

From Gaza to al-Majdal

Ten Art Interventions

A collection of ten aerial images from the Bavarian State Archive, marked by the name (Küstenebene-File 10- Gaza-Beerseba “bir es-seba”), were taken between September 1917 and September 1918 during reconnaissance flights by the Bavarian Air Squadron as part of the operations of the German-Turkish Alliance. They systematically document the stretch of land between Gaza and al-Majdal, including the later destroyed villages of ‘Iraq al-Manshiyya, Bayt Jirja, al-Jiyya, Barbara, and al-Majdal.

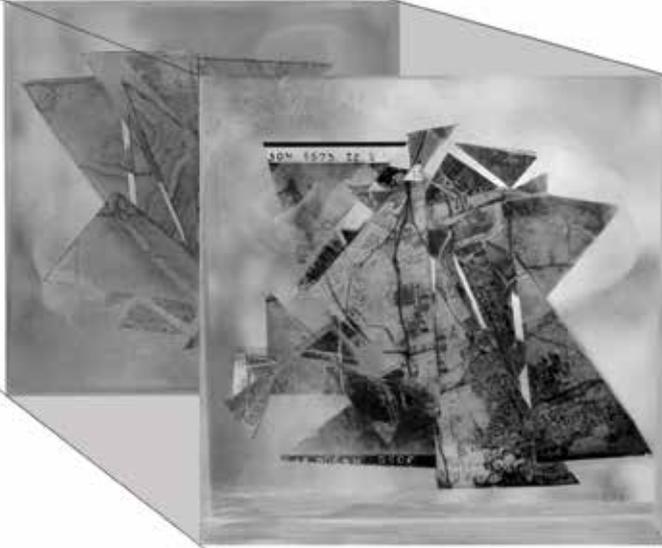
The aerial reconnaissance photographs that were taken during scout operations served the Germans for tactical and surveillance ends, likewise the successive colonial regimes in Palestine. They have become a tool for the study of the urban landscape and infrastructure of Palestine at the end of the Ottoman period.

For this special issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*, ten artists were invited to work with these images and make an intervention through imagining the process of photographing and capturing these images from the sky. The artists were asked to respond to the following questions while thinking about their artistic intervention: Did the pilot receive orders to capture this image via radio communication? What was the dispatch? What was the pilot thinking at the moment of capturing the image, coming from a European culture and photographing the “holy” landscape of Palestine? What did the pilot see beyond the frame of the photograph? How can we interpret these images beyond their military objectives? Can the artist impersonate the pilot while relating to a more contemporary experience? How does the same image look today via satellite?

مددت رأسي بلهفة لأتأمل تفاصيل مدينة غزة عبر زجاج الطائرة الأمامي، وخرائط المساح الفرنسي "بيير جاكوتين" التي رسمها للفلسطين لا تقارق مخيلتي. انظر عبر الزجاج كأنني ما زلت أقف أمام لوحات خرائطه الستة التي ما زالت معلقة على جدران غرفتي، أتأملها، أحقق بها ... محدثًا نفسي "سوف أعيد رسم هذه الخرائط من جديد".

ينتابني إحساس غريب الآن وأنا أغادر أجواء المدينة كأنني أخرج من فضاء مغلق... سأنظر للأسفل للمرة الأخيرة.

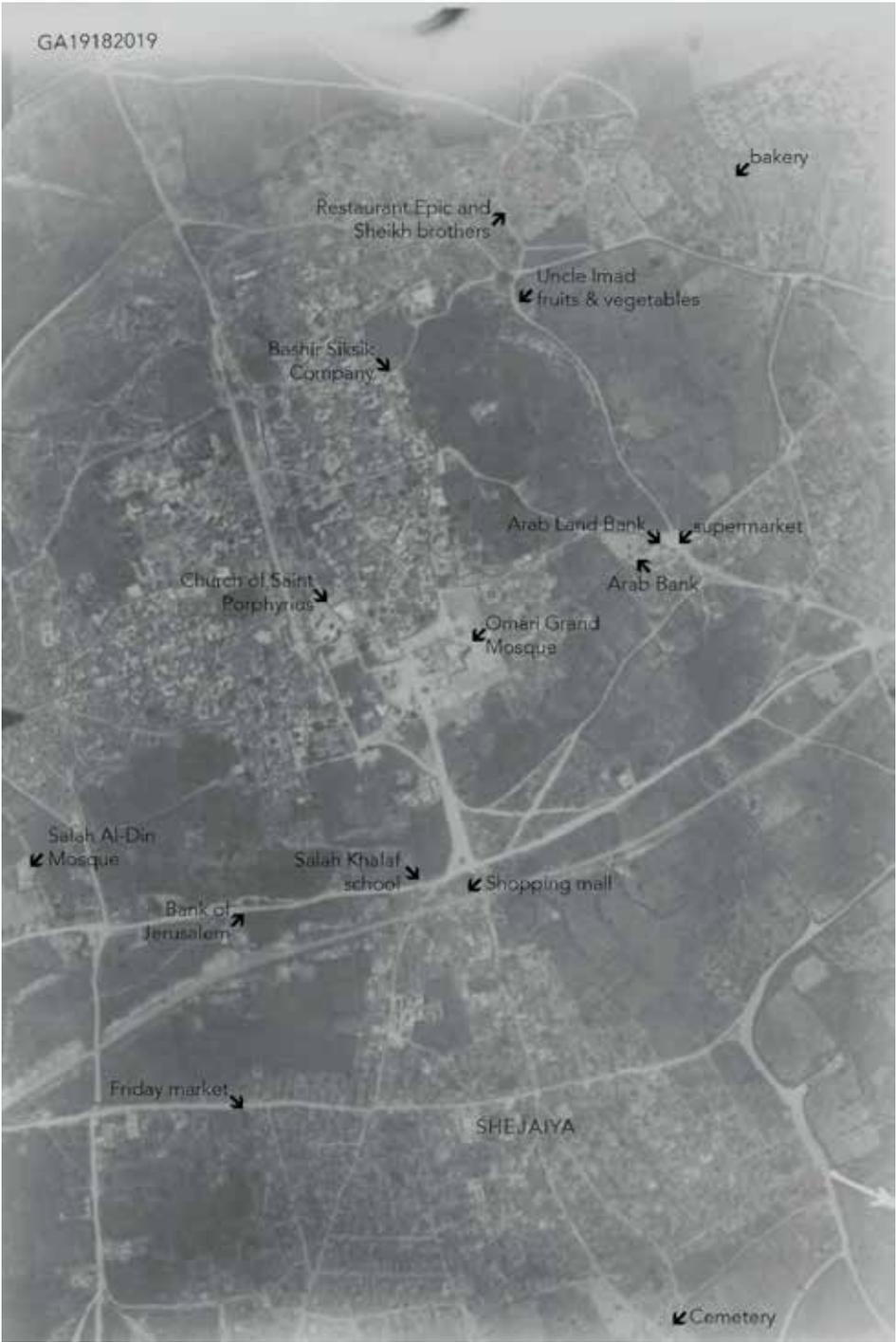
من مذكرات طيار
1918 - 5 - 28



Shada Safadi on Gaza City

1799-1918. Plexiglass, collage. 25 x 25 cm, 2019. "I have a strange feeling now as I leave the city, as if I am leaving a closed space ... I will look down for the last time."

From a pilot's diary (text by artist)



Jack Persekian on Gaza City
Gaza Aerial View, 1918–2019. 2019.

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F - 16A COCKPIT ARRANGEMENT

INSTRUMENT PANEL

1. HUD combiner glass
2. Television camera
3. Air refuel status indicator
4. HUD control panel
5. Standby attitude indicator
6. Fuel flow indicator
7. Fuel FC tank warning light (red)
8. Hydraulic pressure warning light (cyan)
9. Canopy warning light (red)
10. UHF altimeter frequency indicator
11. Vertical velocity indicator
12. Engine oil pressure indicator
13. Tachometer
14. Nozzle position indicator
15. ETT indicator
16. Fuel quantity indicator
17. Alertness
18. Marker beacon light indicator
19. Altitude deviation indicator
20. Horizontal situation indicator
21. Radar incoherent optical display
22. Radar gain adjustment knob
23. Angle of attack indicator
24. Instrument panel select control
25. Air speed indicator



LEFT CONSOLE

1. Radar control panel
2. UHF altimeter
3. Air refuel status indicator
4. Fuel quantity indicator
5. Fuel flow indicator
6. Fuel FC tank warning light (red)
7. Fuel quantity indicator
8. Fuel quantity indicator
9. Fuel quantity indicator
10. Fuel quantity indicator
11. Fuel quantity indicator
12. Fuel quantity indicator
13. Fuel quantity indicator
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18. Fuel quantity indicator
19. Fuel quantity indicator
20. Fuel quantity indicator
21. Fuel quantity indicator
22. Fuel quantity indicator
23. Fuel quantity indicator
24. Fuel quantity indicator

RIGHT CONSOLE (TYPICAL)

1. Fuel quantity indicator
2. Fuel quantity indicator
3. Fuel quantity indicator
4. Fuel quantity indicator
5. Fuel quantity indicator
6. Fuel quantity indicator
7. Fuel quantity indicator
8. Fuel quantity indicator
9. Fuel quantity indicator
10. Fuel quantity indicator
11. Fuel quantity indicator
12. Fuel quantity indicator
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24. Fuel quantity indicator

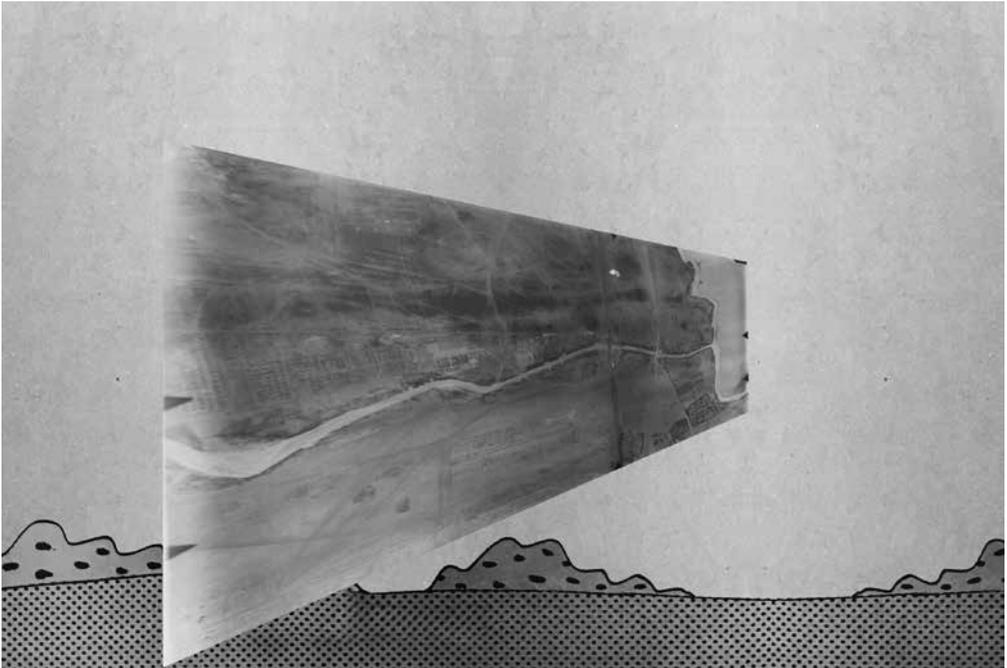
RIGHT AUXILIARY CONSOLE

1. Fuel quantity indicator
2. Fuel quantity indicator
3. Fuel quantity indicator
4. Fuel quantity indicator
5. Fuel quantity indicator
6. Fuel quantity indicator
7. Fuel quantity indicator
8. Fuel quantity indicator
9. Fuel quantity indicator
10. Fuel quantity indicator
11. Fuel quantity indicator
12. Fuel quantity indicator
13. Fuel quantity indicator
14. Fuel quantity indicator
15. Fuel quantity indicator
16. Fuel quantity indicator
17. Fuel quantity indicator
18. Fuel quantity indicator
19. Fuel quantity indicator
20. Fuel quantity indicator
21. Fuel quantity indicator
22. Fuel quantity indicator
23. Fuel quantity indicator
24. Fuel quantity indicator

26. Store control panel
27. Autopilot roll axis switch
28. Autopilot yaw switch
29. Autopilot pitch mode switch
30. Master warning light (amber)
31. Master warning light (amber)
32. Angle of attack indicator



Amer Shomali on 'Iraq al-Manshiyya
 Proskynetarion "topography of the holy land," 2019.



Ala Younis on Dayr Esned

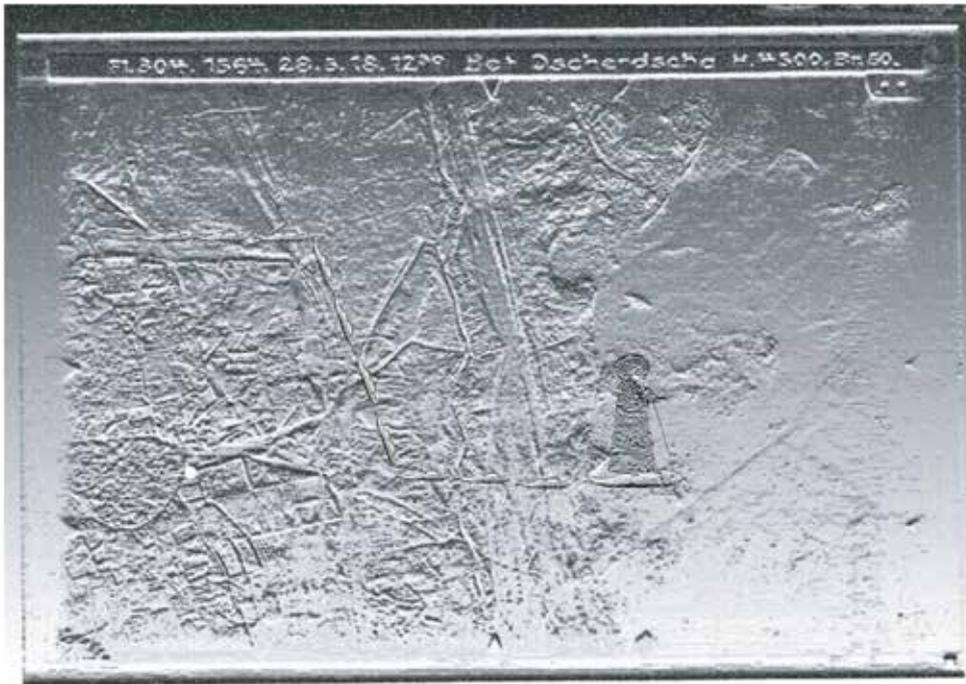
Al-Labbad opens his eyes with astonishment. Here is a drawing of the land on which he imagines a landing, cut through by an aerial image of Dayr Esned repositioned as the windscreen of its shooting pilot.



هذه هي القرية التي رسمتها
 قرية الجيبة ، معالمها ، دورها، هنا يقع المسجد، وهذا الجبر والجاوية.
 هذه هي المقبرة . والقرية فيها رام يخرقها من الشمال الشرقي الى الجنوب الغربي يتصل
 مع وادي الصبي قرب هربيا ، ويصب في البحر المتوسط.
 والقرية فيها كرق تراجية ، هذه كريق بيت جرجا، وهذه الكريق الى بركة وبيت كسيما
 هذه هي دارنا ، دار الحاج محمد السطار
 وهنا في ذلك سكة صعيد يربط فلسطين كلها
 وفي الكريق الرئيسي الذي يمتد من رفح حتى رأس الناقورة
 عامه سكان القرية كان ١٤٣٢ نسمة واليوم ١٣ الف لاجئ
 ومساحتها ٦٨٠٠ هكتار

Khaled Hourani on al-Jiyya

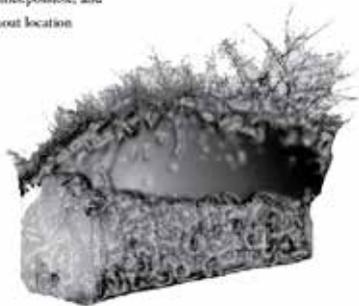
Eyewitness, Video al-Jayyeh, Haj Mohamad al-Sahar.



» Which we know as much as we do of the medieval topography of the Frankish kingdom. Even in the later period of the Moslem rule, the accounts of the country are mere sketches compared with the full details obtainable from contemporary documents. «



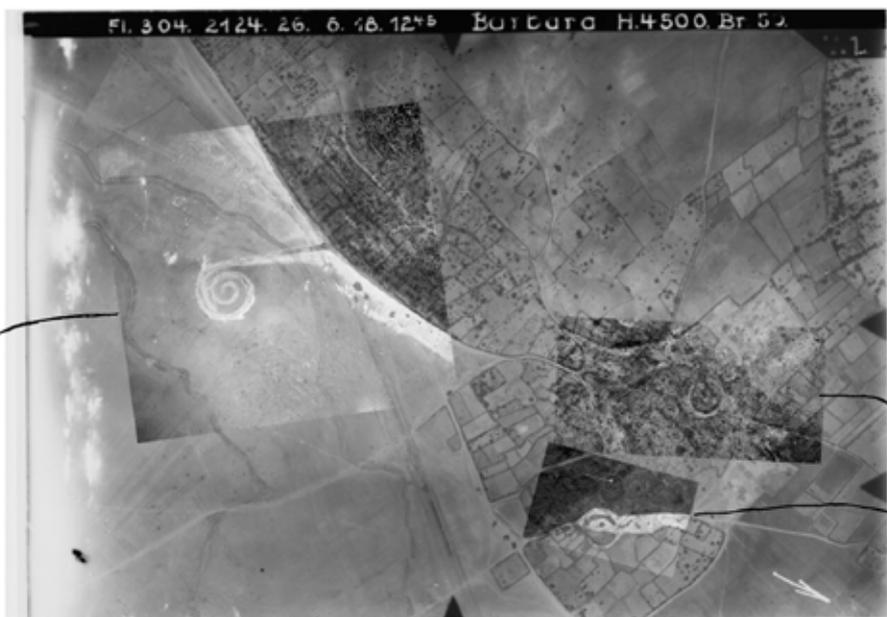
» He has also successfully identified a very large proportion of the sites, but as he apparently was not in possession of the Survey map, and as the Sarvey Memoirs were unpublished at the time, a considerable amount of additional identification becomes possible, and only a very small proportion of these sites are left without location on the map. «



Mahdi Baraghiti on Bayt Jirja

Graphic collage, 2019.

Text: *Journal Palestine Exploration Quarterly* vol. 21, 4 (1889).



Aerial image of the village of Barbara, 28 May 1918. Bavarian State Archives

On July 20, 1973, American artist Robert Smithson died during an aviation accident along with the pilot and a photographer when their light plane crash as they were inspecting one of his earthworks under construction (Amarillo Ramp) in the vicinity of Amarillo, Texas.

Relatively few of Smithson's major works remain intact, his best-known pieces, and probably the most famous pieces of all earthworks, are the Spiral Jetty, 1970 (1500 ft) protruding into Great Salt Lake in northern Utah, U.S. and Broken Circle/Spiral Hill, 1971 in Emmen, The Netherlands.

Essa Grayeb on Barbara

Artist/Photographer/Pilot, 2019. Scanning of manipulated images with text and hand drawings (photo essay in progress).



She told me,

Lines are many, and future is promising. I see investments and development. People will gather for commercial purposes - Peaceful, positive, progressive, and of good faith. This land is there for benefit. I think that I don't see war.

(Manira / 11,500 CFA franc)



She told me,

Thousands of years left hidden scars in its skin, spreading light into the entire world. How blessed are you to have this image! This land have diamonds and gold within, human eyes can't see. One is born soon there, an angel who will reveal its history. Change will occur. Protected are those who will keep this image.

(Ada / 9,000 CFA franc)



She told me,

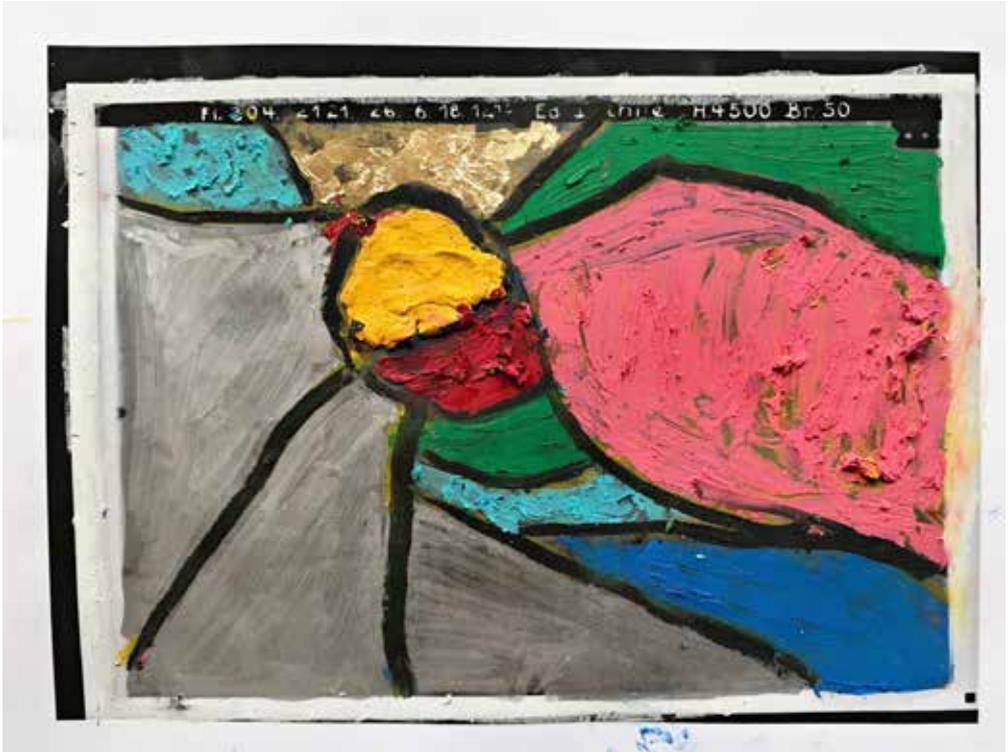
This land holds powers to heal people from their sickness. Its water is sweet. Your distance is vast. This image will change your entire life. If you go there in person, you will never have any blockage in your way. And if you use this picture in your art, you will be famous. This land is your cure.

(Amita / 13,500 CFA franc)

**TRANSCRIBED ENCOUNTERS WITH THREE PSYCHIC PICTURE
READERS IN DAKAR, SENEGAL. DECEMBER/2019.**

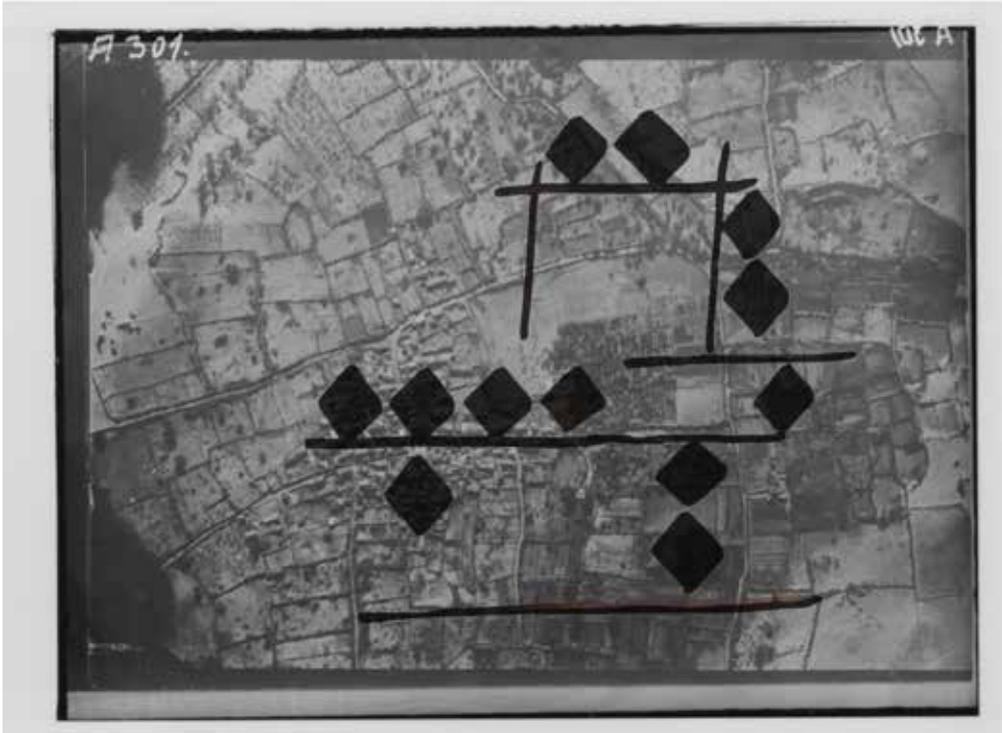
Noor Abed on al-Majdal

Transcribed Encounters with Three Psychic Picture Readers in Dakar, Senegal, 2019.



Oraib Toukan on al-Jiyya

The Pleasure of a Certain Distance, 2019. Drawing on laser, paper, ink, oil pastel, metal leaf.



Dots invisible to the eye
dictate the limits of the sky

Undress the letter
Un-render the script

Participating Artists' Biographies

Shada Safadi is a visual artist from the Golan who lives and works in the Golan and in Ramallah. Shada is a founding member of Fateh al-Muddaris Center for Arts and Culture in the Golan.

Jack Persekian is founding director of al-Ma'mal Foundation and gallery Anadiel in Jerusalem.

Amer Shomali is a multidisciplinary artist teaching in the Faculty of Art, Music, and Design at Birzeit University, Palestine.

Ala Younis is an artist, curator, and publisher. Her work investigates archives, film remains, and artistic practices. She presented her work at the Venice, Istanbul and Gwangju Biennials, and international and Arab art institutions. She curated Kuwait's pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2013) and the "Museum of Manufactured Response to Absence."

Khaled Hourani is a Palestinian artist, curator, and art critic, as well as founder and former director of the International Academy of Art Palestine. Hourani plays a major role in the contemporary art scene in Palestine.

Mahdi Baraghithi is a visual artist who works across a range of media including performance, installation, and collage.

Oraib Toukan is an artist and scholar. She is currently a EUME (Europe in the Middle East) fellow at the Forum Transregional Studien in Berlin.

Essa Grayeb is a visual artist, working across different media such as photography, video, installation, and text.

Noor Abed is an artist and researcher based in Ramallah.

Shuruq Harb is an artist filmmaker, writer, editor, and curator.