



EXHIBITION BOOKLET

MAY 2025

Disclaimer 1

The instructors of the course have chosen to keep the students' identities anonymous, referring to them only by their group numbers, in order to protect them from defamation and harassment by zionist students—which are harmful actions they have faced over the duration of the course.

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Disclaimer 2

The student works have been sealed behind fixed glass—not as a gesture of celebration, but as a precautionary measure against the threat of vandalism. In a university space that should protect academic freedom, this act lays bare the extent to which students must now defend their right to express, to be seen, and to claim space amidst a climate of intimidation and harassment.

Reclaiming Space // Reclaiming Narrative

Over the past several months, this corridor has become an active site of spatial and discursive contestation. What was once a neutral academic passage has been transformed—both symbolically and materially—into a terrain where academic freedom had to be defended against Zionist extremist attacks and institutional resistance. This transformation has unfolded in parallel with the unfolding genocide in Gaza, where the destruction of Palestinian life has reached unprecedented levels. Yet even at a distance, the mechanisms of erasure, silencing, and spatial control have reverberated within the walls of the university.

The exhibition Reclaiming Space / Reclaiming Narrative emerges from a charged and deeply contested context. It showcases student projects developed within the course Architecture and Colonialism, which critically explores the role of architecture as a tool of colonial domination. The course itself was the outcome of a year of rigorous collective effort by BK Scholars for Palestine—a group formed to carve out space within our faculty to engage openly with the question of Palestine and the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Centering the case of Palestine, the course examines how the Israeli state has deployed spatial tools—from settlements and checkpoints to planning laws and military infra-structure—as mechanisms of displacement, fragmentation, and control. By situating the current violence in Gaza and the West Bank within a broader settler colonial framework, the course encourages students to interrogate the entanglements between space, power, and spatial resistance.

Yet the exhibition has not remained untouched by the very structures it seeks to expose. From the outset, this corridor has been a site of coordinated efforts to undermine the course and its pedagogy.

Instructors have faced harassment and defamation campaigns orchestrated by Zionist groups both within and outside the university. Although the exhibition had been scheduled since December 2024, it was recently canceled by the institution, citing safety concerns and the threat of vandalism—threats emerging from the same networks attempting to silence the course altogether.

In this context, the corridor has become more than a backdrop; it has become a participant in the unfolding dynamics of spatialized censorship and academic repression. The theoretical discussions held inside the classroom—on how space is used to dominate, erase, and exclude—have materialized just outside its doors. The students' right to access, occupy, and speak within their own faculty has been challenged, along with their broader struggle to articulate solidarities and commitments to human rights and justice. These incidents are not isolated. In April 2024, this same corridor was subjected to a similar form of erasure when over 200 posters promoting an academic event titled "Architecturing Destruction in Gaza, Palestine" were violently removed. That event, co-organized by our academic group BK Scholars for Palestine in coordination with the faculty administration, was also targeted by intimidation tactics designed to disrupt and delegitimize scholarly engagement with Palestine and its violent colonial reality. These recurring acts of suppression underscore a broader Zionist pattern: the use of fear, hostility, and spatial violence to silence those who challenge dominant narratives on Palestine.

This exhibition insists on reclaiming the corridor as a space of knowledge production, critical inquiry, and collective reflection. By occupying this contested site with student research, visual analysis, and spatial storytelling, Reclaiming Space / Reclaiming Narrative asserts the necessity of making visible what is so often rendered invisible—not only in Gaza, but also within the university itself.

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ENVIRONMENT

Language shapes how we understand the world—and how we position ourselves within it. In colonized contexts, the power to name, define, and categorize is never neutral; it is a site of struggle, resistance, and reimagination.

The Colonial Glossary emerged from this understanding, as both a pedagogical and academic exercise. Students were invited to interrogate the terms that frame our thinking about colonialism, power, violence, and resistance—terms often inherited from dominant discourses that obscure as much as they reveal.

Rather than simply learning definitions through academic sources, students critically unpacked and redefined concepts such as Al Nakba, Ghurba, and Apartheid, exploring their historical roots and contemporary collective and personal resonances. Each entry, expressed through text or image, became a small act of reclaiming language—of asserting new meanings grounded in critical reflection and positionality.

Organized around six thematic clusters—Construction, Deconstruction, Displacement, Remembering, Environment, and the Future—it foregrounded the role of language in shaping colonial realities and opened space to imagine otherwise. This glossary is not just a timely exercise, but an academic vocabulary to help with reclaiming narratives and decolonial futures.

CONSTRUCTION

PHYSICAL

Metabologia

This neologism is composed of the Greek words Metabolē (μεταβολή), meaning „change“ or „transformation,“ and -algia (ἀλγος), meaning „pain.“ It translates to „the pain of change“ or „the suffering caused by transformation“ and describes the distress of witnessing one's land reshaped by colonial forces - particularly through imposed buildings and infrastructure that alter indigenous landscapes against the will of the people.

Similar to solastalgia, a term coined by Glenn Albrecht to describe the emotional distress caused by environmental destruction, Metabologia extends this concept to the built environment, focusing on the suffering induced by architectural and infrastructural interventions designed to assert control. In colonial contexts, imposed construction serves as a mechanism of spatial erasure, reinforcing dominance by altering the landscape in ways that disrupt historical, cultural, and social continuity. Scholars in critical geography and settler-colonial studies argue that such transformations are not merely physical but also deeply psychological, as they embed power structures into space and deprive displaced communities of their sense of belonging (cf. Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism, 1993).

Examples include the replacement of indigenous villages with settlements, the rerouting of roads to fragment communities, and the destruction or repurposing of cultural landmarks to erase historical narratives.

Alfaṣl al-‘unṣurī

The Arabic term يرصن على لصفيلا (al-faṣl al-‘unṣurī) translates to „apartheid“ or „racial segregation“ and is used in Palestinian discourse to describe Israeli policies of discriminatory separation. It refers to legal inequality, movement restrictions, and the built environment as a tool of segregation, including checkpoints, segregated roads, and settlements. In the context of colonial construction, it highlights how architecture and infrastructure are used to enforce division and control space.

A key example is the network of roads in the West Bank, where separate roads for Israelis and Palestinians create a spatial hierarchy, physically embedding segregation into the landscape.

Conflicting Construction

The human need to build and create permanence in conflict with the emotional/psychological desire to return from where you've fled.

In Palestinian Nationalist discourse the right to return is affirmed in the continued existence of the camp as a camp - 'temporary, frozen, abject'. With the belief that improving the camp would dilute its connection to the al-Nakba (through its exposed infrastructure and bricolage) and dissolve refugee identity. However refugees were able to find ways to imprint their own identity onto the landscape: recreating clusters and patterns from their lost villages in Palestine. To the Palestinians camps symbolized loss and defeat but they also became a powerful field to organise and express national identity and sentiment. This contradiction was also exploited by the Israeli Authorities, trying to coax Palestinians into giving up their refugee status by presenting polished plans of 'modern' living outside of the camps (as was a similar case in Shuafat refugee camp). The philosophy behind this was simply captured by Israel's former defense minister Moshe Dayan when he said: 'As long as refugees remain in their camps, the children will say they come from Jaffa and Haifa; if they move out of the camps, the hope is they will feel an attachment to their new land'.

Occupation

*I wake to the hum of engines,
jeeps crawling between walls that were never meant to be here.*

*The wall stretches like a scar,
cutting through olive groves, through streets my
grand-father once walked freely.
They say it's for security, but I know better.
It is a prison without bars, a map redrawn to erase us.*

*At the checkpoint, I stand in line.
The soldier looks at me, looks past me.
He decides if I move or if I wait.
Beyond him, the settlers speed through; no walls, no
permits, no questions.*

*Occupation is the road I cannot take,
the home that can be taken at any moment,
the roof that leaks because permits are denied,
the towers that rise for them while our houses turn to dust.*

*Tomorrow, the wall will still stand.
But so will we.*

Settlement.

Definition based on the International court of law and other international media:

Israeli settlements are residential areas established by Israel in the territories that the state captured during the Six-Day War in 1967 and has since occupied in violation of international law. These settlements contribute to racial segregation by creating a system where Jewish settlers live under Israeli civil law with full rights, while Palestinians remain under military occupation, facing restrictions on movement, land access, and basic services.

Definition based on Israeli media:

"The Israel Policy Forum claims the existence of settlements is necessary for security reasons and states the following points as the main settlement goals:
To delineate a future border between Israel and a Palestinian entity that reflects Israel's priorities
To disrupt the contiguity of Palestinian communities in the West Bank, especially along the central mountain range running north-south
To establish a significant Jewish population in parts of the West Bank so that if annexed, it would not impact the demographic character of the State of Israel"

يُرصن علٰا لصفيلا راج

Definition based on the International court of law and other international media:

The term Apartheid Wall refers to a concrete separation barrier built by Israel in the occupied West Bank, designed to annex Palestinian land, fragment communities, and enforce a system of racial segregation. It serves as a tool of colonization, reinforcing Israeli control while violating international law. In 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled the wall illegal, stating it must be dismantled and that Palestinians must be compensated for the damage it has caused.

Definition based on Israeli media:

Israeli media (Jewish Virtual Library, Israel Policy Forum) call the concrete barrier a high tech fence, not a wall. It is described as a necessary security barrier against Palestinian violence and terrorism. According to the Jewish Virtual Library, the Palestinian struggle of transport is a mere inconvenience in comparison with the security risk Israel would face without the fence, which supposedly prevents suicide bombings in Israel.

Tams

The Arabic word تامس (tams) means obliteration. In the context of colonial construction, it describes not just the removal of historical, cultural, or religious heritage, but the deliberate suppression of identity through the imposition of new structures. It conveys the idea that building can also be an act of erasure, where colonial architecture and infrastructure are used to overwrite indigenous presence, memory, and history.

The construction of the Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem on the site of a historic Muslim cemetery is often cited as an example of tams, as it physically replaces Palestinian heritage with a structure that ignores or negates its past.

Building Life

Construction as an act of reclaiming the right to life..

From the dismissive and anonymous language used to describe Palestinians in current media it is clear that there is a bias in the perception of human lives. This extends to how the validity of Palestinian dwellings is dismissed. Their land is stolen to form buffer zones or contribute to illegal Israeli settlements. Palestinian refugee camps have been described as a 'zone of indistinction' with 'a barely living homo sacer population'. The term 'Homo Sacer' means a person who can be killed without the killer being considered a murderer. Meaning essentially that they have no right to life and do not belong to a society or community.

However, the act as construction is used to directly combat this notion, with refugees expanding on the basic concrete shelters provided by UNRWA - creating permanence and identity.

MENTAL

Narrative

Colonial rulers try to keep their power by actively influencing the way and what to think. They construct a narrative that must shape people's lifestyle and make them undergo their domination. This is not necessarily a loud voice crying out the propaganda. A narrative can be something more subtle and beneath the surface. A narrative is 'an account of a series of events' (Random House, 1979). In psychology, the narrative is seen as fundamental to our sense of self and lies at the basis of our personal identity (Dennett, 1992). A broken-down incoherent narrative results in mental disorders. In the social sciences the form of a narrative is used to explain intricate constructions of social systems (Gabrial, 2004). Humans have always been constructing narratives to understand and communicate the world around us more easily. But what if our narrative is hijacked? Does it also hijack our sense of who we are?

The narrative can be seen in both larger constructs and smaller details, both in physical and mental ways, such as in the case of China dominating Tibet. China tries to control Tibet with cultural re-education programs (Ramanujan, 2022): Tibetan children as young as four years old are removed from their families and put into boarding schools, in which the narrative of the Chinese Party is being forced upon them, while fully ignoring Tibetan language, history, culture and religion (Leibold & Dorjee, 2024). Local village schools are closed, and parents are forced to send their kids off to boarding schools, resulting in more than three-quarters of Tibetan children that have to live apart from their families (Tibet Action Institute, 2021). This is not only physical, as well as mental: some schools only allow them to visit their family once a year, physically preventing them from learning about their own culture. Besides, because tuition is only in Mandarin, they lose the knowledge of their own language and also the ability to communicate with their parents and grandparents. China's imposed narrative prevents them from narrating with their own roots.

Temporariness

Temporariness is something I've always taken for granted; a short-term job, a rental contract, a layover in an airport. It's supposed to mean something fleeting, something that will pass. But when I look at Palestine, I see how „tempo-rary“ can stretch into a lifetime, how it can become a tool to deny stability, security, and belonging.

In refugee camps that were never meant to last, generations of Palestinians have been born, grown old, and passed on, all while living under the label of "temporary." I see pictures of camps that now look like cities, buildings made of concrete instead of tents. And yet, no matter how solid the walls become, the world still refuses to call them permanent.

Identity

There are multiple forms of identity, but in the basis they all share the meaning of: 'a set of qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, or expressions that characterize a person or a group' (Herman, 2011). The term originates from the Latin 'identitas', which means 'sameness with others'. Identity forming could start with genetic heritage - such as ethnicity and family history. Personal identity provides a wireframe, a sense of self-control to understand and guide behavior (Schwartz et al., 2006). Collective identity communicates its role-behaviour towards other groups and fosters a sense of belonging. Both are fluid and static: serving as an anchor to remind us of who we are, however altered and developed during a lifetime. What is the balance between the solidness and flexibility of our personality? Is it possible to retain and keep control over the construction of our individual identity, when confronted with a colonising force?

Who are you, when you lost your home, your family, your friends and all of your possessions? Who are you when you have to flee to another country and start all over again? Who are you when you have to fight and kill to secure a piece of bread, a shelter or a little bit of fuel?

A young girl is looking for shelves at Rafah beach, her beach, the beach that is part of her identity. 90 percent of the population in Gaza was displaced since the start of the war (UNRWA, 2025). They lost almost everything that constructed their identity: not only their physical constructs such as buildings and landscapes, but also their constructed self-concept, because they had to fight for their own safety.

Sumud (Steadfastness)

(دوچرخه) isn't just a philosophy I read about, it's something I witness in the Palestinian community. It's the quiet, unwavering resistance of people who refuse to be erased, even when they are thousands of kilometers away from their homeland. It's in the friends and activists who spend their nights organizing protests, the students who refuse to let their history be forgotten, and the families who keep Palestinian traditions alive, even in exile.

Sumud is more than survival; it's an act of defiance. When I see footage of homes reduced to rubble, yet people still return to rebuild, that is Sumud. When Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank continue to live, love, and dream despite relentless violence, that is Sumud. Even from the Netherlands, I can feel its presence in the unwavering determination of Palestinians and their allies who refuse to be silenced.

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Silence(d)

Silence(d) (v., n.) /s' aɪ.ləns(d)/

Etymology: (n.) latin *silentium*, evolving to english: suppression | restraint, (v.) erasure, censorship



The siege on Palestine (Gaza) is both physical and a **Media Wall**, with Israel blocking journalists, electricity, and internet access; erasing voices, histories, and experiences. Yet, a few photojournalists risk their lives to document the **destruction** and suffering.

Unnme Gaza is a street art movement breaking this silence. By transforming photojournalists' images into public artworks, it sheds light on the crisis while challenging media bias and censorship in Western coverage of occupied Palestine. These artworks bridge artists, those enduring hardship in Gaza, and global citizens, amplifying voices that would otherwise be **silenced**. To honor photojournalists' work, artists remain anonymous, ensuring full credit goes to those documenting the truth. **Silence is suppression**. Stories of displacement, colonial legacies, and humanitarian suffering are erased, while political rhetoric and media bias obscure the root causes of conflict.

الحلابة

Elhalaba (n.) / əlha'la:ba/

Etymology : arabic طلب, to milk, extract. Hilāba: the act or practice of milking.



The West Bank closure system is a series of obstacles including permanent and partially staffed **checkpoints**, concrete roadblocks and **barriers**, **metal gates**, earth mounds, tunnels, trenches, and an elaborate set of permit restrictions that controls and restricts Palestinian **freedom of movement**.

Elhalaba refers to the process of crossing a checkpoint. It is derived from the word describing the fenced path cows walk before getting milked, illustrating the **dehumanising** condition of this infrastructure.

Symbolically, this word could illustrate the 'congestion' caused by many Israeli roadblocks. Economic and social networks are severely damaged, as travel time between places is dramatically increased.

Uprooting

Uprooting (v.) up- root

Etymology: old English meaning: removing from fixed position, hence remove utterly, eradicate



A literal and figural approach of **erasing** a civilization from the root. **Damaging** core values (mostly material) of the culture/religion/identity that cannot be reversed. **Permanent damage** is done to the civilization to try to **dominate** them and replace them with other civilization(s) to settle and seize power.

The meaning of the word can refer to the act of **removing** something from the ground. This is exactly what is happening in Palestine, where olive trees which deeply rooted in Palestinian culture are being **removed**, **damaged**, or **replaced** by invasive species. The word can also mean the **forced removal** of a person from their environment, which is equally relevant, as Palestinians are being **displaced**, **dismantled**, and **dishonored**.

ἀπώλεια

Apóleia (n.) /a'póleia/

Etymology: Ancient Greek: ἀπώλεια :destruction, ruin, loss. In theology: eternal destruction | damnation.



Apóleia describes something lost or in the process of being destroyed. While it can refer to physical loss, such as life, property, or possessions, it also extends to deeper, more abstract dimensions, including the erosion of **moral integrity, purpose, and identity**. In Palestine, apóleia manifests not only in the destruction of homes, lives, and historical heritage but also in the systematic dismantling of **justice, dignity, and truth**. The ongoing occupation, media suppression, and political **dehumanization** contribute to an imposed apóleia, a forced loss of agency and historical narrative. This **destruction** reaches beyond physical spaces, silencing voices, distorting history, and undermining fundamental human rights. Apóleia in Palestine is not just the **erasure of a land and its people**, but a profound moral collapse, an indictment of global conscience and the failure to uphold ethical responsibility and justice.

בְּלָגָן

Balagan (n.) balagán

Etymology: persian *bālākhāna* to russian *баня*, later introduced by Russian immigrants|settlers



The Arabic slang word "balagan" means "mess" or "chaos," often used to describe disorganized or problematic situations. Its origins trace back to Russian and Persian, where it signified disorder. In Hebrew, it evolved to express **chaos** or **struggle**.

In the Palestinian rap song "Inn Ann" by Daboor and Shabideed, the repetition of "balagan, balagan" emphasizes the **disorder, destruction, and struggles** faced by Palestinians. The song resonates with Palestinian youth as it reflects their experiences of conflict and persecution.

The use of "balagan" by Palestinian artists highlights an **intense influence** pushing even on **linguistic** in the reclaiming of a word that represents both chaos and resilience. It is making "balagan" a symbol of the importance of words, **who** uses them and who has the **power** to give meaning to them.

בָּאָר 'עַז / غبار

Ghubar (n.) /gu'ba:r/

Etymology: Arabic: dust | dirt, metaphorically: state of confusion, obscurity, impact of conflict | struggle.



Ghubár (غبار) in Arabic, meaning "dust," comes from the root غ-ب-ر (gh-b-r), symbolizing things that fade or disappear, linking the **aftermath of violence** with the erasure of history. The verb غبار (ghabara) means "to be covered in dust" or "to pass away," **symbolizing the loss of life and memory**, particularly in conflict.

In Hebrew, the word עַז (ubá) also refers to dust, symbolizing **decay** and **loss**. This shared meaning highlights dust as a symbol of destruction.

In Palestine, dust is a symbol of deconstruction, of the **physical, cultural, and moral erasure** faced by Palestinians. As violence destroys lives and homes, dust represents the collapse of identity and the silencing of truth.

Ügür Gaffençüş uses digital collages, such as "Parallel Universes," which juxtapose poignant photojournalistic imagery with scenes of peaceful lives, making the reality for those not affected by it more tangible.

Vital:ysis

Vitalysis (n.) vital-lysis

Etymology: vital: Latin *vitalis*: of life, derived from *vita*: life. lysis: Greek (λύσις): loosening | dissolving



1. Vital means essential, and 2. Lysis refers to breaking down. The term describes the **strategic deconstruction** of essential structures that are crucial for sustaining life and preserving a civilization's legacy. This includes buildings such as hospitals, archives, and educational institutions, as well as fundamental resources like food and water.

An example of this can be seen in Gaza, where the IDF **strategically targets** specific buildings and sites to achieve their ultimate goal: making Gaza **uninhabitable** by **depriving** it of basic necessities for survival. Claims such as "*There is a Hamas tunnel network beneath the hospital*" appear to serve as justification when critical voices begin to emerge.

Resilience

Resilience (n.) /rɪ'zɪliən(t)s/

Etymology: Latin: *resilire*: *re-* (back) + *salire* (to jump). Referring: ability to bounce back over time



The term is often used in the West to describe certain situations or crises. It is frequently imposed on people, businesses, or circumstances, shaping and sometimes **oversimplifying** the entire narrative of a place or event.

Resilience refers to the ability to recover quickly from a **disaster**. But how applicable is this concept in the ongoing situation in Gaza? Can the Palestinians truly recover from such a **catastrophe**? The term resilience is broad and widely used across different contexts.

However, its **danger** lies in how it can (un)consciously **distort** crucial aspects of a narrative. Important stories risk being **disregarded** because the focus shifts too much toward the **disaster** itself and the sympathy it evokes, rather than the actual events and their causes. Moreover, those labeled as resilient often do not appreciate the term being applied to them.

صمد

Sumud (n.) *sumūd*

Etymology : Arabic: *Samada* ﺃـ to remain firm, endure, be unshaken. Sumud: steadfastness



Sumud is an Arabic term meaning "steadfastness". In comparison to the term **resilience**, it is a central concept in Palestinian culture and resistance referring to the **resilience and determination** of Palestinians to remain on their land and maintain their identity despite ongoing occupation, displacement and oppression.

The term has evolved to symbolize the collective endurance of the Palestinian people, highlighting the commitment to justice and freedom. By embodying Sumud, Palestinians **deconstruct** colonial narratives of erasure, asserting their right to exist and resist oppression. Making Sumud a powerful expression of the struggle against colonialism and occupation.

Heritage

Heritage (n.) /'hɛritɪdʒ/

Etymology: old French *eritage*, Latin *heritatum*: inheritance, something passed down through generations.



Heritage in the context of Palestine represents more than just physical landmarks or cultural traditions; it embodies the resilience of a people whose identity, customs, and values have persisted through generations despite conflict, occupation, and destruction. Palestinian heritage is a living testament to the **endurance of its culture**, with every story, practice, and building standing as a symbol of resistance against erasure. This **heritage, passed down through generations**, carries the weight of **collective memory**, from ancient olive groves to the continued preservation of language, food, and art. In Palestine, **heritage** is not just something to be admired, it's something **actively fought for**, as it reflects the unyielding spirit of a people determined to maintain their identity in the face of adversity and ongoing attempts at destruction.

شهادة

Martyrdom (n.) 'mɑ:tədəm/ martyr-dom

Etymology : originates from greek martyr μάρτυς – meaning "witness"



Peace be upon you, O best of martyrs. السلام عليك يا خير الشهداء

Martyrdom, or shahada in Arabic, refers to the sacrifice of one's life in the struggle for (Palestinian) liberation, celebrated as an act of profound resistance and dignity. It **deconstructs** colonial narratives that criminalize or dehumanize Palestinian resistance by honoring the lives of martyrs as symbols of courage and steadfastness, transforming their deaths into a powerful assertion of identity and justice.

In Islam, death is a sacred transition, and the deceased must be treated with utmost dignity, including proper burial rites and respect for the body. The Israeli military's reported **desecration** of Palestinian bodies, such as dragging corpses or withholding them, represents a **deconstruction** of these religious values, dehumanizing the dead and inflicting profound spiritual and emotional harm on their communities.

数

Shù (v.,n.) shū

Etymology: Chinese: to count, to enumerate, to be reckoned as. Also fate/destiny (e.g., in fortune-telling)



It has been **542** days since October 7th, 2023. Since then, Israel's attacks in Gaza have killed at least **46,788** Palestinians and wounded **110,453**. Almost **70%** of the buildings in the Gaza strip have been destroyed. The war has left more than **11,000** people missing. Out of the total population of 2,142 million, more than **2,000,000** Gazans homeless. The lack of adequate shelter and heating caused the deaths of at least **6** babies last week due to conditions related to exposure to the cold.

Martyrs tell the story of **1** person, numbers show the scale of the disaster. 'Shù' can mean to **count**, **fate**, but it can also be translated as **reckoning**. Within Christianity and Islam, the day of reckoning or the day of judgement, is the day all people are called to **account** for their deeds during their life on Earth. This raises the question: Will those responsible for these crimes ever be held accountable?

*Text written based on information available as of March 5, 2025.

Pre-displacement



Indigenous

The olive tree, deeply rooted in Palestinian soil, is more than just a tree. It is a symbol of resilience, history, and belonging. It can live for a thousand years², standing as a silent witness to generations past, carrying their memories and stories. Its cultivation is a craft passed down through time, embodying a deep connection to the land.

At the core of Israel's settler-colonial domination over Palestine lies the systematic disruption of an unbreakable bond with the land, a bond of history, family traditions, and identity. To be indigenous, born in a place, is to be deeply intertwined with a place, its landscapes, its people, its culture—through memory and the rhythms of daily life. To sever this bond is to erase not just a history, but an entire way of being.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the right of indigenous communities to maintain their cultural practices, languages, traditions, and deep ties to their land³. Yet, these rights continue to be disregarded. This is about fundamental human rights. The exhaustion of constantly having to defend one's very existence. It is about the right to belong to the land where you were born.



Marginalization

Marginalization is not just about being pushed to the edges, 'margo', it is about being made invisible in your own homeland. For Palestinians, it is displacement, restricted movement, and socio-political exclusion. It is the loss of homes, the severing of communities, and the slow erasure of a people's presence. Marginalization permeates every aspect of life².

For Palestinians in refugee camps, marginalization stretches across generations. It is being born into a reality where legal status is uncertain, education is a privilege, and economic opportunities out of reach. It is growing up in a world that treats you as temporary, despite decades of exile.

Marginalization is also about being silenced, the frustration of seeing your history rewritten, your suffering debated, your existence questioned³. These systemic barriers, along with persistent stigmatization and discrimination, do more than just limit opportunities—they deny dignity, belonging, and the right to simply exist on equal ground.



Fragmentation

Living in fragmentation means living in constant separation—from your home, your people, your past, your future. In Palestine, fragmentation is more than geographical; it's an enforced division that disrupts continuity.

Walls carve through neighborhoods, permits determine who can visit whom, and families are divided by checkpoints. A person residing in Gaza can't see their cousin in Jerusalem. A refugee in Lebanon is not allowed to return to their home. Even within the same village, someone's land might be just outside their reach, cut off by a fence.

Fragmentation is a strategy of control, a division of people's land and life, hindering Palestinians to form a collective resistance and remembrance. Exhaustion of constantly having to defend one's very existence. It is about the right to belong to the land where you were born.



Dispossession

When we consider the concept of dispossession in the lives of Palestinians, it is much more than being deprived of land or property. It is a disruption of their identity, community, family, and daily life.

Palestinians are not only displaced; they are witnesses to the violent takeover of their homes by settlers, often with the backing of military forces. This creates a deep sense of helplessness and loss, as families see their ancestral homes occupied, their land seized, and their way of life erased.

But despite all of this, there is one thing that can never be taken away from the Palestinian people, their resistance.

Displacement



Al Nakba (النكبة)

From the Arabic 'النكبة' (n-k-b)—"disaster, misfortune or calamity." And hold the meaning of Catastrophe. The term Nakba carries the weight of deep personal and collective loss. It refers to the events of 1948, remembering killed Palestinians, wiped out villages, and hundreds of thousands displaced. For those who lived through it, the Nakba was not just a historical event—it was the sudden and violent uprooting of their lives, the shattering of communities, and the beginning of an exile that, has never ended².

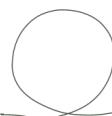
The word Nakba carries a pain that is difficult to put into words. Yet, naming it gives it weight, recognition, and meaning—just as a person's name affirms their existence. Defining a catastrophe is not just about history; it is about ensuring that what was lost is not forgotten³. The Nakba becomes more than just an event—it becomes a story, a lived experience, and a call to remember.



Dehumanization

The term dehumanization holds two meanings: on one hand, the act of subjecting people to inhuman or degrading conditions or treatment, which is very evident and directly visible in Palestine. Palestinians aren't seen as individuals with dignity; they are treated like obstacles and constantly reminded that their freedom is not their own. Not only are Palestinians dehumanized by their direct oppressors, they are also dehumanized by western media, who depict Palestinian deaths in big numbers of 'deceased Palestinians' instead of murdered individuals.

On the other hand, it refers to the act of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities. By subjecting Palestinians to horrible conditions and oppressing them, the Israeli state undermines and hinders Palestinians in engaging with their positive human qualities. A practical example would be that of a scholar whose university gets bombed or shut down. Humanism and humanizing is thus very important and one of the fundamental forms of resilience.



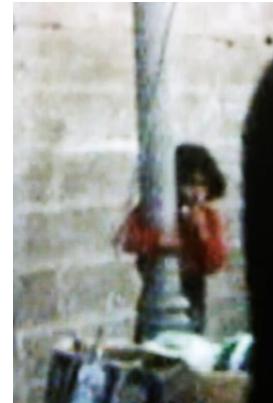


Deracination

From the French 'déraciner' de (up) + raciner(take root)—"to uproot." At its core, it speaks to the painful act of being torn from one's place of belonging—of having one's roots severed, leaving behind not just a physical home, but an entire way of life.

For Palestinians, deracination is more than just a word; it is a lived experience². It is the feeling of being forcibly removed from the land that generations called home, of watching villages disappear, and of carrying the weight of displacement not only in body but in spirit.

It is knowing that the place where your roots once held firm is no longer within reach, that returning is not just difficult but deliberately made impossible. Deracination is not just about being removed; it is about the deep, aching loss of connection to home, history, and identity. And for many, it is a wound that remains open.



Post memory

Postmemory is not just about remembering—it is about carrying the weight of a past you might not have lived through, but that lives through you.

For Palestinians born in exile or under occupation, memories are not always their own. They inherit their parents' and grandparents' histories.

Postmemory is indeed the inheritance of sorrow, but also of resistance. It means the past does not vanish; it continues through stories, art, tattoos, embroidered maps and songs sung in homes thousands of miles away from Palestine. It is the refusal to erase, it is the choice one has to decide what and how to remember.



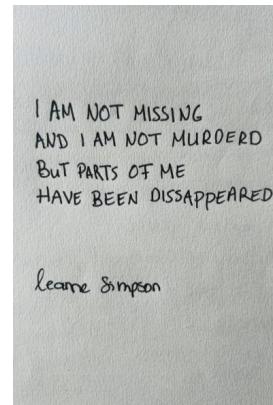
Exilic architecture

Exilic architecture is a product of forced separation—spaces constructed in exile, in limbo, in resistance.

It is the refugee camp, that was meant to be temporary but is still standing decades later, where a child paints doorsteps the same color as his home back in his village.

It is a rooftop garden in a concrete camp in Lebanon, an attempt to recreate the lost orchards of a lost village.

It is a wall that has been covered in familiar fabric and textiles to hide the cold concrete wall that lies beneath. These acts of reclaiming space are testimony of their resilience.



Saudade

Arrives from Portuguese and rooted from the Latin 'Solitatus' —"solitude." Saudade is the emotional imprint of displacement. Expressing the profound sense of longing and nostalgia, embodying the ache for something absent yet deeply cherished. For Palestinians, this can evoke the feeling of reminiscing about a past when their culture thrived, laughter filled their homes, and the sun cast its glow over the hilltop where their grandfather once built the family house. That now stands abandoned and destroyed².

When displaced, the complicated grief, both personal and collective, can be explained as Saudade. Something that is cherished, yet unreachable.

Post-displacement



Ghurba (الغرباء)

Ghurba is an arabic word, similar to the word exile. But It is not simply being far from home it is being cut off from your people, your family, your history. It's the ache of missing familiar faces, sounds, and smells. It's the feeling of longing for the warmth of your homeland, yet finding pieces of home in unexpected places.

For Palestinians this is not a temporal or existential circumstance, but a spatial geopolitical process of forced removal which is continually being put "out of place" in the present.

This painting beautifully portrays the essence of longing. The woman embracing the olive tree is not just holding onto a tree but to her roots, her heritage, and maybe even the scent of her homeland. It expresses a deep connection to a place that may be physically distant but remains ever close in her heart. This feeling is not only personal but can also be passed down to future generations, even if they haven't experienced migration themselves.



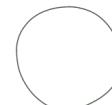
Right of Return

In 1948, over 700,000 Palestinians locked the doors behind them and left their homes, thinking they would return in days, maybe weeks. The right of return was a principle in international law, written most notably in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed as a "condicione sine qua non" (necessity) for the recognition of the Israeli state by the UN.

A year later, however, a different law was passed—one that flung open the doors to Jews from all over the world while sealing Palestinian doors shut.

Decades later, keys are still hanging in exiled homes, passed from one generation to the next. The right remains, but doors remain locked.

Today, the promise of return remains. It is not nostalgia; it is a future waiting to be reclaimed.



REMEMBERING

GHURBA

Ghurba speaks to the experience of being far from one's homeland, encapsulating feelings of alienation, yearning, and longing for the familiar. Rooted in the Arabic root, which also connects to gharb (west), a direction historically symbolising distance, it represents the emotional toll of exile. Living far from home, Ghurba carries with it memories of language, tradition, and loved ones, holding on to a past that refuses to fade.

DUA

A profound form of supplication, Dua comes from the Arabic root meaning "to call" or "to invoke." It is a personal and collective prayer to God, asking for protection, justice, or blessings. Whether for the safety of sacred places like Al-Aqsa or for those lost in exile, Dua becomes an act of spiritual resistance. It bridges generations, offering a reminder that through prayer and memory, the bonds of community remain unbroken, no matter the distance.

VICTIMHOOD

Derived from the Latin *victima* (sacrifice), victimhood describes the experience of suffering, loss, and harm. It's a condition of vulnerability, often weaponised to manipulate historical narratives. While Palestinians carry the weight of displacement, victimhood is also misappropriated by external forces. Israeli self-victimisation, for example, distorts narratives, placing their suffering above the Palestinian history of loss and oppression, thus erasing the true story of dispossession and resistance.

REMEMBERING

DISREMEMBERING

Disremembering is more than simply forgetting; it's the undoing of memory itself. From the English prefix *dis* (reversal) and *remember*, it speaks to an act that either erases memory or makes it difficult to recall. In some cases, it's a survival mechanism when trauma buries painful memories. However, it can also be imposed, as histories are rewritten and inconvenient truths erased. Disremembering challenges myths and calls us to reclaim what was once lost or erased, reminding us that the past never truly disappears.

CENSORSHIP

Censorship, derived from *censere*, meaning "to assess", involves the suppression of speech, ideas, and imagery to align with political or social agendas. In the context of Palestine, censorship is used to silence voices, suppress images of struggle, and erase identities. A notable example is the outlawing of the Palestinian flag from 1967 to the 1990s, a symbol that led to the adoption of the watermelon as a surrogate flag. The persistence of such acts of defiance speaks volumes about the power of symbols in the face of suppression.

SELECTIVE OMISSION

What's omitted can be more revealing than what's included. Selective omission refers to the intentional removal of significant facts or narratives to manipulate a version of history. In Palestine, entire villages have been erased from maps, and Palestinian voices have been systematically excluded from historical narratives. However, through oral traditions, art, and literature, Palestinians continue to recover and tell the stories that have been deliberately left out. It is an ongoing struggle to piece together a fragmented past and restore a stolen history.

REMEMBERING

THE NAKBA

The Nakba, meaning “catastrophe” or “disaster,” refers to the violent displacement of Palestinians in 1948 during the creation of the state of Israel. Approximately 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes. The Nakba, however, is not confined to one year; it is an ongoing calamity marked by the loss of land, homes, and dignity. Even today, the memories of displacement and the desire to return continue to shape the collective Palestinian experience. The Nakba is more than history; it's a living reality.

MIFTA

A key is a symbol of both access and exclusion. In the Palestinian experience, the Miftah is a symbol of homes left behind after the 1948 Nakba. Despite no longer being able to unlock the doors of their lost homes, many Palestinians kept the keys, objects that transcended their original function. These keys became symbols of resistance, identity, and the enduring hope for return. Passed down from generation to generation, the Miftah stands as a reminder of the right of return and the refusal to forget the past.

ARCHIVE

Archives are more than just collections of documents; they are places of memory and resistance. The word archive comes from the Greek arkheion, meaning a place where records and decisions are kept. In the Palestinian experience, archives preserve not just tangible items like maps, photographs, and letters, but also the intangible oral histories, traditions, and cultural practices. As institutions and buildings are destroyed, Palestinians themselves become the keepers of memory, ensuring that history is not erased by violence or neglect.

REMEMBERING

HERITAGE

Heritage is an inheritance, passed down through generations, shaping both identity and culture. The word Turāth comes from the Arabic root تراث (i-r-th), meaning inheritance. In Palestine, heritage is seen in the preservation of cities, homes, and cultural landmarks, as well as through the passing down of oral traditions, music, food, and customs. This heritage is a form of resistance to erasure by reviving traditions and reclaiming land, Palestinians continue to assert their presence and assert that they will not be forgotten.

JOURNALIST

A journalist is not just an observer of events but a recorder of truth. In Palestine, journalists play a critical role in telling stories from the frontlines of struggle. Many Palestinian journalists experience the same hardships they report on, adding a personal dimension to their work. Despite the Israeli occupation's efforts to silence them, journalists remain crucial in disseminating information to the world, ensuring that the truth of Palestinian life, suffering, and resistance is heard.

BOYCOTT

Boycotting is a form of protest that involves refusing to engage with institutions, organisations, or companies that uphold injustice. The term originated during the Irish Land War but has since been adopted by various movements, including the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Boycotting is a method of resistance, rooted in solidarity with those who are oppressed. It serves as both a form of political resistance and a way to remember past struggles for justice and equality.

Environment

Normalisation:

Normalisation in palestinian environmental context is the process of using environmental projects to whitewash occupation, where agreements on water, energy, and agriculture are signed with Arab countries while the occupation continues to uproot trees, steal resources, and destroy Palestine's environment.

التطبيع



"Cursed is normalization on the ruins of the separation wall's shadows

"يُنْسِ الْتَّطْبِيعُ عَلَى أَهْلَالِ ظَلَالِ جَدَارِ الْفَصْلِ"

Between wheat stalks shedding tears of separation from the fields."

"يَنْبَغِي سَنَابِلِ قَمَحٍ تَدَرِّفُ دَمْعَ فَرَاقٍ حُظُوطَ الْحُقُّ"

Occidentalization:

Process where non-Western societies adopt Western norms, result of colonialism. Non western things was seen as strange and defective as compared to the west which was normal and productive. This implied the need for intervention to "improve, restore or repair".

"a land without people for a people without a land"/"Make the desert bloom"

الغرب



Cities change too. Old markets and green spaces disappear, replaced by Western-style buildings. But in many places, history itself is buried under modern construction.

Ghassan Kanafani, a Palestinian writer, said:
"I know her, Haifa, but she denies me.

"إِنِّي أَعْرِفُهَا، «حَيْفَا» وَلَكِنَّهَا تُنْكِرُنِي"

Domicide

Describes the deliberate and systematic destruction of homes and infrastructure to make an area uninhabitable. In the Palestinian context, homicide is used as a tool to displace communities and erase their identity, memory and existence.

"Houses are murdered
just as their inhabitants are killed
and the memories of things are slaughtered,
wood, stones, glass, iron, mortar
– scattered like human limbs.
And cotton silk, linen, notebooks, books –
all torn apart like the unspoken words of people
who did not have the time to say them."

قتل المتأذل



والبيوت تُقتلُ
كما تُقتلُ سُكَانُهَا
وَتُنْقَلُ ذَاكِرُ الأَشْيَاءِ
الْحَجَرُ وَالْخَشْبُ وَالْزَجاجُ وَالْحَدِيدُ وَالْإِسْمَنُ
تَتَنَاثِرُ أَشْلَاءُ كَالْكَانَاتِ
وَالْقَطْنُ وَالْحَرِيرُ وَالْكَتَانُ وَالْدَفَّافُورُ وَالْكِتَابُ
تَتَمَرَّقُ كَالْكَلْمَاتُ الَّتِي
لَمْ يَتَسَنَّ لِأَصْحَابِهَا أَنْ يَقُولُوهَا

Environment

Land seizure

Refers to the forced appropriation of Palestinian land by Israeli authorities, often for settlement expansion or in the name of environmental protection, declaring land as state property, or for security purposes, resulting in the displacement of Palestinians and preventing them from using their lands.

مُصادرةُ الأَرْضِ



"This land is our life; I'd rather die than witness this moment,"

"هَذِهِ الْأَرْضُ رُوحُنَا وَحَيَاتُنَا، أَفْضَلُ أَنْ أَمُوتُ وَلَا أُرَى هَذِهِ الْحَلْظَةَ، وَلَا أُرَى شَجَرَةً تَخلُعُ

Said Mohammad in tears after the dispossession of his land by the Israeli forces for settlement expansion, despite his family's legal ownership of the land.

الولع بالمكان



Topophilia

The affective bond with one's environment, love or affection for a place.

"Enough for me to die on her earth
be buried in her

كَفَانِي أَمُوتُ عَلَى أَرْضِهَا
وَأَدْفَنُ فِيهَا

to melt and vanish into her soil
then sprout forth as a flower
played with by a child from my country.

وَتَحْتَ ثِرَاهَا أَذْوَبُ وَأَفْنَى
وَأَبْعَثُ عَشْبًا عَلَى أَرْضِهَا وَأَبْعَثُ زَهْرَةً
تَعْيَثُ يَهَا كُفُّ طَفْلٍ نَمْتَهُ بِلَادِي

Enough for me to remain in my country's embrace
to be in her close as a handful of dust
a sprig of grass
a flower."

كَفَانِي أَظْلَلُ بِحَضْنِ بَلَادِي
تَرَابًا
وعَشْبًا
وَزَهْرَةً

By Fadwa Touqan

الْعَزْلَةُ الاجْتِمَاعِيَّةُ



Ghettoization

Ghettoization refers to the creation of urban forms by city rulers to exploit and isolate a marginalised ethnoracial group. It is the process of where specific groups are confined to a segregated area.

"The Earth is closing on us
pushing us through the last passage
and we tear off our limbs to pass through.
The Earth is squeezing us.
I wish we were its wheat
so we could die and live again.
I wish the Earth was our mother
so she'd be kind to us."

تَضْبِيقُ بَيْنَ الْأَرْضِ
تَخْشِرُنَا فِي الْمَفْرَزِ الْآخِرِ
فَنَخْلُعُ أَعْصَاءَنَا كَيْ تَمْرَ
وَنَعْضُرُنَا الْأَرْضَ
بَيْ أَلْيَتَنَا قَمْخَهَا
كَيْ نَمُوتُ وَنَخْيَا
وَبَا لَيْتَهَا أَمْنَا
لَتَرْحَمَنَا أَمْنَا

By Mahmoud Darwish

Environment

Dousheh

Dousheh in the Arabic context usually means noise, takes on a heavier weight in Palestine. It is not just sound, it is the violent intrusion of war, the relentless echoes of bombings, and the pollution of both the land and the mind, where people use it in a sarcastic or ironic way to describe these sounds of explosions.

"What's all this dousha outside?"

شو هالدوشة اللي برا

"The whole night was just dousheh, no one could sleep,"

الليلة كلها دوشة، ما حد قدر ينام

"We're not afraid of their dousha, we're standing strong,"

ما بنخاف من دوشتهم، إحنا صامدين

دوشة



Ecocide

الإبادة البيئية

Similar to genocide, scholasticide, homicide and urbicide, Ecocide in Palestine can be explained as the "deliberate, systematic destruction" of infrastructures in an environmental context.

"Where should we go after the last border? إلى أين نذهب بعد الحدود الأخيرة؟

Where should birds fly after the last sky? أين تطير العصافير بعد السماء الأخيرة؟

Where should plants sleep after the last breath of air?" أين تنام النباتات بعد آخر نسمة هواء؟

Excerpt from "Earth Presses Against Us" by Mahmoud Darwish



Eradication

In the Palestinian environmental context, eradication is the systematic uprooting of nature, people, and history by the occupying power. It manifests in bulldozers tearing through olive groves, ancient trees being removed from the earth, and landscapes scarred by destruction. This process aims to sever the deep ties between Palestinians and their land, to erase rooted identity, and replace it with control.

These soldiers, these new soldiers,
They surround her with bulldozers and eradicate
her from the lineage
of the earth... they triumph over
our grandmother who has turned,
her branch now in the earth, and her roots in the sky.

Excerpt from "The Second Olive Tree" by Mahmoud Darwish

اجتثاث



هؤلاء الجنود، هؤلاء الجنود الجدد
يحاصرونها بالجرافات ويجثثونها من سلالة

الأرض... ينتصرون على جدتنا التي انقلبت

وصار فرغها في الأرض وجذورها في السماء

Environment

Weaponizing water

The control of water is used to coerce, intimidate or weaken opposing parties and/or civilian populations.

تسلیح المیاہ



"We've been looking for water since this morning."

"من صباحية ربنا وأحنا صافين دور على المیاہ"

"We're waiting for the rain to fall so we can get water."

"وينستنا علي الشتا لما ينزل عشان نجیب میاہ"

Resilience

Resilience is defined as the capacity to withstand toughness and recover quickly from difficulty.

"Agriculture runs in my blood"

الزراعة تجري في دمي

مقاومة



This is what Yousef Abu Rabee, a young agricultural engineer from Beit Lahiya (northern Gaza) says to explain his return to and regeneration of agricultural land owned by his family. Despite of the lack of resources imposed on Palestinians as a result of the Israeli blockade which has persisted for decades, young Palestinians such as him find creative ways to persist.

Sumud

Sumud in Palestine is the deep-rooted perseverance to remain, to endure, and to resist through existence itself. It is the olive tree standing after being cut, the mother rebuilding her home, the call to prayer rising over a land scarred by struggle. It is faith woven into survival, a belief that patience (sabr) is worship, and that justice will come, if not now, then in time.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

"If the Hour is about to be established and one of you has a sapling in his hand, let him plant it." عن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن قاتم الساعة وبيد أحدكم فسيلة فإن استطاع أن لا يقوه حتى يغرسها فليفعل

"On this land, we have what makes life worth living."

By Mahmoud Darwish

صمود



على هذه الأرض ما يستحق الحياة

THE FUTURE

A Colonial Glossary

Framing the Future

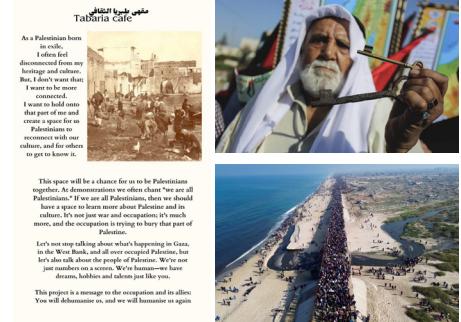
Our exploration of The Future is shaped by history, memory, and resistance. This glossary is a collaborative effort to define and critically engage with concepts shaping colonial legacies and futures. Our research process was deeply rooted in discussions, shared readings, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Through collective analysis, we selected key terms that highlight displacement, resistance, and the struggle for self-determination. This glossary is not just an academic exercise but a tool for reclaiming narratives and imagining decolonial futures. We are aware that no one of us can present a "correct" or a "satisfactory" glossary but the following is our approach to deal with this highly sensitive topic.

Chapter 01: Displacement and Return

Echo (noun [C] UK /'ek.əʊ/)



Shatat [U] UK /ʃæ'ta:t/ Arabic: شاتشلا, meaning "diaspora")



Home (noun [C/U] UK /həʊm/)



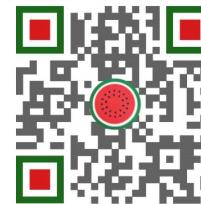
The future cannot be imagined without reckoning with the past. Displacement is not just a historical event; it is an ongoing condition shaping Palestinian identity. The loss of home, the forced scattering of communities, and the persistent longing for return define the struggle for a future where justice and belonging can coexist.



SLIMAN MANSOUR
MEMORY OF PLACES (2009)



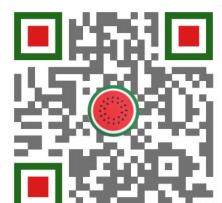
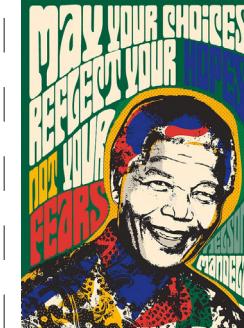
DIASPORA
PALESTINE



WHAT DOES
HOME MEAN?

Chapter 02: Resistance and Survival

Ubuntu (noun [U] UK /u'bun.tu:/)



NELSON MANDELA
BONB

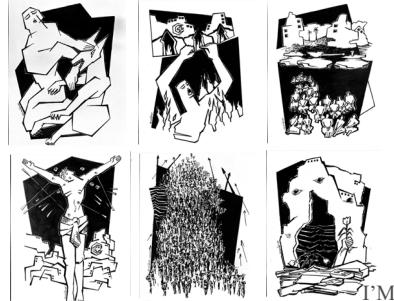
Sumud (noun [U] UK /su'mu:d/ Arabic: دومص, meaning "steadfastness")



To survive is to resist. In the face of occupation, exile, and fragmentation, Palestinian life continues — not as resignation, but as a form of quiet defiance. Resistance is not always loud. It lives in the everyday: in the tending of olive trees, in the preservation of language, in the act of staying.

Chapter 03: Narratives and Control

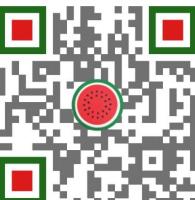
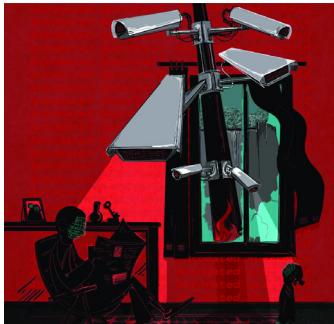
Collective memory (noun [U] UK /kə'lektiv 'mem.ər.i/)



MAISARA BAROUD

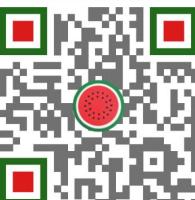
I'M STILL ALIVE (2024/2025)

Orwellian (adjective UK /'ɔ: wel.i.ən/)



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Donald J. Trump (proper noun UK /'dɒn.əld dʒeɪ trʌmp/)



RAMSES

TRUMP'S SOLUTION FOR GAZA (2025)

The struggle for liberation is also a struggle over narratives. Who tells history? Who decides what is remembered and what is forgotten? Language, media, and propaganda shape perceptions of reality, influencing the way the future is imagined and contested.

Chapter 04: Reconstruction & Uncertainty

Reparation (noun [C/U] UK /'rep.ər.eɪ.ʃən/)



GAZA
HATEM KHALED

Amygdala (noun [C] UK /'ə'mig.də.lə/ /'ə'mig.də.lə/)



VISUALIZING PALESTINE



HUMAID
THE FEAR IN THE EYES (2025)

What does it mean to grow up in a war zone? How does perpetual violence shape the mind and spirit? The trauma of occupation does not end with ceasefires—it lingers, shaping generations and casting uncertainty over the future.

Chapter 05: Towards a shared future

Free Palestine (phrase UK /fri: 'pæl.i.stain/)



SAJ ISSA

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO PALESTINE? (2023)

The future must be built on justice, recognition, and reconciliation. It calls for a shift in perspective—seeing each other as interconnected parts of a shared humanity. The next term reflects this vision, advocating for liberation, dignity, and peace for all people, towards a shared future.

35

HIDDEN NECESSITIES

37

WHAT WAS YOUR TURNING POINT?

39

THREADS OF (BE)LONGING

41

WHAT LIES BENEATH

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SCALES OF ERASURE

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MEMORY

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PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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CARRYING HOME

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HANDS THAT REMEMBER

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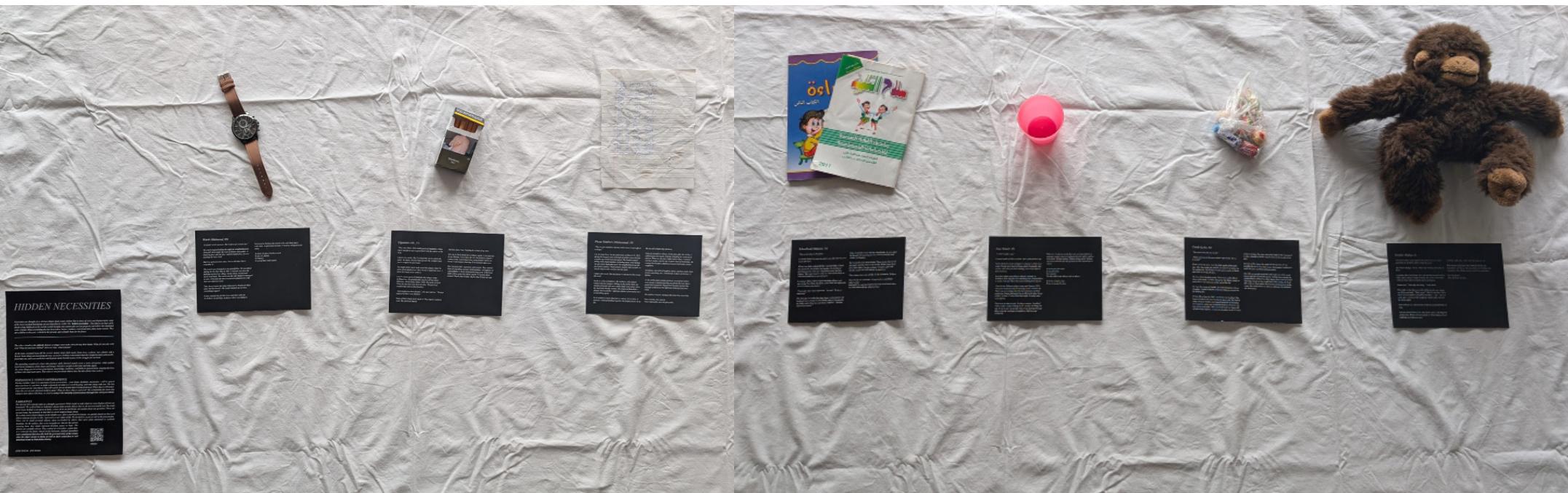
GREETINGS FROM PALESTINE

55

AN X-RAY OF PROPAGANDA

Project 2: Layering as a tool of investigation

The featured projects emerge from rigorous research and critical engagement with the concept of layering—not simply as a design strategy, but as an academic lens through which students examine the entanglements of time, space, and power. Through diverse media and themes, the works expose and confront the material and symbolic legacies of colonial and postcolonial violence. These are not speculative exercises, but carefully constructed counter-narratives that seek to unsettle dominant representations and reclaim erased histories through research and design.



Necessities are thought of as obvious things: food, water, shelter. But in times of crisis and displacement, some of the most essential belongings are not immediately visible. The 'hidden necessities'. The objects are kept safely inside a bag, hidden from the outside world, because one cannot take our last property and with it, the emotional value it holds. When everything else has been taken: homes, routines, even loved ones, these items remain. They are a lifeline to the past, a shield in the present, and a fragile hope for the future.

During wartime when it is uncertain if your possessions will be spared once you leave it, you have to make a decision on what it is worth keeping, and take along with you. The lost possessions are not 'just objects' that will vanish, but an identity that is being destroyed. What objects still matter, when the rest of your physi-

cal world is gone? What do these objects represent? By scrutinizing the items that refugees have taken with them, the meaning of possessions through time and generations is tried to be unlayered.

The objects are often overlooked by others, but carry deep emotional or symbolic meaning. On the surface, they seem insignificant. But for the person carrying them, they might represent freedom, peace or hope. They remind of a lost place, a past time, or a vision for the future. Based on literature research, multiple narratives were constructed that describe both the personal story of the owner, what the object means to them, as well as their connection to real historical events in Palestinian history.

What was your turning point?

group 2

PALESTINIAN GIRL ARRESTED AFTER CONFRONTING ISRAELI SOLDIERS
Palestinian teen filmed slapping IDF soldiers arrested overnight

Ahed Tamimi, 16, is a member of a famous activist family from the village of Nabi Saleh, which holds almost weekly protests against Israel.

The early morning raid
 A pre-dawn arrest of well known Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi, 16, helped cement her standing as an iconic illustration of the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Further highlighted the ongoing asymmetry and power
 Not just a social media trend
 outrage because of human rights violation

Ahed framed as a manipulator while crafting the violent of her cousin being shot in the head just before the video
 Charly after her cousin has been shot

The moment also sparked an intense debate over whether she was a provocateur, manipulating social media to show Israel in a bad light on the international stage, or whether she was a victim of the conflict and a righteous activist, intent on pushing the IDF out of her village of Nabi Saleh and the West Bank in general.

No mention of the fact that soldiers are entering a military camp
 Early Tuesday morning, the IDF responded by raiding the home and arresting her.

Israeli forces raided the Tamimi home and detained her
 Tamimi's mother, Manar, was detained later in the day when she tried to visit her daughter in jail.

for documenting and sharing the video
 Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman said, "No one involved - not only the girl but also her parents and those around them - will escape from what they deserve."

"The IDF is the most humane army and operates on tenets that do not exist anywhere else. But its humanity can't come at the expense of its defense and power," Liberman said.

PERHAPS ING will, horrific
 "Who ever goes wild during the day, will be arrested at night. This is also an INTIMIDATION



GENOCIDE
Palestinian who stabbed two
at age 13 is freed, said to
have developed schizophrenia

TORTURED into filmed confession after spending years in solitary confinement

Abdel Manasra, 20, convicted of terrorism for seriously wounding two in 2015 attack
 In 2015, he was arrested in a raid on his home in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh. He was held in solitary confinement for nearly two years before being released in 2017.

Released for medical health parole for Ahmad Manasra, 20, convicted of terrorism for seriously wounding two in 2015 attack
 In 2015, he was arrested in a raid on his home in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh. He was held in solitary confinement for nearly two years before being released in 2017.

Abdel Manasra, 20, released after completing his 9.5-year sentence, according to the security chief Zahed Zalzala, who said he had no immediate information about Manasra's condition but was with the 18-year-old.
 "We know in jail he's been very ill. We're waiting to know his health situation now," Zalzala said.

ISRAELI laws for Palestinians and Israelis
 The release came amid allegations by human rights groups and relatives of abuse in Israeli prisons. Israel's Prison Authority declined to comment on Manasra's detention and said all prisoners held in accordance with Israeli and international law and that allegations of abuse are investigated.

100% conviction rates for Palestinians under Israeli military court
 A 17-year-old child prisoner died after being starved by Israeli prison guards

For our exhibition piece, we searched for stories of children victims of the Israeli occupation. The plan was then to find distorted articles and correct them.

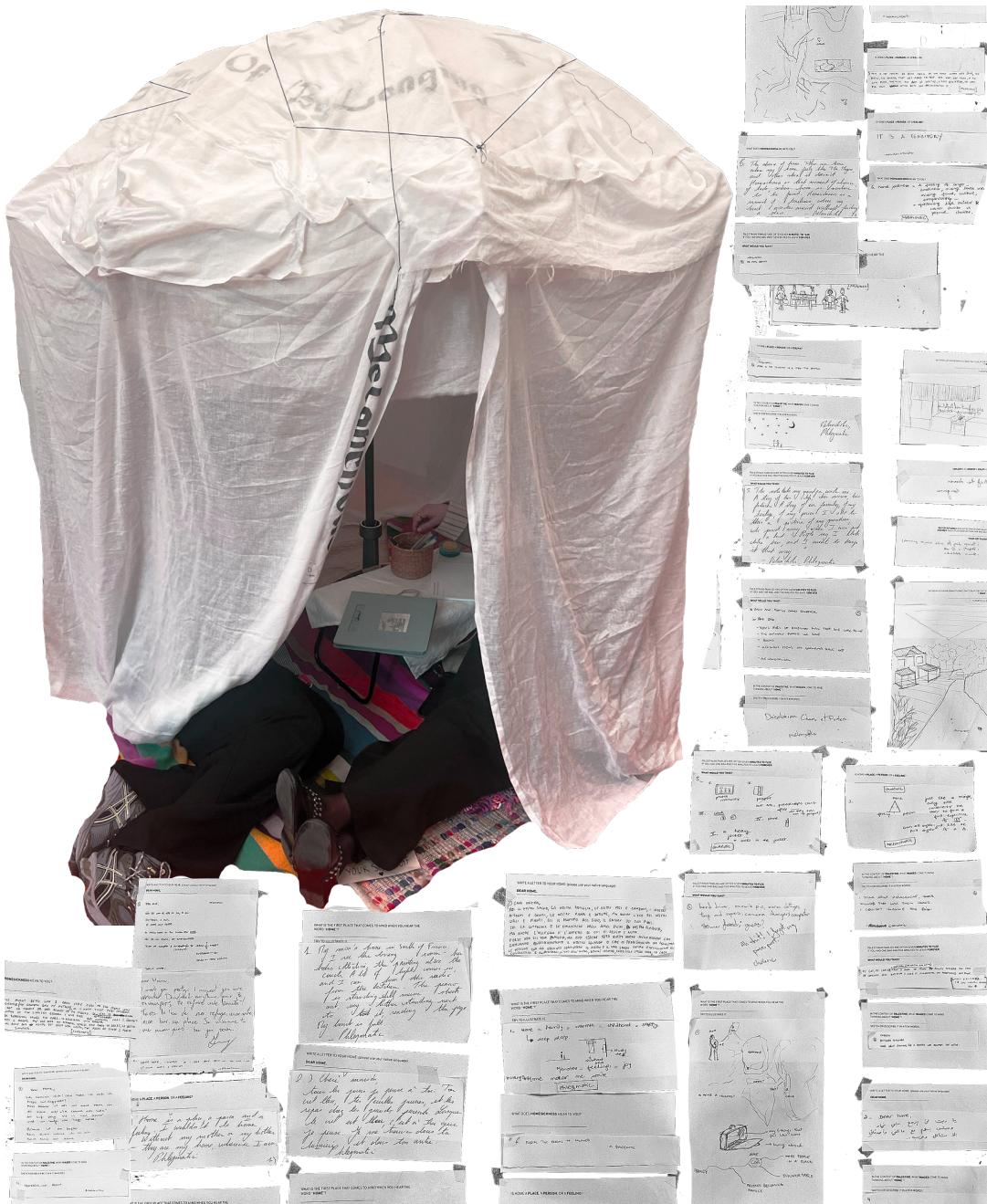
- 01 Mohammad al-Dura
- 02 Baby 'Doll'
- 03 Fawzi al-Junaidi
- 04 Ahed Tamimi
- 05 Ahmad Manasra

Media presents the injustices in Palestine in a distorted, predominantly Israel-centered way, often leading to premature, one-sided conclusions. Polarizing audiences and obscuring the realities faced by Palestinians.

The viewer can push the pane of corrections back and forth. They can choose to see the truth or be satisfied with the distorted image. This emphasises the importance of the viewer's own agency and the emphasis is put on the 'action' of understanding. It directly poses the question to the viewer: What Do You Choose To See? What Will Be Your Turning Point?

Threads of (Be)Longing

group 3



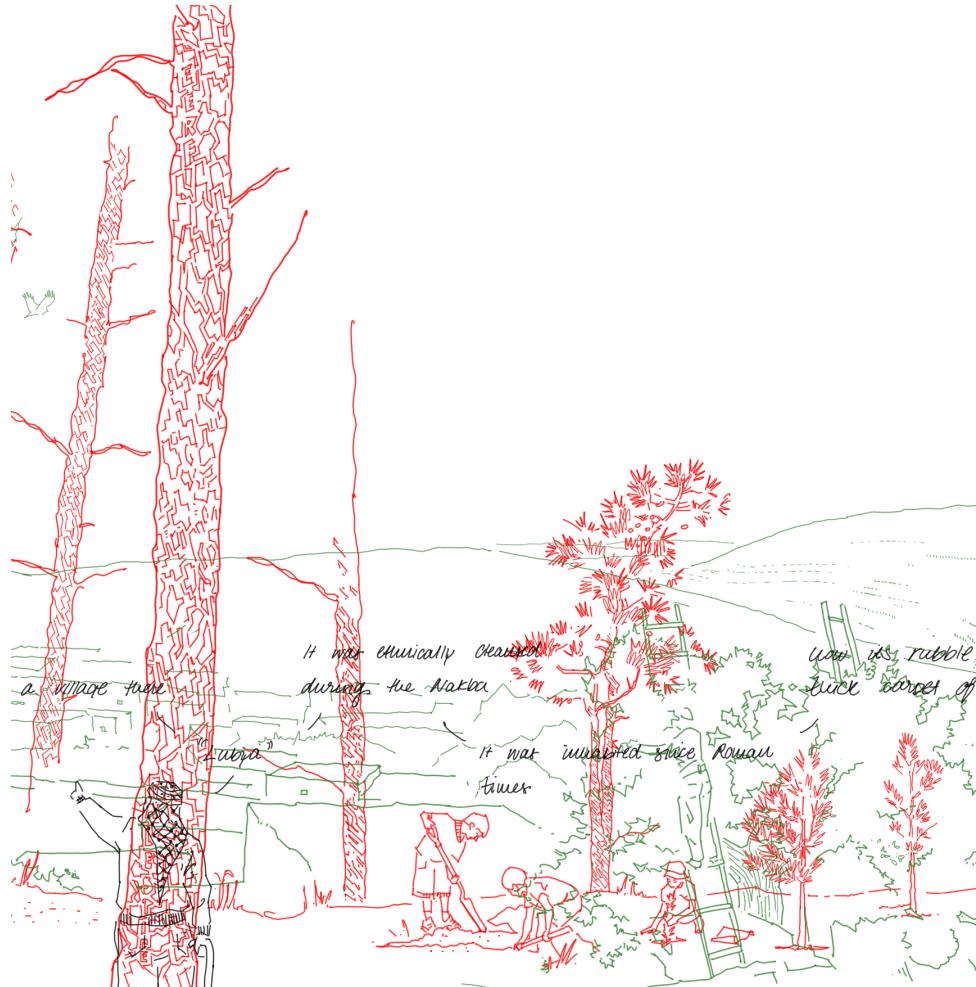
Is home a place? A feeling? A person? We asked this — and invited others to respond, with memories, drawings, and words. Through research, we created an album with a fictional story of a Palestinian family — speaking to a truth lived by many: a warm kitchen, an olive tree, a courtyard — then, rupture. Soldiers march in. Rooms are searched, photos tossed, a father killed — the house no longer safe. The home, no longer there. What remains? A key. A tent. A memory held in thread.

We created a cocoon — a space for reflection, grief, and resistance. A space to reflect on one of the most intimate places: home. Woven from gauze, it speaks of healing and exposure. Stitched with black threads resembling tatreez — Palestinian embroidery passed through generations — a quiet but radical act of remembering and belonging.

Over 1.9 million displaced — Over 56,000 homes demolished — Still, they resist. They teach, plant, remember — This is sumud:

to one another, to a certain steadfastness stitched into daily life. As a participatory installation, everyone's answers were affixed to the gauze forming the cocoon — thin, translucent, easily torn — creating a collective memory of home.

Memory holds. Resistance, it stays. Steadfastness in the face of erasure. This is not a solution. It does not rebuild homes, but it holds their stories — stories that cannot be erased.



What lies beneath reveals a layered and complex truth through the use of red film and intricate drawings. Mounted on a wooden structure, the image presents multiple overlapping realities—one in red, the other in green. One symbolizes the present, the other the past. One reflects the illegally occupied west bank under Israeli control, the other envisions what Palestine would have looked like before colonization. The image created is not a literal depiction of any one village in the occupied West Bank. While it draws from real places and real stories, it should not be interpreted as a direct representation. Rather, it is a tapestry, a weaving



together of layered truths. It explores themes such as the strategic planting of pine forests to obscure Palestinian heritage and the ongoing expansion of illegal Israeli settlements. This project intentionally does not centre the most visible symbols of Israeli colonization, not the wall, nor the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Instead, it seeks to uncover what remains hidden: how Israeli architecture, and the broader tools of the built environment, are used to erase Palestinian life. It is about exposing what lies beneath.

Scales of Erasure

group 5



Unlearning the propaganda

This work traces a spatial journey through erasure—moving from territory, through public sphere, to home.

At each scale, architecture is more than a physical tool, it's a narrative force: constructing, masking, and often silencing.

Nature: how environmental language and masterplanning are mobilized to justify displacement. Forests, inscribed over villages. Parks marketed as progress towards inclusion. Ecological claims are mobilized to reconfigure settler colonial expansion as preservation.

Museums: how public institutions curate not just objects, but also truths. Inside glass cases and on gallery walls, stories are chosen, others omitted. Inside glass cases and on gallery walls, stories are chosen, others omitted.

Museums pretend neutrality, but they actively rewrite the history beneath that facade—to name, to silence, to forget.

Home: how the most bodily intimate space becomes the most violated. Here, erasure comes in the form of permits, demolitions and surveillance. Even identity becomes a bone of contention.

What was private becomes political. What is lived becomes denied.

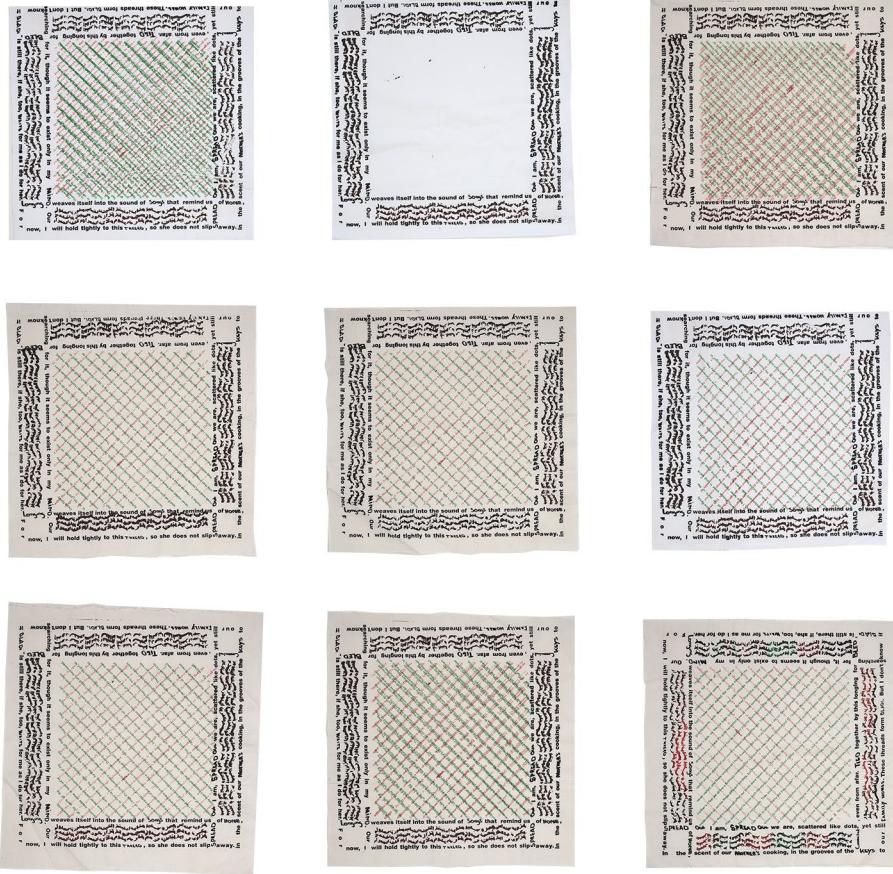
These layers together reveal that architecture is not just passive. It is policy. It is propaganda. It is power.

The viewer participates in a process of unlayering by physically moving through our panels—mirroring our work throughout this course.

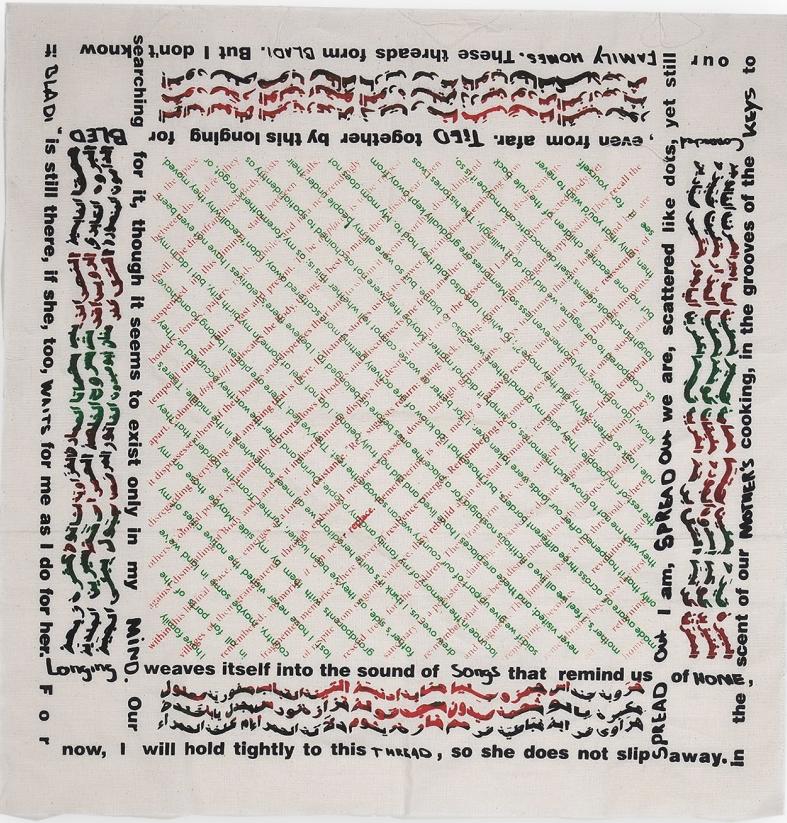
This is not just about seeing what lies behind, but about unlearning what we've been taught to see in the first place.

You can't erase an ongoing story

group 7



The memorial tapestry is a collection of personal stories from across the globe, of families who've been affected by imperialist regimes. Each point of view is superimposed so that the notion of "collective memory" is blatantly exhibited. A people's memory is a collection of individual stories told and retold by its community, to the point where all lines blur and the shared experiences link together the remembering pattern. From afar, our "tapestry" reflects the smoothed out history of a nation; while, if you closely approach each story line, you can pay tribute to personal stories that act as "chapters". Each retelling of a story changes



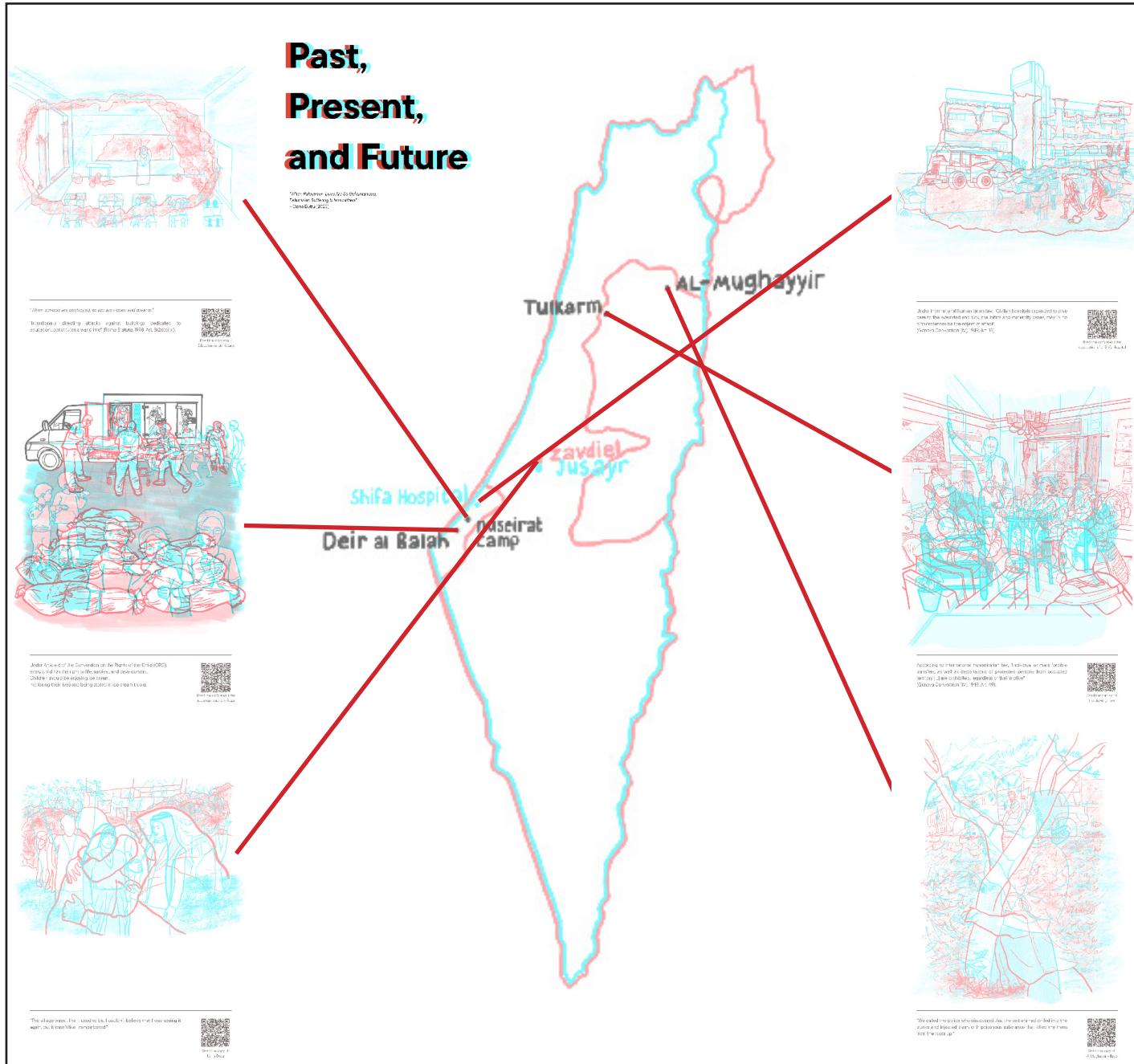
the details and the course, just as each piece of our tapestry will always differ from the one before.

There are many metaphors, but the key one is that erasure is everywhere. To truly understand (post)colonial trauma, you need personal or national identification. The tapestry has no names, countries, or direct story claims a tactic against censorship familiar to the silenced. When context is removed, how many can relate to the siege of redacted ? *Print, spread, tell, unite, resist.*

Print, spread, tell, unite, resist.

Past, Present, and Future

group 8



This project aims to reveal the layered realities of Palestinian life under colonial violence—not only the devastation of the present, but also the richness of what once was. By presenting side by side images of everyday joy, tradition, and peace with the destruction and displacement inflicted by occupation, we seek to humanize Palestinians beyond the frame of suffering. Our goal is to challenge the dominant narratives that reduce them to victims and instead restore their visibility as people with lives, dreams, and deep cultural roots. Through this exhibition, we hope to convey both memory and hope: a remembrance of the past and a belief in the possibility of return, of peace, and of dignity reclaimed.

Our concept for the Layering theme of the exhibition is inspired by anaglyph drawings. Anaglyph drawings are images made of two overlapping layers in contrasting colors (typically red and blue) that create a 3D effect when viewed through special glasses.

We wanted to use this technique to highlight how media often reduces Palestinian suffering to what we see on screens, overshadowing their past lives and identities. The blue drawing would represent their lives before hardship — their memories, dreams, and humanity — while the red drawing would depict their current reality of suffering. However, the blue drawing could also present their future — peaceful like before. By merging the two drawings, we aim to remind viewers that the Palestinians are more than their suffering; they have layered histories that deserve recognition and they deserve to return to the life they had before. At first glance, the image will be very chaotic but once you wear the glasses, each individual drawing becomes more clear.

Carrying Home

group 9

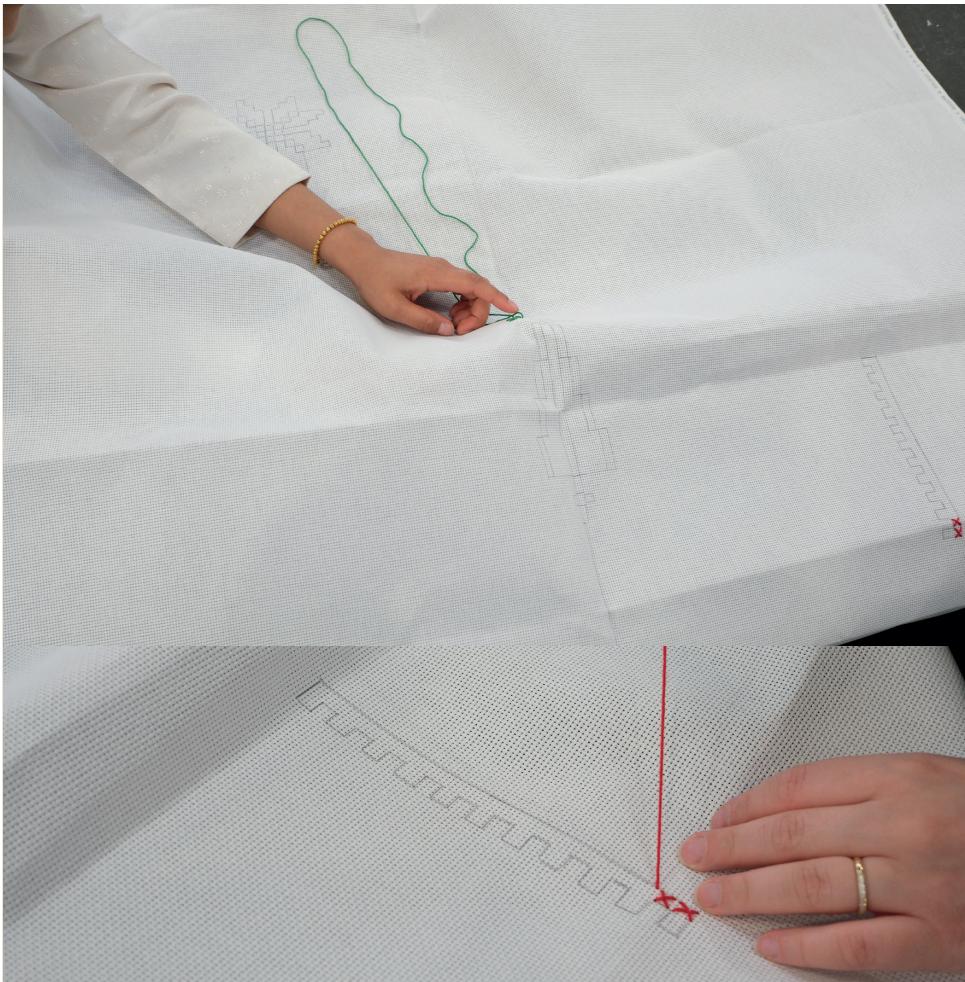


"We must do everything to ensure they [the Palestinians] never do return ... The old will die and the young will forget," said David Ben-Gurion, the founder of Israel, in 1949. Since 1948, Israel has tried its best to erase the identity and existence of the Palestinian people. Many Palestinians who witnessed Al Nakba have died with the dream of returning to their villages. However, their dream has never faded, and the young have never forgotten their Palestine, their home, and their right to return. Now, we are dealing with the third and fourth generations, who still hold the image of Palestine in their hearts. They still carry the memories and identity passed down by their parents and grandparents. They continue to insist on their existence and hold on to the symbolic key of return, despite Israel's great efforts to erase their identity and presence. Palestine, the homeland, has been carried through generations, from those who first witnessed Al-Nakba to the present day. The third and fourth generations still hold onto their homeland and firmly believe in their right to return, even though they have never seen their land. This love and belief have been passed down from generation to generation without fading. These memories which became stories are a red thread that began at the very start of the

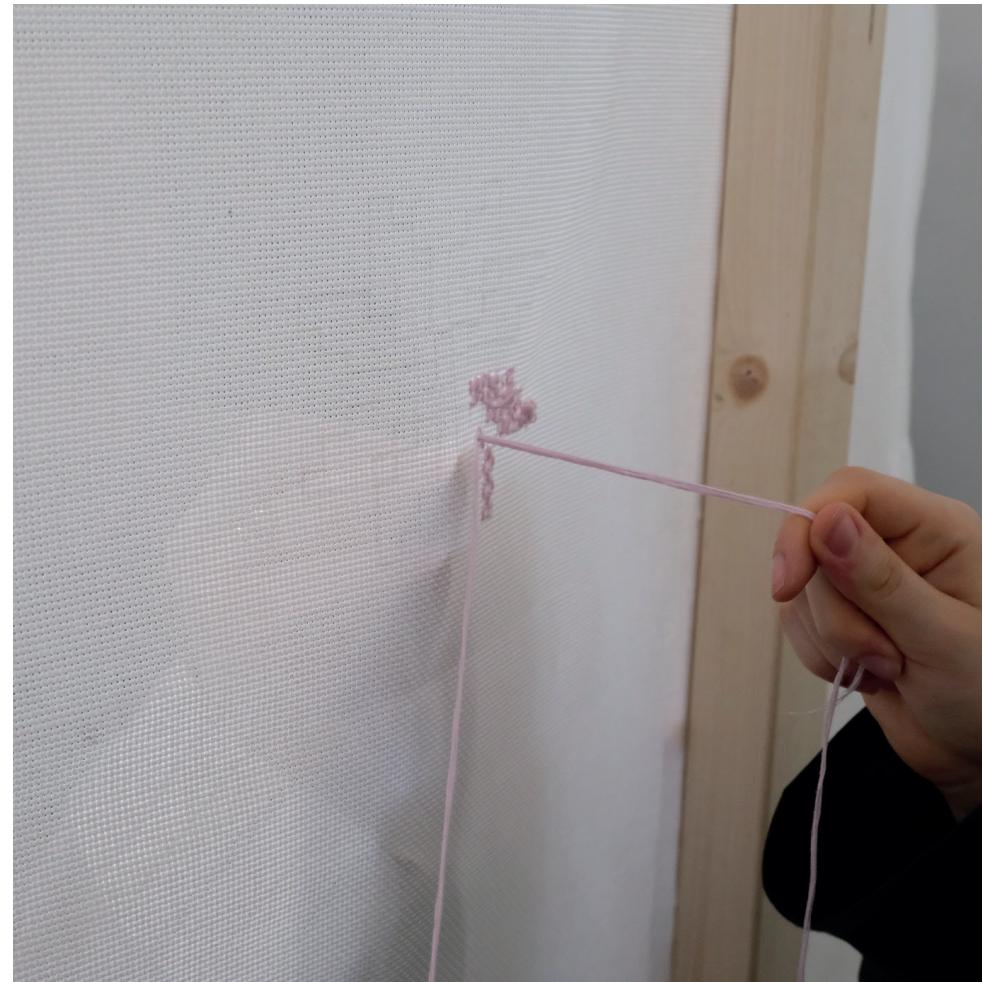
beautiful Palestinian homeland and continue unbroken to the present day, despite the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian people. The world has come to accept the suffering of Palestinians, both in their homeland and in exile, as something normal. Palestinians in exile are unable to return, and they know their land only through memories—the beautiful images of the villages their ancestors once lived in. In our work, we aim to visualize how home and identity are carried through generations of families in exile. How this effects their surroundings, and houses etc. This effect happens through small symbols or big structure. To achieve this, we relied on the real experiences of three Palestinian women, one of whom witnessed Al-Nakba. We sought to translate these real experiences into our work, based on the stories Palestinians tell about their displacement and the identity they have formed around their homeland, even without having seen it. Our ultimate goal is to validate the idea that while the older generation may pass away, the children do not forget. Despite their displacement and the new roots they have established in exile, they still carry and believe in the importance of passing down their identity, traditions, and strong sense of belonging.

Hands that remember

group 10



Hands That Remember (2025) A collaborative artwork/artifact inviting collective reflection, participation, and learning. Tatreez—the traditional Palestinian practice of embroidery—has long served as a form of storytelling, resilience, and preservation. In Hands That Remember, visitors are invited to learn, stitch, and engage in this living tradition. The work centers around three Tatreez patterns: Hope, Resilience, and Continuity. Through these, we navigate the spirit of Palestinian heritage and the shared practice of embroidery. Pause, reflect, and listen to the stories of five Palestinian embroiderers: Wahiba



Mohamad Ali Tawafsha, Rajaa Sabri el-Zeer, Suhair Odeh, Nawal Mahmoud, and Maryam Malakha. By adding a stitch, you carry their stories forward—ensuring they are re-membered, their stories retold, and never silenced. This installation is a collaborative artifact. Please feel free to leave your mark.



Hope



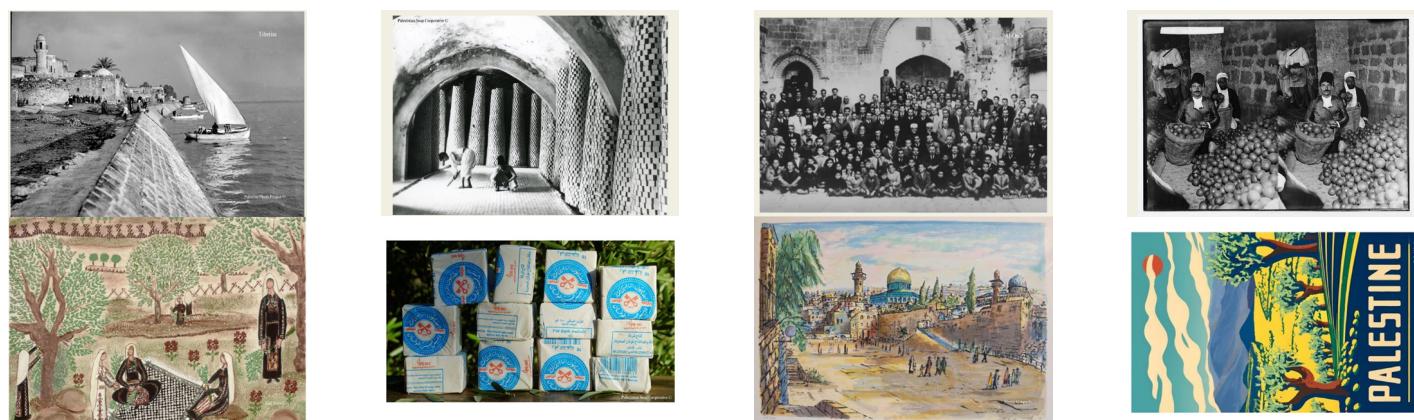
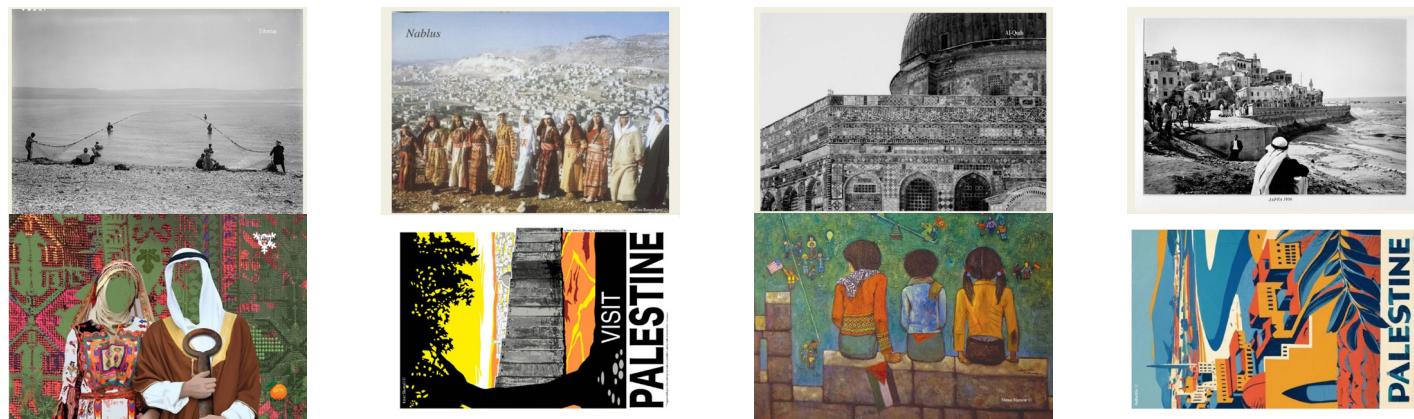
Resilience



Continuity

Greetings from Palestine

group 11



In this project the students aimed to show the perspectives of Palestinians across various time periods through the art of storytelling and narration. They did this by using fictional characters based on real life stories and people. Even though the stories are not real, they could have been real.

To find the information and photographs the students used their research from the colonial glossary, the lectures from their classes and they did extra research to deepen their knowledge and find more media for the postcards.

The postcards are written by four different people, each having two postcards from the past and two from the future. To differentiate the postcards the students have used different aesthetics for the past and for the future. The postcards from the past are the black and white photo's and the postcards from the future are colorful.

The postcards are written from the perspective of someone from Tiberias, Nablus, Yaffa and Al-Quds. By using nostalgia, the students effectively bridge the Past with the Future. This initiative serves to humanize the Palestinian experience by highlighting narratives from diverse regions within Palestine.



An X-Ray of Propaganda explores the visual battlefield between colonial power and resistance through the case of Palestine. Focusing on the manipulation inherent in propaganda, the project examines how beauty and omission craft political narratives. Centered around two historical travel posters — Mitchell Loeb's *Visit Palestine* (1947) and Maurice Renluc's *Visit Israel* (1951) — the project uncovers how these images erase Palestinian presence and rewrite history. By creating revised versions of these posters, the project exposes hidden realities of occupation, displacement, and surveillance masked behind idyllic imagery.

The medium of the agamograph, which shifts images as the viewer moves, was chosen to physically embody the act of uncovering suppressed truths. Viewers must change their perspective to reveal the concealed narrative, mirroring the effort needed to question dominant histories. Drawing on the works of artists like Aya Ghanameh, and Amer Shomali, the project situates graphic media as a site of ideological struggle. It emphasizes that propaganda operates not only through what is shown but also through what is deliberately left out.

MSc2_ Architecture and Colonialism

TU Delft

AR2AA010B