

## 6. Killing time in Gaza and speculative Palestinian futures

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A book on the representation of refugees in contemporary art from Denmark would be incomplete without a consideration of artists who have engaged with the plight of the Palestinians for the long haul: deeply committed artists whose engagements began a long time before the recent conflict ignited by Hamas's deplorable terror attack on Israeli civilians on 7 October 2023, killing approximately 1200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including at least 809 civilians, and taking 252 hostages – acts considered as war crimes (UN Human Rights Office 2024a; Muller 2022). They were followed by Israel's subsequent military intervention into Gaza and disproportionate retaliation, causing a horrendous number of civilian casualties among children, women and the elderly, leaving most cities in ruins and the survivors starving because the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza was strategically blocked. When Hamas and the Israeli government finally agreed to a fragile six-week ceasefire in January 2025, which did not last for long, about 46,000 people had been reported killed, although the actual death toll was assumed to be higher (R. Berg 2025). Half a year later, a famine in Gaza was confirmed by FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (WHO 2025), and the death toll had risen to more than 60,000 people according to the Palestinian health authorities (Al-Mughrabi and Farge 2025; OCHA 2025). In addition, about 90 per cent of the population have been forcibly displaced – many repeatedly, some ten times or more (UN News 2025; OCHA 2025). On top of the humanitarian disaster, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have destroyed an estimated 60 per cent of all buildings, including homes, schools and hospitals, and in northern Gaza probably more (UN News 2025a). In April 2025, The UN estimated that approximately 92 per cent of all residential buildings in Gaza – around 436,000 homes – have been either damaged or destroyed since the start of the conflict (UN News 2025b). Israel has also committed a 'scholasticide' by systematically wiping out the educational system in Gaza (Desai 2024a, 2024b). In the spring of 2025, Hamas still held 59 hostages in captivity, with more than half of them believed to be deceased (Cramer 2025), thereby providing the Israeli government with a reason for letting the IDF continue its onslaught on civilians in Gaza. Following mounting international pressure, the

surviving hostages were finally released in October 2025, and an uncertain peace process began.

In this study of art on forced displacement, it is important to mention that some 70 per cent of Gaza's inhabitants were already registered by the UN as refugees before the onset of the IDF's intervention (OCRA 2018), and that many are descendants of the Palestinians who were forcibly displaced in the Nakba, the Palestinian catastrophe of dispossession in 1948. In short, already before the Gaza war, the occupied Gaza Strip was the territory of refugees.

For the Palestinians, the Arabic word Nakba refers both to the establishment of the state of Israel and the widespread exile and destruction of the Palestinian community following the creation of Israel. During the 1947–1949 war fought in the territory of Palestine under the British Mandate, more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs, or almost two-thirds of the population, fled or were driven from their homes. During the war, Israel occupied 78 per cent of the territory, while Jordan and Egypt occupied the rest. Israel did not allow the Palestinian refugees to return after the war but destroyed hundreds of deserted villages while Israeli settlers repopulated empty neighbourhoods. In June 1967, Israel seized East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights from Jordan, Egypt and Syria during the so-called Six Day War, also known as the June War. Sinai was returned to Egypt in 1979, but Israel continues to occupy the rest of the territories seized in 1967. Therefore, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are referred to collectively as the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The occupation has remained contested, and in July 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion stating that Israel's prolonged occupation of this territory, its settlement regime and violation of the indigenous Palestinian population's right to self-determination is illegal in its entirety (UN Human Rights Office 2024b).

Of particular relevance to this book's examination of forced displacement is the category 'present absentees' created by the state of Israel in 1950 as part of the Israeli Absentee Property Law to designate those Palestinians who were absent from their homes during the Nakba, and whose properties were confiscated by the state while they themselves remained in Israel, now as 'internal refugees' within their own country, and without a home (Masalha 2012, 231–233). As the historian Nur Masalha notes:

Today almost a quarter of all Palestinian citizens inside Israel are "internal refugees" or "present absentees" (*nifkadim nokhahim* in Hebrew). Inside Israel, after the Nakba, the key stipulation was (as it still is) that it was a state created for Jews; non-Jews, both present and "present absentees", were treated as foreigners in their own homeland, despite being the indigenous inhabitants and formerly resident in the country. (Masalha 2012, 231; see also Sneineh 2022)

The Gaza-based writer and activist Ahmad Abu Artema's personal story exemplifies this collective dispossession as well as the Gazan sense of living in an open-air prison. Artema was born in Rafah refugee camp in Gaza to parents displaced during the Nakba from the city of Ramle in what is now Israeli territory – a family home he has never visited: 'My children have never seen anything beyond the confines of Gaza and the siege. [...] they do not know a reality beyond the sound of bombs, the darkness of night with no electricity, the inability to travel freely – or the fact that these things are not normal. Nothing about life in Gaza is normal.' The peculiar nature of life in Gaza thus epitomizes Palestinian statelessness, displacement and refugeehood that is captured accurately in Artema's observation: 'The Nakba is not a just a memory, it is an ongoing reality.' (Artema 2018, n.p.; see also Mirzoeff 2023, 229). The Nakba indeed continues, as also suggested by the prominent Palestinian slogan *al-nakba mustamirra* – the catastrophe is ongoing (see also the Introduction).

Only six months into the brutal conflict between Israel and Hamas, in March 2024, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, Francesca P. Albanese, stated that there were 'reasonable grounds' to believe that Israel was committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Albanese's reasoning is worth quoting here, because she stresses that this conflict should not be considered as 'new' but as the most recent and most destructive stage in the long history of suppression and displacement of the Palestinians which the artWork discussed here in Chapter 6 grapple with:

Specifically, Israel has committed three acts of genocide with the requisite intent: causing seriously serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, and imposing measures intended to prevent birth within the group. [...] the genocide in Gaza is the most extreme stage of a long-standing settler colonial process of erasure of the native Palestinians. [...] For over 76 years, this process has oppressed the Palestinians as a people in every way imaginable, crushing their inalienable right to self-determination demographically, economically, territorially, culturally and politically. (Albanese, quoted from UN News 2024, n.p.)

As Albanese points out in a study co-authored with a fellow scholar of international law, Lex Takkenberg, the Palestinian refugee situation presents some unique characteristics: the homeland from which they were displaced in 1948 and/or were never allowed to return to no longer exists as a political and administrative entity:

[T]he root causes of their displacement remain unaddressed; and displacement from and dispossession in the territory that Israel occupied in 1967 continues unabated. These elements are of fundamental importance to the Palestinian case. This uniqueness overshadows that in other respects the problems faced by Pales-

tinian refugees may not be markedly different from those faced by other refugees worldwide, almost two-thirds of whom also find themselves in protracted exile. (Albanese and Takkenberg 2021, 12)

The political scientist Gabriel Scheffer's distinction between stateless and state-linked diasporas can aid a better understanding of the complexity of this situation, and, more specifically, of how the histories of the Jewish and Palestinian diasporas are intertwined. During extended periods, the Jews had no sovereign national state in the territory they regarded as their homeland. In the wake of the Holocaust and the Second World War, the Zionists in the Jewish diaspora achieved their goal of founding an independent state with support from the international community. However, the 1948 Middle East war that resulted in the founding of an independent Jewish state also uprooted many indigenous Palestinians and caused both forced and voluntary increases in the Palestinian diaspora. As Scheffer explains, the transformation of the Jewish diaspora into a *state-linked* diaspora caused the emergence of a substantial *stateless* Palestinian diaspora (Sheffer 2003, 148–149). A Palestinian state was never created. Some of the works discussed in the following reveal that art is one of the incubators that sustain the hope that one day there will be one.

## Palestine seen through contrasting artistic lenses

The aesthetic idioms of the artists discussed here could hardly be more different. Whilst the stark realism of Kent Klich's photographs and the speculative science fiction-based films of Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind represent divergent artistic visions, they are nonetheless all committed to keeping the Palestinian cause and history in public view. Klich, Sansour and Lind have grappled for years with the complicated situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, along with Palestinian history, identity and loss. They also have in common a complex transnational relation to Denmark and Palestine. An introduction to their respective backgrounds is therefore in order.

Kent Klich is a photographer who has for more than three decades explored subjects such as drug addiction, prostitution, homelessness, war and broken families. The common denominator of his work is a commitment to human rights and social justice and a profound belief in the power of photography to raise awareness of inequality, injustice and the violation of human rights (Sandbye 2017, 193). Klich was born and raised in Sweden by a Swedish mother and a Polish father who had spent five years in a concentration camp during the Second World War before resettling in Sweden.

Klich initially studied psychology at the University of Gothenburg before turning to photography (and film). After studying photography at the International Center of Photography in New York, he joined the Magnum co-operative of photographers in 1998 and left in 2002. He eventually settled in Copenhagen, which has remained his base, but nationality has always been somewhat fluid for him (Sandbye 2017, 193), as it has for the Danish artists of Bosnian origin discussed in Chapter 5.

Klich has a preference for using different modes of storytelling, including modes grounded in collaboration with a range of different people such as local informants, human rights activists and scholars. It is perhaps most evident in his predilection for the photo book – a medium that has a narrative inflection and an enhanced potential for visual storytelling compared to the independent single shot's capture of a 'decisive moment'. Documentary photo books often rely on photographic design formats combining visual and textual narratives. The art historian Birgit Mersmann has suggested that a photo book can be considered a design object with spatial qualities that requires the viewer-reader to turn the pages to initiate the book's visual storytelling where texts and images interact to generate a book length, intermedial narrative (Mersmann 2024, 70).

Klich's photo books cultivate the interconnection between disciplines, including having authors write texts specifically for his books, which all have an ample list of thanks. The list in *Killing Time* (2013), for instance, includes more than a hundred people, from Palestinian civilians who have lent him family photographs, to his interpreter and other collaborators on the project, and even the philosopher Judith Butler for writing the text that only they could (Klich 2013, 215). His images never stand alone but enter into an interplay with different types of texts and documentation. Klich has photographed in Gaza since 2001, i.e. for over 20 years, leading to some of his most notable projects. All his photo books from Gaza have been made in collaboration with the Danish artist Tina Enghoff, with whom he also created a monumental commemorative installation about Danish asylum centres, *In the Past We Made History* (2025), to which I will return in the Conclusion.

The Palestinian Danish duo Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind have collaborated formally since 2016 (Muller 2024, 1) but have worked together for longer. Sansour was born in East Jerusalem, grew up in Bethlehem and studied fine art in Copenhagen, London and New York. She received Danish citizenship in 2009. Working primarily with film, Sansour also creates installations, photographs and sculptures. Sansour does not have a refugee background, but much of her work is deeply intertwined with her own biographical and diasporic experience, and her work revolves around Palestine, addressing contemporary social and political issues as well as exploring the history of Palestine. The Danish author, director and scriptwriter Søren Lind has a background in philosophy. Lind authored books on language and the mind as well as novels and short stories before turning to film and fiction. Most of Sansour and Lind's collaborative works are film-based, with Lind developing the manuscript,

Sansour in charge of the visual aspects and a broad crew of professionals contributing to the actual production of their films, which may sometimes generate spinoffs in other media.

Although the pair has lived in London for more than a decade, they have a strong presence on the Danish art scene thanks to their participation in film festivals, solo and group shows. Highlights are their exhibition *Heirloom* in the Danish pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019, and their solo exhibitions *Tomorrow's Ghosts* at Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg in 2023 (Muller 2024, 1) and *These Moments Will Disappear Too* at Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, in 2025–2026. What Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind share with Kent Klich, in addition to their concern with Palestine, is a collaborative practice that relies on storytelling to explore Palestinian worldmaking processes and how Palestinian worlds are destroyed but nevertheless continue to exist thanks to Palestinian steadfastness, or *sumud*.

### Radical waithood and responsible empathy

To date, Kent Klich has published five books on Gaza. The cornerstone is his 'Gaza trilogy' – *Gaza Photo Album* (2009), *Killing Time* (2013) and *Black Friday* (2015). In 2017, he published a book with selected images from his projects on Gaza on the occasion of his solo exhibition *Gaza Works* at the Hasselblad Center in Gothenburg. In 2024, Klich responded to the outbreak of the conflict in Gaza by publishing *GZA On Land and Air*, donating 200 copies to Palestinian solidarity groups in Sweden, Denmark and Norway – countries with a legacy of leftist Palestinian solidarity groups going back to the 1960s and 1970s (Haugbolle and Olsen 2023, 130).

Klich's background in photojournalism is visible in his work, but he has long since transgressed the boundaries of this *métier* to position himself within the field of artistic photography. As Louis Wolthers notes, his works show 'how photography can be used in ways that go far beyond the immediacy of photojournalism while never losing sight of its ultimate goals: to expose the unrelenting injustice taking place in Gaza and to foster transnational solidarity' (Wolthers 2017, 10). In doing so, Klich's photo books reflect a broader development where the modern tradition of photojournalism is increasingly merging with the tradition of the conceptual and investigative photo art book to form new transmedial and experimental forms of photographic documentary storytelling (Mersmann 2021, 70).

The photographer's awareness of his own role as an outsider looking in is felt in his photo books about Gaza, which all result from collaborative efforts involving interdependent tellers and listeners. To gain access to images, information, people and places, Klich depends on local informants, local journalists, organizations and NGOs working in the Occupied Territory; conversely, they also have an interest in the foreign photographer's ability to reach a world beyond Gaza and to communi-

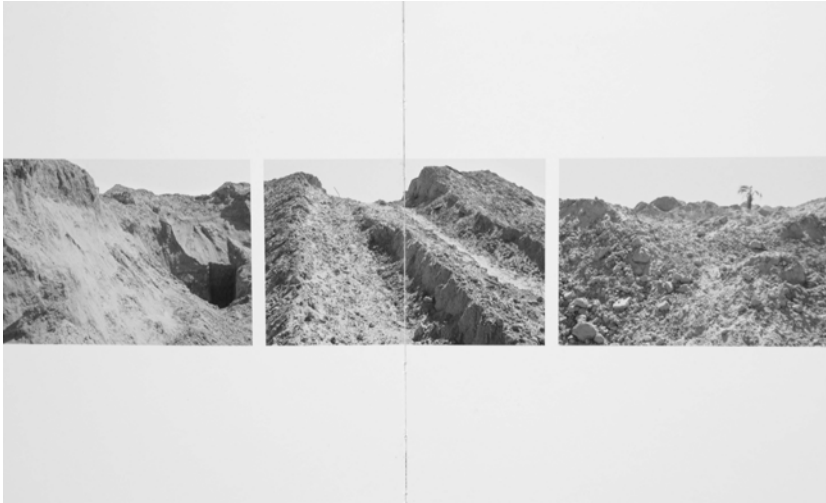
cate their stories in a compelling way to empathic audiences. In a conversation with the American documentary photographer Susan Meiselas, she suggests that they are not the kind of image makers that organize the world aesthetically for others to enjoy. They care that the image is imbued with aesthetic power, but their main concern is that the social context is meaningful to engage with. Klich agrees and elaborates:

It is not the image that is the end product. It is part of the work, the relation with the people, whatever dialogue it can invite, and whatever it can change. [...] When you come as an outsider with your inadequate knowledge it is important to work together with those who know. My work in Gaza would not have been possible without the cooperation with the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Amnesty International and Forensic Architecture. (Klich in Meiselas and Klich 2017, 187).

It was criticism from a Palestinian in Sweden of Klich's earliest photo reportages and stories from Gaza that made him aware of the overemphasis on armed resistance, violence and victims in his journalistic coverage of the conflict, and the need for telling more personal stories (Meiselas and Klich 2017, 185–186). The Gaza books thus testify to the multifaceted strategies employed by Klich to uncover the effects of war on civilians and the less spectacular aspects of life in the aftermath of military interventions that are seldom covered by news media: elements such as daily life under the Israeli occupation, the consequences of the blockade and the subtle signs of resistance (Wolthers 2017, 10). Klich's Gaza books can thus be seen as complex visualizations of destruction, displacement, homelessness, absence and resilience that deploy what Verónica Tello calls a counter-memorial aesthetics to perform a kind of commemoration (Tello 2016). His books evoke and represent places and people that no longer exist due to the ongoing armed conflict; people who have almost been erased from public view and consciousness – internal refugees consigned to oblivion as unimagined communities (Nixon 2011). As Louise Wolthers notes in her sharp-eyed analysis of Klich's Gaza works, Klich consciously uses the fragmentary character of photography and the incorporation of other types of material to defy a totalizing gaze. His books are, rather, multiperspectival compilations relying on a method that Mette Sandbye describes as 'multi-representational slowness' – multi-representational because a broad range of photographic formats have been used, such as conceptual colour images, black-and-white reportage photos, satellite photos and existing family snapshots, usually in an interplay with various forms of text. His books are also characterized by a sense of slowness, in the dual sense of requiring the photographer to work for years on a project and for the viewer to slow

down to explore the interaction between the different aesthetic forms (Sandbye 2017, 193).

Fig. 28: Kent Klich, page spread from the photo book *Black Friday*, 2015, 16 x 24 cm. Courtesy: the artist.



This is particularly noticeable in the project *Black Friday* (2015) about the consequences of the IDF's attack on Rafah on one single day, August 1, 2014, following reports that Hamas had kidnapped an IDF officer. More than 130 mostly civilian Palestinians were killed, and many buildings and greenhouses were destroyed. In *Black Friday*, Klich's own photos of the site where the officer was allegedly taken prisoner and sites where Palestinians were killed serve as 'forensic photography' zooming in on details of a landscape or street to expose the traces left by violence in the sand or asphalt. These close-ups are interspersed with maps, satellite pictures and excerpts from a report on the events of Black Friday by Amnesty International and Forensic Architecture. A whole section of the book commemorates the victims by including a list of their names and a photographic portrait (where available) compiled by the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. Yet, Klich's strangely vacant and uneventful photos make no claim to provide 'evidence' of what killed these individuals to be used in court; they are, rather, 'subjective witness statements from an embodied photographer of the aftermaths' (Wolthers 2017, 16). The subjective perspective and the careful effort by Klich and his collaborators to put a face to each named victim underscore *Black Friday's* rehumanizing ethical appeal. This approach

seeks to counter the dehumanizing media narratives that regularly reduce victims to the latest numerical calculations of the total loss. Furthermore, the tactile mode of communication which characterizes the photo book medium strengthens the personal address to the embodied recipient, who must physically touch, handle and interact with the object for its narrative to unfold (Mersmann 2024, 94). This is especially the case with *Black Friday*, whose pocketbook format enhances the intimacy of this personalized and tactile connection, making its impact potentially more profound.

*Fig. 29: Kent Klich, from Killing Time, 2013. Still image from a smartphone video. 19 x 14.5 cm. Photo: Qareeb Omar Abed. Courtesy: the artist.*



The project *Killing Time* comprises a video installation and a book of photographs and documentation with a preface by Judith Butler. The installation was based on a montage of videos filmed with cellphones belonging to people living in Gaza before and during the first days of the IDF's military attack on Gaza codenamed Operation Cast Lead, from December 27, 2008, until January 18, 2009, following the firing of rockets into Israel from the Gaza Strip. Thirteen Israelis died during this attack, including three killed by the rockets. More than 1400 Palestinians were killed, including about 900 civilians, and about 5000 people were wounded. The damage to the housing stock was also severe with more than 2000 houses completely destroyed and about 20,000 damaged (Klich 2009, n.p.). The video installation, made in collaboration with the film director and editor Anders Rafn, shows people of all ages 'killing time': smoking, resting, playing, waiting. At the end, when viewers learn that the main characters were all among the casualties of the heavy attack, the installa-

tion is suddenly transformed into a memorial. A whole section or 'chapter' of the book *Killing Time* consists of slightly blurred frame grabs from these low-resolution videos printed on a mournful black background. The video installation and the stills, where the movement of life has been frozen, revolve around the tension between peaceful everyday life and the sudden killing of civilians by the IDF, pointing forward to *Black Friday's* concern about civilians killed in a similar attack in 2014.

In a photo book like *Killing Time*, a narrative unfolds, but how? Butler's preface 'Fragments of Lost Life' is preceded by a visual prologue with a selection of Klich's first black and white photographs of everyday life and landscapes in Gaza from 2001–2002. Butler's insightful essay is followed by a visual 'chapter' titled 'From a Distance', with what were then new colour photographs taken by Klich from Israel looking towards Gaza and overlooking the so-called 'buffer-zone' of 300 metres of Palestinian territory that Gazans can only enter at the risk of being killed or injured by Israeli border guards. Here, barren deserted landscapes alternate with cultivated fields and grass meadows. This is followed by the chapter 'What Life Looks Like 2009–11', with images from photo albums belonging to Gazan families who selected photographs and gave Klich the permission to use the pictures when he visited them: they depict happy days on the beach, family gatherings and children, relatives and friends – the loved ones. Glimpses of what those lives were like in the periods between Israeli military operations. This chapter forms a sharp contrast to the commemorative section, with frame grabs from the above-mentioned cellphone videos of people killed during Operation Cast Lead. These have been inserted in the middle of the chapter on 'Life', so that they literally, as well as symbolically, rupture it, with the black background marking that the perspective shifts to that of the victims. Then follows the chapter 'Homes 2009', with a selection of photographs of private homes damaged during Operation Cast Lead; these were previously published in Klich's photo book *Gaza Photo Album* (of which, more below). *Killing Time* concludes with an extensive list of thanks, followed by a visual epilogue with Klich's black and white photographs of the general unrest in Gaza in 2001–2002, suggesting that the conflict *and* Palestinian resistance to the occupation are ongoing.

Klich's representation of Operation Cast Lead thus departs in several ways from the typical photojournalistic focus on acts of warfare and traumatized victims. Firstly, *Killing Time* focuses on the conflict's destructive impact on civilian lifeworlds and the loss of loved ones; and secondly, it includes representations by Palestinians themselves of how they wish to represent themselves and the lifeworld they have built.

To understand better what difference this makes, it is helpful to turn to Mieke Bal's narratological concept of *focalization*. This refers to the way the perspective from which a situation is perceived or imagined shapes the narrative (see Chapter 1). Bal draws attention to the tendency of visual representations to include – as a *depicted* figure – an internal or embedded narrator-focalizer, whose perspective differs from

that of the author/image-maker (Bal 2021, 14). Klich activates this ability to not only talk about how others perceive a situation but to actually *show* it by including many different narrator-focalizers (and their perspectives) in his photo book. In Klich's hands, 'figuring' or 'imaging' these narrator-focalizers by reproducing their own images becomes a tool to make the difference between the reality status of what they see, and the imagined vision of the photographer-outsider stand out more clearly.

In her essay, Butler dwells on the implications of the title *Killing Time* – a common phrase referring to passing the time with trivial activities to keep oneself busy while waiting for something else to happen. The word 'waiting' implies that there is a future, the anticipation of change that it is believed will happen, or a change that one has the agency to bring about. Conversely, 'killing time' implies that one's agency and sense of the future is eroded by a certain kind of temporal destructiveness. Butler suggests that this difference is crucial in Gaza's case:

But perhaps living in the time between bombings, without work and without a clear sense of future, is not quite as agentic as waiting. Is there a way of living in time when the future is closed that is precisely not waiting, but rather killing time – not quite the same as wasting time? [...] the title, *Killing Time*, opens up a problem of agency; "killing" shifts our understanding of action from an infinitive to a continuous present, one in which the beginning and the end of action cannot be properly identified. (Butler 2013, 19)

Taking my cue from Butler, I propose that the conditions of worldmaking in Gaza under the Israeli occupation, blockade and military interventions could be understood as an extreme form of refugee waithood. As explained in Chapter 5, the term *waithood* refers to the limbo and the ways in which forcibly displaced people handle a prolonged encampment by developing an exceptional lifestyle between permanence and transience (Teferra 2022, 164). In this case it is extreme, because the indefinite encampment does not offer protection, only continual exposure to violence and killings.

But how do we approach the visual imagery of the video grabs and photographs in Klich's book? As Butler notes, the images seem to have survived the lives and homes they recorded. In effect, the phone videos surviving the person could even be seen as 'a kind of testament or archive of a lost life', i.e. they serve a commemorative function (Butler 2013, 19). At first glance, Klich's photographs of devastated homes seem to serve a different purpose because they are all about having been dispossessed and forced out – forcibly displaced, again. Yet, as such they are also testimonies, not to the fate of individuals but to the fact that the most recent conflict that began in 2023 has precedence in previous acts of dispossession of Palestinians. Klich's *Killing Time* is from 2011, but it could just as well have been created in 2025. His works retain their validity and urgency.

Refugeedom constitutes an undercurrent in *Killing Time*. In *Gaza Photo Album*, it is the central theme. This photo book is also concerned with the consequences of Operation Cast Lead, but it is dedicated solely to Klich's stark pictures of damaged and sometimes irreparably destroyed dwellings. It thus invites recipients to reflect on the fact that this offensive forced 50,000 inhabitants from their homes (Klich 2009, n.p.). The damaged and deserted private spaces are the silent, yet powerful testimonies to this mass displacement and attack on the fundamental human right to shelter where a feeling of safety prevails, and to intimacy and privacy. In these photographs, intimate items of furniture such as beds, wardrobes and chairs, each evoking multiple stories and layers of association, are now covered by rubble and a grey layer of dust. Walls are scarred with bullet holes and watery streaks of soot, and the gaping holes in the outer walls that once protected the family's space are legion (Wishah 2009, n.p.; see also Wolthers 2017, 11–12). There is a strong sense of ambiguity involved in scrutinizing these pictures: whilst the photographer's attention to details such as used towels, a colourful bedspread, a torn mattress and undamaged glass chandeliers in an otherwise ruined interior 'take us far into the remnants of quotidian life' (Butler 2013, 23), the aesthetic care with which he has depicted these vacated domestic scenes denaturalizes the homes and makes them disturbingly *unhomely*.

Fig. 30: Kent Klich, from *Gaza Photo Album*, 2009. Photograph by the artist of Mohammed Shuhada Ali Ahmed's destroyed home at Tuffah, Northern Gaza Strip. 25 x 17 cm. Courtesy: the artist.



The title *Gaza Photo Album* and the flower-patterned cover come from an actual photo album shown to Klich by an elderly man whom he met when he was visiting devastated homes to photograph them. By approximating the genre of the family photo album, Klich's photo book provides a subjective supplement to more official archives such as 'A Verification of Building-Destruction Resulting from Attacks by the Israeli Occupation' – the archive that the Hamas-run, Gaza-based Ministry of Public Works started after the Israeli bombardments in 2008–2009. Like the official archive, *Gaza Photo Album* can serve as a basis for a historical, political and sociocultural interrogation of the violence and displacement. The founding director of the research agency Forensic Architecture, Eyal Weizman, calls this archive the 'Book of Destruction' in the exhaustive analysis that he contributes to Klich's *Gaza Works*. As Weizman observes, the visible ruin plays a crucial role in the public display of domination and violence: 'it demonstrates the presence of colonial power even when the colonizer is nowhere to be seen' (Weizman 2017, 166; see also 168). His conclusion regarding the Israeli offensives against the densely populated residential areas in Gaza, resulting in a disproportionately high number of civilian deaths, is still alarmingly valid: 'The war on refugees is an ongoing form of violence that seeks not only to destroy refugee life and property but also to restructure "refugeeness" – a feature of Palestinian political identity' (Weizman 2017, 169).

But there is more to Klich's appropriation of the family photo album genre. War and occupation are implicit, but *Gaza Photo Album* stays focused on the destruction of the refugees' possibility of domestic worldmaking and thriving. In Butler's lucid formulation, the camera perpetuates the convention of the family album as if it were unable to recognize the loss: 'The camera continues to take those shots capturing life in the home as if the camera does not know that the family is gone [...] as if it were itself stunned or traumatized' (Butler 2013, 23). Thus, Klich's album does not convert into a story of family life but keeps, rather, mechanically repeating the same conventional frontal setup in newly demolished homes, expressing a subdued form of outrage and mourning. In Klich's colour photographs, the individual details of these dwellings stand out clearly, yet all the homes look the same: damaged, deserted. Hence, they harbour the paradox of family photographs: on the one hand, they represent something extremely personal and dear to the individual or family; on the other, they are so permeated by pictorial conventions that virtually anyone can project themselves into their ordinariness (Sandbye 2017, 197). The possible flash of identification – the sudden realization that this photo could have been of your home and the absent family could have been your own – brings us to the question of empathy already touched upon in Chapter 5. It is illuminating to address this question from the perspective of documentary photography, which has a long history of combining the provision of visual evidence and documentation with affective qualities that invite empathy (Wolthers 2017, 12).

In her seminal study *The Art of Coexistence: Unlearning the Way We See Migration*, Christine Ross subjects the fundamental ambivalence of empathy to a critical analysis that can help shed light on the ambiguity of *Gaza Photo Album*. Ross develops an accurate concept of empathy which acknowledges that empathy is key to the affective ways in which much art moves audiences. By the same token, she cautions her readers about its common pitfalls: ‘feeling the pain of others is not in and of itself prosocial’ (Ross 2022, 180), and ‘empathy can go wrong’ and distort intersubjective relations – for instance, when it is based on ‘the false consensus effect’, i.e. the tendency to assume that others will feel the same way the self does (Ross 2022, 167). In other words, empathy may involve bias and the vampirism of others’ emotions (Ross 2022, 178). Moreover, sometimes the emotional response that images elicit is not proper empathy but, rather, sympathy for people perceived as pitiful victims. Empathy is thus what Ross calls a *pharmakon*, a concept she uses throughout her book to capture the ambiguities, antagonisms and paradoxes of the impact artworks may have as both a poison and a remedy/cure. Ross suggests that in an age of migration and forced displacement, empathy is key to coexistence. She defines empathy as ‘a coexistence in which a being feels and understands the distress lived by another being but without living that distress (not “as if” experiencing that distress, however, as is the case with sympathy)’. Furthermore, she calls for ‘responsible empathy’ based on ‘prosociality’, that is, the capacity to notice the distress of others and to be moved by it – a critical component of what is called prosocial behaviour: the attempt, or desire, to help other individuals, groups or communities whose pain we feel and comprehend (Ross 2022, 157).

Ross argues that not all art on forced displacement invites responsible empathy (Ross 2022, 179), because this requires the affective response that the artwork stimulates to be ‘prosocially effective’. Engendering a prosocial form of empathy with and through art requires, argues Ross, ‘a certain level of perspective sharing’ as well as ‘a certain level of historical contextualization that is detailed enough to disclose the structures of inequality, injustice, and violence inherent to contemporary migration’ (Ross 2022, 178). Empathy is thus a tricky strategy, yet indispensable in art. Therefore, Ross concludes that:

[E]mpathy is a *necessary* but *ambivalent* and *insufficient* condition of possibility for prosociality and more reciprocal forms of coexistence. [...] This is how artistic practices addressing present-day migration explore empathy as an aesthetic strategy: they uphold its ambivalences without presuming to resolve them but struggling to have them or allowing them to unfold prosocially. (Ross 2022, 174; emphasis added).

This is precisely the aesthetic strategy deployed by Klich in *Gaza Photo Album*: the pictures of destroyed Palestinian homes uphold the ambivalence of familiarity and

defamiliarization in a way that allows the recipient's empathy to unfold prosocially. Correlated with the written accounts which outline the historical context of the IDF's Operation Cast Lead, Klich's photo album ensures that the historical contextualization is sufficient to disclose the mechanisms of occupation, violence and forced displacement, as is required for it to be prosocially effective.

## Imagining possible futures for Palestine

Although Kent Klich's documentary realism and Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind's science fiction-based aesthetics represent contrasting artistic idioms, these artists share a concern with home and homeland, loss and absence. Moreover, they have a predilection for visually oriented narrative genres, the photo book and science fiction, respectively, and they approach narrative in ways that are at one at the same time artistic, explorative and investigative. While Klich's *Gaza Photo Album* focuses on the absence felt in forcibly vacated domestic spaces, much of Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind's work focuses on haunting ghosts and haunted places. It reflects a general turn in Palestinian visual art towards the spectral as an animating rather than a nihilistic force, identified by the postcolonial studies scholar Anna Ball. Here, ghostly motifs become 'a means to celebrate the resilience of life-even-in-death, rather than to mourn a condition of death-in-life' (Ball, quoted in Muller 2024, 2).

In her PhD thesis on contemporary art in the Middle East, the curator Nat Muller, who is the foremost expert on Sansour and Lind's work, explains why Larissa Sansour, along with many other artists from the region, have turned to science fiction – or sci-fi – in the past two decades. This expansive and fluctuating genre often considers themes of space- and time travel, utopias and dystopias, sex and gender, encounters with aliens, alternate histories and parallel universes. The germinating industrial revolution, unfolding from the late 1700s over the next few centuries, infused this form of fiction with a deep fascination with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals that still characterizes this speculative genre. Sci-fi asks: 'What if?' It speculates on the possible outcome, allowing itself ample scope for moving beyond the present and the possible (Amos Rex 2024). The science fiction theorist Darko Suvin thus defines sci-fi as a genre of 'cognitive estrangement' in which an empirical novelty or 'novum' is introduced, often serving as a disruptor that produces the estrangement while simultaneously creating a fictional imaginary.<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to its worldbuilding and imaginary qualities, sci-fi, suggests Muller, is capable of articulating and proposing alternatives to a societal situation of 'social,

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1 Darko Suvin's foundational essay 'The State of the Art in Science Fiction Theory: Determining and Delimiting the Genre', *Science Fiction Studies* 6:1, 1979: 32–45, is quoted in Muller 2022, 4.

political and identitarian unrest, polarisation and estrangement' (Muller 2022, 3). She argues that the interest in sci-fi among artists in and from the Middle East was born from the proliferation of cataclysms that have befallen the region. These crises impelled artists to look for agential tools, enabling them to take stock of the past and present and to acknowledge darkness and loss while still sustaining the hope for change and looking at possible futures. In the tropes of sci-fi they find an instrument that enables them to explore 'the dynamic between loss and the creative and critical potential for speculative repair though this recent history'; a genre that allows for commemoration of loss while also operating as a recuperative device, albeit a flawed one that can nevertheless help envision possibility and futurity and instil a sense of hope into audiences (Muller 2022, 2, see also 1 and 7).

By quoting Susan Sontag's proposition that disaster, not science, is the driving heart of sci-fi, Nat Muller provides an explanation why sci-fi has become Sansour and Lind's preferred genre. One of the most traumatic and protracted disasters of the Middle East is the 1948 Nakba. The ongoing dispossession and displacement of indigenous Palestinians from their land renders the historical event an event without closure. This has made it difficult for Palestinians to think about futurity (Muller 2022, 8). As Muller notes, seen from the vantage point of the early 2020s, 'the longing for a viable Palestinian homeland might [...] seem more fantastical than a Palestinian lunar colony as seen in Larissa Sansour's *A Space Exodus*' (Muller 2022, 9).

In this short video work from 2008, the well-known music of Stanley Kubrick's 1968 sci-fi film *2001: A Space Odyssey* is transformed into an Arabic-style soundtrack matching Sansour's vision of an outer-space world where she is the astronaut on a journey searching for a territory on which to plant the Palestinian flag, suggesting, ambiguously, both a stateless people's desire for a homeland and colonial land grab. The film also reflects the feminist foundation of Sansour's work, where women are often cast in leading roles of power (Murney and Sansour 2023, 60). Re-enacting the first moon landing in 1969, the artist also reformulates Neil Armstrong's historic words: 'That's one small step for a Palestinian; one giant leap for mankind.'<sup>2</sup>

*A Space Exodus* asks the question about nationhood and self-determination as the first part of a science fiction trilogy that also includes *Nation Estate* (2012) and *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* (2016).<sup>3</sup> Tinged with a bleak sense of humour serving as a weapon to puncture the politics of representation in Palestine (Murney and Sansour 2023, 58), these works all explore different aspects of the political turmoil in the Middle East under the common themes of loss, belonging, heritage and national identity.

2 Larissa Sansour, *A Space Exodus* (2008), official selection on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggk78Wxy12M> (accessed March 31, 2025).

3 *Nation Estate* predates Sansour and Lind's formal collaboration, but Lind is listed in the credits as co-director and author of the manuscript.

Fig. 31: Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *Olive Tree (Nation Estate)*, 2012. C-print.  
 Courtesy: the artists.



In contrast to the surrealistically hopeful *A Space Exodus*, the single-channel video *Nation Estate* conjures up a Palestinian state squeezed into a single high-rise in the West Bank as if all land had been lost. Here, the internal focalizer is a Palestinian woman who enters the building with her unborn child to usher in a dystopian future. The audience follows her going up in the lift past floors with geographical destinations such as Jerusalem and Tulkarm until she exits at the Bethlehem floor – a vertical itinerary indicating that the ‘nation estate’ is also the nation partitioned and stacked. Its interior is embellished with national symbols such as plates decorated with the black and white *keffiyeh* pattern commonly associated with Palestinian solidarity and resistance. However, in this sleek, high-tech environment the symbols are barely more than nostalgic decoration, having lost their cultural and political moorings as well as their ability to support identity and nation building. Unlike its predecessor, *Nation Estate* does not envision a ‘solution’, and the glimpse of the alluring slogan ‘Nation Estate – Living the High Life’ is sarcastic, at best. Sansour, rather, uses sci-fi to exaggerate the facts on the ground under the Israeli occupation, as experienced by the artist herself in Bethlehem where she grew up. In a 2023 interview with the art historian Anastasia Murney, Sansour stressed how she often uses personal experience to address collective issues. ‘Her city’, Bethlehem, is completely surrounded by the Israeli security wall, and Israeli settlements move closer every year:

Bethlehem is becoming an open-air prison disjointed from other towns and cities. This is happening to so many areas in Palestine. It makes it hard to imagine a viable Palestinian state when you take into consideration the little land left for Palestinians. *Nation Estate* is a direct comment on that. [...] *Nation Estate* mocks an

actual solution to the Palestinian problem if things continue to develop the way they do at present. (Murney and Sansour 2023, 61–62)

That humour and narrative can be brought into play for critical ends is even more apparent in the single-channel film *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*, in which archaeology is weaponized in the battle for Palestinian self-determination (Murney and Sansour 2023, 58). Again, Sansour's hometown of Bethlehem is invoked, serving as the abstracted backdrop of a story about a resistance group that produces and hides deposits of exquisite *keffiyeh*-patterned porcelain in the hope that it will be discovered by future archaeologists. The work intervenes in Israel's ideological and territorial usage of biblical archaeology to construct origin myths and land rights exclusively for Jews in order to legitimate a Jewish 'return' to an ancestral homeland. *In the Future* reverses these claims (Muller 2024, 11). It suggests that historical narratives are based as much on discourse as on facts – for instance, when the protagonist, who calls herself 'a narrative terrorist', states that 'fiction has a constitutive effect on historicity and political reality' (Sansour and Lind 2016, 8:38 min.). Her mission is to rearrange the archaeological 'facts' used to support the dominant narrative, and she suggests that, if found, the porcelain artefacts would provide evidence of the existence of an ancient Palestinian people who 'ate from the finest porcelain' and thus rewrite the historical narrative of which people(s) can claim to be the original inhabitants, in support of any descendants' claim to the land. However, *In the Future* is not so much about demands for a nation-state as the restoration of historical presence by refuting systemic erasure (Muller 2022, 154).

In the opening scene of *In the Future*, darkness has descended upon a squadron of locust-shaped spaceships taking off from a post-apocalyptic landscape. Throughout the course of the video, Sansour and Lind populate the desolate landscape with archival images of, among others, Ottoman soldiers, British Mandate soldiers, Israeli soldiers, Palestinian Bedouins, Palestinians in traditional dress from the early 1900s, as well as members of the Palestinian middle class and Palestinian refugees. In doing so, they achieve two things: they establish a colonial timeline as well as visualizing and establishing Palestinian identity and habitation (Muller 2022, 155).

Sansour and Lind thus use a sci-fi narrative that incorporates historical documentation to introduce a different, speculative perspective on Palestine, insisting that past, present and future must be seen through one lens if one is to make sense of the deadlocked Israeli–Palestinian conflict and envision ways to move beyond it. In their work, sci-fi signals loss (of homeland, heritage, rights, citizenship, homes and lives), but as Muller has rightly pointed out, sci-fi is also used as a recuperative device, albeit an imperfect one: what has been lost is not what is recuperated, but sci-fi imaginaries nevertheless 'manage to create oxygen in settings where there is deemed to be none' (Muller 2022, 7).

Fig. 32: Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*, 2016. Single-channel video, 29 min. Installation view: Larissa Sansour, Amos Rex, 2024. Photo: Tuomas Uusheimo. Courtesy: Amos Rex and the artists.



Interestingly, *In the Future* was first developed as a performance work based on the plan to bury ‘artefacts for the future’ in multiple locations across Israel/Palestine (Murney and Sansour 2023, 63). The project *Archaeology in Absentia* (2016) builds on this initial idea while also expanding on the previous work. Combining sculpture, photographs and in-situ interventions, the project experiments with turning the video’s fictional narrative into real and tangible objects. The photographic part ‘documents’ keffiyeh-ornamented plates being buried across historical Palestine. This action was undertaken by Lind who, courtesy of his Danish passport, was permitted to travel without restrictions around Israel and the West Bank, unlike Sansour who, as a Palestinian, cannot travel freely in Israel and the West Bank area (Muller 2022, 159; 2024, 11). The sculptural part is an installation displaying fifteen bronze ‘crockery bombs’ fashioned after those dropped over the barren landscape by the returning spacecrafts in *In the Future*. On closer inspection, the bomb capsules resemble opened Fabergé eggs. Their porcelain cargo is missing, but engraved geographical coordinates on their inside suggest where each has been hidden, since the engraved longitudes and latitudes identify places ranging from Nazareth, Jericho, Ramallah and Jerusalem to Bethlehem and the Dead Sea. The plates thus become proxies for what Israeli law terms ‘present absentees’ – the internal refugees

(Muller 2022, 159). In the installation *Archaeology in Absentia* (2016), the claims for historical acknowledgement put forward in the film are not only articulated but also made ‘material’, with the fabricated artefacts masquerading as ‘solid proof’. *Archaeology in Absentia* is thus essentially about the power of storytelling to turn fiction into historical fact.

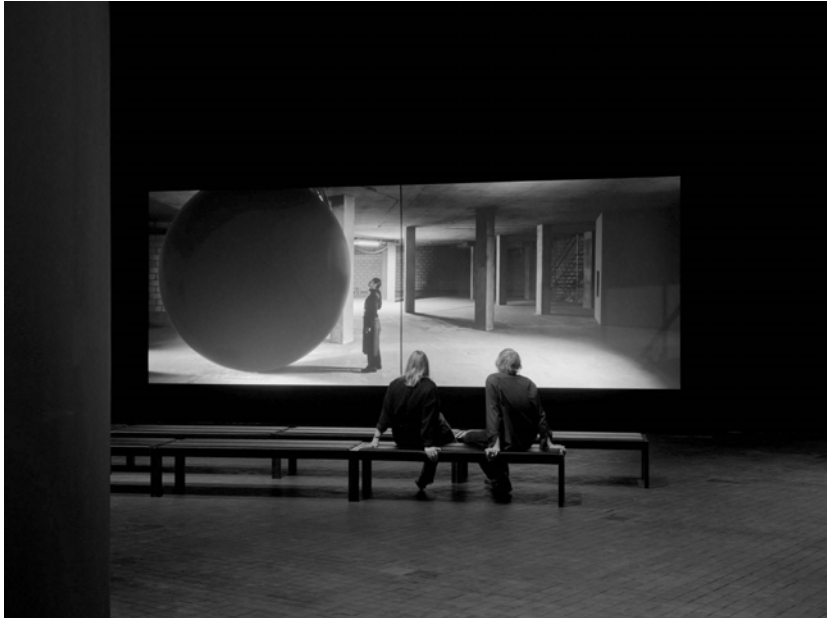
Fig. 33: Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *Archaeology in Absentia*, 2016. Fifteen bronze sculptures, 20 cm each. Installation view: Larissa Sansour, *Amos Rex*, 2024. Photo: Tuomas Uusheimo. Courtesy: Amos Rex and the artists.



Like *In the Future they Ate from the Finest Porcelain*, *In Vitro* (2019) explores Palestinian heritage, identity and psyche, but this black-and-white two-channel film adds to this thematic a concern with epigenetics, a discipline that studies the intergenerational transfer of trauma at a genetic level. *In Vitro* also links the ongoing disaster of the Nakba to the unfolding disaster of climate breakdown. It centres on the survivors of a climate disaster in an abandoned bunker below Bethlehem that has been converted into an enormous refuge and orchard where a group of scientists are preparing to restore life on earth from heirloom seeds collected before the disaster. *In Vitro* formed the centrepiece of Sansour and Lind’s exhibition in the Danish pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. While the Latin title *In Vitro* (‘in glass’) refers to scientific procedures in an artificial space and

to in vitro fertilization, the exhibition title *Heirloom* gestured towards the ambiguity of inherited material as burden (transfer of trauma) and potential (transfer of resilience and new life).

Fig. 34: Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *In Vitro*, 2019. Two-channel black and white HD film installation, 28 min. Installation view: Larissa Sansour, *Amos Rex*, 2024. Photo: Tuomas Uusheimo. Courtesy: Amos Rex and the artists.



*In Vitro*'s speculative narrative unfolds as an intense conversation between the ailing woman, Dunia – founder of the orchard and representative of a bygone age – and her young successor, Alia – a clone engineered from the DNA of townspeople who perished. Alia is likened to the daughter Dunia lost in the disaster that drove survivors underground, suggesting her role as a surrogate daughter and foregrounding the intergenerational disagreement between the older generations of forcibly displaced Palestinians and their descendants who do not share the older generation's dream of restoring the past but want to define their own future. One way of reading *In Vitro* is thus as a meditation on the intergenerational disagreement between the forcibly displaced generation wanting to 'return' both temporally and spatially to the lost land as they remember it, and their descendants who envision a different future. It is obviously shaped by history, but it will take the new generation in a different direction. For them, the present is not the limbo of 'waiting time'

before the desired 'return'; it is their 'lifetime'. As Alia says to Dunia, 'Our grief is different' (Sansour and Lind 2019, 15:40–16:00, see also 16:00–18:00; and Muller 2022, 82–83).

Alia was born and raised underground and has never seen the city and homeland she is expected to replant and repopulate. However, she remembers it thanks to the artificial or prosthetic memories she has 'inherited' from the persons she replaces, along with the dream of restoring the past, which Alia is now rejecting. Hence, *In Vitro* does not represent time as linear. Different layers of time coexist under the condition of cumulative disasters where the chronology of the respective cataclysms have become blurred (Muller 2022, 80). Much of *In Vitro*'s storytelling is communicated through the dialogue between Dunia and Alia that loops back and forth between past and future, sometimes changing direction without warning. And this dialogue is itself set in the present tense of an imagined future dystopia, an unsettled presence without a foreseeable future.

Fig. 35: Kent Klich, from the photo book *GZA On Land and Air*, 2024. 38 x 25 cm. Courtesy: the artist. *GAZA International Airport*, GZA, 2016–2017.



This temporal disorientation presents an obstacle to viewers seeking to identify the series of logically and chronologically related events which would normally constitute the *fabula* of a conventional narrative; however, it also foregrounds the temporal disjuncture in the lives of Alia and Dunia that locks them in different experiences of time. As Muller observes, 'for Dunia this life is *in vitro*, outside her

natural habitat; while for Alia this is life *in vivo* (Latin for ‘within the living’) – this is her natural habitat’ (Muller 2022, 86). The temporal structure and texture of *In Vitro*’s narrative is thus heterogeneous, i.e. it is characterized by what Mieke Bal calls multitemporality and heterochrony (Bal 2021, 100–101). As Bal notes, film and video are ‘technically able to make multi-temporality visible and the experience of heterochrony tangible’ (Bal 2021, 117). *In Vitro* exploits this potential to the fullest.

The film’s disjointed multitemporality amplifies its gloomy perspective on a forced displacement that is political and historical but also ecological since the boundary between human and natural disaster has been undone and survivors have been forced to take refuge in the brutalist bunker’s underworld. Yet the clone Alia articulates the idea of, and the hope for, a new beginning and a forward-looking stance.

In Kent Klich’s most recent photo book on Gaza, *GZA On Land and Air*, conceptualized and published together with Tina Enghoff and the Gazan writer and human rights advocate Muhammad Shehada in 2024 as a response to the extensive attacks on Gaza, the photographer seems to have chosen a similar strategy of complicating linear historical time to inspire hope in the midst of cyclical destruction and displacement. The bulk of the material in the book is archival material depicting and describing the glory days from November 1998 till October 2000 when the Gaza International Airport, GZA, was in operation, and Palestine had launched its own national airline – a key component of modern nation-building. At that time, the airport was seen as a symbol of hope for an independent state of Palestine, and future plans for Palestinian Airlines included services to Frankfurt, London, Rome and Paris (Klich et al. 2024, n.p.). The airport was shut down and then destroyed by Israel in 2001–2002. Some of Klich’s own photographs taken on a visit to the ruins of GZA in 2016–2017 are also included. At the time, the airport attracted visitors and school classes from all over Gaza, who came to this former gateway to/from Gaza to get ‘a glimpse of what could have been and what is desperately needed to plug some life back into Gaza’, as Shehada explains in the essay ‘Gaza Past, Present and Future’, completed in January 2024. His essay is ‘prefaced’ by an inserted document, a reprint of a 2005 plan for the reconstruction of the airport by the Palestinian Ministry of Transportation. This historical source provides an antidote to the fresh testimonies that have been inserted into the book’s historical documentation of GZA, reactivating it: these testimonies are ‘tweets’ from the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), written by Hind Khoudary, a Palestinian journalist based in the Gaza Strip and using X to report on the first four months of Israel’s attack. Like Shehada’s essay, Khoudary’s tweets are printed in both Arabic and English. Two early tweets read:

Day 7: On Friday, those who could packed as many people as possible into cars bringing with them little more than the clothes they wore and drove out of Gaza

City. A steady midday stream of vehicles along the costal road, leading south from Gaza City, became an afternoon traffic jam.

Day 10: I wished I had had the time to grab my favorite blanket from home, and say one last goodbye to my family house, in case it gets bombed before I can return.

In the first tweet, note how the description of mass displacement is likened to the mundane non-event of a traffic jam, signalling that this is not an uncommon occurrence in Gaza, the territory of refugees. In the second tweet, observe not only Khoudary's mournful regret, but also her hope of returning.

The historical documentation of GZA's construction, destruction and potential reconstruction tells a different story about mobility and enforced *immobility*. Yet, it also conveys a sense of hope by suggesting that it is possible to learn from history to build a different kind of future in which Palestinians are granted 'normal, free, and dignified lives, whether in an independent sovereign state of their own, in one bi-national state or in a confederation' (Shehada 2024, n.p.).

Importantly, *GZA On Land and Air*'s activist or rather 'artist' way of harnessing history, along with older artworks, exemplifies how Klich's photographic works, as well as Sansour and Lind's sci-fi works, are reactivated every time the Israeli–Palestinian conflict flares up, testifying to their extraordinary aesthetic, affective and political power. Sansour's reflections in a 2024 interview on how the present bears on their older works also applies to Klich's work:

What we are witnessing now is unbearable, not only in terms of innocent lives lost, but also in terms of the ethical corruption of humanity. Looking at previous works now, I see them in a completely new light, with an added immediacy, certain dialogue fragments written in an equal air of mourning and premonition, which in itself only confirms the cyclicity of the atrocities and injustices committed in Palestine. (Sansour in Tuomi 2024, n.p.)