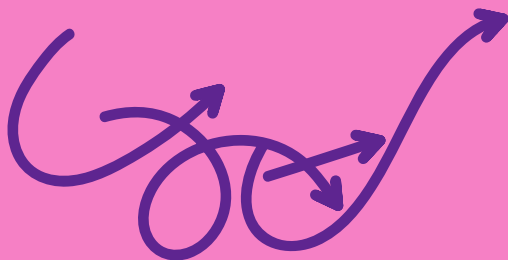
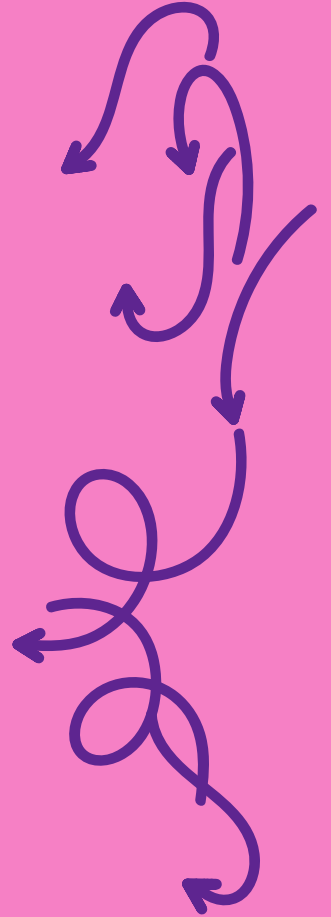
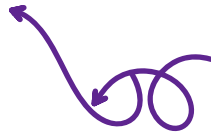


Raghad Resres
Hidden Dimension





East Amman, Jordan — 2023



Sewing the Room — 2024



Sewing the Room — 2024



Mohammad Amin Refugee Camp — 2023



Mohammad Amin Refugee Camp — 2023

Raghad Resres *Hidden Dimension*

I am an artist who operates through feminist spatial practice. My works address issues related to gender, power dynamics, and social constructs within physical spaces. I am particularly invested in women's embodied relations in marginalised areas and refugee contexts, which are intricately linked to and influenced by the social and political consequences of displacement and colonisation.

In my research project I am exploring the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Established as temporary refuges in response to the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe) in 1948 and the subsequent Naksa (setback) in 1967¹, whereby the Israeli occupation forcibly uprooted Palestinians from their native land and thousands of Palestinians subsequently sought refuge in Jordan².

Over many years the architectural and organisational state of these camps has been shaped by various factors. Of particular significance is the residents' prolonged resistance to proposed changes to the camps' temporal structures, driven by the political and social sensitivity associated with them. The Palestinian camps in Jordan were initially established as a temporary resolution to the Palestinian crises. Until the 1980s, camp residents rejected organisational solutions proposed by both the Jordanian state and the UN, which they viewed as attempts to sustain the camp and abolish its temporary status³. They reappropriated the architectural physicality of the camps over the span of 70 years, creating spaces that challenged the parameters and standards imposed by the United Nations⁴. The urban landscape of these camps has formed into what the Jordanian-Palestinian researcher and architect Samar Al Maqusi has termed 'the Palestinian scale'⁵.

Beyond its political dimensions and significance, this scale directly influences the formation of social values among its inhabitants. In the camp residents know each other well; they are connected by authentic Arab values formed through generosity, giving, and solidarity. This extends to the buildings themselves which are bounded to the extent that the view from one person's window can be into a neighbour's living room. This intertwining of camp spaces blurs the line between the private and the public.

In this context I find myself subject to many social constraints that are directly connected to movement and visibility. For instance, it is not acceptable for women to sit in their own private spaces without being covered if the window or the curtains are open, because they will be exposed to the public. Similarly, sitting on a roof or a balcony is only acceptable during dark hours, and on the condition that lights are kept off. It is also deemed unacceptable for women to walk alone on the streets during the night without the companionship.

This context has led me to reflect on my bodily experience in these spaces, questioning my body's relationship with the camp structure, light, covers or fabric, and how these influence my physical movements and my inner bodily experiences. With my MFA research project *Hidden Dimension* I began a journey of exploring how invisible social constraints affect women's inner-body experiences. The project explores how architecture echoes societal constraints. In particular, the constraint

of the 'Social Operation of Architecture' — a term I am using to refer to practices a community accepts or rejects based on the architectural design and layout of a particular spatial context.

In my artistic research I have been exploring the realm of movement. I experimented with wielding disruptive gestures, employing light and fabric as my main materials to stir embodied subjective experiences. My aim has been to affect the sense of motion and the inner bodily sensations of publics. Driven by my interest in our perception of daily constraints, entwined within the fabric of dominant societal systems, I seek to make visible the construction of these suppressive structures.

In my exploration I created the performance *Sewing the Room*, an experiential performance where I literally sew my body, and the audience, to the very fabric of the room itself. Through this act I am aiming to disrupt the social and physical boundaries of the space, inviting the public to question the impact of social norms on physical motion within interior space and architecture. The performance reaches intensity as I sew my feet onto a fabric map representing my hometown in East Amman. This gesture intentionally spatializes my personal experiences with social constraints, extending them beyond their context and transforming them into a tool for critiquing different social constraints that restrict bodily motion in other environments.

In this publication I have produced a series of new images based on my work *Dancing Edifices*. This is a series of digital paintings in which I aim to evoke visually induced motion sickness through re-compositions of the spatial architecture of East Amman's Palestinian refugee camps. This type of motion sickness can occur when there is visual stimulation in the absence of physical movement. In these constructions, I situate pencil drawn self-portraits made while contemplating my inner body experience within this architecture. This endeavour reimagines the camp's architectural challenges, reshaping the physical space's movement and organisation and transcending the confines of mere bodily motion. These images open possibilities for questioning or reimagining embodied experiences with the camp's physical and conceptual structure.

1 — Department of Palestinian Affairs, "Palestinian Refugees And Displaced Camps in Jordan," Department of Palestinian Affairs, accessed March 5, 2024, URL: https://dpa.gov.jo/En/List/Palestinian_Refugees_And_Displaced_Camps_in_Jordan.

2 — Maher Charif, "Nakba, Stages of a Forced Displacement," Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestinian Question, accessed March 5, 2024, URL: <https://www.palquest.org/en/highlight/160/nakba>

3 — Husna FM Radio. "How do camp residents formulate their relationship with the place." YouTube video, 39:12. September 2022. https://youtu.be/Av28pBhJ_Ec?si=6f7edGpyvBl1qW35.

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

5 — Samar Maqusi, "Acts of Spatial Violation: The Politics of Space-Making inside the Palestinian Refugee Camp," *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research* 6, no. 1 (2021): 57-70. The Palestinian scale refers to the unique architectural and spatial environment that has emerged within Palestinian refugee camps, resulting from the refugees' spatial practices and acts of resisting the architectural parameters and standards imposed by the United Nations and host governments.





Dancing Edifices No 5 — 2024



Dancing Edifices No 8 — 2024

Bio

Raghad Resres (b. 1996) is a Jordanian research-based artist of Palestinian descent. Her artistic practice lies at the crossroads of conceptual art, theatre, and performance. She operates through feminist spatial practice, and she explores themes of motion, perception, and sensory experiences.

Project

Raghad's research project *Hidden Dimension* has explored different forms of publicness, ranging from workshops to discussions and exhibitions. Ethical questions, and her background in participatory and social collaborative arts, have led her to explore the role of the artist as both collaborator and *active participant* in public space. For Raghad, the artist as an active participant is about seeking balance between one's engagement with their own artistic project, and the social framework in which it takes place, in a critical, reflexive, and continuous manner.

To mobilise the active participant position, Raghad has worked with groups of women, architects, artists, and community organisations in two workshops. One of these workshops took place in East Amman in Jordan (2023) and the other in Hammarkullen in Gothenburg (2024). Her work has also been exhibited in other contexts such as the Kuno Biennial (2024), Gallery 54 (2023), GIBCA Extended (2024), Hammarkullen Konsthall (2024), and the exhibition *Speculative Gatherings* (2024).

e raghadmrasras@gmail.com
@ raghad_rasras
t +46722883863

