



Research Open Talk

Narrating Space in Gaza with/beyond the Conflict

Tuesday 8 March 2022, 16:30 - 19:00
Chapman 4 and Online, University of Salford

Zoom bit.ly/364cRwV [id: 895 2083 1690]

RSVP bit.ly/3JlpySu

Architecture and Design,
University of Salford



Terreform,
Center for Advanced Urban Research



AUC Press





A discussion with contributors to
Open Gaza: Architectures of Hope
(editors Michael Sorkin & Deen Sharp)

hosted by
Dr Claudia Trillo & Dr Athena Moustaka
Architecture and Design, University of Salford

Event Programme

- 16:30 Welcome & Refreshments
- 16:45 “Introduction”
Dr Claudia Trillo & Dr Athena Moustaka
- 17:00 “Re-ecologizing Gaza”
Dr Fadi Shayya & Ahmad Barclay
- 17:15 “Timeless Gaza”
Mahdi Sabbagh and Meghan McAllister
- 17:30 “Absurd-City, Subver-City”
Dr Yara Sharif & Dr Nasser Golzari
- 17:45 – Panel Recap
and Interview with Ahmad Shabat on “Planning Gaza”
- 18:00 – Q & A

Scientific organization: Dr Fadi Shayya [F.Shayya@salford.ac.uk],
booklet image: Gaza City - public domain via Wikipedia

Presentations

Re-ecologizing Gaza

The graphic works by Visualizing Palestine (VP) serve as method and medium to reconnect what the Israeli occupation persistently separates and isolates through controlling Gaza's land borders, airspace, and territorial waters. Israel's project of siege warfare 'de-ecologizes' the Gaza Strip, through obstructing and/or interrupting its ecological flows. Around the world, we encounter traces and effects of such 'de-ecologizing' in people's stories, the work of activists, news media reports, and research outputs of non-governmental and governmental organizations. Against the occupation's 'de-ecologizing' project, VP's work contributes to a method of 're-ecologizing' the Gaza Strip. That is to reconnect and re-establish ecological flows relevant to humans and centered around their environment. At a conceptual and discursive level, VP's 're-ecologizing' works through engaging in a collective and transdisciplinary production of research-graphic works as public, free-of-charge, sharable digital medium with visual-textual and print capacities. The outputs become ready to act as learning and advocacy tools for collectives and individuals across the globe. And, the production method and output medium themselves become part of a project of 're-ecologizing' Palestine through connecting professionals, advocates, enthusiasts, and the media.

Timeless Gaza

Making sense of urbanism in the Gaza Strip requires reckoning with Israel's varied mechanisms of controlling the territory and the violence of an artificially imposed border. And yet, traces of an open, connected, and expanded past can be found in the

Gaza Strip and its historic hinterlands. Through a close reading of British cartographic artifacts, we identify layered networks of people and goods that have shaped Gaza historically to suggest a different reading of its present urban character and its future possibilities. Our approach sets aside the embodied violence of the maps in order to resuscitate knowledge of the land that has long been erased from Gaza. "Timeless Gaza" imagines a city whose historic networks were never severed. In addition to multiple pasts, our maps suggest multiple futures. History provides Gaza with an inventory from which it might revive or combine various infrastructures of mobility and trade. What if Gaza's former networks of trade and mobility were in use today? Timeless Gaza imagines a place where the hegemony of the border might, in many respects, appear stranger than fiction.

Absurd-City, Subver-City

After the devastating war on the Gaza Strip in 2008-09, which left most of it in ruins, we took up the challenge of trying to think how Gazans could manage to reconstruct their city under such conditions. The presentation discusses the development of a new typology we have called the Green Urban Lab. The Lab explores creative ways to stitch together the fragmented urban landscape using speculative and live projects. In what we call the 'Absurd-City' we take advantage of the blurred boundaries between the street, the block, and the room to rethink the notion of home and domesticity. In our proposed intervention to create the 'Subver-city', we envisage the 'Green Urban Lab' acting as a threshold between private and public space: a means to offer alternative ways for Gaza residents to engage in 'self-help', hinting at possible alternative forms of reconstruction.

Participants

Ahmad Barclay is an architect and UX designer engaged in projects involving data visualization, visual storytelling and learning through play. He has led award winning infographics projects as a partner with Visualizing Impact, initiated the open data project Palestine Open Maps, contributed to a variety of publications, and facilitated courses and workshops based on his practices in Beirut, London, Lisbon, Amman, and Bangalore. Ahmad is presently leading data visualization work for the 2021 Census at the Office for National Statistics (UK).

Ahmad Shabat is a geographer and native of Gaza. Currently, he is a PhD candidate at the School of Science, Engineering and Environment, University of Salford, completing a doctoral thesis on public transport and planning policy in Gaza City.

Dr Athena Moustaka is a Lecturer in Architectural Design at the University of Salford, where she has been a full-time faculty member since 2015. She is currently the Programme Director for BSc Architectural Engineering and a member of Salford's Centre for Urban Processes, Resilient Infrastructures & Sustainable Built Environments (UPRISE research group). She has participated in research projects on Urbanism in the Middle East (Gaza and Jordan).

Dr Claudia Trillo is Reader in Architecture at the University of Salford. She is chartered architect in the UK and Italy and holds a PhD in urban design. Her research interests focus on sustainable design, as an outcome of the interplay across different scales and of the interconnection between nature and culture.

Dr Fadi Shayya is an architect, researcher, and educator working across the extensive fields of design and the built environment. Trained in architecture, urbanism, and the social sciences in Beirut, New York, and Manchester, his research concerns and

strategies are trans- and inter-disciplinary, cutting across urban theory, architectural humanities, professional practice, science and technology studies, and the philosophy of technology. He holds a PhD in Architecture from the University of Manchester, and he currently teaches architectural design at the University of Salford and supervise postgraduate research at the Manchester School of Architecture.

Mahdi Sabbagh is an editor, architect, and urbanist. He is part of Palfest, the Palestine Festival of Literature. In 2019 he curated the festival around the theme of Urban Futures: Colonial Space Today. Mahdi was co-editor of *Perspecta 50: Urban Divides* (MIT Press, 2017), and his work has been published in *Open Gaza* (AUC Press, 2021), *Arab Urbanism*, the *Journal of Public Culture*, *Jerusalem Quarterly*, and the *Funambulist*. He holds a Masters in Architecture from Yale.

Meghan McAllister is an architect and urbanist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her professional work focuses on affordable housing, as well as projects for combating houselessness. Meghan was the co-editor of the 50th issue of the *Yale Architectural Journal*, *Perspecta 50: Urban Divides* (MIT Press, 2017). She also collaborated on the publication of *Mexican Social Housing: Promises Revisited* (Actar, 2018). Meghan holds a BA in Growth & Structure of Cities from Haverford College and a Masters in Architecture from Yale.

Dr Nasser Golzari + Dr Yara Sharif are practicing architects and academics with an interest in design as a mean to facilitate and create resilient communities within contested geography. Combining research with design, their work runs parallel between their architecture practice NG Architects, London, Palestine Regeneration Team (PART) and their Design Studio at the University of Westminster.

