

CONSTELLATIONS OF
ALONG THE

Constellations of Multiple Wishes: *Along the Eastern Horizon*

Museum of

23 / 5

Moderna galerija,

Contemporary Art

–

24 / 11

Metelkova

2024

Ljubljana 2024



MULTIPLE WISHES:
EASTERN HORIZON

Constellations of Multiple Wishes: *Along the Eastern Horizon*

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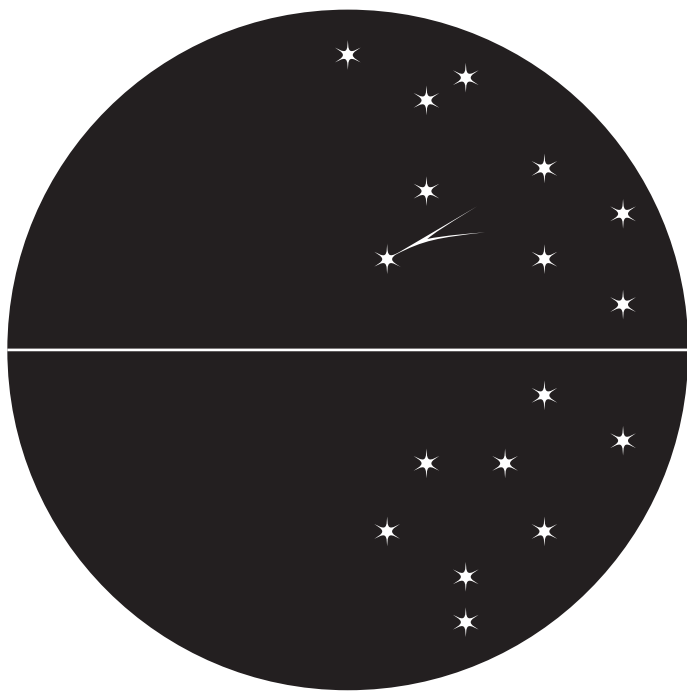
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Constellations of Multiple Wishes: *Along the Eastern Horizon*



Foreword

“I know I can’t change the future, but I can change the past. It is the past, not the future, which is infinite. Our past was appropriated. I am one of the people who has to reappropriate it.”

– Toni Morrison

The exhibition *Constellations of Multiple Wishes* was first presented in 2023 at The Mosaic Rooms, London. It contemplated past and present sites of struggle through entangled recent histories from the foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Agitating the relationship between time and memory, the exhibition refused the position of historian and instead reflected on personal and collective ideas and political desires that ripple and echo across time. The catalyst for the exhibition was the *Southern Constellations* series, which was initiated at the Moderna galerija, Ljubljana in 2019, and followed by different iterations in Gwangju, Rijeka, Skopje, and Podgorica. The series focused on the rich cultural production of the NAM: on various historical constellations such as organizations, events, exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and cultural policies that shaped the non-aligned cultural landscape. These exhibitions grappled with the unrealized aspect of the movement and the visionary world it was trying to build, the one that did not arrive, at least not yet. They ruminated on the traces of the movement – affective, cultural, political, social, and other – that can be found in our present. Fundamentally, these exhibitions revealed that the common thread looping together the non-aligned transnational networks was the rejection of the *colonial and imperial project*. As well as other knowledge apparatuses, this nexus of connection rooted in anti-colonial and alter-global politics deeply affected art and culture.

Constellations of Multiple Wishes: Along the Eastern Horizon is the latest iteration in the *Constellations* series. This exhibition takes a critical look at the NAM

itself, which has become something of an anachronism in recent decades. We write this text as the genocide in Gaza enters its sixth month. As such, one cannot assert the movement's rejection of coloniality without centering Palestine and the decades of colonial violence and occupation, as well as the decades of resistance and struggle for liberation. While the mention of the genocide in Gaza has been banned and even criminalized in art institutions across the West, we refuse to edit it out of our exhibition texts and halls. We reject silence and neutrality because we understand them to be forms of complicity.

Working on these exhibitions and the movement more broadly repeatedly brought to the fore the question of solidarity. Both as a key principle of non-alignment and as an increasingly sanitized term that is today co-opted by liberalism. It can well be claimed that there is a crisis of global solidarity, where solidarity is often just a pretext for the consolidation of new geopolitical powers. Juxtaposing the outpouring of solidarity with Ukraine with the continued censorship of Palestine in the cultural sector signals a chilling new era of state-imposed solidarity as well as censorship. This is creating a worryingly fertile ground for further inequalities, hierarchies, and exclusionary politics. We must understand the gravity of this moment and move away from the assimilation of pseudo-radical semantics and participate in and build bridges towards a solidarity that is interconnected and interdependent – building bonds with struggles from Gaza to Congo, to Sudan and beyond.

The decades after World War II saw numerous alternatives to domination and oppression, with anti-colonial, antifascist, and emancipatory movements inventing new political languages of liberation rooted in solidarity and common struggle. Many of these past alternatives appear to have failed us, and advocating for rights within current systems can feel futile. The need for alternatives is great indeed. Even though Palestine is still a member of the NAM, the supposed “biggest peace movement in history,” it has not done anything to end the genocide in Gaza. The NAM has thus become one of the biggest political disappointments instead, unable to provide solutions to the struggles and tragedies of its

member states, and what remains are the grandiose historical ideas and unfinished utopias. But we do not have to fix it in time or render it obsolete. If the world that it was attempting to build anew has not arrived, perhaps today we are still working towards it.

Instead of dwelling in nostalgia and things lost in the currents of history, the works in *Constellations of Multiple Wishes: Along the Eastern Horizon* demand and seek out alternative routes, networks, and constellations. Setting up a dialog among archival materials, existing works and contemporary commissions, the works in this exhibition explore past imaginaries and words yet to be enacted, trace shared experiences, consider relationships and borderlines that have since been dissolved and that continue to displace. Laced with poetic interventions, they move through failure and absurdity, anxiety and solidarity, and hope and resistance.

Bojana Piškur and Angelina Radaković,
curators of the exhibition
March 2024



exhibition participants

Ala Younis	Alia Farid	Basim Magdy
Essa Grayeb	Free Palestine Poster Project	
KURS (Miloš Miletić & Mirjana Radovanović)		
The Non-Aligned Art Collection	Laboratory (
Omar Bsoul	Kareem Dabbah	Inji Efflatoun
Mamdouh Kashlan		Choukri Mesli
Khudhair Shakirji)	Larry Achiampong	
Mona Rouhana Benyamin		Nika Autor





Plan for Greater Baghdad

COURTESY OF

THE ARTIST

PHOTO:

TIM BOWDITCH

2015

–

18

/ DELFINA FOUNDATION & ART JAMEEL

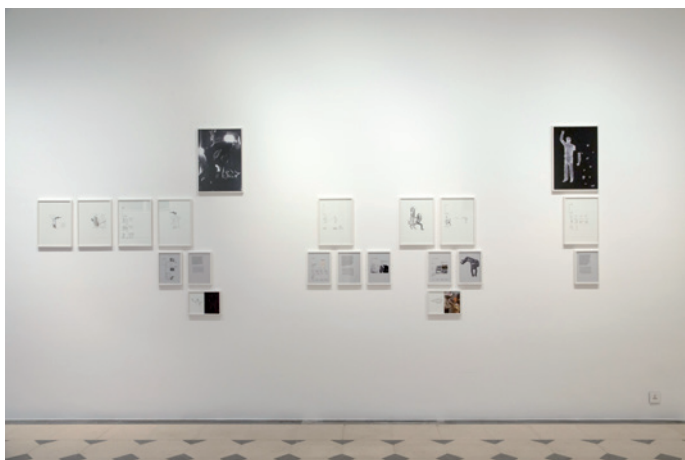
Plan for Greater Baghdad (2015) started with a set of 35 mm slides taken by the architect Rifat Chadirji in 1982 of a gymnasium in Baghdad designed by Le Corbusier and named after Saddam Hussein.

Before its inauguration in 1980, the Saddam Hussein Gymnasium had metamorphosed through numerous iterations of plans over twenty-five years. In this time, the commission for the Gymnasium had seen five military coups and six heads of state; four master plans, each with its town planner; a Development Board that became a Ministry and then a State Commission; a modern starchitect among a constellation of many others with their associated architects, draftsmen, contractors, agents and lawyers; local architects accompanied by similar structures from their consulting firms, from government departments, and parallel commissions; more than one local artist/sculptor; eager competitors; and other monuments that simultaneously appeared and disappeared as a result of these same conglomerations.

Heavily based on archives, found material, and the stories of its protagonists, *Plan for Greater Baghdad* looks into protecting monuments for posterity and developing plans for Baghdad as an expression of power or

a necessity. Missing from the representations and citations contained in established archives, the images that document the performances of design, power, and designing power stitch together fragments of other images and records of gestures retrieved from representations and narratives by local artists.

A later iteration of the project, *Plan (fem.) for Greater Baghdad* (2018), places the contributions made by female artists, architects and other influential figures within the development of Baghdad and its modern monuments. The work rearticulates archival material to bring about new narratives. In this case, the reading sees beyond the male dominance of the city's architecture and politics and the related grand narratives.



Enactment

COURTESY OF

2017-24

THE ARTIST

PHOTO:

/

MOHAMMAD ZAKARIA

MMAG FOUNDATION

Geometric poses, black attire, abstract backgrounds, and overall minimal aesthetics turn performative images into what looks like the documentation of deliberate performance art. *Enactment* includes images of how the military hired these skilled bodies to investigate the various possibilities of escape that individuals could try against the wall. In *Enactment*, several isolated yet related incidents show how particular bodies are forced in or out of a collective. While the performative makes me uncomfortable, I bear its image when it is situated in politics. It is the point when everything starts to appear to be a performance, acted out or staged, in retrospect. This project is a study of findings that (could) come across

as “performance art,” tracing through them the various accidental performances related to obscure political situations and the documentary trail they left behind. Focusing on the forms the body takes as it supports other bodies, narratives, or exhibitions of power, this project seeks to probe the slippery terrain between the performative act and the creative evidence of historical events.

ALA YOUNIS uses her research-led practice to seek instances where historical and political events collapse into personal ones. Her work examines issues of the modern day and what informs visual and popular culture—nationalism, didactic projects, political alliances, social movements, the emergence of global capital and personal and collective loss—through a diversity of voices. She adapts the language of architectural model-making to study the early studio stagecraft and the interplay of nations, but also puts publishing efforts under the same lens of investigation. Her work probes what drove investors, studios, currency fluctuations, solidarity acts, revolutionary voices, and political crises as they shifted the centers of cultural and political influence.

**Mezquita de Hatillo (Puerto Rico)**

wool pile and kilim
prayer rug, 80 × 140 cm

2014

PHOTO: ANDY STAGG, PHOTO

COURTESY OF

THE ARTIST

COURTESY

THE MOSAIC ROOMS

Mezquita de Hatillo (Puerto Rico), 2014 is an early iteration of the work that Alia Farid has been conducting since 2013 that traces Arab and South Asian migrations to Latin America and the Caribbean. Based on dialogue with diaspora communities, Farid conjures a landscape of transnational spaces represented as rugs and tapestries. Farid works with different weaving studios, using stories, images and other ephemera as a point of departure to translate the information into a woven piece. Like much of her work, *Mezquita de Hatillo* (Puerto Rico), 2014 brings different sites into a relationship with each other, creating a transregionalism that belies the national boundaries drawn on land.

ALIA FARID (b.1985) lives and works in Kuwait and Puerto Rico. She has had solo exhibitions in Chisenhale Gallery, London; Kunsthalle Basel, Basel; the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, Missouri; Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam; Portikus, Frankfurt am Main; and CAC Passerelle, Brest. Recent and upcoming group shows include participation in the Geneva Biennale Sculpture Garden, Whitney Biennial, Diriyah Biennale, Bienal de São Paulo, Gwangju Biennale, Sharjah Biennial, Theater of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991–2001 in MOMA PS1, Yokohama Triennale and Asia Pacific Triennial. She has forthcoming solo exhibitions in Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, and the Contemporary Art Museum Houston in partnership with the Rivers Institute and Detroit Institute of Arts. Alia Farid has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from la Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico (San Juan), a Master of Science in Visual Studies from the Visual Arts Program in MIT (Cambridge) and a Master of Arts in Museum Studies and Critical Theory from the Programa d'Estudis Independents MACBA (Barcelona). In 2023, she received the Lise Wilhelmsen Art Award and is currently the David and Roberta Logie Fellow at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute (2023–2024).

Basim

Magdy



Our

Prehistoric Fate

Duraclear prints (151 × 177 cm each),
powder
aluminum
lightbox displays

-coated
structure,
and clamps

2011

COURTESY OF

THE ARTIST

PHOTO:

INSTALLATION VIEW

AND GYPSUM GALLERY, CAIRO

ROYAL ACADEMY, LONDON

Our Prehistoric Fate was commissioned by the first Biennale of Contemporary Art. D-O ARK Underground in Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The biennale took place inside a nuclear bunker built between 1953 and 1979 to protect the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito and up to 350 members of his inner circle in the event of a nuclear conflict. The bunker remained a state secret until after the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Two large Duraclear prints hang on Yugoslav military lightbox displays with clamps in the war strategy room of the bunker, where decisions were meant to be made and maps of the situation on the ground were meant to be evaluated. The first reads “The Future Belongs to Us” in large letters, the second is an encyclopedia illustration from the 1960s showing an Ankylosaurus, a prehistoric creature, approaching a pond to drink.

BASIM MAGDY is an artist and a filmmaker. In recent years his work has appeared in solo exhibitions at Frac Bretagne, Rennes; KM21 Museum for Contemporary Art,

The Hague; Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg; M HKA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp; MAAT Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon; MCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; MAXXI, Rome; Jeu de Paume, Paris; CAPC Museum of Contemporary Art, Bordeaux; Deutsche Bank KunstHalle, Berlin; and Arnolfini, Bristol, and in group shows at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Castello di Rivoli, Torino, New Museum Triennial, New York; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; La Biennale de Montreal, Montreal; the MEDIACITY Seoul Biennial; 13th Istanbul Biennial; Sharjah Biennial 11; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; and La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris.



U.A.R. - the Utopian
 Arab Republic
 of 2023 - ongoing
 wall installation COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

On 1 February 1958, the unification of Egypt and Syria gave birth to a newly established entity, the “United Arab Republic,” hailed as the first step in the revival of the Arab nation. However, in less than four years this unity was torn asunder. This union gave the doctrine and sentiment of “the Arab nation” a tangible reality, and while one of its principal aims was to achieve a form of pan-Arab solidarity, this quickly gave way to many disappointments.

This project is a presentation of long-term research into the material and visual representations of the U.A.R. The project explores visual depictions and illustrations on a collection of “first day of issue” postage covers

which were issued by the U.A.R. between 1958 and 1961. These stamped envelopes now stand as a physical relic of an era long gone, a time when the dream of a unified Arab nation seemed within grasp. They were specially issued on memorial days to commemorate significant events or important national celebrations. Designed in the Art Deco style, these stamped envelopes amalgamate elements of geometric motifs, curvilinear forms, sharply defined outlines, and bold colors, often reflecting a fascination with machinery and modernity, drawing inspiration and symbols from ancient Egyptian mythology.

The project comprises a collection of prints analyzing the visual representations of drawings, symbols, and texts found on these envelopes. Through this exploration, the project aims to illuminate the intricate construction of historical narratives that have woven the fabric of the Arab collective consciousness and the process of shaping a national ethos and identity in the post-colonial era of the Arab nation's history.

ESSA GRAYEB is a Palestinian visual artist based in Jerusalem whose practice traverses a range of media, primarily photography, moving images, and installation.

Some of Grayeb's works are made from objects, footage, and sounds that already exist, which he appropriates and manipulates while constantly weaving in and out of reality and fiction. Grayeb's work delves into narratives of the past and their contemporary interpretation, often related to Arab nationalism and Pan-Arabism, and originates from exploring elements connected to historical moments within the collective memory and forgetfulness, and their manifestations in popular culture. Grayeb earned his MFA from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in 2022.

His work has been exhibited at the Palestine Museum, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, A.M. Qattan Foundation, and Qalandia International, among others.

Free Project

Palestine .com



Laura



Anastasio

freepalestineproject.com

Warsheh

The Free Palestine Poster Project is a website that acts as a curated archive of posters submitted by designers from all over the world, which can be downloaded and used as an expression of solidarity with Palestine. It continues the strong tradition of print and design as powerful media for conveying support for anti-colonial struggles and liberation movements.

KURS (Miloš Miletić & Mirjana Radovanović)



freedom is indivisible 2023
embroidery and print on canvas,
series of four drawings and a
booklet, various dimensions
ARCHIVE TRANSLATED BY:
Mirza Purić and Selma Asotić
ERASURE POEMS BY: Selma Asotić

COMMISSIONED BY: THE MOSAIC ROOMS
/ A.M. QATTAN FOUNDATION, 2022,
WITH SUPPORT FROM
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
COURTESY KURS
PHOTO: ANDY STAGG, PHOTO
COURTESY: THE MOSAIC ROOMS

From our very first research project—where we discovered, while researching the history of murals in Belgrade, a series of interventions in public space made for the 9th Summit of NAM—through our visits to Chile and Palestine, to various graphic design projects, we have repeatedly come across the legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement. When the curators invited us to look into the speeches delivered during the Non-Aligned Summit Conferences as part of an exhibition at The Mosaic Rooms, we did not know where the archival research would lead us. Due to the specificity of the topic, we combed through Yugoslav periodicals from the time of the conferences, focusing on two daily newspapers – *Politika* and *Borba*. The original conference reports that

included transcripts of the keynote addresses also served as a source. We looked at ten conferences, from the first one held in Belgrade in 1961 to the one in 1992, the year when Yugoslavia, although never officially expelled, ceased to be a member of the Non-Aligned Movement due to its disintegration and wars. From the vast archival material, we decided to focus on five speeches and one interview. This is not to say that these speeches were the most important or pivotal ones. The thread that binds them together is the struggle for freedom and an emphasis on anticolonialism, anti-imperialism, and antifascism.

Since presenting the archival material in relation to our contemporary context did not strike us as particularly interesting, we solicited help from Selma Asotić, a poet from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Using the technique of erasure, Selma turned the speeches into poems. Instead of redacting the text, which would come perilously close to an act of censorship, Selma opted to leave the original legible. The poems serve to highlight, summarize, or draw out less prominent meanings of the original text, and their full effect depends upon the interplay between the text in the background and the text in the foreground. We wanted the new work arising from this material to underscore the positive aspects of the Non-Aligned Movement and its commitment to freedom, despite its numerous historical contradictions.

MILOŠ MILETIĆ and MIRJANA RADOVANOVIĆ jointly act as KURS in visual art and as researchers. In their work they explore how artistic practice can contribute to (and become an integral part of) various social struggles. As a starting point they often use archival material combined with revolutionary poetry/prose and the visual language of progressive movements from the past. Most often they produce murals, illustrations and various printed materials (newspapers, posters, graphics). They are guided by the idea that the content they produce should be both didactic and accessible to the wide public.

The Non-Aligned Art Collection Laboratory



Inji Efflatoun	:	Kareem Dabbah	:		
Peasant woman and bananas		Composition			
1968	oil	on canvas	1989	copper	engraving
COURTESY:	MUSEUM FOR	CONTEMPORARY ART	OF MONTENEGRO		
PHOTO:	ANDY STAGG,	PHOTO COURTESY:	THE MOSAIC ROOMS		

The Non-Aligned Art Collection Laboratory (Marina Čelebić, Anita Ćulafić, Nada Baković, Natalija Vujošević) is a project that aims to develop contemporary research and archival artistic practices at the Museum for Contemporary Art of Montenegro. The collection holds some 800 artworks from 56 countries acquired by the Gallery of Art of the Non-Aligned Countries during its existence from 1984 to 1995. The Gallery of Art of the Non-Aligned Countries was established with the purpose of “contributing to the affirmation of the principles and goals of the non-alignment policy in the field of culture.” During the decade of its existence, the gallery organized exhibitions, symposiums, and artistic exchanges in a bid for equal status in the field of culture. At present, the main focus of the laboratory is research-based activities that contribute to historicization and new interpretations of works and histories, as well as renewing the

international communications and exchanges nurtured by the collection itself.

THE SELECTION INCLUDES WORKS BY

OMAR BSOUL is a Jordanian self-taught artist living and working in Irbid. He started presenting his work in 1976. He wrote several art papers and guest lectured at Jordanian and Iraqi universities. He is director of the Arab Center for Tradition, Culture and Arts in Irbid.

Born in 1943 in Jerusalem KAREEM DABBAH was an active member of the Board of the Palestinian Artists League. Dabbah specialized in copper engraving and also worked with ceramics. His artworks focus on popular folkloric symbols and Arabic calligraphy.

INJI EFFLATOUN was an artist, political activist and feminist who explored painting's political and social potential. In her art works she was inspired by the daily lives of working-class people in Egypt, with a focus on the everyday struggles of women. She was imprisoned by the Nasser regime for her political activities between 1959–63. Her release saw a stylistic shift in her work, as she started to use more vibrant colors with rhythmic brushstrokes evoking a sense of light and space.

MAMDOUH KASHLAN was one of the founding Syrian modernists. He has been referred to as an artist of the people, as he created works that reflected nature and the Syrian identity. He captured scenes of daily village life and themes of motherhood in his vividly colored canvases.

CHOUKRI MESLI was born in 1941 in Tlemcen, Algeria. In 1967 he co-founded the artist group *Aouchem*, inspired by indigenous tattoos and motifs, and in 1969 he was responsible for the art exhibitions at the Pan-African Festival of Algiers. Mesli was also a founding member of the artist union (UNAP) and of the collective of artists, intellectuals and scientists against torture (RAIS). In 1994 he sought exile in Paris, where he died in 2017.

KHUDHAIR SHAKIRJI graduated from the Fine Arts Academy in Baghdad, and subsequently joined the Baghdad Modern Art Group, alongside artists like Shakir Hassan Al Said and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra. Shakirji explored local themes in his work and draw references from traditional and folkloric imagery. He experimented with abstraction, cubism, and expressionism, developing a distinguished style that reflected on the social realities of the time.

Larry Achiampong



A Letter

(Side B)

still from the video

COMMISSIONED BY THE MOSAIC ROOMS

/ A.M. QATTAN FOUNDATION, 2022,

WITH SUPPORT FROM ARTS COUNCIL

ENGLAND. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST,

LOOK MAMA! PRODUCTIONS,

LUX & COPPERFIELD, LONDON.

2023

4K

video

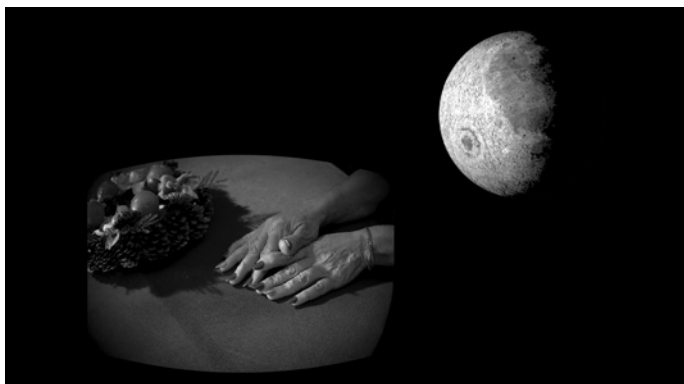
A Letter (Side B) (2023) looks at the affective impact of history, immigration and geographical separation on two brothers living in Britain and Ghana. The film collapses time, exploring how the past interrupts and impacts the present and incorporates recent footage filmed by Achiampong in Ghana as well as archival footage from the Museum of African Art: The Veda and Dr Zdravko Pečar Collection in Belgrade, Serbia. Speaking from a deeply personal perspective, the film additionally utilizes older technologies from a “hacked” Game Boy Camera, which Achiampong modified to enable the capture of moving images via HDMI. Through the marriage of storytelling and the use of retro technology, the exploration of time travel and the concept of “Sankó-time” becomes possible. As coined by Achiampong in 2017, the term relates to the Ghanaian Adinkra symbol and indigenous Akan term *Sankofa*, meaning to “go back and retrieve.” Through the nuanced use of current and older technologies, visuals, sounds and recollections of lived experiences and conversations, the film also points

to the wider social and political consequences of the institutional structures and behaviors that threaten the lives of migrants and refugee families.

LARRY ACHIAMPONG's projects employ film, still imagery, audio and visual archives, live performance, objects and sound to explore ideas surrounding class, gender, cross-cultural and digital identities.

With works that examine his communal and personal heritage—in particular, the intersection between popular culture and the residues of colonization, Achiampong crate-digs the vaults of history. These investigations examine constructions of the Self through the activity of splicing the audio and visual materials of personal and interpersonal archives, offering multiple perspectives that reveal the deeply entrenched inequalities in contemporary society.

Mona Rouhana Benjamin



Moonscape 2020 Still frame from the video
single channel video, 17 min. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Moonscape^{*} is a short film which takes the form of a music video for a middle of the road ballad, performed as a duet between a male and female singer, in Arabic. The song traces the story of a man called Dennis M. Hope, who claimed ownership of the Moon in 1980 and founded the Lunar Embassy—a company that sells land on a variety of planets and moons—and makes a connection between his story and that of the director, a young Palestinian woman living under the Israeli occupation, longing to end the misery of her people in any way possible.

The visuals in the film are a hybrid of surrealist scenes from the Arab music industry—reenacted by the artist's parents, who also play the singers in the film—and film noir, in addition to found footage from the NASA archives, references to canonic films which influenced the art world and show representations of the Moon, and screenshots of email correspondence with members of staff of the Lunar Embassy. All in order to explore the relationship between hope, nostalgia and despair.

* A moonscape is an area or vista of the lunar landscape (generally of the Earth's moon), or a visual representation of this, such as in a painting. The term "moonscape" is also sometimes used metaphorically for an area devastated or flattened by war, often by shelling.

Trouble in Paradise is a dysfunctional sitcom that set out to explore humor as a mechanism of coping with trauma, pain, and taboos in relation to the Nakba and the Israeli occupation, with the use of three sets of jokes ranging from the classical misogynistic genre to anti-jokes and culturally specific humor, in order to examine why Nakba jokes never fully evolved as a genre or entered the Palestinian mainstream.

The main characters in the film are the artist's parents, who do not speak English and thus read the jokes from transliterated title cards, who experienced the Nakba (1948) and the Naksa (1967), but never shared their memories from these major events.



Trouble in Paradise 2018 Still frame from the video
single channel video, 8:30 min. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

MONA ROUHANA BENYAMIN is a visual artist, filmmaker, and writer based in Palestine. In her works she explores intergenerational perspectives on hope, trauma, and questions of identity, using humor and irony as political tools of resistance and reflection. By appropriating formats from the mass and popular media and tampering with their apparatuses, she raises questions about the value of authenticity and the tension between truth and fiction. Her films have been screened internationally at various venues, festivals, and platforms, which include—among others—MoMA, REDCAT, CUNY, Sheffield DocFest, and Columbia University.



Newsreel 242 – Sunny Railways

2023

digital DCP,

27 min

Still from the video
 COMMISSIONED BY THE MOSAIC ROOMS
 / A.M. QATTAN FOUNDATION, 2022,
 WITH SUPPORT FROM
 ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

In Yugoslavia in 1947, as many as 200,000 young brigadiers from around the world, including a Palestinian brigade, took part in the building of the new 242 km Šamac-Sarajevo railway in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A newsreel from the period shows them toiling away with spades, pickaxes and shovels to complete the job in just seven months. *Newsreel 242 – Sunny Railways* is a tribute to these idealistic young people constructing a new, better world based on different, more equal foundations.

“The visions of the future suffocated in the rivers of blood and mass graves,” we hear in a voice-over, referring to the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia and to the broader context. The railroad, laid over the rubble of the Second World War, damaged during the war in the 1990s, and neglected in the new millennium, now looks like the ruins of some ancient civilization. And as Palestinians once helped build the railroad, their descendants now walk along the same rails, fleeing war and seeking a better world, such as once seemed possible.

NIKA AUTOR's work is primarily based on experimental videos and documentaries, film essays, photographs,

collages, paintings and spatial video installations. In her work, she explores the invisible and inaudible aspects in relation to tacit knowledge of “forgotten history” and “silenced modernity.” Her work focuses on the creation of particular constructions of collective memory and personal, oral narratives. She explores asylum and migration politics, workers' rights and the politics of memory. Nika is part of the Newsreel Front, an informal collective of workers in the field of film theory and artistic practice. Her work has been exhibited in many and various international museums, galleries and festivals. These include the 57th Venice Biennale; Jeu de Paume in Paris; MAXXI in Rome, Moderna galerija in Ljubljana; Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art; Tokyo Photographic Art Museum; and the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, among others.

Archival materials, a chronology and a cartography



Booklets from the series
Nesvrstanost i nesvrstani
(Non-Alignment and
the Non-Aligned), Izdavačko
preduzeće Rad, Belgrade, printed
in 1972–1976 (private archive)

Postcards sent from member
countries of the NAM to
Yugoslavia between 1960
and 1980 (private archive)

Blood and Tears (Krv
i suze), 35 mm, 1970
COURTESY OF FILMSKE
NOVOSTI, BELGRADE

Blood and Tears was directed by Boško Mratinković for the Yugoslav state newsreel bureau (Filmske novosti) in Belgrade. The film script was written by Mirko Aksentijević, a Middle East correspondent for Tanjug, the Yugoslav state press agency, and one of the first foreign journalists to cover the rise of the liberation movement. The director of photography was the legendary

Stevan Labudović. The two travelled together to Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon in 1970 to film at PLO training camps and Yasser Arafat's headquarters. *Blood and Tears* is a rare early portrait of a social and political movement (PLO) growing rapidly in strength and confidence and the start of the Fedayeen movement in 1967.

Photo album: volunteer
youth work brigades, the
Šamac-Sarajevo railroad,
1947 (private archive)

Marjana Deržaj as part of
the Yugoslav cultural and
entertainment group performing
under the auspices of UNEF
in Sinai and Gaza in 1959
and 1961, black-and-white
photographs, photo album
(archive of Tina Mahkota)

The catalogue of the exhibition
of posters *Palestina oteta i
negirana domovina* (Palestine,
the Kidnapped and Negated
Homeland) Centar za kulturu
i informacije Zagreba, 1979
(archive of Darko Fritz)

Teja Merhar: Cartography
of Yugoslavia's International
Collaborations in Culture with
the Middle Eastern Countries

Žiga Smolič: Chronology:
Relations between Yugoslavia
and Palestine in 1946–1991







**Constellations of Multiple Wishes:
Along the Eastern Horizon**

+MSUM

Museum of Contemporary Art
Metelkova, Ljubljana

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