

Unsettled Earth

Chapter II: The Fugitive Field

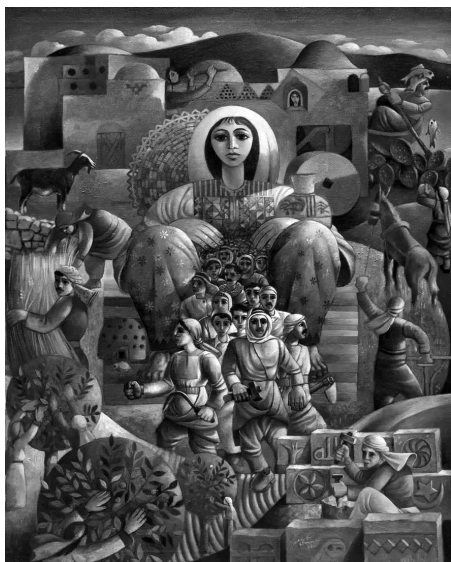
27.11.2025-
28.02.2026



To support grassroots
initiatives in Palestine

Rooted in collaborations with grassroots agrarian initiatives and collectives in Palestine organizing around defense of land, communal autonomy, and ecological recovery, *Unsettled Earth* explores practices and infrastructures that construct relations of land and life anew amid ongoing settler-colonial violence and ecological catastrophe. At this critical juncture of the seemingly boundless acceleration of genocidal violence and settler expansion in Palestine and its neighboring geography, the project asks: How is the environment mobilized as an apparatus of violence and elimination? How do we construct a horizon beyond settler colonialism and its regimes of law and property? What is the relationship between working the land and liberating it? How can those who have been exiled from their land continue to resist its expropriation?

Unsettled Earth unfolds through partnerships with Palestinian agrarian initiatives, a study program and an exhibition held at Spore Initiative. The partnerships are aimed at supporting popular education experiments and infrastructure development in Palestine addressing present-day material urgencies. The study program offers different pedagogical formats for exchange between ecological practitioners from across the Global South, elaborates on histories of peasantry, and expands the project's geographical scope to include the exploration of colonial and genocidal continuums, particularly in the context of Germany. The multichapter exhibition extends the project's main questions into aesthetic, discursive, and auditory propositions, some of which trace the weaponization of landscape as a medium of violence, while others evoke land as a fabric of poetic, social, affective, and political associations.



Sliman Mansour
***The Village Awakens* (1987)**

Aqueous print on archival Canson rag paper, 240 g, 53 x 41.5 cm

Sliman Mansour's original painting, *The Village Awakens*, portrays Palestinians engaged in various activities, each contributing in a different way to the collective. The depicted figures construct the village, harvest the land, and tend to the animals and livestock. Mansour captures a people's unwavering connection to their land via the specific focus on a scene of Palestinian rural life. The painting evokes a long tradition of agrarian relations sustained through collaborative practices of working the earth and tending to its lifeforms.



Rana Nazzal Hamadeh
***We would be freer* (2023)**

Video, 9'

We would be freer / بنكون اكثر احرار is a short film reflecting on the relationship between native plants and colonized peoples. Through story and knowledge sharing, the film takes a close look at the sumac plant as a medicine, a powdered spice, a dye, and more. Known for its zesty taste and bright colour, different varieties of sumac are found around the world. In particular, staghorn sumac is native to parts of

Turtle Island and tanner's sumac to the eastern Mediterranean. Weaving between the voices of two women, one from the Mohawk community of Kahnawá:ke and the other an internally displaced refugee in Ramallah, *We would be freer* invites you to contemplate the role of the sumac plant in two occupied lands that lie far apart. Mimicking the progression of the plant's flowers from yellow to green to red, the short film is a cyclical reflection on connection to land, sustainability, and wild plants.



Moayed Abou Ammouna
***Barzakh of Gaza* (2024-25)**

6 photo prints on alu-dibond, dimensions varied

"Mired in the barzakh of Gaza, possessing nothing but maps of ascension to paradise. Short distances separate their bodies from fatal storms; distances dense with earnest blood and shrapnel from an insatiable death, besieging and testing them. So they memorized the map well and redefined existence.

And yet, these are images of what they were doing ahead of their departure, of loss in exodus, of collective sorrow and protracted rage; images of the daily struggles of Gazans in the face of immeasurable wars. Images of long runs with heavy hearts in an orphaned city full of dignity and explosion, of attempts to survive rivers of blood and the guillotine of death without success or with temporary miracles; a death deferred by time difference.

These are images of those who carried their headless children, searched through the rubble, screamed from under the debris bodiless and then disappeared in the news cycle and in the folds of numbers and figures.

Of radiant, delicate faces confronting annihilation through starry eyes large enough for all these soldiers, of bodies invaded by tanks and ignited by the necessity of justice, *tha'r*, and the sun of freedom.

They invented times of their own, chanting their dreams of an ordinary life without attributes, liberated from the hemorrhage of memory and recollections, the overlapping of time, without the anxiety of tomorrow and the burden of rage. Dreams of quietude and the reassured night.

These are images to answer for action at a time of war and an inherited, trembling dispossession.

To those who *flood and roam*, mired in the *barzakh* of Gaza and the voids of time, dreaming of an open, rooted ending, victorious without tears, bringing an end to the calendar of assassination."

— Moayed Abou Ammouna



Asphalt
***Mashaat* (2024-ongoing)**

Multimedia Installation / Programming

Mashaat is a cross-disciplinary project that unfolds through study, publishing activities and infrastructural interventions. It investigates the significance of the agrarian within the context of Palestinian anticolonial struggle, engaging with agricultural cooperatives and community organisations across Palestine to examine organisational forms that disrupt dominant relations of labour and property, and gesture toward an alternative mode of production.

The project emerged in the aftermath of "Al-Una Conference", which focused on the agricultural cooperative as a model for studying how specific modes of production, consumption and exchange shape social relations and political realities in Palestine. Building on this inquiry, *Mashaat* revisits the practices of participating cooperatives as potential historical precedents of an insurgent economics that could self-sustain beyond decolonisation.

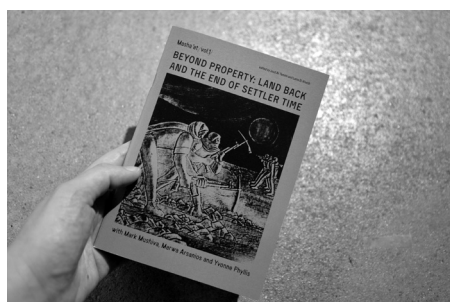
Responding to the centrality of private property in the history of colonisation in Palestine and the region at large,

the project situates its inquiry within a broader speculative study of the Palestinian *mashaa* (commons) as a political horizon, as a praxis and a potential past-future. In doing so, it draws on the idea of prefigurative politics: practices that are always already here and yet to come. The *mashaa*, in this sense, is not simply a historical form, but a speculative proposition—linking collective agrarian practices to the prospect of return and reclaiming a non-alienated relationship to land.

Much like the camp-communes of earlier Palestinian revolutionary movements—anchored in the geography of villages of origin yet oriented toward outward political movement (Abourahmeh, 2021) — *Mashaat* explores how current agrarian formations connect the memory of a pre-colonial past with the imaginary of a liberated future.

This iteration of the ongoing project is commissioned by Spore Initiative. It includes a library installation that houses texts, books and audiovisual materials, activated through regular study sessions and publishing exercises.

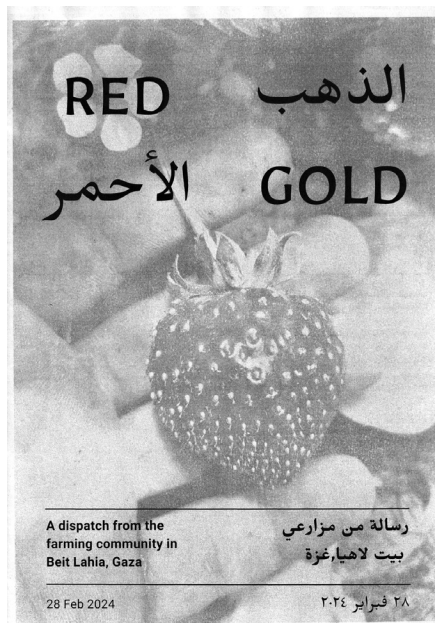
The video captures a conversation between a grassroots organiser and a member of an agricultural cooperative in the West Bank. Together, they reflect on how their work in arts and culture has evolved in response to ongoing settler expansion, developing organisational strategies and collective practices that form part of a broader resistance economy. Their efforts represent a material intervention—one that not only defends the land but actively reclaims it through sustained, community-based action.



Mashaat (1) Beyond Property: Land Back and the End of Settler Time (2025)

Publication

Beyond Property: Land Back and the End of Settler Time comes out of a conversation held in June 2025 between Mark Mushiva, Marwa Arsianios, and Yvonne Phyllis. Moving through the Levant, Namibia, and South Africa the discussion attunes to each context's particularities while studying the shared ways in which colonial and settler colonial structures are entangled with the logics of private ownership. *Beyond Property* also examines modes of communal struggle that resist this capture of land and social relations into property. This publication is the first of a series that takes up the questions of the Mashaat project: on one hand by archiving and propagating conversations that take place within the project and are formative to its stakes and on another by commissioning new texts that expand on the Mashaat as a past-future form for organizing land, labor, and life.



Heiba Lamara and Ammanah Lamar in conversation with Yousef Sager Abu Rabee
Red Gold: Dispatch from Beit Lahia, Gaza (2024-2025)

Print publication, A4

Via voice notes over WhatsApp, Yousef Sager Abu Rabee, a passionate agricultural engineer from Beit Lahia, North Gaza describes the conditions of Palestinian farmers under the current massacre and the impact years of blockade have had on agriculture in the North. This bilingual English and Arabic transcription documents a few moments of Yousef's work coordinating efforts to maintain propagation and plant seeds

in Beit Lahia alongside distributing flour and water essential to his neighbourhood's survival, in the months before he was killed.



Jumana Manna
Cache (2019)

Ceramics, tadelakt, aluminium shelving unit, steel grates, 220 x 328 x 70 cm

Cache is a series of anthropomorphic interpretations and abstractions of *khabyas*, a key feature of rural Levantine architecture, now obsolete. These traditional seed storage chambers were built into the interior of homes to preserve grains for sowing and annual consumption. The ceramic sculptures are positioned as fragments, transported from their architectural settings onto plinths and gridded metal shelves, building an environment suggestive of storages found in settings such as seed banks, ethnographic collections or museum vaults. Using the exhibition as a site to muddle the taxonomic impulses of such institutions, *Cache* considers the transformation of systems of sustenance and knowledge from practices of survival to centralized economies of capital growth.



Ahmad Alaqla
I Died a Thousand Times (2024)

40 prints on rice paper, A4;
3D printed sculpture coated
with chrome, 80 x 60 x 80 cm

I Died a Thousand Times is a series of images that trace the life and death cycles within the Palestinian landscape, focusing on wild thistle plants covering the sacred hills of central Palestine from early spring to late summer. Throughout these seasons, the hills transform through three distinct cycles of colour—red, green, and yellow. The thistles in the series were collected and imaged around Dar Jacir and the Cremisan Valley in Bethlehem, Ein Kenya in Ramallah, and Khirbet Al Samara in Salfit. The image series blends familial memories, weaving together dreamlike accounts, personal stories, and surreal happenings unearthing and forging novel connections between Palestinian and their landscape.

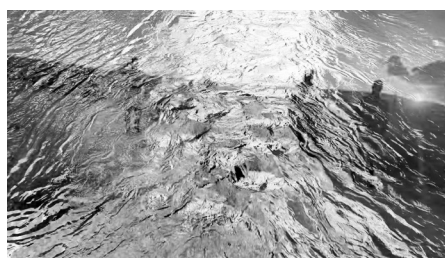


Kamal Aljafari
UNDR (2024)

Video, 15'

The camera's eye returns obsessively to the same places, a vertical perspective that imposes control, the possession of archaeological sites, stones lying for thousands years in the desert. The places it observes, however, are not deserted: we see, as if glimpsed from afar, the peasants working the land, themselves transformed into landscape. Something disturbs the stillness of the place: explosions on land and in the sea prepare the ground for new cities with new names, new forests. This landscape

is transformed into a scenography of appropriation.



Sarah Zeryab
The Retired Peasantry (2025)

Video, 15'30

Zeryab's new work investigates the refugee camp's relation to the question of land, tracing the historical and political transformations of the peasant figure into that of the refugee. Through this continuum, she asks how the act of working the land might inform a politics for the refugee camp — a site defined precisely by the absence of land to farm. Bringing together contemporary testimonies from those displaced from refugee camps today, the video speaks to land in its absence as a set of intersecting times and places. *The Retired Peasantry* reflects on this tension between dispossession and cultivation, evoking the persistence of native memory and the imagination of a land-based politics within spaces of exile.

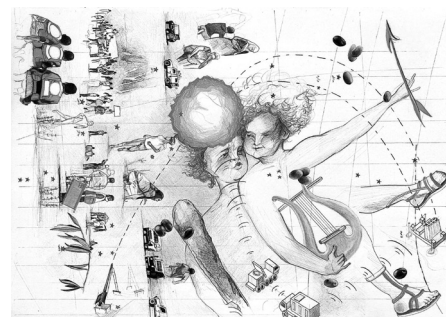


Bayan Abu Nahla
Airdrops (2024)

Print of watercolor drawing, 40 x 30 cm

The watercolor drawing captures the moment aid is air dropped into Gaza. The image points to the ways in which mass starvation and food deprivation are a key modality of the ongoing assault on Gaza. As an extension of starvation as a weapon, aid is a tool for managing, administrating, and attacking people's options for survival.

But *Airdrops* also figures the ways in which the environment is itself mobilized to generate further violence; the land, the sea, and the entire landscape are transformed from sources of life and sustenance to scenes of scarcity and subjugation



Basyma Saad
Untitled (Night is blanket below which children of night hasten arrival of dawn) (2025)

Drawing, A1

Saad's work begins from a study of the divergence in olive cultivars between Palestine and Lebanon under Zionist colonization across the 20th century and the introduction of European high-yield varieties. Once shared across the region, these original cultivars were renamed, replaced, or disappeared from the landscape of Palestine, while surviving in Lebanon under their ancestral names. Saad approaches this botanical and historical split through a surrealist composition that intertwines diagrams of the Iron Dome, mythological figures, and imagery from olive harvests. The resulting work moves between scientific, mythic, and political registers — a fragmented landscape in which the violence of colonization and the persistence of agrarian memory coexist. "Ground itself torn up and cratered, "above ground," "underground" unstable categories. Kitchen is tunnel is olive press is filial piety and love of a daughter. Night is blanket below which children of night hasten arrival of dawn. Sparta plays itself."



**Basel Abbas and
Ruanne Abou-Rahme**
Until we became fire and fire us
(2023-ongoing)

2-channel video, 32'; digital prints on steel
panel, 120 x 170cm; 50 x 150 cm and 50 x
100 cm sublimation prints on fabric

The song is the call and the land is
calling
The land is calling the vanished through
the song
The land haunts us
And we haunt them
The shadow, the echo, the ghosts of
what remain.
Palestine, the loss of our land haunts us.
Having been severed from the land we
are haunted by it. A forbidden land like a
forbidden love.

Until we became fire and fire us explores
various forms of hauntings, love stories
bound to loss, land and self, forms of
imprisonment and the call to get free,
with sound and song being at the heart
of this exploration. In it all is a search
for a reconnection to a severed broken
land, community, history, one that
haunts, imprisons and moves us all
at once. The project is a mixed media
installation with multiple channel
sound and video. It formally explores
the idea of hauntings in its aural and
visual content and the way in which this
material appears and disappears into a
given space. Sometimes appearing as
poetry from a dissonant voice, a broken
melody or intense flashes of text and
video, or an imprint from a forbidden
land, a forbidden love.

This work is part of the wider *May
amnesia never kiss us on the mouth*
project.

Unsettled Earth
25.04.2025 - 28.02.2026

Curation: Joud Al Tamimi, Lama El Khatib
Program in collaboration with Sarah Zeryab
Exhibition Architecture: Rowaa Ibrahim
Graphic Design: Aziza Ahmad
Publishing Support: Nabil Heine

Exhibition Production Lead: Simon v. Krosigk
Exhibition Production Team: Marea Zan, Santiago
Doljanin Lighting Design: Emilio Cordero Checa
Audio Visual: Bert Günther
Clay Work: Lehmbaukontor

Vinyls: Villa Schmück-Dich
Translation & editing in English, German &
Arabic: Celina Basra, Julia Gyemant, Spore
Communications & Spore Team
Commissioned and produced by Spore Initiative