelligence from Algerian liberation
fighters, French paratroopers would often submerge them
in water and administer electric charges
to their drenched bodies.

June 27, 2014

Jubilant fans celebrate Algeria's historic qualification to the round of 16. Thousands of fans flood the streets of Paris, with riot police present in large numbers.

Despite a predominantly festive mood, altercations take place between soccer fans and law enforcement. Acts of vandalism and hooliganism are reported.

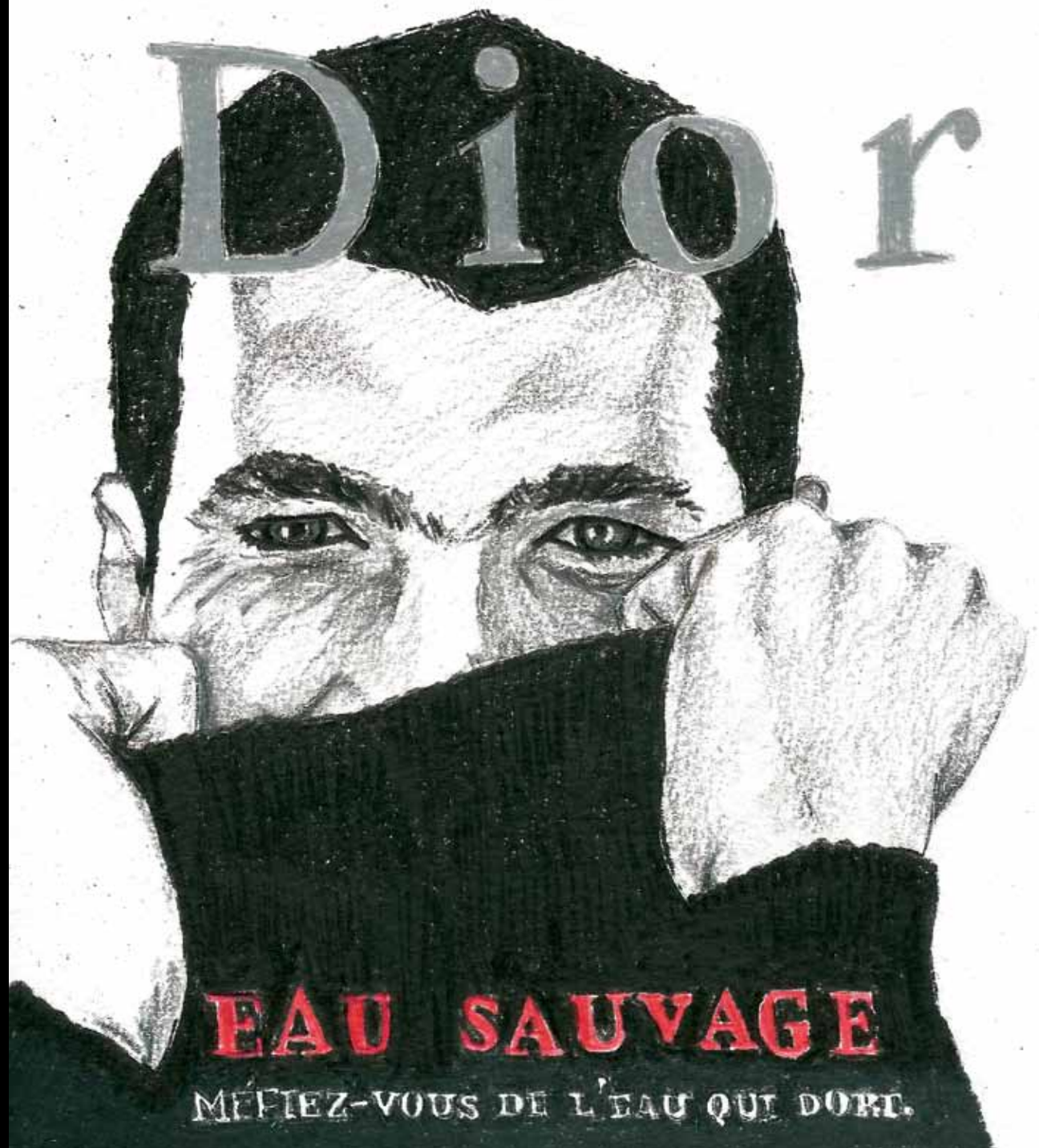
Some French cities forbid the display of "foreign flags" in public spaces. A politician calls for a ban on dual citizenship.

July 26, 2014

In Paris, a large pro-Palestinian protest goes ahead despite a government ban. 1500 riot police are on call.

Another demonstration opposing Israel's deadly offensive on Gaza ends in violence as vigilantes attack the fervent procession in parts of the city.

haig aivazian
2014



IN CONVERSATION

HAIG AIVAZIAN & PASCUAL SISTO

PASCUAL SISTO: You ended part one of your film (How Great You Are O Son of the Desert!) with this suspended idea of the victims of Clichy-sous-Bois as martyrs, which creates a parallel with the image of Zidane as a martyr. Using drawings of the victims emphasizes this position. Do you ever see your work as a myth-making narrative? I say this because even though it is all based on factual information, there is a strong sense of free association in the video — specifically the part where you cut into the Adidas commercial with Zidane witnessing the electrocution of Messi in an Argentinean ghetto. That parallel in the context of the film is quite chilling, but can definitely also be interpreted as an associative fiction.

HAIG AIVAZIAN: I think I definitely work in associative ways, but none of it is fiction really, even if sometimes the links seem like a leap. Fundamentally the point of the associations is to expose an inherent logic that ties seemingly disparate elements together. To be clear, I think that victims of systemic violence due to institutionalized social exclusion and targeted police brutality are indeed martyrs. Zidane's martyrdom at first glance is more of a PR spin by a very savvy entrepreneur who is notoriously image conscious. The manner in which the words of Materazzi's that triggered Zidane's headbutt were shrouded in mystery (maintained by Zidane himself to this day) was also a way to assign a somewhat artificial nobility to his act of violence.

The Adidas footage is chilling indeed. The connections become almost too clear, too convenient, and this is due to the power of a conspiratorial logic, which sees connections everywhere. But again, I don't think of this association as fiction. The narrative of the poor but talented boy playing sports in the ghetto only to be discovered and propelled to superstardom is at once an empowering potential for a certain demographic and of course an utter falsity. The parallel between the kids in Clichy-sous-Bois playing soccer and being electrocuted to death, versus the advertisement of Messi electrocuted as a child only to gain super powers as an adult, was for me a very clear and heartbreaking manifestation of the differences between the reality of the fate of youths from the ghetto and the false hopes of social mobility and riches promised by some athletes, leagues, and of course sports brands. Zidane, Messi, and Adidas are the myth-makers, and somehow that ad in this context short circuits and exposes the mechanisms of this marketing.

PS: It's all in the context and the order of things. I still remember when I took my first video editing class and realized the amount of power in the editing process. You can easily change the meaning of a story by how you arrange and expose its elementary building blocks. Even in the early montage experiments of Eisenstein, he would seamlessly cut between studio shots and location footage without altering the flow of information. We all know that filmmaking and storytelling is a subjective act; even when trying to be as objective as possible, you are always making decisions, and in the end you edit what you need to be able to tell your story.

You are obviously trying to make a point, but how do you feel these decisions are any different from what the media does to convey world news and other events? We are moving towards a world of curated content, where everything is being distilled by authoritative voices that narrow down the overflowing stream of information. We become filters. How do you see your responsibility as an artist in absorbing and filtering information? And how do you see your process in relation to journalism?

HA: I think a large part of my work is in very close contact with journalism, both as process and as material. By that I mean both in terms of certain investigative and editorial approaches on the one hand and with the actual use of reports and material distributed by media on the other. This is most evident for me in this work on Zidane, as the style and language of the voice-over borrows very heavily from a certain kind of French reportage. As for the material, it is almost exclusively found footage, excluding the illustrations and drawings, though even many of these, mainly the info-graphic-like graphics, borrow from a language of journalism. In fact, I gravitated towards them as a shared language between sports reporting and the reporting of the 2005 riots on French television. Particularly the obsessive manner in which French media was pinpointing the location of the projects that were inflamed throughout the riots.

I also like to make use of the perceived neutrality of documentary or news reports where a gradual gap begins to make its way between what is being said and what the images are communicating. Or if the relationship between image and text is seemingly one to one, that an uneasy gap begins to insert itself. I try to create a similar gap when I manipulate, slow down, crop found footage, where a seemingly banal instance can take on uncomfortable meanings. Somehow in those moments, an unspoken ideology slowly rears its head, or makes its presence manifest.

One example is what I try and do with the blurred

faces of the arrested rioters on television. The blurring is a common convention used to protect the identity of minors, but in the film it becomes a physical manifestation of interference caused by an electric charge, which renders identities and geographies undecipherable and indifferentiable. The film posits that France no longer recognizes its own children, and the proof of that is that their very faces lose their features.

Essentially, I like to get close to journalism with my work, and my responsibility, in vague terms, would be to play, to manipulate, to short circuit, to make my own... the information that I am fed.

PS: As a FC Barcelona fan, I've always had animosity towards Real Madrid. There are only a few players that resisted that animosity, and I can say I have never hated Casillas or Zidane. They both possess this classical notion of the noble sportsman, fair-play and honesty. However, I've always thought of Real Madrid as the team that is assembled out of mercenaries, where the president seeks out the best talent in the world and purchases them at the going rate, rather than the building-from-scratch mentality that Barcelona has. We make the names and they buy them.

We (and I speak as a Barcelona fan) made Ronaldo, Figo, and even Laudrup, and they just came in and bought them at the peak of their careers. So there is something about ending in Madrid and being a part of the "galácticos," or world-class mercenaries, that reminded me of the current X-Men or superhero Hollywood films coming out these days, where we have ensemble cast of the very best. How do you feel about that? This might build another bridge with your other film about the "dream team" during the Barcelona Olympics.

HA: True, but Barcelona is not exactly a mom-and-pop organization fighting a titan either, is it? Sure, Real went overboard with its galácticos frenzy, but up to that point (early 2000s), Real and Barça were essentially sharing the monopoly of spending in the Spanish league, weren't they?

The desire to gather the best players in some sort of "dream team" is a very understandable impulse within the logic of games. It is the basis of collecting cards, many video games and of things like fantasy leagues. It is also an extremely common theme in sports advertisement. In fact, the Messi ad we were just talking about is a part of a series called "The Quest," where Zidane is tasked with putting together the best possible team. Each ad is dedicated to the story of a different player: Messi, Lampard, Schweinsteiger, Kaka, and so on. They each have a super power caused by a freak accident of sorts (another common trope), and the ad's tagline is, "Every team needs ..." Messi is "the Spark," Lampard is "the Powerhouse," Kaka is "the Conductor," and so on.

For this year's World Cup, Nike had a remarkably similar concept with its "The Last Game" ad, where a company develops clones that erase the imperfections and recklessness of football players and render the game flawless and efficient, thus ultimately killing its beauty. Here, it is Brazil's Ronaldo that is tasked with regrouping the players to take back the game.

With regards to the so-called Dream Team in the Barcelona Olympics in '92, I have been making work that derives from a body of research which seeks to make parallels between the evolution of American national basketball teams from 1992 to 2012 and American military invasions, interventions, and involvement in Iraq from 1990 to 2011. This is in a bid to talk about sports ambassadorship as political strategy, but it is also an attempt to map America's image abroad and self-image through the Bush (H and W) years, as well as the narratives that Obama's election enabled to circulate (both racially within the U.S. and in terms of foreign policy.)

The Dream Team was very much comprised with this fantasy league logic in mind, the best players in their respective positions, collected from various clubs in the NBA representing the United States in the first post Soviet Olympic Games. But here too, brand affiliations complicate the premise quite nicely. There was the infamous instance when, after the United States defeated everyone by huge margins, some of the players (namely Michael Jordan) went onto the podium with an American flag draped over their shoulders. In fact this was an "elegant" contractual solution by a player sponsored by Nike to cover up the Reebok logos on the Team USA tracksuits.

PS: To begin by answering your question, yes, Barça is definitely not a family-run business, but they generally have the approach of making star players rather than just buying them. I do find it interesting that both Barça and Real are registered associations instead of limited companies (with Bilbao and Osasuna), so you cannot buy them, [unlike] many of the teams currently being bought by foreign investors. That is another topic of interest, especially with the recent influx of cash into teams like Chelsea, Manchester City, and even Malaga, in Spain, but back to the idea of the dream team and commercial sponsors. It is interesting to see that players now make most of their income through commercial sponsors, so one must wonder who they are really playing for. Part of them plays for Real Madrid, while the other plays for Nike or Adidas.

There was an instance during the last Champions League final when Ronaldo scored the fourth goal and ran towards the right corner in what looked like an excessive celebration. It was later revealed by a journalist that he was acting for a film about himself and knew the exact position of the film cameras. I'm very much interested in the intersection between the real and fictive, and soccer players are becoming media stars and sometimes spend more time acting for the cameras and worrying about their social image than in the sport itself.

I'd like to stay with an interview with Messi where he mentioned that he would do all of this for free, but I also see the reality of the tweeting actor celebrity players, just like politicians taking on corporate sponsors and lobbyists during their political presidential campaigns. How do you feel about this intersection of interests?

HA: Yes, I read about that celebration, which indeed seemed excessive given that Real had already clearly won the game with a comfortable margin before Ronaldo's goal. But I also appreciate Ronaldo's social and political stances vis-a-vis the Palestinian struggle as well as his frequent reaching out to young fans. In that sense, I find him to be less of a sponsorship monster than Zidane and with a seemingly more socially conscious framework.

Something strangely uneasy emerges when you break down the players' roles and aura into the reality that they are employees and that they are working a job. Sure, they have much more recognition, money, privilege, agency, than any other job in the world, but it is a job nonetheless. Something happens to me, for example, particularly when I watch basketball, and when I see someone like Chicago's Derrick Rose, an incredibly explosive and humble player, struggle with injuries. Again, this is of course a fleeting image and not at all a structural analysis, but those moments when the physical strain of this job on an athlete's body makes itself apparent, and the threat of career-ending injuries becomes manifest -- there is something intense about that to me. There is an unresolvable tension between that aspect of being a young athlete and having your body exploited and the whole tweeting soap saga that professional sports can be.

PS: The very topics of politics and soccer are very taboo at most dinner tables, so I'm always glad you bring them up. Obviously, they can either unite or completely divide people. I still remember great conversations with complete strangers, like a Mexican mechanic in L.A. or a Turkish taxi driver in Istanbul, where the fact that I was from Barcelona immediately sparked a conversation about the sport. I also do remember many arguments as well. I still feel that club teams breed a different type of pride.

One of the only things that still ties me to Barcelona is actually watching them play. It's the one social habit I still do, apart from the occasional siesta, of course. So I find that by watching them play, I am still connected to my youth and the memories of place; the team becomes an embodiment of my teenage years there. With national teams, the pride takes on a whole different level. Seeing national flags in every game makes it almost military, the fans, the passion. I think sometimes watching a national team brings out the worst of us. It's very easy to get caught up in it and become a fascistic nationalist radical for 90 minutes. I take it with humor, but it can be fatal in the wrong hands.

I still felt strange seeing so many Spanish flags in the streets after the 2010 world cup. The last time an image like that existed was probably during the Franco regime. I know it's quite casual and common to see U.S. flags here, but in Spain and some other European countries seeing so much nationalism is never a good sign.

I remember my friend Eamon Ore-Giron, a fellow artist from L.A. who was in Spain at the time, telling me how he was both excited and terrified at the flags and fanaticism. I know that it was our first World Cup so we are allowed a little extra passion, but I can see how it could feel scary. So yes, soccer is a clear vessel for politics. I know you are well aware of this, but I wanted to see how you feel about using the language of the sport to analyze politics. I don't even want to get into the Real Madrid (Franco association) and FC Barcelona as the Republican team, but there are plenty of cases of teams and sport being a loaded gun in political discourse.

HA: I think this is in large part what makes the World Cup so compelling; it is that it brings all these historical and political narratives into play on a highly visualized platform. The very structure of the World Cup is made for this stuff, so I even hesitate to say that it serves as a vehicle for politics. Politics are embedded within the very idea of the World Cup in a way that is more pronounced or more charged than in other events. The famous Iran victory over the U.S in 1998 is just one good

example, but also the whole rise of the African teams versus the European teams, which are themselves increasingly multi-ethnic.

Clubs are indeed a different ball game, where the nationalisms are replaced by some other more regional logic or an alternate form of patriarchal inheritance. But the examples you cite in terms of the relationships between clubs and politics are extremely interesting, as they map out a network of influence of sorts. If you look at FIAT and Juventus's relationship to the Mussolini regime, for example, if we are thinking historically, but also if you look at the contemporary structures of sponsorships where we see a rise of investment by groups like Etihad Airways and Emirates Airlines of the United Arab Emirates, and to bring it closer to your home club, groups like the Qatar Foundation.

I think this helps give a sense as to why a country like Qatar may have won the bid to host the 2022 World Cup despite having virtually no football history and extremely unfavorable weather conditions to host such an event... To say nothing of the gross human rights violations and horrendous mistreatment of migrant workers tasked with the construction of the stadiums there. All this to say that the relationship between clubs and private sponsorship offers a really good mirroring of something like presidential campaigns, for example, and the interconnections between private money and national or international influence.

This is all beyond the deep histories of fascist or Nazi regimes' co-opting of sports as an ideological tool, or the deep history of politically motivated boycotts of Olympic Games, etcetera. My interest in these intersections peaks when they triangulate with a corporate infrastructure, both in terms of the structural complexities this triangulation enables, and in terms of the sculpting of the ideologies, images, drives, and social models disseminated by it.

PS: The relationship between sports and politics is definitely clear, and I even see the World Cup with a much more focused nationalist agenda than the Olympics, which diffuses sports into too many ramifications. The World Cup is clear and concise in that aspect. Also, soccer is a sport that can be played in a dirt field with rocks as posts and a ball, so it is also one of the most economically accessible.

Spain defeated Germany in the final of the Euro 2008, and the narrative was that the country falling into a financial crisis defeated Europe's greatest economy. This also makes me think of sports as a way to divert information. I remember hearing journalists talk about how winning the World Cup in 2010 made Spaniards forget the hardships of the financial crisis and the high unemployment rate. For a full month people get to ignore reality to focus on 22 players kicking a ball around a field. This goes back to the Gladiators and how the "games" were made as a spectacle to keep the crowds in order and content. What is your view on the role of sports outside of political discourse? Of course, there is the clear competitive behavior of improving skill and perfecting form, but I'm wondering about your thoughts of sport in general terms.

To tie this with my previous question, I also remember another Nike ad where the ensemble cast of top players of the moment play against demons in Rome's coliseum in a clear nod to the gladiator era, ending with Cantona shooting right through the goalie's chest for the winning goal.

HA: Yes, I remember that one. It's remarkable how affective sports advertisements can be, no matter how critical you are of the capitalist underpinnings they rely on, the severe body normative ideologies they perpetuate, the familiarity and transparency of their cinematic tropes, their inherently gendered and masculinist nature, etcetera. There remains something in this most general of narratives of sport, of pushing oneself beyond one's own limitations, of breaking through, that is powerful in its motivational capacity.

Sport is also an essential socializing force, and I think that certainly does not have to be as creepy as it sounds, as in it doesn't have to be a socializing in the civilizing sense that politicians (particularly in the French arena) use it.

For me the most beautiful thing about sports is its unpredictable nature. Meaning that no matter how regimented a game is, how much you train for something, how much surveillance and control is exercised on a pitch, in other words, no matter how hard you prep the spectacle, when bodies come into contact with one another in a public and live setting, there is always the potential for the spectacle to break.

To bring it back to the gladiators, the potential I am talking about is that of the winning gladiator refusing to go for the kill in front of the whole crowd despite the Emperor's request. It is a noncompliance, a reintroduction of tension between the performer and the spectator. (The injuries I was mentioning earlier also create this sort of break, though in a different way.)

What is most compelling about Zidane's headbutt to me is precisely this aspect: For a flash, we saw the Zidane machine, the whole stack of his sponsorships and images, crack wide open. Of course, it is only momentary; Zidane is quickly forgiven for his gesture, reintegrated as a hero, and his act is even justified by then-president Jacques Chirac, who invites him to the Elysée Palace.

With regards to distraction, obfuscation, and of course displacement that is involved with sport as event or spectacle, we saw the riots silenced in Brazil, and even the more politically inclined of us turned our attention towards the games and away from the poverty and oppression. We see this for virtually every Olympic Village and stadium that is built. We also see these events being pitched as ways to expand infrastructure and boost the economy within host cities. More often than not, they end up being the opposite.

I remember in the early '90s I went on a trip to Italy for the first time, and I saw a graffiti on the wall which I was too young to really understand at the time, but it stuck with me for some reason. It was in reference to the 1990 World Cup, and it read: "Italia 90, Miseria 91."

PS: One of my favorite parts in the film is that section at the 21st minute where an unidentified young man from the Paris suburbs talks about doing apprenticeships for 15 years while not being able to feel empowered by the educational system. I find that this tackles the whole cause and effect dynamic of the film and in most of your work. You go to the root of the problem and have the patience and perseverance of digging as far as you can go to try to find the root of the problem. Zidane could have been one of the kids that jumped the wrong fence into the electrical transformer. He came from the same suburbs and probably played soccer in the same fields.

Suddenly, Zidane's violent act is seen as the desperate cry of a victim who has been made into that. Most criminals were probably victims at one point in their lives, and instead of treating them as that, we perpetrate the problem by ignoring the real causes. We give out red cards and imprison people to put them away instead of dealing with the larger problem in the division of classes, immigration, and the educational system. There is no real question here as this could be an endless conversation, but I wanted to see how you feel about this.

In an ideal world, the referee should have asked the reasons behind the violent act and then maybe, after hearing about the repetitive and cumulative insults, they both should have been given a red card, or better yet they should have reached some form of consensus, but that would have taken way longer than 120 minutes... so the refereeing in sports and the policing of the suburbs are essentially using the same methods.

HA: Absolutely. There are several points with this that don't quite make it into the film but that I find fascinating. One is the surveillance aspect of the televising of the game. In addition to the extraordinary number of cameras filming every aspect of the match, there are cameras that alternate between as little as two players throughout the game. (The late, great, and beautiful Harun Farocki's Deep Play tackles this aspect of football, and Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon's Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait is also a play on this.) This alternating camera almost missed the head-butt by a matter of seconds, as it was due to alternate away shortly after the act.

In addition, the red card took atypically long to be drawn, and this was due to the fact that the head referee missed the act, as did the two linesmen. The controversy is that FIFA rules clearly state that a human eye must catch the offense in order to penalize it, and in the case of the Zidane head-butt, it is very likely that it was in fact the fourth umpire, sitting in the box between the two teams, who had access to a screen and replays, who was the one that informed the referee of Zidane's act via his earpiece.

In his first official and exclusive interview explaining the head-butt on France's Canal+, Zidane says something resonant. He explains that he first runs ahead of Materazzi in order to get away from the string of insults that the latter is hurling at him, but Materazzi doesn't stop. Then Zidane says: "Sometimes words are harsher than actions: You hear them once, you hear them twice, and then when you hear them a third time..."

This to me also went along with this term racaille (thug or scumbag), which in the film is the first parallel that I make between someone like Zidane from the ghettoes of Marseille, who would have been likely to hear that term attributed to him, and the rioting youth in 2005 who are continuously referred to as such by politicians and journalists. One of the main episodes that led to the riots of 2005, besides the murdering of Zied and Bouna, is a visit by then-Interior Minister Sarkozy to a Parisian suburb at night, accompanied by television cameras. At a certain point, he looks up to a resident of the neighborhood who apparently is calling for his attention from her window, and he

yells up the now infamous sentence: “You are sick and tired of these scumbags (racailles), aren’t you? Well, we will get rid of them for you.”

In the film, I am trying to draw parallels between these sorts of insults, which are verbally reflective of a regime of institutionalized and undifferentiating criminalization, and the acts they bring about. I am suggesting that the real violence is in the unrelenting provocation rather than the reactions it creates.

If indeed words are harsher than actions, as Zidane suggests, then what happens if we take things that are said or are reported to have been said by police or media at face value? In the film, this approach is what first enables me to go from Materazzi’s alleged insult (which by the way is proven to be a false report) to an analysis of Zidane’s act as a terroristic one. But in the film, I also talk about remarks made by journalists and police officers during the 2005 riots, and on many other occasions, as being profoundly indicative of the ideological links and structures that tie things together.

For example, when Algerian kids that were born and raised in France are told things like, “This is not the Intifada,” or, “We’re not in Gaza,” one could simply say that these are racially charged ignorant slurs by a few individuals. But then, when pro-Gaza anti-war demonstrations were banned in France with this most recent assault on Gaza, for example, or when Marine Le Pen talks about banning dual citizenship after Algeria fans took over the Champs Elysées to celebrate Algeria’s qualification to the second round, then one may — and I would say should — wonder what ties all of those events together. Those links should help us shed some light on the connections between policing tactics, be they policing football matches, or race riots, or terrorism.

PS: I would like to add “Soccer as Never Before” to the references. The film by Hellmuth Costard was probably the first following a single player for the entirety of the game.

HA: Ah, yes, good point, absolutely. The other two mentions do relate to Zidane directly, though.

PS: I wasn’t aware of the Algerian fans debacle; can you explain more? That is exactly what I mean by the symbolic act of giving a red card. The cards are generally given for a foul without the intention to play the ball, but they are rarely given for insults, due to the obvious fact that the referee does not have ears on all players. We might reach a point where video cameras and even microphones are added to the game to control every aspect of it. It would be quite fitting in the current surveillance era. There are plenty of cases when a player is red carded for insulting the refs, but rarely each other, and I do firmly agree that words can be more harmful than violent acts.

This makes me think that the surveillance tactics you mention in sport have a strong analogy to the recent NSA disclosures by Edward Snowden. What is your take on this? (Would) you rather have the goal camera deciding if the ball crossed the line, or do you prefer relying on the referee’s eye for that? The same applies to state policing using surveillance cameras and the tracking of our online identity trail. Should technology interfere with both practices?

HA: When Algeria made it through to the second round in Brazil for the first time in history, the frenzy in the entire Arab world was incredible. Even in Beirut, where people are die-hard fans of the big soccer dynasties (Germany, Italy, Brazil, etcetera, and I could write an essay on the logic of these sorts of affiliations in Lebanon), some kids were draped in Algerian flags.

As one might expect in France, this would be a charged affair with such a huge population there. Sure enough, the streets were taken over by young men and women of so-called Algerian origins. These are third-generation French citizens. The jubilation goes a little out of control, though it is mainly festive. Riot police is, as expected, very present, and altercations take place, as they might in many places and with many soccer related outpours. Immediately the public discourse turns to the integration problem, why are these kids identifying with Algeria so strongly even after so many generations of French citizenship? Additionally, so-called foreign flags are banned from being flown in cities like Nice, and the Marine LePen remark about banning dual citizenship.

The security argument of course immediately comes up should there be further Algerian wins in the World Cup (which unfortunately doesn’t happen), and it is this same security argument that comes up with the Gaza demonstration ban. Perhaps the problem or the fear is seeing large and visible groups of Arabs in the streets.

I like your rigorous tying of technology in sport and surveillance. It makes sense. Any sports fan has been frustrated with bad calls and wished for the replays to change the course of the game. It also ties our impulses as spectators and surveillance together.

It seems to me that the NBA has a more democratic and hybrid solution to this. A team can ask for certain decisions to be reviewed on the spot. They can only do this a given amount of time per game. Then the refs get together and watch the replay, discuss and deliver a revised or maintained decision. The argument that the FIFA makes however, as you know better than I do, is that this slows down the momentum of the game, which of course is true.

But more generally speaking, the complexity of how these events are shot nowadays, the suspended and drone cameras, the high-definition slow motion replays, etcetera, somehow manages to flatten the image or at least the action. I am old enough to remember the replays with the flashing letter “R” and the reverse angle being the only alternate view of a shot. When something is so visually driven as “spectator sport,” of course it immediately becomes about voyeurism and surveillance. The whole architectural logic of a stadium is panoptic. It is no wonder really that companies like G4S who handle contracts for migrant detention centers, prisons, and border posts also handle things like security at sporting events.

Raised in Barcelona, Spain, **Pascual Sisto** graduated with a BFA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles. He also attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2011 and is a recipient of the 2012 California Community Foundation Emerging Artist Fellowship. Recent exhibitions include Seventeen Gallery, Prism, 5 Car Garage, Smart Objects, Armory Center for the Arts, and the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art. Sisto lives and works in Los Angeles.

NOT AN EXCEPTION:

U.S. PRISON POLICY FROM CALIFORNIA TO CUBA

CHITRA GANESH & MARIAM GHANI

WITH ALEXIS AGATHOCLEOUS & RAMZI KASSEM

In summer 2013, 30,000 prisoners at Pelican Bay and other California state prisons organized a hunger strike to protest extended solitary confinement. For years, and sometimes even decades, Pelican Bay inmates remain completely isolated for 22 to 24 hours per day and are denied all forms of contact with the outside world, in clear violation of international human rights standards. Perhaps it is not so surprising, then, that the prisoners at Pelican Bay cited the ongoing hunger strike at Guantanamo Bay as an inspiration for their latest wave of organizing. Meanwhile, Guantanamo prisoners have said they were inspired by hunger strikes undertaken by prisoners' rights movements in the United States and Ireland, among other places.

At the end of the summer of 2013, we sat down with human rights lawyers Alexis Agathocleous and Ramzi Kassem to discuss U.S. prison practices across the globe. Our conversation traced a series of similar connections—including examples of the so-called "imperial boomerang" made infamous by recent events in Ferguson, Missouri—to suggest that activists should follow policymakers in imagining "domestic" and "foreign" struggles as a single continuum, rather than as separate spheres.

Agathocleous and Kassem have been at the forefront of legal advocacy around civil liberties and prisoners' rights for much of the last decade, and each brings a unique perspective to the current debate. As part of his work with the Center for Constitutional Rights, Alexis represents a group of Pelican Bay prisoners who have been held in solitary confinement for a dozen years or more, while Ramzi represents some of the Guantanamo prisoners who have been cleared for transfer since 2009 but are still under an executive hold.

For years, both Agathocleous and Kassem have provided invaluable insight and advice for our ongoing collaboration, Index of the Disappeared, an experimental archive of detentions, deportations, renditions, and redactions. A number of subjects covered in this conversation —Guantanamo, hunger strikes, the global war on terror, surveillance, shifting definitions of torture, Communication Management Units (CMUs), racial profiling, and the prison-industrial complex—are also subjects of Index archive collections.

We have edited the original interview transcript for the present publication, and added endnotes with updates on some cases mentioned in the interview.

(MG & CG, August 2014)

MARIAM GHANI: Index of the Disappeared recently produced a project for Creative Time Reports called *The Guantanamo Effect*, which looks at Guantanamo as an idea, or a kind of self-replicating virus, that has spread and mutated to reappear in different forms and guises all around the world. One form in which it has reappeared is the Communication Management Units (CMUs) now housed in prisons within the United States. We wanted to bring you together today to talk about how policies and practices developed at Guantanamo have circulated around the globe to Bagram and places like Bagram, and then back to the United States, to the CMUs and places like them.

RAMZI KASSEM: My students and I work both on the CLEAR (Creating Law Enforcement Accountability and Responsibility) Project and on Guantanamo and Bagram defense, partly because we recognize that the cleavage in the human rights advocacy community between so-called domestic concerns and so-called global human rights concerns is an artificial one. This cleavage exists in our minds, but the government does not buy into it. The government very much views its counter-terrorism polices and practices, be they implemented domestically or internationally, as part of a single unitary spectrum.

We do our clients and ourselves a disservice by buying into that artificial separation between different segments of our own rights community and struggles. For that reason, it's important to recognize the continuities that exist between Guantanamo not just as a location but also, as you said, as an idea with both domestic and global manifestations.

And we should think about Guantanamo not just prospectively, in the sense of how it will influence

the future course of events in the United States, or the way both the United States and other countries will participate in the world. We also have to look retrospectively, and recognize that many themes we associate with the idea of Guantanamo actually pre-date 9/11 by quite a lot. While these did not always uniquely affect Muslim communities as they tend to nowadays, Guantanamo itself, the idea, borrows from a lot of pre-9/11 tropes, policies, practices and injustices.

ALEXIS AGATHOCLEOUS: That makes a lot of sense. I'm involved in one big case around the Communications Management Units, which, as you say, do affect Muslim communities more drastically. But I am also litigating a case against the state of California, a domestic detention case that is in federal court in California, where we're challenging the use of prolonged solitary confinement in the state's super-max facility.

So it's an interesting challenge, as you say, to consider how a number of the human rights abuses that people are responding to, in Guantanamo and elsewhere, also have a long history in the domestic context. Our responses depend not only the devastating psychological and physical toll of the conditions imposed on prisoners, but also on who is being targeted.

There is a long history, for example, of super-max confinement being used primarily against people of color, politicized groups, people who are organizing within prisons, who are organizing other prisoners and agitating for their rights. We see a disproportionate number of people from these communities being isolated under such conditions.

It can be very difficult to figure out where historical convergences and divergences occur, but I agree that it's a mistake to overlook them and view what's happening now as something new—not only because that's inaccurate, but because I think we need to do a better job of linking to pre-9/11 and pre-Guantanamo political organizing. A more powerful movement opposing these human rights abuses will be built if we can link communities that aren't traditionally associated but do have very similar stakes in this debate.

RK: That's precisely why a large part of our organizing against NYPD surveillance of Muslims within the CLEAR project is about making connections between the predominantly Muslim communities we work with in CLEAR and other communities in New York City who are equally targeted by constitutionally suspect, ineffective profiling.

In connecting NYPD surveillance with stop-and-frisk, we try to ensure that communities targeted by surveillance also show up at the Center for Constitutional Rights Floyd trial[1] and pack the courthouse, to signal a shared struggle and aligned interests. Fundamentally, these are kindred forms of profiling, and the underlying logic and mechanisms of stop-and-frisk and surveillance are nearly identical.

CHITRA GANESH: I think those are really important points, because so much of how we have seen these different mechanisms proliferate is by articulating Guantanamo as an exception. I think understanding these historical trajectories—how many current practices, as you've said, predate what's happening now—is key to countering that argument. Even bringing up something like Japanese internment, which younger students can talk about because they're being taught it, helps us to see that Guantanamo and its effects are not exceptional, but rather part of a much longer, more complex history.

RK: The problem with a lot of the conversation about Guantanamo is exactly how it starts by framing Guantanamo as an exception. While Guantanamo certainly has unique dimensions historically and otherwise, this exceptional framing is problematic because it blinds us to all these other aspects, and all the ways in which Guantanamo will survive those physical structures that exist there today.

My view, for a few years at least, is that by the time the Guantanamo prison facilities are closed, it will mostly be symbolic—not for my clients and their families and their communities, for whom it will mean the world for them to be (ideally) released and returned home—but symbolic in the larger sense that a lot of the practices will continue in different ways.

CG: Or are already continuing right now in secret prisons or CMUs.

MG: Alexis, maybe you can explain a bit about the actual structure of a Communications Management Unit or CMU, and the special Bureau of Prisons rules applied to prisoners in a CMU.

AA: There are currently two communications management units in the U.S. One is in Indiana, and one is in Illinois. These are isolated units housed within broader federal prison settings. So the prisoners in the CMUs never have any contact whatsoever with the prisoners in the other part of the prison. In fact, the CMU at Terre Haute is their old death row facility, converted into a CMU after their death row was shut down.

The first CMU was opened in 2006, the second in 2008. They are small units. At this stage, since they were first opened, about 160 to 170 prisoners have cycled through. About two-thirds of those prisoners are Muslim.

The units were opened very, very quietly, because the policies in place there were relatively unprecedented, in terms of the extent and duration of the communications restrictions placed on the prisoners there. It really was a break from the stated Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) policy, which assumes that prisoners will have ongoing contact with family members and community members. This policy is based on a very broadly accepted idea that a prisoner, once released, is going to be much more successful in reintegrating into society if he or she has been allowed to maintain community and family ties all along.

So it took a long time for people to figure out what was going on at the CMU. It started to become clear when prisoners there started reaching out to legal advocacy groups, such as the Center for Constitutional Rights, and saying, "Look, we've been designated to this unit, we have almost no ability to reach out to our families and to our communities, and we're not being told why we're here. We're not being told what evidence was used to designate us here, and we're not being told what to do to get out."

CG: What was the government's justification for their failure to publish and disclose these changes?

MG: Or the rationale for this shift in policy?

AA: Basically the government's position is that there is nothing unusual about the Communications Management Units, that they are in fact general population units that just happen to be very small, impose drastic restrictions, and just happen to be two-thirds Muslim. Their claim is that prisoners at the CMUs are not entitled to any particularized process, or any disclosure of the allegations used against them, because there's actually nothing unusual about the restrictions imposed on them—the BOP claims it is within their discretion to limit communications in this fashion.

So the lynchpin of our litigation against the BOP is to point out that in fact the communications restrictions in place at the CMU are very unusual, and that you are constitutionally entitled to due process once you are placed in a restricted prison setting that imposes what the Supreme Court terms atypical and significant hardships. So our burden in this case is to establish that what is happening at the CMU is atypical and significant.

It seems fairly intuitive when you look at the restrictions in place, the most significant of which, I think, is that prisoners at the CMU are never entitled to what's called a contact visit. This means that even on the limited occasions that family or community members are allowed to visit, there is an absolute no contact rule in place. So the visits occur through Plexiglas over a telephone. People see this in representations of prison life on TV or in the movies, so I think there is an idea that it's somehow orthodox, but it is in fact extremely unorthodox to have a no-contact visit of that nature.

And what's also unusual is that these restrictions are imposed for years and years and years at a time. The prisoners have no idea when they'll be released from this setting or what they would have to do to earn their way out. For example, Kifah Jayyousi was just last week released from the CMU and transferred to general population, and it will be the first time in five years he has been able to touch or hug his family members. He has five kids whom he has not been able to hug for five years, and they will finally be able to do that.

While these debates get bogged down in very technical due process requirements, and the burden of proof to establish a due process violation, what it actually comes down to is that this guy has not been able to hug his 13-year-old daughter since she was seven.

RK: And that's not a unique issue. One of our CLEAR clients is married to a man in one of the CMUs. When we met with her a couple of weeks ago, she shared with us the very hard time she has explaining to their five-year-old why he can't touch his father when they visit. He can't hug his father. And there are many, many families in that situation.

When you think about what the families of the men at Guantanamo or Bagram are going through, it's a difference in degree but not a difference in kind. My clients at Guantanamo and Bagram haven't been in the same physical location as their families for over a decade. A few years ago, the military began permitting video teleconferences—basically Skype—between the prisoners and their families, depending on where they're from and their disciplinary status. The best-case scenario is five or six of those calls a year. But in most cases, the calls are often restricted for "disciplinary" or other reasons.

When you look across the entire spectrum of the system, very frequently the justification offered by the government leverages the exceptionalization of particular acts and particular categories of prisoners. So these men are either convicted terrorists or they're enemy combatants, but regardless of the varied phrasing, it's essentially the same leveraging mechanism—and you can see it even in the way that society here responded to the Boston bombing versus the way it responded to other, comparably senseless acts of violence in society at large.

Exceptionalizing certain acts of violence over others, or categories of prisoners over others, leaves a lot of room for the government to push through really extreme and radical policies when it comes to prison—to normalize them, entrench them, and then generalize them, to ultimately use them beyond the initially targeted population.

You see it in the terrorism trials that we've seen since 9/11. The conditions that Alexis describes are conditions that are imposed on defendants pre-trial. We could cite many cases of people being thrown into solitary as they await trial, with devastating consequences to their mental health—people who haven't even been convicted.

AA: That's exactly right. Invoking exceptionalism, hand in hand with the incredibly successful mobilization of the term "terrorism," has had a couple of effects. Obviously, it's a whole other can of worms, but the convictions that we've seen post-9/11 on razor-thin evidence, or on the basis of "plots" that are essentially manufactured by the government to then be prosecuted as terrorism cases, really create an atmosphere of profound fear, both in the affected communities and in our court system itself.

The result is, I think, a sort of boldness that the federal government has developed. It's saying, "Trust us, we know what we're doing," and claiming that these national security issues trump fundamental due process and the presumption of transparency in the criminal justice system. But once those mechanisms of transparency are eroded, a very, very troubling chain of decision-making occurs.

In the context of CMUs, for example, now that we're deep in litigation and discovery in that case, we're finding a pattern of designations and transfers to CMUs, and also decisions to retain people there, based on their protected First Amendment activity. Because the term "terrorist" has been invoked and because this is known as a terrorist unit, the BOP has been reluctant to allow judicial oversight or disclosure of what they are doing or how they are making their decisions.

Once you start to dig beneath the surface, you find that the CMUs are actually, in many instances, being used as a way to silence people's speech and to remove them from prison populations where that speech is seen as undesirable.

Daniel McGowan is an environmental activist, and he's one of the plaintiffs in this lawsuit. We have had previously secret documents disclosed to us that establish that the federal government has explicitly written down that they are keeping him in the CMU because he is politically active, because he has espoused support for radical organizations, and because he is in an influential position within those organizations.

MG: We also have to remember that what's happening within the prisons fits into a larger pattern of the chilling of political speech more generally. Ramzi, with your work with CLEAR, I believe you've looked into some of the effects of the NYPD surveillance of student groups.

RK: Like Alexis just said, if you scratch beneath the surface you find something that's both really innocuous and, equally importantly, constitutionally protected activity. Even when it comes to the most local form of so-called counter-terrorism policing, like the NYPD Intelligence Division surveillance program targeting American Muslim communities in New York City and beyond, which Commissioner Ray Kelly views as one of his signature programs, along with stop-and-frisk. Often, once you get past the rhetoric of "New York City is under threat" and the idea, not backed up by any empirical evidence, that the threat will emanate from New York City's own Muslim communities, what you see is just a police force that is mostly concerned with dissent and unpopular speech, and speech that is critical of U.S. foreign policy, and organizing around U.S. foreign policy or even domestic police accountability and other related issues.

The effect of that sort of widespread surveillance is saddening, shocking, and staggering. For two years, the CLEAR project went into Muslim student associations, mostly in the CUNY[2] system but also some private institutions, and into the different mosques and community organizations and youth centers that we work with on a weekly basis, and we interviewed students, organizers, community leaders, community members, activists, and business owners. The resulting report, Mapping Muslims,[3] really details the pervasive chill that has invaded this community.

When we walked into a Muslim Student Association (MSA) whose members we had interviewed, we saw a sign that was up on the wall, and we reproduced a picture of that sign in our report. The sign said, "No political speech in the MSA room." And they pasted on the wall next to that sign one of the Associated Press articles based on leaked NYPD documents that reflected the NYPD Intelligence Division's interest in politically active Muslim student associations. And so, for that reason, those MSAs immediately either disbanded or overtly discouraged their members from engaging in certain kinds of speech.

We saw that in mosques as well. The extent to which surveillance chills … The reason I highlight this is that one of the NYPD and Mayor Bloomberg's principal defenses of surveillance has been to say, basically, no harm no foul. People were not aware that they were placed under surveillance, so how could you say that this hurts them, right? And I think both parts of that statement are false. The first part, because by the time the AP published that series of stories in 2011, most of the communities that we worked with in New York City didn't experience it as a revelation. They experienced it as a confirmation.

CG: A fact of everyday life.

RK: That's right. These communities have been very well aware of the reality of both NYPD surveillance and FBI surveillance for years. Seeing the NYPD's records in the AP stories was valuable, but just as a confirmation of the depth and the detail of that surveillance. But no one was shocked and surprised.

The second part of the NYPD defense is equally false, in that there is a cost of surveillance, and that cost is borne primarily by the communities infiltrated. Those communities are no longer able to function in a natural way. When we speak with imams, they tell us that rather than turn their mosque into a welcoming space, a second home for their congregants, the way any pastor would in any church in New York City, their instinct is to push everyone out between prayer times, so as not to attract NYPD attention. Their instinct is to end certain conversations or to encourage congregants to talk about politics outside of the mosque and not within its walls.

You also hear spiritual leaders saying that their role is to have private counseling sessions about really sensitive details in the congregants' lives, but because of the pervasive fear of who might be an informant, who might be undercover, a lot of imams very frankly said, "If someone comes into my mosque and I don't know who they are, I don't know who their family is, and they ask me to have a private conversation with them, I am going to try to include a third person to be my witness. And that may disrupt the relationship that I'm supposed to have with the congregant, and make it impossible for that person to share private concerns with me, because they'd have to air those in front of a third person, but it's necessary for self-protection." So these communities have been harmed in very concrete, specific ways.

AA: I think the idea that surveillance is occurring in a vacuum completely ignores the context of the last decade in these affected communities. I mean, right after 9/11 there was the institution of this "hold until cleared" policy, wherein people were swept up under the premise of minor immigration infractions, and held under this policy [for unrelated reasons and disproportionate amounts of time]. And that was here in New York. That experience wasn't lost on people.

Also, there have been a number of high profile criminal cases, like the case up in Albany, in which people are being swept into what are essentially government-manufactured plots, and then sent to places like ADX[4] and the CMUs. That's not lost on people either. It all ultimately converges and has a chilling affect.

I've spoken to a lot of people who have family members at the CMUs, and one of the things they talk about is how during the first years of CMUs, they became pariahs within their own communities because of the degree of fear, especially of association—any form of association, even conversation, was used as evidence of conspiracy, or as evidence of material support. Surveillance must be seen within this much broader context.

MG: How has your work changed over the last five to 10 years? Do you feel the legal response to this context has changed?

CG: Or your own thinking about the work you do, from when you began working on these issues and cases, to the present moment?

RK: The main transformation for me has been moving beyond a narrow conception of my role as a lawyer. The first was not being overly invested in formal victory in the courts—keeping your eyes on success as measured by clients' goals, goals of the communities you're serving, and leveraging the judicial system to generate attention that feeds into larger movement building, but not being overly invested in formal outcomes.

Going through the ups and downs of litigation, and seeing the varied ways one can effect change, have helped me grow in that regard. It's something I try to emphasize with my students—think about success without victory and learn to transform seeming obstacles or problems into opportunities. For example, if you request a piece of information from the government about your client who's detained at Guantanamo—if they give you a document, how will you use that? If they don't give you a document, how could you use that? There's opportunity in both.

Another change has been reevaluating the role played by lawyers within movements—not seeing ourselves at the center of different movements that we support, or assuming that we have all the answers or even the right questions. I've gotten more comfortable personally with this, and also worked to help students be more open to taking cues from the communities that we work with, whether the prisoner population of Guantanamo or a community in Bensonhurst.

AA: I second that. Something we're all getting better at doing, which dovetails back with how we opened this discussion, is connecting the dots between different situations that seem distinct but in fact share many things in common. One example I see is people becoming much smarter and more strategic about placing very individual clients, issues, and claims into a broader human rights framework, which really helps to draw those links.

One of the most interesting recent examples is around the hunger strike at Guantanamo. Obviously it's been going on for a long time, but now it's finally starting to gain some traction in the public consciousness. I was talking to my clients at the Pelican Bay super-max facility in California, who also went on hunger strike two summers ago to protest the fact that they had been held in solitary confinement for anywhere between 10 and 35 years, and they used similar tactics and terms to explain their plight.

Now they've just announced that they are going back on hunger strike this July. One of their sources of inspiration is the hunger strike at Guantanamo. They know what's happening there, they know that prisoners mobilized this tactic out of desperation but also as an exercise of agency, and now they are making those connections too: "There is a broad human rights framework in which broad sets of abuses are occurring, we're on this continuum, and we take inspiration from that." I think it's pretty remarkable.

MG: That's amazing.

RK: Just like your clients at Pelican Bay looked to what was happening at Guantanamo, I've had numerous explicit conversations with my clients at Guantanamo about Israeli prisons where Palestinian prisoners had gone on hunger strike recently, and even about more distant, historical parallels, like the IRA hunger strike in the U.K. prisons.

These men are also politicized and aware. It's important to say that because when the hunger strike first began, what was really interesting to me was the prison administration's initial statement. First they denied there was any hunger strike, then they minimized its political significance by infantilizing detainees' motivations. They said things like the men are protesting because they are not getting ice cream or because we've pulled back some of the luxurious privileges that we've bestowed upon them.

CG: Or further delegitimizing the strike by saying "They're probably eating in secret when we're not looking."

RK: Exactly. "They're not actually on hunger strike." So you adopt this narrow definition of hunger strike that attempts to erase it out of existence just as they adopted a narrow definition of torture that eliminated torture.[5] This initial reaction is so telling. What is more threatening than a concerted political action by prisoners who are seeing those connections across geographical and temporal boundaries?

So it's very much a conscious political act on the part of the men at Guantanamo. And as Alexis was saying, it's an act of agency. I would note, though, that my clients don't frame it as a gesture born of desperation. In many ways, they articulate it as a life-affirming gesture, an exercise of dignity, a means of asserting autonomy. Those men do not wish to die. Quite the contrary, they want to live; they want to go home and see their families. But given their circumstances, this is the way they can get that point across.

As dire as the circumstances are now, as harsh as the crackdown has been, as brutal and oppressive as the force-feeding practices are at Guantanamo, I think in many ways my clients are in a better mental space than they've ever been.

Al Jazeera just released the force-feeding protocols from March 2013. There is language in the U.S. government's protocols saying we must isolate and force-feed hunger strikers in order to defeat their solidarity—because they recognize that what keeps the hunger strike going, and makes it work, is solidarity. This tells us is that our role as their lawyers is to amplify their protest, to make sure they know that the world knows what they're doing and hears their message, to ensure that we help them create and maintain that solidarity.

CG: Mariam and I were at an event organized by the Center for Constitutional Rights last night, where prisoner's letters were read aloud. One of the sentences that stayed with me was one of the prisoners saying that via hunger striking, "the bond that we have, we have all become like one body." As though we feel ourselves to be part of the same physical body and we all share one heart.

RK: What I always go back to is the place where the hunger strike began. It didn't begin in Camp 5, which has cellblocks that are entirely solitary confinement, it began in Camp 6, which is the U.S. government's flagship, model, state-of-the-art facility. It's where they take journalists on their "Potemkin Village" tours to showcase how normal and great Guantanamo is and how complacent and happy the prisoners are. That's the messaging behind Camp 6 under the Obama administration.

The fact that the hunger strike began in Camp 6 adds a layer of significance to the message. It doesn't matter that you may allow communal living, or certain amenities that the government characterizes as luxuries. That does nothing to change the fundamental, constant reality of Guantanamo, which is indefinite imprisonment without charge, without fair process, for over a decade. The men are not blind to that reality. The fact that they began their hunger strike in Camp 6 signals a rejection of all the rhetoric intended to justify the existence of a place like Guantanamo and normalize the practice of detaining people indefinitely forever.

Alexis, now that your clients are going back on hunger strike, what do you anticipate and what do they anticipate? Will the response be similar? Or will it be drowned out, and people won't pay attention? And if that's your expectation, why?

AA: It's bit hard to predict exactly how this will play out this time around. Last time it happened against a different backdrop. Now that the prisoners have this class action lawsuit in place, there is additional leverage and attention to what is going on in the prison, at least in the context of the lawsuit. That said, the last hunger strike was incredibly successful for a few reasons. It was extraordinary just as a political feat, since these thousand or so guys at Pelican Bay are all in isolation, meaning they never see each other because they are kept in their cells for at least 23 hours a day, and whenever they leave they are escorted in shackles and they are taken, ostensibly for an hour a day but often for less than that or not at all, to an exercise pen that's called a dog run, which is another solitary cell that's a little bit longer and taller where they're allowed to walk around for an hour.

So their circumstances are extraordinary and their only means of communicating with each other is basically by yelling through the walls and the pipes. They do so at risk of disciplinary infractions but it occurs nonetheless.

These men organized their own hunger strike, and from there they organized solidarity hunger strikes across California, and then eventually across the United States. And at its peak, there were 13,000 prisoners across the United States hunger striking in solidarity with the prisoners at Pelican Bay.

CG: That's amazing.

AA: It really is. I am hard pressed to think of many political movements that can mobilize that kind of action in those sheer numbers, and the fact that it was done from isolation was pretty extraordinary.

In terms of outcomes, it did bring California Corrections (CDCR) to the table. They were forced to contend with what was going on because there was a fair amount of media attention and public outrage. And CDCR did commit to making reforms as a result of the hunger strike. The hunger striking committee issued various demands, frankly very modest demands, and CDCR promised to engage and to take those into consideration. What we've seen subsequently is a systematic failure to do anything meaningful in response, hence the renewed hunger strike.

The Center for Constitutional Rights is an organization that tends to bring litigation in support of social movements and organizing that's already fleshed out—the litigation is just a piece of that strategy. That's out of deference to the political movements people are involved in, first of all. But it's also due to a realistic assessment of what Ramzi mentioned before, that litigation in federal courts rarely generates the sort of justice-based outcomes that one would hope for, so it shouldn't be the whole strategy.

The Pelican Bay case should be quite interesting this time, because there are pressure points from so many different places. A really important shift is the

new human rights based analysis of solitary confinement, both domestically and internationally, which has been fairly game changing. Last summer, the Special Rapporteur for Torture from the United Nations issued a report finding that prolonged solitary confinement constitutes torture under the Convention Against Torture and also violates other human rights instruments[6] to which the United States is a signatory. And the U.N. has defined prolonged solitary confinement as anything that is longer than 15 days.

RK: And with that, the Rapporteur also said you should abandon the practice altogether.

AA: Exactly.

RK: If you don't abandon it and do continue the practice, you *cannot* do it for any longer than 15 days. And with Alexis' clients, you're talking about a decade. I have clients at Guantanamo, here in the United States, and elsewhere, who have been placed in solitary confinement for periods far exceeding that 15-day maximum. It's deeply troubling how out of synch the United States is with these international norms.

AA: Yes. And this renewed hunger strike in California is happening against the backdrop of a dramatic shift in public and political consciousness around this issue because of Guantanamo, what's been happening internationally, and these prisoner-led movements. So it has the potential to be another game-changer.

MG: We've now heard a certain renewal of rhetoric around creating some sort of path to the closing of Guantanamo. What do you see as the probability of this actually happening? What are some ways in which that might actually be possible?

RK: I want get to that by addressing the disconnect between the rhetoric and a prognosis of what's going to happen in a prison like Guantanamo.

Hunger strikes are our clients' concerted action. Through their peaceful protest at Guantanamo they have built a movement. There are now solidarity strikes in the United States as well—a rolling hunger strike nationwide in solidarity with the prisoners' hunger strike at Guantanamo. So what are the results of this movement?

The White House and President Obama went from not wanting to address the hunger strike at all to addressing it twice on April 30th and then again in his recent speech about counterterrorism policy. The prisoners were able to bring themselves back onto the agenda, to mobilize a great deal of solidarity in the United States and internationally, and to focus the critical media attention they garnered on various U.S. government policies. I think that in and of itself is a major achievement.

Concretely, what have they obtained in relation to their demands? Lifting the moratorium, as announced by President Obama in a more recent address, is a necessary step. The moratorium is a self-imposed White House policy that prevents the U.S. government from transferring anyone from Guantanamo to Yemen or Saudi Arabia, which has been continually in place for two years. It's good that the President has taken that step, but insufficient and certainly not applause-worthy. The moratorium was a self-inflicted wound to begin with. Its reversal was necessary, but what we really require from the White House is some recognition of the fact that all along they've had the authority, despite congressional obstacles, to release prisoners from Guantanamo, but have chosen for political reasons not to exercise that authority.

The President's recent speech did not recognize that. What I and my clients at Guantanamo are waiting to see, before they even entertain the notion of suspending their hunger strike, is the release of some prisoners. Now that would signal a concrete commitment to move towards closing down the prison. Anything short of that will likely be dismissed as more empty rhetoric by prisoners who have seen and heard such rhetoric many times over since Obama came into power.

Republican talking points these days foreground how different countries are unwilling to accept prisoners, and so there is no clear path ahead even for a President who really wished to close the prison. I don't think any of that is true. Half the prisoner population has been approved for release by the full panoply of national security agencies and the U.S. government. Those are men that unanimously those agencies have said—

MG: Fine. Let them go.

RK: There is no reason to keep them at Guantanamo. There are countries who are willing to take them. One of my clients who's on hunger strike is in solitary confinement and has been in solitary for years—Shaker Amer, a Saudi national and U.K. resident whose family lives in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom's official stated policy is that they want him back. He has been approved for release both under the Bush administration and the Obama administration.

If you can't start with that case, if you can't hand someone over, not just to any country but to the United States' oldest and most reliable ally, supposedly, the United Kingdom, how can we take the rhetoric that Obama wishes to close the prison seriously?

So that's what I'm waiting for and, more importantly, what my clients are waiting for—that concrete step. Lifting the moratorium is great, but it must be followed by a step in the right direction, like the release of *at least one* prisoner.

MG: Many people don't understand how complex the process can actually be to have someone released from Guantanamo, and what an extensive negotiation it entails between the receiving state and the releasing state.

CG: Do you think there is a potential scenario where Guantanamo prisoners, who are set to be released in a country like Yemen, that has been deemed unfit to receive released prisoners, would then be transferred into further indefinite detention in the U.S.?

RK: In the United States?

MG: Well, in Yemen also, it's possible.

RK: Both are possibilities. There's a case of one prisoner from Guantanamo who was brought to the United States for trial, was tried, convicted, and spent a lot of that pre-trial time and post conviction time in conditions that are identical to the ones that Alexis's clients endure every day.

Actually, the President flagged the possibility of indefinite U.S. detention explicitly when he said he wanted to import the military commission system from Guantanamo into the United States. What Obama has said, when it comes to detention policy, has been either unhelpful or downright harmful. This idea—that instead of abandoning a fundamentally flawed military commission system, designed to produce convictions and not justice by any stretch, Obama proposes bringing [it] back into the United States to further entrench and normalize it—is definitely harmful. Proposals about housing it in South Carolina, for example, are currently being floated about.

That's one possibility. The other thing that I'm worried about, as you mentioned, is the conditions my clients may encounter after they're sent back to their home countries or resettled in a third country.

I have had five clients released over the years. I spoke to one of them in Saudi Arabia last week. He was released in 2009, a week before we were scheduled to go to trial. We had responded in writing to the government's evidence at that point. The government did not want to go to trial, because it knew it would lose. So the week before our trial date, they just put him on a plane, and the first thing we knew about it was a phone call announcing to us that he was on a plane bound for Saudi Arabia. That was in June of 2009, and he remained in the so-called rehabilitation center in Saudi Arabia, so essentially in Saudi custody, until March of 2012.

The conditions in that rehabilitation center in Saudi Arabia were better than the conditions in a normal Saudi prison. They were better than what was going on at Guantanamo at the time. But it was still a deprivation of liberty. I can't imagine that the Yemeni government would have means at all similar to the Saudi government. I can only imagine that if there is a similar "rehabilitation center" in Yemen, the conditions there would be worse. On the whole, my clients would probably take that over Guantanamo, because even if the conditions are worse in Yemen, at least they would be able to see their families and hope at some point to be free men. Can I ask you both a question?

MG: Of course.

RK: You've been doing this together for almost a decade, and I don't think I know any other artists who have been engaged with these issues for that long. How has that changed your view of the world and also your view of each other? Because I know you were friends before you started collaborating.

CG: It's true.

MG: Well, we have had a Vulcan mind meld around our work.

CG: We call it the big brain.

MG: Yes, we have a sort of hive mind. But it's also been helpful for me because my own practice would not, even though I think of it as political, fall under the categorization of political art as it generally gets articulated.

It's been interesting to work on something over a long period of time in an art world that prioritizes breadth and trendy issues over depth of engagement. That might be why our project flies a bit under the radar, but I feel like prioritizing depth and long-term engagement produces a way of working that allows us to keep going with ideas and subjects and materials that can often be difficult to

work with in a more short-term or intensive way.

I think about this with our Guantanamo Effect project. What it might be like to look at it five years from now, for example, as a document or marker of how people were reacting or how this issue was being thought about in 2013 versus 2018. It will become dated, inevitably, but it will also preserve certain stories and connections against the grain of an era of constant media amnesia, where we have no idea what became of that thing that was happening last week because we're distracted by the new crazy thing that happens.

CG: It's really the collaboration between us that has allowed us to remain engaged with this project for so long. I think if either of us had tried to do it alone, we wouldn't have been able to stay with it for so long. The depth of engagement is made possible by the kind of creative marriage across disciplines born out of Index of the Disappeared.

MG: A lot of times with political art there is a grey area of representation—specific kinds of suffering or conflict are physically represented in what can verge on an exploitative or a sensationalist way. So it's great to have a practice that's more research-based and archival, which can negotiate these questions of representation in a way that I feel comfortable with.

CG: Over the decade that we've spent on this project, we've been able to really grapple with some of these issues around representation of people and experiences, and that time has allowed us to develop a series of different, and we hope ultimately more nuanced, answers to the most difficult questions.

Since we conducted this interview, several new developments have taken place in the cases discussed. In April of 2014, the NYPD disbanded their former Demographics Unit,[7] the principal instigator of mass surveillance within Muslim communities, largely as a result of efforts by lawyers like Ramzi, working within organizations such as CLEAR and the American Civil Liberties Union. The NYPD, however, continues its staunch defense of deploying Muslim informants in so-called anti-terrorism work.[8] Stop-and-frisk policing of black and Latino communities, which Ramzi discusses as a parallel to the racial profiling of Muslim communities, has also undergone significant changes. In August of 2013, a New York federal judge rejected stop-and-frisk policy on the grounds that it violated the 4th and 14th Amendment rights of minorities in New York City, who have been disproportionately affected by stop-and-frisk. Since the election of new mayor Bill de Blasio, the City of New York has dropped its opposition to the Floyd case, and agreed to enter an arbitration process, but the NYPD police unions continue to resist arbitration.[9]

As we write, men continue to be imprisoned in indefinite detention at Guantanamo, some never even having been formally charged, while others, who have been cleared for release for years, still await any actual change in their conditions. In July 2014, a nurse on duty at Guantanamo refused to comply with his official orders to participate in the force-feeding of prisoner Abu Wael Dhiab, who is now in the eighteenth month of his hunger strike to protest his indefinite detention.[10]

Ashker v. Brown, the lawsuit Alexis litigates with the Center for Constitutional Rights to challenge extended solitary confinement at Pelican Bay State, was granted class certification by a California federal judge in June 2014.[11] Class certification allows hundreds of men who have been held in isolation at Pelican Bay for over 10 years the opportunity to join this lawsuit and fight against their prolonged solitary confinement. Solidarity and strength in numbers, which were so important to mobilizing the 60-day hunger strike organized by Pelican Bay prisoners in summer 2013, continue to be critical to current developments in this case. Alexis notes, "Since their 2011 hunger strikes, hundreds of prisoners at the Pelican Bay SHU—and across California—have stood together in solidarity to protest inhumane conditions and broken policies they've been subjected to for decades. This case has always been about the constitutional violations suffered by all prisoners at the SHU, so it is only appropriate that it proceed as a class action."[12]

In late August 2014, meanwhile, a bill proposed in the California State Legislature, which would have allowed inmates in the state's Security Housing Units to keep photographs and make a phone call after three months of good behavior, was listed as inactive due to fears that the bill would be vetoed by Governor Jerry Brown.[13] The tabling of this bill serves to prolong the harsh conditions specific to the California prison system, which not only continues to hold some prisoners in solitary for up to 23 hours per day, but has also recently been legally mandated to address long-term overcrowding issues in its general population.

Index of the Disappeared has always been interested in connecting the dots between issues that are seen to be geographically and temporally separate. For *Shangri-La: Imagined Cities*, therefore, we wanted to link the central question of the exhibition, the Orientalist basis of the Shangri-La collection, with the bias that underlies prison policies in the U.S. and particularly in the California prison system, leading to both the disproportionate imprisonment of people of color and the use of isolation to segregate and silence Muslim and politicized prisoners within the prison system.

Notes

1 Floyd, et al. v. City of New York, et al. is a federal class action lawsuit filed against the NYPD and City of New York, challenging the practice of stop-and-frisk. Current status of case at https://ccrjustice.org/ourcases/current-cases/floyd-et-al

2 City University of New York. NYPD surveillance of Muslim Student Associations was focused on MSAs at public universities.

3 Available at http://www.law.cuny.edu/academics/clinics/immigration/clear/Mapping-Muslims.pdf

4 ADX is a Bureau of Prisons abbreviation for "Administrative Maximum" segregation. In this case Alexis is referring to the Florence ADX facility, a federal supermax prison in Colorado constructed to house high-risk and high-profile federal inmates, and described by its warden as "a cleaner version of hell" (in Mother Jones, 2013).

5 R amzi is referring to the legal redefinition of torture in the Office of Legal Counsel memos of August 1st, 2002 (prepared by Alberto Gonzales, Jay Bybee and John Yoo) and the other OLC memos known collectively as the "torture memos." These memos put forth arguments to shield U.S. officials from being charged with war crimes for using "enhanced interrogation techniques" on prisoners believed to be part of either the Taliban or Al-Qaeda, following arguments in earlier memos that the accepted laws of war, including the Geneva Convention, do not apply to combat against non-state enemies.

6 Specifically, the U.N. Rapporteur cited articles 1 and 16 of the Convention Against Torture, articles 7 and 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the following General Assembly resolutions: Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty, and Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness.

7 http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bratton-disbands-nypd-muslim-spying-unit-article-1.1757446

8 http://www.thenation.com/article/179504/nypd-has-disbanded-its-most-notorious-spy-unit-age-muslim-surveillance-really-over

9 https://ccrjustice.org/ourcases/current-cases/floyd-et-al

10 http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/07/15/4237720/navy-nurse-refuses-to-force-feed.html

11 For more information see http://www.latimes.com/local/political/la-me-ff-class-action-prison-solitary-confinement-20140602-story.html

12 http://www.ccrjustice.org/newsroom/press-releases/hundreds-of-california-prisoners-isolation-join-class-action-lawsuit

13 http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/30/us-usa-california-prisons-idUSKBN0GU01D20140830

THE TRESPASSERS:

TRANSCRIPTS + NOTES

MARIAM GHANI

Speculations

All human evil comes from a single cause:
man's inability to sit quietly in a room.
(Pascal)

Q: So, how did you end up in Afghanistan?

A: Well, we went to Pakistan for my friend's wedding, like ...

Q: OK ...

A: And then we thought we might as well cross the border and see what was going on over there, y'know?

Q: And what happened next?

Q: So, how did you end up in Afghanistan?

A: Well, I joined up right after 9/11, you know ...

Q: Right ...

A: And the next thing I knew, we were deploying to Bagram.

Q: And what happened next?

Q: So, how did you end up in Afghanistan?

A: Well, we'd been talking about going back ever since I was a kid ...

Q: Naturally ...

A: And when I got a chance to go, it didn't seem to matter so much how I went, you see.

Q: And the money?

A: Right. That played a part as well.

Q: So was it everything you hoped it would be?

A: I don't know how to answer that question.

Q: Why not?

A: I don't remember what I was looking for.

The Battle Lab

Major General Dunlavey and later Major General Miller referred to GTMO as a "Battle Lab" meaning that interrogations and other procedures there were to some degree experimental, and their lessons would benefit DOD in other places. While this was logical in terms of learning lessons, I personally objected to the implied philosophy that interrogators should experiment with untested methods, particularly those in which they were not trained.

Frankly, the 1992 version of Field Manual 34-52 had a problem with it. It was 18 years old and it was how things were done for POWs. We had world-class prisoners, not Enemy Prisoners of War (EPWs) or POWs. When we got them they had already been detained for five months and had their stories already down.

We had not fought a real war since Vietnam. Except for DHS, our interrogators were virtually inexperienced. It was an on the job training situation at GTMO.

Joint Task Force 170 had authorizations for a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a psychiatric technician on its duty roster, but no one had been deployed to fill those positions. Nobody really knew what we were supposed to do for the unit, but at least the duty roster had its positions filled.

The Secretary of Defense said he wanted a product and he wanted intelligence now. He told me what he wanted, not how to do it.

This is my opinion. Even though they were giving information and some of it was useful, while we were there a large part of the time we were focused on trying to establish a link between Al Qaeda and Iraq and we were not being successful in establishing that link. The more frustrated people got in not being able to establish the link, there was more and more pressure to resort to measures that might produce immediate results.

Harsh techniques used on our service members have worked and will work on some, what about those?

Force is risky, and may be ineffective due to the detainees' frame of reference. They are used to seeing much more barbaric treatment.

Agreed.

Psychological stressors are extremely effective (for example sleep deprivation, withholding food, isolation, loss of time)

We can't do sleep deprivation

Yes, we can—with approval.

* Disrupting the normal camp operations is vital. We need to create an environment of "controlled chaos."

Lieutenant Colonel Beaver: We may need to curb the harsher operations while ICRC is around. It is better not to expose them to any controversial techniques. We must have the support of the DOD.

Becker: We have had many reports from Bagram about sleep deprivation being used.

LTC Beaver: True, but officially it is not happening. It is not being reported officially. The ICRC is a serious concern. They will be in and out, scrutinizing our operations, unless they are displeased and decide to protest and leave. This would draw a lot of negative attention.

Fredman: The DOJ has provided much guidance on this issue. The CIA is not held to the same rules as the military. In the past when the ICRC has made a big deal about certain detainees, the DOD has "moved" them away from the attention of the ICRC. Upon questioning from the ICRC about their whereabouts, the DOD's response has repeatedly been that the detainee merited no status under the Geneva Convention. The CIA has employed aggressive techniques on less than a handful of suspects since 9/11.

Under the Torture Convention, torture has been prohibited by international law, but the language of the statutes is written vaguely. Severe mental and physical pain is prohibited. The mental part is explained as poorly as the physical. Severe physical pain described as anything causing permanent damage to major organs or body parts. Mental torture described as anything leading to permanent, profound damage to the senses or personality. It is basically subject to perception. If the detainee dies you're doing it wrong. So far, the techniques we have addressed have not proven to produce these types of results, which in a way challenges what the BSCT paper says about not being able to prove whether these techniques will lead to permanent damage. True, but officially it is not happening. It is not being reported officially. The ICRC is a serious concern. They will be in and out, scrutinizing our operations, unless they are displeased and decide to protest and leave. This would draw a lot of negative attention.

LTC Beaver: We will need documentation to protect us

Fredman: Yes, if someone dies while aggressive techniques are being used, regardless of cause of death, the backlash of attention would be extremely detrimental. Everything must be approved and documented.

Fredman: The Torture Convention prohibits torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. The US did not sign up on the second part, because of the 8th amendment (cruel and unusual punishment), but we did sign the part about torture. This gives us more license to use more controversial techniques.

LTC Beaver: Does SERE employ the "wet towel" technique?

Fredman: If a well-trained individual is used to perform [sic] this technique it can feel like you're drowning. The lymphatic system will react as if you're suffocating, but your body will not cease to function. It is very effective to identify phobias and use them (ie, insects, snakes, claustrophobia). The level of resistance is directly related to person's experience.

Major Burney: Whether or not significant stress occurs lies in the eye of the beholder. The burden of proof is the big issue. It is very difficult to disprove someone else's PTSD.

Sam: This looks like the kind of stuff Congressional hearings are made of. Quotes from LTC Beaver regarding things that are not being reported give the appearance of impropriety. Other comments like "It is basically subject to perception. If the detainee dies you're doing it wrong" and "Any of the techniques that lie on the harshest end of the spectrum must be performed by a highly trained individual. Medical personnel should be present to treat any possible accidents" seem to stretch beyond the bounds of legal propriety. Talk of "wet towel treatment" which results in the lymphatic gland reacting as if you are suffocating, would, in my opinion, shock the conscience of any legal body looking at using the results of the interrogations, or possibly even the interrogators. Someone needs to be considering how history will look back at this.

The Commander of US SOUTHCOM has forwarded a request by the Commander of Joint Task Force 170 (now JTF-GTMO) for approval of counter-resistance techniques to aid in the interrogation of detainees at Guantanamo Bay. The request contains three categories of counter-resistance techniques, with the first category the least aggressive and the third category the most aggressive. I have discussed this with the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Doug Feith, and General Myers, and I believe all join in the recommendation that, as a matter of policy, you authorize the commander of SOUTHCOM to employ, in his discretion, only Categories I and II and the fourth technique listed in Category III (use of mild, non-injurious physical contact, such as grabbing, poking in the chest with a finger, and light pushing). Approved—however, I stand for 8-10 hours a day; why is standing limited to 4 hours? Signed Donald Rumsfeld, December 2nd, 2002

Following the Secretary's December 2nd, 2002 authorization, senior staff at GTMO began drafting a standard operating procedure (SOP) specifically for the use of SERE procedures in interrogations. The draft SOP itself stated that, "the premise behind this is that the interrogation tactics used at US military SERE schools are appropriate for use in real-world interrogations. These tactics and techniques are used at SERE school to 'break' SERE detainees. The same tactics and techniques can be used to break real detainees during interrogations."

I believe the techniques and tactics that we use in training have applicability. What I am wrestling with is the implications of using these tactics as it relates to current legal constraints, the totally different motivations of the detainees, and the lack of direction of senior leadership within the [U.S. Government] on how to uniformly treat detainees. The handling of [Designated Unlawful Combatants] is a screwed up mess and everyone is scrambling to unscrew the mess.

Pretty much everyone involved in counter-terrorism issues at the Department of Justice (DoJ), including the senior leadership of the department, was aware of concerns about the effectiveness of Department of Defense (DoD) interrogations. Nahmias said that concern about ineffectiveness generally, as well as concerns about ineffective interrogations of specific detainees, "were a repeated issue during my entire time at Justice."

Many of the interviewers were young and inexperienced and yelled and screamed at the detainees but had no knowledge of Al Qaeda. Any concerns we, as the FBI, raised were dismissed because the military needed intelligence immediately. We were also told in no uncertain terms we were not in charge and the military were running the show.

Although very enthusiastic, DHS interrogators appear to have limited experience in any kind of interview approach which emphasizes patience or being friendly over a long period of time. They appear to be highly susceptible to pressure to get quick results, and this pressure will be reflected in that they improvise plans as they go along.

The reliability of their techniques is questionable. Worse, there appears to be no one on the DHS side who seems concerned about this. They are quick to dismiss any approach that extends beyond their experience or imagination.

Their embracement [sic] of a fear-based approach is consistent with the military environment in which they operate but may not be conducive to the long-term goal of obtaining reliable intelligence.

Hello from GTMO,

As of 10/8/2002 @1800 hours, DHS will discontinue their current efforts regarding prisoner #63 [Mohamed al-Qahtani]. Besides the sleep deprivation they utilized loud music, bright lights, and "body placement discomfort," all with negative results. They asked X and I to participate in an "after action" on this phase which we will probably do. At present the plan is for DHS to initiate their Phase II on #63 sometime this weekend. The detainee is down to around 100 pounds, but is still as fervent as ever. That's it for now, more to follow.

Phase II: The military would place a government translator with al-Qahtani. The translator would act and be treated like a detainee, and he would engage al-Qahtani in conversation, and ask targeted questions to extract the sought-after information.

Phase III: The plan referred to Level III techniques, apparently a reference to the techniques listed in the October 2002 memorandum in which MG Dunleavy requested that the commander of SOUTHCOM approve 19 counter-resistance techniques not specifically listed in Field Manual 34-52. SERE and other counter-interrogation resistance training techniques would be employed.

Phase IV: Al-Qahtani would be sent off-island, either temporarily or permanently, to Jordan, Egypt or another third country to allow those countries to employ interrogation techniques that will enable them to obtain the requisite information.

After X left, he heard that #63 ended up in hospital.

I occasionally saw sleep deprivation interviews with strobe lights, and two different kinds of loud music. I asked one of the interrogators what they were doing. They said it would take approximately four days to break someone doing an interrogation, sixteen hours on with the lights and music, and four hours off.

On one occasion the air conditioning had been turned down so far and the temperature was so cold in the room that the barefooted detainee was shaking with cold. When I asked the MPs what was going on, I was told that interrogators from the day prior had ordered this treatment, and the detainee was not to be moved. On another occasion, the AC had been turned off, making the temperature in the unheated room probably well over 100 degrees. The detainee was almost unconscious on the floor with a pile of hair next to him. He had apparently been literally pulling his own hair out throughout the night.

There were two interrogators in the room with the detainee. A asked B if the detainee had been spitting at the interrogators or exhibiting belligerent behavior towards them. B replied no, then told A that the detainee's head had been duct taped because he would not stop quoting the Koran.

If you think this is tough, you should see what's happening in Afghanistan.

Death in Bagram

Pursuant to a lease agreement executed by the US and Afghan governments, Afghanistan ceded exclusive use and control of Bagram Airbase to the United States. The lease grants the United States exclusive use, exclusive control, and exclusive, peaceable, undisturbed and uninterrupted possession of all facilities and land at Bagram Airfield, without cost and without interference by the Afghan government. The lease continues in effect in perpetuity unless and until the United States determines unilaterally that it no longer requires use of the base. US civil and military personnel at Bagram are subject only to US jurisdiction. Bagram prisoners have no access to Afghan courts and cannot claim or assert protections under Afghan law.

The following is the SECDEF (Secretary of Defense) criteria for detention.

CENTCOM should, as necessary, obtain control over the following enemy combatants:

All Al Qaeda personnel;

All Taliban leaders, Afghan and non-Afghan;

Non-Afghan Taliban personnel, including named individuals as identified by the intelligence community, anyone with special skills or education, such as those known as professor or engineer, and anyone who speaks a Western language;

Any others whom screeners think may pose a threat to US interests, may have intelligence value, or may be of law enforcement interest.

Although SECDEF criteria for detention are generally known and understood, the approach to detaining personnel differs substantially across the theater. In some areas, few persons are detained unless there is a specific pre-existing justification or a threat to the force present. In other locations, cordon and search operations yield large numbers of detainees without apparent application of specific criteria. There is an inverse correlation between the length of time a unit has been in theater and the number of individuals it detains.

Inconsistent and unevenly applied standards in the detention and interrogation process increase the possibility of the abuse of detainees, especially forward in the battle area. Ironically, that same weakness in standards degrades the intelligence collection process with negative effects growing the further a detainee moves through the system.

On December 4th, 2002, a PUC (Person Under Control) died at the Bagram Collection Point (BCP). Six days later, on December 10th, a second PUC died at the BCP. The patterns of detainee abuse in these two incidents share some similarities.

Habibullah was very stubborn and gave smart responses. Once they asked him if he wanted to spend the rest of his life in cuffs. His response was "yes, don't they look good on me?" He was very sick, clearing his throat and coughing up phlegm constantly. He was a pretty young man.

X wanted to put him in the safety position of kneeling for the interrogations. But Habibullah could not kneel. He told me about the pain in his legs and ultimately, he sat on the floor because his right leg would not bend at the knee. His right foot was swollen up too. He limped into the interrogation room. After about 90 to 120 minutes, we got nothing out of him, and the interview was going nowhere. X called for the MPs and they came in, put him back on his feet, and took him back to his cell. The MPs were so big and strong, I really couldn't tell if he was walking or being carried. There was one MP on each side and they moved him quickly. They took him back to isolation. Because of his position that was where he was being kept.

Q: What did Habibullah tell you happened to his leg?

A: He never said. He complained it hurt, but did not say why or how. We all thought he was exaggerating his cough because it would conveniently get worse when we asked serious questions. But he was sick. He was coughing up nasty stuff and spitting it into the cup.

Q: When detainees were sick or injured and told this to you, what were the responsibilities of interrogators, once you translated these complaints?

A: If they were happy with the detainee's answers, they would say OK, I'll see what I can do for you. If they didn't like the answers they got, or did not like the detainee's behavior, they would do nothing and just ignore their complaints.

Q: Did X tell the MPs about Habibullah's medical complaints, his legs and his cough?

A: I don't remember.

The interpreter told me that this product, resembling snuff, called *niswa*, when discontinued caused the kind of reaction we were seeing — coughing, phlegm. I felt like I was getting an insider's perspective on a cultural thing and that was why it never alarmed me that he had any type of serious medical condition.

Sergeant X and Specialist Y went back in with me to try to get Habibullah to eat. One of us took his hood off and X was holding the fruit up in front of him and he had no reaction. His eyes were almost completely open, he was kind of staring off. His head was tilted, so that he was looking in my direction, and I took it as a taunt. One of the other NCOs put an apple in his hand. He wouldn't even hold onto it. Finally, I looked at X and Y and made the comment, out of frustration, that "This guy's a fuckin' idiot." When I turned back toward him, spit hit me right in the chest. I looked down and I was in shock. I honestly thought he spit, but I'm not sure if he spit at me. I was pissed. Later, X told me that I kneed him, but I honestly don't recall doing it. I just snapped. I was so angry and I literally saw red. Y grabbed him by the shirt, pulled him forward and yelled at him. I remember backing away from him and I said something like "Don't ever spit on me again." I then delivered a common pronial strike with my knee, maybe a couple of times. I guess I hit him pretty hard with my right knee in his right thigh. X's eyes were wide and he and Y were both shocked. I am known as the calmest and easiest of the guards. The other guys often kidded me about being too easy on the detainees. They thought I was soft, maybe even weak. I probably hit him harder than I should have. A few minutes, maybe ten minutes later, the sergeant of the guard, Staff Sergeant (SSG) Z, came in with an apple and an orange. He wanted to discuss the incident with me and try to get the detainee to eat. I told him we were trying to get the detainee to eat and he spit on me, but I didn't tell him about my common pronial strikes. He told me, "We have to get him to eat." We tried to get Habibullah's attention from the door, while waiting for a third person, by banging on the door. I had a gut feeling that something was wrong with him medically, but I told SSG Z that he was probably faking. We got no response from him. He was slumped forward, pretty much dead weight. We took his hood off and undid the chains from the ceiling and eased him to the ground. We talked about what to do and nudged at his foot with our boots, me and SSG Z, checking for a response. I reached down and felt for a pulse and I got nothing. X ran around the corner to the medical room and got a blood pressure cuff and the stethescope. A couple of times I thought maybe I felt a weak pulse but there was nothing. SSG Z said, "Don't even joke with me." We sent for the medic and Z sent for the stethescope and BP cuff at around the same time. The medic refused to get out of bed. We sent the runner back a second time and the medic said, "If he's unconscious it's beyond me. You'd better call the hospital." By now it's been probably 30 minute since we first walked in the cell and he had no pulse.

Q: The blood pressure readings you cited in earlier statements, where did they come from?

A: The first one I thought I heard. Looking back now, I was in denial that the detainee was dead. I probably heard my own heart racing.

Q: Do you know anyone who delivered blows to Habibullah besides the knee blows you gave him?

A: Yes. After the deployment was pretty much over, when everyone else went home, I went with a small group of soldiers, Specialist (SPC) A, SPC B, SPC C and myself, to Qatar. We were supposed to be putting our equipment and vehicles on the boat to come home. One night we were sitting around playing cards, and it came up again, the death. I walked away. I just can't talk about it. But A made the comment, "It was really weird, because when you relieved me that day, we had a lot of problems with him and had to adjust his cuffs a bunch, I must have given him (the detainee, Habibullah) at least 50 common pronial strikes that day, and he deserved every one of them."

Q: Have you heard people around the unit refer to you as the "Knee of Death"?

A: Yes, they refer to me by so many things associated with the death, "Grim Reaper" among them. Our commander has asked us to come up

with a new company motto. Ours is "Tigers is the Tower." A lot of people want us to use "Death by Knee." Pretty much everyone who thinks the deaths were a joke. I must have heard it from fifty guys in the unit.

Q: After the first death, did the practice of delivering common peronial strikes change?

A: They told us we had to log it. They did not ask that it be discontinued.

I had no contact that I can recall with the other detainee that died, the one CID has told me was named Ullah and was designated PUC 412. I did have contact with detainee Dilawar, PUC 421, on at least two occasions when I served as the interpreter for his interrogation by military intelligence personnel. The lead interrogator was Specialist X, and at least once he was accompanied by Sergeant Y. I recall this session specifically because of what Y did to Dilawar. At the beginning of this session, X was going slow, and Y was always very aggressive. He always wanted to lead. Dilawar was in trouble with Y quickly. Y had a rule that the detainee had to look at him, not me. He gave him three chances, and then he grabbed him by the shirtfront and pulled him toward him, across the table, slamming his chest into the tablefront. This caused Dilawar to stand up. It only happened once, during this session, because Dilawar was very weak and compliant, but very quiet. With other detainees, Y did this repeatedly. When Dilawar first came into the interview, he said he was too weak and was unable to talk. He also said that his wife had died. Initially, none of us believed Dilawar's wife had died. We all thought it was a clever attempt to avoid interrogation. Dilawar complained that his hands and feet were numb, and he kept asking for water. I observed uncontrollable shaking, bouncing of his legs while he was seated. I believe he also said he was "beaten up" but we didn't pursue that. Y went and got a small water bottle. I observed him poke a hole in the bottle near the bottom. He gave the bottle to DILAWAR. DILAWAR could not open the bottle top, he was too weak. While DILAWAR tried to open the bottle, water was draining out of the hole in the bottom and onto DILAWAR's clothing. Y changed tactics. He turned the bottle over, so the hole was at the top, and squeezed water into DILAWAR's mouth. He pressed the bottom of the bottle against DILAWAR's lips. This effectively gagged DILAWAR by forcing a large volume of water into his mouth and nose rapidly. Water spilled out of his mouth, down the front of his clothes and he spit it back out. Y squeezed the bottle repeatedly, saying "Come on, drink. Drink! You were asking for water." When he removed the water, Dilawar was finally able to breathe and he spit the water out. Y yelled "What are you spitting at me?" DILAWAR told me he was not spitting at Y, it was not intentional, he could not breathe. I told this to Y. At this point DILAWAR was standing up and Y told DILAWAR to get on his knees and DILAWAR said he could not. He said he was "too weak." He would be happy to, but he couldn't, he was too weak. Y then told the Military Police (MP) to put DILAWAR on his knees, which the MP did by kneeing DILAWAR either in the back or the back of the leg. They summoned two MPs to return him to his cell. DILAWAR left under his own power, on his feet, but he was limping. I think Military Intelligence (MI) asked the MPs to keep him standing, not all the time.

Q: Did anyone relay the information about DILAWAR's leg and hand numbness to medical authorities?

A: No.

I served as the interpreter on one occasion, that I recall, during a session with PUC 421 (whom I have been told by CID was named Dilawar.) DILAWAR was a suspect in a rocket attack on Americans. He denied this completely. He was a skinny guy, about 5'7" and weighed about 110-115 lbs. He was a pretty small guy. He was also a young guy, maybe in his late 20s. About 10 minutes into the interview, X had me instruct him to get on his knees. To effect this, he had to get himself out of the chair with his feet and hands cuffed and kneel in front of the chair. She had me tell him to raise his cuffed hands over his head and them there. DILAWAR's arms got tired and he'd drop them so X (who was standing behind him) would pull his hands back up from behind or would hit his hands as he dropped them forward to get them back in the air. DILAWAR complained that he could not hold his hands up and that he couldn't do it anymore. This went on for five to ten minutes. X berated him for being weak and questioned him about being a man, which was very insulting because of his heritage and she was trying to goad him into a reaction. He did not get angry, he simply kept complaining about the discomfort. This is the strongest reaction an Afghan man would have to pain, they do not cry and would especially not do this in front of a woman. After that, maybe twenty minutes into the interview, told me to instruct DILAWAR over to the wall. She then told me to have DILWAR sit along the wall, but not on the floor. The position was like sitting along the wall with no chair under you. Dilawar also told me this hurt him and he could not do it. Several times he moved, so X and Y picked him up and shoved him back into the wall. This happened multiple times. During this time, he continued to tell me that his legs hurt and that he could not do this. X and Y grabbed him by his shirt (front), dragged him to his feet and shoved him back against the wall, sliding him back into seated position. DILAWAR slid down the wall and onto the floor and Y picked him up and repeated this for about another ten minutes. Once Y shoved him hard into the wall and X warned him "Be careful" and "not hit him too hard". She mentioned he was small and not to be so rough, that it wasn't allowed. This went on for ten or fifteen minutes. He was so tired he couldn't get up. She'd tell him not to talk, but DILAWAR was not that type of guy. He kept complaining and she was yelling at him in English. He didn't understand English and she spoke no Pashtun. At that point, I wasn't doing much, they weren't using me. DILAWAR was trying to talk with me, asking for help. X was telling him "Don't look at him, he can't help you, he's with us, he won't help you." I translated this and I explained that they were doing this because he was being uncooperative. They stood him up and at one point X stepped on his bare foot with her boot and grabbed him by his beard and pulled him towards her. At one point, DILAWAR was on his knees, his hands were cuffed and raised in front of his chest and grabbed him by his beard and pulled him tightly towards chest. Once X kicked DILAWAR in the groin (private areas) with her right foot. She was standing some distance from him and she stepped back and kicked him. His hands were cuffed, he was standing and she must not have made full contact. He did groan and grab himself, but he did not fall down. In my experience a full contact blow or kick in that area causes you to fall down or to your knees.

Q: At what point was the interview over?

A: About ten minutes after it started, they didn't ask any more questions. About the first ten minutes (I think) they were actually questioning him, after that it was pushing, shoving, kicking and shouting at him. There was no interrogation going on. They weren't questioning him. They were roughing him up. Y went to get the MPs and when they came in, they picked him up from the floor and put the hood back on him and dragged him out of the door back to his cell. X told them to put him in a standing position with his hands overhead until the next shift came on.

Q: Did X understand any Pashtun?

A: I'm sure she knew a little, but not enough to be helpful.

Q: Could she tell that DILAWAR was complaining about pain and tiredness?

A: I told her what DILAWAR was saying. Some things don't need words, the tone of voice and body language tell you that a person is in pain or can't comply anymore. I think they knew what effect their actions were having on him.

Q: When you were hired was the subject of what was acceptable for interrogators to do with detainees discussed?

A: No, we were supposed to support the American Army in Operation Enduring Freedom and do as they asked us to.

From the beginning, they were asking if they were allowed to put the detainees into safety positions, or utilize sleep deprivation. I can tell you that up until the deaths of the two detainees, we never got a clear-cut answer from the Staff Judge Advocate as to what could or could not be done. Our guidance was "Just don't violate the Geneva Convention. Look at these Powerpoint slides."

Q: How often were safety positions or stress positions used during interrogations?

A: Often, I would say daily. I would say that not by every interrogator on a daily basis, but at least one of us used them each day.

Q: Do you know if Y was referred to as the "King of Torture"?

A: Yes, the two incidents that I saw would lead me to think that he was doing things to the detainees that he was not supposed to be doing. Staff Sergeant W knew about it, and even referred to Y as the "King of Torture."

What most people don't realize is that there was very little in the form of structure and rules for dealing with this type of detainee. There was the Geneva Convention for Enemy Prisoners of War, but nothing for terrorists. It was an interesting balancing act. We sometimes developed a rapport with detainees and Staff Sergeant W would sit us down and remind us these were evil people, and talk about 9/11, and how they weren't our friends and could not be trusted.

Q: Did any of the other MPs appear to dislike the detainees?

A: I would say the entire unit. When we arrived we were still thinking about September 11th. We didn't know if the detainees were innocent or guilty. We did know when the detainees who came into the facility were "top dogs" or not. We knew the second detainee was a "top dog" because of the briefings provided by Sergeant First Class X.

At that point, most of us were convinced that the detainee was innocent. I believe my questioning plan for the interrogation may have been about the environment in Khost itself, and not about the rocket attack.

Q: In your earlier statement, you indicated that you talked with Dilawar, PUC 421, when he was placed in standing restraint, the day before his death. What did you observe and what communication did you have with him or his guards?

A: DILAWAR was on sleep deprivation. The MPs were ordered by SSG W and/or CPT V not to let him sleep and he was chained in a standing position in an isolation cell as part of that. The MI leadership had to approve and direct sleep deprivation. I heard he had been there all night by the time I talked with him, at midday the next day. All day long, the MPs used different interpreters to tell him "only one more hour." If I had known he was standing all that time, I would have protested. When I spoke with him, he barely had the energy to talk. I told him "Look, please if you want to be able to sit down and be released from shackles, you just need to be quiet for one more hour". He told me that if he was in shackles another hour he would die. I told him nothing bad would happen to him if he did as he was asked and he agreed to. Of course at the time, I had no idea he had been restrained and kept awake all that time. The next day I heard he had died. He kept telling me he needed to see a doctor and he needed a shot. I told the MP (whom I can't recall or identify) that he was asking for a doctor. The MP walked over to DILAWAR, took DILAWAR's hand and pressed down on the detainee's nailbed. He then looked back at me and pronounced the detainee's vital signs were fine and that he was just trying to get out of the restraints.

Q: Why was DILAWAR in standing restraint?

A: Sleep deprivation.

If a detainee spilled his guts during the initial interview, he could go straight to general population. But 99% of the time, they went on to sleep deprivation. This was to disorient them and make them more susceptible to interrogations. MI decided how much sleep a detainee got, and it depended on the detainee's level of cooperation. The decision to direct a course of sleep deprivation was reached collectively by the interrogators. Then the head MI guy, SSG W, would tell the MPs to keep the detainee awake. Sleep deprivation was an MI decision. The MPs just did what they were told by MI. I think W would tell the MP Sergeant of the Guard and then the MPs would be responsible for keeping the MPs awake.

Q: How were the MPs supposed to keep the detainee awake?

A: Sometimes loud music, banging on cells, and sometimes they would chain them to the ceiling standing up. I have heard that after six days with no sleep, anyone will talk. It was considered the best tactic, but that was how the other detainee died.

Q: How many times at the most did you strike Dilawar, PUC 421, and under what circumstances?

A: Somewhere in the area of 37 times, less than 40 for sure. There was one time, which I did not remember before, where I told Dilawar "That's it," implying I was fed up with him, and I said I was going to give him 15 common peronial strikes in each leg. Then I delivered the blows. When I recounted the story later, that is the way I told it. I told people that I had to switch knees because my leg got tired. I'm not absolutely certain that I delivered 30 strikes at that time. That was the number I said but it may have been a few more or less than that. There were also another 5 to 7 times I struck him, with knee strikes, during times when he was being non-compliant.

Q: Where did the 30 knee strikes occur?

A: DIlawar was restrained in the isolation cell, on the top floor, in the first cell on the left. I can't recall the number of the cell.

Q: How was Dilawar restrained at the time you delivered the 30 blows?

A: He was chained to the ceiling. His hands were either together over his head or out to his side. He was wearing a set of short handcuffs and there was a long leg iron connecting him to the Hesco wire ceiling. I can't recall the configuration of his restraints, only that he was restrained in one of the two ways I have described. His legs would have been shackled together with a set of leg irons at the ankles. His feet would have been touching the floor.

Q: How was Dilawar being non-compliant? What behavior was Dilawar engaged in that provoked such a response from you?

A: Not putting his hood back on, mule-kicking the door, pulling his hood off.

Q: Did your knee become sore from delivering blows to Dilawar?

A: No, not really, but when I told the story I remember exaggerating and saying I hit him so much and so hard that my knee got sore. I don't know if I actually kneed him 30 times.

Q: Why can't you clearly recall the circumstances of the times you delivered blows to Habibullah and Dilawar?

A: They were not the only PUCs I delivered blows to. I did it to a lot of other PUCs who did not die. It happened a lot. It was standard practice to pop someone who did not comply. These two guys died, but I probably kneed 20 or more PUCs total, and I just can't differentiate between the rest of the PUCs and the ones that died. Each time I entered a cell, other guys were with me, but who was with me for each specific incident, I just don't know, there were too many.

Q: Did you know that striking a PUC who was restrained and no threat to you was wrong?

A: Yes.

Q: If you knew it was wrong, why did you do it?

A: It was morally wrong, but it was SOP (standard operating practice). Really it wasn't a written down SOP, but it was standard practice and it was what was routinely done. So I just went along with what everyone else was doing.

Q: Did anyone in leadership deliver, or know about the practice of delivering, common peronial knee strikes?

A: Yes. All of them knew.

I cannot recall exactly who, but they showed us additional techniques which they said were used by police agencies for people who would not comply with what they were told, or were resistant. One of these techniques was the common peronial strike. That is when you use your knee and strike the outside thigh of an individual. The blow is designed to strike a nerve in the leg, which causes the leg to collapse, giving you the opportunity to subdue the individual. I knew when the instruction was given that it was not what I was taught at MP school in 1993. The use of the strikes was not ordered by anyone within the company, but was provided so that we would have more options if our formal training did not work for some reason. One of my team members, Specialist A, was employed as a civilian police officer. He told me that he would not use the peronial strike, as it would "tear up" the legs of the individual you struck.

Q: How did the detainee react to the common peronial strike?

A: He screamed out "Allah, Allah, Allah," and my first reaction was that he was crying out to his God. Everybody heard him cry out and thought it was funny. X and Y were there when this happened and they thought it was funny too. It became a kind of running joke, and people kept showing up to give this detainee a common peronial strike just to hear him scream out "Allah." I know A, B, and the majority of first platoon came by and gave him a common peronial strike just to hear him cry out, because it was funny. When shift change came about, second platoon heard about it, and things went downhill from there. I am pretty sure nearly all of second platoon did it too. And I know third platoon did it too. On the next day, X, Y and I went to the detainee's cell because he was making some noise. I opened up the cell, and X and Y went into the cell, and each gave him one common peronial strike and he cried out "Allah, Allah" again. I stood by the cell when it happened. We then left.

Q: How many strikes do you believe the detainee received in all?

A: I don't even know. It went on over a 24 hour period, and I should think it was over 100 strikes.

Q: Are you saying that every platoon in your company gave common peronial strikes to this detainee to hear him scream out "Allah"?

A: Yes.

Q: Was the second detainee that died always restrained when the common peronial strikes were given?

A: Yes.

Q: How do you know the second detainee that died was struck for fun and not because of some type of bad behavior?

A: Because everyone was talking about wanting to hear him cry out "Allah, Allah, Allah."

Q: Who else would know about the strikes besides you?

A: Everyone in the unit knew about it.

Q: Are you sure Sergeant First Class (SFC) Z knew about the strikes?

A: He was aware of what was going on and nipped

it in the bud. That's when he gave us the order to stop giving peronial strikes to anybody.

Q: What exactly did you tell SFC Z about what was going on?

A: I think I told SFC Z that the detainee (that later died)'s leg was looking bad. His pants would fall down sometimes when he was in standing restraints. The first time that I saw him I noticed he had a bruise on one of his thighs. Over time I noticed it was getting bigger and he was beginning to put his weight on one leg. I assumed Z already knew about the bruise getting bigger from the common peronial strikes, because he seemed to know everything about what was going on in there. I don't recall what I told him about people giving the detainees common peronial strikes.

Q: Did you tell anyone else about the bruising?

A: I told a field medic, I have no idea who he was, about the bruising when he came by for his once-a-day medical check. He checked it out and said it was okay.

We used to hear him yelling and screaming. Then one day I heard the MPs talking on the radio, and they said this man's number, 421, had died. A couple days later I asked an MP (G-6) what happened and he told me a detainee died. He said he had a heart attack. After this event, all the hitting, things started to change. The food was better, no hanging from chains, the punishment was not as severe. If we were caught talking, they made us stand up with our hands in the air.

Q: Do you think the death of either of those detainees was deliberate?

A: I think that someone was irresponsible. I don't think that anyone meant to kill them, just that their tactics were overused. I think that the PUCs were not cared for enough and that both the MPs and medical staff did not observe their medical conditions well enough.

Q: How do you feel about the deaths of the two detainees?

A: I am not surprised at all. I think the culture, the nation, the company, the Army breed the mentality that allowed it to happen.

The Winds of War

On January 24th, 2003, 9 days after Secretary Rumsfeld rescinded authority for the techniques at GTMO, the Staff Judge Advocate for Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180), Central Command's conventional forces in Afghanistan, produced an interrogation techniques memo. While that memo remains classified, unclassified portions of a report by Major General George Fay stated that the memo "recommended removal of clothing—a technique that had been in the Secretary's December 2 authorization" and discussed "exploiting the Arab fear of dogs" another technique approved by the Secretary on December 2, 2002.

From Afghanistan, the techniques made their way to Iraq. According to the Department of Defense (DoD) Inspector General (IG), at the beginning of the Iraq war, special mission unit forces in Iraq "used a January 2003 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which had been developed for operations in Afghanistan."

Captain (CPT) Wood stated that interrogators had used sleep deprivation and stress positions in Afghanistan and that she "perceived the Iraq experience to be evolving into the same operational environment as Afghanistan. She said that she used her "best judgment and concluded [the techniques] would be effective tools for interrogations at [Abu Ghraib]." She also said that she later put together a request for additional interrogation options because "the winds of war were changing" and there was "mounting pressure from higher for 'actionable intelligence' from interrogation operations." CPT Wood said that she did not want to repeat her experience in Afghanistan, where interrogators lacked written guidance. "A lot of the interrogators and analysts also served in Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan where some other techniques were approved for use … I understood the Afghanistan rules were a little different because the detainees were not classified as EPWs. It was, 'use techniques in the spirit of the Geneva Convention,' not, 'you will apply the Geneva Convention.' In order to use those similar techniques from GTMO and Afghanistan in Iraq, we sought approval from the higher command."

In his report of his investigation into Abu Ghraib, Major General George Fay said that interrogation techniques developed for GTMO became "confused" and were implemented at Abu Ghraib. For example, Major General Fay said that removal of clothing, while not included in CJTF-7's SOP, was "imported" to Abu Ghraib, could be "traced through Afghanistan and GTMO," and contributed

to an environment at Abu Ghraib that appeared "to condone depravity and degradation rather than humane treatment of detainees."

On July 26, 2003, CPT Wood submitted a proposed interrogation policy to her chain of command. The proposed policy was based on the interrogation policy in use at the Special Mission Unit (SMU-TF) facility in Iraq. CPT Wood said that she and her staff simply "cleaned up some of the grammar, changed the heading and signature block, and sent it up" to CJTF-7 as a proposed policy for the 519th MI Brigade. Mirroring the SMU-TF policies, CPT Wood's proposed policy included sleep management, "varying comfort positions" (sitting, standing, kneeling, prone), presence of military working dogs, 20-hour interrogations, isolation, and yelling, loud music, and light control. The proposed policy stated that "EPWs that refuse to answer may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind." The prohibition against threats, insults and exposure to unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment, however, was limited to EPWs and CPT Wood stated that, to her knowledge, there were no EPWs held at Abu Ghraib.

CPT Ponce added:

> …The gloves are coming off gentleman regarding these detainees. Colonel Boltz has made it clear that we want these individuals broken. Casualties are mounting and we need to start gathering info to help protect our fellow soldiers from any further attacks.
>
> Today's enemy, particularly those in [Southwest Asia], understand force, not psychological mind games or incentives. I would propose a baseline interrogation technique that at a minimum allows for physical contact resembling that used by SERE schools (This allows open-handed facial slaps from a distance of no more than about two feet and back-handed blows to the midsection from a distance of about 18 inches. Again, this is open-handed.) …Other techniques would include close confinement quarters, sleep deprivation, white noise, and a litany of harsher fear-up approaches. . . fear of dogs and snakes appear to work nicely. I firmly agree that the gloves need to come off.

Major Nathan Hoepner, the Operations Officer (S-3) of the 501st MI Battalion, took issue with the language in Captain Ponce's email, stating in an email of his own:

> As for "the gloves need to come off…" we need to take a deep breath and remember who we are. Those gloves are most definitely NOT based on Cold War or WWII enemies—they are based on clearly established standards of international law to which we are signatories and in part the originators. Those in turn derive from practices commonly accepted as morally correct, the so-called "usages of war." It comes down to standards of right and wrong—something we cannot just put aside when we find it inconvenient, any more than we can declare that we will "take no prisoners" and therefore shoot those who surrender to us simply because we find prisoners inconvenient. "The casualties are mounting…" we have taken casualties in every war we have ever fought—that is part of the very nature of war. We also inflict casualties, generally more than we take. That in no way justifies letting go of our standards. We have NEVER considered our enemies justified in doing such things to us. Casualties are part of war—if you cannot take casualties then you cannot engage in war. Period. BOTTOM LINE: We are American soldiers, heirs of a long tradition of staying on the high ground. We need to stay there.

Meanwhile, in [b(2)]

The capture of senior Al Qa'ida operative Abu Zubaydah on 27 March 2002 presented the Agency with the opportunity to obtain actionable intelligence on future threats to the United States from the most senior Al-Qai'da member in US custody at that time. This accelerated CIA's development of an interrogation program.

Several months earlier, in late 2001, CIA had tasked an independent contractor psychologist, who had experience in the US Air Force's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) training program, to research and write a paper on Al-Qa'ida's resistance to interrogation techniques. This psychologist collaborated with a Department of Defense (DoD) psychologist who had [redacted] SERE experience in the US Air Force and DoD to produce the paper, "Recognizing and Developing Countermeasures to Al-Qa'ida Resistance to Interrogation Techniques: A Resistance Training Perspective." Subsequently, the two psychologists developed a list of new and more aggressive EITs [extended interrogation techniques] that they recommended for use in interrogations.

Standard measures (i.e. without physical or substantial psychological pressure)
- Shaving
- Stripping
- Diapering (generally for periods not greater

than 72 hours)
Hooding
Isolation
White noise or loud music (at a decibel level that will not damage hearing)
Continuous light or darkness
Uncomfortably cool environment
Restricted diet, including reduced caloric intake (sufficient to maintain general health)
Shackling in upright, sitting or horizontal position
Water Dousing
Sleep deprivation (up to 72 hours)

Enhanced Interrogation Techniques

- The *attention grasp* consists of grasping the detainee with both hands, with one hand on each side of the collar opening, in a controlled and quick motion. In the same motion as the grasp, the detainee is drawn towards the interrogator.

- During the *walling* technique, the detainee is pulled forward and then quickly and firmly pushed into a flexible false wall so that his shoulder blades hit the wall. His head and shoulders are supported with a rolled towel to prevent whiplash.

- The *facial hold* is used to hold the detainee's head immobile. The interrogator places an open palm on either side of the detainee's face and the interrogator's fingertips are kept well away from the detainee's eyes.

- In the *facial or insult slap*, the fingers are slightly spread apart. The interrogator's hand makes contact with the area between the tip of the detainee's chin and the bottom of the corresponding earlobe.

- In *cramped confinement,* the detainee is placed in a confined space, typically a small or large box, which is usually dark. Confinement in the smaller space lasts no more than two hours and in the larger space it can last up to 18 hours.

- *Insects* placed in a confinement box involve placing a harmless insect in the box with the detainee.

- During *wall standing*, the detainee may stand about 4 to 5 feet from a wall with his feet spread approximately to his shoulder width. His arms are stretched out in front of him and his fingers rest on the wall to support all of his body weight. The detainee is not allowed to reposition his hands or feet.

- The application of *stress positions* may include having the detainee sit on the floor with his legs extended straight out in front of him with his arms raised above his head or kneeling on the floor while leaning back at a 45 degree angle.

- *Sleep deprivation* will not exceed 11 days at a time.

- The application of the *waterboard* technique involves binding the detainee to a bench with his feet elevated above his head. The detainee's head is immobilized and an interrogator places a cloth over the detainee's mouth and nose while pouring water onto the cloth in a controlled manner. Airflow is restricted for 20 to 40 seconds and the technique produces the sensation of drowning and suffocation.

One of the psychologists/interrogators acknowledged that the Agency's use of the technique differed from that used in SERE training and explained that the Agency's technique is different because it is "for real" and is more poignant and convincing.

Thomas described for the OIG the techniques that he saw the CIA interrogators use on Zubaydah after they took control of the interrogation. [redacted] Thomas said he raised objections to these techniques to the CIA and told the CIA it was "borderline torture." He stated that Zubaydah was responding to the FBI's rapport-based approach before the CIA assumed control over the interrogation, but became uncooperative after being subjected to the CIA's techniques.

As a result, D'Amuro did not think the techniques would be effective in obtaining accurate information. He said what the detainees did not expect was to be treated as human beings. He said the FBI had successfully obtained information through cooperation without the use of "aggressive techniques. D'Amuro said that when an interrogator knows the subject matter, vets the information, and catches an interviewee when he lies, the interrogator can eventually get him to tell the truth. In contrast, if "aggressive" techniques are used long enough, detainees will start saying things they think the interrogator want to hear just to get them to stop.

The Agency lacked adequate linguists or subject matter experts and had little hard knowledge of what particular Al-Qa'ida leaders—who later became detainees—knew. This lack of knowledge led analysts to speculate about what a detainee "should know," vice [sic] information the analyst could objectively demonstrate the detainee did know. [paragraph redacted] When a detainee did not respond to a question posed to him, the assumption at Headquarters was that the detainee was holding back and knew more; consequently, Headquarters recommended resumption of EITs.

EITs require advance approval from Headquarters, as do standard techniques whenever feasible. The field must document the use of both standard techniques and EITs.

In December 2002, [redacted] cable reported that a detainee was left in a cold room, shackled and naked, until he demonstrated cooperation. When asked in February 2003, if cold was used as an interrogation technique, ___ responded, "not per se." He explained that physical and environmental discomfort was used to encourage the detainees to improve their environment. ___ observed that cold is hard to define. He asked rhetorically, "How cold is cold? How cold is life threatening?"

One officer expressed concern that one day, Agency officers will wind up on some "wanted list" to appear before the World Court for war crimes stemming from activities [redacted]. Another said, "Ten years from now we're going to be sorry we're doing this … [but] it has to be done."

No decisions on any "endgame" for Agency detainees have been made. Senior Agency officials see this as a policy issue for the US government rather than a CIA issue. Even with CIA initiatives to address the issue with policymakers, some detainees who cannot be prosecuted will likely remain in CIA custody indefinitely.

The Translators

Linguist: Works within a _____. Translates _____ questions and detainees' answers in an accurate and timely manner.

The Army turned to Titan in 2003 to provide linguists to perform translation in exactly the same fashion as military linguists, whose positions they were filling due to the critical shortage. Before the linguists deployed to Iraq, Titan provided a brief orientation, instructing them that, upon assignment to a military unit, they would "fall within th[e] chain of command." Titan further told the linguists that they should raise any problems first with military supervisors and then "work your way up the chain of command." Titan sent its linguists to Fort Benning, Georgia, for a week of military pre-deployment training, which served many of the same purposes as military basic training (or "boot camp"). Upon arriving in Iraq, Titan linguists were assigned to military units by Major John Scott Harris, an Army officer who served as linguist manager for the Coalition Joint Task Force, overseeing the assignment of both military and Titan linguists. The linguists were fully integrated in their units and were required to accompany their units on their missions, including combat missions. Starting in 2003, Titan linguists were assigned to the Abu Ghraib prison.

As each linguist arrived, Chief Warrant Officer Rumminger conducted interrogation indoctrination training, in which he provided instruction as to what was authorized by the Interrogation Rules of Engagement ("IROE") and what was prohibited. At the end of training, each linguist was required to sign two documents: a memorandum of understanding with the unit, and the IROE. In the memorandum of understanding, the linguist agreed to follow military rules and directives while attached to the unit and not to discuss the unit's mission with others; the memorandum of understanding specifically provided that, in the event of a disagreement between the linguist and an interrogator, the interrogation should stop, and the two parties should report immediately to the officer in charge.

After completing training, the Titan linguists were given work assignments by Chief Warrant Officer Rumminger (or by non-commissioned officers ("NCOs") with responsibility for particular interrogation teams). Titan management had no role in the day-to-day supervision, direction or control of its linguists. Titan linguists, like military linguists, were required to reflect, as precisely as possible, the words and manner of the interrogator. There was no difference in how Titan and military linguists were used. Noncompliance with military orders was likely to result in removal from the unit or from the contract.

Titan linguists were also required to report any violation of the law of war to the military "in the first instance" because it was an "operational issue"; in the event that they encountered difficulties, they could turn to their site managers, who would help them to take the issue up the military chain of command.

Q: Did you have an impression regarding what weight was given to the statements of interpreters relative to their allegations of assaults by MI interrogators in interviews?

A: We reviewed it as credible. I put great weight behind it. He had no reason to make it up.

Q: Did the interpreters working with MI ever speak about concerns they had related to interrogation

techniques or tactics?

A: They never spoke to the interrogators. They had been instructed to speak directly to Staff Sergeant W if they had any concerns. I don't recall if that ever happened or not. It probably did. We saw interpreters come and work with us for short periods of time and I would guess they did not get along with someone, or did not like something that was being done, so they left.

I felt strongly enough that after this session I went to the MI supervisor, Staff Sergeant W, and told him about it. He told me it was wrong and he would talk to them. But I remember seeing W passing the interrogation room and he saw what was going on. My impression was that W knew and tolerated what they were doing. He told me that they had to be tougher at Bagram than in GTMO. It was his way of justifying the interrogation tactics.

I don't remember the date, but A told me Sergeant X had kicked BT-421 in the genitals during an interrogation. I immediately had X brought to the BCP to talk to her about the allegation. She told me she had not kicked BT-421 in the genitals, but had spread his legs apart with her foot.

Q: Did she ever strike him in his genital area?

A: No.

Q: Was she ever in a position to strike him in his genital area?

A: Yes, when he was on his knees, she would place her foot in between his knees.

Q: Did you ever see her strike him in the groin area while in this position?

A: No.

Q: Is it possible she could have?

A: Yes, but I never saw her.

Q: Could someone else have seen her strike him?

A: If she did, A might have seen her.

Q: Does A seem reliable and truthful to you?

A: No.

Q: Why not?

A: Because he leaves a lot out of what is said when he gets the answer for us.

Q: How do you know that?

A: Because whenever the person says something about the Taliban, he leaves that out of the answer.

Q: How many times have you worked with A?

A: About 4 or 5 times.

Q: How many of those times were with BT-421?

A: Just once.

Q: Do you think A would lie about someone striking BT-421?

A: I don't think he'd have a reason to. He was angry about the stress positions we would use, like putting him on his knees.

Q: What disputes arose between interrogators and interpreters that caused Staff Sergeant W to institute a two-man concept for conducting the interrogations of detained personnel?

A: That was not the only reason he did it. I'm not sure what specifically triggered it. But I do recall that some interpreters were uncomfortable with yelling, cursing and some of the comments they were expected to translate. The interpreters were disturbed by some of the treatment of their people.

Q: Did interrogations, and treatment of detainees generally, become harsher at any particular time?

A: Yes, if the detainee had been in custody for two weeks and not told you anything, or changed the information he was providing on a regular basis.

We had problems with judging this. Sometimes the interpreters translated answers differently, so it could appear they were lying. There was one time when the man was saying the same thing all week, but the interpreters translated it differently, so it appeared to us he was lying.

Q: Would a detained individual inform yourself or another interpreter if they had been struck or were injured?

A: Most of the detainees were shy from talking with us because we were American or we were working for the Americans. They often would not share their true feelings with us. Some would not answer questions, some would not cooperate, and others would constantly lie to us. I was told by some of the detainees that the Afghan militia had beaten them before they were released to US forces.

In my view, most of the issues termed "non-compliance" of Afghan people arose from the shock of bringing people from rural settings into an urban or city setting. This was different for them and things happened at such a quick pace, they had problems understanding and reacting. The MPs interpreted this as a behavioral issue, when in my view it was simply too much sensory input for them to process. They had never been hooded or goggled. When they were told they would have a number instead of a name, one man even cried. They were especially disturbed by the medical procedures, undressing in front of people, rectal examinations. They were resistant to many procedures because they didn't know what was happening. Many come from villages, and have never been subjected to rigid discipline. They didn't react quickly enough for the MPs. I saw many detainees beaten by the MPs. I've seen MPs beat up detainees, by kicking them with their boots in the legs and stomach for non-compliance. The problem with this is the detainee can't comply, because they have no idea what the MP is saying. They kick detainees while moving them to their cell. Then when the detainee finally gets to their cell, they lay down and pray to God for relief. They then get in trouble for talking (praying) and the MPs come in the cell and kick them some more for talking, which is against the rules.

Q: Regarding other interviews you assisted with, approximately how many interviews did you interpret for during your time at the Bagram Collection Point (BCP)?

A: At the time of the deaths, I had done just a few interviews, I pretty much was brand new. By now, I have done hundreds, sometimes I do as many as three interviews a day. My observation has been that yelling and screaming is less effective than talking rationally with people. I tried to convince some of the Alpha Company interrogators to try something besides yelling and bullying and as they changed tactics they got better results. Most of them slowly switched over.

Q: Did you observe any Alpha Company interrogators touching detainees, during interviews?

A: Yes, some provided comforting touching on the shoulder. Some would shove or shake detainees, at that time, everyone touched detainees. Now, I've been told that MI cannot touch detainees. I don't think Alpha Company knew that.

Q: Did you observe anyone exhibit violent physical or abusive conduct toward detainees?

A: Not a whole lot, a bit of shoving and shaking, but an enormous amount of verbal abuse. Of course, the detainees probably didn't understand what was being said, but there was no mistaking the tone. That comes across even if you don't speak the language. It made me terribly uncomfortable to tell those ugly things to the detainees.

Q: Were there any threats to detainees or their families—that you were asked to translate?

A: Not really, mostly they said ugly things like "who will take care of your family while you are away?" Stuff designed to make them want to go home, but no direct threats.

Q: Being an Afghani, how did it make you feel that two detainees died at BDF?

A: It was shocking. As contract interpreters, we are told to keep our opinions to ourselves. But as an individual, you have to make your own judgement about how much you are willing to accept. I did my part to inform MI supervisors about the actions of X and Y. W talked to them, then Dilawar died, and a lot of things changed, got a little better.

Complicity

Q: Did you know that the threat of imminent death constitutes torture under the Geneva Convention?

A: No sir, not at that time.

Q: Was it possible for you to refuse to translate a threat, if one was made in an interrogation or capture situation?

A: That would depend.

Q: On what exactly?

A: On who was making the threat.

The soldiers told me through an interpreter: "Shut up, don't speak, otherwise we will shoot you here. We are Americans."

Subject: AR 15-6 Investigation of the Abu Ghraib Detention Facility and 205th MI Brigade.

Finding: Civilian-16, Translator, Titan employee. A preponderance of evidence supports that Civilian-16 did, or failed to do, the following:

Failed to report detainee abuse.

Failed to report threats against detainees.

Finding: Civilian-17, Interpreter, Titan employee. A preponderance of evidence supports that Civilan 17 did, or failed to do, the following:

Actively participated in detainee abuse.

Failure to report detainee abuse.

Failure to stop detainee abuse.

So you know, some agents have asked what it means that a prisoner is being "abused or mistreated." We have said our intent is for them to report conduct that they know or suspect is beyond the authorization of the person doing the harsh interrogation. While the agent may not know exactly what is permitted, an agent would suspect that pulling out fingernails or sodomizing the detainee is beyond the level of authorization. On the other hand, there is no reason to report on "routine" harsh interrogation techniques that DOD has authorized their employees/contractors to use. [FBI legal counsel Caproni, 2004 email to FBI director Mueller]

Re: Interview/Interrogations

Our people will continue to conduct interview of detainees (PUCs) at secure locations only. If, during the conduct of any interview, events occur that, in the opinion of the FBI agent(s) present, exceed acceptable FBI interview practices, the agent(s) will immediately remove themselves from the scene and will report their concerns to the Afghanistan On-Scene Commander. [rough draft of OGC guidance to FBI field agents, 2004]

What does it mean to "participate" in aggressive interrogation (outside our guidelines) when you are in forward positions. What happens if the army beats the stuffing out of a detainee, gives him to the FBI, he starts talking to the FBI and then the Army wants him back. Have we just "participated" in good cop—bad cop with the Army? How long after Army does its thing do we need to wait to not be viewed as a "participant" in the harsh interrogation. [Caproni email to OGC, October 2004]

FBI is participating (or certainly will be viewed as participating) in aggressive but lawful DOD techniques where FBI agents are [working] with the military interrogators and merely as policy absent themselves from the rough stuff and come back in (minutes, hours or days later) to question the detainee. [OGC reply]

D'Amuro proposed that the FBI be permitted to interview the detainees first, before the CIA would use its "special techniques." D'Amuro said that the FBI recognized that it would have a "taint problem" if the FBI conducted its interviews after the CIA had used the more aggressive techniques. However, no agreement was reached with the CIA at that time.

From November 2004 through April 2005, the attorney drafted several proposals to address the "participation" issue. Ultimately, he proposed a "totality of the circumstances" test, suggesting that an FBI interrogation of a subject that was "distinctly apart in time from an interrogation by non-FBI personnel where methods which could be reasonably interpreted as abusive or inherently coercive were employed" could be found as having occurred in concordance with FBI policy.

According to Jack Goldsmith, Special Council in the Department of Defense (2002-2003) and Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel (2003-2004): "never in the history of the United States had lawyers had such extraordinary influence over war policies as they did after 9/11. The lawyers weren't necessarily expert on al Qaeda, or Islamic fundamentalism, or intelligence, or international diplomacy, or even the requirements of national security. But lawyers—especially White House and Justice Department lawyers—seemed to 'own' issues that had profound national security and political and diplomatic consequences.

On 29 July 2003, the DCI and the General Counsel provided a detailed briefing to selected NSC [National Security Council] Principals on CIA's detention and interrogation efforts involving "high value detainees" to include the expanded use of EITs. According to a Memorandum for the Record prepared by the General Counsel following that meeting, the Attorney General confirmed that DoJ approved of the expanded use of various EITs, including multiple applications of the waterboard. The General Counsel said he believes everyone in attendance was aware of exactly what CIA was doing with respect to detention and interrogation, and approved of the effort.

The CIA wanted the Salt Pit to be a "host-nation facility," an Afghan prison with Afghan guards. Its designation as an Afghan facility was intended to give US personnel some insulation from actions taken by Afghan guards inside, a tactic used in secret CIA prisons in other countries, former and current CIA officials said. The CIA, however, paid the entire cost of maintaining the facility, including the electricity, food and salaries for the guards, who were all vetted by agency personnel. The CIA also decided who would be kept inside, including some "high-value targets," al-Qaeda leaders in transit to other, more secure secret CIA prisons. "We financed it, but it was an Afghan deal," one senior intelligence officer said.

During their May 2005 meeting, President Bush and President Karzai expressed a strong desire to return Afghan detainees to Afghanistan as part of the US-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership. According to the New York Times, which has a draft of the 2005 Notes, Washington has asked Kabul to share intelligence information from the detainees, "utilize all methods appropriate and permissible under Afghan law to surveil or monitor their activities following any release," and "confiscate or deny passports and take measures to prevent each national from traveling outside Afghanistan." As part of the accord, the United States said it would finance the rebuilding of an Afghan prison block and help equip and train an Afghan guard force. Block D in Pul-i-Charkhi is that prison block.

According to defense lawyers, defendants in Block D are predominantly Pushto speakers, and there are no interpreters during trials.

One defense counsel stated that when he questions the validity of the evidence during trial, the prosecutors' standard response is: "Why would the Americans detain him then? The US has nothing against this person unless he's guilty."

SOURCE NOTES

Speculations

Pascal quotation inspired by NYRB review of *The Road to Guantanamo*

Q&As based on (not transcripts of) conversations with former detainees, soldiers and translators in various media reports.

The Battle Lab

Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) Report (2009)

Major General Mike Dunleavy, former Guantanamo (GTMO) commander, interview for internal Army investigation of abuse at GTMO

Minutes from the 10/2/02 GTMO Counter-Resistance Strategy Meeting

Department of Defense (DoD) memo authorizing extended interrogation techniques at GTMO (12/02)

Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Review (DoJ OIG Review) of FBI Involvement in Interrogations in Guantanamo, Afghanistan and Iraq (2008)

FBI emails about Mohamed Al-Qahtani, aka prisoner #63 (2002)

FBI responses to detainee abuse survey (2003-4)

Death in Bagram

Wahid, Rahman et al v. Gates (Bagram habeas corpus challenge)

2003 detention/transfer criteria used by US forces in Afghanistan

Jacoby Report (2004) on detention operations in Afghanistan

Church Report (2005)

Army criminal investigation task force (CITF) investigation of 2002 deaths at Bagram

The Winds of War

SASC Report

Meanwhile, in [(b)(2)]*

*(b)(2) means “censored/withheld for reasons of national security, according to paragraph (b)(2) of the Freedom of Information Act”

CIA Inspector General (IG) Report (2004)

CIA Office of Medical Services (OMS) interrogation guidelines (2002)

CIA Enhanced Interrogation Technique (EIT) “bullet points” revised by John Yoo of the DoJ Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) (2002)

DoJ OIG report

The Translators

GTMO Combined Joint Task Force Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Saleh et al v. Titan, CACI et al (contractor liability lawsuit)

CITF investigation of Bagram deaths

Complicity

Q&A based on (not transcript of) interviews with former translators.

NYT interviews with former Bagram detainees (2007)

Army Regulation (AR) 15-6 investigation of Abu Ghraib abuse

DOJ OIG Review

SASC Report

Washington Post (Dana Priest) report on the death of Gul Rahman at the CIA secret prison codenamed “Salt Pit” in Northern Afghanistan

Mohamed Ahmad Farang Bashmilah testimony, Bashmilah et al v. Jeppesen Dataplan (rendition flight contractor lawsuit)

Human Rights First report on Afghan trials for former GTMO and Bagram detainees

---

All of the primary source documents (government reports, memos, emails etc.) used in the video have been officially declassified and are freely available online, as well as in the *Trespassers* print archive usually exhibited with the video. Many of them can be downloaded from the archive built up by the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) from FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) releases. All of the secondary documents (NGO reports, media reports, legal briefs and analysis, etc.) are also available online. The *Trespassers* archive is related to and partially replicated from the archive of Index of the Disappeared, my ongoing collaboration with Chitra Ganesh. The Index archive covers detention, deportation, rendition and redaction. The *Trespassers* archive is specifically focused on the themes covered in the video. When exhibited, the *Trespassers* archive usually includes a selection of binders loaned from the larger Index archive, to provide greater context for the primary documents.

BODIES OF LOGISTICS

JASON WAITE

How can we understand the column as endemic to a Western ideology built on smuggled histories? Cleaved from the earth, a block of pale white stone with thick grey veins is thrust into a trans-mutational nautical journey. Aboard a rusting Chinese-flagged freighter manned by stonemasons, these bodies are dislocated by the accelerated pace of consumptive needs and desires in late capitalism. The latest large-scale work by artist Adrian Paci, *The Column* (2013) explores the collapsing of production and circulation by documenting the construction of a monolithic column. The film follows the quarrying of a marble block in China to its transport onto a factory-ship that serves as the site of a mobile workshop in transit on the open sea. Based on a story the artist heard of stone factory ships that companies in China were employing to reduce the delivery time for finished carvings, Paci created his "fairy tale"—an odyssey of trans-oceanic labor. The various stages of work are presented in the film, which is usually exhibited adjacent to the horizontal column itself, shown waiting on its side in a state of anticipation of being "used" and always ready to be transported. What is the relationship between the representation of the conditions of labor and the status of the column? Moreover, how can we understand this as an act of migration, yet one that simultaneously contests the economic forces that precipitated its move?

Paci is no stranger to bodies in flight. He himself migrated across the Adriatic Sea to Milan due to civil unrest in Albania, his movement coinciding with the rise of post-1989 globalization that has led to a significant flow of bodies and goods across borders. Inflected by an overt transience and a questioning of what the construction of a home could mean, Paci's oeuvre is pervaded by a critical view of nostalgia. *Home to Go* (2001) depicts the body of the artist bearing the weight of a roof that he is tied to; it is a heavy burden but simultaneously acts as a symbolic shelter he can translocate—albeit under much duress. His vulnerable bare flesh is reminiscent of ecclesiastic scenes of martyrdom, yet his poses belie a classical stature, instead exuding a certain awkwardness. He is perpetually contorting himself in the images, similar to the process that accompanies dislocation and adaptation to a new context.

Connecting his own experience to the broader experience of migration in his film *Centro di Permanenza Temporanea* [Center for Temporary Permanence] (2007), Paci puts forward a vision of migration that questions the process of "arrival" as a final state, seeing it rather as one step in a complicated political and emotional form of movement that, once in motion, inexorably changes the subject and the constitution of what the parameters of "arrival" might be. The title refers to the camps set up on the Italian coast to house the waves of undocumented migrants arriving by boat that began coming after the Schengen Treaty eased travel inside Europe in the mid-1990s, compounded by crises in certain regions of Africa. The film, however, is set on the tarmac at the San Jose International Airport, in the heart of California's Silicon Valley. Here, a group made up mostly of Latinos, partaking in different histories of economic migration from agriculture to software, walks in a line across the tarmac. They climb a movable staircase used to board aircraft, only to be left in a limbo reminiscent of Godot. While aircraft take off and land in the background, no plane arrives at the empty parking space for the prospective passengers. The scene evokes a state of being in suspension, a waiting in passage laden with ennui. Here something greater is being asked of transience, not as a temporary moment in between, but rather as a need to accommodate the perpetual state of being in transit while we are displaced by desire and capital.

The lone architectural feature adrift on the empty sea in *The Column* also grapples with displacement of people and objects. In the film, the column is heading to an unknown destination, never reaching land, while the column itself, when exhibited adjacent to the film, does show its presence, but as with all artworks, it never really arrives. Art is forever de-moored, passing from port to port not in search of a home but rather as a permanent resident of a state of transience, not only in its physical state—a constant mode of transport from one venue to another or one collection to another—but also in the reading of the work itself. Meanings are roped to artworks for a time until time passes and a new context evolves with a new set of instruments and a different set of concerns. This condition of transience is shared both by people and capital in the era of late capitalism, a period marked not by singular sites, but rather a multiplicity of nodes and exchange. As *The Column* proposes in its mobile production process, the transition between these nodes is no longer a boring passage, but now a moment of incessant production. Not only with the physical labor of the masons; passage is also replete with immaterial labor thanks to the ubiquitous access to email, smartphones, even wifi in airplanes—passage is a site of value production. The prophecy during the stage of industrialized capitalism that technology would bring less labor, espoused by the economist John Maynard Keynes and others, has been obliterated by fiber optic light.

The unusual scene of work on water that Paci depicts illuminates this conflation between production and circulation. This logic of late

capitalism, defined by the compression of production and circulation, not only aims to make work more efficient—its ultimate goal is to get rid of the worker entirely. *The Column* partakes in the field that Fred Moten and Stefano Harney describe as logistics, with its own set of precise desires:

> For capital the subject has become too cumbersome, too slow, too prone to error, too controlling, to say nothing of too rarified, too specialized a form of life. Yet it is not we who ask this question. This is the automatic, insistent, driving question of the field of logistics. Logistics wants to dispense with the subject altogether.[1]

Logistics here is a subject-less framework of the control of flows, a rapidly growing matrix that ensnarls us in a ready-at-hand availability that reduces agency in favor of convenience, and utilizes dense algorithms of support—navigation, work-flow management, object and image recognition—that cumulatively work together to act as a command function over machine and the body to shape a different way of relating. In Paci's film, the crew of the boat is rarely seen, as if the boat is on autopilot. One shot during the day shows a crew-member sleeping on the deck, floating along in a state of passive unconsciousness. Moten and Harney describe "logistical populations" that "will be created to do without thinking, to feel without emotion, to move without friction, to adapt without question, to translate without pause, to connect without interruption."[2] Paci seems to sense the oneiric capacity of logistics as a form of perpetual motion where one is just along for the ride and the direction is known only by the navigation system. However, within this de-subjectification, Paci counterposes the labor of stonework as embodied activities that form their own affective relations not despite work but in the process of labor itself: a relation based on a common material knowledge and physical exertion that extends into a deeper affinity.

Shrouded in the concentration of labor and enveloped in techne, the stone carvers express a certain symbiosis with their object, corpus and stone, impressed and etched by each other as they traverse the sea. The workers' faces are unflinchingly focused, seemingly impervious to the clouds of dust chiseled from the rock that blanket their impassive expressions. While there is a certain anesthetization of the process there is also a casualness in the workers that belies romanticism. In the work, largely void of language, the affective exchange that takes place with the viewer relies on the response to the appearance of the workers themselves. This understanding is fostered by the face-to-face encounter posited by the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, which centers on the role of the expression embedded in the visage which "breaks through all the envelopings and generalities of Being to spread out in its 'form' the totality of its 'content,' finally abolishing the distinction between form and content."[3] The absence of language does not exclude an intimate form of communication that, as Levinas describes, is both specific and direct. Despite the hard work, which it clearly is, the struggle and satisfaction that are bound up with a common labor are visible. Paci shows a resistance against de-subjectification stemming from the collapse of logistics and production. The shared affinity of the workers in the open sea unfolds a dynamic of mutual aid and reliance, tethered to one another and the stained hull, only a thin barrier between them and the ocean floor. Here the political dimension of being together in a precarious state of transience—form—and its affective dimensions—content—are shown intertwined without distinction, putting forward a proposition in the film for a poesis of being that transcends the difficult conditions.

The union of "form and content" can also be found in the archetype of the column itself, an apparatus whose aesthetics is integral to its function. In this instance, however, the column is not erected and never bears the weight of a building, but is forever left horizontal in a state of transit between capacity and action—a position of confluence that mirrors its own history. While the column is ostensibly deployed here with its Corinthian capital as a symbol of the "West," the form itself actually undoes the homogenous notion of an Occidental culture. Developed by Mesopotamian cultures and popularized in Egyptian architecture, the column as a form was later taken into the Greco-Roman tradition, and its symbolic use stems from this usurpation. What emerges in *The Column* is a confluence of histories, culture, and labor that subverts the presumptions of the materials and the work, exposing the affective dimension of the de-subjectified logistical network through an importation of artistic production. This precarious state of transit and production, a collapse of spaces endemic in late capitalism, might be isolated but nonetheless has its own form of being-together and mutual aid. Paci both revels in and contests this emerging space, putting forth a complex vision of the overlapping realms of production and circulation that results in a disclosure of what it means to work and live together, no matter what the conditions are. The column itself is not a monument but rather an itinerant migrant, shaped by the process of transit—a fugitive for a common future.

Notes

1 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013), p. 87

2 *Ibid*., 91

3 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979) p. 51

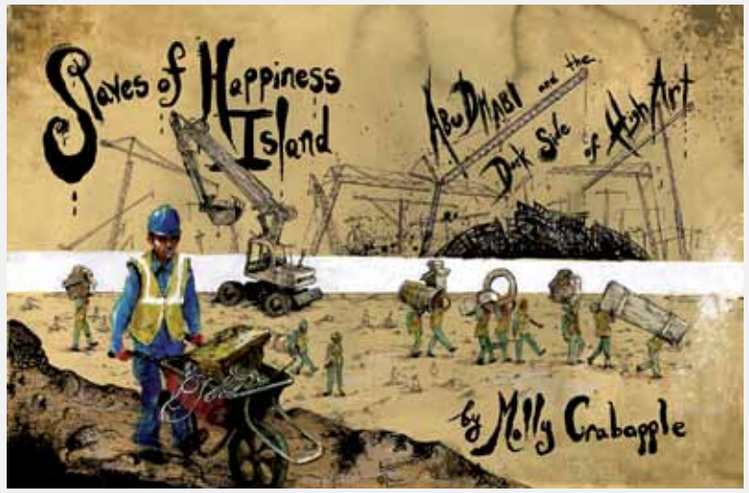
Of Desert Islands: Writing on Art and Activism by Gulf Labor

Edited by Haig Aivazian
for Shangri La: Imagined Cities

Slaves of Happiness Island: Abu Dhabi and the Dark Side Of High Art

Molly Crabapple

All illustrations by the author



MY MESSAGE TO THE HEAD OF THE LOUVRE WOULD BE TO COME AND SEE HOW WE ARE LIVING HERE," said Tariq,* a carpenter's helper working on construction of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, a $653 million Middle Eastern outpost of the iconic Parisian museum. Set to be completed in 2015, its collection will include a Torah from 19th-century Yemen, Picassos, and Magrittes.

"See our living conditions and think about the promises they made," Tariq told me through a translator.

Last year, in his mid 30s, Tariq left his job at a Pakistani textile mill with dreams of being a crane operator in the Gulf. He showed me his certificate of crane proficiency, pulling the worn piece of paper out of the pocket of his beige salwar kameez. Recruiters promised him a salary of $326 a month—for a $1,776 recruitment fee to be paid in advance. With a cousin guiding him through the process, Tariq flew to Abu Dhabi to work for the Regal Construction company, one of roughly 900 construction outfits that employ foreign workers in the emirate.

But when Tariq arrived, Regal didn't need him. For 24 days, he waited without pay, living in a squalid workers' camp. When work finally materialized, he learned he would make only $176 a month. His boss confiscated his passport so that he couldn't change jobs or leave the country. He sends half his salary back to his family. After 11 months in the Gulf, he still has not paid back the loan he took out to get there.

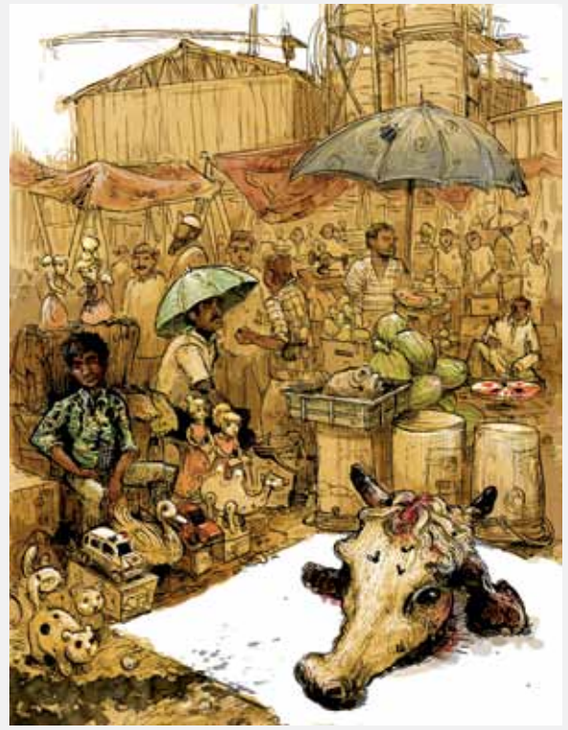
"How can I stay happy with a salary of $176?" Tariq asked, with an uncomfortable smile.

Tariq is one of dozens of construction workers laboring on Saadiyat Island whom I interviewed this May. He took out his flip phone and snapped a picture of the drawing I'd sketched of him. He had a gentle face that lit up when he talked about cricket. He told me he'd use my drawing as a profile pic on Facebook.

Though it is now only a sunbaked construction site, Saadiyat, a ten-square-mile atoll 500 yards off the coast of Abu Dhabi, will be home to branches of the Louvre, the Guggenheim, and New York University, alongside hotels, shopping, and luxurious homes. It will be a cultural paradise, conjured by the country's vast oil wealth but built on the backs of men who are little more than indentured servants.

While there are no official statistics, there may be as many as 1 million migrant construction workers in the UAE today. Like Tariq, the men I talked to have had their passports confiscated and earn between $150 and $300 a month. They will have to spend years working off debts to recruiters who have gotten them their jobs.

Reports about the conditions of workers in the Gulf have been wide and probing. Articles contrast the glittering skyscrapers they build and the scant wages they receive. In May, the New York Times published a scathing exposé of labor abuses at NYU Abu Dhabi.



But what's often lost in much of the reporting about foreign labor in the United Arab Emirates—and Abu Dhabi specifically—is the agency of the workers themselves. The men I met in the Gulf are brave and ambitious—heroes to their families back home. They dared to chase better prospects and were met with repression instead. In a country where the faintest whisper of dissent can get you deported, more than a hundred strikes have rocked the construction industry in the past three years. While workers may be lied to and forced to live and work in brutal conditions, they also—improbably—are fighting back.

The Saadiyat Island Cultural District is the flagship project of TDIC (Tourism Development & Investment Company), a state-owned firm responsible for much of Abu Dhabi's development. Announced in 2007, with an initial budget of $27 billion, according to media reports, Saadiyat will be the largest mixed-use development on the Arabian Gulf.

TDIC's website promises fantasias of contemporary architecture. Plans show museums that look like they are pierced with moonbeams or modeled after the feathers of giant birds. After a day of culture, visitors will be able to relax at the St. Regis hotel or the Shangri-La. They will be able to play golf on world-class courses, or lounge by a series of man-made lagoons and mangrove forests, and then eat at one of dozens of gourmet restaurants run by international celebrity chefs. While construction of all these projects is happening piecemeal, Saadiyat, as envisioned by Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon al Nahyan, chairman of TDIC and member of Abu Dhabi's royal family, may be completed by 2020. For at least five more years, the island will need a veritable army of laborers.

I first set foot on Saadiyat on a day so hot it nearly made me faint. Journalists are not allowed to visit without government minders, so I sneaked in. Saadiyat's terrain looked like the moon. Bulldozers churned up pearl-colored dust. The dust dried my eyes. It came out in my snot. In company-branded jumpsuits, men toiled through their 12-hour shifts, welding and lugging rebar beneath the merciless sun.

Ibrahim served as my translator. He is in his early 20s. With his carefully styled black hair, he resembles a South Asian James Dean. Ibrahim asked me to withhold details about his life for fear of deportation, or worse. "If I speak to the media, they will take me from my room and put me somewhere no one will find me," he said. Ibrahim has the sort of intelligence that crackles around him in sly, sarcastic sparks. He is smart in a way so obvious that he tries to hide it from his bosses by speaking in broken English. He knows five languages, loves poetry, and dreams of getting a master's degree.

In his home country, Ibrahim had worked as a translator for an international NGO. Insurgents murdered locals who collaborated with foreigners. Ibrahim's friends worried that he'd be next. The NGO offered little protection because he wasn't an employee, so it was time to skip town.

Seeing a newspaper ad for construction jobs in Abu Dhabi, Ibrahim scraped together $760 from friends to pay a recruiter. He arrived in the UAE in the summer of 2013. "It's so hot under that sun," Ibrahim told me. "The sweat pours off your body like rain."

"Hell is better than here," he told his boss soon after he came to work on Saadiyat.

"Haha! Go to hell then," the boss responded.

Ibrahim relished describing his boss, a blowhard who berates his workers and often calls them donkeys, which means "idiot" in idiomatic Arabic. Because of Ibrahim's language proficiency, workers demand that he tell his boss that they work hard, that they are men.

We drove around Saadiyat in a creaky rental. It overheated whenever we turned on the air. At the NYU site, cheerful signs invited workers to share their opinions about their conditions. They were in English, a language few workers understand. We drove past the Louvre site. TDIC had hung banners from the perimeter fence showing the museum as it would be in 2015. When I looked inside, the building was nothing more than a shell of steel beams. Workers at the Louvre are all employed by a company called Arabtec, one of the Gulf's largest construction outfits. The government of Abu Dhabi holds a 20 percent stake in Arabtec, and workers have staged strikes against them for years.

In 2007, up to 30,000 Arabtec workers went on strike in Dubai. Men building Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest skyscraper, put down their tools. The strike had been coordinated with mobile phones to protest low wages and poor living conditions. Police arrested 4,000 strikers. At the end of ten days, Arabtec promised a pay raise. Managing Director Riad Kamal told Reuters

that the impact on the company's profits would be less than 1 percent.

But the strikes—and crackdowns—continued. Three thousand more workers went on strike in Dubai in 2011. They made $176 a month and wanted a $41 raise. The police arrested 70 men they claimed were ringleaders. "Their presence in the country is dangerous," Colonel Mohammed al Murr, director of the Dubai Police's General Department of Legal and Disciplinary Control, told the National, a state-owned newspaper.

After this, Bangladeshi workers, who were alleged to have helped organize the strikes, were banned for an indefinite period from seeking UAE visas.

In May 2013, thousands of Arabtec workers stopped work in Dubai and on Saadiyat—including at the Louvre. They demanded an $81 a month stipend for food. According to a source who asked for anonymity, "The police were called in after one day. Workers were told to return to work or they'd be sent home. Over the coming weeks at least a thousand Arabtec workers in Abu Dhabi alone were rounded up and had their visas canceled. The majority were Bangladeshis."

In response, Arabtec promised a 20 percent wage hike. No worker I interviewed had seen the promised cash.

Arabtec also replaced Bangladeshis with Pakistanis. It was classic divide-and-rule strategy, harking back to the British Empire. In August 2013, the tension exploded into riots between Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Saadiyat Village. Workers turned their tools against one another. The police fired live ammo into the air.

After the riots, Pakistani workers were shipped off to other camps.

Arabtec is not the only company to draw protests. In May 2014, the New York Times reported that hundreds of workers at BKGulf (which is building NYU Abu Dhabi) had been deported for striking. Management bluffed that they'd negotiate, but police broke down workers' doors instead. Workers told the Times that police had beaten them to force confessions.

Ibrahim told me about smaller disobediences. On the Bani Yas villas site, about 15 miles inland from downtown Abu Dhabi, workers had organized a brutal beat-down of an abusive engineer. To protest the lack of air conditioning in buses, workers had staged impromptu soccer games with their hard hats to prevent the buses from leaving.

While wages may sometimes rise, the Emirates will never permit workers to formally organize. Workers' councils, or any form of unionization, are strictly banned.

Molly Crabapple

We parked the car on a spot overlooking the Louvre site on Saadiyat. Ibrahim and I stepped into the hallucinatory heat and walked up to two workers who seemed to be on break.

We made sure no supervisors were around, then asked the laborers how much money they made. They answered gladly.

One said $200 a month; the other said $175. Yes, their bosses kept their passports.

Ibrahim lives in one of Abu Dhabi's labor camps, in a low-rise building set among row after row of identical blocks. Like most camps, it is hidden deep in the desert, far from central Abu Dhabi. Forty thousand men can live in a single camp. They are Nepali, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian—and work for a variety of companies. Often, since they don't speak English, they won't know what project they're building

Corporate buses ferry workers to job sites. Even these are no respite from the heat. Despite laws to the contrary, many buses have no air conditioning. Commutes last up to two hours, and the temperatures often reach more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Ibrahim showed me a cell-phone video of the windowless dorm he shares with ten men. Outside, he has only a mosque, a hypermarket, and the sun.

On his one day off, Ibrahim told me, he would like to stroll Abu Dhabi's corniche. But there's no public transit. He is a virtual prisoner in the workers' city.

Besides a few cashiers, the camps contain no women—just as the UAE, flush with laborers, is two-thirds male. Men save up for occasional visits to Ethiopian prostitutes. They too are migrants, often former maids who ran away from abusive employers. Because of their dark skin, Ethiopian prostitutes aren't favored by the country's Emirati elite and have to charge prices that even laborers can afford.

"We are so bored, and it's a long time away from home," Ibrahim told me when I asked him about the women. "We sit in that room for the whole day. We can't go outside because of the heat, can't afford to get to the beach or the mall."

Some workers sleep with each other. Several of Ibrahim's acquaintances have been jailed for having romantic relationships with other men. To save face, one of them, a Pashtun, told his family he'd been charged with murder.

"A beautiful boy is like a girlfriend," Ibrahim said.

Bus drivers, among the best-paid workers, court good-looking young men with promises of meals at restaurants and cell-phone credit. One driver offered Ibrahim 20 dirhams to find him a boyfriend. After a week he called Ibrahim, peeved he had turned up no one. Promising to do better, Ibrahim shook him down for ten dirhams more.

If Ibrahim is late sending money back home, his mom voices her displeasure. "What are you doing? Drinking at nightclubs in Dubai?" Ibrahim shouted, in imitation of her maternal holler. "If you're not going to send money, come home!"

"If you ask a thousand workers," Ibrahim said, "not one will tell you we are happy."

ROUGHLY 10 PERCENT OF THE UAE'S 9.2 MILLION RESIDENTS ARE CITIZENS. The rest are "expats" (if they're white-collar professionals) or "migrant labor" (if they're working class). Foreigners can live in the Emirates for generations, but short of proving Emirati heritage, there's no way they can get citizenship. They can be deported at whim.

Amid this disenfranchisement, Emiratis can appear to foreigners like aristocrats. One can be arrested just for flipping them off in traffic.

Pravasalokam is a hit TV show in Kerala, India. A reality program whose name means "Workers' World" in Malayalam, the show depicts the rescue of workers who have disappeared—due to jail, poverty, or abuse—in the Gulf. The Gulf nightmare is well known, yet migrants keep coming. The $14 billion a year in remittances they send home is integral to the economies of Nepal and Bangladesh (in Bangladesh the two largest sources of foreign currency are migrant labor and garments). But migrants are pushed by war as well as cash. Many workers hail from Kashmir, Pakistan's Taliban-dominated Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, and other crisis areas in South Asia.

Whatever his country of origin, a migrant almost always has to pay a recruiter fee (which is then shared with subcontractors inside the Emirates). While hiring companies claim to cover costs like airfare, visas, and medical exams, recruiters in the sending countries and their partners in the UAE often skim a year's potential wages from the worker himself. In some countries recruiters dodge local labor laws by hiring subcontractors, who trawl villages for the illiterate, the desperate, or those simply frustrated enough to risk the dangers of the Gulf. Workers take out loans, empty their families' savings, or use land as collateral.

At Mafraq Workers' City No. 2, a labor camp 23 miles from central Abu Dhabi, I interviewed workers cutting one another's hair in an improvised outdoor barbershop. They crowded around me, telling me about salaries of $150 to $300 a month and police who hassled them if they dared visit the beach in their salwar kameez. While Emiratis are dependent on migrant labor, they'd prefer that the workers stay invisible in their off-hours.

Friends crouched in the shade beneath buses. One group sneaked a forbidden bottle of wine. The rules here were as strict as summer camp—no booze, no cooking, no gambling, no porn.

In addition to the acres-wide sandpits and towering construction cranes, Saadiyat Island is also home to what is billed to be the most humane labor camp in the entire Gulf. In response to international pressure, TDIC created what they call the Saadiyat Accommodation Village to house all workers building Western cultural institutions. In the words of its developer, it "provide[s] an internationally recognized world-class standard of living." Its huge cricket field, writing classes, and a library containing Steinbeck are everything a visiting dignitary could desire.

But despite TDIC's claims, many workers live elsewhere, including in crumbling tenements in central Abu Dhabi. And Saadiyat Village is hardly a paradise.

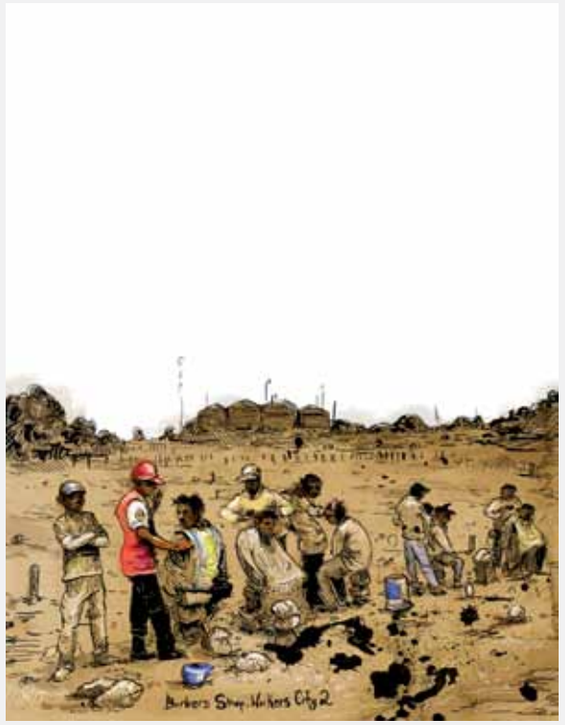
Tariq, the Louvre worker, told me, "The grounds are the only things that are good. Everything else will make you feel awful. The bathrooms always stink. We don't even have doors there. The food given to us is inedible."

Andrew Ross is an NYU professor and activist from Gulf Labor, a coalition of artists who advocate for the rights of workers building cultural institutions on Saadiyat. In May, TDIC invited Gulf Labor to tour Saadiyat Village. But when the activists visited other labor camps unsupervised, they noticed that they were followed. The surveillance only stopped when they left their cell phones behind.

According to Ross, Saadiyat Village is a "high-

security zone" where workers are constantly monitored.

Workers live more than a mile beyond a checkpoint they are forbidden from walking to. Their only escape is a bus that runs once a week to Abu Dhabi. In the wake of the Arab Spring, security concerns are cited to outside visitors as a reason for keeping the all-male workforce in physical isolation. But if controlling and isolating workers helps TDIC manage the fallout of international pressure, it also produces a less than ideal side effect for the press-shy Emiratis: It helps workers organize and resist.



IN 2006, THREE EMINENT FIGURES IN THE FRENCH ART WORLD WROTE AN OPEN LETTER to *Le Monde* titled "Museums Are Not for Sale." Françoise Cachin, Jean Clair, and Roland Recht decried the Louvre's partnership with Abu Dhabi. "Isn't that 'selling your soul'?" they asked.

The most simplistic accusation against Abu Dhabi is that by building branches of the Louvre or Guggenheim, the city is buying culture. This logic pretends that Cleopatra's Needle ended up in Paris through the goodness of Egyptian hearts, or that Lord Elgin didn't just pillage the marbles that bear his name.

Those accusations also perpetuate another myth: The UAE has no culture of its own.

Two generations ago, the Emiratis were Bedouins, nomadic desert people whose main economic activity was pearl diving. They built wind towers, trained falcons, and composed swashbuckling poetry. Emirati culture was rich, but Emiratis were poor. Now they are wealthy. From the lens of European dominance, Emiratis can seem like improper overlords.

Or perhaps Europeans are just jealous. The UAE's oil money could have disappeared in the coffers of Western energy companies or corrupt leaders. Instead, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE, built a munificent welfare state. Emirati citizens get free education, health care, and electricity, as well as generous wages subsidized by the government. They pay no taxes. But the foreigners who compose 90 percent of the population don't share in this largesse.

At times the dream of Abu Dhabi slayed me. One afternoon I stood inside the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, in central Abu Dhabi. Built in 2007, the gigantic structure made me gasp at its loveliness. Its design spans the breadth of Muslim art: The domes were Taj Mahal, the stucco Moroccan, the tiles Turkish, the gold palm columns seemingly from the future. It embodied the cosmopolitanism of the Muslim world, vital with the energy of this young country.

For this piece, I met with several Emiratis involved in culture. None would speak on the record. They were charming, passionate about the arts, proud of their country. But when I asked them about workers, they frowned with irritation. Why did the press keep picking on them?

They would prefer to talk about charity: free Bollywood movies, free food baskets for Ramadan. The Radisson Blu's Box project distributes boxes of toiletries. Their Facebook page shows a grim Emirati handing a box to a grim Bangladeshi worker. It's turned logo-side toward the camera.

Charity can get you cheap Facebook photos. But what does it fix if workers aren't paid enough to afford a bar of soap?

The Guggenheim Museum's PR team claims, incorrectly, that labor is not a problem because construction has not yet begun on the Abu Dhabi outpost. Conversely, NYU asserts labor is not a problem because construction is technically over. I saw men working on both sites.

Andrew Ross from Gulf Labor stressed that an institution's responsibilities don't end with construction. "If you visit Saadiyat, you find NYU is the only finished building. Apart from the workers' village, it's surrounded by nothing. It will have construction going on for 20 years around it."

When I asked the Guggenheim for comment on workers' conditions, the director, Richard Armstrong, did not respond to my queries. The chief of global communications, Eleanor R. Goldhar, told me that construction workers were subcontractors.

"The main construction contract has not yet been awarded for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. We are working closely with TDIC so that existing labor laws and high standards are enforced on all aspects of the project," Goldhar wrote.

Our world runs on subcontractors. How could any client know what they were up to, except that everything was too cheap to be true?

"YOU KNOW HOW FORD SAID YOU CAN HAVE ANY CAR you like as long as it's black? In the UAE they can make whatever you want, as long as it's a building. They can't make free speech or human rights," Ahmed Mansoor told me in the curtained-off back room of a Dubai restaurant.

An engineer by trade, Mansoor spent about eight months in jail in 2011 for running a website that allowed those living in the Emirates to speak frankly about politics, religion, and culture. It was at one time the most popular public forum in the country.

Mansoor and his co-defendants, known as the UAE5, were arrested for "publicly insulting" Abu Dhabi's president, vice president, and crown prince. At the same time, the government mounted a smear campaign, allegedly bribing sheikhs to organize petitions denouncing Mansoor. One of his co-defendants was a lecturer at the Sorbonne.

In prison, guards gave Mansoor a wheelchair lined with infected fabric. He caught scabies. Guards denied him access to a dermatologist for months. After nearly eight months of incarceration, Mansoor and his co-defendants began a 16-day-long hunger strike that finally led to their pardon. He still hasn't gotten his passport back.

Ever since Mansoor's release, he's suffered unfortunate coincidences. Thugs attacked him twice—once, brutally beating his head. A hundred and forty thousand dollars disappeared from Mansoor's bank account, and his car was stolen. The police have not found a culprit for any of these crimes.

When I asked him about the Western cultural institutions being built on Saadiyat, he told me, "All these glittering buildings and huge names are there to hide an ugly face… Artists around the world appreciate the human struggle for freedom. In the UAE, we are only buying the image."

Can you have art without freedom? Splendid objects get made for the highest bidder. Challenging ideas require something more than the Emirates may care to provide.

I put this question to a young artist born in the UAE. He told me: "By entertaining any vision of a culturally engaged metropolis, [the UAE] has opened up a Pandora's box. Critical culture is forced into a more subversive form. This subversion itself can be a form of poetry. I have to think like this, because I live here and I need to survive the aftermath of my own thoughts."

The artist is well off but not a citizen. Afraid of being deported, he asked me not to use his name.

One morning Ibrahim took me to a market in Musaffah, a port city southeast of Abu Dhabi. Construction workers sweating it out on $170 a month spent their free day going to Dubai to buy flash drives or watermelon, which they sold to other workers in Musaffah's markets. This would earn them an extra $10 a day. One man sold dolls for workers to take home to the children they'd left behind. Each vendor said he was there because his salary was too low. No, they had no rest. Yes, they were tired.

As we got farther in, we passed homemade roulette wheels and porn. The market was illegal but tolerated. As I spoke to vendors, more and more men gathered around me. In all-male Musaffah, a white girl might as well be an alien.

I asked a butcher the price of a cow's head. The crowd screamed as undercover cops yanked him away. The butcher was arrested, seemingly as punishment for speaking to a Westerner. Terrified that he might also be arrested, Ibrahim suggested that we leave the market quickly.

"I will leave this fucking country. I never want to come back to the Middle East in my life," Ibrahim poured out to me as we drove away from the market. "This is a prison. People see the world's tallest building, not the people who built it."

"I have nothing to do with the workers," said Zaha Hadid, the star architect behind one of Qatar's phantasmagoric soccer stadiums being built for the 2022 World Cup, when the Guardian asked her in February 2014 about the deaths of 882 migrant laborers constructing her design. "It's not my duty as an architect to look at it." Hadid is now designing the Abu Dhabi Performing Arts Centre on Saadiyat.

The West's museums lie atop metaphoric graveyards. Art's temples have always been built on the backs of the poor. The Louvre in Paris touts its history in the passive voice on its website: "Was built to the west of the city"; "wings begun under Louis XIV were partially completed." But what of the peasants who sweated and died in the construction? Of them, official histories have little to say. Neither do official histories mention the miners who mined the fortune that let Solomon R. Guggenheim build the museum that bears his name.

Defenders of Western institutions in Abu Dhabi are right about one thing. They are not unique. The labor abuses at the Louvre or NYU are the same labor abuses that are happening throughout the UAE. The UAE is not the worst country for workers in the Gulf, and the Gulf is not the worst region for workers in the world. Most countries sustain themselves on the labor of transient, disposable people. This may be unofficial, as in the United States (our agricultural industry would collapse overnight without undocumented migrants), or it may be institutionalized, as in the UAE.

"Capital is global and derives its velocity from replicating the same model everywhere. Gulf Labor is arguing for a global, humane, and fair standard of labor and migration regulations to accompany, and slow down, global capital," said Naeem Mohaiemen, a New York–based Bangladeshi artist who is a member of Gulf Labor. "The implications can be staggering. If Saadiyat implemented world-standard labor and migration rights, that could become a precedent for implementing the same standards in the entire region. Then people would ask, what about migrant labor in Malaysia? In Texas? And so on…"

On my last day, Ibrahim and I drove out to the Guggenheim site on Saadiyat. Even though he was exhausted, Ibrahim grinned. After nearly a year in the UAE, he'd paid off his debts to recruiters. Once his contract concluded, he'd be free.

We interviewed Vijay*, a worker building a tunnel that will lead into the Guggenheim. His group of workers are laying the infrastructure that will feed the museum, and we believe he's the first Guggenheim worker to speak about the conditions working there. In the back of our car, Vijay gulped water. He'd wrapped his head in wet cloth. His skin was beaded with sweat.

Vijay came to Abu Dhabi in 2004. His family was eking out a living growing vegetables on a small farm they owned near Chennai, India. Vijay has three sisters. Since he's the only son, his father decided he would work in the Gulf. Vijay's family rounded up $2,100 to pay a recruiter.

By 2008, his salary had peaked at $435 a month.

Then came the 2008 financial crash. On the pretext that there was less work, Vijay's company slashed his monthly base salary to $217 (up to $326 with overtime), though his hours remained the same. His wages have not risen since.

"Some days I start at 7 AM. I never know when I will get done. We sometimes work past midnight. I sometimes sleep for only two or three hours," he told me. "Yet we cannot complain."

Vijay works seven days a week. His company withholds salaries for months at a time, especially if workers visit home. He believes that his company is cheating workers on overtime, denying them access to the ledgers in which their hours are marked.

"I don't know how much longer I can go on like this. My body is on the verge of giving up, but I cannot leave my job because I am responsible for my sisters," he told me.

Vijay dreams of getting married in India and returning to his family's modest farm near Chennai. But first, he wants to get a license to drive a minibus. Drivers are paid better and can work out of the sun, sitting down.

They say Sheikh Zayed built Abu Dhabi, just like Louis XIV built the Louvre. But this is a myth. Vijay built Abu Dhabi more than Sheikh Zayed did. He built it growing deeper in debt each day, his feet sinking into the lunar sand.

An Emirati curator told me that these museums were Abu Dhabi's "gifts to the region." She refused to go on record, certain my article would overplay the UAE's labor problems. But she allowed that quote.

She is wrong about the giver of the gift. Saadiyat is a "gift" to the UAE from Vijay, from Tariq, from Ibrahim—from all the men whose hands have built these cities. But migrant workers' names are never engraved on donor lists.

In a few years Saadiyat will be open for business. Artists and patrons will mingle at the Louvre and Guggenheim's opening galas. The fresh buildings will sparkle like starlight.

Unfortunately, Vijay will not be in attendance. He will be working elsewhere, still trying to pay off his debt.

**Name has been changed.*

Molly Crabapple is an artist and writer in New York. Called "An emblem of the way art can break out of the gilded gallery" by the *New Republic*, she has drawn in Guantanamo Bay, Abu Dhabi's migrant labor camps, and with refugees and rebels in Syria. Crabapple is a columnist for *VICE*, and has written for publications including *The New York Times*, *Paris Review*, and *Vanity Fair*. Her illustrated memoir, *Drawing Blood*, will be published by Harper Collins in 2015. She is the recipient of a Gold Rush Award from RUSH Philanthropic Arts, and her work is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

Utopian Dust Versus Perfumed Amplification: Object Lessons from Saadiyat Island and Gehry's Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi

Guy Mannes-Abbott

An Introduction to the Present

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE FUTURE IS THAT THERE IS NOT ONLY ONE BUT MANY, and none will abide by expectation. The Gulf will not taste of Charles Fourier's utopian lemonade, even if the Arctic melts, nor will it smell like Serpentine, the pride of London's art-world.

It's necessary to state this simply because we exist at a time when a more singular notion of "the future" is being furiously hedged against. Hedged most ubiquitously within the realms that institutions relating to visual production are presently conceived: cultural policy, urbanism, architecture, development or construction. In recent decades these have become a single entity in the service of global capital.

Since the early industrialized powers declared war, as Michel Serres so definitively put it[1], on the ecology of our common world, a lexicon that includes "future-proofing" and "sustainability" does have referents. However, it's not concretized in climate change but in balance sheets, capital fluidity and returns. In this context, future-proofing is all about now: guarantees of profit streams and access to them today. It's a lexicon evacuated of substantive sense and can't address how to survive such a war.

To escape from abjection, especially when constrained by ecological correctives to our existence, we must re-conceive the formation of our futures. Futures catalyzed, for example, by reference to a conventionally dismissed Utopianism, like that of Charles Fourier's: "a perfect anachrony to capital's pre-emption of the future through calculated responses in the present."[2] We know how we got here; it's time to chance everything on our escape from apparent captivation with, or captivity by, crass mechanisms of capital, contract and commodity. Mechanisms which have guaranteed that

Serpentine Fragrance.
Courtesy Guy Mannes-Abbott

the kinds of institution I refer to have been reduced to a single possibility: the spectacular shop, within an infrastructural context derived from eighteenth century Europe.

The best and perhaps most unfortunate single example of this phenomenon is the Frank Gehry-designed brand-extension of the Guggenheim that will sit alongside other cultural institutions on Saadiyat Island, just off the coast of Abu Dhabi. It's an obvious but complex example which I'm using to conceive better futures than one redeemed in this kind of predictable past error. Conditions of acceleration in the Gulf allow us to run broken-down and stitched-together Utopian ideas through this concrete example.[3] I insist on being understood as a critical friend with deep interest and some intimacy with the Gulf and broader Indian Ocean world. Crude negativities are abundant; while I'm more sympathetic with Rem Koolhaas' curiosity and appetite for the expansive actualities I experienced afresh this March – even while also visiting labour camps throughout the Emirates.

I AM MAKING TRACKS.

I walk through mounting sand and ahead of me is a remote, rather ramshackle camp for full-time taxi drivers. Beyond that, another camp is home to cleaning staff for five-star hotels on the horizon. In the mid-distance industrial-scale labour camps house thousands of south Asian men entrapped by debt, their lives at the service of vast quantities of concrete, steel and art institutions.

I lay down my footprint with a crowd of anonymous others and before me is a stained-walled compound where the pavement-washers dwell. The ones that drive up and down in continuous loops on the momentarily dust-free pavements around the base of a towering fancy as I pass on foot with an émigré artist in the early hours one March morning. We share one certainty: the storm will come again.

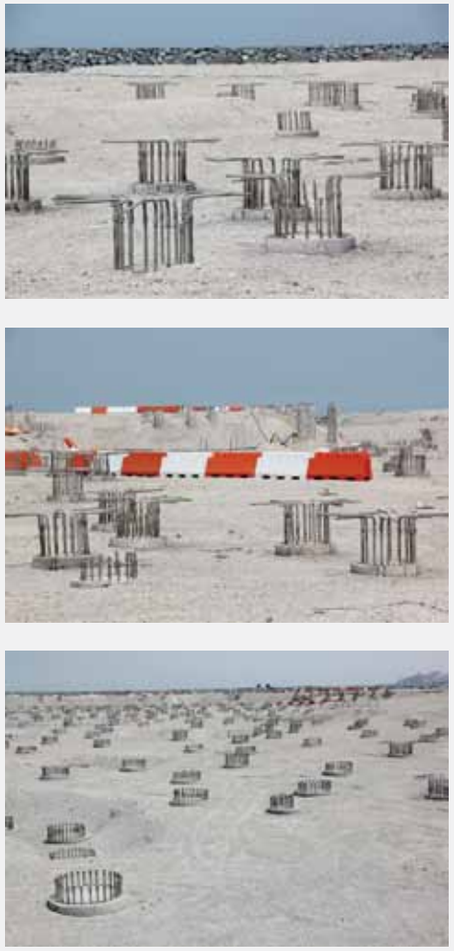
I am making tracks. ©Guy Mannes-Abbott

I watch my feet kick through sandy trails, reshaping other footprints in chaotic densities along improvised tracks. They lead through dune-like hillocks of disturbed ground towards a fierce six-lane highway. I follow the logic of feet that have come before me in a dash to the middle section, stand beside owners of similar footprints, and provoke them into a final sprint before they're ready. We resume in a kilometre stroll over rain-hardened ground, inhabiting the Hindu Kush with words as we follow millions of preceding footprints into unpaved alleyways between labour camps serving this and neighbouring Emirates.

I enter as a particle – even a particulate – amongst others, attentive to a certain invisibility that relates directly to the spectacularity of institutions feeding on people and places like this. Camps detaining the men who build the towers and corniches, drive the trucks and dig the trenches, die from tall buildings or debt burdens. The feet of men who build the "palaces for the people" – as Saadiyat's cultural institutions were termed in 2007[4] – under "conditions of forced labour."[5] Palaces designed to be inaccessible to their feet and dust-proofed with the future-past. Cultural institutions borne of a trackless and unsustainable amplification.

Only a decade ago, 2014 formed the future horizon of a remarkably ambitious plan to develop Saadiyat Island as a culturally-driven city quarter of global stature. The impetus was to plan for a post-oil economy, and develop ways or places to draw a global audience to the region and a service-based economy to go with that. Thomas More conceived his Republic of Utopia as an island in 1516 but with Saadiyat there were the resources for plans on this scale to actually take place. A decade on, the plans have shifted to redefine the future claimed. Today, many elements of what the Guggenheim's Thomas Krens described as "the greatest concentration of contemporary cultural resources in the world"[6] are yet to be realized – and so remain negotiable.

Foundations laid for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. © Guy Mannes-Abbott



Krens, the Guggenheim Foundation's Director who oversaw the Abu Dhabi deal (but was replaced by Richard Armstrong in November 2008) and claimed credit for conceiving the Cultural District's cluster of Pritzker-Prize-Winner-designed institutions, wanted his spectacular shop to be one of the "top elite cultural institutions in the world."[7] Those would include Rafael Vinoly's New York University campus, Jean Nouvel's Louvre Abu Dhabi and one day even Zaha Hadid's "cherry" of a performing arts centre[8]. Explicitly, "the Gehry museum was designed to be out of proportion and out of scale with what existed."[9] The banalities of this kind of amplification are too easily savaged for me to do it here.

Instead, it's worth examining what generates such error, which for all its monstrousness is also branding every part of the world where urban development is taking place: from Abu Dhabi, through London, Sydney, Oslo, Gujarat, and so on. This model, founded by the once revolutionary Louvre, has matured to the point at which these same institutions increasingly resemble London's Bond Street boutiques, complete with own-brand perfumes[10]. It is a model barely changed in 200 years[11] which, if not entirely redundant, is now merely continuous with the decontextualizing spaces of globalization.

I remember my disorientation after first exiting a museum exhibition through a gift shop. Before then, I enjoyed hub airports for their decontextualizing qualities, even if best exemplified by nights at Saddam International Airport, during a hijacking and the Iran-Iraq War. The Museum has, as per cliché, become the shop as part of a totalizing process in which everything is, or aims to be, decontextualized in this way. It's most pernicious and predictable when the global institution is being built from

scratch. As such, it's necessary to articulate some principles and arguments upon which a different approach can be founded and built.

We're on the cusp of different kinds of futures: the taking-up of so-far unclaimed spaces of globalized capital for social, political, ecological needs, desires and benefits for a newly migrant subject or citizen in a world that is scrambled, multi-polar and perilously warming. While these radical conceptual changes are barely emergent, they require new imaginings and articulations, to put it crudely, which ought to be obvious to all. That is, let the globalised spectacle redeem itself in the past, our futures will require new networks of unconstrained dreams, commonalities and autonomous actors.

It's all a matter of dust. One that includes sand, small even invisible objects – human and non-human – in various symbolic, cultural and all-too concrete measures. A figure or figures that the spectacular shop-approach to future institutions ignores, can't see or comprehend, refuses responsibility for or insures itself against to maximize rewards in the Now. All future institutions will be judged by their relation to dust of these kinds.

What scale ought we consider or conceive the multitudinous dust to be? Viewed climactically, we are very many, and very small with very simple, common imperatives for life. We obtain no priority, or much notice and are raised to a gracious equality with all else that exists. As humans we share physical conditions of existence, while our differences are almost imperceptible. However, I'm interested in scales of this order as they relate to the urban, to institutions, buildings – including dwellings. Bear with me.

Parmanu is an Indian comic strip named after its hero: "Atom". In this wonderful image Parmanu stands over an accomplice called Probot: a "starchitect" working on a series of gestural buildings that can only be a reference to Gehry and his spectacular shops. Probot is intently digging up some local context or reference to stick together with that angular or "inspiring!" shape on the bottom screen as a proposal for the next Guggenheim perhaps.

Actually Parmanu and Probot are protectors of Delhi and the screens represent a CCTV-like security system in the city. I'm more interested in scales of dust or sand or ideas smaller than Parmanu the atom; that realm of the unseen, "invisible", intuited, overlooked, not-translated or Klugean "blind spot."[12] Add another easily overlooked "a" to his name and you arrive at my point of interest: the paramanu, a term from India's Vastu Shastras which is used *as* a principle and measure for building and nowadays is said to refer to sub-atomic particles. Traditionally, these measurements begin with a unit perceptible only to the sage or visionary figure who has "mastered their senses."[13]

Parmanu & Probot. ©RajComics.com

The *paramanu* is smaller than a particle of dust thrown up by the wheels of carriages. In fact, there are eight of these particles to every dust speck. Thereafter, there is a very tightly specified and gradual amplification of measures which expand from the "formless": atom, dust particle, the tip of a hair, a nit and on to recognizable scales like a grain of barley, a forearm and danda or staff. Every aspect of building was governed by these measures, which further determine all relations of form in linked proportions. Amplification begins at a level too small for the incurious eye to see and expands with visceral affect.

How different this is in approach to the cartoonishly assertive fancies dropped in cities, on sea fronts or islands to be surrounded by cultural infrastructure, vast amounts of retail and countless cafes – like little squirts of perfume?

In 2004 at the same time that 7,000-year-old dwellings were unearthed on Marawah island in the Gulf[14] the future descended on Abu Dhabi. Saadiyat, the Island of Happiness or Contentment, was an undeveloped island with few archeological traces, just across an inlet of Gulf water from the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. There were resources at hand and what resources they were! Only a wish-list was required to absorb the riches of a tiny nation with vast oil and natural gas reserves and a matching sovereign wealth fund. An initial masterplan was prepared by Gensler Associates, a global corporation from the USA, for a 27 square kilometre city quarter. It would be half the size of Bermuda and accommodate a population equal to the city of Oxford.[15] The plan included sectors dedicated to leisure, hotels, retail as well as the Cultural District which would be a driver for all the rest.

Ambitious Emiratis were in a position to persuade those they regarded as the best examples of universal, national, and contemporary institutions across the world to become lavishly rewarded "partners" in their Utopia. They took a steely-eyed view of old-western institutions in relative decline and seduced them into trading sufficient expertise in museology to ground their own future institutions. At the same time there would be loans from museum collections: classical, modern and "contemporary"; and substantial funds allocated to acquire new collections to bolster those and leave Abu Dhabi in a position to take full ownership of the institutions and new collections 30 years into the future.

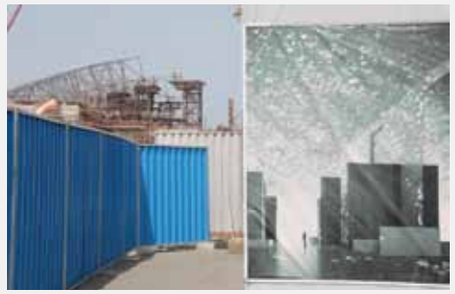
he histories of Emirati dwelling and trading sites are increasingly well researched, with excavations revealing links with the Indus Valley Civilisation over thousands of years. Archival interest in more recent decades of cyclical development is growing, not least in the UAE's capital city. UNESCO are likely to confer World Heritage status on Dubai's deserving creek area in 2014 too. Meanwhile, downtown Sharjah is engaged in a process of reinvention that involves large-scale demolition and betrays a curious distaste for its post-independence aspirations. Alongside it the Sharjah Art Foundation has been building cultural institutions with lessons for the future which I will return to. While ignorance about these histories is common, the island that became Saadiyat had only a few late-Islamic era remains in 2004 and so offered a near *tabula rasa*. This very rare condition goes some way to ameliorate cruder criticisms of the totalizing "something" being built in place of "nothing".

Saadiyat Island, 2007. ©Google

Let me come back to that by way of origins. Abu Dhabi wanted a "Universal" museum in the ideologically "Western" mode: a unipolar panorama of global cultures gathered in a single location, a first for the Emirates. Their discussions and agreement with the Louvre to bring the model museum and 300 objects from its "world-class" collection to Abu Dhabi, were a founding factor in the broader plans for Saadiyat. Greek and Roman spoils which filled the revolutionary Louvre would now transfer some of their pedigree to Abu Dhabi. All of this was critical in persuading Thomas Krens to bring his brand on board, as he would put it. Otherwise, discussions with Abu Dhabi, he bragged, had not been "automatically like, 'Wow.'"[16]

Brand is key here: the Louvre's rewards include $715 million for loans and expertise and $525 million or an annual payment of $17.5 million every year of the 30 year-long agreement, for the use of the Louvre's brand alone.[17] There was also $32.5 million to refurbish a wing of the Pavillon de Flore[18] and other sweeteners plus the usual billions in armaments and aircraft which are, naturally, unrelated. We have to assume a comparable level of reward for brand Guggenheim too, although it lacks the confidence to divulge the information.

Louvre Abu Dhabi, exterior.
©Guy Mannes-Abbott



Hito Steyerl's brilliant video *Is the Museum a Battlefield* (2013) traces circuits between elite art institutions, military hardware, potential war crimes, complicit starchitects and others, as well as the financial sponsorship that links them all in the new regime of global biennials. She states gleefully that "one could say that the Louvre was created by being stormed",[19] and maintained as a public art museum through repeated storming between the 1793 and 1871. Anecdote possesses the force of "street insurgence", as Walter Benjamin wrote in *The Arcades Project*,[20] versus the orderly ranks of historical narrative. What is beyond substantial dispute is that "the appropriation of a certain space, which had to be opened and broken into, was the first delight of the Revolution."[21]

This model of the state museum represented by the Louvre was created in accelerated conditions for the first anniversary of the revolution on 10 August 1793 and was a significant part of the grounding and narrating of the new Republic. So significant a part that there were wry questions asked at the time about whether, if older plans for a "public" Louvre had been delivered, it might have "saved the monarchy"[22] from the guillotine and tough-minded Republicanism. As such it seems a striking choice for Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates to make during a phase of unprecedented internal change in a world undergoing significant realignments.

The UAE is a federation of hereditary monarchies, governed by a Federal Supreme Council (FSC) representing the seven emirates. The FSC elects the President and Vice President, posts which have so far gone to ruling Sheikhs of Abu Dhabi and Dubai respectively. In 2006, the Federal National Council was inaugurated and made up of appointees and elected figures to perform a consultative role: "examining and, if it wishes, amending all proposed Federal legislation".[23] The Tourism, Development and Investment Company (TDIC) is a public company owned entirely by the government of Abu Dhabi. They describe their choice as follows: "Louvre Abu Dhabi is being developed with the expertise of the Agence France-Museums and in partnership with the Musee du Louvre, renowned for its museological excellence since its foundation in 1793."[24]

Louvre Abu Dhabi, interior.
©Guy Mannes-Abbott

So much for the symbolism of a revolutionary anniversary! The substance is arguably more relevant as the revolutionary Louvre represented "a new building type: the public museum of art."[25] Here "the central and abiding issues of museum practice – the classification and display of objects, lighting, the aims of conservation – were first discussed and articulated"[26] and constitute its "modernity". It helped shape

the identity of the revolutionary Republic, staking claims against a vanquished despotism and for a powerful notion of the commons. Until 1793, the Louvre's contents had belonged to one individual or institution, now it was the "property of all". Subsequently, it would fill with the property of all the Republic's conquests as curatorial hit lists accompanied the military across Europe.[27]

As if to prove the banality of the model pursued by the Guggenheim's spectacular shop, it is contracted to reproduce the same old eighteenth century institution with "a comprehensive series of collections, exhibitions, and educational programmes.[28] Moreover: "the museum will provide significant space for its permanent collection and special exhibition galleries along with art education facilities, a theatre, a library and a research centre plus a retail store, a restaurant and several cafes."[29]

This is the copy and paste model wherever globalization has flourished in the world. It remains a curious choice for Abu Dhabi's Utopian island project, except that the Saadiyat museums are principally cultural spectacles, buildings to signal intent: newness, wealth, forms of "seriousness" about Abu Dhabi's national identity and aspirations. This is why they are being built by the most obvious "starchitects" on the block: Gehry, Nouvel, Foster and Hadid – designers of seductive visual objects that don't have to fit properly or work internally – so long as they don't leak. These are amplified gestures to be arrayed along a newly articulated coastline on plinth-like extensions, to be seen and admired from afar.

These gestures by the same "starchitects" are now globally ubiquitous. Similarly scaled cultural institutions plus massive infrastructural builds are ingoing in Doha, Hong Kong and Baku – wherever a city or nation seeks attention. More insidious is the level below this where starchitectural centrepieces are focal points of global sports events or, one more level down, "lead" urban regenerations. The latter is exemplified by Renzo Piano's Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo, with its shops, offices, flats and "box-park", a model repeated with "big" retail in place of a "big" institution at Elephant and Castle in central London.

Labour camp transport. ©Guy Mannes-Abbott

Labour camp clothing. ©Guy Mannes-Abbott

Anonymous labour camp. ©Guy Mannes-Abbott

It's important to note that the way that this all works on Saadiyat does not necessarily discredit Abu Dhabi's planners and commissioners. Saadiyat can take shape in this way, along with its bundles of elite hotels and vast shopping complex of elite brands called The District[30] that will bind the Cultural District together, and achieve its basic goals. Once built, once full of the tourists who will obediently flock to it, the spaces will morph, develop, and change. Saadiyat will become a place again, where anything is possible.

However, in terms of conceiving the future institution, Gehry's Guggenheim perfectly exemplifies the corrupted commercial logic of an obscene model. It came after attempts to franchise the brand in commercial tie-ins in Las Vegas and Berlin failed. In a squirm-inducing interview between Koolhaas and Krens in 2006–7, the former asks the latter whether, after Bilbao and with Abu Dhabi commissioned, all future Guggenheims will be designed by Gehry. Krens deprecates but concludes "Frank is a genius and he is perfect for the site."[31]

In Jebel Ali Industrial Area there is a boom in labour camp construction. Plots in its centre, south of the big, new *masjid*, are being lined out while nearby foundations and bases are being waterproofed. Who builds the labour camps for the construction workers that build the future institutions? Who profits from the labour camps built, of course, by migrant construction workers for other migrant construction workers? Why does nobody talk of cultural institutions for these isolated labour camps? Why are these men so expendable in this place? After repaying recruitment fees over two years some, or many, will not have their visas renewed and return home, forever diminished, perhaps condemned to try again?

I walk along the Corniche and around Marina Mall. I walk a short stretch of the new highway cutting across Saadiyat Island and linking to Abu Dhabi city. I step across sandy stretches of "nothing" towards a Metro station in uptown and downtown Dubai. As befits a city of breath-taking expansion, everywhere I look there is space. Space not designed for the foot but the car, driven by someone else, very often a migrant worker. When walking is necessary, in and around Metros for example, everything is a long way from the other. To access a road or anywhere else by foot involves a notable distance often lacking physical animation.

All this is simply a result of accelerated expansion and very rapid layering of time. In 2014, what is most marvellous is that it's all perfect, or very new by the standards of most cities in the world. The speed and the energy invested is palpable, as is a sense of expansive possibility. It's hard and then not hard, to imagine the near future in which accretion has continued at the same pace and the planned new is encrusted with improvised adaptions to usage. A little further into the future and these dumb spaces will have been appropriated.

These cities are products and producers of globalization, capable surfers on its currents, convinced they will land spectacularly or have their image commemorated. Meanwhile, the spaces of globalized capital are being politicized, socialized, taken up, appropriated by all of its actants. It's an uncontroversial expectation and will follow as new moon follows old. It's not something that is usefully planned, nor planned against. It's a process in which those who are invisible today become less so until, by stealthy rhythms and associative efforts, they are the global citizens of next year, complete with a wearying array of rights and responsibilities over the common world.

And what do you imagine has happened to those once-future institutions which at the point of completion in 2015 or 2018 became memorials to a shamefully exploitative twenty-first century past? And just how stormy is the weather in the futures than can never be proofed against or written-down? Allow me to transport you back to a Utopian future, grounded in revolution, before returning to the composition of a time beyond ours.

Gorica labour camp: clothes hung out to dry. ©Guy Mannes-Abbott

The heart of the labour camp. ©Guy Mannes-Abbott

Labour camp construction boom. ©Guy Mannes-Abbott

CHARLES FOURIER WAS INTOXICATED by the Louvre's Grand Gallerie on his first visit to Paris, six months after the Bastille was stormed in 1789. It directly inspired the circulation spaces or domesticated "street-gallery" which enabled systems of human exchange to power the Utopian community he called Harmony.

At the centre of Fourier's vision of Harmony was a Phalanstery which, he wrote, could have no resemblance to the Versailles-like palace of his day. Harmony would be like "a small town in itself"[32] of 1,600–1,800 people, but "vastly different" in spatial terms because it would be "a society run by series of groups."[33] Its large centrepiece would be a place for "quiet activity; it should include the dining rooms, the exchange, meeting rooms, library, studies, etc."[34] with a wing for "noisy" activities. Another wing "should contain the caravanserai with its ballrooms and its halls for meetings with outsiders",[35] and act as the communications hub, along-with a "large number of halls for social relations."[36]

Fourier's aim was to imagine an "architecture that would break down the walls between people and families and make possible the multiplication of bonds between the members of a community."[37] His urban form and architecture would adapt to humans and their uncompromised desires. "Everything is linked by a series of passage-ways which are sheltered, elegant, and comfortable in winter thanks to the help of heaters and ventilators."[38] These arteries were luxurious for a reason: "A state of things which requires so much moving about makes sheltered means of communication an absolute necessity."[39]

Fourier's intention was profoundly radical: "The street-galleries are a mode of internal communication which would alone be sufficient to inspire disdain for the palaces and great cities" of his day, in which "we have no conception of the compound or collective forms of luxury." [40] This notion of collective enjoyment, bound up with the "butterflying passions" of his Utopia, is crucial. The notion that every particle in the place called Harmony shares the day-to-day luxury in highly-socialized spaces, reflected in architectural and new-urban forms is both purely Utopian and steadily pragmatic.

What did the street mean to Fourier? The Paris he first experienced was dense, crowded, "seething with activity" around its centre. Its passageways, or their airs, were full of "impure particles."[41] "In October the crowd had entered the Tuileries and it was this crowd, with its contrasts, costumes, and unceasing movement that attracted Fourier."[42] The royal gardens were political fora, the arcades "filled with cafes, gambling houses, small traders of every description and the heart of the publishing world" – all "compressed into a single spatial domain."[43]

20 years before the famous glazed arcades entrained consumers, gallery streets like the Galeries de Bois were wooden "ramshackle, leaky and unplanned"[44] structures – the "mephitic … huts made out of planks" that Balzac set his Paris of "Lost Illusions" amongst[45] – which condensed a heterogeneous world selling bonds and bodies. However, "the *actual* society in the galleries was not (Fourier's) object: it was the principle of social condensation exemplified by the galleries that intimated the potential of architecture to reform the social world."[46] This is what globalization's players have abandoned any relation to, as they've reverted to building palatial spectacles – exemplified by Gehry's Guggenheim Abu Dhabi – without purpose or even common use.

I quote at such length from and on Fourier because of the relationship between notions of urban organization or institutional architecture, however "liberated", and streets, passages, pathways and the "impure particles" that animate and overwhelm them in varying forms. I'm back in Jebel Ali Industrial Area's peculiar grid, on dirty sand tracks between labour camps, an "impure particle" amongst countless others who reclaim this as public space. Hidden away, socially invisible, often entrapped and yet forming a shifting but always overwhelming majority in the state they're building.

What of the insurgent anecdote, that small and undervalued configuration that can be so disruptive when least expected? Or which can contain "an entire philosophy"[47] as in Bruno Latour's famous account of being a young tutor in the French provinces when he was stopped in his tracks outside Dijon. At the dusty roadside, he found himself repeating "nothing can be reduced to anything else, nothing can be deduced from anything else, everything may be allied to everything else."[48]

Hereafter, as Graham Harman nicely elaborates "every human and nonhuman object now stands by itself as a force to reckon with. No actor, however trivial, will be dismissed as mere noise in comparison with its essence, its context, its physical body, or its conditions of possibility. Everything will be absolutely concrete: all objects and all modes of dealing with objects will now be on the same footing."[49] He goes on with a Latourian riff: "Atoms and molecules are actants, as are children, raindrops, bullet trains, politicians and numerals … on exactly the same ontological footing."[50] The point "is to grant dignity to the least grain of reality. Nothing is mere rubble to be used up or trampled by mightier actors."[51]

I labour with this because it is the response to familiar questions about who the museum is for, whose art is it, what use is the institution and, indeed, how do we use it? The answer lies in the digital as well as philosophical construction of how we live now in global networks that will strip every facade bare, layer over every glassy architectural folly, even Nouvel's domed LAD, and refuse the vanity of monumental institutions which generate monumental art in ever more pointless and empty gestures. It will, I wager, take a lot of art-world perfume to fill Gehry's GAD.

In preparing part of the ground for my next book, I've been researching the hut as an elementary, philosophical, architectural, romantic and liveable construction. I found images from 1944–5 of an exhibition at the Tate's Millbank gallery (now Tate Britain), showing prototypes of prefabricated housing units designed to solve a war-time housing crisis. Already the notion of such an exhibition is radical in the context of a GAD or variations on its model. Cheap housing for all being exhibited, and therefore presumably attracting crowds of those same "impure particles" to the heart of established British art! It's inconceivable today except as ironic gesture, of course.

More significantly, if such an installation took place it would exhibit a pristine prefab from the 1940s, one unchanged by temporal and human impurities. It is the surviving prefabs: with their Tudorbethan beams and windows, their textured walls, decorative statuary, wall-hangings and maximal adaptions of the simple original form that we ought to value. They represent a concrete present but also condense our futures. Futures constrained by adaptation, impurity, improvisation, accretion: all the arts of self-organized invention that might help us survive our planetary "war".

The future institution needs to not merely exhibit this tagged and tattooed body but the latter is what the future institution will be. Yes, I'm suggesting that the global model should adapt to something like the prefab housing unit or its regional equivalent, if it's to retain credibility or utility and survive waves of insurgency. The decontextualized airport experience lies in the past, to be replaced with futures of climactic, and so to some extent contextual, constraint.

A last anecdote? The Sharjah Biennial provides a concrete reference here in the sense that it takes place in a series of modest, often actually domestic-scale buildings. Despite a new cluster of purpose built art spaces with a recognizable elegance, there is no starchitect's palace or perfume. During the 2011 Biennial, themed around revolutionary archives, there was a moment that pulled me up during Khalil Rabah's installing of paintings on walls and racks: *Art Exhibition – Ready Made Representations* (2011). The images were based on press photos from exhibitions of Palestinian art around the world since 1954. The paintings had been done by unattributed Chinese copyists.

What startled me was that I came upon them laid out and stacked up against the more formal permanent galleries of the Sharjah Museum's Orientalist collection of paintings. This was a biennial with internal controversies which opened during the brutal crackdown on democracy protests in Bahrain, when the UAE was called upon for support. If the art institution or museum has a future it is for generating and working through associations like these.

THE MODEL OF A CULTURAL INSTITUTION OR MUSEUM AS VISUAL EXTRAVAGANZA, predicated on a retail model of cultures, commissioned by an overpowerful national body or individual and on unexamined whim, surrounded by retail and service industry offerings, close enough to hotels, transport hubs, and other leisure activities, etc., is long dead.

In retrospect, it's clear that 2014–5 was the turning point, when another rash of Guggenheims were seen threatening cities across the MENASA region. Alexandria wept, Ramallah refused poetically, Basra said "bollocks", Aden gave a considered negative response, Algiers laughed, Karachi snapped, Ahmedabad prevaricated momentarily, and Sharjah was mortified. Each had institutions of cultural memory and making of varying sizes and remit already. A domestic house turned museum in more than one city, a modest-sized palace in another, a rather moribund but authentic post-independence warehouse in others, a single room amongst a rich range of institutions in Ahmedabad, clustering spaces elsewhere. Cities joined forces to demand that any future institutional brand be prohibited from selling anything within or in relation to it and the threats were withdrawn.

The institution of the future reflects the body that gifts it time and attention. It is continuous with the city and its "impure particles" rather than being a cartoonishly out-sized object cut in to an urban milieu, or "leading" a regeneration project. It has caught up with the way that the human became reconfigurable and "impure": new parts grown, attached, altered, decorated. Caught up too with inhabited dwellings and shared urban space, also adaptive, accretive, refurbished, transformed by addition or growth.

Gulf cities quickly joined and surpassed the global present in ecological time with its new spatiality of equivalence and restless realignments. On Saadiyat the monumental institutions were re-mantled, with one of Gehry's ersatz ventilation cones being transported and installed on the banks of the Hudson River, like those obelisks in Paris and London. The remaining spaces were adapted to multiple uses, in which objects are no longer worshipped from afar.

The rest of the Cultural District was transformed into a series of linked spaces of making and enjoyment of what has been made: studios, workshops, desert-schools, and reading rooms. The old branded boutiques in The District were repurposed as social housing and Saadiyat welcomed its first community of newly constituted migrant-citizens in the Gulf – truly an Island of Happiness on our common earth.

Pre-fabricated home, London 2014.
©Guy Mannes-Abbott

Tate Gallery Exhibits Prefabricated Housing 1944. ©Tate archives

Guy Mannes-Abbott is a writer, essayist and critic who lives and works in London, UK. He is the author of a singular series of texts, poems, stories and aphorisms called e. things, which have been exhibited, published and performed alongside the work of leading British artists. In *Ramallah, Running* (2012) is the longest and latest in this series of texts and projects. Mannes-Abbott participated in Moderation[s]: A Thing At A Time at Witte de With (Rotterdam, 2013) and collaborated with the Bombay-based collective CAMP on a film, *The Country of the Blind*, and *Other Stories for the Folkestone Triennial* 2011. He has written catalogue essays on visual art and taught architectural theory at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London. His critical journalism has appeared in The Independent, The Guardian, New Statesman, Harpers & Queen, TANK and Bidoun. Recent publications include: *Drone Fiction* (2013), Translated By (2011) and an *Introduction to Mourid Barghouti's Midnight and OtherPoems* (2008).

Notes

1 Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1995).
2 Lars Bang Larsen, "Giraffe and Anti-Giraffe: Charles Fourier's Artistic Thinking," *e-flux journal* 26 (2011).
3 I do have Bruno Latour's notion of composition in mind here: "repair, take care, assemble, reassemble, stitch together", but am radicalising it. Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto,'" *New Literary History* 41.3 (2010): 475.
4 Unknown Author, "Palaces for the People," *Al Manakh* 1 (2007): 331.
5 "The Island of Happiness Revisited," Human Rights Watch website, March 2012 http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/03/21/island-happiness-revisited-0
6 Thomas Krens, "Newsweek Q&A The Guggenheim's Thomas Krens on Saadiyat," *Newsweek*, 13 March 2010. (But surely 2007?)
7 *Ibid*.
8 "Neoliberalism has turned architecture into a 'cherry on the cake' affair... assigned it a new role and limited its range." "Interview with Star Architect Rem Koolhaas," *Der Spiegel*, 2011.
9 Rem Koolhaas, "After Bilbao Thomas Krens' vision for Abu Dhabi as a 'cultural destination,'" *Al Manakh* 12 (2007): 334-336.
10 See: http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/shop/serpentine
11 Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 12.
12 Kluge's notion of the devil's blind spot: "Between the Devil's attempt to test the witch's or half-witch's devotion to evil, and the temptation to show his omnipotence, there exists a tiny gap, a little blind spot." Alexander Kluge, *The Devil's Blind Spot* (New York: New Directions, 2004), 12-14.
13 Ram Raz, *Essays on the Architecture of the Hindus* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1834), 15.
14 See Abu Dhabi Islands Archeological Survey: http://www.adias-uae.com/marawah.html
15 See TDIC site page: http://www.tdic.ae/project/saadiyat/saadiyat_cultural_district.aspx
16 Krens, *Newsweek*, *op cit*.
17 Some of the detail is included in the Louvre's publicly available agreement, which is in French and best summarized in: Alan Riding, "The Louvre's Art: Priceless. The Louvre's name: expensive," *New York Times*, 7 March 2007 http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/07/arts/design/07louv.html?_r=0.
18 This generated problems. See: Anna Somers Cocks, "Bad feelings over Abu Dhabi's unspent €25m gift to the Louvre," The Art Newspaper, 7 May 2013 http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Bad-feelings-over-Abu-Dhabis-unspent-m-gift-to-the-Louvre/29411-. This was only recently resolved by restoration of the Palace of Fontainebleau's theatre: Nick Leech, "Historic French Theatre Restored and Renamed in Honour of Sheikh Khalifa," The National, 1 May 2013 http://www.thenational.ae/uae/historic-french-theatre-restored-and-renamed-in-honour-of-sheikh-khalifa
19 Hito Steyerl, *Is the Museum a Battlefield*, 2012.
20 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 545.
21 Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 126.
22 McClellan, *op cit*., 8.
23 See: https://web.archive.org/web/20080801202643/http://www.government.ae/gov/en/gov/federal/politics.jsp
24 See more at: http://www.tdic.ae/media/press_release/award_08-01-2013.aspx#sthash.rbhTRWV7.dpuf
25 McClellan, *op cit*., 1.
26 *Ibid*.
27 *Ibid*.,115-6.
28 See TDIC webpage: http://www.tdic.ae/project/cultural/guggenheim.aspx
29 *Ibid*.
30 See: http://www.tdic.ae/project/retail/district.aspx
31 Koolhaas, *op cit*.
32 Charles Fourier, "An Architectural Innovation: The Street-Gallery," in *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972).
33 Charles Fourier, "The Phalanstery," in *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972).
34 *Ibid*.
35 *Ibid*.
36 *Ibid*.
37 Jonathan Beecher and Charles Fourier, *The Visionary and His World* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1986), 244.
38 Fourier, "An Architectural Innovation," *op cit*.
39 *Ibid*.
40 *Ibid*.
41 Sebastien Mercier, 1793, quoted in: Anthony Vidler, *The Scenes of the Street and Other Essays* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2011), 110.
42 *Ibid*., 50.
43 *Ibid*.
44 *Ibid*., 53.
45 *Ibid*., 77.
46 *Ibid*., 53.
47 Graham Harman, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Melbourne: re.press, 2009), 13.
48 Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 163.
49 Harman, op cit., 13.
50 *Ibid*., 14.
51 *Ibid*., 15.

Notes From a Boycott

Mariam Ghani, Gulf Labor working group

GULF LABOR IS A GROUP OF ARTISTS, WRITERS, ARCHITECTS, CURATORS, AND OTHER CULTURAL WORKERS who are trying to ensure that workers' rights are protected during the construction of new cultural institutions on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi. After letter-writing and meetings with the Guggenheim in 2010 produced insufficient change, we initiated a public boycott of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi in 2011. Almost two thousand cultural workers have signed on to the boycott, agreeing not to sell work to, accept commissions from, or participate in events on behalf of the GAD.

Like most long-term boycotts, the Gulf Labor campaign has undergone a number of shifts and deployed a range of different tactics over the years since its public launch. Some signatories have dropped out, while others have joined in. Our working group - which is responsible for organizing, negotiating, and public statements -- has a rotating membership open to anyone participating in the boycott. That membership has changed over time, which naturally inflects the decisions made by the working group. At some moments, we have engaged in intensive behind-the-scenes dialogues with both the Guggenheim and their partners in Abu Dhabi. At other moments, we have withdrawn from conversations that seemed to produce no tangible results, and considered how we might change the dynamic, by intervening in other ways or arenas.

Gulf Labor's most visible tactical shift came in fall 2013, when we launched the 52 Weeks campaign (currently in Week 38). Every week for a year, we are releasing one or more artist's projects. These projects call attention to some aspect of the conditions of workers on Saadiyat Island, the political context that enables their situation, and the problematic compact between the western institutions building on Saadiyat and their partners in Abu Dhabi; or they make links between the situation of the workers on Saadiyat and similar struggles by other migrants and workers in other places and times. 52 Weeks represents a move from the strategic use of artworks (withholding them, or imposing conditions on their sale, production and exhibition) as an activist tactic, to an attempt to apply the same kind of pressure through the production and distribution of artworks that directly address or enact that activism.

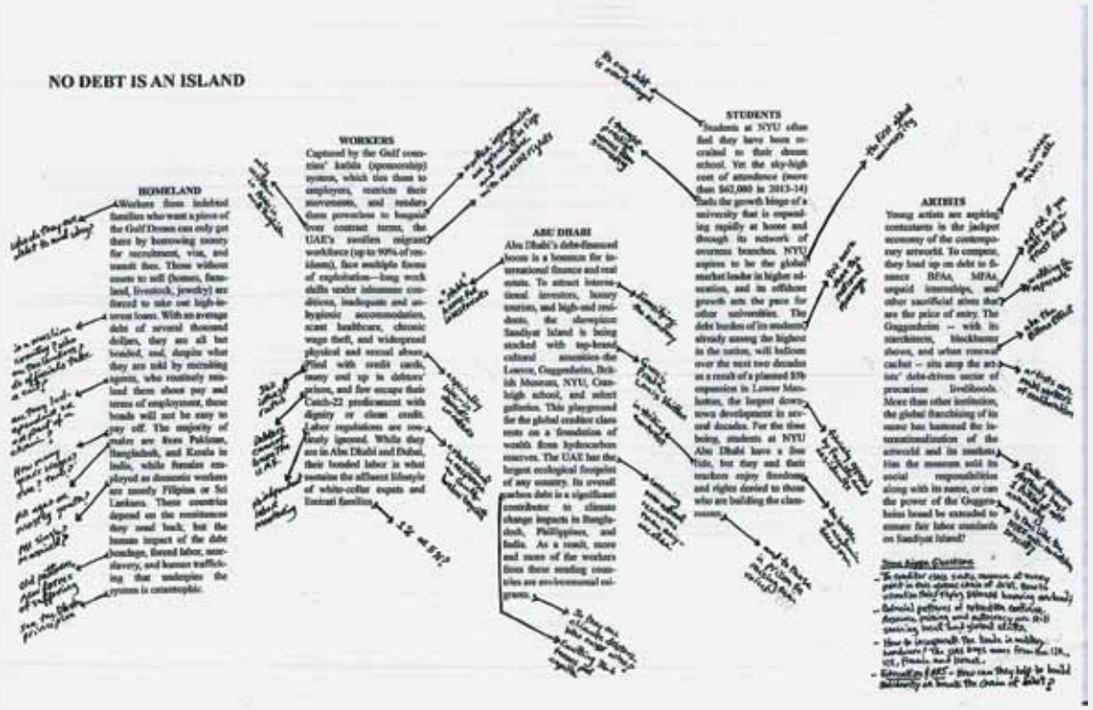
52 Weeks was initially conceived as a means to exert constant pressure on the Guggenheim, its chief Emirati partner TDIC (Tourism Development & Investment Company), and the other Western institutions imbricated in construction projects on Saadiyat (the Louvre, the British Museum, and New York University). 52 Weeks also allows Gulf Labor to connect our efforts vis-à-vis Saadiyat Island to relevant issues and parallel activist projects outside Saadiyat–from the World Cup stadium construction in Qatar, to the globalization of university campuses, to the struggles of migrant tomato pickers in Florida–through the projects produced by a diverse group of artists and writers. 52 Weeks additionally opens a space for direct actions to be performed as weeks within the ongoing campaign, by newly formed affinity groups (like the Global Ultra Luxury Faction or G.U.L.F.). The flexibility of this format potentially broadens Gulf Labor's purview, without splitting the focus of its central demands.

Gulf Labor, poster announcing the launch of 52 Weeks, 2013

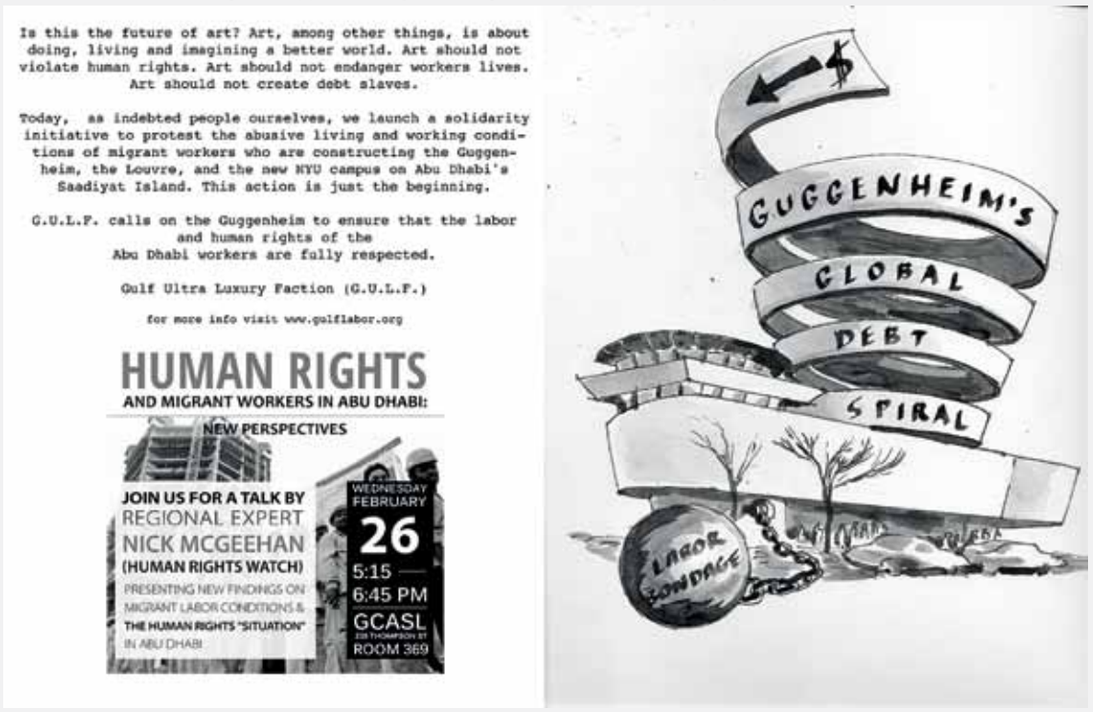
Farid Sarroukh & Maha Traboulsi in collaboration with Walid Raad for Week 9, *If FIFA did...*, poster, 2013

Santiago Mazatl for Week 37 Immokalee Workers in Florida (ciw-online.org/about), 2014. *Farmworker Justice*, poster created in solidarity with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida (ciw-online.org/about), 2014

Andrew Ross and MTL (Nitasha Dhillon & Amin Husain) for Week 10, *NO DEBT IS AN ISLAND*.
A triptych with multimedia components (website, printable PDF, and a solidarity initiative), 2013



Global Ultra Luxury Faction (G.U.L.F.) for Week 20, *Is this the future of art?*
Front of flyer dropped during February 22nd action at the Guggenheim Museum, New York

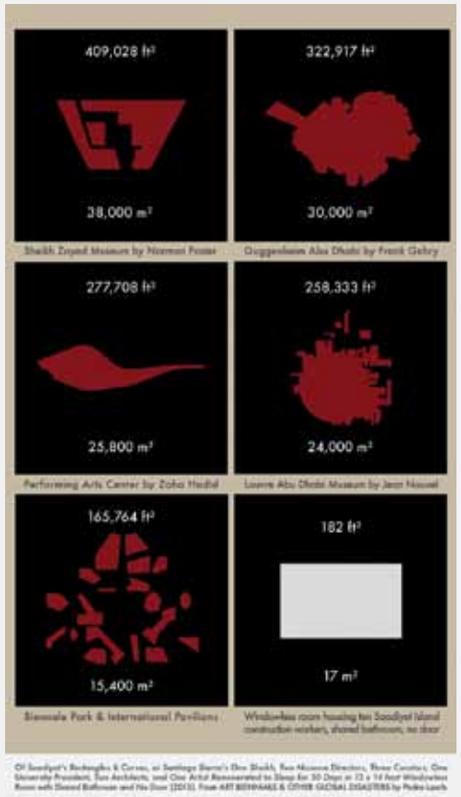


G.U.L.F., documentation of March 29th action at Guggenheim Museum, New York. Fake dollar bills were dropped into the atrium during the *Italian Futurism* exhibition. A fake globalguggenheim.com website concurrently launched an RFP for sustainable and ethical museum designs.

While some of the 52 Weeks perform or call for direct actions, others take a more laconic, analytical, or abstracted approach to highlighting the ironies and contradictions of the grand project of Saadiyat Island (literally translated, the 'Island of Happiness'). One week might propose new architectural standards (see whobuilds.org for details), the next launch an activist Twitterbot, and the next present an entry from an encyclopedia or lexicon. The tone might be playful or elegiac, reflective or sardonic. Assessing the campaign from the two-thirds mark, it seems to me that 52 Weeks and its many brilliant contributors have begun to reimagine what a group like Gulf Labor can be and do—how an activist project based in a boycott might serve beyond that boycott, without abandoning it. 52 Weeks is a reminder that a boycott can and should be the beginning of a larger conversation, rather than a means to shut down all dialogue around an issue.

John Jurayj for Week 32, *30 Untitled Men*,
poster with portraits of the 30 British Museum trustees printed on vellum with burn holes, 2014

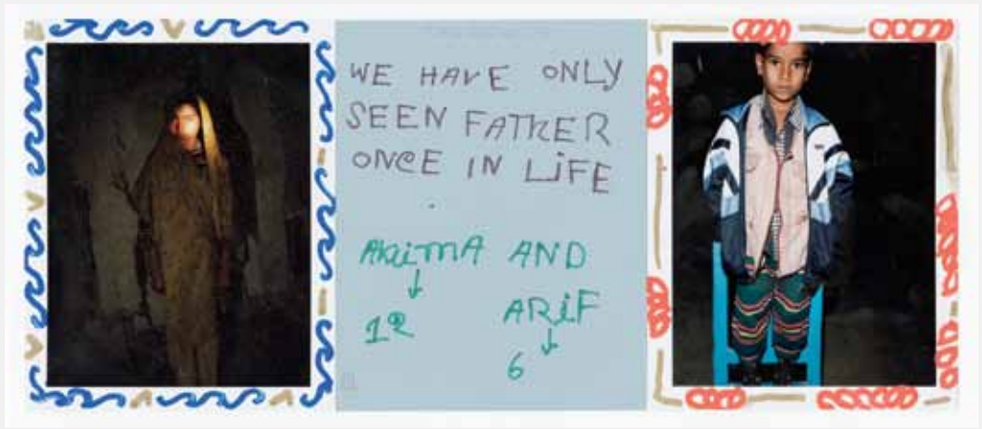
Pedro Lasch for Week 14, *Of Saadiyat's Rectangls & Curves, or Santiago Sierra's One Sheikh, Two Museum Directors, Three Curators, One University President, Two Architects, and One Artist Remunerated to Sleep for 30 Days in 13×14 foot Windowless Room with Shared Bathroom and No Door*, poster, 2013



Lynn Love & Ann Sappenfield for Week 11,
50° Celsius, page layout from 2010
Supplement to the New Emirati
Britannica, Third Edition

Hans Haacke for Week 5, *I Paid…*, poster, 2014

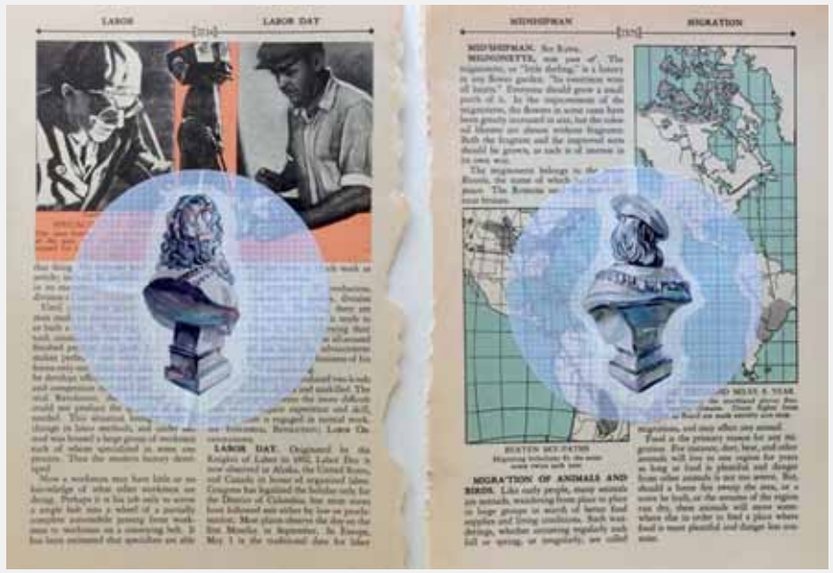
Jim Goldberg for Week 16, *Akima and Arif*, photos and text
(http://gulflabor.org/2014/week-16-jim-goldberg-akima-and-arif/)
from a trip to Bangladesh in 2007



Matt Greco & Greg Sholette for Week 7, *Saadiyat Island Workers Quarters Collectibles*,
3-D printed objects and packaging, shop-dropped in the Guggenheim NYC gift-store in October 2013.
Photos by Karin Cintron

Sarah Farahat & Aaron Hughes for Week 34, *Labor of Art, Art of Labor*,
a downloadable organizing toolkit and twitterbot campaign (#GulfLaborAction), 2014

Anna Stump for Week 19, *Migrant Labor did not exist in the Wonderland of Knowledge Encyclopedia, 1938*, gouache and collage on paper, 2013



Over the past year, the conversation around cultural boycotts in the art and academic worlds appears to be once again approaching some kind of critical mass. Renewed press around Gulf Labor's boycott followed both the 52 Weeks launch in the fall and the front-page New York Times revelations around the NYU Abu Dhabi campus in the spring. The carefully negotiated artist withdrawals from the Sydney Biennale in protest of main sponsor Transfield's involvement with widely criticized migrant detention camps resulted in the withdrawal of Transfield's chairman from the Biennale board and the return of the boycotting artists to the show. The current edition of Manifesta itself has been the target of a call to boycott, because of its location in Saint Petersburg and the manifold challenges to free expression (and for dissidents and non-Russians, also freedom of movement) in the current political and cultural climate of Russia, including the so-called 'homosexual propaganda' laws. The public program of Manifesta includes self-reflexive discussions on the 'socio-political context of biennials' and the distinctions between 'making art politically' and 'making political art,' as well as 'engagement and disengagement,' echoing a recent mini-conference in New York co-presented by Art in General and the Vera List Center.

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israeli companies and institutions complicit in the violation of Palestinian rights received a fresh jolt of controversy when the American Studies Association voted to endorse BDS, and American politicians

Rawi Hage for Week 25, *Carnival*, 2014 poster with excerpt from the 2012 novel of the same name, in six different languages

Todd Ayoung & Jelena Stojanovic for Week 28, *A Paradox on Citizenry and Creativity*, poster, 2014

seized the opportunity to denounce professors who dare to take 'left' political stands. More recently, the Creative Time exhibition 'Living as Form,' a survey of socially engaged art practices, was being toured by Independent Curators International through their 'Exhibition in a Box' program, and traveled to two venues in Israel – including the Technion, a university deeply embedded in the Israeli military-industrial-settlement complex – before notifying the participating artists, some of whom are BDS signatories. Creative Time and ICI have both stated that they do not participate in any cultural boycotts, because they believe it's more important to engage than disengage. There are some contexts, however, where the line between presenting engaged work in order to shift the limits and possibilities of the discourse, and allowing that work to be used to paper over real problems, becomes so fine that it can easily vanish entirely.

The question raised by Creative Time is, nonetheless, at the heart of every boycott dilemma. Can a given situation be changed more by engaging, or by disengaging? The answer may be different for every person, for every government, for every institution, for every situation. For some people, 'boycott' will always be a dirty word – whether because of a reflexively anti-labor stance, or because of harsh experience on the wrong end of economic sanctions. For others – perhaps people like me, who grew up in boycotting households, always avoiding something or other (whether Chilean grapes, 'Israeli' hummus, or clothes made with prison labor) – the boycott is just another bit in the activist toolkit, or really, just an ordinary fact of life: part of the endless, everyday struggle to live your ethics.

Pablo Helguera for Week 36, *At the very least…* from the series 'Artoons,' 2010

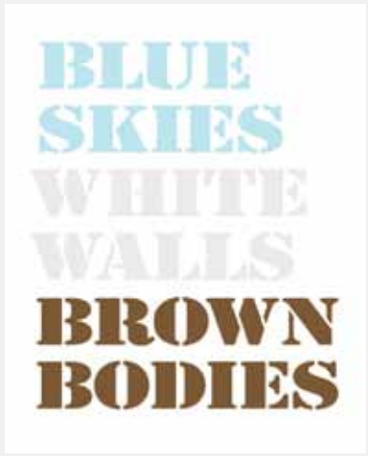
Thomas Hirschhorn for Week 2, *Banners*, photocopies and tape, 2009. Published in conjunction with the text *My Guggenheim Dilemma*

In the text published by Thomas Hirschhorn for the second week of 52 Weeks, "My Guggenheim Dilemma," the artist asserts that the real dilemma of a cultural boycott lies in the contradiction between the "politics of 'good intentions', 'the good conscience', 'the engagement of the artist'… and my belief and conviction that Art, as Art, has to keep completely out of any daily political cause in order to maintain its power, its artistic power, its real political power." If the real political power of art lies in maintaining a space that, in Hirschhorn's formulation, can resist the simplifications of political idealism and realism, then why use art to enact real-world politics? Perhaps precisely because when culture is deployed for political purposes – as it often is by autocratic regimes who cloak that autocracy with performances of freedom – the weave between aesthetics and politics becomes so complex that the space of art is required to unpick it.

Hirschhorn's text also brings up another critical point. In the last line, he says "my signature for the boycott of Guggenheim Abu Dhabi will make sense if I have to pay a price for it." As the text was originally a letter sent from Hirschhorn to Nancy Spector and Richard Armstrong about a proposed exhibition at the Guggenheim Bilbao, the discussion of paying a price is quite apt. Yet the notion of paying a real, personal price for participation in a cultural boycott is not widely discussed these days. It seems more fashionable to describe joining what Hirschhorn himself calls a "fancy artists' boycott" as either an essentially meaningless gesture of solidarity – just another e-signature on another petition – or, for the organizers, as some sort of esoteric career move. But if the boycott is to succeed, the price must be real – lost income, frayed relationships, a certain reputation for troublemaking – and signing must mean that you are willing to really pay that price. Less signatories who have seriously weighed what it means to sign are more valuable than more signatories who sign without weighing the consequences.

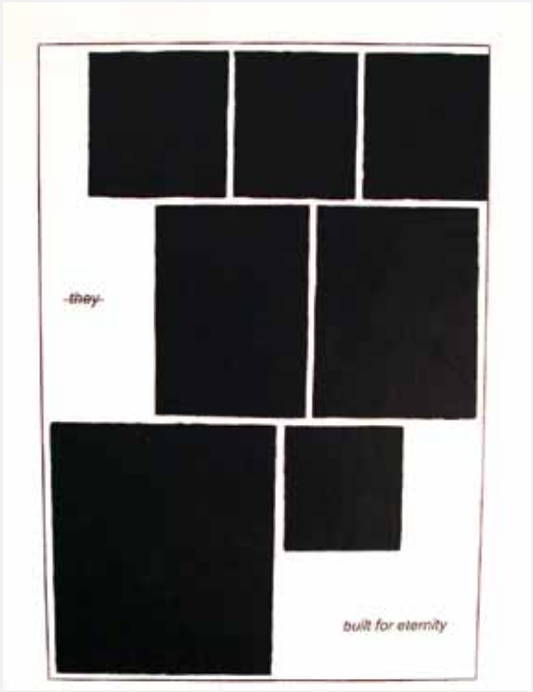
Ultimately, a boycott should be a tactic of last, not first, resort. Public boycotts should be called only when private negotiation proves either impossible or fruitless. And a boycott should be applied only when a boycott is likely to produce results. That is to say, a cultural boycott will work only if the creative work being withheld has significant and immediate value to the institution or government being boycotted. If that government or institution does not in fact need cultural products for a specific purpose in this specific moment, cultural workers have no leverage with that government or institution, and a boycott will not work. Likewise, if the boycott does not include a significant portion of the most visible cultural workers necessary to the immediate purpose or project of the government or institution, the boycott will not work. A public boycott should not be called until enough organizing has been done to ensure a minimum of consensus around the goal and necessity of the boycott in the community most important to its success. If the demand behind a boycott is vague or diffuse, the boycott will not work. In a long-term boycott, however, it is possible that the goal of the boycott may develop over time as the situation and relationships change, from one central demand into a series of more specific or interrelated demands.

Jaret Vadera for Week 30,
Blue Skies, White Walls, Brown Bodies, poster, 2014



Hend al Mansour for Week 23, *Fist of the Day*,
silkscreen print, 2014

Maryam Monalisa Gharavi for Week 21,
they built for eternity, acrylic and inkjet, 2014



I am writing these notes from a moment that may be the beginning, or the middle, or nearly the end of a long boycott. Until the boycott ends, we will not know how to narrate exactly how it progressed from one stage to the next. We will not know if we succeeded, or failed, or reached some agreement where everyone involved felt they won a little and lost a little. The most recent development, the involvement of the ILO at the government level, gives some hope that the boycott may be resolved in a way that satisfies all sides. But at this stage we still do not know which moves will lead where; we can only hope that experience and principle will serve as good guides.

Our experience so far, however, suggests that the boycott dilemma of engagement versus disengagement is something of a false dichotomy. By which I mean that describing participation in a cultural boycott as disengagement, and refusal to participate in a boycott as engagement, can be a drastic oversimplification. Not only because a long-term boycott like Gulf Labor's actually involves as much negotiation with as withdrawal from the boycotted institution, but also because a cultural boycott, while enacting physical or economic withdrawal from a particular space, simultaneously opens a parallel space for critical engagement with the issues motivating the boycott, and dialogue with all the players involved. One might even call it engaging by disengaging.

No matter how the boycott itself ends, Gulf Labor will have opened the space for a new conversation about labor, migration, and privilege in the art world. In large part, this is due to 52 Weeks: to the shift in tactics it represented, the collective energy it generated, and especially to the slants, tangents and connections opened by various contributors.

High Culture and Hard Labor

Andrew Ross

ACROSS A NARROW SEA CHANNEL FROM ABU DHABI'S SLEEK TOWERS, construction on Saadiyat Island is proceeding at a pace that's extreme even by the standards of this Persian Gulf boomtown.

Planned as the mother of all luxury property developments, Saadiyat's extraordinary offer to the buyers of its opulent villas is that they will be able to stroll to the Guggenheim Museum, the Louvre and a new national museum partnered with the British Museum. A clutch of lustrous architects – Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, Rafael Viñoly and Norman Foster – have been lured with princely sums to design these buildings. New York University, where I am on the faculty, will join the museums when its satellite campus opens later this year. But there is a darker story behind the shiny facades of these temples to culture, arts and ideas.

On Saadiyat, and throughout the gleaming cityscapes of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the construction work force is almost entirely made up of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi Sri Lankan and Nepalese migrant laborers. Bound to an employer by the kafala sponsorship system, they arrive heavily indebted from recruitment and transit fees, only to find that their gulf dream has been a mirage. Typically, in the United Arab Emirates, the sponsoring employer takes their passports, houses the workers in substandard labor camps, pays much less than they were promised and enforces a punishing regimen under the desert sun.

In its 2006 report "Building Towers, Cheating Workers," Human Rights Watch issued the first of its several critiques of the kafala system. The official response has been mixed: some reforms have been made to labor law, but representatives from Human Rights Watch have been barred from entry, and almost a thousand migrants have died in neighboring Qatar while building infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup.

Saadiyat is supposed to be a model exception. The government's Tourism Development and Investment Corporation has installed a well-equipped worker village (though it still has the feel of a detention camp), along with employment policies that look good on paper. But the policies are not adequately enforced. Employers are supposed to pay off their workers' recruitment fees, though very few do, and many contractors house their workers more cheaply in poor facilities elsewhere. Every independent investigator who has visited these off-island locations has turned up multiple violations of the employment codes.

Earlier this month, I interviewed workers employed on Saadiyat projects, accompanied by my colleagues from Gulf Labor, a coalition of artists and writers convened three years ago to persuade the Guggenheim and the Louvre to raise labor standards. Gulf Labor has led an international boycott of the museum's Abu Dhabi branch by more than 1,800 artists, writers, curators and gallery owners – many of them respected names whose work the Guggenheim would like to acquire for its Saadiyat collection.

On our trips through the archipelago of labor camps that encircles Abu Dhabi and Dubai, we stopped at a makeshift Punjabi restaurant in the industrial area known as Al Quoz. There, in the early morning hours, we spoke with a number of workers including one named Ganesh, who has worked on buildings for N.Y.U. and the Louvre. Slightly built with a dazzling smile, he switched between Hindi and English to explain his predicament. Owed a year's wages by the recruitment company that brought him from Nepal, he is unable to leave the U.A.E., more than 10 years later, because his sponsor has his passport (and his back pay). His labor visa has expired, and he is surviving on canteen credit and illegal work stints.

Paying off recruitment debts consumed his first two years of hard labor in the U.A.E. During that time, his family's subsistence farm in the Himalaya foothills had been at his creditor's disposal. "Three or four out of 10 lose their land," he said, "when they can't repay on time." His next decade in the U.A.E. was spent scratching out thin remittances to send to his wife and children. On some work projects, he was housed three hours from the construction site. To put in a mandatory 12-hour shift, "I had to wake up at 4 a.m.," he said, "and then had to cook my dinner after I returned at 10 p.m."

Last month, a Gulf Labor offshoot (the Global Ultra Luxury Faction) occupied the Guggenheim Museum in New York, protesting labor conditions in Abu Dhabi. In response, the museum's director, Richard Armstrong, claimed that the Guggenheim's Abu Dhabi expansion, designed by Mr. Gehry, is not yet under construction. Yet the extensive foundation pilings and much of the surrounding infrastructure have already been laid.

It's not too late for the museum to break with the practices that have built the Louvre and N.Y.U. And there is still time for Mr. Gehry to counter the ugly implications of Zaha Hadid's recent remarks after the deaths in Qatar, where she designed Al Wakrah stadium. "I have nothing to do with the workers," she said. "It's not my duty as an architect to look at it."

The U.A.E. is hardly alone in its dependence on tragically underpaid and ill-treated migrant workers. Every developed, and fast-developing, country has its own record of shame. But in the Persian Gulf States, the lavish lifestyle of a minority composed of citizens and corporate expats is maintained by a vast majority that functions as a servant class.

If liberal cultural and educational institutions are to

operate with any integrity in that environment, they must insist on a change of the rules: abolish the recruitment debt system, pay a living wage, allow workers to change employers at will and legalize the right to collective bargaining. Otherwise, their gulf paymasters will go on cherry-picking from the globalization menu—Lamborghinis, credit default swaps, liberal arts degrees, blockbuster exhibitions—while spurning the social contract that protects basic human rights.

Andrew Ross is a professor of social and cultural analysis at New York University and a member of Gulf Labor.

Who's Building the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi? FAQ

Gulf Labor

What is 52 Weeks of Gulf Labor?

"52 Weeks" is a one-year campaign starting in October 2013. Artists, writers, and activists from different cities and countries are invited to contribute a work, a text, or action each week that relates to or highlights the coercive recruitment, and deplorable living and working conditions of migrant laborers in Abu Dhabi who are building the Guggenheim, the Louvre, and the Sheikh Zayed National Museum (in collaboration with the British Museum).

When did the Gulflabor boycott start?

The boycott was made public in 2011, but several key initiatives precede that date, including a letter signed by 43 artists sent to the Guggenheim in 2010 seeking guarantees of protection for worker rights. This letter was sent out after members of Gulflabor consulted with Human Rights Watch (HRW) following their 2009 report on worker living conditions on Saadiyat Island. Several meetings with the Guggenheim also followed this letter.

Soon after these efforts, the TDIC (the entity overseeing construction on Saadiyat for Abu Dhabi) issued an important document called the EPP (Employment Practices Policy), which outlined a code of conduct that contractors building on Saadiyat should follow. The EPP is not a piece of legislation, but rather a non- binding pledge by TDIC to hold its contractors to fair labor standards. Unfortunately, even this non-binding document lacked both practical mechanisms to ensure future implementation of these policies, and independent monitoring of actual construction sites and worker accommodations. Following these shortcomings, the boycott was made public in March 2011.

What are Gulflabor's specific demands?

Gulflabor calls on all academic and cultural institutions building on Saadiyat Island to seek uniform and enforceable human rights protections, and better conditions than are prevalent, for the workers working on their sites. These protections should specifically address:

1. Recruitment fees and relocation costs paid by workers. 2. Confiscation of worker passports by employers. (Though we recognize that this has appreciably improved in recent years.) 3. Poor and unsafe housing and living conditions, even in the Saadiyat Construction Village that is meant to embody the highest standards for worker welfare upheld by TDIC. 4. Lack of freedom to change jobs or to form trade unions for collective bargaining. 5. Lack of open platforms for workers to express grievances or abuses without fear of recrimination or dismissal.

At a minimum, Gulflabor requires enforcement of the existing EPP document, including the appointment of an independent monitor empowered and enabled to make impromptu inspections of work sites and worker accommodations. Unfortunately, the first report produced by the current monitor, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC), did not assuage our initial doubts over the firm's ability to maneuver independently due its business interests in the region. The report did not include any unannounced inspections, but did include formal responses from TDIC to all issues raised by PwC, indicating that TDIC were given the time and opportunity to address shortcomings prior to the release of the report. This methodology is unorthodox, to say the least. In previous meetings and correspondence, Gulflabor has recommended a list of human rights organizations that we thought could act as sound and rigorous monitors, and we reiterate our call for such an independent monitor.

Gulflabor has also suggested the implementation of the Institute of Human Rights and Business's recently drafted Dhaka Principles as a framework to move TDIC policies forward. These guidelines were developed within the business world, and do not place unrealistic burdens on employers, but nonetheless abide by internationally recognized standards of human rights for workers.

Ideally, Gulflabor would like to see either a workers rights framework like the Dhaka Principles and/or an employer code of conduct like the EPP enacted into law in the UAE.

If the recruitment and relocation fees are paid in the workers' countries of origin, how can that be changed from the UAE side?

This can be done through stricter regulation of subcontracting practices, including limiting the number of times a contract can be subcontracted, and holding contractors legally responsible for the actions of their subcontractors. These same regulations would resolve some of the major issues with enforcement of the EPP, which currently only applies to the contractors who sign it, not the subcontractors who actually manage most of the work onsite.

Has Gulflabor met with the Guggenheim and/or TDIC and/or Human Rights Watch?

Gulflabor is in regular contact with Human Rights Watch, and has worked closely with their representatives for the region. We have been in regular touch with Guggenheim officials, sharing information and holding

face-to-face meetings from time to time. Our relationship with the Guggenheim is not adversarial. All along, we have maintained that we are handing the Guggenheim an opportunity to pioneer a fresh ethical profile for museums. Twenty years ago, the anti- sweatshop movement put the same pressure on globalizing corporations. As non-profit artworld institutions acquire global profiles, they will have to grapple with the same concerns, as will the artists who work with them. As for TDIC, our relationship is more remote, in every sense. We have had conversations with relevant officials, and we would like more. We have also offered many solutions, regarding labor standards and monitoring methods, but there has been little reciprocity on their part (This has recently changed, as TDIC invited Gulf Labor to visit Saadiyat, in March 2014. See Timeline above for more developments).

Is Gulflabor boycotting the Guggenheim worldwide?

No. The formal boycott in which all Gulflabor signatories are participating applies only to the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. However, a range of positions have been taken on this issue by individual boycott participants, which include both total worldwide boycott and collaboration with local Guggenheim outposts on projects that will not travel to Abu Dhabi. Because Guggenheim acquisitions ultimately become part of a global rather than a local collection, however, some Gulflabor members whose work has been considered for acquisition by the Guggenheim have either refused the sale or imposed a rider on any potential sales, specifying that any work sold to the Guggenheim may not be exhibited in Abu Dhabi until and unless the Gulflabor boycott is lifted. While Gulflabor encourages all signatories to take a similar position on acquisitions, we recognize that this is not possible for everyone, as it may result in significant financial hardships.

Is Gulflabor boycotting other projects on Saadiyat Island?

At the moment, not formally, though many individual members of Gulflabor have taken this stance. However, it is difficult and in many ways counter- productive to separate the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi from the context of the larger Saadiyat project. Our most recent statement calls on all academic and cultural institutions buiding on Saadiyat to promote fair labor practices on the island, and urges the Guggenheim to take a leading role in drawing the other Western institutions involved – the Louvre, the British Museum, etc. – into this effort. There is also some overlap between Gulflabor and the group of NYU faculty and students involved in organizing for fair labor practices at NYU Abu Dhabi. As we see it and understand the situation, most of the problems and challenges for improving conditions for workers in the UAE are structural ones. So they are by no means limited to the Guggenheim and do include other projects on Saadiyat and across the UAE. There are legal and immigration processes which structurally place workers in a very precarious state with very limited rights and freedoms.

What is Gulflabor's position on labor practices in other cultural projects in the Middle East? In the US? Elsewhere in the world?

The labor practices deployed on Saadiyat reflect a more general trend in our time to put the so-called bottom line ahead of everything, including the safety and general well-being of workers and their conditions of life. As of March 2013, the US has a guest worker program in place which is designed to provide the US with the low-wage labor it depends on without giving these workers political rights or a path to citizenship; recent strikes for better working conditions by guest workers employed by major US corporations suggest that this type of program works no better in the US than in the UAE. These same dynamics and concerns manifest not only in different work sites in the UAE and the Gulf, but also in different forms in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Migrant workers are indispensable to a number of industries worldwide, most notably construction, and perform some of the most dangerous, precarious and least rewarded jobs in a predatory system. Gulflabor's sister group, Who Builds Your Architecture? works within the architecture community to raise critical questions about the responsibility of architects to the workers who realize their ideas. Why should 21st century cultural institutions which spare no cost to have the best design, materials, technologies, engineering, and so forth not value the lives of the people who will be materializing these dreams? The same questions need to be asked around new cultural institutions wherever they take shape; the Saadiyat Island project is a particular flashpoint because, considering Abu Dhabi's economic position, the budget could very easily be stretched to accommodate better conditions and wages for workers, but has not been.

With regards to existing institutions, some members of Gulflabor have also been involved recently in supporting the struggle of Sotheby's art handlers. Sotheby's decided to lockout its unionized art handlers in New York and tried to force them to agree to a lesser contract even though by all accounts art sales are booming even in this age of austerity. The art handlers' struggle for a better contract was successful, as the pressure from the workers and the many who acted in solidarity, even taking actions at MOMA and the Whitney Museum, forced Sotheby's to see that it was far more costly for them to continue the lockout, than to offer fair terms to its workers.

How is Gulflabor organized? Is Guflabor funded by anyone?

Gulflabor is organized by a Working Group drawn from the signatories. The membership of the Working Group rotates; any signatory who wishes to join is welcome. Meetings are in New York but those outside New York often join in by Skype; many discussions and tasks are conducted through a listserv. The Working Group currently includes Haig Aivazian, Ayreen Anastas, Doug Ashford, Shaina Anand, Doris Bittar, Tania Brugera, Sam Durant, Rene Gabri, Mariam Ghani, Hans Haacke, Brian Holmes, Rana Jaleel, Guy Mannes-Abbott, Naeem Mohaiemen, Walid Raad, Michael Rakowitz, Andrew Ross, Ashok Sukumaran, Gregory Sholette, Beth Stryker, and Murtaza Vali.

Gulflabor is not funded. The Working Group donates their time and efforts. Occasionally members of the Working Group participate in a panel discussion or produce a text for publication, for which they receive a small fee. When available, these funds are used to subsidize Gulflabor's website and outreach efforts.

Are only artists involved in Gulflabor, or is it composed of / open to other cultural workers?

Both the Working Group and the larger body of signatories include people from all across the spectrum of cultural work, from artists, to curators, to critics and other writers, to architects, to academics (both students and teachers), to arts administrators and other people who make the visible labor of art work possible.

How will Gulflabor determine when the boycott is successful?

Success could be measured as either (a) facts on the ground, when an independent monitor issues a report that demonstrates that all five problems identified by HRW and Gulflabor have been resolved, or (b) demonstration of real will to change, when worker rights in the UAE are protected by an enforceable law, conforming with international human rights principles, and enacted into statute.

THE HUMANITY GAME: ART, ISLAM, AND THE WAR ON TERROR

JESSICA WINEGAR

> …the notion that art is a panhuman universal is a pernicious idea, which has on balance done more harm than good.
> —Shelly Errington, *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress*

The attacks of September 11, 2001 presented a dilemma for liberal American cultural elites. Many were horrified by the events of that day and expressed concern over the growth of radical Islamic movements. Yet they were also uncomfortable with the increase in negative stereotypes of Muslims and Middle Easterners, and with the growing discursive division of the world into civilized "us" and barbaric "them." The challenge came in reconciling the view that the attacks reflected the dangers of Middle Eastern Islam with the liberal belief in the values of cosmopolitan diversity and shared humanity. Art, it seems, has proven a compelling solution to this dilemma. Through the selection, marketing, and consumption of particular kinds of art from the Middle East, American cultural elites have sought to create and sustain another image of the region than that emanating from conservative talk radio. Motivated by the rationale of building what is often referred to as a "bridge of understanding," arts professionals have organized special arts events and attracted new audiences, who come eager to see "another side" of the Middle East.[1]

These events are structured around two related assumptions: that art is a uniquely valuable and uncompromised agent of cross-cultural understanding; and that art constitutes the supreme evidence of a people's humanity, thereby bringing us all together. Such universalist assumptions about art conceal the ways in which these events advance a particular political understanding of Middle Eastern history, culture, and religion, and wish specific futures upon Middle Easterners and, by extension, upon all Muslims. The visions of the Middle East and prescriptions for its future propagated in these events are not at odds with the clash of civilizations rhetoric and negative stereotypes, as they are intended to be. If we look more closely at how organizers and audiences construct the category of art, at what they include in the category and how they evaluate it, a convergence emerges between the interest in such art and the discourses of the so-called War on Terror.

The selection, evaluation, and translation of the meaning of art works is never a neutral process governed by universal aesthetic principles; rather, it is deeply political. This process is shaped by particular tastes, evaluative frameworks, and institutional demands that, despite the intentions of many of those involved, reproduce the terms of conflict, and more particularly its religious dimensions. The unusually high interest in art from the Middle East is set in a context of widely held erroneous assumptions that Muslims reject image-making and have anxieties about art in general. Not only is iconoclasm poorly understood and greatly overestimated, it is also frequently viewed with suspicion, and sometimes as proof of Muslim provinciality or even backwardness (Flood 2002). Ironically, as I will show, the secularist impulse in the desire to find art that shows the historical artistic achievements and modernity of Middle Eastern Muslims, along with the encouragement of certain kinds of art-making among them, actually ends up reproducing a religious framework such that their work is often interpreted with reference to Islam, whether or not there even exists a religious connection. In the process, the association of Islam with the Middle East is cemented, despite the range of religious faiths and attachments in the region, and despite the existence of millions of Muslims who are not Middle Eastern. Thus, the claims about art, humanity, and religion governing these arts events actually operate in the same discursive universe of the conflict (which often frames problems in religious terms) and thus may act to reproduce it. When art is used to show Middle Easterners' humanity or to advance certain views of Islam, a very particular and politicized "bridge of understanding" is created that obfuscates, and perhaps refuses, other understandings which might be less comfortable to America's secular cultural elites.

Selective Service

After Al-Qaeda attacked the U.S. on September 11, 2001, many local and national arts institutions, universities, and grassroots organizations launched Middle East or Islam-related arts events for the first time, while others scrambled to feature relevant parts of their permanent collections.[2] Funds flowed from many agencies and foundations, including Ford, Doris Duke, Soros, Rockefeller, Mellon, and the Flora Family Foundation. Examples of the range and size of these new activities include: an exhibition of art made by young Iranians at the

Meridian International Center in Washington; a display of calligraphic art at the University of Michigan Museum of Art; an exhibition of Sufi artists at a gallery in the Hamptons; a show featuring contemporary Palestinian art at Houston's Station Museum, which later traveled to San Francisco, Vermont, and New York. In Los Angeles, the Islamic Center of Southern California and St. James Church co-hosted an arts and music festival. Alwan, based in New York City, has organized a smorgasbord of music and dance performances, art exhibits, poetry readings, and film screenings (including one on Islam to address post 9/11 fears). ArteEast is another New York-based arts organization, founded in 2003, that brings Middle Eastern film and visual arts to audiences in the city and elsewhere through travelling film programs and its website, which features an arts magazine and a virtual gallery. A similar range of activities has been produced by Zawaya, an Arab arts organization founded in the Bay Area after 9/11. Major corporate and government institutions sponsored events as well. In 2006, the Museum of Modern Art in New York mounted the show *Without Boundary*, billed as featuring contemporary artists from the "Islamic world." Meanwhile, Islamic art from London's Victoria and Albert Museum was featured at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, and later at the Kimbell Art Museum in Forth Worth. And the first Arab pavilion in the entire 40-year history of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival opened in 2005, featuring Omani musicians, dancers, and craftspeople.

Having conducted previous research on Egyptian visual arts (Winegar 2006), I have been struck by the sheer difference between the kinds of arts that are featured at various venues in Egypt and those featured at the institutions I have just mentioned. Scores of visual artists, and major trends in painting and sculpture existing in the Middle East, are regularly disregarded by American curators and arts organizers, and forms of cultural production that some Egyptians would classify as art (such as pop films and music) are not deemed art enough (or art at all) for many events in the United States. Much of the work shown in the U.S. is made by people from the region living at least part if not full-time in the U.S. The focus on particular kinds of artists, themes, and aesthetics at the expense of others may be due to several factors: many artists in the region do not speak languages (verbal, aesthetic, and otherwise) that are easily translatable in the American context; many focus on themes important only in their local contexts; and many do not possess the cultural, economic, or educational capital to make their voices heard overseas (see Winegar 2006). Also, if we consider the example of the Latin American art boom, which ignored U.S.-born Latinos because they were seen as "minorities" and thus not representative of exotic Latin American "difference" (Davila 1999), then the contrasting preference for artists born in the Middle East but working in the U.S. might reflect an insistence on ultimate otherness, a refusal to incorporate Middle Easterners as "minorities" in the American nation, or to valorize them as "exotics" living elsewhere (despite the problems of these two terms). Furthermore, we are dealing with a market, not a transcendental universal set of values given to art. Middle Eastern arts constitute a niche market, and therefore the selection of work must fit with the tastes and other ideological demands of that niche's funders, audiences, and organizers. These demands are shaped by the national space in which they are articulated, a space in which (as most polls show) the majority hold negative opinions of the Middle East and Muslims.

Many of these new arts events present the work they showcase as representative of a region, culture, and history defined as Middle Eastern, and/or a religion defined as Islamic. By selecting particular forms of cultural production from a larger and extremely diverse field, and labeling them "Middle Eastern art" or "Islamic art," this representational exercise reproduces, as Orientalist representations do, a one-to-one homogenizing correlation between region, culture, history, and religion. Although most event organizers try to avoid such generalizing and want to fight the stereotypes that motivate and are produced by generalizations, they cannot escape the dominant frameworks for presenting such works in the U.S. Their funders want evidence that the art forms presented are actually "Middle Eastern" or "Islamic," and it is easiest to capture audience interest by providing a cultural/regional/religious framework for viewing artworks. What is lost in this process of selecting certain things and presenting them as Middle Eastern is the vast variety of forms of cultural production by people from/of the region known as the Middle East. Furthermore, when art from the Middle East is labeled as "Islamic," religion becomes the primary (or sole) framework for interpreting the meanings, formal properties, and makers of the art, crowding out other perspectives. Creating the categories of Middle Eastern art or Islamic art from the Middle East, then, involves a process of selecting forms of cultural production from a larger arena, naming them not only "art" but also "good art," and then leaving aside the rest as art that is subpar, or not even worthy of the category itself.

Furthermore, when we take into account how the bridges narrative dominates U.S. cultural diplomacy initiatives in majority-Muslim countries (in the Middle East and South/Southeast Asia), and the fact that there is such an overlap between the kinds of art selected by private and public institutions, we must then consider the connection between these arts events and the political agenda of the U.S. government. The Department of State's Cultural Diplomacy program aims to persuade Muslims, through exposure to American arts and culture, that America is still a beacon of freedom and civilization despite Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. Support of specific kinds of art is intended to send the message that Americans appreciate Islamic heritage. The so-called bridge of understanding that is to be built through what is termed "exchange" will, it is hoped, encourage Muslims—especially the young—to have a positive view of the United States, and hence to take up new creative projects rather than arms.[3] Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes has stated that "civilized peoples" value art, whereas "violent extremists" do not.[4] Here, art is linked to the discourse of freedom in an incredibly unliberating moment, much as abstract expressionism and jazz music became emblematic of "freedom" in the U.S. propaganda machinery of the Cold War (see Guilbault 1983, Von Eschen 2005). It is no accident that First Lady Laura Bush and other government officials positively refer to cultural diplomacy during that period when they discuss current initiatives.[5]

As an academic who writes about artists from the Middle East, I am often called on to translate their art to U.S. audiences, and so I pay attention to the discourses that I use in my own (albeit small) role as a culture broker. In public forums, I have found it extremely difficult to escape the "art as evidence of advancement and humanity" discourse that dominates U.S. cultural policy and most Middle East-related arts events in the U.S., because it seems to quickly break a stereotype by drawing on powerful, historically constituted understandings of art. In American elite circles, from the U.S. government to universities and arts organizations, there is no greater contrast to the image of a suicide bomber than the image of an artist. In 2005, during my fellowship tenure at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe, I was interviewed by the staff for a feature about my work on the School's website. The School has an interest in making anthropological research accessible to the broader public, and so the interviewer asked me to describe my book project on the contemporary Egyptian visual art world in so-called layperson's terms. She said, "If you had to communicate the most important thing about your work to a broader audience, what would you say?" I immediately replied, "Social life in the Middle East is not reducible to the veil and terrorism. Through its art, we can see Arabs and Muslims as people living everyday lives and doing creative things."[6] I was trying to combat Western fixations on veiling and terrorism, but ended up unintentionally implying that these things cannot be considered creative acts, and that they are actually the conceptual opposites of creativity and of art. By using Egyptian art to encourage the School's audience to see Arabs and Muslims as human beings like them, engaged (as so many Santa Fe residents are) in creative arts activities, I ended up attaching (gendered) religiosity and violence to the Middle East in the process.

Especially in the context of the Middle East, the intertwined discourses of humanity, creativity, and understanding depend on, and in large measure are enabled by, abiding notions of barbarism, violence, and ignorance. Even if one refuses this teleological dichotomy intellectually, as I and so many other events organizers do, it still imposes itself on our framing of art in part because it constitutes a compelling way to receive funds and attract audiences. As the Bush Administration, media pundits, and academics like Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis had discovered, this dichotomy can easily render "clear" a messy situation. It is recognizable and has resonance for organizers, funders, and audience members not only because of its ubiquity in political discourse, but also because of its deep history in Western philosophy, art theory, and engagements with objects and art of cultural others.

Art as That Which Distinguishes Us from Animals

The "art as evidence of humanity" theory in Western thought is of course traceable to Kant, who argued that the aesthetic experience of beauty takes us beyond the "purposive striving of nature" and is part of "the cultivation of our higher destiny" and the "development of our humanity" (Kant 1951 [1790]: 283). Already in this early formulation, we see how the pairing of art with notions of humanity is based on the ideology of unilinear social evolution. The evolutionary underpinning of art/humanity discourses became more pronounced in the 19th century, particularly with the development of disciplines like anthropology, the spread of colonialism, and the rise of the Industrial Revolution and World's Fairs. During this period, material culture gradually became the "supreme signifier of universal progress and modernity" (Buchli 2002:4), with nations or cultures being ranked according to their advancement in the realm of material culture (including the arts), and with Western Europe and the U.S. at the pinnacle.

The emerging discipline of anthropology was very much focused on material culture as the visible instantiation of cultural others, and Victorian anthropologists often used differences in material culture as proof for theories of cultural evolution that brought so-called primitive peoples into the human fold, but at a lower level. In his book *Primitive Culture* (1871), Edward Tylor positioned "the arts" (broadly defined) as an index and component of human culture, as that which distinguishes humans from animals. For him, changes in verbal or material culture indicated civilizational development towards greater complexity. Likewise, in *Ancient Society* (1877), Lewis Henry Morgan made material culture the determinant and evidence of human progress from savagery to barbarism to civilization. The new ethnographic museums, and especially the increasingly popular World's Fairs, were promoting the same ideas beyond intellectual circles, in the exhibits of objects from around the world, some of which were categorized as art. The gathering of objects from diverse cultures together in one fair emphasized the notion of a shared humanity, but like the anthropological notion of humanity at the time, it was divided into a racial-cultural hierarchy. Objects acquired (often through the colonial enterprise) served both as proof of common humanity, and of Western superiority.[7]

The idea that it is art that evidences a people's humanity continued into 20th century anthropology and Western modernist art theory. Although the teleological underpinnings of the idea became less explicit (particularly in anthropology), they nonetheless remain implicit in the very construction of art/humanity discourse. In *Primitive Art* (1927), Franz Boas used art to argue for the humanity of so-called primitive peoples. He wrote, "Even the poorest tribes have produced work that gives to them esthetic pleasure....In one way or another esthetic pleasure is felt by all members of mankind" (1955 [1927]:9). Like today's arts organizers, Boas used art to combat widespread assumptions that non-Western peoples were inferior or sub-human. He argued that they possessed mental powers to develop design rationally with masterful techniques but also with individual creativity. By showing that primitive artists were not "slaves to tradition" (1927:156), Boas was also drawing on Western modernist ideologies of the artist as creative individual, which were recognizable to Western readers and therefore could have an additional humanizing effect (see Marcus and Myers 1995:12). Later anthropologists such as Benedict, Geertz, and d'Azevedo likewise attributed aesthetic styles and artistic categories to non-Western cultures, partly as a way of valorizing them and rendering their strangeness more familiar. Indeed, the general humanizing project of the discipline of anthropology, the discipline which sets out to create cross-cultural understanding, has often been articulated through reference to art. My own anthropological work on Egyptian art is part of that story (Winegar 2006). But even though anthropologists from Boas onwards have discarded social evolutionism, there is still an impulse to humanize cultural others by drawing on a supposedly universally accepted notion that art represents the most refined activity or body of objects. Yet this framing inevitably sets up other activities (or other objects) as less refined and perhaps less human. And as anthropologists are well aware, the attempt to create cross-cultural understanding through anthropological humanism has traditionally suffered from glaring omissions of power relations (see Clifford 1988).

The same assumptions about art and humanity abound in the field of modern art. Marcus and Myers have noted that anthropology's theories of art and culture "have their roots in the very matrix of aesthetics and Romanticism from which modern art sprang," (1995:11), and so it is no surprise that ideologies of modern art, like those of anthropology, often emphasized this link between art and humanity without much attention to social power. In one pertinent example, American abstract expressionists believed that art should express human absolutes and should "aim to reach universal man." As Serge Guilbault argues, appeals to universality among this "avant-garde" were framed apolitically (as universalist art discourses usually are)—despite the fact that these artists were using so-called primitive art as inspiration for their projects, and despite the fact that their work became part of the government's cultural diplomacy efforts during the Cold War (Guilbault 1983:119).

Western elite consumption of non-Western arts in the 20th century has typically reproduced primitivist stereotypes and social evolutionist ideology even as it traffics in universalist assumptions about shared humanity (e.g., Clifford, 1988, Errington 1998, Price 1989, Taylor 1997). Indeed, the desire to unify through art has often involved the adoption (conscious or otherwise) of a less progressive politics. The case I examine here is also not the first of American elite interest in the art of cultural others with whom relations are strained, who are the victims of disagreeable U.S. government policies, or towards whom there is substantial guilt. For example, white collectors of Southwest Native American art in the first half of the 20th century promoted art as part of a liberal political agenda that sought to ameliorate the "ravages of colonialism," while simultaneously laying claim to the art as a source of a unique American national tradition (Mullin 2001:86). The Latin American art "boom" in the U.S., beginning in the late 1970s and reaching a peak in the 1980s, was partly the result of American liberal criticism of Reagan's disastrous policies in Central America *and* the U.S. government's attempts to, first, woo the Mexican government into an oil deal beneficial to the U.S. in the wake of the OPEC crisis, and later, to enhance cultural exchange with Latin America using discourses of cultural understanding (Goldman 1994). Also in that era, the thousands of Americans who admired the objects from King Tut's tomb, touring the U.S. with significant government financial and discursive support, were, at the same time, participating in the creation of a set of what McAlister identified as "implicit connections" between "Tut's wealth and the new and conspicuous wealth of Arab oil producers; and between Tut's gold and the 'black gold' of Middle Eastern oil" (McAlister 2001:139). These connections reproduced stereotypes of greedy Arab sheiks, and contributed to notions of U.S. "imperial stewardship" towards both art and oil that drew on the idea of universal heritage (2001:129).

The rise of multiculturalism during the 1980s also provoked certain segments of the liberal American elite to valorize U.S. minorities through art and, often, the art of their origins (e.g., so-called primitive art from Africa for African-Americans, Latin American art for U.S. Latinos). Yet the project of multiculturalism also involved reinscribing dominant national narratives, valuing only certain elements of other people's "culture" as "good," eliding power relations within and between groups, and furthering capitalist markets which thrive on difference (Davila 1999; Segal and Handler 1995). It was in this context that consumers of the new marketing category of "world music" imagined and celebrated a democratic global commons, but through primitivizing discourses that masked both the creation of new social hierarchies (especially between Western producers or musical collaborators and the musicians with whom they worked), and, one could argue, the increasing U.S. complicity in the economic and political strangulation of the musicians' societies (Feld 2000, Taylor 1997).[8]

Clearly, American elites have turned to the art of others over the course of the 20th century in times when those others have taken on a particular political and social importance, and the tensions inherent in the process of creating universals through difference (and vice-versa) continue to characterize contemporary engagements with art from the Middle East. But what is unique today is the overriding emphasis on art as a means for Middle Easterners to critique their contemporary gender relations and religion (seen as related), and to liberate themselves from certain, presumably oppressive, aspects of both. Moreover, there is an unprecedented concentration on religion (Islam) as a problematic site in need of either erasure or significant civilizing.[9]

The connection between art and freedom also has roots in Western philosophy. The Kantian idea of art as a sphere of activity autonomous from utilitarian interest was harnessed in certain modernisms and avant-gardisms to promote a critique of society through art. The assumption that art is or should be kept separate from religious and political interests continues to enable this valorization of critique. Today, many American arts organizers and audience members draw on these ideas when they advance the view that art can, and in fact should, challenge or critique Middle Eastern gender relations and Islam and that art is a primary medium and barometer of social progress. Support for artistic freedom in the Middle East is often based on this view. It is important to emphasize the specificity of these formulations; in my ethnography of Egyptian artists (2006), I found that the idea of art's autonomy was not always relevant, and was often understood in ways that did not privilege critique or rebellion against gender or religious norms.

My purpose in calling attention to the histories of the frameworks used in the selection, marketing, and reception of Middle East art after 9/11/01 is to emphasize that they are not the objective or disinterested evaluative apparatus that they claim to be. Rather, they originated within the context of ascendant Western European and U.S. global dominance and thus bring with them a certain politics, which are then conveniently regenerated for a post-9/11 era. Earlier civilizing discourses have gained new explanatory power. When they appear in the context of American institutions featuring Middle Eastern art, the discourses of art as an expression of humanity, and of art as an effective medium for achieving secular freedom, align themselves with certain national interests, which include the extension of U.S. economic and political influence in (or occupation of) the region, and the creation of particular Muslim subjects.

These U.S. national interests become apparent when we consider that there are three kinds of cultural production most frequently selected as good art in these venues, and that these forms are presented in very particular ways. Historical Middle Eastern Islamic art and art from ancient Middle Eastern civilizations is frequently featured as

indicating past glory and achievement. Music, especially that categorized as "Sufi," becomes evidence of a peaceful Islam, or its Muslim connections are erased entirely. Other selected music is framed as resisting Islam. And third, visual art made by Middle Eastern Muslim women remains a perennial favorite, and is frequently interpreted as critiquing "bad" Islam. My analysis of each of these shows the assumptions and limitations of the art/humanity framework. I then discuss the controversies surrounding contemporary Palestinian art events to reveal more fully the political underpinnings of the framework's seemingly disinterested humanism.

Islam's Past Glory

In the press release for a 2005 performance by the Silk Road Dance Company in Maryland (a performance that was part of a special series called "Dancing in Islamic Lands"), head choreographer Laurel Gray is quoted thus: "As one familiar with the culture and history of both East and West, I feel it is imperative to use art to build a bridge of understanding between Americans and the Islamic world. Instead of falling prey to a false notion of a 'clash of civilizations,' we need to remember that East and West have interacted for millennia, often crossing cultures with positive results."[10] Such appeals to the centuries-long interaction between "Islam" and the "West" often assert that consumption of art will necessarily improve contemporary cross-cultural relations because art itself bears the evidence of past interaction between the West and the Islamic world. Notably the "Islamic world" presented in such exhibitions is usually defined through objects which originated in countries that are part of what is today called the Middle East, thereby creating a slippage between the "Middle East" and "Islam" similar to that which exists in the popular media.

When the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC hosted the traveling exhibition of Islamic art treasures from the Victoria and Albert collection in 2004, it did a special section and programming around the theme of artistic exchange between Europe and the Islamic world from the 14th to 17th centuries. Objects from the permanent collection which showed the influence of Islamic art were featured (e.g., appropriation of Islamic designs or depiction of Middle Eastern objects in late-Medieval or Renaissance paintings). In the exhibition press release, then-Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar lauded the event by saying, "Now, more than ever, we need to work to build bridges of understanding between our societies and cultures."[11] In this exhibition particularly, we can see how art objects are positioned as both symbols of East/West relations, and as agents which are to effect those relations (cf., Gell 1998).

The version of the bridges of understanding narrative which is built on assertions about prior rich artistic interaction between Islam and the West generally emphasizes only one side of the interaction: what Islam once contributed to Western civilization. The laudable goal, of course, is to educate Americans about Muslim achievements and to emphasize interconnections rather than clashes. However, in doing so this narrative runs the risk of providing an anemic "understanding" of so-called Islamic cultural objects, because often the emphasis still, actually, on understanding the history of Western Europe. For example, Holland Cotter argued that the exhibition "Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2007 was "a European, not an Islamic, show. Despite the Islamic material included we learn little about Islam or about the Islamic meaning of objects or, even in a general way, about Islamic views of the West" (Cotter 2007).

The bridges of understanding narrative also uses the aesthetic to anesthetize the complex history of interaction between the so-called East and West, and especially any negative aspects of that interaction (for example, the conquering of Al-Andalus, the Crusades, or colonialism). Too often, these arts events communicate the idea of a past utopia of cross-cultural understanding that can be regained through art appreciation, as if art ever existed in a world devoid of military conquest and economic inequalities. Indeed, the exhibition strategy of celebrating past glories and utopias is favored over other strategies which might take a critical view of how objects from the Middle East were "acquired," of how politics and economics can drive artistic creation, and, more generally, of the connection between art and hostilities defined as civilizational.

The anesthetized narrative of past Muslim contributions to Western civilization occurs within a common art historical and museological framework which defines "Islamic art" as that which was produced prior to European colonialism.[12] Despite the good intentions of curators and their success in putting together displays of visually compelling objects, the insistent historical framework of the vast majority of exhibitions of Islamic art or art of ancient Middle Eastern civilizations effectively locks Middle Eastern/Muslim cultural production and artistic appreciation in the past. Given the fact that historical exhibitions very rarely include some contemporary component,[13] viewers can come away with the impression that good Islamic art (or even Muslim artists) are things that existed only in the past, despite the fact that there are many contemporary artists from the Middle East who describe their work as "Islamic" and perceive it as part of that tradition.[14] There have been shows featuring the work of contemporary artists who identify as Muslim, but these have not been held in the same prestigious venues hosting the magnificent displays of historical Islamic art. As in Native American museum representations, there is also a "significant silence" regarding tourist art (Phillips 1995), and contemporary Islamic crafts.

This silence, along with the contextual separation of historical and contemporary, and the significantly greater resources poured into the former, allows for the notion of Islam's past glory to persist. In this regard, such exhibition patterns are related to the classic primitivist paradigm in which authenticity is found only in a pre-capitalist, pre-colonial past when the so-called natives were not imitators or "commercial hacks" (Errington 1998:71; see also Phillips and Steiner 1999). They can sometimes evidence an "imperialist nostalgia," a "mourning for what one has destroyed," at work in these exhibitions (Rosaldo 1989).

Indeed, this pattern of exhibitions not only denies Middle Eastern Muslims modernity, but also creates and traffics in broader discourses of past Islamic glory and current decline. In a New York Times article entitled "Islamic Art as a Mediator for Cultures in Confrontation," a curator from the Victoria and Albert put it this way: "People say at this moment it is more important to recognize that the Middle East and the Islamic world was *in its day* as advanced culturally, as well as economically and militarily, as any country or empire in the world" (Riding 2004, emphasis added). Of course this statement directly implies that the Middle East and the so-called Islamic world are not currently as culturally advanced as they once were. Such exhibitions are created, marketed, and viewed in a context where Muslim civilizational decline is often evidenced through reference to Muslim engagements with art. For example, the protests against the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad are widely condemned as representative of antiquated understandings of the image and as uncivilized responses to the modern value of freedom of expression. American commentators, in response to the Taliban's destruction of the Bamyan Buddhas in 2001, reprimanded contemporary Muslims for lacking artistic appreciation and propagated the problematic view that Islamic art never developed out of iconoclasm (see Flood 2002). The link between national(ist) political agendas and the idea of civilizational decline as evidenced by art becomes especially clear in government and media discourses concerning the looting of objects in the Iraqi National Museum, in which Iraqi looters are often portrayed as animalistic, and lacking the refinement to even appreciate their own heritage (Scheid 2006).

The liberal impulse among museum curators, art critics, and museum-goers to use historical Islamic artistic achievements to counter the negative stereotyping of Muslims after 9/11 is, in fact, part of what Flood calls an "emergent…exhibitionary regime that not only aims to project a model of peaceful coexistence but to locate and provide an appropriate model of Islam itself" (2007:43). Drawing on Preziosi, Flood argues that such exhibitions constitute a performative use of objects to create "object-lessons" for prescribing "models for the ideal Muslim citizen" and ideal social relations (Flood 2007:43-44.) Such object-lessons of historical Islamic art exhibitions, then, seek to create a very particular definition of humanity—one that is contained within, and only finds expression through, certain nation-state projects to create a modern citizenry (cf., Asad 2003). Furthermore, much like earlier articulations of the concept of humanity as it relates to art, these also depend upon a conceptual opposite—barbarism—to which only Muslims (particularly Middle Eastern ones) belong.

Music and the Pacification, or Erasure, of Islam

Just as exhibitions of historical Islamic art eschew politics, and contribute to a palatable framing of Islam as having a golden age long past, music events also tend to frame Islam in ways comfortable to American cultural elites. The plethora of performances of Middle Eastern Sufi music in recent years is a case in point. Sufi music concerts have been held at the new Arab arts organization spaces, at civic centers and museums, at concert clubs, at government venues such as the Kennedy Center and the U.S. Embassy in India, and at many universities. The preference for Sufi music among the different musics produced by Muslims predates 9/11, to be sure,[15] but in this particular context the selection and presentation of Sufi music as a bridge of understanding advocates a peaceful, apolitical Islam as an explicit counter to radical Islamism.

For example, The Philadelphia Society of Art, Literature, and Music has created a Sufi-focused "Full Circle Project" which is to serve as "a bridge of bilateral understanding and peace between what has been called 'Islam' and 'The West'." The project kick-off included a concert of Sufi music, a music-accompanied reading of poetry by Rumi, and the

screening of a documentary on Sufism with a title derived from a Rumi poem. PSALM's literature on the project makes use of the dichotomous framework discussed thus far. It states, "*Although* he was a devout Muslim, Rumi became a 'Sufi'" and "...*although* he was a devout Muslim, [Rumi] embraced all people without distinction." (emphasis added). About the documentary, PSALM relates that it "makes plain the tragic irony that while Islam is now seen by many as the enemy of Western Civilization (and vice-versa), there exists an alternative to be found in Rumi's peaceful path called 'Sufism', within Islam, whose message may prove to be an elegant solution to the a-priori problems of a dangerous and unstable co-existence that people of *all* nations now face" (emphasis in original).[16]

Sufi music, like many arts of cultural others, is thus portrayed as humanizing. Yet, as I noted was often the case with world music more generally, the humanist intention is de-politicized, as if political problems and humans were separate or could be separated. The artistic director of a music festival at Stanford University in 2006 which featured Sufi music relates, "When you focus on the politics of a region, you often see the problems and the conflicts....When you focus on culture, you see people."[17] The leader of the group Shusmo (which plays jazz-oriented Middle Eastern-inflected music) sees the appeal of this logic. Explaining that people who want to "get in touch" with Arabs can "see another side of the Middle East" through music, "because you are not talking politics, you are *just* listening to music" (emphasis added).[18] Yet the desire to create a bridge of understanding through certain musics exists in a political context in which the U.S. government actively supports those people and regimes that it considers representative of moderate Islam. I am certainly not saying that arts organizers support the U.S. government's actions in the Middle East. In fact, nearly all that I know oppose the Iraq war. But their preference for certain musics that they understand as representing peaceful Islam, and/or their unlinking of politics and music through humanist discourse, corresponds to the government's paternalistic civilizing mission. It is no accident that the state's cultural arm also funds events of Sufi music, poetry, and other arts seen to embody religious moderation. As President Bush has said, "All civilized nations, especially those in the Muslim world, are bound together in this struggle between moderation and extremism. By working together...we will help the people of the Middle East reclaim their freedom."[19] When UNESCO names 2007 the "Year of Rumi," it is clear that art has become a popular means of promoting more palatable religious devotions on the world stage.

While sometimes music made by Muslims is celebrated for revealing a friendlier Islam, at other times mainstream Islam is conveniently erased in the effort to create a notion of universal humanity. Ted Swedenburg has examined the publicity around Arab musicians popular in the West, such as those playing North African Gnawa music or southern Egyptian folk songs, and finds that when marketed as part of the world music scene, they are portrayed as primordial or expressing "'universal' human experience," and that this discourse "enables Western audiences to avoid the inconvenient fact of Islam, which is central to these traditional Arab musics" (Swedenburg 2001:39). The hype around these musicians erases their Islamic faith or generalizes it in the language of mysticism and spirituality such that listeners do not have to really engage with mainstream Islam.[20]

A third framing of music promotes the view that it should critique "bad" Islam. Schade-Poulsen (1999), as well as Swedenburg (2001), discuss how Western media incorrectly portrays North African rai music as rebelling against Islamic extremism. The press release for the aforementioned music festival at Stanford tells us that there will be a screening of the film *The Rockstar and the Mullahs* which features a rock musician "interviewing orthodox Muslim celerics who believe music is forbidden in Islam."[21] Indeed there is such a desire to see artists as rebelling against Islam that sometimes it scarcely matters whether or not the artist is a practicing Muslim, and whether or not the artist intends for the art to criticize the religion. As Schade-Poulsen shows, most rai musicians do not critique Islam. Audience members at my talks on Egyptian artists sometimes express distress upon learning that most artists actually want to become better Muslims and do not find religious critique a worthy subject of art-making. Yet in the dominant framing of Middle Eastern arts in the U.S., Islam is seen as a stricture, something from which artists should undoubtedly want to free themselves or at least find moderation within it. Art becomes a wholly secular tool of freedom from religious oppression—not, for example, from foreign domination. Generally event organizers do not seek out artistic uses of religion to advocate for freedom from things like military occupation. Thus, cultural production shaped by mainstream Islam is denied inclusion in the category of art. The important goal remains to highlight, through art, artistic approaches to Islam that make for an acceptable bridge of cultural understanding.

Fetishizing Women and Critiquing Islam

It is in this matrix of hegemonic notions about art and freedom, and assumptions about Islam, that we also find the many events featuring female Middle Eastern visual artists and filmmakers whose work is presented and interpreted as showing, and therefore challenging, Middle Eastern gender inequalities seen as derived almost solely from Islam. These events often feature women born in the Middle East but who live in the West, and this latter fact is almost always viewed as the source of value in their work. As artists who have themselves embodied the ideal of the "bridge," then, they are seen as the most free and able to comment on, or perhaps change, the lack of freedom in the Middle East. The discourses surrounding the work of Iranian-born Shirin Neshat are a case in point. She is the most popular and well-known Middle Eastern-born artist in the United States. Visitors to the 2006 Museum of Modern Art show *Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking* most frequently singled out her work for positive mention, and people tended to linger in front of it longer than in front of the other pieces in the show. The intention of *Without Boundary* was to question the category of "Islamic art" by featuring (mostly) artists from the "Islamic world" (a category that, with one exception, meant the "Middle East") but who now live in the West. There were twice as many women than men in the show, and gender and sexuality were major themes throughout. In this show as in others, the staging of art as an avenue of Middle Eastern Muslim women's expression of resistance to Islam is favored over discussion of American intervention in the U.S. In fact, the absence of commentary on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in *Without Boundary* was extremely notable,[22] leading us to question the ways in which the obsession over women artists supposedly critiquing Islam may at some level rationalize U.S. intervention, or at the very least prevent substantive criticism of it.

Without Boundary featured two works from her *Women of Allah* series (1996), including one called *Speechless* where a barrel of a gun stands in as a woman's earring. Discussing this image on the free audio tour, Neshat says, "In my view this image at first communicates this extreme sense of submission and betrayal of this woman to religion. Maybe this person is willingly doing what she's doing or in fact maybe she's a victim. But somehow her faith, her religion, her weapon empowers her in a way that nothing else does." But do audience viewers take from this image the idea of empowerment along with submission? The exhibition curator, Fereshteh Daftari, writes in the catalogue, "Americans and Europeans have mistaken Neshat's work for documentation of the oppressed condition of women in Islamic societies..." (Daftari 2006:20). Although she and the artist try to head off this interpretation, my discussions with viewers indicated that they generally saw the submission of Muslim women, of Middle Eastern women, in this work and others.

It is no accident, I think, that many audience members I spoke with singled out Neshat's work as their favorite in the show. They interpreted her art as showing and challenging women's oppression in the Middle East and the inequality between men and women. In just one example, a tourist from Dallas told me that of all the works in the show, the works of Neshat stood out, as did two photographs by Iraqi/Irish artist Jananne Al-Ani of members of her family in various stages of head and body cover. She said the work spoke to her of Middle Eastern women "seeking freedom and liberty." Two security guards commented that these works show how "sad" Muslim women are, implying that their situation was difficult.

These viewers may perhaps be forgiven for not recognizing the admittedly small aspect of Neshat's work that shows some positive aspects to contemporary Muslim practice, or the play on the veil and critique of Orientalism intended by Al-Ani, given the fact that these art works cannot quite escape the system of Orientalist media images of unnamed Muslim women in veils. At times, Neshat herself traffics in Orientalism, for example when she tells the audience on the audio tour that Muslim women are "the sexiest women on the planet" because their veils are seductive and mysterious. This kind of framing of art and Islam that involves a critique of Muslim gender relations along with a promotion of Islam's non-threatening side (e.g. the perceived heightened sexuality of Muslim women) is particularly effective if one judges from Neshat's massive art sales and the ubiquity of this framing in many arts events around the country.

To relativize these frameworks of presentation and interpretation, it might be helpful to consider the perspective of one set of visitors who did not use them. One Friday night at MOMA, a group of fifteen male Muslim professionals from the New York area visited the exhibition as part of their weekly Friday study group (*halqa*). The leader of the group toured the exhibition jotting ideas in his small notebook for discussion, and particularly noted some of the wall text accompanying the works. Later, he said that while he appreciated what the exhibition was trying to do and thought some of the art works were "really great," he was left with some serious questions. He glanced through his notebook and

gave me some words from the wall texts which indicated the framing of the exhibition which he found problematic—words like "defying" and "hybrid" and "secular." He wondered if this framing of so-called Islamic art was the only way to make it "palatable." "Is it not legitimate to draw on one's faith," he asked me, without adopting this language, this secularist defiant stance?

Indeed, only certain works celebrating Islam can be shown within the dominant U.S. frameworks of selection and reception. There is no problem showing Islamic art which is safely within the bounds of history and therefore can be understood as a past achievement. Sufi music is acceptable because it represents a benign and spiritually enlightened Islam; rai music is valued because of its supposed resistance to Islam. And work celebrating the sexuality of Middle Eastern Muslim women is desirable because it is dependent upon the idea that Islam should be critiqued for oppressing women and denying them their "natural" sexual humanity.

Dichotomies and Exclusions

The yoking of art to ideologies of humanity underlies this process of selecting works and creating from them a category of "good Middle Eastern art"—a category that emphasizes past Islamic achievements, benign religiosity, and critique of contemporary Islam. The bridges of understanding narrative rests on the idea that art is prime evidence or a suitable bearer of Middle Easterners' humanity, but it is a very particular definition of humanity that is advanced under the guise of a universal humanism. It is one that allows Middle Eastern Muslims to be human only in the past or only if they eschew political Islam or critique religion. Through the selection of certain kinds of cultural production from the Middle East, and by the process of naming these good art, certain Middle Easterners are allowed into the fold of humankind, but, importantly, others are not. For the art/humanity linkage has always depended on its opposite for its definition. The framing of art as evidence of humanity, or even as creating humanity, calls forth the historically constituted set of oppositions between human and animal, and between civilization and barbarism, that I discussed as part of Enlightenment philosophy, the anthropological tradition, Western colonialism, and modern art theory. In a context of renewed imperialism and attendant public discourse about a clash of civilizations, this set of oppositions finds fertile ground for rearticulation when it comes to Middle Eastern art.

We see the reproduction of this dichotomy in the arts press all the time. For example, a University of Michigan professor interviewed by the Detroit News about a series of Middle Eastern film, theater, music, and art shows said: "Since September 11, there has been so much attention to the Middle East. Almost all of it has been unhappy; politics, violence, religious extremism. There are many other things that happen there in everyday life. The Western audience is missing out on all the other rich life culture that occurs there" (Guthrie 2005). Likewise, in a Manhattan newspaper, the organizers of the Alwan Cultural Center are described as trying to "highlight the diversity of Arab culture, showing New Yorkers that it is more than just the destructive force we witnessed [on 9/11]. It can also be extraordinarily creative." Countering stereotypes through art, they "[want] to show that the Arab world is made up of more than just Islamic fundamentalists" (Beckerman 2005). Similarly, the dance choreographer mentioned earlier said, "the exquisite beauty of the dance, poetry and music of the Islamic world reveals a different face from the austere fundamentalism known to most Americans."[23]

In these historically constituted framings, art is assumed to be more inherently "human," than "anti-human" things like religious fundamentalism or terrorism. It is figured as the supreme expression of creativity which counters acts of "anti-creativity" or "destruction." Middle Easterners' expression of humanity through art, the logic goes, links us to them in a bridge of understanding, because we are also human producers of art. However, this articulation of the art/humanity nexus necessarily excludes the idea that Americans might also be outside of the category of the human, and engaged in anti-creative destruction. Indeed the idea that a bridge of understanding could be built by recognizing shared acts of destruction is unimaginable in this framework. It is Middle Eastern Muslims who must be artistic in order to become human.

The Director of Houston's Station Museum, which first hosted the traveling exhibition of contemporary Palestinian art called *Made in Palestine*, is quoted in a press release as saying, "It is our conviction that the American public deserves to be made aware of Palestinian art as a profound manifestation of the humanity of the Palestinian people."[24] Visitors to the New York version of the *Made in Palestine* exhibition frequently used this language in their discussion of the exhibit, even though most of them had not read the exhibition literature or press materials when they did so. For example, one woman who worked as an architect in the same Chelsea building that houses the exhibition brought her partner to come see the show. Tired of the standard press coverage of the Middle East, they had come to see "another side of things." The woman said that what she liked about the show was that it "humanizes the Palestinians" because in the U.S., "you just hear about bombers." Note how the bombers are basically not included in the category of the human here. However, when I asked her if there were any works that humanize the Palestinians more than others, she chose the photographs of Palestinian families who have lost loved ones done by Noel Jabbour as part of a series called *Vacant Seats*. In these images, it is often unclear how the martyrs died. Interestingly, the possibility that Palestinians could mourn the death of loved ones who were suicide bombers was not considered by the couple.[25] The woman said that the pictures show "there's something universal that everyone can understand," and her partner agreed, saying that they communicate the message that "Palestinians have families too."

I do not think there is any doubt that images of bombers in their suicide mission gear, or images clearly marked "bombers' families," would be read by most American audiences as evidence not of Palestinian humanity, or as art, but rather as distasteful, as propaganda, as evidence of their backwardness or barbaric state. This is likely true of images of other Middle Eastern suicide bombers or militants, especially male ones. Positive artistic representations of Muslim men, and especially activist Muslim men, are exceptionally rare.[26] "Bad" Islam, then, is almost universally associated with the male gender, which likely explains why male Middle Eastern visual artists have been less sought after than women by American curators, though this preference appears to be changing.

Similarly, many other forms of Middle Eastern cultural production are regularly excluded from the category of art as constructed in these events, such as those forms that explicitly advocate resistance against any of the occupations, that celebrate contemporary, conventional Islam, or that to Western audiences contain no visual or aural signifiers of Islam or the Middle East at all. One thinks of abstract painting or sculpture that contain no designs derived from historical Islamic, Sumerian, or Pharaonic art, music that criticizes Israel or the U.S. or that celebrates Islam, political cartoons, political graffiti, illustrations or graphic art from Islamic publications, or martyr posters or videos, among other cultural practices that require considerable creativity for their production. It might be argued that American arts venues rarely feature contemporary Christian cultural production as art either. Indeed, such work is threatening to the secular elite's category of art as well. However, it seems that Islam-inflected visual culture is subject to more intense scrutiny and dissection than the arts of religious traditions also perceived as "other," which are valued with almost no reservation (e.g., Buddhist, Hindu, African and Native American religions).

What gets included in the category of good Middle Eastern art, and how it gets framed, is crucial to reproduction of dichotomies between humanity/creativity/culture on the one hand, and fundamentalism/terrorism/inhumanity/not-creativity/not-culture on the other. Thus these events may end up reproducing "clash of civilizations"-type dichotomies rather than work against them, as so many curators and audiences want them to do. In positioning art as more valuable to understanding the Middle East than "veils or terrorism" in my online interview, I was not in any way challenging my audiences in Santa Fe, in the art community, or in academe. Rather, I was offering a much more comfortable "bridge of understanding" to walk across than that constructed from stories of violence.

The "art as evidence and bearer of humanity" narrative contains several assumptions worth thinking about: fundamentalism and terrorism are not "human," and they are not "creative." [Here I am thinking of the infamous statement by British artist Damien Hirst congratulating the 9/11 hijackers for producing a "visually stunning" work of art (Allison 2002)], Another assumption (or implication, at the very least) is that Americans are already (or more) human and do not engage in things like fundamentalism and terrorism. Olu Oguibe (2004) has written eloquently of how non-Western artists must always play the "culture game"—proving and representing their cultural background such that they will always be seen as good "Egyptian," "Lebanese," "Arab," or "Muslim" artists but never just "good artists." I suggest that art and artists from the Middle East must also enter into what I would call the "humanity game," always reminding Westerners that they are "humans"—something that Euro-American artists never have to do. Yet the "humanity game," like the "culture game" can never really be won. Using art to evidence humanity always creates the impression of a range of other activities that are not human, and that are engaged in only by certain groups. When the art/humanity nexus is articulated by reference to Islam, the "unhuman" group becomes Middle Eastern Muslims.

Palestine and the Limits of Humanity

While American elites are often quick to criticize artistic censorship in the Middle East, they are relatively silent about a certain homegrown form of censorship. Some recent arts events related to Palestine strikingly reveal the limitations and political underpinnings of the category of art being employed. Bringing the *Made in Palestine* show from the Station Museum in Texas to different venues around the country was a daunting task. The museum's curator hit a brick wall wherever he tried to market the show. He said that his many contacts told him privately that "they would lose their museum funding if they were to hold an exhibit that was pro-Palestinian" (Haddad 2005). Through a major coordination of activist groups, the show was finally brought to SomArts in San Francisco in 2005, yet it met resistance from critics who said that the exhibition glorified Palestinian terrorism and was anti-Israel and anti-American. Efforts to bring the show to Westchester, New York met with more protests from two county legislators and a New York State assemblyman, who said that the show "glorifies terrorism"[27] and is anti-American and anti-Israeli "propaganda…for assassins" (Eshelman 2005). The non-profit arts group Al-Jisser (notably, Arabic for "the bridge") worked tirelessly for months holding fundraisers to raise money to bring the show to New York City. Co-organizer Samia Halaby said, "We knocked on the doors of every museum and every alternative space…When they finally all rejected us, the reason seemed mostly that the upper layers of their administrations, the directors and head curators, had all rejected the show." She continued that some people were honest enough to tell her that "showing Palestinian art would likely mean an end to their gallery" (Kenazi 2006). So Al-Jisser rented its own space, in the heart of Chelsea, and opened *Made in Palestine* in the spring of 2006. There were 2000 people in attendance, mostly professionals of Middle Eastern descent or Palestine activists, and in this way it was a very different crowd than one usually sees at such openings. In discussions with me, visitors focused on their belief in the power of art to raise awareness of the Israeli occupation and of Palestinians' humanity. The question is: did any of the more typical art-going audiences come to see the art and as a result allow Palestinians into the human fold? Though no fault of the organizers, it seems to me that the main effects of the show were to galvanize people who were already aware of the Palestinian struggle, and to make them aware of the importance of Palestinian art.

Meanwhile, another Palestine related art event meant to show humanity and create bridges of understanding also faced unusual troubles. The play *My Name is Rachel Corrie* tells the true story of a young American activist who was killed by an Israeli army bulldozer in 2003 while acting as a human shield to prevent a Palestinian home in Gaza from demolishment. The play was scheduled to open in the spring of 2006 at the New York Theater Workshop but was cancelled and postponed indefinitely because of concerns that it might offend some groups of theater lovers. It eventually opened at New York's Minetta Lane Theater in October 2006. But then another run was cancelled at CanStage, Canada's largest non-profit theater, again out of fears that it would offend some audience members. In July 2007 a reading of the play took place at the Round House Theatre in Maryland, but it was announced privately through a network of friends to avoid media backlash.

Voices from Palestine, a show of artwork by Palestinian refugee teenagers held at Brandeis University in 2006, represents another example of censorship. The exhibition was organized by an Israeli student at Brandeis as part of a project for a course called "The Arts of Building Peace." The student had contacted an arts center in a Bethlehem refugee camp and arranged for drawings to be sent and exhibited in the library. The drawings depicted life under occupation from the Palestinian youths' point of view, such as images of Israel's Wall, and house demolitions. The organizer's stated intent was to "humanize" the teenagers. But the Brandeis Administration removed the exhibition because of what it called lack of context and imbalance, and because of reports that some students found the exhibit upsetting. Although the majority of the faculty opposed what they viewed as a case of censorship, and a special university ethics committee found that the administration had erred in removing the exhibit,[28] the episode still reveals the limits of the use of Middle Eastern art to humanize when the art does not fit within established frameworks.

The difficulties faced by those trying to show Palestinian humanity through art raise some provocative questions about the new interest in Middle Eastern and Islamic arts and about the ways in which they are presented to U.S. audiences. Gell has discussed how art objects are not passive results of humans' expressive intentions, but rather agents which produce and mediate social relations (1998). In these cases of Middle East-related events in the U.S., art forms are attributed a certain agency to create bridges. But to what extent can this agency be realized within relations of power where other agents—such as ambassadors, money, and weapons—are also operative? It seems that the objects may in fact be agents that produce social relations of a less savory variety. Can the emphasis on art as evidence of humanity really erase stereotypes of Middle Eastern Muslims as un-human destructive terrorists, or does this framing depend on these stereotypes for its own definition and execution? Does the insistence on seeing rai musicians or Muslim women artists as critiquing Islam really advance Americans' "understanding" of the Middle East, or does it merely confirm what they think they already know? Does the valorization of Sufi arts or historical Islamic art really aid understanding of the daily lives and concerns of the region's Muslims? And finally, just whose "understanding" lies at the banks of the bridge that is reputedly being built?

Acknowledgements

This paper is based on field research conducted in New York in 2005 and 2006, on my experience as the Virtual Gallery Coordinator with ArteEast since 2005, and on analysis of press coverage and marketing literature of arts events nationwide since 2001. Portions of the paper were presented at the 2005 Middle East Studies Association Meetings, the 2006 Society for Cultural Anthropology and American Anthropological Association Meetings, and at Brown University, New York University, and the University of Vermont. I thank all of these audiences for their helpful suggestions, as well as Lori Allen, Barry Flood, Suzanne Gauch, Francesca Merlan, Nasser Rabbat, Kirsten Scheid, Ted Swedenburg, Natasha Winegar, and the two anonymous journal reviewers.

Notes

1 One anonymous reviewer suggested that such events also enable their audiences to feel self-satisfied that they can appreciate the arts of a much-maligned region. Indeed, both organizers and audiences may perform their elite status through these events, and construct elite identities alternative to those of conservative elites who, it is presumed, could not appreciate art from the Middle East. I do not have specific ethnographic data that confirms this interpretation, although the trope of "discovery" in these events would indicate that it is valid to some degree.

2 As Flood (2007) notes, academic institutions have also created new faculty lines and courses in Islamic art as a response to 9/11.

3 See the 2005 Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy at www.state.gov/r/adcompd/rls/54256.htm. Accessed on October 11, 2007. That American liberal elites view art that critiques Middle Eastern society as a positive alternative to militancy against U.S./Israeli interests is perhaps best encapsulated by the thrust of a February 22, 2008 broadcast on NPR (the station of choice for that constituency). In "A Palestinian Intifada Icon Chooses Art over War," Eric Westervelt reports on a former Al-Aqsa Brigadesman from Jenin, Zakariya Zubeidi, who created a children's theater. He tells listeners that Zubeidi critiques social problems "rarely discussed openly in Palestinian culture" and emphasizes (twice) the portion of the interview in which Zubeidi says that Palestinians are also culpable for the conflict and need to stop blaming Israel for everything. http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=19239928. Accessed on April 23, 2008.

4 "State Department Launches Global Cultural Initiative," September 25, 2006. www.usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060925152441jmnamdeirf0.3944361

5 For example, see www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060925-2.html. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

6 www.sarweb.org/scholars/scholars/individuals/scholar04-05/winegar05.htm. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

7 See Rydell 1984, especially p. 64-68.

8 Like many contemporary ideas of the visual arts, those related to world music had their roots in the academy. Ethnomusicologists and others with "an academically liberal mission" began using the term partly for its "clear populist ring" (Feld 2000, 146-7).

9 Although there were slight blips of interest among certain groups in Middle Eastern arts after the first Gulf War and, earlier, in Vietnamese folk music and dance as a result of the war in Vietnam (Sophie Quinn-Judge, personal communication), it seems that this is the first "official" U.S. war that has instigated such widespread interest in the arts of "the other side," suggesting that a significant shift has occurred in how (mostly anti-war) elites deal with conflict.

10 www.silkroaddance.com/uploads/HPPressRelease.pdf. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

11 www.nga.gov/press/2004/212/index.htm. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

12 For a synopsis of this problem and how it has been addressed in art history, see Flood 2007.

13 One exception is the exhibition "Glittering Gold: Illumination in Islamic Art" at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (2007-2008), which hosted a contemporary illuminator from Turkey.

14 See for example Ali (1997) and Jiwa (2004).

15 It would be interesting to research the possible connections between the emergence of the popularity of Sufi music and Sufism in U.S. involvement in the Middle East.

16 www.thepsalm.org. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

17 Jindong Cai, quoted in the press release of the Pan-Asian Music Festival, www.stanford.edu/dept/news/pr/2006/pr-asian-020806.html. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

18 Tareq Abboushi, quoted in Beckerman 2005.

19 www.voanews.com/uspolicy/archive/2006-10/2006-10-02-voa4.cfm. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

20 Note that this is a pre-9/11 framing as well, but one that became particularly convenient afterwards.

21 www.stanford.edu/dept/news/pr/2006/pr-asian-020806.html. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

22 For an excellent critique of this exhibition and its assumptions, see Farhat 2006.

23 www.silkroaddance.com/uploads/HPPressRelease.pdf. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

24 See press release re-posted at www.electronicintifada.net/v2/article3664.shtml. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

25 None of the photographs were of bombers' families, but Palestinians generally attribute the term martyr to anyone who dies as a result of the Israeli occupation, including people caught in the crossfire, people who die because roadblocks prevent their arrival at a hospital, as well as bombers. The Azzami family shown in Figure 2 was grieving for their son Ahmed, who was shot at age 16 while standing outside of his home, witnessing a clash during the first Intifada.

26 This is often the case in the visual culture of the American media as well. Images of crowds of nameless, Muslim men yelling with fists or guns raised in the air tend to dominate print and television media when the idea of Muslims or Islam as a threat is invoked.

27 Quoted in "County Legislators Condemn Palestinian Art Fundraiser." *Westchester.com*, November 18, 2004. Available at: www.westchester.com/Westchester_News/Westchester_Government_and_Politics/County_Legislators_Condemn_Palestinian_Art_Fundraiser_200411184496.html

28 For a full report, see www.brandeis.edu/ethics/news/2006/2006.Sept.25.html. Accessed on October 11, 2007.

References Cited

Ali, Wijdan. 1997. *Modern Islamic Art: Development and Continuity*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Allison, Rebecca. 2002. "9/11 wicked but a work of art, says Damien Hirst." *The Guardian,* September 11.

Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Beckerman, Gal. 2004. "Arab culture near the W.T.C." Downtown Express, Jan 30-Feb 5. Accessed from www.downtownexpress.com/de_38/arabculturrenear.html on March 12, 2008.

Boas, Franz. 1955 [1927]. *Primitive Art*. New York: Dover.

Buchli, Victor, ed. 2002. *The Material Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg.

Clifford, James. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Cotter, Holland. 2007. "The Republic of Beauty, Melding West and East." *The New York Times,* March 30.

Daftari, Fereshteh. 2006. "Islamic or Not." In *Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking*, pp.10-27. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

Davila, Arlene. 1999. "Latinizing Culture: Art, Museums, and the Politics of U.S. Multicultural Encompassment." *Cultural Anthropology* 14(2):180-202.

Errington, Shelly. 1998. *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Eshelman, Rob. 2005. "Made in Palestine." Counterpunch, April 8. Accessed from www.counterpunch.org/eshelman04082005.html on March 12, 2008.

Farhat, Maymanah. 2006. "MoMA's Without Boundary Exhibit: Contemporary 'Islamic' Art in Context." Counterpunch, October 11. Accessed from www.counterpunch.org/farhat03252006.html on March 12, 2008.

Feld, Steven. 2000. "A Sweet lullaby for World Music." *Public Culture* 12(1):145-171.

Flood, Finbarr Barry. 2007. "From the Pophet to postmodernism? New World Orders and the end of Islamic Art." In Elizabeth C. Mansfield, eds. *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and Its Institutions*, pp. 31-53. New York: Routledge.

_____2002. "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum." *Art Bulletin* 84:641-59.

Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goldman, Shifra. *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social change in Latin America and the United States.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Guilbault, Serge. 1983. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism and the Cold War*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Guthrie, Doug. 2005. "U-M brings community glimpse of Middle East." The Detroit News, Jan 2. Accessed from www.detnews.com/2005/metro/0501/04/B01-47270.htm on March 12, 2008.

Haddad, Lisa Isam. 2005. "Palestine US exhibit stirs controversy." *Al-Jazeera.net*, April 20. Accessed from laotraorilla.blog-city.com/palestine_us_exhibit_stirs_controversy.htm on March 12, 2008.

Jiwa, Munir. 2004. "Aestheticizing Politics and Politicizing Aesthetics: Visual Artists and the Production and Representation of Muslim Identities in the United States." Ph.D. Dissertation, Anthropology Program, Columbia University Teacher's College.

Kant, Immanuel. 1951 [1790]. *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by J.H. Bernard. London: Collier Macmillan.

Kenazi, Remi. 2006. "The art of Politics." *ZNet*, March 4. Accessed from www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=9851 on March 12, 2008.

Marcus, George and Fred Myers, eds. 1995. *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

McAlister, Melani. 2001. *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Morgan, Lewis Henry. 1985 [1877]. *Ancient Society*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Mullin, Molly. 2001. *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and value in the American Southwest.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Oguibe, Olu. 2004. *The Culture Game*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Phillips, Ruth B. 1995. "Why Not Tourist Art? Significant Silences in Native American Museum Representation." In Gyan Prakash, ed., *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, pp. 98-125. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Phillips, Ruth B. and Christopher B. Steiner, eds. 1999. *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Price, Sally. 1989. *Primitive Art in Civilized Places.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Riding, Alan. 2006. "In London, the Victoria and Albert's New Gallery Shows the Islamic World as Oasis, Not Caldron." *The New York Times*, August 9.

Rosaldo, Renato. 1989. "Imperialist Nostalgia." *Representations* 26:107-122.

Rydell, Robert W. 1984. *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Schade-Poulsen, Marc. 1999. *Men and Popular Music in Algeria: The Social Significance of Rai*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Scheid, Kirsten. 2006. "Art as the Other Face of War: An Analysis of Looting Based on Iraq, 2003." Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association meetings, San Francisco, CA, Nov 14-19.

Segal, Daniel A. and Richard Handler. 1995. "U.S. Multiculturalism and the Concept of Culture." *Identities* 14: 391-407.

Swedenburg, Ted. 2001. "Arab 'World Music' in the US." *Middle East Report* 219:34-40.

Taylor, Timothy D. 1997. *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets.* New York: Routledge.

Tylor, Edward B. 1871. *Primitive Culture*. London: John Murray.

Von Eschen, Penny M. 2004. *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Winegar, Jessica. 2006. *Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

RESPONSE

(IN WHAT WAYS HAVE ARTISTS, ACADEMICS, AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS RESPONDED TO THE U.S.-LED INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF IRAQ?)

KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO

Though I am not an expert in political and cultural anthropology, I will attempt to elaborate on some conditions and issues that may have contributed to the passivity and silence of artists, intellectuals, academics, and those from within the cultural domain.

The War

Unlike during the Vietnam War, we have no official military draft, which is an important condition for the potential of a nationwide antiwar movement.

And unlike before the Vietnam War, the U .S. was indeed attacked (in 2001)—not by any country, and certainly not by Iraq—and thus, for many, retaliation seems legitimate. The cultural and larger publics, including artistic audiences and institutions, are confused by their complex relation to the popular "support our troops" slogan.

I lived in Poland during the Vietnam War and cannot be a witness here, but from what I hear from my American-born colleagues, the resentment, resistance, and fear of military draft in the context of the illegality of the war (because the U.S. was not directly attacked) were critically linked with, and to some degree fueled by, powerful and emotionally charged reports and images of war.

The Media

In the current war, there is no attempt to present politically insightful information and images of war; particularly absent is the damage done to civilians and to cultural and social life in Iraq.

To make it worse, the real picture of war damage inflicted on the U.S. population (including trauma transmission and dissemination) is not being taken into account by the media. (I will come back to this issue in the later part of my response.) The damage to immigrants and their families caused by Homeland Security's domestic "war on terror" (the subject of my in interior projection titled *If You See Something, Say Something…*) is also neither seen nor heard.

Through skillful imposition of the editorial technique of omission, the government's "public information" machine has silenced the complexity and magnitude of the toll of war and successfully manipulated a confused and disappointed middle class and its centrist "public sphere." In this way, the government turned media into its "publicity." The art of the front-page image (no more than trite photographic war icons) in the *New York Times* and affiliated *Boston Globe* testifies to this.

Antiwar discourse between cultures, classes, and generations needs evocative, passionate, and "agonistic" war reports and images, ones that compete for "truth telling." Artists and intellectuals, especially visual artists and their audiences, rely today only on media imagery. In order to construct new forms and methods for critical thinking, resistance, and rescue, artists and intellectuals—and the public at large—need to see and hear information and imagery that reports, testifies, explores, and uncovers the war.

Ernst Friedrich's *Anti-War Museum* and *Krieg dem Kriege!* [War against War!] project, which relied on photographic documents as evidence of the horrors of war, would be as difficult today as it was then, in the time of German censorship during World War I. John Heartfield would have had have a hard time as well (but I am sure that his sense of humor would have helped him find a way to unmask and ridicule the empty sentimentality and hypocrisy of the media's war imagery and the workings of the censorship itself. He would have embraced the Internet and the methods of "Electronic Civil Disobedience," just as he mastered the method of photomontage and the use of the most advanced printing technology, rotogravure).

Reading the Morning Newspaper…

Our postdeconstructive artistic efforts (analytical, critical, and pro-active) are not only sporadic and lonely but also overshadowed by the "spiritual" impact of media imagery.

The media provides for a daily spectacle of "humanized" and "universalized" war trauma. Television, radio, and the Internet provide "spiritual" assistance to one's confused life. The physical, mental, or moral injury and suffering of those in Iraq and Afghanistan are being turned into soft and digestible parareligious media representation. Aimed at comforting our ethically confused souls, today's art of media culture is elegant and hermeneutical in its careful choice and omission of critical issues. The phantasm it inspires has a "sublime" and "metaphysical" effect. Hegel said:

> Reading the morning newspaper is a kind of real Morning Prayer. One orients one's attitude against the world and toward (in one case) God, or (in the other case) toward that which the world is. The former gives the same security as the latter, in that one knows where one stands.

Made long before the advent of the newspaper's advanced color photography and its iconic impact,

Hegel's observation seems surprisingly accurate today. Present day image reproduction technology adds "quality" to Hegel's "real Morning Prayer." The large-scale, "holy" image on the front page of the *New York Times* functions as an altar in front of which we justify our political passivity in real life. They are skillfully created to be used by a reader as empathy objects.

As long as we look at the tragic media icons with "feelings for the victims"—establishing a bridge of empathy with them, or, more precisely, with their icons we feel that we are part of a larger human family. We may imagine and wish (pray) that the suffering of these war survivors and victims may "redeem" us, or offer a sort of "salvation," and relieve us from an obligation to try to do anything about their and other's situations. One's empathy functions here as a substitute for action.

When in the time of war the middle class's spiritual, humanistic, and aesthetic needs seem to be "fulfilled" by the art of the media, the critical artist and his or her art are put out of business by the art of an official and powerful "media artist."

Is there a way to confront the artistic impact of the media? To disclose and challenge what it is shown, how it misrepresents, and what it hides about the war?

If You See Something...

In my interior projection *If You See Something...*, a reference to the Homeland Security signs still displayed in the public transportation systems of New York and other cities that read "If You See Something, Say Something," I focus on the tragic effects of our "Ministry of Interior," U.S. Homeland Security, on the limits of our perception and imagination effected by the "interior" of our uninformed minds (our subjectivity), and most importantly on the invisible people, the working residents of our country who are struggling to survive the U.S. government's unjust actions conducted against them in the name of the war on terror.

With the use of high-definition video projection, the windowless space of Galerie Lelong was transformed in to an illusion of an interior with windows. "On the other side" of milky glass windows (Chelsea-style), as if outside on the sidewalk, one could see the foggy images of those "others" suffering arrests, detentions, and deportations, the "aliens" from whom we are alienated. They actors worked according to scripts written themselves; they recalled and reenacted scenes from real life, situations that happened and could happen again to them on the New York streets.

The psycho-political and aesthetic aims of the projection were as follows:

- To come close enough to these "strangers," who one usually does not notice, to see and hear some unexpected details of their painful, often brave and comically tragic experiences, and to realize how incomplete our understanding and access to their experience is.

- To engage the survivors emotionally and aesthetically as coartists in the production and animation of the projection; to help them develop rhetorical survival skills and emotional capacities by publically articulating their traumatic encounters with Homeland Security.

- To help organizations attract media and public attention for their clients' situations.

- To take advantage of the cultural production situation in order to build new connections between immigrants and social support networks.

During the two years of the project's development, I joined the work of many social support groups and established political ties with the "Visible Collective," directed by Naeem Mohaiemen, which developed *Disappeared in America* in conjunction with the Queens Museum. Besides those immigrants who were directly involved, numerous lawyers, social worker, families, friends, and organizations helped with the project.[1]

Cultural Economy of Silence

The ineffectiveness of early antiwar demonstrations (here and abroad) and the reelection of George Bush weakened the self-confidence and strength of critical sections of the middle-class: the media, universities, museums, cultural institutions, etc.

Today, in cultural institutions and academia it is in "good taste" to imply that one may be "against" the interventionism and imperial war conducted by the present government – yet only in private or in confidential meetings. In public and, above all, in one's projects, one must remain "neutral," "humanistic," and "universal"—anything to avoid what could be called "political."

The political climate ignited by our fears of terrorism, real and/ or imagined, controls of our thinking. Collectors, directors, curators, gallery dealers, art professors, and artists themselves live with self-censorship and the dubious results of their common sense choices made in the name of economical survival and aesthetic "sophistication."

(They say political art is "too simple"; that artists should not be "preaching to the converted"; that "in our hearts" we are all against the war anyway, so let's keep quiet "to survive"; it's only a year before "he" is gone.)

Boards of trustees, corporate and individual sponsors, and state and city political support have indirect or direct connections with the U.S. government's interventions. One cannot mess with these interests; the new managerial styles of cultural and academic institutions say so quite openly.

Many people say that the idea of political art is "passé," which sounds like saying that criticism and the political process are passé, that critical thinking, protest, and opposition to right wing nationalistic and imperialistic ideology are passé. The political art of the past cannot, of course, make sense for present; another form will need to be invented now and in the future. What was good yesterday may not be good for today, what is today may be not good for tomorrow. Why, then, have we been attempting since the 1990s to bury all kinds of political and engaged art? Why haven't we just gone ahead and invented new ones?

I absolutely agree with your questionnaire's implication that the market driven cultural economy alienates us from the collective and/ or coalition based oppositional practice of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. Emphasis on an individual artist's oeuvre (demanded by the market) and the fashionable aversion to any kind of socially focused, critical art (a bad name, if not a curse), is a serious background for the lack of any socio-aesthetic action and movement (another bad name).

The Internet

Contrary to *October's* implied skepticism about the effect of the Internet, and in accordance with the more optimistic position of Critical Art Ensemble and other technologically and politically minded groups and artists, I believe that the Internet's communication technology and culture are NOT socially alienating and depoliticizing factors.

I hold that the Internet continues to be a great political and artistic vehicle for all of us and the vital means of collective being and action. The creative use of the Internet, in conjunction with digital imaging technology, cellular telephone communication, and other media, is an organic part of the public oppositional presence—as much as physical gatherings, actions, and events. Through various interfaces and cross-organizational networks, the Internet can enforce, protect, and disseminate oppositional projects, developing them collectively and coordinating them, often globally. The Internet allows the social actions in electronic space to be organically linked with social actions in urban, suburban, and distant environments.

In addition, today's oppositional projects and protests do not always need to take the form of massive street demonstrations or marches on Washington. The actions that take place between these big gatherings—actions prepared through the use of digital media and communication technologies—can be effective.

The War Silence

The U.S. population's silence is in part a result of vast war fallout at home the rapid spread of the secondary trauma transmitted by returning soldiers to their families. Soldiers' psychologically and socially harmful (posttraumatic stress-related behavior) directly affects their close and extended families.

This war is unprecedented in U.S. history for its excessive use of the National Guard and military reserves and for recalling older individuals, who typically have large families, three or four times. Each traumatized soldier retraumatizes five to nine members of his or her own family. Secondary war trauma is spreading so rapidly across the country that it will cripple and destroy the lives of a third of the U.S. population. The soldiers' families are as much war veterans as the soldiers themselves. For too many back home, the peace is a "continuation of war by other means."

As a result of new boot camp desensitizing techniques, 80 percent of U.S. soldiers are trained and armed to kill in Iraq and Afghanistan (only 20 percent did so in World War II). In this situation, it must be very difficult for returning soldiers to resensitize themselves back home, and there is no comprehensive and effective government program for such reintegration.

For every U.S. soldier killed, there are sixteen wounded comrades, an unprecedented ratio of survival, which means an enormous number of veterans will suffer deep physical and mental wounds. New kinds of brain, bodily, and emotional injuries are multiplying. These emotional, moral, and physical injuries affect the lives of veterans as well as those of their children and grandchildren.

Those soldiers recalled several times to Iraq are not only traumatized, but also retraumatized, and in turn they traumatize, retraumatize, harm, and even kill

others or themselves.

The Iraq human trauma is, of course, far greater than the one among U.S. soldiers and families. Eighty percent or more of the children in Iraq suffer post-traumatic stress, joining the vast majority of Iraq as a traumatized population. Countless Iraqis have lost their lives; countless Iraqis have lost their closest kin, their friends, and their community; countless Iraqis live wounded and impoverished, and seek uncertain and traumatic refuge abroad.

The Tasks

There is enormous emotional and political illiteracy about the scale of today's war and the spread of war trauma, about war as a lived-through experience, as an experience with resulting generational and cultural fallout.

The silence of those who know what the present war is—that is, the silence of one-third of the U.S. population, and the silence of the entire population of Iraq—is reinforced by the common sense passivity on the part of cultural, artistic, and academic worlds.

In this situation it is difficult, if not impossible, for the younger generations, artists among them, to learn and comprehend the existential dimension and scale of the present war. They do not know what war is from the point of view of Iraqi civilians or Iraqi "insurgents," nor from U.S. soldiers and their families. There is no agonistic democratic discourse, based on fearless speech by all parties.

Young people do not have any cultural base from which to develop their ethical and political acts of public speech and art in opposition to the war. The war impact will soon be so large that they will have many everyday experiences with the social epidemic of secondary trauma, but without a larger social discourse they will have no equipment to understand the scale and depth of its existential fallout. The younger population has no idea what war is.

Since 2001, I have been engaged in teaching workshops and seminars as a part of my Interrogative Design Group at MIT. The courses explore public art, media art, methodologies in advancing designs and technologies of protest, dissensus and social inclusion, and critical and "agonistic" memory; I have focused more recently on the design of communication and mobility equipment design for today's war veterans.

Each year I receive more student demand for images and information on soldiers' and civilians' lived war experience. War veterans are invited to speak to the students, alternative films from the war are shown, and the Internet communications about the war and its fallout—and online antiwar art and cultural projects are reviewed.

In the isolated academic environment, it is almost impossible to break the wall of silence, reinforced by the media and cultural worlds, that separates two alienated populations: those who know what war is and those who do not. The wall of silence, passivity, and ignorance must be dismantled. Tactical cultural projects must be urgently developed with those who know, with the veterans, their families, and those who work directly with them.

Art for the Political

If, since the 1990s, our objective has been to contribute to the political, rather than to politics, to the polis rather than the police, to that which is potentia and multitude rather than potentates, to revolt rather than revolution, to agon and dissenus rather then consensus, to Democratic parrhesia and public interpellation rather than "patriotic" or "civic responsibility," to nomadology rather than the state apparatus...let us then continue our effort in inventing "art for the political." There have been new and versified methodologies developed in this direction by artists, artistic and cultural groups, collaborative networks, and coalitions.

Let's hope they will focus on the methods of war against war as a new, post deconstructive project. In this context, I would like to mention some names of oppositional artistic groups and projects (some of them are among the respondents to the October questionnaire):

> Walid Raad and the Atlas Group, Critical Art Ensemble (Electronic Civil Disobedience and other projects), Todd Hirsch and works by Autonomedia, 16Beaver, the Yes Men, Naeem Mohaiemen and the Visible Collective, John Melpede, and the programs and projects of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, the projects and teaching of MIT's Interrogative Design Group (including the War Veteran Vehicle Project presently under development), and many others.

It is my conviction that if these and other artists, artistic groups, networks, and coalitions further focus their attention on the present war and on fallout for later generations, we will contribute not only to end this war, but to a situation in which it will be much more difficult for society to allow an unjust, irresponsible, interventionist war to reoccur.

Developing my Interrogative Design Group and the War Veteran Vehicle Project in collaboration with Theodore Spyropoulos, preparing new interior and exterior public projections with war veterans, as well as learning and teaching the methods and techniques of oppositional art, I try to contribute in this direction.

—August 2007

Krzysztof Wodiczko is an artist who lives and works in New York and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

This text was initially published in a special issue of *October* in reponse to the title's question.

Notes

1 The social support organizations and groups that directly collaborated were the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (Asli); the American Friends Service Committee (William Coley); the Asylum Project, Immigrant Rights Program-NYMRO; the Civil Liberties Union Boston Chapter; the Coney Island Avenue Project (Bobby Khan); the Council of Pakistan Organization (Mohammad Razvi); DRUM (Desis Raising Up and Moving); Families for Freedom (Aarti Shahani and Subhash Katecl); Keeping Hope Alive (Jane Mee); the National Immigration Project (Malik Ndau); Peaceful Tomorrows (Nail Ashour); Physicians for Human Rights (Barbara Ayoite); Safe Horizons, Immigration Law Project (Ellen Friedland); the Visible Collective (Naeem Mohaiemen); and the War Resisters League (Steve Theberge). Without these groups, examples of the presence of an oppositional public sphere, this project would not have been possible.

WALKTHROUGH, PART II

CONTINUED FROM "WALKTHROUGH, PART I"

WALID RAAD

During the past decade or so, I've been hearing more and more about Arab artists, about contemporary Arab art, modern Arab art, Islamic art, Middle Eastern art, its makers, sponsors, consumers, genres, and histories.

I've also been fascinated by the increasing number of festivals, workshops, museums, galleries, residencies, exhibitions, prizes, foundations, schools, and journals emerging in Arab cities such as Beirut, Doha, Cairo, Alexandria, Marrakech, Tangiers, Ramallah, Sharjah, and especially the United Arab Emirates—the UAE.

The UAE, in fact, presents a fascinating case study.

The UAE (and I apologize if I repeat here some of the dumb facts you already know) is composed of seven emirates (Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah, and Umm al-Quwain). Abu Dhabi is the capital of the UAE, and in terms of resources and wealth, it is also the richest of the seven emirates. Just to give you a sense of its wealth: The UAE holds between 3 and 5 percent of the world's proven natural gas reserves, at around 215 trillion cubic feet, which is the seventh largest natural gas deposit in the world. Ninety-four percent of these reserves are in Abu Dhabi.

The UAE also has between 6 and 9 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. That's the seventh largest in the world at around 97.8 billion barrels, and it is important to note that 94 percent of those reserves are in Abu Dhabi. At an average price of $110 per barrel of oil, Abu Dhabi netted $120 billion from oil in 2012.

Abu Dhabi also has the third largest (after Norway and Saudi Arabia) sovereign wealth fund in the world, valued at around $630 billion. This sovereign wealth fund generates loads of dollars for the emirate every year. It has a twenty-year annual rate of return of around 6.9 percent, and a thirty-year annual rate of return of 8.1 percent.

In other words, Abu Dhabi is not just rich. It is very, very rich.

But Abu Dhabi also seems to know that its wealth depends too much on petro-chemical products. In the past two decades or so, Abu Dhabi has tried to diversify its hydrocarbon-dominated economy. It has invested heavily in aerospace, health care, biomedical technology, education, finance, and as you may have heard, in culture and the arts.

The main investment in culture and the arts is the well-publicized Saadiyat Island: a twenty-seven-square-kilometer island (that's half the size of Bermuda) where Abu Dhabi has planned a $27 billon development project. On this one island, Abu Dhabi is about to build the largest-to-date Guggenheim Museum, to be designed by Frank Gehry. The same island will have a Louvre Abu Dhabi museum designed by Jean Nouvel. The same island will have a Sheikh Zayed National Museum designed by Foster and Partners. Saadiyat Island will also host a Maritime Museum designed by Tadao Ando, a performing arts center designed by Zaha Hadid, a New York University campus designed by Rafael Vinoly, a few marinas, seven-star hotels, restaurants, golf courses, and so on. We know how such islands are erected.

But it is also important to note that Abu Dhabi is not just hiring starchitects to build cultural meccas that the emirate will then fill with high-end, market-tested Arab, Iranian, Turkish, Islamic, North African, and Southeast Asian art in the hope that this alone will attract millions of tourists. No. Abu Dhabi plans a broad infrastructure that will not only include museums, universities, and colleges, but also art magazines, art journals, art prizes, art foundations, private and public art collections, art handlers, insurers, writers, critics, galleries, archives, and so on, and so on. And Abu Dhabi is also well-aware that when students come to study at NYU and the other colleges, they will likely bring with them alternative lifestyles and cultures. As such, I was not surprised to meet someone who had been charged with designing Abu Dhabi's alternative arts scene.

Detail of sketch for Walid Raad's project "Scratching on Things I Could Disavow," 2007-ongoing

I must say that all of this, for me as an artist, an Arab, or even as an American, is truly fascinating. How long have we been waiting for an Arab government to actually spend its wealth on art, education, health care and culture? It is happening today. And not just in Abu Dhabi. This is happening in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and to a lesser extent, in other Arab states as well.

But then every time you ask the question: Why are these sheikhs and sheikhas in the Gulf all of a sudden so interested in the arts? Why are they all of a sudden spending all this money on culture and the arts? Every time you ask this question, you should also be ready to hear the two dominant and weighty caricatures that have emerged to make sense of all this.

The first caricature states that all this investment in culture and the arts in the Arabian/Persian Gulf is a cynical move undertaken by a bunch of autocrats seeking to shift their economies away from petrochemical dependence and towards tourism, all the while camouflaging and veiling their stay-in-power-longer, get-even-richer schemes under the "civilizing" cloak of culture.

Moreover, this sudden love of the arts and culture by the Emirati sheikhs and sheikhas simply aims to curry favor with restless and suspicious foreign powers such as France, the UK, and the US—powers whose protection will surely be needed should things get out of hand with a nuclear-armed Iran.

In other words, the sheikhs and sheikhas in Abu Dhabi and Qatar don't give a damn about the arts. They only care about more power and more money. And if, in the midst of their negotiations with the French government for some Mirage fighter jets and military bases, they need to add a Louvre, then so be it. What's a billion dollars for a Louvre? This is, by the way, what the government of Abu Dhabi agreed to pay the French government in order to license the Louvre brand for thirty years—$1 billion. What's a billion dollars for the government of Abu Dhabi? It's a small fraction of the interest earned by their sovereign wealth fund annually. It's Emirati pocket change.

The second caricature states that there is nothing cynical in all of this spending. In fact, it says that all of this investment in the arts and culture is the sign of an Arab renaissance, of young new rulers seeking to assert the complexity and diversity of Arab, Islamic, and Emirati values, especially after 9/11.

We are told that this renaissance is led by Western-bred visionaries who are tired of the old ways, and who are wholeheartedly trying to first democratize the taste of their subjects via the arts, and then they will democratize all aspects of civil and political life in their intellectually thirsty but socially conservative lands.

Yes, they may be licensing Western brands such as the Louvre and the Guggenheim, but let's give these leaders a break. We should give them a break for no other reason than that we know very well that these are the same people who only a few years ago would have spent their petro-dollars buying more Ferraris and Bentleys than they could drive; these are the same people who only a few years ago were buying yet more high-end properties in New York, London, Tokyo, and Paris; these are the same people who only a few years ago would have invested most if not all of their wealth in foreign lands, but who are today investing in culture and health care and education, and most importantly, who are doing all this investment at home; and they are, after all, only trying to do in ten or twenty years in the twenty-first century what it took their Western counterparts one hundred years to put in place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Who established the Metropolitan Museum of Art after all? Was it not robber barons? Let's call them American sheikhs. Was it not American sheikhs who established the Met over one hundred years ago, and who helped shift the center of modern art from Paris to New York seventy years ago? Why can't Arab sheikhs do the same for Arab culture today? They may not shift the center of the contemporary art world to the East, but at least they will certainly establish an eastern outpost for it there.

I must say that I don't care to sort through these caricatures, and I don't care to find out whether the sheikhs and sheikhas in Abu Dhabi and Qatar are enlightened, sincere, or cynical. I assume these are complex people, and like all complex people, they make contradictory decisions. I assume that they are sincere, cynical, and enlightened at the same time. I don't know. In fact, I am quite sure that I will never know.

But there is one thing that I do know for sure—one thing about which I am absolutely certain.

At the opening of the Guggenheim Museum in Abu Dhabi, or Qatar, or elsewhere in the Gulf, sometime between 2017 and 2024, a proud local resident rushes the entrance only to find that he is unable to proceed. Why can't he proceed? Why doesn't he go in?

Is it because he is dressed in jeans and a black t-shirt and sneakers, and this is a black-tie affair? He feels underdressed. Is this why he does not go in? No.

It must be the thugs who are shielding the ruling dynasty, a ruling class that is attending the event *en masse* to showcase its benevolence and refined sensibilities, pubescent-future-rulers in tow. Do the

Walid Raad, *Views from Inner to Outer Compartments*, 2012
Exhibition view Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna. ©Jakob Polacsek

thugs prevent his access? No.

He simply feels that if he walked in, he would certainly "hit a wall." That he would literally hit a wall.

On the spot, he turns to face the onrushing crowd and screams: "Stop. Don't go in. Be careful!"

Within seconds, the security services arrive. They beat him severely, handcuff him, and send him to a psychiatric facility.

The very next day, I open the newspaper, turn to page six, and look at the bottom right-hand corner. I read the following headline: "Demented Man Disturbs Opening: Claims World Is Flat."

This event has already happened. This headline has already been written. About this, I am absolutely certain.

This text is (here and there) a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. The text transcribes the walkthrough/presentation component of Walid Raad's exhibition *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow*, presented at dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel.

THE IMPERIAL IMAGINARY

ELLA SHOHAT AND ROBERT STAM

Postmodern War

That the imperial and Indian war conventions traced here, together with the Eurocentric tendencies of the media apparatus, have not reached an end became strikingly evident during the Persian Gulf war. The ground for the "popularity" of the war was prepared by a long intertextual chain: crusading anti-Islamic tales, captivity narratives, the imperial adventure novel, the "manifest destiny" western, and more recent militaristic films like *Star Wars* (1977), the *Rambo* series (1982, 1985, 1988) and *Top Gun* (1988). An orientalist and imperialist imaginary was reactivated for the ideological purposes of the warrior state.[1] The Gulf war was presented as a macro-entertainment, one with a beginning (Desert Shield), a middle (Desert Sword), and an end (Desert Storm), all undergirded by a fictive telos: the "New World Order." The futuristic overtones of the phrase meshed anachronistically with the medievalist connotations of "shield" and "sword," evocative of a religious substratum of Crusades against Muslim infidels. Network logos "Countdown to War," "Deadline in the Desert," "America at the Brink" — communicated a throbbing sense of inevitability, of an inexorable slouching toward war; provoking, even, a kind of spectatorial *desire* for war. Talk of peace, following administration cues, was treated not as a hope but as a "nightmare scenario," a kind of "coitus interruptus" within an irresistible orgasmic march.[2]

Multigeneric, the Gulf war mini-series drew on the codes of the war film (soldiers silhouetted against the sky, thrilling martial music, *Top Gun* visuals); of the PBS educational show (military pedagogs with pointers, maps, and video blackboards); of sports programming (instant replay, expert-running commentary); and of the western (lines drawn in the sand, the implacable logic of the showdown). The Gulf war scenario had the elemental, childlike charm of the fable, the awesome pyrotechnics of apocalypse, and the didactic impulses of allegory. With this war, an already powerful media apparatus became "wedded" to another apparatus of the gaze — that of military simulation and surveillance. As a consequence, telespectators were encouraged to "enjoy" a quantum leap in prosthetic audio-visual power. Television news offered its spectator what Donna Haraway, in another context, calls the "conquering gaze from nowhere," a gaze that claims "the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation."[3] While TV coverage in general allows spectators to imagine themselves at the center of the globe's "hot spots," during the Gulf war the media coaxed spectators to spy, thanks to an almost pornographic kind of surveillance, on a whole geographical region, whose nooks and crannies lay open to the military's panoptic view.[4]

The fact that the military view literally *became* the spectator's view goes a long way toward explaining the massive public adherence in the US to the war. For quite apart from the pleasures of identification with a powerful military apparatus, the Gulf war coverage hyperbolized the normal pleasures of the televisual "apparatus" itself. While the semiotic theory of the cinematic apparatus requires "scanning" for television, since many of the factors that foster the realer-than-real subject effects in the cinema do not apply here, nevertheless TV does have its own pleasuring capacities and its own ways of encouraging spectatorial regression and narcissism. Indeed, TV affords pleasures even more multiform than those afforded by the cinema, for the televiewer identifies with an even wider array of viewpoints: notably those provided by film cameras, video-cameras, and their magnetic residue of images and sounds on tape, along with those provided by tapeless video-cameras directly transmitting images and sounds, all then relayed around the world through satellite transmission. TV thus confers perceptual powers in some ways superior to those of the relatively sluggish cinema, a medium that TV both includes and surpasses in its ability to "cover the world."[5] The smaller screen, while preventing immersion in a deep, enveloping space, encourages in other ways a kind of narcissistic voyeurism. Larger than the figures on the screen, we quite literally oversee the world from a sheltered position — all the human shapes parading before us in TV's insubstantial pageant are scaled down to Lilliputian insignificance, two-dimensional-dolls, their height rarely exceeding a foot.

The Gulf war mobilized atavistic passions, as televisual spectatorship became deeply implicated in an attempt to corral multiethnic spectators into a jingoistic communalism. A "feel-good" war became an (ultimately ineffective) electoral ploy, as global and domestic politics became linked to the Nielsen ratings. Much as the encirclement imagery model in the western engages literal point of view — the looking through the sights of a rifle, or through the windows of a fort Gulf war "spectators" were made to see through the point of view of American pilots, and even through that of "smart bombs." Media coverage endowed the spectatorial eye with what Paul Virilio calls the "symbolic function of a weapon."[6] The Gulf war telespectator, vicariously equipped with night-vision technology, infra-red vision, capable of zapping "enemy" tanks, planes, buildings, and heads of state, was prodded into feeling infinitely powerful. In a war where the same pilot's hand that released the missile simultaneously

tripped the camera shutter, spectators were teleguided to see from the bomber's perspective, incorporated into the surveillance equipment, sutured into the sights of high-tech weaponry.

Peter Jennings "Striding the world like a Colossus"

Gulf war media coverage paraded before the viewers innumerable candidates for what Metz calls "secondary identification," that is, identification with the human figures on the screen: the anchors, the correspondents, the generals, the experts, and the people interviewed on the street.[7] As "pivots" of identification, the anchors and correspondents played an especially crucial role. The latter-day descendants of the traveler and scientist heroes of the imperial adventure films, news anchors constitute authentic contemporary heroes. Their words have godlike efficacy; their mere designation of an event calls forth instant illustration in the form of animated miniatures, colorful maps, and live-action footage. As charismatic figures, comparable in power to the great stars of the cinema, the anchors facilitated a massive transfer of allegiance to the war, particularly in contexts where viewers lacked alternative sources of information and analysis.

During the Gulf war, the newscasters dropped their usual mask of neutrality and metamorphosed into partisan cheerleaders. The historical inertia of their reputation for "objectivity" functioned in favor of the war. The newscasters' prowar stance took many forms: adjectival qualifications of the bombing as "beautiful" or "precise," facile references to soldier "heroes," the tendentious use of the word "patriotism" to refer only to pro-war actions and attitudes. Newscasters spoke of Iraq as the "enemy," as if they had personally joined the armed forces. Dan Rather "enlisted" by saluting the troops, Forest Sawyer by donning military fatigues, Howard Threlkel by frisking surrendering Iraqi prisoners. Throughout, the newscasters channeled empathy according to clear hierarchies of human value: at the apex stood Americans and Europeans, then came Israelis, then Arab allies, and lowest on the ladder were Arab enemies. Even the oil-suffocated cormorants in the Persian Gulf and the animals in the Kuwait City Zoo garnered more sympathy than the Iraqi soldiers. The zealous citizens who sported "Nuke Iraq" T-shirts, or who patriotically roughed up people they took to be Arab-Americans (even those from countries allied to the US), intuitively understood the subliminal message sent out by the media: Third World life has no value a European (including an honorary European) need respect.

Although the Gulf war took place in the revised political context of the post cold war period, many of the tropes, imagery, and narratives deployed were drawn from colonial/imperial discourse. Demonizing Saddam Hussein, the administration not only resuscitated the "just war" paradigm of World War II (thus making the war more amenable to Manichean dualisms of good versus evil than the "messy" Vietnam war), it also invoked the familiar paradigm of the "savage war" and of extermination as morality play. The premise of "savage war," according to Richard Slotkin, is the idea "that ineluctable political and social differences—rooted in some combination of "blood" and culture—make coexistence between primitive natives and Europeans impossible on any basis other than subjugation."[8] The psychological basis of public acceptance of massive force, in a situation of "savage war," is the expectation that a people (or leader) defined as savage will commit unimaginable atrocities, such as rape, massacre, or torture:

> once such a *threatened* or rumored atrocity has been avenged with an actual atrocity, the mechanisms of projection become more (rather than less) powerful. Although we hopefully assert that our vengeance has had a chastening effect on the enemy, our belief that the enemy is "savage" suggests that we may merely have given him an additional motive for vengeance.[9]

The melodramatic formula that cast Hussein as villain (a "Geronimo with Hitler's ambitions," as Slotkin puts it), Bush as hero, and Kuwait as the damsel in distress was a replay of countless colonial-western narratives. Basic to such narratives is the rescue of a White woman (and at times a dark one) from a dark rapist, and a happy conclusion entailing the restoration of a patriarchal-imperial world order and the punishment of the dark disobedient rapist, who must be humiliated in the name of the dishonored female. The Gulf war as fought in a gendered language, where the "rape of Kuwait"—the sexual violation of an innocent, passive, symbolically feminine persona—became the pretext for a manly penetration of Iraq. The metaphor of the rape of Kuwait, the circulating rumors about Iraqi rapes of Kuwaiti women, and the insinuation of possible rapes of American female soldiers by Iraqi captors became part of an imperial rescue fantasy eerily reminiscent of the medieval Crusades, when non-Christian enemies were also portrayed as licentious beasts.[10] At the same time, through a show of phallic vigor in the Gulf war, a senescent America imagined itself cured of the traumatic "impotence" it suffered in another war, in another Third World country—Vietnam.

Permeated by skull-and-crossbones-style male bonding, the Gulf war was machismo-driven from the start.[11] But in their mobilization of a national imaginary, the administration and the media were careful not to make jingoistic militarism the spectator's sole locus of identification. They also provided more warm, more stereotypically "feminine" and "progressive" points of identification. Along with the smart bombs came yellow ribbons, along with the martial fifes and drums came the strains of violins. For those disinclined to identify with military puissance *per se,* less masculinist entries for identification were available—with the "multicultural" army on the ground, with women taking military roles, with the advance for Blacks represented by the leadership of Colin Powell, with the homeside families concerned about their loved ones.

In the Gulf war as western, Iraqi conscripts played the role of the Indians. The western's imagery of encirclement entails not only a particular perspective of siege but also the inflation of the external threat. Thus the Iraqi army, a largely conscript force with mediocre weaponry, unable to conquer Iran much less the assembled might of the world's most powerful armies, was promoted to the "fourth army in the world." When diverse pragmatic rationales for the war (oil, jobs, the American way of life) failed to catch fire with the electorate, the administration tapped into two interrelated cultural strains—idealistic exceptionalism and puritanical vindictiveness. On the one hand, the administration sounded lofty goals of regional peace and the New World Order; on the other, it demonized Hussein as "a man of evil standing against human life itself." Here Bush stood well within the tradition of what Michael Rogin calls "political demonology"—the creation of monsters through the "inflation, stigmatization, and dehumanization of political foes."[12] The "moderate" and "pragmatic" Hussein of earlier political rhetoric, ally of American policy and the darling of American, British, and German corporations, was transformed into a reincarnation of Hitler with the rapidity with which enemies for "Hate Week" were fabricated in Orwell's *1984.* It was also within the logic of the Manichean allegory that Bush, invoking the venerable tradition of the righteous massacre, would ask for divine blessing for American armed forces in a National Day of Prayer, just as he thanked the pilots in the January 1992 bombings for "doing the Lord's work."[13] And since the Manichean allegory does not allow for two competing evils, or for lesser and greater evils, or for minor and major thugs, but only for good against evil, it also allows for only one legitimate outcome: the annihilation of evil in a ritual sacrifice or exorcism that "cleanses" the accumulated iniquity. "Allah creates," said one Gulf war ditty, "but we cremate."

While the media on the one hand forced a "dirty-handed" complicity with the war by positioning viewers among the soldiers—Ted Koppel placing us in the cockpit of a Saudi fighter, Diane Sawyer putting us inside a tank—they also symbolically cleansed those very same hands. The spectator was prompted to indulge infantile dreams of omnipotence, made to feel allied to immense destructive forces, but also to feel fundamentally pure and innocent. Any word or image implying that the American spectators or their tax dollars were somehow responsible for mass suffering would have destroyed the shaky edifice of non-culpability, an unflattering implication that might have hurt ratings. Despite its lethal violence (estimates of over 150,000 dead, with an equal number dying later due to disease and mal-nutrition), the Gulf war was fought in the name of American victimization, in the tradition of the many wars in which reiterated claims of self-defense have masked overwhelming, disproportionate power.

In "'Make My Day': Spectacle as Amnesia in Imperial Politics," Michael Rogin anatomizes the role of real and imaginary massacres in justifying military interventions. Citing Reagan's role-playing as Dirty Harry, Rogin recalls the context in which Clint Eastwood uses the phrase "make my day" in *Sudden Impact* (1983). In the scene, Eastwood is "daring a black man to murder a woman ... so that Dirty Harry can kill the black." In other words, "white men show how tough they are by resubordinating and sacrificing their race and gender others."[14] Running like a thread through North American history is the similar notion, recycled by countless westerns, that Indian "outrages" justified Euro-American massacres and appropriations. In 1622, in "A Declaration of the State of the Colonie and Affaires" in Virginia, Edward Waterhouse wrote with relief that "our hands which before were tied with gentleness and faire usage, are now set at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Savages [so that we may] invade the Country, and destroy them who

sought to destroy us."[15] Waterhouse's declaration anticipates what one might call the "make my day" syndrome, a desire for an outrage to justify even greater violence. The Gulf war reiterated the trope of "regeneration through violence" (in Slotkin's words), the process whereby the fictive "we" of national unity is reforged through salutary massacres. That President Bush had been figuratively in bed with the dictator Hussein merely betrays the binaristic splitting off of one's own impulses on to a phantasmic other that is so typical of colonialist thinking.

Our point is not that some national essence induces the American public into war—obviously antiwar protest and antimilitarism are equally part of American history—nor to suggest that Hussein is an innocent Third World victim, but rather to map the ways point-of-view conventions and a powerful media apparatus can be mobilized to shape public opinion for militaristic purposes. But these televisual tactics would not have "worked" so effectively had spectators not already been thoroughly "primed" by innumerable westerns, adventure films, and imperial epics.

The Gulf war revealed not only the continued reign of the imperial imaginary, but also the limitations of certain variants of postmodernism. Jean Baudrillard' s account of the implosive collapse of boundaries in a mass-mediated global society, for example, is exhilaratingly apt in its rendering of the "feel" of life in the simulacral world of the postmodern, but his conceptions are ultimately inadequate for a phenomenon such as the Gulf war. In an article in the *Guardian* a few days before the outbreak of the war, Baudrillard treated the impending conflict as an impossibility, a figment of mass-media simulation techniques without real-world referents.[16] And on March 29, 1991, shortly after the end of hostilities, playing with the Giraudoux title *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* (The Trojan War Will Not Take Place, 1934), Baudrillard declared in *Libération* that "The Gulf War Has Not Taken Place."[17] On one level, there is no denying the descriptive canniness of Baudrillard's account. The representation of the most media-covered war in history did indeed seem to shift from classical realist representation to the brave new public-relations world of hyperreality. Not only was the war packaged as a spectatorial video-game, it also proliferated in simulacral strategies—computer simulations, fake bomb damage, fake missile silos, fake attacks, even fake heat to attract heat-seeking missiles. War on the electronic battlefield became a media experience *par excellence* even for its participants, demanding what Paul Virilio calls a *"dédoublement"* of observation—both an immediate perception and a media-inflected perception through video, radar, and computer simulation.[18]

But if the Gulf war revealed the descriptive aptness of the Baudrillardian account of postmodernism, it also signaled that paradigm's political vacuousness, its disempowering combination of extreme cognitive skepticism and political quietism. For what the Gulf war revealed were fundamental asymmetries in how the depthless surfaces of postmodernity are lived; asymmetries not only between the experience of television and the experience of war, but also between the experiences of the combatants and the spectators engaged on different sides of the war. Some groups watched the war from an antiseptic distance, while others lived it in the company of death, dismemberment, disease, and famine. Technology facilitated seeing and hearing on the one side, and obliterated it on the other. While Americans, as Jonathon Schell puts it, waged war in "three dimensions," the foe was trapped, "like the creatures in certain geometrical games, in two dimensions ... we kill and they die, as if a race of gods were making war against a race of human beings."[19]

If postmodernism has spread the telematic feel of First World media around the world, in sum, it has hardly deconstructed the relations of power that marginalize, devalue, and time and time again massacre otherized peoples and cultures.[20] Baudrillard's radically ahistorical account misses the fact that time is palimpsestic; we live in many times, not just in the "new" time of advertising and the media. In the case of the Gulf war, the most sophisticated technology was used in the service of ideas drawn from millennial sources, from Christian Crusades against Muslims to "savage wars" against Indians. With the Gulf war, the fact of mass death itself, the radical discontinuity between the living and the dead, reveals the limitations of a world seen only through the prism of the simulacrum.

Notes

1 Ironically, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf himself speaks of this intertext in his recently published memoirs, where he complains of the pressure of the "hawks": These were guys who had seen John Wayne in *The Green Berets,* they'd seen *Rambo,* they'd seen *Patton,* and it was very easy for them to pound their desks and say: "By God, we've got to go in there ... gotta punish that son of a bitch!" Of course, none of them was going to get shot at.

2 The recurrent trope of the war being "on schedule" was as much narratological as military. January 15 was set as the date for war, as Serge Daney pointed out, much as a date is set for the opening of a Hollywood blockbuster. See Serge Daney, "Mais que fait la Police," *Liberation* (Feb. 15, 1991), p. 16.

3 Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," included in Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 188.

4 We focus here on the mechanisms of promoting identification; we do not suggest that these mechanisms were experienced in identical ways by, for example, Baghdadis or New Yorkers, Kuwaitis or Israelis, Christians or Muslims, leftists or rightists. Although the experience of war is mediated, there are differences within spectatorship. These spectatorial differences will be the subject of our last chapter.

5 See Robert Stam, "Television News and Its Spectator," in Ann Kaplan, ed., *Regarding Television* (Fredricksburg, Md.: AFI, 1983).

6 See Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (London: Verso, 1989).

7 For Metz on "secondary identification," see *The Imaginary Signifer.*

8 Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 12.

9 *Ibid.*

10 The media also painted Hussein in the colors of orientalist fantasies of sexual perversity and excess. Entertainment magazines and television shows luxuriated in voyeuristic projections about Hussein's putative sexual perversions, including still photos of his bunker bedroom, his harem, and stories about his presumed penchant for killing his lovers, especially those who could testify to his failures in bed. The cover of a *National Examiner* (March 12, 1991) carried the headline "Saddam Hussein's Bizarre Sex Life: A Recent CIA Report Reveals," with a photomontage of Hussein as a crossdresser in a mini skirt. Geraldo's talk show (March 4, 1991) featured a series of so-called experts' titillating descriptions of torture, all delivered up to an insatiably repelled audience. Close-ups emphasized the responses of good Americans shocked by this cruel dark-skinned leader, compared Idi Amin, Qaddafi, Noriega, Hitler, and Stalin. Hussein was frequently nicknamed the "Butcher from Baghdad" and "The Thief from Baghdad." See Ella Shohat, "The Media's War," *Social Text*, No. 28, Vol. IX, (1991).

11 Pilots reportedly watched porn videos before ejaculating their bombs over Iraq, thus turning pent-up sexual energy into military aggression, and recapitulating the transmutation of sex into violence that Leslie Fiedler, in *Love and Death in the American Novel*, discerned as characteristic of the American novel.

12 Michael Rogin, *Ronald Reagan: The Movie* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. xxi.

13 See William Alberts, "Prayer as an Instrument of War," *Z* (April 1991).

14 Michael Rogin, "'Make My Day': Spectacle as Amnesia in Imperial Politics," *Representations*, No. 29 (Winter 1990).

15 Quoted in Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*, p. 11.

16 Jean Baudrillard, "The Reality Gulf," *Guardian* (Jan. 11, 1991).

17 Jean Baudrillard, "La Guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu," *Libération* (March 29, 1991).

18 See Paul Virilio, "L'Acquisition d'Objectif," *Libération* (Jan. 30, 1991), p. 15.

19 See Jonathon Schell, "Modern Might, Ancient Arrogance," *Newsday* (Feb. 12, 1991), p. 86.

20 For more on the Gulf war, see Robert Stam, "Mobilizing Fictions: The Gulf War, the Media, and the Recruitment of the Spectator," *Public Culture*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring 1992). This passage was written before the appearance of Christopher Norris' *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals, and the Gulf War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), which takes a parallel, although not identical, approach to the same topic. We are in full sympathy with Norris' critique of the "ideological complicity that exists between ... extreme anti-realist or irrationalist doctrine and the crisis of moral and political nerve among those whose voices should have been raised against the actions committed in their name" (p. 27).

CHECKPOINTS AS GENDERED SPACES: AN AUTO-ARCHAEOLOGY OF WAR, HERITAGE AND THE CITY

UZMA Z. RIZVI

Authors Preface

March 19th, 2003, President of the United States, George W. Bush announces the beginning of combat with the nation of Iraq. Eight years later (2011) as I write this chapter combat continues in Iraq with a death toll of nearly 112,000 civilians due to violence (www.iraqbodycount.org/, accessed 1 November, 2011). This chapter cannot articulate the deep trauma that the violence of this war will have on the Iraqi people, nor does it pretend to encapsulate all senses of violence that war produces. I have chosen not to speak directly of military strategy or politics per se, but rather of gender specific experiences on the streets of key cities in January 2009 through the investigation of checkpoints.

Introduction

> The US war logs show that there were 13,963 incidents linked to convoys or at checkpoints across Iraq from 2004-2009. Most of them ended harmlessly, but when things went wrong it was civilians, more often than not, that got killed. (Slater & Ball 2011)

The landscape of war is a constantly changing stratigraphy of human events. The documentation of such micro-depositional histories is short, rapid, and often ephemeral. This chapter presents such a document through an autoarchaeology of specific urban checkpoints in Iraq, January 2009. The crux of the project is the contemporary materiality/immateriality of war and the manner in which its existence and resulting traces affect human beings and cityscapes by highlighting the fluctuating meaning of safety, a shift to an uncanny landscape and the effects of violence on notions of subjectivity. This chapter focuses on both the tangible and intangible aspects of those issues by locating the analysis on city checkpoints as urban gendered spaces and the manner in which such locales *fracture* heritage by unsettling city-spaces.

Checkpoints are generally thought of as unsafe locales of simmering volatility. It is the place where an aspect of *bare life* is determined by the state—does a body contain the rights to pass or is it to be separated from the rest of the citizenry (Agamben 1998). There is a heightened sense of urgency, anxiety, and fear in the very air that occupies that space, often making it difficult to breathe. This chapter emerges from experiences at checkpoints in Iraq in the cities of Baghdad, Kauzmain, Najaf, Karbala and Samarra (Figure 1). These checkpoints were woven into and out of the urban fabric. These checkpoints were segregated, presumable by sex, but in fact by gender (marked by clothing). And ironically, the female checkpoints became “safe spaces” creating a distinct public space and location of discourse. As pedestrian checkpoints, not used for vehicles or convoys, they had the ability to be mobile and were, in fact, moved across the landscape.

Figure 1. Map of contemporary Iraq with key sites mentioned in the text (map: Leonardo Arias)

These women’s checkpoints were camp like structures, tents held up by poles on city roads (dirt and paved). Older checkpoints could be traced at intersections based on the discoloration of the pavement or dirt from the kerosene heaters used inside the tents (in January it was near 4°C/39°F), and postholes left by the poles holding up the tents. As mentioned previously, the checkpoints located within the cities were generally segregated by gender (assessed by the wearing of gender-marked clothing) with the tent like stations being gendered female and the open-air checkpoints being gendered male. All the women I encountered in public space during my time there were covered in either an *abbaya* or a *chador* of some kind. This form of clothing loosely covers the body shape and image, thus making any assessment of sex based on physicality vague. Such ambiguity creates and structures overreliance on heteronormative assumptions of possible genders resulting in the adoption of only two forms of gendered checkpoints in the city: male or female (see Ritchie 2010 for a discussion on queer identity and checkpoints).

The structural violence that checkpoints insist upon the cityscape is intricately linked to some assumed protection of corporeal violence, and yet there is a deeper violence enacted upon the subjectivity of

those living in war zones each time one walks through a checkpoint (see Starzmann 2010). This alteration of self happens as the discourse of violence seeps into the everyday. Such structural and self-alterations mediate and constantly reconstruct shattered realities of monuments and emotions linked to them. Directly hit by war, the cityscape is fractured; a condition that continues to be structurally enforced by the constant moving of checkpoints across the landscape. This constant shattering of the everyday leads to fragments of reality strung together to create a sense of self and place. A fractured heritage becomes a reality of war.

Efforts to regain some sense of accountability in such a context prompted numerous responses in public discourse, beginning primarily with the listing of antiquities as casualties of war and issues surrounding looting (Bahrani 2003, 2003a). Looting became a very serious point of discussion with calls for the protection of Iraq's cultural heritage which was explicitly linked to material artifacts (Bogdanos 2005; Brodie & Renfrew 2005; Rothfield 2008; Stone 2005; Warren 2005). Some anthropologists and archaeologists, although sympathetic to the concern about artifacts, raised questions related to the ethical stance of utilizing cultural knowledge extracted from scholars for the "war on terror" (González 2007), and how discussions with the United States government demonstrated an implicit compliance of the neo-colonial and imperial aspirations of the US in Iraq (Hamilakis 2003, 2009).

Unlike these previous efforts, this chapter is based on corporeal experience within a war-zone. As such, it has created its own methodology, its own dataset and its own trauma.

Woman/Archaeologist/Other: A Note on Methodology

The context is war.

The context is one of life or death.

The context is dictating methodology.

The context is irreproducible in text or image.

The context is segregated based on gender performed.

In *Stranger and Friend,* Hortense Powdermaker elucidates what it meant to be a woman in the field, to pass as black, and the ramifications of "going native". Standing in line at a checkpoint in Najaf, I found myself recalling Powdermaker's work, particularly the quote, "When I inadvertently "passed" for Negro, I would return to the boarding house and look in the mirror, wondering if the color of my skin had changed. There was always some tension in the situation for me." (1966: 196) When there are checkpoints in society that manage the corporeality of assigning identity, there will always be the complications of "passing" (Ritchie 2010). In the time of war, every *body* is constantly being read, interpreted, and contextualized as a body/subject while traversing the cityscape. As a female academic from an immigrant community from the East/Global South living in a diaspora in the West/Global North, the materiality and corporeality of all visual cues on my body were constantly in question, shifting and transmutable (Rizvi 2008; c.f. Minh-ha 1989). Inside the (gendered female) checkpoints, the (female) security guards were ready with their own questions as they ran their hands over my chest, and down my arms, "*Ayna Inti*?" "*Ahaal kuja hastid*?" "*Kahan say*?" in various languages (Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, respectively) I would be asked where I was from, based on what they thought I could understand. I would reply in Arabic, "*Ana -amreeki*" (I am American)—at which point they would laugh, pinch their fingers in front of their faces while moving their hands back and forth would say "*Asli asli*"– what is my origin, my essence. As the guards would check my notebook, one of them would ask about what I was writing and my profession. Unless there was a large group of women waiting, upon hearing that I was an archaeologist, discussions would ensue that focused on where I had done archaeological work, what my level of education was, and what I thought about Iraq's antiquity. My identity as an archaeologist trumped any discussion of my essential origin and triggered a form of archaeological public discourse in the most unlikely areas—the interior spaces of a checkpoint. This identity allowed me to create the context within which discursive data was generated, although in that moment, it was performed to keep me safe, out of suspicion, and most importantly, to help me pass through the checkpoint.

The methodology related to collection strategy was unstable, unexpected, and unplanned. I had not entered into these spaces looking for anything; I had entered these spaces to survive. In those moments, this was not a project, it had not yet started; it was in the process of becoming. The data for this project comes from the few scribbled notes I had taken with pencils in the back of prayer books, napkins, and notebooks. At checkpoints cell phones, pens, cameras, lipstick/chap stick, anything that could potentially be seen or regarded as threatening was confiscated. I traveled only with a handkerchief, a small, unsharpened pencil, and a prayer or notebook. Most of the notes were filled in upon reaching back at my hotel, and further elaborated upon returning back to the United States. As I compulsively wrote these notes, particularly upon my return, I recognized this act as being one of trying to contend with the reality of war, the trauma of war, and the desire for that experience to be recognized and studied—an impulse of an academic trying to make sense of the world in which war was an everyday occurrence. This became an act of transformation from a witness to an historian (c.f. Garton Ash 1990).

Disciplined into my subjectivity as an archaeologist, one of the key absences in this project became transferable data beyond memory and experience of place. What sort of methodology does one employ when disallowed to take photographs, measure things, or document in any way that archaeologists are trained? I have no photographs of the streets, the walls, the buildings. In a space of war, unless permission was granted by the state, there was little to no room for the average citizen or visitor to document public experience, becoming a subtle yet violent stripping of individual rights to document/witness the trauma of war. In some capacity, such a condition suggests that perhaps there exist sites or events that resist archaeological study (Piccini, personal communication). Or it may be that memory and experience become documents in states of emergency (c.f. Sebald 2003).

Documenting the Contemporary: The Space and Place of Memory

> Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but rather a medium. It is the medium of that which is experienced, just as earth is the medium in which ancient cities lie buried. (Benjamin 1932)

Archaeological data, most traditionally, is studied as emerging from a certain provenience, in a certain matrix, and in association with other forms of data. Within that same discourse, these forms of data are based on both behavioral and transformational processes that are both human and natural (Ashmore & Sharer 2000: 60-67). This data is recovered from a medium and provides information for and about the material and immaterial within a place. Contemplating the medium of memory as context in a time of war, the data extracted follow similar forms of expression. Utilizing memory as a medium that holds the information rather than as information itself allows for a recalibration of remembrance, recognition, and recollection.

Whereas individual memory must be able to intertwine and interact with social and collective memory in order to provide a certain degree of authenticity (Olick & Robbins 1998), memory as a medium provides an alternative perspective to the collection of data. In documenting the contemporary, the stratigraphic record of memory is ineluctably contestable thus inherently self-reflexive. It may, in fact, be best documented then as what appears on the surface, rather than hidden deep below (c.f. Harrison 2011).

Modernity's anxiety with memory and the super-desire to collect material traces pushes the researcher to both text and image to create the archive (Freud 1929; Derrida 1998). Although Freud (1925) may argue that the archive is born out of the distrust of memory and the need to write something down in the event of possible forgetfulness, there is something about the archive that, as Jacques Derrida (1998) argues, has its own logic as a thing unto itself and within itself, as well as its own death and undoing. We look to the archive as a repository of national memory. In so far as that is the case, it is inherently hegemonic in its epistemology, in its formulation. And yet, we assume factual legitimacy of the materials collected within the archive, as if their buriedness, their inaccessibility, renders them truthful. Notes on a napkin and sketches do not often suffice as data for the modern collector of information—but in spaces of war, those ephemera provide additional context to the medium of memory. The idea of the archive, particularly in relation to trauma and violence is something that most Freudian analysts would argue is contingently unrepresentable. However, in allowing the medium of memory to be surveyed, an archaeology of now has the possibility to resist grand narratives and their associated images.

Photographs are used to bear witness to the atrocities of war becoming the official gaze and image (Zelizer 1998). And yet, when one looks at the actual images of the war and compares them to the internal images from memory, there is a disjuncture: a moment seeped in the unfamiliar and uncanny. There is a distance that the image forces upon memory—until the memory is only made up of the image that dictates it. Upon returning from Iraq in 2009, I attempted to reconstruct the cityscape through images that I researched—until I realized that those images were replacing my memory. I could not recognize the streets of the everyday because in the every day, one moves through spaces not through images of those spaces. In obsessively documenting these spaces through experiences, the "normal processes that people go through often as a matter of course," (Harrison &

Schofield 2010: 70) recently scholars dealing with issues of cultural memory, architectural spaces and heritage have attempted to radicalize the hierarchies of text and image (Andreassen, Bjerck & Olsen 2010) and contend with the destruction of architecture as collective memory (Bevan 2006; Herscher 2010). However, in a time of war, space itself is constantly altered.

In order to keep checkpoints effective and safe, military strategy dictates that these points constantly shift and change. Thus, as the cityscape continues to be altered by bombs, it utilizes the one possible web of stability and makes that unstable as well—every few days, while I was in Kauzmain and Najaf, the checkpoint locations changed. The city is left in constant flux—the everydayness of walking through and encountering a city (c.f. de Certeau 1984), knowing a city, is disturbed. Each change reminds one of why there is flux; there is a base level of traumatic understanding and reliving of violence in each new checkpoint location that is encountered. There is everydayness to the distancing, detachment, and disillusionment that the individual feels walking through similarly detached buildings. Buildings that might have had meanings and memories embodied within them, no longer exist as those very same buildings. Thus in the recollection of memories, one reconstructs not only the event but the physicality of that event. The building has effectively withdrawn and detached from its everyday guise, only to serve as an index of its own past. In fact, thinkers such as Jalal Toufic (2009) would argue that even if there were no visible marks of violence on the buildings, in the aftermath of a surpassing disaster, even the immaterial, such as tradition and heritage itself, withdraws.

The Materiality and Immateriality of War: Experiencing Checkpoints as Architecture and Space

Checkpoints generally don the state-sanctioned and instantiated guise of "security" and the façade of maintaining non-violence. Indexing cartographic aggression, checkpoints mark enforced borders by dominant states or oppressive regimes in order to control access and order the public. They act as in between spaces through which each body must traverse in order to move between larger places. As compared to most checkpoints in the world and the ways in which they articulate the separation between spaces, such as between nations, along borders, or even security at airports, the checkpoints in the cities in Iraq were, in early 2009, unique. This was partially because of the state of emergency and warfare in the cities themselves and partially due to, what seemed to be, mixed military strategies employed by American and Iraqi forces that had to do with the movement of checkpoints. These Iraqi checkpoints served to fragment the urban terrain in a systematic web of controlled locales, subjugating bodies. In an interesting turn and one that may be read as a form of resistance, many Iraqi's utilized Google Earth to locate the shifted locations of these checkpoints so as to by-pass the possible violence, delay, and humiliation of having to go through checkpoints on the way to work or school (Hussein 2009).

Each major intersection in the main cities in Iraq, such as Baghdad, Najaf, Samarra, etc. had a checkpoint, every major monument or building had numerous such points in the surrounding area, even though the building itself was pock-marked with bullet holes, or half of it lay in rubble. These checkpoints structurally enforce new borders and separations in an already war-torn urban landscape. Their multitude became undisclosed potential locales of violence, which allowed them to occupy the same ambiguous space of war—the possibility and impossibility of security.

Albeit contextualized within that uncertainty, the only spaces in which the city had some semblance of order in both the visceral and real (arguably hyper-real) were the spaces within the checkpoints. It was within those uncanny spaces that I became human again, where, although my identity was being questioned and negotiated by my possible answers, there was an ability for human interaction that involved recognition of our lives prior to the trauma of war—the life that I had been living before visiting Iraq, the life before the experience of war—and those normalizing discourses and spaces were where public interaction took place. The emergent reality was culturally context specific (Iraqi culture), with a cosmopolitan mix of women from different nations, and the feeling of "safety", as tenuous as it was, within the checkpoint allowed for discussion with people one does not usually see or know—an oddly public and urban feel for an enclosed private space.

Checkpoints are situated aesthetic experiences that are simultaneously infused with potential and kinetic violence; an experience that requires constantly negotiated performances of identity, in some cases choosing to reinstate static notions of self and subject. The roads between checkpoints were occupied by the "public" that included both men and women -upon reaching a checkpoint visually gendered women were separated into tents. Generally, there were two types of checkpoints, one that involved a line outside the tent, in which only one or two women would be allowed at a time, and the second, in which a larger tent was used, which easily fit over 20 women.

With the first, that is, the smaller tent, women were ushered into a line, on one or both sides of that line would be a male Iraqi police officer or army personnel with highly visible markers of ammunition, wearing heavy boots. Each woman in line would go in on one side of the tent and come out the other. In each tent, there were two to three female security guards who would physically search body and bags, engage in a brief dialog, and then let you exit the other side, where there was another male with heavy ammunition and heavy boots. These smaller checkpoints were neither as interactive, nor as discussion friendly.

In contrast, in the larger tents, where over 6-8 women would be placed as security guards, there were more conversations, and a general buzz would greet us as we walked inside. At the checkpoint there were metal railings that separated each of us as we walked into it, so as to create 4-5 lines. These railings were attached to a platform, elevating us slightly off the ground in order to make it easier for the guards to search our bodies. In observing this, I realized that it usually placed most women roughly at eye level because they had to take off their shoes (generally black heels) for security. It was in these larger tents that all sorts of discussions would take place between women allowing for more flexibility and textured conversation about everything from the price of tomatoes, to their children, to arguing about who was cutting in line, to asking each other to pray for the other. The normalcy of the inside chatter was in stark contrast to the general silence while walking outside—perhaps it was because there were no visible guns, perhaps it was the number of women in the tent, whatever it was, it allowed a momentary reprise from being in a space of war.

It was in fact, during one of these checkpoints early in my trip, while in Kauzmain, that I first encountered public archaeological discourse. While being searched, a few of the security guards and I discussed the antiquity of Iraq in comparison to what they knew of India. In the background, we could hear men screaming orders and the clamping of boots, indicating movement of soldiers. There was something oddly comforting about the discussion, one in which the stomping of the boots outside and the hands running down my legs checking for weapons, were made common-place by the tone used in the discussion by the guards – and through that first interaction, they normalized the space of war by placing me into a familiar discursive space of archaeology.

In another such encounter, while waiting in line at a check point in Kauzmain, a young woman standing in front of me asked me my name and profession as she pointed to my notebook. Upon hearing that I worked in India as an archaeologist, she remarked upon how I would understand and appreciate the antiquity of Iraq as India also came from an ancient past. She was not the only person to remark upon this parallel relationship of antiquity and how that the power of the antiquity of the land was the source of strength in such times. The woman standing in the line next to us nodded her head in solemn agreement, with the woman behind her adding that knowing history was, in fact, the way forward. The internalization of national rhetoric is not surprising (Haider 2001); however, which "history" they were referring to was very significant. In a post-Saddam era, these women were speaking of a new national history that included a *Shia* history, a history previously silenced. This became apparent as within the next few minutes, over ten women in line were talking about how significant it was that the historic monuments important to the *Shia* community were now made accessible to the public. As the conversation began to pick up momentum (and volume) within the tent, it was quieted down by the guards. The shushing from the guards brought about many lowered glances and giggles between the women indexing a form of familiarity and shared experience. Within those five or so minutes of discussion, women who did not seem to know each other, were brought together to discuss their own interactions with historic monuments, their ideas of what it meant to live in an ancient land, and their formulations of what might constitute a new national heritage.

Inside the checkpoints, publics formed around issues of national heritage and architecture of collective history. That same checkpoints' exteriority partitioned public space. The materiality of these checkpoints ripped the urban plan apart and created a new and constantly shifting ephemeral architecture of the city. This constant parceling of the city spaces, the destruction of the urban plan, and the construction of violence due to the unfolding war infused the cityscape with a thick, palpable feeling of exhaustion due to constancy of war. There was a simultaneity to the trauma and any attempt to move past that as the post-trauma; a cyclical treachery that led to distancing and detachment, not only in human behavior, but in the materiality of the buildings and the urban space itself.

The Trauma of War, the Subjective City and the Withdrawal of Heritage

> *Driving in Beirut's streets, the carcasses of abandoned buildings encrusted between functional buildings and receded to invisibility—in spite of their bulky concrete brownish grey stockiness—often seemed like a tenacious and surly reminder of that street or neighbourhood's previous life.* (Salti 2009)

The constant of war, the detachment, withdrawal, and excessive vigilance of space, material and humans in a contemporary moment provides indicators of the post-traumatic –and in this case the manner in which that form of trauma infuses city spaces. The cities, which are built to function on ordered principles, are completely disordered. In very real ways, wars affect all civic functions, water and sewage, electricity, phone lines collapse under the weight. Unable to perform daily routines drastically alter any human condition within that context. That inability for the city to enact city-ness imbues a certain feeling of hopelessness, helplessness, and inefficacy within the spaces of the city.

To live through the destructive moments directly affects the subjectivities of the individuals living in those spaces as well as the spaces within which they live. Documenting the civil war in Beirut, artists' project/publication entitled *Beirut Bereft: The Architecture of the Forsaken and Map of the Derelict* (2009) provides an autoethnographic journey through photographs of the architectural landscape of Beirut by Ziad Antar and an evocative and mournful account of growing up during the civil war and what happens after, by Rasha Salti. The haunting account by Salti illustrates the realities of war that go beyond fear of bodily harm, the moment of a transforming subjectivity:

> To be driven to exhaustion with one's life, out of breath and to the edge of despair, were not only sentiments commonplace to all in Beirut, they were sentiments I felt intensely, discerned fully, often. So were abrupt and seemingly irreversible departures. Overnight, people packed their bags and left their neighborhood, their city, their country, for good. In addition to attending wakes, I became accustomed to farewell bidding get-togethers. Departures seemed then just as radically irreversible as "good-byes" and "so longs" terminal. With postal service entirely defunct and phone lines operational on whim, there was no hope of maintaining contact. Farewells were more poignant than wakes. I, we, those left behind, were being abandoned by those who chose to leave. The blinding pain of enduring (and accepting) being abandoned was only assuaged with the passage of time. Just as with mourning death. Soon enough farewell parties and wakes became confused. I remember being scared of being left amongst those left behind. (2009: 11-15)

The reality of war and separation leave indelible marks on our subjectivity. This fear, not always of one's own death, but a constant fear of loss infuses every interaction. The loss of individuals and the loss of normalcy: a simple task of buying fruit or honey from the local market can never be experienced as an every day event during a time of war. It is not only the human factor that creates the uncanny city, but rather, the city itself is disempowered because it is disordered. In encountering the trauma of an unrecognizable and withdrawn city, in this case, Samarra, Iraq, I experienced what Freud called a feeling of derealization (*Entfremdungsgefühl*) in his open letter, *A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis*: "What I see here is not real." (1968 (1936): 110) The city was not real to me—although I had *heard* that it had undergone this transformation through war—I had *learnt* about it—but the reality of its existence could not compare to the distance I felt due to the detachedness of the city I was standing in. I knew I was in Samarra, I could see the wide expanse of the *maidan* (open dusty field) that led up to the Malwiya Tower, and yet the gates, the walls, the tower all eluded me and any form of documentation. As an archaeologist who has visited many historical monuments and felt buildings as subjective material forms, it was disconcerting to feel emptiness as I stood next to the Tower. The transformation of these city spaces seemed beyond what I could understand as real (c.f. Vidler 1994).

In truth, I am willing to accept that perhaps these architectural forms withdrew from my understanding of them as I was nothing more than a visitor, incapable of experiencing trauma of a city not my own. It was only after my experience in Iraq that the beginning sequence in the film *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) resonated. The inability to experience trauma and memory of trauma as a visitor is best articulated in the beginning of the film in which the emic and etic experiences of trauma determine how memory may or may not be able to form authentic recollection. For individuals whose homes, neighborhoods, and cities have been affected by violence, the images of the past insist and resist erasure even if the physical elements have been removed for reconstructive purposes. In an ethnography of post-war Beirut, Yasmeen Arif discusses the reconstruction of a neighborhood with its inhabitants:

> Mrs. Nabti: After they (SOLIDERE) finished the demolition we went down to look around and I stood there in front of the past and all I could see was the image even though it was empty. You know how one can be shocked? I was shocked. (2002:121)

These aspects of architectural and spatial imagination in moments of trauma evoke new formulations of tradition and heritage: some as forms of nostalgia, and others as forms of healing.

Fractured Heritage: Some Concluding Thoughts

It was clear during my time in Iraq, that although war was taking a heavy toll on the population of people I interacted with, it was not erasing their sense of national heritage. If anything, the discourse around archaeology and the nation was flourishing, in part due to the ability of previously silenced communities to have a say in what that history may include and having more direct access to the past. In one particularly enlightening conversation, a young man who managed a store in Karbala asked me if all archaeologists knew the value of a vessel the moment they saw it and if not, how one put a price tag on the vessel. He provided examples of other forms of value creation such as how jewelers measure out gold, adding in wastage and craftsmanship when establishing the price of a necklace. I responded, as I have been disciplined by my practice to say, that archaeologists could not and should not put price tags on the past and that the inherent value of archaeological objects are the intangible, etc. and that if they saw such artifacts floating around they should make sure to send it back to the museum since it did more good in the public realm. This response was met with an interesting discussion by most of the people in the small group that had formed: they had never been to the museums, not because of lack of interest but because of the over twenty years of war (starting with the Iran-Iraq war), the museums were often closed. The concept of cultural and national heritage in connection to artifacts was, I realized, on shaky ground. Many of them knew about the sites, knew about the antiquity of the land, but had not visited the sites because they were either soldiers in the war, or fearful of their safety.

Interestingly enough, in every, if not all conversations about the past, people would articulate very specific relationships that they had with ancient Iraq. For example, in a checkpoint in Kauzmain, the security guard who was patting me down simultaneously provided a commentary about how "the land was of their ancestors and it is that tie that gave them strength in the face of adversity." The destruction of ancient monuments and museums was placed in the discursive realm of national heritage. It was something that was being dismantled or fractured, but could not be destroyed. This was because, I was told, of its antiquity, linking in a very direct and continuous manner the nation to a pre-modern and ancient past in an unchanging form.

Given the war context, I recognized some of the problematic statements linking the past the present as reinstating national identity, linking a body to a land in a way that excludes all others; particularly not reflective of the many immigrant populations that have settled over the past few millennia. I chose not engage in that debate at that time. It is also important to note that not all conversations dealt with heritage in this manner. During the time I was in Iraq, reports of a contemporary art exhibition taking place in Baghdad were circulating (see Meyers 2009). In the checkpoints in Karbala, embedded in the discussions of heritage as being linked to antiquity, were a few moments in which the women discussed how such shows of contemporary art might also be considered within national heritage.

Also in these discussions of heritage, the metaphor of roots *"jazwar/gazwar"* was often used. There was a form of resilience in which it seemed to be a given that an Iraqi heritage would grow back as an organic process. National heritage was a form a natural heritage. Whether or not this can be read as a problematic assertion is somewhat irrelevant for this study. The publics which formed around the discourses of the past demonstrate a certain fracturing but not erasure of national heritage in a time of war. In some sense, that fracturing is necessary to allow for a new plurality of histories to find space in national narratives. Although difficult, an archaeology of the present in an on-going war may provide a mode of witnessing and documenting the trauma of a fractured heritage thereby creating space for new discourses to emerge that may allow for some form of healing in a post-war moment. It is within this context then that such a project simultaneously becomes an archaeology of supermodernity, "an archaeology of us who are alive…but more than any other, an archaeology of trauma, emotion, and intimate involvement." (González-Ruibal 2008: 248) In this contemporary moment an archaeology of on-going war, as ephemeral and shifting as it may be, provides nuance to the narratives of war and allows

us to encounter an otherwise withdrawn and resistant landscape—not to insist on manifestations of data, but rather, to acknowledge the existence and effects of violence on subjectivities, cityscapes, and heritage.

Postscript

It is important to note that not every interaction with war and the state was so easy and tinged with romantic nostalgia. I am sure I have, during the experience itself and in my recollection of it, chosen specific narratives that provided solace in an otherwise extremely dangerous and hostile environment. It allows me to reconcile the fact that I, unlike many American archaeologists who go to Iraq, did not have body armor, nor was I escorted by any military police or security force. I had a black *chador*, with jeans and a sweater on underneath. Uncharacteristic for my usual "archaeological attire," I had no cell phone, no camera, no GPS, no map. However, I could not step out of my anthropological upbringing and thus continued to document to control my fear. The discussions about national and cultural heritage, a semi-public discourse became just as much about archaeology as much as it was a way to hold on to some aspect of normality—a memory of life before the context of war. This dual functionality categorizes this project as autoethnographic as well, if for no other reason than to contend with post-traumatic stress combined with culture shock that emerged upon returning to the United States (c.f. Behar 1996).

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, tr. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Andreassen, Elin, Bjerck, Hein, and Olsen, Bjørnar. 2010 *Persistent Memories: Pyramiden—a Soviet Mining Town in the High Arctic*. Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press.

Arif, Yasmeen. 2002. Past Places/Future Spaces: Reconstructing Post-War Beirut. *The Cities of Everyday Life*, Sarai Reader 2: 117–25. Delhi: Sarai Media Lab.

Ashmore, Wendy and Sharer, Robert. 2000. *Discovering our Past: A Brief Introduction to Archaeology*, 3rd edn. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Bahrani, Zainab. 2003a. Iraq's Cultural Heritage: Monuments, History, and Loss. *Art Journal* 62 (4): 11–17.

—2003b. Looting and Conquest. *The Nation*, 26 May. Available at: <http://www.thenation.com/article/looting-and-conquest> (accessed 24 October 2011).

Behar, Ruth. 1996. *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Benjamin, Walter. 1932. Excavation and Memory. In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings* Volume 2, Part 2 1931–1934, tr. Rodney Livingstone and others, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, p. 576. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Bevan, Robert. 2006. *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*. London: Reaktion Books. Bogdanos, Michael. 2005. Casualties of War: Truth and the Iraq Museum. *American Journal of Archaeology* 190: 477–526.

Brodie, Neil and Renfrew, Colin. 2005. Looting and the World's Archaeological Heritage: The Inadequate Response. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 343–61.

de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, tr. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1998. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Freud, Sigmund. 1968a [1929]. Civilization and its Discontents. *In Civilization, War and Death*, ed. J. Rickman, pp. 26–81. Psycho-Analytical Epitomes No. 4. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

—1968b [1936]. A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis. In *Civilization, War and Death*, ed. J. Rickman, pp. 103–15. Psycho-Analytical Epitomes No. 4. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

—2006 [1925]. A Note upon the Mystic Writing- Pad. In *The Archive*, ed. C. Merewether, pp. 20–4. Boston, MA: MIT Press.

Garton-Ash, Timothy. 1990. *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of 1989 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. New York: Vintage Books.

Gonzalez, Roberto J. 2007. Towards Mercenary Anthropology? The New US Army Counterinsurgency Manual FM 3–24 and the Military–Anthropology Complex. *Anthropology Today* 23(3):14–19.

Gonzalez-Ruibal, Alfredo. 2008. Time to Destroy: An Archaeology of Supermodernity. *Current Anthropology* 49(2): 247–79.

Haider, Hind. 2001. Nationalism, Archaeology, and Ideology in Iraq from 1921 to the Present. Master's Thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

Hamilakis, Yannis. 2003. Iraq, Stewardship and "The Record": An Ethical Crisis for Archaeology. *Public Archaeology* 3: 104–11.

—2009. The "War on Terror" and the Military–Archaeology Complex: Iraq, Ethics, and Neo-Colonialism. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 5: 39–65.

Harrison, Rodney. 2011. Surface Assemblages. Towards an Archaeology *in* and *of* the Present. *Archaeological Dialogues* 18(2): 141–61.

Harrison, Rodney and Schofield, John. 2010. *After Modernity: Archaeological Approaches to the Contemporary Past*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herscher, Andrew. 2010. *Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hussein, Aqeel. 2009. Google Earth, the Survival Tool of War-Torn Iraq. *The Telegraph*, 15 February. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1542775/Google-Earth-the-survival-tool-of-war-torn-Iraq.html> (accessed 1 November 2011).

Meyers, Steven Lee. 2009. A New Role for Iraqi Militants: Patron of the Arts. *The New York Times*, 13 February. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/14/world/middleeast/14baghdad.html> (accessed 24 October 2011).

Minh-ha, Trinh. 1989. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Olick, Jeffery and Robbins, Joyce.1998. Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 105–40. Powdermaker, Hortense. 1966. *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Ritchie, Jason. 2010. Queer Checkpoints: Sexuality, Survival, and the Paradoxes of Sovereignty in Israel-Palestine. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Rizvi, Uzma Z. 2008. Decolonizing Methodologies as Strategies of Practice: Operationalizing the Postcolonial Critique in the Archaeology of Rajasthan. In *Archaeology and the Postcolonial Critique,* ed. Matthew Liebmann and Uzma Rizvi, pp. 109–27. Archaeology and Society Series. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Rothfield, Lawrence (ed.). 2008. *Antiquities Under Siege: Cultural Heritage Protection after the Iraq War*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.

Salti, Rasha and Antar, Ziad. 2009. *The Architecture of the Forsaken and Map of the Derelict*. Sharjah: Sharjah Art Foundation.

Sebald, Winfried Georg. 2003. *On the Natural History of Destruction*, tr. Anthea Bell. New York: Random House.

Slater, Emma and Ball, James. 2011. Hundreds of Civilians Gunned Down at Checkpoints. *Iraq War Logs*, 22 October. Available at: <http://www.iraqwarlogs.com/2010/10/22/more-than- 600-civilians-killed-in-error-by-coalition-forces-in-iraq/> (accessed 13 October 2011).

Starzmann, Maria T. 2010. Structural Violence as Political Experience in Palestine: An Archaeology of the Past in the Present. *Present Pasts* 2(1): 126–41.

Stone, Peter. 2005. The Identification and Protection of Cultural Heritage During the Iraq Conflict: A Peculiarly English Tale. *Antiquity* 79: 1–11.

Toufic, Jalal. 2009. *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster*. Los Angeles: California Institute of the Arts/REDCAT/Forthcoming Books.

Vidler, Anthony. 1994. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Boston, MA: MIT Press.

Warren, John. 2005. War and the Cultural Heritage of Iraq: A Sadly Mismanaged Affair. *Third World Quarterly* 26(4–5): 815–30.

Zelizer, Barbie. 1998. *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

THE WITHDRAWAL OF TRADITION PAST A SURPASSING DISASTER

(EXCERPT)

JALAL TOUFIC

If the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, are a surpassing disaster then beyond not only the immediate death toll and the manifest destruction of buildings, including museums, libraries and temples, and of various other sorts of physical records, but also the long-term hidden material effects, in cells that have been affected with radioactivity in the "depth" of the body, and the latent traumatic effects that may manifest themselves *après coup*, there would be an additional immaterial withdrawal of literary, philosophical and thoughtful texts as well as of certain films, videos, and musical works, notwithstanding that copies of these continue to be physically available; of paintings and buildings that were not physically destroyed; of spiritual guides; and of the holiness/specialness of certain spaces. In other words, whether a disaster is a surpassing one (for a community—defined by its sensibility to the immaterial withdrawal that results from such a disaster) cannot be ascertained by the number of casualties, the intensity of psychic traumas and the extent of material damage, but by whether we encounter in its aftermath symptoms of withdrawal of tradition.[1]

In countries, such as Bosnia, Lebanon, or Rwanda, that have suffered a brutal civil war, one encounters myriad cases of traumatized survivors. Many of these survivors seek psychiatric treatment to regain a cathexis of the world, including of tradition and culture in general. But that subjective working through cannot on its own succeed in remedying the withdrawal of tradition, for that withdrawal is not a subjective symptom, whether individual or collective, and therefore cannot be fully addressed by psychiatrists or psychoanalysts, but demands the resurrecting efforts of writers, artists, and thinkers. Without the latter's contribution, either the psychiatric treatment fails, or else though the patient may leave ostensibly healthy, he or she soon discovers that tradition, including art, is still withdrawn.

With regard to the surpassing disaster, art acts like the mirror in vampire films: it reveals the withdrawal of what we think is still there. "You have seen nothing in Hiroshima" (Duras's *Hiroshima mon amour*, 1961).[2] Does this entail that one should not record? No. One should record this "nothing," which only after the resurrection can be available. We have to take photographs even though because of their referents' withdrawal, and until their referents are resurrected, they are not going to be available as referential, documentary pieces—with the concomitant risk that facets relating to the subject matter might be mistaken for purely formal ones. A vicious circle: what has to be recorded has been withdrawn, so that, unless it is resurrected, it is going to be overlooked; but in order to accomplish that prerequisite work of resurrection to avert its overlooking, one has initially to have, however minimally, perceived it, that is, countered its withdrawal, that is, resurrected it. But how can one speak of a withdrawal of civil war Beirut buildings when refugees still noticed and lived in them? Yet aren't these refugees, who are marginalized because of their lack of political power and their economic destitution, affected with an additional overlooking through their association with these withdrawn buildings? The Lebanese's overall obliviousness and indifference to documenting the carnage through photographs, films, and videos cannot be fully explained by the circumstance that toward the end of the civil war they must have grown habituated to the destruction around them, as well as by the fact that many of these ruined areas were declared military zones, off-limits to cameras. Can photographs of these withdrawn buildings become available without resurrecting their withdrawn referents? It seems such photographs become themselves withdrawn. There is going then to be "a time of development" of the chemically developed photographs taken during the latter stages of the war. The documentation is for the future not only in the sense that it preserves the present referent for future generations, but also in that it can function as a preservation of the referent only in the future, only when the work of resurrection has countered the withdrawal. He thought that until such photographs become available, one of the appropriate sites for their exposition would be the Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, next to the spaces left blank following the March 18, 1990, theft of several famous paintings from the museum, thus confronting the viewer with two different kinds of unavailability, a material and an immaterial one. While in the West there has been a proliferation of new museums (Mario Botta's San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain; Steven Holl's Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland; Steven Holl's Knut Hamsun Centre, Prestied, Norway; Hans Hollein's Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt, Germany; Daniel Libeskind's Felix Nussbaum Museum, Osnabrück, Germany; Richard Meier's Getty Center, Los Angeles ...); extensions to existing museums (Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, an extension of the Berlin Museum; the Grand Louvre Project [1981–1999], which involved the doubling in size, to 60,000 m², of the exhibition areas of the museum ...); new libraries (Sandy Wilson's British Library, St Pancras, London;[3]

Dominique Perrault's Bibliothèque nationale de France; Mete Arat and Hans-Dieter and Gisela Kaiser's German National Library, Frankfurt am Main...); and cataloguing and inventorying, as exemplified by Macmillan's *The Dictionary of Art* (1996), with its thirty-four volumes, 41,000 articles, 6,802 contributing scholars, and 15,000 black-and-white illustrations, Afghans, Bosnians, and Iraqis have been divested of much of their artistic tradition, not only through material destruction, but also through immaterial withdrawal. Even were substantial parts of the contents of both the National and University Library and the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo to somehow be recovered (in the form of copies that happened to be on loan to other libraries or of microfilm copies of the originals in other libraries...),[4] this would not be enough to make them once more fully available. Increasingly in the West, absence is affected with a mode of presence through telepresence and telesensing; increasingly in the "developing" countries, presence is affected with an absence through the (negative) matting due to the withdrawal of tradition past surpassing disasters.

After the surpassing disaster, while the documentation of the referent is for the future, the presentation of the withdrawal is an urgent task for the present. If he tried to document specifically Beirut's *Aswāq* (in the central district), it was not that this area was particularly—as a possible consequence of the severe damage it had undergone—withdrawn, but because large sections of it were in imminent danger of being erased without true deliberation, to provide space for the construction of a new city center. He had to explicitly show that some of these severely damaged and/or ruined buildings had withdrawn: as a preventive measure against others, although ostensibly perceiving them, unconsciously acting as if they weren't there. To allow the discussion about the future condition of these severely damaged and/or ruined buildings not to be a foregone oversight, it was crucial not only to criticize the financial interests at stake and the subjective wish to forget whatever had strong associations with so many individual and collective traumas, but also to either resurrect these buildings or make manifest their withdrawal through art and architectural works, so that they would still be available for the argument against their demolition. What contributed to the failure to save these severely damaged and/or ruined buildings in the *Aswāq* area was that artists and filmmakers managed neither to resurrect them nor to manifest their withdrawal, so that the withdrawal not having become explicit, hence not having become a factor that one could consciously and intentionally try to counter when thinking and planning the future of the city, these withdrawn buildings could so easily be overlooked, and thus could so readily be demolished so that a new commercial center could replace them. Did they erase many severely damaged buildings and/or ruins to forget, or was it rather that they were able to erase them so easily because these severely damaged and/or ruined buildings were withdrawn by the surpassing disaster and therefore somewhat already quasi-forgotten, so that the erasure largely implemented the forgetfulness embodied in these severely damaged and/or ruined buildings? Not being part of the community that suffered the surpassing disaster that ravaged Sarajevo, the American architect Lebbeus Woods could notice the severely damaged and/or ruined buildings and recommend in a book their integration into the future reconstructed city. But, as a consequence of the withdrawal, those belonging to that community treated that book with obliviousness, overlooking it and its recommendations. After the surpassing disaster, the duty of at least some artists is to disclose the withdrawal (Duras's *Hiroshima mon amour*, 1961; Godard's *King Lear*, 1987; Boltanski's *Monument: La Fête de Pourim*, 1988) and/or to resurrect what has been withdrawn (Godard's *King Lear*).

Jocelyne Saab's *Once Upon a Time: Beirut* (*Kān ya mā kān Bayrūt*), 1994, is a film about forgetting, unfortunately mainly in the sense that it is an unmindful film: it is grotesque how quickly it forgets even the memorable Duras epigraph with which it starts: "... Like you, I wanted my memory to be inconsolable, a memory of shadow and stone.... Like you, I have forgotten...." Memory is not to be limited, as in Saab's film, to human recollection and archival images. The loss of memory in *Hiroshima mon amour* is implied not only in the French woman's melancholia as to the ineluctability of forgetting her German lover and the nuclear devastation of Hiroshima, but also in the Japanese man's repeated "You have seen nothing in Hiroshima." Forgetfulness is not always the result of subjective factors; it is sometimes an effect of an objective withdrawal of beings (for example, of film images [shadows] and buildings [stone]) due to a surpassing disaster. A memory of that whose withdrawal is in the guise of its abrupt forgetfulness by those belonging to the community of the surpassing disaster is a betrayal of it, a false memory. To accord with the "Like you, I have forgotten..." of the Duras epigraph with which her film opens would have entailed showing that some of the archival documentary footage Saab presents, for example, some of the images of Lebanon in the 1920s, had undergone a withdrawal. Is there a more effective way to hide that certain images that withdrew as a consequence of a surpassing disaster are inaccessible than to have the film's characters enter in them? But past a surpassing disaster, one's appearance in images of an earlier period rather than implying that they are available, and that they thus provide and instance some form of memory, would in a genuine film, on the contrary, suggest that the country that underwent the surpassing disaster was so divested from the others that it turned into a radical closure. The radical closure allows the irruption of unworldly ahistorical versions of the two protagonists in the images,[5] but the images themselves are withdrawn. The film reel that is forgotten in the taxicab and presumably lost gets returned to the two young female protagonists and projected: a missed opportunity to subtly imply the withdrawal of the images. Saab could still have intimated the withdrawal by designing the insertion of the two female actresses in the archival images in such a way as to put in doubt the authenticity of these images; or by having the images of the two characters in the film scenes they shot of each other in early 1990s Beirut manifest the same impression of artificiality and overlaying as the clearly matted shots of them in the 1920s Beirut archival images. Unfortunately this is not the case in Saab's work. It is not fortuitous that Beirut is represented mostly through bad Egyptian movies in a film directed by a journalist, that is, by someone belonging to a profession that has not provided examples of sensing the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster, let alone of contributing to tradition's resurrection. While, with rare exceptions, commercial culture, which to many is what is most linked to actuality, has not been withdrawn by the series of catastrophes that hit the Arab world and that added up to a surpassing disaster, much of "avant-garde" writing and art, as well as all genuinely traditional art and writing, which is viewed by many as the part of culture least connected to current events, have been withdrawn by the present surpassing disaster. After a public reading from my book *Over-Sensitivity*, I played back *taqāsīm* on *maqām nahawand* performed by Riād al-Sunbāṭī and on *maqām kurd* performed by Munīr Bashīr. Soon after the music started, and except for me, the Middle Easterners present there began swaying their heads to the sounds. After the music stopped, I affirmed: "I am trying to resurrect tradition to be able to really hear this music again, accompanying it then with the quasi-*dhikr* of a musical high (*Allāh! ... Allāh! ...*)." Judging from their reaction to the surpassing disaster, many presumably elitist artists and writers are much more in touch with actuality than commercial culture. Tradition is not merely what materially and ostensibly survived "the test" of time: in normal times a nebulous entity despite the somewhat artificial process of canon formation, tradition becomes delineated and specified by the surpassing disaster. Tradition is what conjointly materially survived the surpassing disaster, was immaterially withdrawn by it, and had the fortune of being subsequently resurrected by artists, writers, and thinkers. Many works one had taken to be part of tradition are revealed by their availability past a surpassing disaster as not really part of tradition; contrariwise, many modernist works of art that vehemently attacked "tradition" are, prior to any reluctant gradual canonization, revealed by their withdrawal to be part of that tradition.

There were two fundamental kinds of out-of-focus and/or sloppy compositions in the photographs, films, and videos of the period around the Lebanese civil war:

- Those from the civil war's period itself were due to one or several of the following factors: the threatening conditions under which the photographer was taking them; the hasty looking away on encountering the gutted, decomposing corpses; the proximity of the dead—come to prevent the world's desertion of those suffering a surpassing disaster from turning into a radical closure—against whose freezing, not as corpses (*rigor mortis* is a form of motion*less*ness, therefore still a variety of motion) but as creatures of the undeath realm, all motions, including the restless motionlessness of the living, appear blurry; and the entranced states in which the encounter with the dead often occurs.

- Those from the aftermath of the civil war were due mainly to the withdrawal of what was being photographed.

Like so many others, he had become used to viewing things at the speed of war. So for a while after the civil war's end, he did not take any photographs nor shoot any videos, waiting until he learned to look again at a leisurely pace. This period of adjustment lasted a full two years. Yet even after he became used to looking at buildings and experiencing events at the rhythm of peace, the photographs of the ruins in Lebanon taken by this Lebanese photographer, who classically composed those of his photographs shot in other countries, still looked like they were taken by a photographer lacking time to aim since in imminent danger, the compositions haphazard and the focus almost always off. He was asked if he was influenced by such works as Vito Acconci's *Fall* (1969): a series of photographs Acconci produced by clicking his handheld camera as he reached the ground while repeatedly falling forward; or Michael Snow's *Venetian Blind* (1970): twenty-four snapshots he

took with his eyes closed, each showing a blurred Snow against the accidentally framed background of a section of Venice. He was aware of and attracted by the blurring in Snow's piece and by the random compositions in Acconci's photographs. But he could recognize no basic similarity between these works and his current photographs, since the earth and grass in the Acconci photographs, the sections of Venice in *Venetian Blind*, as well as the road, filmed without looking through the viewfinder, in Snow's *Seated Figures* (1988) are available to Acconci and to Snow. The question revealed a misunderstanding, since in his work the out-of-focus and/or the haphazard framings were not a formal strategy but due to the withdrawal and thus unavailability to vision of the material.

They sent him to shoot a photographic portfolio of the destruction in Bosnia. He returned with thousands of largely blurred and haphazardly framed photographs of intact buildings with no shrapnel or shrapnel marks, indeed not even broken glass. He insisted that these photographs should be grouped into an exhibition titled "The Savage War." Some felt offended at what they found to be tasteless humor; others had to admit that they were surprised that so many buildings had weathered the war unscathed. Many thought that he was facetious or that he was apologetic for the aggressors. Someone remarked critically: "One more example of a disciple trying to outdo his master: a Baudrillardian photographer implying that not only the Gulf War but also this one did not take place." He did not care to reply to someone who simplified both his work and that of Baudrillard. Someone unaware that due to the withdrawal past a surpassing disaster something in the referent cannot be localized exactly, whether with regards to framing or focus or both, asked critically whether the blurring and hit-or-miss framings were intentionally created by him to give the sensation they were shot during the war. "No."

Someone had forgotten a high-quality laser reproduction of Boltanski's *Altar to the Chases High School* (1988) in the copy of *The Holocaust Museum in Washington* (Rizzoli, 1995) that he checked out from a library. Is the blurring in Boltanski's reproduction of a graduation photograph he found in a school yearbook an enhancement of the expressivity of the photograph, as curator Lynn Gumpert proposes ("Boltanski transformed them into skeletal vestiges—their eyes reduced to empty black sockets, any hint of a smile metamorphosed into a grimace of death"[6])? Does it render for us the loss of individuation to which those depicted would have been subjected in the camps? Is it to give the sensation that those depicted are already fading from memory? Or is it rather to render the stereotypical association of the dead with haze and furtiveness? None of the above. These blurred photographs disclose to us nothing beyond their referent's withdrawal and possibly their own withdrawal as a result of a surpassing disaster.[7] After looking at that Boltanski photograph for a few minutes, he went back to looking at the illustrations and photographs in the book. He could no longer really focus on them. They had become blurred and distant. He felt that it was with eyes adjusted to the blurriness of that Boltanski photograph that he was looking at the Auschwitz prisoner identification photographs included in the book. Is it conceivable that a curator would place a Boltanski piece such as *Reserves: The Purim Holiday* (1989), based on a photograph of a Purim celebration at a Jewish school in France, 1939, in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC? It is certainly conceivable, since the vast majority of curators would be oblivious of how this would affect all the items there with blurring. In which case, I would not be surprised were some spectator at the museum's cinema to suddenly yell: "Focus!" Who may have such an experience on seeing Boltanski's blurred photograph? Is it everybody? Not at all, and this despite what Boltanski himself implies in an interview in the journal *Autrement*, 1996. Only those who belong to the community of that surpassing disaster would have such an experience.

The "You have seen nothing in Hiroshima" said by the Japanese man to the visiting French woman could at one level mean: You, a French woman, removed from both the direct experience of the atomic explosion and its radioactive aftereffects should not have the presumption to consider that you have seen anything in Hiroshima. At yet another level, it includes her in the community, since she is experiencing the withdrawal due to the surpassing disaster. If she reacts negatively to the Japanese man's words, insisting that she has seen certain things, it must be because, being an ethical person, she is not sure she is yet of that community.[8] Those Americans who managed to pressure the Smithsonian to an out-and-out scaling back of the exhibit "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II" it planned to hold in 1995 at the National Air and Space Museum are certainly not ones who "have seen nothing in Hiroshima"; they are merely ones who do not want others to see what they presume is perceptible. To very few Westerners would I say: "You have seen nothing in West Beirut" or "You have seen nothing in Iraq." How little has Herzog, the director of *Lessons of Darkness*, 1991, seen in Iraq and the Kuwaiti theater of operations in the aftermath of the Gulf War! With rare people would one progress from "You have seen little in Iraq" (most frequently because they have scant historical knowledge and no direct experience and depend for their political outlook on the biased mainstream media of the West) to "You have seen nothing in Iraq," because they now belong to the community of the surpassing disaster and thus are affected with the withdrawal. The first expression is critical and exclusive; the second is inclusive when in relation to communities that underwent a surpassing disaster. I highly respect Duras for having "seen nothing in Hiroshima"; I feel contempt for her for how little she saw in Palestine and in Iraq. I certainly would not have said to the living Duras: "You have seen nothing in Palestine and Iraq. Nothing"!

In the two film series I curated at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, I did not show any works whose main function is to provide a critique or parody of stereotypes of Middle Easterners, let alone works that do not even furnish such a critique but merely the occasion for subsequent verbose discussions full of resentment. Anyone whose "art" merely revolves around how better to express and convey such a critique reveals that he or she is an academician himself or herself through his or her obliviousness, even at the intuitive level, to the connection of stereotypes to the unconscious. Certainly by now any aspiring academician who intends to once more catalogue the litany of stereotypes the majority of Westerners have of Arabs, Iranians, etc., as his or her contribution to one more anthology negotiating something or other around issues of multiculturalism, orientalism, etc.,[9] has to ask himself or herself how much these stereotypes are linked to the unconscious and its processes—no widespread stereotype is not implicated with the unconscious—and therefore, while arguably effective at the rational, conscious level if not at doing away with these stereotypes then at least at problematizing them, how little effective is the placement of a *no*, a negative sign, a critical attitude before these views whose addresser and addressee is mostly the unconscious, which "knows nothing that is negative, and no negation"[10] (Freud, who elsewhere writes, "'No' seems not to exist so far as dreams are concerned"[11]); indeed how largely counterproductive they are at the level where it really matters with stereotypes, the unconscious level. These critics and academics are playing an important role in the maintenance of these stereotypes at the level of the unconscious; moreover, they are indirectly propagating such stereotypes to sectors previously immune to them, since many people from other cultures and ethnic groups relax their vigilance when dealing with these academics seemingly defending them. I find the encounter with such ostensibly critical academic catalogues of stereotypes of Arabs even more oppressive than the rude transactions with prejudiced airport security officials or embassy employees. All in all, that the representation of Arabs and Iranians in the most simplistic manner (up to denying their existence: the description of Palestine by many of the early Zionists as "a land without a people") can facilitate the Israeli destruction of villages in South Lebanon in the name of a defense against terrorism (even guerrilla operations by the Lebanese against military targets in the part of Lebanon illegally occupied by Israel are termed terroristic!) is no excuse for limiting oneself to criticizing or parodying such widespread misrepresentations. "A woman cannot do much harm to a man. He carries all his tragedy within him. She can bother him, provoke him, she can even kill him—that's all."[12] (That is, even for those who consider that death is the absolute end and a total loss, all is not all.[13] To any totalizing "that is all," we, laconic mortals, have the reaction, and not tautologically: "That's all." That something exceeds all is implied by the difference between *that's all* and *that's all* and confirmed by the difference between *c'est tout* and *c'est tout* [this excess includes but is not reducible to this difference between *that's all* and *that's all* and between *c'est tout* and *c'est tout*].) In other words, they can bother us, for example by their ignorance of our tradition; provoke us, for example, with their resultant flagrant stereotypes about us; they can even treat us like potential terrorists and kill us—that's all. But is that all they can do? Kill us—in the hundreds of thousands? Unfortunately, they can do worse: produce a surpassing disaster and thus a withdrawal of tradition.

A Kashaya Pomo chief and scholar recently expressly discontinued the transmission of a tribal dance. Something must have indicated to her that the discontinuation of the transmission of the dance would be less detrimental and problematic than its handing down. Were it the case that their forebears had undergone only a vast catastrophe, the issue for the present-day Native Americans would plainly be to do everything possible to transmit the traditional songs and dances to their youths in spite of the latter's acculturation and indifference. But in case what was suffered was a surpassing disaster, one must be sensitive to the eventuality of the withdrawal, and, in the absence or failure of the resurrection of tradition, of the obligation to suspend transmission, so as not to hand down counterfeit tradition.[14]

Notes

1 Were no books, paintings, and buildings to withdraw past a disaster, does that imply necessarily that that disaster was not a surpassing one? Is it possible rather that there was no withdrawal past the disaster not because the latter is not a surpassing one but because that culture, however much it trumpets its self proclaimed "tradition," does not really have a tradition? Yes!

2 I have the feeling that although in all likelihood they despised horror films, Duras (the author of *Hiroshima mon amour* and the filmmaker of *Le camion*, etc.) as well as the Tarkovsky of *The Sacrifice* would have nonetheless been impressed by the absence of the undead from the mirror in front of which he or she happens to stand.

3 The library's design dates from 1975.

4 András Riedlmayer, "Erasing the Past: The Destruction of Libraries and Archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, July 1995: "On 25 August 1992, Bosnia's National and University Library ... was shelled and burned. Before the fire, the library held 1.5 million volumes, including over 155,000 rare books and manuscripts.... Bombarded with incendiary grenades from Serbian nationalist positions across the river, the library burned for three days; it was reduced to ashes with most of its contents.... Aida Buturovi, a librarian in the National Library's exchanges section, was shot to death by a sniper while attempting to rescue books from the flames. Three months earlier Sarajevo's Oriental Institute, home to the largest collection of Islamic and Jewish manuscript texts and Ottoman documents in Southeastern Europe, was shelled with phosphorus grenades and burned. Losses included 5,263 bound manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, and Aljamiado (Bosnian Slavic written in Arabic script) ... and 200,000 other documents of the Ottoman era.... In each case, the library alone was targeted; adjacent buildings stand intact to this day."

5 In the first edition of *Over-Sensitivity*, I used the term *eruption* to describe the sudden appearance of unworldly entities in radical closures. I now prefer and use the term *irruption* since eruption, if considered not in the sense I wanted, as an indicator of tone, namely the breaking out of a rash on the world, but as a violent or sudden release of some pressure, could easily be misunderstood in terms of a return of the repressed.

6 Lynn Gumpert, *Christian Boltanski* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 103.

7 Certainly in the voluminous work of Boltanski, the out-of-focus in some other instances (for example, some of the photographs of his *Detective*, 1972–73, which were cut from a specialized review of crime stories and which are of assassins and victims) reproduces a stereotypical image of the dead as revenants; and in yet other instances, it is simply formal.

8 Does the "You have seen nothing in Hiroshima" automatically include the non-Japanese film spectator? No.

9 When I wrote these words in the first edition of the book (2000), I was, through the term *negotiating*, referring to the plethora of 1990s books, mostly anthologies, with the title *Negotiating ——*. Most, if not all of these books have, deservedly, been forgotten by now, 2013.

10 Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 14, *On the History of the Psycho-analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology, and Other Works (1914–1916)*, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud; assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1957), 296.

11 Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 4 (1900), *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1st part, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud; assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953), 318.

12 These words appear, neither quoted nor attributed, in Godard's *New Wave*; they are from Jacques Chardonne's *L'amour c'est beaucoup plus que l'amour* ([Paris: Albin Michel, 1957], 33: "*Une femme ne peut pas beaucoup nuire à un homme. Il porte en lui-même toute sa tragédie. Elle peut le gêner, l'agacer. Elle peut le tuer. C'est tout*"). Some women might feel oversensitive to and wary of such formulation. I have no patience for a reflex reversal, or any abstract reaction; what I would appreciate would be some (comic?) rigorous reformulation, for example by Alenka Zupančič, the author of *The Odd One In: On Comedy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

13 This is clear also in the case of a radical closure and the structural eventual irruption of fully formed ahistorical entities in it: the radical closure is all, but, as is made manifest by the irruption of unworldly entities in it, that all is not all.

14 Past some surpassing disaster that caused the withdrawal of *Don Quixote*, it was not the ninth and the thirty-eighth chapters of part 1 of *Don Quixote* written by the Menard of Borges's "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*" that were counterfeit, but rather, pending its resurrection, Cervantes's book. I would think that by the time Menard finished chapter 22 of part 1 of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes's book was resurrected.

Artist Biographies

Haig Aivazian

Haig Aivazian (b. 1980, Beirut, Lebanon) is an artist, curator and writer. Using performance, video, drawing, installation and sculpture, his work weaves together personal and geo-political, micro and macro narratives in its search for ideological loopholes and short circuits.

Aivazian holds an MFA from Northwestern University and is a Skowhegan alumnus (2011). His work has been exhibited in France, Germany, Austria, Lebanon, the U.A.E, Brazil, Canada, and the U.S.A. *Refugee Olympics*, part of the *fugere* project, was commissioned for Sharjah Biennial 9 (2009) Other parts of FUGERE were exhibited in a solo show in Sfeir-Semler gallery's Hamburg space (2013). *Collapsing Foundations*, an installation and lecture-performance work, was showcased in a solo exhibition at Parisian Laundry's bunker space, Montréal (2012). Aivazian's video works have been included in several exhibitions and festivals including at Mercer Union, Toronto (2011), FIDMarseille (2012) and Videobrasil's Southern Panoramas (2013).

Among his curated exhibitions are: *Roads Were Open/Roads Were Closed* at The Third Line, Dubai (2008); and *Plot for a Biennial*, Sharjah Biennial 10 (2011), of which he was Associate Curator. Aivazian has written for a number of publications including *Afterall Journal, Manifesta Journal, FUSE, Adbusters, Ibraaz, Bidoun, AMCA (Association for Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran, and Turkey), The Arab Studies Journal,* as well as several exhibition catalogues. He is currently based in Beirut.

Jananne Al-Ani

Jananne Al-Ani is a London-based Iraqi-born artist. She studied Fine Art at the Byam Shaw School of Art and graduated with an MA in Photography from the Royal College of Art. She is currently Senior Research Fellow at the University of the Arts London.

Al-Ani has had solo exhibitions at the Hayward Gallery Project Space, London (2014); Beirut Art Center (2013); Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC (2012) and Darat al Funun, Amman (2010). Group exhibitions include *Mom, am I Barbarian?* 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013); *Re:emerge Towards a New Cultural Cartography* Sharjah Biennial 11 (2013); *all our relations*, 18th Biennale of Sydney (2012); *The Future of a Promise*, 54th Venice Biennale; *Closer*, Beirut Art Center (2009); and *Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2006).

Recipient of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize (2011) and the East International Award (2000), her work can be found in collections including the Tate Gallery and Imperial War Museum, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo and Darat al Funun, Amman.

George Awde

George Awde (b 1980) is currently an assistant professor of photography at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar and co-director of marra.tein, a residency and research initiative in Beirut. He received his BFA in painting from Massachusetts College of Art (2004) and his MFA in photography from Yale University's School of Art (2009). His awards include the Aaron Siskind Foundation's Individual Photographer's Fellowship (2012), Philadelphia Museum of Art's Photography Portfolio Competition (2012), Fulbright US Scholar Grant to Egypt (2012-2013), Alice Kimball English Travel Fellowship (2009), and The Richard Benson Scholarship for Excellence in Photography (2008). Awde's works have been exhibited internationally and published in several international publications and catalogues.

Most recently Awde's work has been exhibited in multiple venues including his third solo exhibition, *His Passing Cover*, as part of the FotoFest international biennial. He has also received two Faculty Research Grants from VCUQatar, as well as being nominated to the Paul Huf Award, for the third consecutive year. His work has also been included in several catalogues this year.

Taysir Batniji

Born in Gaza in 1966, Taysir Batniji studied art at Al-Najah University in Nablus, in Palestine. In 1994, he was awarded a fellowship to study at the School of Fine Arts in Bourges. Since then, he has been dividing his time between France and Palestine. During this period spent between two countries and two cultures, Batniji has developed a multi-media practice, focusing on photographic and video images.

Following his first solo show in Paris in 2002, that showed works produced in Gaza, he multiplied his participations in a number of exhibitions, biennales

Artist Biographies

and residencies in Europe and across the world, amongst which the Rencontres d'Arles and *C'est pas du Cinema!* in Fresnoy in 2002, *Dreams and Conflicts, Contemporary Arab Representations* at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003, *Heterotopias* at the Thessalonique Biennale and the Sharjah Biennale in 2007, *Palestine c/o Venice* at the Venice Biennale in 2009, *The Future of a Promise* at the Venice Biennale in 2011, *Now Babylon* at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, *Recreational Purpose* at the National Museum of Bahrain and *Everyday Rituals* at the Maraya Art Centre in Sharjah in 2014.

Taysir was awarded the Abraaj Group Art Prize in 2012. His works can be found in the collections of institutions including: the Centre Pompidou and the FNAC in France, the V&A and The Imperial War Museum in London, the Queensland Art Gallery in Australia and Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi.

Charles Gaines

Charles Gaines received his BA from Jersey City State University and his MFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology. He has had over 70 one-person shows and several hundred group exhibitions in the US and Europe, and is represented in the US by Paula Cooper Gallery (NY) and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects.

In 2013, he had a solo exhibition at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York; performed as the Charles Gaines Ensemble featuring Wadada Leo Smith at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and was a Guggenheim Fellow. His solo exhibition, *Gridwork: 1974 - 1989*, opened on July 17th, 2014 at The Studio Museum in Harlem in New York, NY, and travels to the Hammer Museum in 2015. His work *Manifestos 2* was on view as part of *Sites of Reason* at the Museum of Modern Art (June 11 – September 28, 2014). His work will be included in Prospect.3 New Orleans and the Montreal Biennial in October 2014, and a solo exhibition will take place at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects in September 2015.

Gaines's work has also been included in *State of Mind: New California Art Circa 1970* at the Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, IL (October 3 – January 12, 2014); *Body Language*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (July 18 – October 27, 2013); *Blues for Smoke*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (October 21 – January 2013). He is in the collection of many museums including: Museum of Modern Art (NYC), Whitney Museum (NYC), Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), Walker Art Center (Minn.), The Blanton Museum of Art, (Austin), Hammer Museum (LA), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art (LA), Pomona Art Museum (Pomona, CA), Orange County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Art, Oakland Museum, Fresno Art Museum.

Mariam Ghani

Mariam Ghani's research-based practice spans video, installation, performance, photography, and text. Her exhibitions and screenings include the Rotterdam, transmediale, and CPH:DOX film festivals, dOCUMENTA (13) in Kabul and Kassel, MoMA in New York, the National Gallery in DC, and the Sharjah Biennials 10 and 9. Recent texts have been published *by Creative Time Reports, Foreign Policy, Ibraaz, Triple Canopy*, the *Manifesta Journal*, and the *NYRBlog*. Ghani has collaborated with artist Chitra Ganesh since 2004 as *Index of the Disappeared*, an experimental archive of post-9/11 detentions, deportations, renditions and redactions; with choreographer Erin Kelly since 2006 on the video series *Performed Places*; with media archive collective pad.ma since 2012 on the Afghan Films online archive; and with the Gulf Labor working group since 2013.

Ghani has been awarded the NYFA and Soros Fellowships, grants from the Graham Foundation, CEC ArtsLink, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation and the Experimental Television Center, and residencies at LMCC, Eyebeam Atelier, Smack Mellon and the Akademie Schloss Solitude. Ghani holds a B.A. in Comparative Literature from NYU and an MFA from SVA. She is currently the Freund Fellow at Washington University in St. Louis and a Visiting Scholar at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU.

Gelare Khoshgozaran

Gelare Khoshgozaran is an artist, a translator and writer living in Los Angeles. She has contributed to multiple Persian and English publications including *Parkett, The Enemy, Jadaliyya, Ajam Media Collective* and *WildGender*. She is the Persian translator of Oxford University Press's *Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Ofoq Publishers, 2014). Gelare received her undergraduate degree in Photography from the University of Arts, Tehran and her MFA from the University of Southern California. She was the winner of the 2011 Neely Macomber Travel Award and ArtGenève's Meta Young Art Critic Award 2012.

Adrian Paci

Adrian Paci (born in 1969 in Shkoder, Albania) studied painting at the Academy of Art of Tirana. In 1997 he moved to Milan where he lives and works. Throughout his career he held numerous solo shows in various international institutions such as: Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Norway (2014); Röda Sten Konsthall, Goteborg (2014); MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal (2014); Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea – PAC, Milan (2014); Jeu de Paume, Paris (2013); National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina (2012); Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich (2010); Bloomberg Space, London (2010); The Center for Contemporary Art – CCA, Tel Aviv (2009); Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund (2007); MoMA PS1, New York (2006) and Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2005).

Amongst the various group shows, Adrian Paci's work has also been featured in the 14th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (2014); in the 48th and the 51st edition of the International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (respectively in 1999 and 2005); in the 15th Biennale of Sydney (2006); in the 15th Quadriennale di Roma, where he won first prize (2008); in the Biennale de Lyon (2009); and in the 4th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013).

Checklist

Haig Aivazian
How Great You Are O Son of the Desert!, 2009-ongoing
Video. Color, stereo sound, 60:00

Jananne Al-Ani
Aerial I, 2011
Production still from the film *Shadow Sites II*
Archival chromogenic C-type print, 69" × 87"

Jananne Al-Ani
Aerial III, *IV*, *V*, *VI*, 2011
Production stills from the film *Shadow Sites II*
Archival pigment prints, 18" × 22" (each)

George Awde
Untitled, 2007-2014
24 inkjet prints, 30" × 38" (each)
60 Polaroid, inkjet prints, contact prints, 4" × 5" (each)

Taysir Batniji
To My Brother, 2012
60 hand carvings from photographs on paper, 17" × 13" (each)

Charles Gaines
Notes on Social Justice: Freedom's Jubilee! (1865), 2014
Ink on Strathmore paper, 48" × 35"

Charles Gaines
Notes on Social Justice: Hurrah For Grover Cleveland, (1892), 2013
Ink on Paper, 76" × 46"

Charles Gaines
Notes on Social Justice: What's De Matter, Uncle Sam? (1905), 2013
Ink on photo print, 50" × 35" (2)

Chitra Ganesh and Mariam Ghani
Index of the Disappeared, 2004-ongoing
Selections from the archive

Mariam Ghani
The Trespassers, 2011
Single channel video, 95:00, with archive

Gelare Khoshgozaran
rial & tERROR, 2011
Video. Color, stereo sound, 16:27

Adrian Paci
The Column, 2013
HD video projection. Color, sound, 25:40

Acknowledgements

The *Los Angeles / Islam Arts Initiative (LA/IAI)* would not have been possible without the leadership of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and the generous support of its major donors: the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Community Foundation, the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), the Barnsdall Art Park Foundation, and the Sister Cities of Los Angeles Organization.

LA/IAI brought together nearly 30 cultural institutions and community partner organizations throughout Los Angeles to stimulate the global conversation in connection to cultural, political, and social issues through widely accessible, open-ended arts and cultural programs.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to curate *Shangri La: Imagined Cities* at DCA's Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG) at Barnsdall Park as one of the initiative's two anchor exhibitions along with *Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape and Islamic Art*, and appreciate the City of Los Angeles, and especially DCA, for making the commitment to mount this expansive initiative. Additional thanks are due in no small part to Leslie Ito and Elica Vafaie for their encouragement of, and their engagement with, the initiative and our project partners.

Very special thanks are extended to LA/IAI Project Director, Olga Garay-English, and LA/IAI Project Manager, Amitis Motevalli. The absolute vision of Motevalli as an artist and organizer was essential to the manifestation of this project. In addition, I thank Danielle Brazell, DCA's General Manager; Matthew Rudnick, DCA's Assistant General Manager; and Leslie Thomas, DCA's Community Arts Division Director; for their support of this project as part of an ongoing effort to provide high quality, diversified public arts programming to the City of Los Angeles.

This catalogue would not have been realized without the gracious contributions made by the authors, and by the unswervingly thoughtful work of designer Jessica Fleischmann (still room), the dedication of Will Caperton y Montoya, DCA's Director of Marketing and Development, and the sharp insight of co-editor and writer, Mostafa Heddaya.

Much appreciation goes to Steven Lavine, President of the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and Tom Lawson, Dean of the School of Art at CalArts, who provided a notably engaged environment for learning and an invaluable teaching experience.

The staff of LAMAG: Scott Canty, Director; Gabriel Cifarelli, Exhibition Coordinator; and Michael Miller, Chief Exhibition Preparator; ensured that the exhibition was rigorously executed. The Blink Creative team of Beth Brett and Emma Haber secured awareness within Los Angeles and its broader communities about the initiative, and the breadth of its offerings. This programming was supported with the work and energy of *LA/IAI* Assistant Project Manager, Maryam Hosseinzadeh.

The artists in the exhibition are expressly thanked for the exceptional integrity of their work, and the generosity of their participation.

Reprint Permissions

Molly Crabapple, “Slaves of Happiness Island: Abu Dhabi and the Dark Side of High Art.” Initially published by VICE.com on August 4, 2014. Reprinted with permission from the author.

Guy Mannes-Abbott, “Utopian dust Versus Perfumed Amplification: Object Lessons from Saadiyat and Gehry’s Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi.” This essay was commissioned by Ibraaz as part of Platform 007 and can be viewed online at the following link: http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/94/. It will also form part of Volume 03 in the Visual Cultures in North Africa and the Middle East series published by I.B. Tauris and Ibraaz Publishing: Future Imperfect: Educating Institutions through Critical Practice in the Middle East (forthcoming, 2015), edited by Anthony Downey. Reprinted with permission by Ibraaz and the author.

Mariam Ghani, “Notes On A Boycott”. First appeared in Manifesta Journal #18, reproduced by permission of the author.

Andrew Ross, “High Culture and Hard Labor.” A version of this op-ed appeared in print on March 29, 2014, on page A21 of the New York edition with the headline: High Culture and Hard Labor. Reprinted with permission from the NY Times and the author.

H.G. Masters, “Jananne Al-Ani: Disembodied Perspective.” First published in ArtAsiaPacific no 87 May/June 2102. Courtesy ArtAsiaPacific.

Chitra Ganesh & Mariam Ghani with Alexis Agathocleous & Ramzi Kassem, “Not An Exception: U.S. Prison Policy from California to Cuba.” First appeared as an audio podcast on Creative Time Reports. Amended by the authors and reprinted with their permission.

Jessica Winegar, “The Humanity Game: Art, Islam, and the War on Terror.” First appeared in *Anthropological Quarterly*, 81(3): pp. 651-681, 2008. Reprinted with permission from the author.

Krzysztof Wodiczko, “Response,” *October*, 123 (Winter, 2008), pp. 172-179. October Magazine, Ltd. and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008. Reprinted with permission from MIT Press.

Walid Raad, “Walkthrough, Part II,” *e-flux journal*, No. 49, 2013. Reprinted with permission from the author.

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, “The Imperial Imaginary.” Excerpt from *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, pp.125-136. London, England: Routledge, 1994. Reprinted with permission from the author(s).

Uzma Z. Rizvi, “Checkpoints as Gendered Spaces: An Autoarchaeology of War, Heritage and the City.” First appeared in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Contemporary World*, edited by P. Graves-Brown, R. Harrison, and A. Piccini, pp. 494-506. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Reprinted with permission from the author.

Jalal Toufic, “The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster.” Amended excerpt from *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster*. (Forthcoming Books, 2009; available for download as a PDF file at: http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm), 11-12 and 57-71. Printed with permission from the author.

About the Curator

Rijin Sahakian (b. 1978, Baghdad, Iraq) received her M.A. in Contemporary Art and Cultural Policy from New York University. Sahakian curated *Iraq: Reframe* at the Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga, CA in 2008, and has consulted on various arts and film projects including the Desert Initiative at the Arizona State University Art Museum and the feature film *Detroit Unleaded*. Sahakian was awarded a graduate Fulbright Fellowship for research in Amman, Jordan, where she initiated Sada, a nonprofit project conducting arts education, advocacy, and production programs for Baghdad-based artists, in 2011. She has contributed writing to various artist projects and publications including *e-flux journal*, *Ibraaz*, and *Jadaliyya*, and conducted workshops and presentations at a variety of arts and education institutions internationally including: the Rhode Island School of Design; California College for the Arts; Darat al Funun in Amman, Jordan; and marra.tein in Beirut, Lebanon. Sahakian was a visiting faculty member at the California Institute of the Arts and guest curator at the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs where she organized the 2014 exhibition *Shangri La: Imagined Cities*.

About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) generates and supports high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles' 4 million residents and 40 million annual visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and ensures access to diverse and enriching cultural activities through: grantmaking, marketing, development, public art, community arts programming, arts education, and building partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles.

DCA's operating budget and managed portfolio totaled $56 million in fiscal year 2013/14. It consisted of: $13.4 million in City related and indirect cost allocations; $10.5 million in Transient Occupancy Tax funds; $9 million in one-time City funding; $9 million in funds from the Public Works Improvements Arts Program (PWIAP); $7.5 million from the Private Arts Development Fee Program (ADF); and $6.3 million in private and public funds raised from foundation, corporate, government, and individual donors.

DCA significantly supports artists and cultural projects through its Public Art Division by administering a portfolio that totaled $16.5 million in PWIAP and ADF funds in FY13/14. Of this amount, typically 15% to 20%, or between $2.5 and $3.3 million, was attributable to artists' fees.

DCA's Marketing and Development Division has raised $34 million over the last 12 fiscal years to re-grant to LA-based artists and arts and cultural organizations, and to support DCA's special programming and facilities. DCA also grants approximately $2.3 million annually to 268 artists and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations through its long-established Grants Administration Division. Additional special project support of more than $1.5 million is also awarded annually for a total of approximately $3.8 million invested each year in LA's creative community.

DCA provides arts and cultural programming through its Community Arts Division, managing numerous neighborhood arts and cultural centers, theaters, historic sites, and educational initiatives.

DCA's Marketing and Development Division also markets the City's arts and cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative catalogs, publications, and promotional materials, and management of the culturela.org website visited by over 3 million people annually.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

back cover:

Adrian Paci
The Column, 2013
Production shot
HD video projection. Color, sound, 25:40
Photography by Roberto Marossi
Courtesy of the artist and kaufmann repetto, Milan

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles