



Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible

Hoda El Shakry

To cite this article: Hoda El Shakry (2021): Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible, Interventions, DOI: [10.1080/1369801X.2021.1885471](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2021.1885471)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2021.1885471>



Published online: 18 Mar 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

PALESTINE AND THE AESTHETICS OF THE FUTURE IMPOSSIBLE

Hoda El Shakry

Department of Comparative Literature, University of Chicago, USA

.....
Afrofuturism
art
Palestine
science fiction
speculative fiction
.....
*This essay explores how contemporary Palestinian cultural producers—across literature, art, and film—simultaneously expose and disrupt the chronopolitics of settler occupation. It pairs Adania Shibli’s 2002 novella *Masās (Touch)* with the 2013 short film *Condom Lead* directed by Tarzan and Arab in order to theorize a poetics of the everyday. Their works generate an ontology of the present eschatologically bound to an emptied future time–space. The essay then turns to Khalil Rabah’s conceptual multisite project the Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind (2003) and Larissa Sansour’s science fiction trilogy: *A Space Exodus* (2009), *Nation Estate* (2012), and *In the Future They Ate* from the *Finest Porcelain* (2015). Their projects engage in speculative modes of world-building that bridge past and future temporalities in order to render legible the unviability of the present. I situate these works, on the one hand, in relation to scholarship on affect and *ṣumūd* (steadfastness) in post-Oslo popular Palestinian cultural production. On the other, I put them into conversation with theorizations of counter-futurism and Afrofuturism as historical recovery projects. Read paratactically, this body of Palestinian art illustrates the critical potential of impossible acts of imagination.*

The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed.
(William Gibson, *Economist*, 4 December 2003)

A recent volume of short fiction asks twelve writers to reflect upon what Palestine *might* look like in 2048 – a century after the establishment of the state of Israel and the mass exodus of an estimated seven hundred thousand Palestinians in what is known as *al-Nakba* (literally, “catastrophe” or “disaster”). Not only does *Palestine+100: Stories from a Century After the Nakba* (Ghalayini 2019) signal the growing interest in Arab science fiction, but it also speaks to the heterotemporality of the occupation in the Palestinian collective imaginary.¹ While a definitive moment in the past, the Nakba also conditions the present and cannot be uncoupled from speculations about the future. Visual artist Larissa Sansour (2018b) describes this phenomenon as such: “It is hard to talk about the Palestinian trauma without addressing several tenses. The Palestinian psyche seems to be planted in the catastrophic events of 1948 and is tied to a constant projection of the future, yet the present is in a constant limbo.” Palestinian speculative fiction thus reveals both the conceptual limitations – and the imaginative possibilities – afforded by the ongoing nature of the occupation.

1 The same press also published *Iraq + 100: Stories from Another Iraq*, which asks Iraqi writers to imagine 2103 – a century after the US invasion (Blasim 2016).

This essay examines the “chronopolitical intervention[s]” of contemporary Palestinian artistic practices across a diverse cross-section of experimental literature, art, and film (Eshun 2003, 298). I begin by comparing the poetics of the everyday in Adania Shibli’s 2002 novella *Masās* (Touch) and the 2013 short film *Condom Lead* directed by Tarzan and Arab. These works reflect a broader trend within contemporary Palestinian cultural production that simultaneously commemorates and (incompletely) mourns the everyday lives of Palestinians. Rejecting the utopian impulses of a salvific future, they instead aestheticize the quotidian realities of Palestinian life amidst the daily violence of the occupation. *Masās* and *Condom Lead* are mutually invested in rendering Palestinian life visible, while also partaking in alternative archival practices that (at)tend to minor acts and stories often obscured by macropolitical concerns. I subsequently turn to the ways in which artist Khalil Rabah’s conceptual multisite project *The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* (2003) and Larissa Sansour’s science fiction trilogy – *A Space Exodus* (2009), *Nation Estate* (2012), and *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* (2015) – stage narratives of unfulfillable Palestinian futures. These *counter-futurisms* rely upon a temporal reconfiguration in which dystopic futures are recursively mediated through the past in existential negation of the conditions of the present (Parikka 2018).

By subverting the uncanny temporality of settler occupation, the works of Shibli and Tarzan and Arab, on the one hand, and Rabah and Sansour, on the

other, suggest the impossibility of future-oriented modes of aesthetic representation. *Masās* and *Condom Lead* enact an ontology of the present eschatologically bound to an emptied future time-space. Meanwhile, Rabah's museum project and Sansour's trilogy bridge past and future temporalities in order to expose the present realities that make these futures unattainable. By engaging in speculative acts of world-building, however, I argue their works ultimately illustrate the critical potential of impossible acts of imagination.

Poetics of the everyday | everyday poetics

How should we take account of, question, describe what happens every day and recurs every day: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual? ... It matters little to me that these questions should be fragmentary, barely indicative of a method, at most a project. It matters a lot to me that they should seem trivial and futile: that's exactly what makes them just as essential, if not more so, as all the other questions by which we've tried in vain to lay hold on our truth. (Perec 1999, 207)

Palestine is our way of exercising our daily living. That's what's going to solve the problem of Palestine. (Suleiman 2016)

A brief discussion of critical scholarship on post-Oslo Palestinian cultural production will help frame my theorization of everyday poetics in contemporary Palestinian art. The Oslo process, which culminated in the signing of the Oslo accords in Washington, DC (1993) and Egypt (1995), was a watershed moment for the Palestinian geopolitical imaginary. Marking the first formal mutual recognition between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli government, the process created a Palestinian Authority (PA) with restricted powers of self-governance in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. It was largely unsuccessful in establishing Palestinian political autonomy and concluded with the second intifada in 2000. Scholars have argued Oslo's stated aims – which directly contradicted the concomitant expansionist practices of the Israeli state – distracted from and ultimately enabled the consolidation of Israeli control over Palestinian life and territories (Hanieh 2018; Weizman 2007). Deepening the “neoliberal features of the PA's postcolonial state building project,” Oslo delegitimized more explicitly anti-occupationist or decolonial practices that fell outside of the geopolitical logics of a two-state solution (Anani 2014, 215).

A number of cultural critics have argued that, in the aftermath of the Oslo process, the Palestinian body politic had to adapt the ways in which it engaged with international communities. In the absence of other forms of political recourse, Lori Allen contends that there emerged a “politics of immediation” in which “social actors mobilize representations of people in states of acute physical and emotional distress as part of their political projects” (2009, 161). The second intifada intensified “affect-laden” forms of Palestinian self-representation, in which the other becomes legible *as human* precisely in the act of bearing witness to their suffering (163). While some scholars frame this as depolitical resignation, Adila Laïda-Hanieh notes the political exigency of public acts of mourning, which she argues “ruptures the regime of visibility of Palestinians abstracted in a nationalist collective, or as militant noise. This new visibility indexes political rights to life itself” (2014, 66–67).² Laleh Khalili similarly emphasizes the importance of “global visibility” to Palestinian political discourse and activism, particularly in marshalling international solidarity (2010, 127).

2 For an overview of scholarship critical of affect-laden modes of representation, see Laïda-Hanieh (2014, 48). On post-Oslo martyr commemoration, see Allen (2006).

These scholars provide a useful heuristic for understanding the ways in which popular Palestinian cultural production reflects and responds to the conditions of occupation. They frame Oslo as site of political crisis whereby Palestinians lost faith in the political apparatus of the Palestinian Authority and the false promises of two-state diplomacy. This ushered in a mode of Palestinian self-representation inflected by human-rights discourse that oriented itself towards international communities moved by the spectacle of suffering.

3 This includes works by Tanya Habjouqa, Mona Hatoum, Khaled Jarrar, and Yazid Annani.

The post-Oslo period, I argue, also witnessed a growing interest in the aesthetics of the everyday across the transnational Palestinian art scene, with approaches ranging from the representational to the conceptual.³ Focusing on the daily lives of Palestinians, this corpus signals the increasing importance of archival and curatorial practices in the collective cultivation of Palestinian cultural memory. Rather than performing bare life, these works centre on the quotidian and existential realities of Palestinians. Rejecting the liberal-humanist politics of recognition and empathy, they instead rely upon a muted affect, which I read in relation to the practice of *ṣumūd*. The concept of *ṣumūd* – meaning steadfastness, perseverance, firmness, endurance, resistance, or opposition (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007, 800); to defy, withstand, stand up against someone or something, to oppose or resist, to hold out (Wehr 1994, 525) – is a richly polyvalent term in the Palestinian collective consciousness. Generally understood as a mode of non-violent protest or resistance, *ṣumūd* often carries the connotation of everyday survival, endurance, and resilience.⁴

4 Popularized in the OPT and refugee camps, *ṣumūd* can refer to having a firm

The capacious term encompasses a diverse range of cultural, material, ideational, and psychic practices that confront the pervasiveness with which settler colonialism impinges on all facets of daily life (Richter-Devroe

connection to Palestinian culture and identity in the diaspora (Khalili 2007, 101; Rijke and Van Teeffelen 2014, 87–91). It has also been described as a “third way” between the binary of armed resistance and hopeless resignation (Shehadeh 1982). On the shifting inflection of *ṣumūd*, see Pearlman (2014, 96); Ryan (2015, 305).

2011, 33). Scholars have subsequently theorized *ṣumūd* as a form of *infra-politics*, or “the circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups” (Scott 1990, 183; see also Khalili 2007; Richter-Devroe 2011; Rijke and Van Teeffelen 2014; Ryan 2015). In the context of imprisoned and tortured Palestinians, Lena Meari argues *ṣumūd* “constitutes a Palestinian relational political-psycho-affective subjectivity” that “destabilizes the colonial order and its power relations” (2014, 549). As a political praxis in “constant revolutionary becoming,” *ṣumūd* invites “an alternative regime of being” in the “ethical-political” formation of Palestinians that at once evades and negates the conditions of their subjugation (549–550).

Ṣumūd strives to preserve the knowledge practices and lifeworlds of Palestinians against the forces of cultural, historical, and territorial erasure. The strategy reflects a geopolitical reality in which “complete annihilation – not only of political institutions, but of every person – is a real possibility” (Khalili 2007, 99). *Ṣumūd* nonetheless often entails hopefulness (Khalili 2007; Richter-Devroe 2011) and “an investment in the future” (Rijke and Van Teeffelen 2014, 93). While inflected by the political-affective qualities of *ṣumūd*, I notably read *Masās* and *Condom Lead* along a different temporal register, insofar as they challenge the very viability of Palestinian futurity.

Scholars have noted the asymmetrical ways in which the occupation delimits not only mobility, but also the experience of time, particularly for Palestinians in the OPT (Petee 2008, 2018; Tawil-Souri 2017; Zureik 2010). Checkpoints, permits, curfews, and closures – not to mention arrhythmic outbursts of violence – condition a state of spatial fragmentation, or “deep space,” as well as one of temporal limbo (Weizman 2012, 168). Describing the ontology of waiting in the occupied territories in which “daily life lurches forward in crisis mode, its sequencing enveloped in uncertainty and contingency,” Petee writes “Palestinian space shrinks, time slows and mobility is constricted” (2018, 58, 44). Palestinian time is consequently not only experienced as “stretched,” “prolonged,” “suspended,” and “protracted,” but it is also “weaponized,” “stolen,” and subject to mechanisms of surveillance and control (44–61). This timescape is both deeply mired in the everyday materiality of time and simultaneously out of synch with the accelerated temporality of late global capitalism. In attending to the complex lifeworlds of Palestinians, cultural producers engaged in the poetics of the everyday disrupt the very temporal politics of power.

The work of Palestinian art critic, essayist, novelist, and playwright Adania Shibli demonstrates how seemingly innocuous spaces of quotidian life can function as sites of transgression. The writer describes the importance of cultivating “a secret hidden zone that the oppressor finds so minor that they wouldn’t bother to destroy” (2017). Narrated through the lens of a young Palestinian girl, Shibli’s acclaimed 2002 novella *Masās* (Touch) dwells upon the sensory minutiae of everyday life in the West Bank. The youngest

of nine sisters, the unnamed protagonist, described simply as “the little girl” (*al-fatāt al-ṣaghīra*), is both viscerally present and profoundly inaccessible within the text (Shibli 2010). In unadorned yet haunting third-person prose, the novella traces episodes in the girl’s childhood that hover between the minute and the monumental. The sparse text’s refusal to appropriate the little girl’s voice generates a sense of alienating intimacy amidst a barren temporality of suspended yet enduring life. Shibli’s adoption of the narrative perspective of a young girl further challenges notions of reproductive futurity in which children embody the future.

Organized around the abstract sections “colors” (*’alwān*), “silence” (*ṣamt*), “movement” (*ḥaraka*), “language” (*luḡha*), and “the wall” (*al-ḥā’it*), *Masās* immerses us in the world of the young protagonist one sensation at a time. Overwhelmed by existence itself, she navigates her surroundings through isolated sensorial experiences that hover on the edge of synesthesia. In “colors,” for example, these range from the insignificant – closing her eyes in order to see the world through her flesh-coloured eyelids – to the catastrophic – struggling to choose an all-black outfit for her brother’s unexpected funeral. While the daily violence of the occupation lingers in the margins of the text, Shibli translates the traumatic experience of coming of age in the West Bank into a visually saturated narrative. Her detailed attention to sensory experiences mirrors the scale with which children physically and psychologically navigate the world. Zoomed in on the girl’s perceptual field, events both small and large are reduced to abstracted shapes, textures, and movements displaced from their broader context.

The protagonist’s existential precarity is heightened in a scene in which she picks up the Qur’an and reads a verse from the sura Ya-Sin (36:37): “And a sign for them is the night; we strip it of the day and lo, they are in darkness” (13). Shibli employs the verse to highlight the impermanence of human existence, writing:

Before the sun was created, black alone filled the universe. Black was there before creation [*qabl al-bidāya*]. Before she was born. And after she would die, blackness would return to its place, her empty place [*makānihā al-fāriḡh*]. So God was behind the darkness, unfolding it and folding it again whichever way He willed. (Shibli 2010, 13)

The passage describes the young girl’s pious resignation over the fragility of human life. That she turns to the sura Ya-Sin, in particular, emphasizes the normalization of violence and death around her. Not only is the sura “devoted to the problem of man’s moral responsibility,” but the Prophet Muhammad is said to have “called upon his followers to recite it over the dying and in prayers for the dead” (Asad 2003, 757). The sura speaks to the ways in which the girl attempts to frame her experiences within a

broader cosmological order, where death, like creation, can be explained through divine will rather than human agency.

“Movement” presents the girl’s world through the quotidian flurry of motion that surrounds her. In the context of the West Bank, where mobility is highly regulated and restricted for Palestinians, Shibli directs our attention to the minor movements the young girl observes: writhing smoke from her father’s cigarette, her mother’s finger traces on the prayer rug, or her sister brushing her hair. Tragic moments also flit across her perceptual stage: the shaking of her mother’s gold bangles as she wipes tears off her dead son’s face, or the corpse of a labourer swaying from a rope after he hung himself during olive harvesting season. The passage describes how the man’s body “swayed with the gentleness of the wind passing over him. It swung him right, left, back, and forth” (Shibli 2010, 49). By presenting all of the young girl’s experiences with equal care, *Masās* foregrounds the everyday fragility of Palestinian life.

While the majority of the novella explores the young girl’s childhood, it is peppered with cryptic references to her eventual marriage. In the brief closing section, titled “the wall,” we encounter “the girl as a bride” staring at the Israeli West Bank barrier wall during her wedding procession (72). If the young woman’s childhood was presented to us as a series of abstracted vignettes, the final section confronts the brutal realities of life under occupation:

The bride sits on the bridal seat all alone, embracing the wall with her eyes.
 Time passes and so do the sisters, edging closer to the end, while the girl’s embrace
 of the wall intensifies.
 Everyone is looking at her, and she looks back.
 At the wall.
 It encompasses all vision ... She cannot escape it. (Shibli 2010, 72)

Inescapable and totalizing, the wall is a visual force-field that binds the young woman’s existence across both space and time. Locked in a visual embrace (*t’āniq al-ḥā’it bi-’aynīhā*) with her betrothed – the wall – she moves towards an unknown end (*al-nihāya*). The slow passing of time is reflected in the staccato line breaks which stretch our reading experience down the page. The bride’s would-be intimate embrace with the wall speaks to the myriad ways in which the occupation, metonymically represented by the barrier wall, inhabits the skin of everyday life in the occupied territories.

Shibli’s poetic archive of daily life in the West Bank reflects a Palestinian cultural politics that reimagines the aesthetics of resistance. For while the protagonist cannot “escape” the wall (*ibti’ād*, meaning to depart, separate, or detach), there is nonetheless a stoic resoluteness reminiscent of *ṣumūd* in the novella’s final lines. The young woman is driven away in the procession with “her eyes...fixed on the rearview mirror, watching the house move

away” (72). Shibli situates the protagonist’s coming of age less in the act of marriage than in her cathetic encounter with the wall. This mirrors the girl’s focal shift from the subtle micro-experiences of her childhood to the threatening enormity of the wall as both a physical and symbolic object. The novella’s ending leaves our protagonist Janus-faced, driven towards an unknowable future, with her eyes locked on a past mediated through the distortive view of a rearview mirror. She occupies a threshold space of temporal and spatial limbo that stresses the precariousness of her existence and fraught relation to the future. If Palestinians are circumscribed within “occupation time,” then in compelling her readers to linger there, Shibli both exposes and unsettles the temporal politics of occupation (Meneley 2008, 20).

Simultaneously documenting and defamiliarizing everyday life, the 2013 experimental short *Condom Lead* also dwells within the minor spaces that shape Palestinian experiences. Directed by brothers Tarzan and Arab (b. Ahmed and Mohamed Abu Nasser), the film follows a young couple with a baby trying unsuccessfully to have sex during the 22-day military assault on the Gaza Strip known as Operation Cast Lead.⁵ The tongue-in-cheek title references Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli military operation launched between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009 that entailed combined land and air assaults into the densely populated Gaza strip.⁶ In the film’s opening sequence, the camera glides through an empty apartment as colourful balloons are pushed one by one into the hallway from an adjacent room in which we hear the squeals of a child. The infant crawls across the balloon strewn hallway and disappears into another room. We hear, but do not see, a balloon pop – evocative of shellfire – as the screen abruptly cuts to black. The child’s cry eerily echoes in the distance as the film’s title fades in.

Tarzan and Arab’s growing cinematic corpus recalls the stylizations of theatre of the absurd in which the surreality of reality becomes the very stuff of fiction. *Condom Lead*’s portrayal of Operation Cast Lead – itself a microcosm of the daily indignities of life in Gaza, often referred to as the world’s largest “open-air prison” – foregrounds the banalities of everyday life when life itself is imbued with precarity (Chomsky 2012). The couple move through the film with blunted affect as they struggle to comfort their crying baby during daily explosions, or repeatedly fail to carve out moments of pleasure amidst the assault. The film’s leitmotif of condoms turned balloons – one for each of the twenty-two nights of the assault in which the couple are unable to have sex – are a visual signifier of their aborted attempts at sexual intimacy, while more broadly embodying the absurd futility of the human condition. The condom-balloons, like the child’s perspective in *Masās*, further signal the neoliberal logics of reproductive futurity. Scholars have long noted the ways in which reproductivity is central to the viability of the nation-state, and particularly to the project of

5 Tarzan and Arab also did a series of posters titled Gazawood that rebranded Israeli military operations against Gaza as Hollywood blockbuster movie posters: <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/special-collection/gazawood-series>.

6 The intensity of the offensive, particularly the use of white phosphorus munitions in urban areas, garnered significant international criticism (Human Rights Watch 2009).



Figure 1 Tarzan and Arab, *Condom Lead*, 2013. Courtesy of the artists.

7 Anxieties around discrepant birthrates have fueled various state initiatives in which reproduction among Jewish families is framed “as a patriotic duty in the country’s existential struggle” (Eisenbud 2018).

Zionism.⁷ In the context of the assault, the indefinitely deferred sex-act suggests the foreclosure of Palestinian futures. Moreover, the condom-balloons emphasize wartime cultures of scarcity; here, libidinal pleasure is denied and subsequently repurposed as childish play (Figure 1).

Condom Lead has a muted visual aesthetic and features dramatically long shots, stylized compositions, and a cacophonous soundscape of amplified diegetic sounds. Its narrative simplicity and restrained aesthetics, coupled with the absence of dialogue, lend the film an air of hyper-reality that feels at once mundane and unsettling. The couple are barricaded in their apartment over the twenty-two days, and as viewers, we wait alongside them with bated anticipation for the end of the assault. This sense of claustrophobic time is echoed in the film’s visual stylization: the low-contrast warm colour palate and minimal natural light, as well as the use of extreme close-ups in which characters burst from the edges of the image frame. As the power cuts early in the film, much of it is shot in near-darkness, eerily illuminated by flickering candlelight and missile blasts.

Formally, the film mirrors the spatial disruption of the constant missile launches with the natural unsteadiness of handheld shots. Similarly, framed shots using doors or walls create a split-screen effect that spatializes the couple’s isolation (Figure 2). This doubling effect is echoed in parallel over-the-shoulder sequences where we see each figure simultaneously from behind and reflected in the bathroom mirror. They closely inspect their faces, pulling their skin taught to create theatrical tableaux. The camera angles generate a sense of voyeuristic intimacy that evokes the couple’s estrangement from one another. The only scenes in which they appear together are in the bedroom, where the wife attends to the crying infant while the husband apathetically inflates condoms into balloons. The scenes of the couple in bed, usually lying back-to-back, are often Dutch-tilt shots where the camera is angled off the centre axis in order to amplify the sense of disorientation.



Figure 2 Tarzan and Arab, *Condom Lead*, 2013. Courtesy of the artists.

In lieu of dialogue, *Condom Lead* artfully manipulates diegetic sounds so that they appear distorted simply by nature of their amplification. The soundscape combines the quotidian – the shrill cries of the infant, running water, the static hum of the television, a dog barking in the distance, the squeaking of the baby’s crib – with violent reminders of the assault: sirens, gunshots, the constant buzzing of drones and helicopters, missiles and rocket fire. In one scene, the husband watches the news as the signal repeatedly cuts. We hear the newscaster’s disjointed voice over a television set abstracted by its awkward cropping in the frame. Given that much of the conflict is played out in competing soundbites and footage, this scene deconstructs sensationalist news media into deformed sounds and static-filled images.

The film closes with the husband on the balcony smoking a cigarette as the condom-balloons float serenely upwards, recalling an earlier scene in which he smokes against a pitch-black sky pockmarked by missiles. The final sequence contrasts the sonic realism of amplified wind sounds with the absurdism of the floating condom-balloons. From obstructed and off-kilter camera angles to exaggerated sounds, *Condom Lead* directs our attention to the mediated nature of the everyday. It suggests that the unsettling normalization of occupation produces a mode of existence in which life must go on but only as a simulacrum of itself. The film channels a body of avant-garde Palestinian cinema that exposes “the powerful paradoxes of everyday normal(ized) life under occupation” by mobilizing “cynical, humorous, or ironic genres to engage the dark reality of occupation and siege” (Richter-Devroe and Salih 2014, 18–20). The condom-balloons can also be read as a subtle nod to Elia Suleiman’s acclaimed 2002 film *Yaddun Ilāhiyya* (*Divine Intervention*), which prominently features a red balloon imprinted with Yasser Arafat’s smiling face. The balloon infamously floats past an

Israeli checkpoint and across the city of Nazareth, before settling atop al-Aqsa mosque.

Divine Intervention is a day-in-the-life account of a cross-territorial relationship mediated by the checkpoints between Nazareth and Ramallah. Unlike *Condom Lead*, however, the film borders on the surreal, and features a number of disjointed vignettes reminiscent of Sergio Leone's quirky cinematic aesthetic. While Tarzan and Arab share in some of the aesthetic tropes of Suleiman, their films extract the surreal from the everyday, rather than the other way around. *Condom Lead* is a visual meditation on everyday Palestinian life whose subtle formal manipulations in composition, lighting, and sound generate an uncanny temporality where time is at once paused and prolonged. The narrative framework of the 22-day assault further situates the film within a state of suspension in which the present/future are relationally mediated by the temporal rhythm of war.

Tarzan and Arab's *Condom Lead* joins Shibli's *Masās* in its hyperfocus on and defamiliarization of the everyday. Read alongside one another, they suggest an everyday poetics rooted in the practice of *ṣumūd* but divorced from speculations about the future. *Masās* achieves this through the narrative perspective of a child, while *Condom Lead* focuses on the impossibility of intimacy during a period of heightened violence. If this body of work generates an archive of Palestinian daily life that assumes the foreclosure of the future, then the works of Khalil Rabah and Larissa Sansour speak to the desire to imagine alternative futurities that upend narratives of both the past and present.

Past futures | futures passed

Arabfuturism is a re-examination and interrogation of narratives that surround oceans of historical fiction. It bulldozes cultural nostalgias that prop up a dubious political paralysis and works to solidify and progress a progressive force, towards being subjects and not objects of history.

Arabfuturism conceives instead, an origin in imagined space, towards the abyss of an imagined future.

Arabfuturism celebrates the temporalities of our collaborative genealogies. (Majali 2018)

Khalil Rabah's multisite *Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* (2003) disrupts the politics of museumification while simultaneously performing historiographic interventions through archival practices. Playing with the boundaries between reality and fiction, as well as official and unofficial institutional formations, the museum transforms in

8 Alongside the museum, Rabah created an airline named the United States of Palestine Airlines or USPA and a branding agency called the Palestinian Design Force, named after the Israeli Defense Forces (Rabah 2006).
9 The project presciently foreshadows some of the tensions surrounding the Palestinian Museum in Bizreit, which controversially opened on 18 May 2016 without a single art object in it (Toukan 2018).

each iteration: from the 2005 Istanbul Biennale, to De Appel in Amsterdam (2006), the Acropolis Museum in Athens (2006), and the Brunei Gallery at London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies (2007).⁸ Fabricating its own modes of officialese, the project unsettles the relationship between cultural institutions and state formations.⁹ Rabah’s art practice thus speaks to the desire of Palestinian cultural producers to create art that both reflects and services Palestinians, rather than relying upon the affective patronage of international communities.

The cryptic statement posted to the museum’s website reads like a surreal futurist manifesto:

The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind is cubist in its impossibility, it is occupied, exiled at home, and everywhere abroad. An entirely new place, it rests nowhere while waiting for our return ... The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind is the observance of accursed ignorance, insists on the infinity of traces and persists irrespective of fragmentation. It is a local rehabilitation of the future. The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind is the international, an institution in the service of universal history. It is only this impossible. (PMNHH 2016)

The statement is rife with intentional contradictions: the museum is everywhere and nowhere, in exile while at home, a historical call from the future, an impossibility. These temporal manipulations extend to the museum’s inconsistent origin story, which mythologizes its very creation in/out of time. While the museum’s literature from 2003 back-dates its establishment to 1961, Rabah celebrated the museum’s seventy-fifth anniversary in 2004 and its hundredth anniversary in 2005 (Rabah 2005). This creative accounting calls attention to the mythic time of museums in which reified objects are alienated from the present in order to be preserved for the future.

In archiving the present as past for the future as present, the *Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* “subverts the notion of archiving, documentation and the idea of the museum itself as a repository of objects and the construction of collective knowledge” (Rabah 2008). Its website includes a series of newsletters blending factual and fictional details about the museum that accompany the various site-specific installations. Moreover, the installations include a number of “fake” artifacts, such as heated olive wood made to resemble old bones, or soap that looks like fossils. In so doing, the project toys with the simulacraphic nature not only of museum spaces, but also of Palestinian cultural conservancy practices under the conditions of the occupation.

On the one hand, the *Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* “represents a desire to identify with a national establishment that wants to place itself in a national discourse of the history of life” (Rabah 2005). On

the other, because it invokes a “psychic, metaphoric Palestine,” the exercise is “all sort of imaginary” (Rabah 2005). The odd temporalization enacted through (fictional) museum sites thus comes to reflect the problematic temporality of Palestinian statehood in ways that speak directly to Larissa Sansour’s science fiction trilogy. By fashioning fictional pasts in order to envision alternate futures staged in a suspended present, both Rabah and Sansour reimagine Palestine through speculative modes of ideational, narrative, and material world-building.

Working across the mediums of video, photography, sculpture, and installation, Sansour’s art practice explores the conceptual limitations and possibilities of Palestinian identity and statehood. Her trilogy – *A Space Exodus* (2009), *Nation Estate* (2012), and *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* (2015) – borrows extensively from science fiction’s sterile visual aesthetic: bright lighting, cool colour tones, fast shutter speeds, computer-generated imagery (CGI), and visual effects (VFX) such as matte painting to generate epic fictional landscapes, as well as the use of anamorphic lenses to create extremely wide aspect-ratios and horizontal lens flares. The accompaniment of each short film with multimedia objects and photographs from these fictional universes emphasizes the aesthetic mediation involved in science fiction world-building (<https://www.larissasansour.com/WORKS>).

Returning to my discussion of post-Oslo trends in Palestinian popular culture, Sansour explains that her own turn to speculative and science fiction coincided with the second intifada:

I think my art practice started becoming more and more enveloped in the realm of fantasy around 2002. The reality of the occupation of Palestine manifested itself in the most absurd and heartbreaking ways. It was hard to relate to the world what really was going on. The siege of Bethlehem, the erection of the Israeli apartheid wall, the prohibition of Palestinians to enter the Israeli airport, the erection of checkpoints between Israeli territories and Palestinian territories, or Palestinian territories from other Palestinian territories all contributed to a sense of powerlessness and an eradication of one’s humanity. I think in the face of such acceleration and direct confrontation with an abject reality, there is a need to resort to a parallel place or fictional space where rational and normative relational deductions can be made. (Sansour, n.d.)

Sansour’s comments speak to the ways in which speculative fiction enables imaginative critical interventions otherwise unavailable within the violent realities of the ongoing occupation. Her trilogy mobilizes science fiction tropes and formal techniques in order to explore possible outcomes that ultimately highlight the untenability of existing conditions. In *A Space Exodus* (video, 2009) Sansour plays the first Palestinian astronaut to travel into space. From the camera angles to the soundtrack and high-contrast aesthetic,

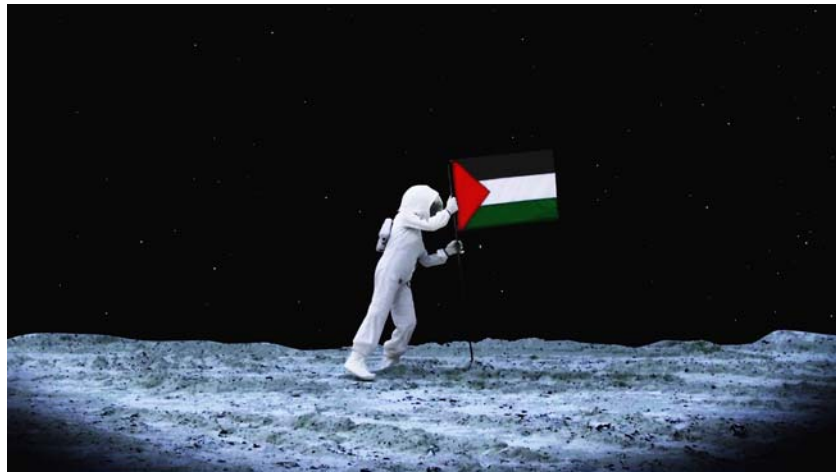


Figure 3 Larissa Sansour, *A Space Exodus*, 2009. Courtesy of the artist.

the film is a nod to Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Only this foray into space is not an odyssey but, rather, a mass exodus that reimagines “the expulsion of 700,000 Palestinians from their land in 1948” (Sansour 2009). Wearing a white spacesuit adorned with an embroidered Palestinian flag, Sansour lands on the moon, where she plants the Palestinian flag (Figure 3), as her voice-over declares “that’s one small step for Palestinians, one giant leap for mankind” (Sansour 2009). The film ends with her losing contact with mission control as she calls out “Jerusalem ...” while slowly drifting into the cosmic abyss. Subverting the infamous aphorism “A land without a people for a people without a land,” Sansour suggests Palestinian statehood can only be achieved in another dimension of space–time. In this sense, the short recalls Sun Ra’s 1972 Afrofuturist film *Space is the Place*, in which he resettles African Americans on an uninhabited planet. However, statehood in *A Space Exodus* is itself a fiction, a grand gesture taking place on the moon in which its sole witness is lost in space. For what is a state without citizens?

Nation Estate (photo and video, 2012) offers yet another dystopic response to the question of Palestinian sovereignty. In this case, the film “explores a vertical solution to Palestinian statehood” in which Palestinians reside in a skyscraper promising “the high life” built just outside the actual city of Jerusalem and surrounded by a concrete enclosure wall. Turning the nation-state into a nation estate, the project at once harnesses and critiques the neoliberal politics of expanding Israeli settlements. Each floor of the building contains a major city, complete with signature monuments (e.g. the mosque of the Dome of the Rock), ecosystems (an olive grove, wildlife reserve, the Dead Sea, the Mediterranean), and public services (a hospital, energy and sanitation, diplomatic



Figure 4 Larissa Sansour, *Nation Estate*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

missions, aid and development, permits and passports, schools and universities). If *A Space Exodus* proposes outer space in lieu of land, *Nation Estate* proffers the tiny footprint of upward development – and purportedly upward mobility – in the face of shrinking Palestinian territories. *Nation Estate* thus recalls what British-Israeli architect Eyal Weizman (2002, 2007, 2017) refers to as the “politics of verticality” or “vertical apartheid,” which emerged in the post-Oslo period as a pervasive and totalizing mechanism of Palestinian population control.

While the estate promises luxury, the reality of the surveillance state remains firmly intact as identity papers and checkpoints are replaced by biometric verification. Like a sterile museum filled with hollowed artifacts drained of their aura, the estate is a holographic simulacrum of Palestine (Figure 4). In relocating and rescaling Palestinian territories, Sansour asks the question, what is Palestine: a collection of things? a place? a people? an idea(l)?

Read alongside one another, Khalil Rabah’s *Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* and Larissa Sansour’s *Nation Estate* reveal the complex ways in which Palestinian artists negotiate the impulse to preserve cultural patrimony for a future that remains tenuous at best, and impossible at worst. Staged within this very tension, Rabah amplifies the absurdity of museumification practices that commodify Palestinian cultural artifacts amidst the disposability of Palestinian life. Meanwhile, Sansour creates a living museum in *Nation Estate* that houses “all these symbols and artefacts we’ve gathered as Palestinians,” in order to ask whether “they really mean anything anymore” (Sansour 2016b).

Across both *A Space Exodus* and *Nation Estate* Sansour envisions absurdist solutions to the seemingly unanswerable question of Palestinian territories and bodies. Each relies upon the assumption that Palestinians must

reside elsewhere in space – the terra incognita of outer space or the verticality of a skyscraper. *A Space Exodus* literally looks to the moon as an alternative home for Palestinians when the one-state solution is no longer viable; meanwhile, *Nation Estate* satirizes the two-state solution by spatializing asymmetries of power. In the final and most complex installation of the trilogy, *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* (photo, installation, and film, Larissa Sansour with Søren Lind, 2015), Sansour offers her most radical exploration of Palestine statehood – namely, through the manipulation of time and not simply space. The “fictional video essay” is framed as a disembodied session between a therapist and the leader of a “narrative resistance group” who has a warrant out for her arrest. The group is making underground deposits of porcelain, patterned after the Palestinian *kaffiyeh*, that function as “a cultural DNA” aimed at proving the existence of a fictional civilization hundreds of years in the future in order to support their claims to the land (Sansour 2016a).

Blurring the line between reality and fiction, myth and history, *In the Future* combines CGI and live motion to produce disjointed vignettes that flit across time and space. The film’s visual layering is sonically mirrored in a dissonant soundtrack that combines haunting electronic instrumentals and vocalization by Iraqi musician Aida Nadeem, distorted diegetic and non-diegetic sounds, and the voiceover of the narrator and her therapist in Palestinian vernacular. The deliberately confusing syntax of the film’s mixed-tense title signals the ways in which science fiction occupies a threshold temporality that manipulates the past in order to reimagine the future. Sansour explains that the heterotemporality of the Palestinian political imaginary is particularly suited to the genre of science fiction, which “despite its stylized imagery, sterile futurism and high production value ... almost invariably carries within it a sense of retro, ideas of the future tend to appear standard and cliché at the same time as they come across as visionary” (Sansour 2018a).

Fabricating a mythological past to support future territorial claims, Sansour’s narrative terrorists repurpose archeological practices in order to stage their own futurist historical intervention. By virtue of doing so, however, they must forego their claims to this land in the present. The film offers a critique of the “instrumentalisation of archeology” aimed at “exposing and dismantling core mechanisms supporting a colonialist-nationalist project” (Sansour 2018b).¹⁰ Sansour’s comments echo anthropologist Nadia Abu El Haj’s study of “the significance of archaeology to the Israeli state and society and the role it played in the formation and enactment of its colonial-national historical imagination and in the substantiation of its territorial claims” (2001, 2). In problematizing archeological practices, Sansour, like Rabah, invites us to question the imbrication of political stakes and “social interests” in the production of historical knowledge about Palestine (8).

10 The work of Palestinian visual artist and filmmaker Jumana Manna similarly explores the politics of archeology in Palestinian and Israeli national history.



Figure 5 Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*, 2015. Courtesy of the artists.

Despite its heavy use of CGI and VFX to project a futurist ethos, *In the Future* also incorporates dramatically colourized – and in some cases, animated – archival photos of Palestinians across history (Figures 5 and 6). The figures in the archival images stare intently at the camera, exaggerating the uncanny vividness of the past. This “cross-temporal” collage recalls a “grand tableau vivant” in which the figures appear at once animated and lifeless, real and fictional, archaic and futuristic (Sansour 2018b). The mixed media format exaggerates science fiction’s retro-futurist temporality by blending the past and the future into the same visual plane. It echoes Sansour’s assessment of the Palestinian state of temporal limbo between mourning territorial losses and fantasies of statehood. While *In the Future* troubles the ways in which mythology becomes narrativized as historical fact, it nonetheless testifies “to the quiet, but perpetual presence of history in any dialogue on Palestine” (Sansour 2016a).

As with Shibli’s *Masās*, everyday violence lurks in the background but is not explicitly named, insofar as the narrator speaks in vague terms about “our rulers,” “my people,” and “nations.” The film’s psychonarrative framework mobilizes the analytical space to bridge the affective and temporal complexities of trauma. Reflecting on the tragic death of her sister at the age of nine, the narrator notes that “most radical activity [is] founded in trauma” (*m’uzam ’af’alnā al-jadhriyya maşdarhā şadmāt al-nafsiyya*). Her sister’s killing is both incidental – “they mistook her for something else” – and synecdochical – “death is no longer about the single life lost ... It’s what we are as a whole that qualifies us as targets.”

The narrator describes her group as *militia riwā ī* or a narrative militia – which Sansour translates as “narrative terrorist” – resignifying the rhetoric mobilized to vilify Palestinian resistance and justify Israeli state response



Figure 6 Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*, 2015. Courtesy of the artists.

tactics. *In the Future*'s focus on discursive interventions suggests that some of the most dangerous acts of state violence are epistemic (Gallien 2017, 8). In one scene, the narrator explains that archeology “was already a frontline” on which “our rulers built a nation,” as we see bomb-shaped capsules roll off a plane; their parachutes slowly deploy as they fall to the ground carrying deposits of *kaffiyeh*-patterned porcelain. The scene visualizes archeological violence as a way of contextualizing the group’s “historical interventions” (*tadakhkhul fī al-tārīkh*), which Sansour and Lind extend beyond the film’s world-crafting. *In the Future* was accompanied by an exhibition titled *Archaeology in Absentia* that featured fifteen bronze munition replicas engraved with coordinates to deposits of hand-painted porcelain plates that the artists buried across Palestine.

Remythologizing the ways in which eschatological rhetoric is always already woven into the history of Palestine/Israel, *In the Future* suggests “the apocalypse is the first stop on the road to an acceptable future” (Sansour 2018b). It is the figure of the therapist who diagnoses that the apocalypse has already taken place, not as a specific catastrophic event, but rather as a gradual process of erosion. To that end, the film visually references the biblical plagues said to be inflicted upon the Pharaoh of Egypt because of his enslavement of the Israelites. In the opening sequence we see a swarm of locust-shaped spaceships; in another scene, a “porcelain monsoon” (*ʿasaf min al-khazaf*) resembling a “biblical plague” (*mīthl al-tāʿūn fī zaman al-tawrā*) rains down on the narrator (Figure 7). The visual anachronism invites us to reflect upon the ways in which historical mythology inflects territorial claims to Palestine/Israel. In so doing, *In the Future* – like *A Space Exodus* and *Nation Estate* – stages a series of “temporal dislodgement[s]” that engage with the aesthetic conventions of science fiction (Sansour 2016a).



Figure 7 Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*, 2015. Courtesy of the artists.

Impossible futures

The possible has been tried and failed. Now it's time to try the impossible. (Sun Ra 1972)

This essay has traced two intersecting trends in contemporary Palestinian cultural production following the second intifada. Going against the grain of affect-laden modes of representation discussed at the opening of this essay, these artists invoke the stoic qualities of *ṣumūd*. Rather than aestheticizing physical forms of violence, however, their works render legible everyday articulations of temporal and epistemic violence.

Archiving daily life in the West Bank and Gaza, Adania Shibli's novella *Masās* and Tarzan and Arab's short film *Condom Lead* capture the suspended temporality of settler occupation. Lingering within "occupation time," they expose how asymmetries of power deeply impact the experience of time in addition to questions of mobility. Moreover, the centrality of children in both works disrupts the reproductive logics of futurity. Mobilizing the narrative perspective of a young girl, *Masās* magnifies the profound ways in which her childhood is delimited by the conditions of the occupation. While violence and loss lurk beneath the surface, Shibli's vibrant sensorial picture of the world through the young girl's eyes nonetheless testifies to her fragile existence. Meanwhile, *Condom Lead* centres on the claustrophobic time of war in which the unviability of the future is reflected in the estranged couple's inability to have sex and the inconsolability of their crying child. If *Masās* lingers within the temporal rhythm of a child's mind, then *Condom Lead* amplifies the ways in which the occupation disrupts everyday life and the ability to conceive – both literally and figuratively – a future.

Khalil Rabah’s *Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* and Larissa Sansour’s science fiction trilogy, on the other hand, transform the temporal politics of the occupation through narrative and ideational modes of world-building. Rabah’s museum project simulates an official historical past for Palestinians that amplifies the odd temporalization of museumification practices. In the process, he exposes the ways in which Palestinians occupy a threshold state between a suspended present and hypothetical future. Meanwhile, each of the films in Sansour’s trilogy envisions how to solve the question of Palestinian statehood, but each ultimately contains within it the impossibility of its fulfilment. They articulate a distinctly “Palestinian anti-colonial dystopic poetics” that expands the range of speculative fiction’s political imaginary (Hochberg 2018, 34).

As a speculative “mode of critical inquiry,” Afrofuturism can be a productive interlocutor to this body of Palestinian art, insofar as it entails “historical recovery projects” that project “black futures derived from Afrodiasporic experiences” (Yaszek 2006, 42–47).¹¹ These works tap into an existential temporal knot for disenfranchised populations: the simultaneous erasure of historical past with the foreclosure of futurity. Put otherwise:

The continual invitation to conjecture, in turn, produces speculative histories, which point to possible alternatives (alternate histories and futures) at the same time as they call for critical reflection on history itself as narrative, the construction of which conditions our understanding of both the present and future. (Armillas-Tiseyra 2016, 273–74)

As an act of temporal and epistemological disruption, Afrofuturism operates like other counter-futurisms, by “articulating histories of dispossession as part of imaginary futures” (Parikka 2018, 41). Such works shed critical light on the historical legacies of enslavement, colonialism, and settler occupation, as well as their present-day rearticulations.

Adania Shibli, Tarzan and Arab, Khalil Rabah, and Larissa Sansour demonstrate the ways in which the politics and aesthetics of temporality are central to contemporary Palestinian art practices in the post-Oslo period. While *Masās* and *Condom Lead* meditate on the present in the absence of a possible future, the *Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind* and Sansour’s science fiction trilogy proleptically manipulate the present as past to make certain futures conceivable. Rather than mapping a path to a particular future, they expose and disrupt the chronopolitics of the occupation. Works such as Sansour’s dystopic *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* suggest that because the present reality of Palestine is unsustainable, the most radical acts are imaginative, even if those futures can never be realized. For as her narrative terrorist reminds us, “very few raptures are instantaneous.”

11 While it is beyond the scope of this essay to explore this linkage, the nascent body of critical and artistic works dubbed “Arab futurism” or “Gulf futurism” are frequently in dialogue with Afrofuturism (Nazif 2018; Parikka 2018; L. Suleiman 2016).

References

- Abu El Haj, Nadia. 2001. *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Allen, Lori A. 2006. "The Polyvalent Politics of Martyr Commemorations in the Palestinian Intifada." *History and Memory* 18 (2): 107–138.
- Allen, Lori A. 2009. "Martyr Bodies in the Media: Human Rights, Aesthetics, and the Politics of Immediation in the Palestinian Intifada." *American Ethnologist* 36 (1): 161–180.
- Anani, Yazid. 2014. "On Delusion, Art, and Urban Desires in Palestine Today." *Interview. Arab Studies Journal* 22 (1): 208–229.
- Armillas-Tiseyra, Magalí. 2016. "Afronauts: On Science Fiction and the Crisis of Possibility." *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 3 (3): 273–290.
- Asad, Muhammad. 2003. *The Message of the Qur'an*. Translated and with commentary by Muhammad Asad. Bristol: Book Foundation.
- Baalbaki, Munir, and Rohi Baalbaki. 2007. *Al-mawrid: Arabic-English, English-Arabic Dictionary*. Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-l-Malāyīn.
- Blasim, Hassan, ed. 2016. *Iraq+100: Stories from Another Iraq*. Manchester: Comma Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2012. "Noam Chomsky: My Visit to Gaza, the World's Largest Open-Air Prison." *Truth-out*, November 9. <https://www.truthout.org/articles/noam-chomsky-my-visit-to-gaza-the-worlds-largest-open-air-prison/>.
- Eisenbud, Daniel K. 2018. "Current Israeli Birth Rates Unsustainable, Says Expert." *Jerusalem Post*, February 21. <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Current-Israeli-birth-rates-unsustainable-says-expert-543209>.
- Eshun, Kodwo. 2003. "Further Considerations of Afrofuturism." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (2): 287–302.
- Gallien, Claire. 2017. "Trouble in the Archive: Of Counter-Memories, Breakable Memories and Other Proleptic Moves Into the Past in Larissa Sansour's and Wael Shawky's Arts." *Postcolonial Interventions: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 2 (1): 1–31.
- Ghalayini, Basma, ed. 2019. *Palestine+100: Stories from a Century After the Nakba*. Manchester: Comma Press.
- Hanieh, Adam. 2018. "The Oslo Illusion." *Jacobin*, April 21. <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2013/04/the-oslo-illusion/>.
- Hochberg, Gil. 2018. "'Jerusalem, We Have a Problem': Larissa Sansour's Sci-Fi Trilogy and the Impetus of Dystopic Imagination." *Arab Studies Journal* 26 (1): 34–57.
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2009. "Rain of Fire: Israel's Unlawful Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza." Human Rights Watch, March 25. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/03/25/rain-fire/israels-unlawful-use-white-phosphorus-gaza>.
- Khalili, Laleh. 2010. "Palestinians: The Politics of Control, Invisibility and the Spectacle." In *Manifestations of Identity: The Lived Reality of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, 125–145. Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies.
- Khalili, Laleh. 2007. "Heroic and Tragic Pasts: Mnemonic Narratives in the Palestinian Refugee Camps." *Critical Sociology* 33 (4): 731–759.
- Laïda-Hanieh, Adila. 2014. "Grievability as Political Claim Making: The 100 Shaheed-100 Lives Exhibition." *Arab Studies Journal* 22 (1): 46–73.
- Majali, Sulāiman. 2018. "Towards a Possible Manifesto: Proposing Arabfuturism(s) (Conversation A)." *Futures of Colour*. <https://www.futuresofcolour.tumblr.com/post/161897827578/towards-arabfuturisms-manifesto-words-artwork>.
- Meari, Lena. 2014. "Sumud: A Palestinian Philosophy of Confrontation in Colonial Prisons." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113 (3): 547–578.
- Meneley, Anne. 2008. "Time in a Bottle: The Uneasy Circulation of Palestinian Olive Oil." *Middle East Report* 248: 18–23.
- Nazif, Perwana. 2018. "Arabfuturism: Science-Fiction and Alternate Realities in the Arab World." *The Quietus*, February 22. <https://www.thequietus.com/articles/24088-arabfuturism>.
- Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind (PMNHH). 2016. <http://www.thepalestinianmuseumofnaturalhistoryandhumankind.org/>.
- Parikka, Jussi. 2018. "Middle East and Other Futurisms: Imaginary Temporalities in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture." *Culture, Theory and Critique* 59 (1): 40–58.
- Pearlman, Wendy. 2014. *Violence, Nonviolence and the Palestinian National Movement*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Perec, Georges. 1999. "Approaches to What?" In *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, translated by John Sturrock, 205–207. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Peteet, Julie. 2008. "Stealing Time." *Middle East Report* 248: 14–15.
- Peteet, Julie. 2018. "Closure's Temporality: The Cultural Politics of Time and Waiting." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 117 (1): 43–64.

- Rabah, Khalil. 2005. Interview. https://www.static1.squarespace.com/static/539dfe9de4b0514810bd29ea/t/5408ef32e4b03d3eb8691b09/1409871666353/Khalil_Rabah_Interview.pdf.
- Rabah, Khalil. 2006. "A Conversation with Khalil Rabah." Interview. <https://www.bidoun.org/articles/khalil-rabah-and-mai-abu-eldahab>.
- Rabah, Khalil. 2008. "Liverpool Biennial." <https://www.biennial.com/2008/exhibition/artists/khalil-rabah>.
- Richter-Devroe, Sophia. 2011. "Palestinian Women's Everyday Resistance: Between Normality and Normalisation." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 12 (2): 32–46.
- Richter-Devroe, Sophia, and Ruba Salih. 2014. "Cultures of Resistance in Palestine and Beyond: The Politics of Art, Aesthetics, and Affect." *Arab Studies Journal* 22 (1): 8–27.
- Rijke, Alexandra, and Toine Van Teeffelen. 2014. "To Exist is to Resist: Sumud, Heroism, and the Everyday." *Jerusalem Quarterly* 59: 86–99.
- Ryan, Caitlin. 2015. "Everyday Resilience as Resistance: Palestinian Women Practicing *Sumud*." *International Political Sociology* 9 (4): 299–315.
- Sansour, Larissa. 2009. *Space Exodus*. Video.
- Sansour, Larissa. 2012. *Nation Estate*. Video.
- Sansour, Larissa, and Søren, Lind. 2015. *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*. Video.
- Sansour, Larissa. 2016a. "Time, Nationhood, Resistance: Larissa Sansour's Latest Film In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain." Interview. <http://www.artradarjournal.com/2016/02/01/palestinian-artist-larissa-sansours-interview/>.
- Sansour, Larissa. 2016b. "Unbreakable." Interview. <http://www.reorientmag.com/2016/02/larissa-sansour/>.
- Sansour, Larissa. 2018a. Interview. <http://www.islamscifi.com/islam-scifi-interview-of-larissa/>.
- Sansour, Larissa. 2018b. Interview. <https://www.vector-bsfa.com/2018/03/31/interview-with-larissa-sansour/>.
- Sansour, Larissa. n.d. "Contemporary Practices." <http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volumex/fiction%20and%20art%20practice.pdf>.
- Scott, James. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Shehadeh, Raja. 1982. *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank*. London: Quartet Books.
- Shibli, Adania. 2002. *Masās*. Beirut: al-Adab.
- Shibli, Adania. 2010. *Touch*. Translated by Paul Haydar. Northhampton, MA: Clockroot Books.
- Shibli, Adania. 2017. Interview. <https://www.lithub.com/adania-shibli-on-writing-palestine-from-the-inside/>.
- Suleiman, Elia. 2002. *Yaddun Ilābiyya* [Divine Intervention]. DVD. Port Washington: Ognon Pictures.
- Suleiman, Lama. 2016. "Afrofuturism and Arabfuturism: Reflections of a Present-day Diasporic Reader." Tohu, June 12. http://www.tohumagazine.com/article/afrofuturism-and-arabfuturism-reflections-present-day-diasporic-reader#footnoteref10_ma208iw.
- Suleiman, Elia. 2016. "The Other Face of Silence." Interview. <http://www.palestine.mei.columbia.edu/the-north/2016/6/14/elia-suleiman>.
- Sun Ra. 1972. *Space is the Place*. Film. Directed by John Coney.
- Tarzan and Arab. 2013. *Condom Lead*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNkn552kEYA>.
- Tawil-Souri, Helga. 2017. "Checkpoint Time." *Qui Parle* 26 (2): 383–422.
- Toukan, Hanan. 2018. "The Palestinian Museum." *Radical Philosophy* 2.03. https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/the-palestinian-museum?fbclid=IwAR1rV50Z8tfy1I7IVDi2axJXwF_s32dLGua-WnJbd1UuJspSxB-fqSi69jY.
- Wehr, Hans. 1994. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. 3rd ed. Compiled by J. Milton Cowan. Beirut: Librairie du Liban.
- Weizman, Eyal. 2002. Introduction to The Politics of Verticality. openDemocracy, April 23. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/article_801jsp/.
- Weizman, Eyal. 2007. *Hollow Land: Israeli's Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso.
- Weizman, Eyal. 2012. "Archaeology of the Present: Organized Crime Through the Study of Urban Built Environments." An Interview with Eyal Weizman." *Journal of International Affairs* 6 (1): 163–168.
- Weizman, Eyal. 2017. "The Vertical Apartheid." openDemocracy, July 13. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/vertical-apartheid/>.
- Yaszek, Lisa. 2006. "Afrofuturism, Science Fiction, and the History of the Future." *Socialism and Democracy* 20 (3): 41–60.
- Zureik, Elia. 2010. "Introduction." In *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine: Population, Territory and Power*, edited by Elia Zureik, David Lyon, and Yasmeen Abu-Laban, 3–46. London: Routledge.