LUND UNIVERSITY

Futuristic Heritage

# Palestinian Craftculture in the Context of Settler Colonialism

Iman Sharabati

| Master of Applied Cultural Analysis | Supervisor |
| --- | --- |
| Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences | Philip Dodds |
| TKAM02 - Spring 2022 | |

## Abstract

Futuristic Heritage: Palestinian Craftculture in the Context of Settler Colonialism

Iman Sharabati

Through the study of the creative practices of young artisans in Palestine, this thesis addresses the symbolic and lived time experiences in the context of settler colonialism. It is based on interviews with seven craftspeople from Ramallah and Jerusalem who practice artistic forms of reproducing and rethinking heritage. It investigates how and why they do what they do on a daily basis, with a focus on their treatment of space, materials, and particularly time, as well as the narratives they share through their works. These artisans' daily practices, creative art forms, and cultural productions are framed and analyzed here as a kind of slow activism and visual resistance to the settler-colonial regime which locates independence and decolonization as futuristic endeavors in their world-making projects. As a result, this study contributes to time studies by providing contextualized knowledge on aesthetic slow activism.

I propose that, while heritage practices are often associated with the past, they can also be used to tell futuristic stories. The heritage practices and craftworks featured in this thesis hosted numerous time experiences, including the past, present, and future. As actors in the Palestinian heritage movement, young artisans introduced new practices and narratives that challenged traditional production structures such as family, gender, and location, and they were also self-sufficient in terms of governmental and non-governmental support. More importantly, the way they reworked traditional crafts was delicate and respectful, yet it allowed for the emergence of a new visual vocabulary in which previous heritage narratives were challenged, and multiple signposts of time interacted inside the same craftwork.

Keywords: artisans; slow activism; *Sumud*; counter-futurism; Palestine; settler colonialism; crafts; heritage; embroidery; decolonisation; sustainable materialism.

## Abstract in Arabic

ملخص الأطروحة

الموروث كفضاء لإنتاج مرويات مستقبلية: حقل الحرف في فلسطين في سياق الاستعمار الاستيطاني الكولونيالي

إيمان شرباتي

تتناول هذه الأطروحة تجارب الزمن الرمزية والمعيشية في سياق الاستعمار الاستيطاني عبر دراسة الممارسات الإبداعية للحرفيات والحرفيين الشباب في فلسطين. وتستند الدراسة إلى مقابلات مع سبعة حرفيات/ين من رام الله والقدس يمارسون أشكالاً فنية منوعة من إعادة إنتاج التراث والتفكير فيه، وذلك بهدف فهم وتحليل ممارساتهم اليومية ودوافعها القيمية والجمالية مع التركيز على علاقاتهم بالفضاءات والمواد والوقت، بالإضافة إلى تحليل الرسائل التي تحملها أعمالهم.

تؤطر الدراسة الممارسات اليومية لهؤلاء الحرفيات/ين وأشكال الفن الإبداعي والإنتاج الثقافي التي ينتجونها كنوع من أنواع الناشطية البطيئة والمقاومة البصرية للنظام الاستعماري الاستيطاني التي تنتج عوالمها عبر النظر إلى المستقبل كفضاء لتحقيق الاستقلال وإنهاء الاستعمار. وبذلك تعتبر هذه الدراسة مساهمة في دراسات الوقت عبر توفيرها معرفة سياقية حول تطبيقات وأنماط الناشطية الجمالية البطيئة.

تقترح الدراسة أيضاً أنّ الممارسات التراثية والتي يتم النظر إليها عادةً بارتباطها بالماضي، إلا إنها أيضاً تشكّل مساحةً لاستقبال سرديات مستقبلية. وقد تناولت الممارسات التراثية والأعمال اليدوية الواردة في هذه الأطروحة تجارب زمنية عديدة، منها في الزمن الماضي والحاضر والمستقبل. من جانب آخر، كفاعلين في حركة التراث الفلسطيني قدّم الحرفيات/ون الشباب ممارسات وروايات جديدة تتحدى أنظمة الإنتاج التقليدية مثل الأسرة والجنس والموقع ، كما أنهم متحررون بمشاريعهم من الحاجة إلى الدعم الحكومي وغير الحكومي. والأهم من ذلك، أنّ الطريقة التي أعادوا بها صياغة الحرف التقليدية اتسمت بتقدير الموروث القديم واحترامه، لكنّها سمحت بظهور مفردات بصرية جديدة تتفاعل فيها الإشارات المتعددة للزمن ضمن نفس المساحة المادّية للعمل الحرفي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حرفيون/ات، الناشطية البطيئة، الصمود، قراءات مستقبلية بديلة، فلسطين، الاحتلال الكولونيالي الاستيطاني، الحرف اليدوية، التطريز، الموروث، مناهضة الاستعمار، المادّية المستدامة

## Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank my friends and family for supporting me in the journey of thinking of and writing this thesis. I also appreciate all the support and encouragement I received from my supervisor Philip Dodds. The rich discussions we had and the feedback I received from him were essential in this research project.

I am also grateful to artisans who generously opened their spaces to meet me and to share their stories, my colleagues who read the thesis manuscript and provided feedback, and my friends with whom I had discussions on this topic before and during the writing process.

I am grateful for my late father's memory which was warmly present in my mind while I wrote sections related to Jerusalem. His favorite place, his souvenir shop in the old city was in mind. Maybe this is why I had a curiosity about craft culture from the first place.

Basel El Araj taught me and the people of my generation that long struggles against settler colonialism should not make us forget why we do resist it. It is a long struggle, and the answers might fade away at moments of tiredness, but faith in justice and freedom will never disappear.

Last but not least, to those with whom I shared long walks in Lund, my best friends, and colleagues who know themselves, thank you for your time and kindness.

## Table of Contents

Abstract ........ 2

Abstract in Arabic ........ 3

Acknowledgments: ........ 4

1. Introduction ........ 7

1.1 Introduction and Overview ........ 7

1.2 Introducing Settler Colonialism ........ 8

1.2 Background on Heritage and the Palestinian Visual Art Scene ........ 10

2. Previous Studies ........ 12

2.1. Introducing Heritage ........ 12

2.2. Futurizing Palestine ........ 13

2.3 The Contemporary Heritage Movement ........ 14

3. Theoretical Frameworks ........ 17

3.1. Introducing *Sumud* ........ 17

3.2. Dissensus, Presence and Landscape Repopulation ........ 19

3.3. Theorizing Time in Heritage Practices ........ 20

4. Methodology and Empirical Material ........ 22

4.1 Issuefication as An Open Process ........ 23

4.2 Participants and Methods ........ 24

4.3 The Researcher Self: Researcher-Semi Friend-Stranger ........ 26

4.4 Ethical Considerations ........ 28

4.5 Introducing the Artisans ........ 30

4.5.1 Lara Salous ........ 30

4.5.2 Alef Studio ........ 31

4.5.3 Chamber of Art ........ 32

4.5.4 Darza Studio ........ 33
4.5.5 Shireen Salman Designs ........ 34
4.5.6 Fawasil 48 ........ 34
4.5.7 Rand Dabboor Gallery ........ 35
5. Analysis and Discussion ........ 36
5.1 Slowness as a Time Experience ........ 36
5.2 Sensitivity to the Familiar ........ 43
5.3 Artisans’ Values Framework ........ 49
5.4 Analysis of Artisans Craftworks ........ 54
5.4.1 Tradition Reworked ........ 55
5.4.2 Futuristic Elements ........ 59
6. Conclusion ........ 63
6.1 Main Findings and Reflections ........ 63
6.2 Applicability and Indications of Further Research Needs ........ 66
7. References List ........ 70
8. List of Figures: ........ 76

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction and Overview

When I think of creative crafts, I recall an old memory of me walking and exploring a cultural fair in Ramallah on a summer night, inquiring about an upcoming concert while completely ignoring the women selling traditional accessories behind their booths. Their presence was in the background of that scene, their works felt like a frozen image of the usual dull objects that I was used to seeing at such events year after year. I was at Souq Al-harja in Ramallah only recently when that image changed; my eyes were opened with surprise and excitement when I saw new faces of artisans, women, and men, with their colorful unexpected works, proposing a new visual representation and language of craftworks.

Based on this initial observation, this thesis will study the practices of young artisans in Palestine. My emphasis will be on those who articulate and portray linkages between the past, present, and future. Therefore, the notion of time and its multiple manifestations will permeate this text. Time as lived and imagined. The focus will be on 'craftculture', inspired by the concept of fabriculture coined by Bratich and Brush (2011), which broadens the definition of craftwork to include processes of meaning formation, communication, and links with (im)material labor.

During my fieldwork, I noticed that artisans had critical views on conventional attitudes of approaching the past as a static period of time. Their work might be viewed as an attempt to bring back what they believe to be valuable from the past; they do this in a culture that is affected by colonial time and space experiences. Yet, they experiment with new ways of generating meanings and imagining futures, as well as proposing objects that are relevant to today's life, such as urban-friendly designs. In order to better comprehend their craftculture, this thesis will aim to address two main questions:

-How do artisans experience time, space, and materials?

- What stories and messages are conveyed through their handicrafts?

In the broader sense, this thesis aims at situating the practices and works of emerging Palestinian artisans within the framework of visual resistance to the settler-colonial regime. Therefore, the next section will provide an introduction to settler colonialism and its history in Palestine.

The text in this thesis is ordered to provide broader contextual knowledge on creative heritage as portrayed in the previous studies in the second chapter, which will be followed by a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework used for approaching the research questions in the third chapter. The fourth chapter introduces the methodology of the research and includes a section introducing the artisans and their projects. The analytical chapter is composed of four sections covering an analysis of artisans' practices, with emphasis on their time experiences and attunement to material, their values framework, and an analysis of their craftwork and the visual language they use in reworking the tradition and suggesting futuristic narrative. The final chapter is the conclusion in which main findings, reflections, and ideas for future research are discussed.

## 1.2 **Introducing Settler Colonialism**

Settler colonialism is a specific type of colonialism that is defined and explained as:

> An ongoing system of power that perpetuates the genocide and repression of indigenous peoples and cultures. Essentially hegemonic in scope, settler colonialism normalizes the continuous settler occupation, exploiting lands and resources to which indigenous peoples have genealogical relationships. Settler colonialism includes interlocking forms of oppression, including racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism. This is because settler colonizers are Eurocentric and assume that European values with respect to ethnic, and therefore moral, superiority are inevitable and natural. (Oxford bibliographies, 2017).

The Israeli settler colonial regime was forcibly established in Palestine in 1948 through a process of ethnic cleansing. In his book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Elan Pappe (2007) explains historical accounts of the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 where over 400 Palestinian villages were deliberately destroyed, civilians were massacred and around a million men, women, and children were expelled from their homes and lands. Furthermore, Pappe explains how this project is similar to other histories: "The fact that the expellers were newcomers to the country, and part of a colonization project, relates the case of Palestine to the colonialist history of ethnic cleansing in North and South America, Africa and Australia, where white settlers routinely committed such crimes" (Pappe 2007: 7).

This historical event is known as *Nakba*; the catastrophe in the Palestinian terminology, which is perceived as a national shared point of departure according to Abu Hatoum (2021). She explains that moment as a continuous event in which "the claim of the continuity of the Nakba is corroborated by the continuous violence of the Israeli settler-colonial regime in Palestine". (Abu Hatoum 2021: 398).

In 1993 The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed the Oslo peace records with the Israeli side, which resulted in forming what is known today as the Palestinian Authority (PA) which according to Salih and Richter-Devroe (2014) has "sponsored 'resistance culture' on the one hand, and 'normalized' the very occupying power that was being resisted, on the other. This new scenario had broad implications for Palestinian cultures of resistance, their forms, and the politics they conveyed" (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014: 9). Signing this agreement was unsuccessful and resulted in the second intifada (i.e., a series of popular uprisings) in 2000 as El Shakry (2021) clarifies. Nevertheless, and apart from the Israeli colonial expansionist practices, which were enforced by signing this agreement, El Shakry explains that one of the main impacts of this agreement was "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" (El Shakry 2021: 671) which means that the PA's neoliberal state project is adding more limitations to decolonial practices.

The Nakba and consequent political events resulted in a situated form of waiting. According to Jamal (2016), the endless waiting has two significant effects on the Palestinian reality. The first one is what Jamal refers to as a sense of crisis which represents an acceptance of the existential state caused by loss. The second one is "the materialization of a common Palestinian awareness despite — or perhaps because of — differences in locality. Palestinians' connections to new locations since the Nakba have been sidelined and replaced by the experience of displacement, loss, refugee status, and the forced, deformed connectedness to Palestine as major sources of consciousness" (Jamal 2016: 372). As a result, the transformation of the homeland into a spiritual goal happens, Jamal suggests, through a process of 'purification' that aims at protecting time from the space of contemporaneity by using a common myth as a time expanding mechanism. As a result, prolonged waiting and 'expectations' become what Jamal refers to as a universal Palestinian characteristic (Jamal 2016). I would argue that dynamics in which these two effects are enacted

are fluid and entangled. Experiences of loss and hope, separation and unity, acceptance and refusal, live together and are manifested in multiple forms in daily life.

This political context has a very explicit impact on cultural practitioners as much as it affects the general lives of all Palestinians. Multiple examples of this impact will be introduced within the stories of artisans in the analytical chapter.

### 1.2 **Background on Heritage and the Palestinian Visual Art Scene**

This section provides a selective historical background on the modern crafts and visual art fields in Palestine. An early anthropological study on craft industries was conducted by a British artist and craftsman who lived in Palestine and Egypt before and during the war of 1948. The study demonstrates how these industries were organically informed by the regional crafts scene. For instance, skilled Syrian weavers' instructors used to teach craftsmen in Majdal, Jaffa, and in a Syrian factory in Bireh near Jerusalem. At the same time, it shows how Gaza used to be the center of the rug industry where at that time "a new factory for cloth weaving has been started there by a young man trained in Egypt and in the London Central School" (Stewart 1944: 266). The study presents the 'modernization' of crafts during the British mandate of Palestine where other crafts such as pottery, embroidery, metal, and leatherwork witnessed an expansion and a significant knowledge and skills exchange with regional and international experts. On the other hand, the author acknowledged the impact of the war on this developing field: "a factory working under high pressure in wartime is not a place for technological training. Such training can only properly be carried on in the research atmosphere of a technical school" (Stewart 1944: 270). According to Bshara (2020), this 'modernization' caused the loss of much of the traditional know-how, as traditional techniques were abandoned in favor of imported technologies and materials. Later on, when the Nakba took place, both building crafts and everyday crafts were severely harmed.

The visual art scene had a different historical track since the art industry is less reliant on technologies and equipment than the craft industry. As Palestinian artists were scattered in different countries after the Nakba, their art remained. The Palestinian Plastic Artists Network/Association-*Rabeta* was founded in 1972 as part of the national liberation movement with three main aspirational goals: to establish a national identity and culture, to form a national arts movement within the occupied land, and to create a visual language; a symbolic and iconic

vocabulary (Alhoash Gallery, 2021). Although the *Rabeta* is no longer active, the cultural scene's participation in the liberation movement, whether through the arts, literature, cinema, or other means, has always been seen as an important element of the nation's memory. Moreover, modern art pioneers recall in different occasions how the first intifada in the late 1980s was a turning point in the evolution of Palestinian art. Four prominent artists at that time formed the ‘New Vision’ movement which proposed “a margin for more individualized outlets and experimentation” (The Arab Weekly, 2019). In his book *Emerging to the Light*, Anani (2019) tells the story of how his generation used the heritage material in their artworks in a way that did not lock and limit the material to the symbols of survival but instead sought to reshape and generate new meanings.

National heritage has always been present in the history of Palestinian art. Shomali (Alhoash Gallery, 2021) argues that artists’ catalogs in the 1980s showed how artists did pay attention to the problematic aspects connected to approaching heritage and national identity, such as extreme locality and being captured and locked in the past. Former exhibition catalogs, according to Shomali, show signs of dichotomies of locality versus universalism, and originality versus fundamentalism. A critical reflexivity towards heritage has been a continuous trait of artistic practices while contemporary crafts practices in this thesis are also in constant dialogue with heritage.

More attention was given to heritage, in the last two decades, after the Oslo agreement, according to Bshara (2020), with participation of official and non-official actors, which he explains as part of the nation-building process. This thesis will focus more on the characteristics of the recent heritage movement.

## 2. Previous Studies

This chapter will critically present and discuss the distinguished work of De Cesari (2010) in the field of creative heritage practices in Palestine. Her study "Creative Heritage: Palestinian Heritage NGOs and Defiant Arts of Government" will constitute the base for addressing relevant terms and concepts used in this thesis and will function as a reference point for discussing other relevant literature.

### 2.1. **Introducing Heritage**

In her 2010 study, De Cesari analyzes non-state governmentality within Palestinian heritage practices. She refers to this heritage as an 'ambiguous terrain' (De Cesari 2010: 621) where artists' radical activities collide with traditional heritage practices. This chapter will focus on the ambiguity that permits the areas of heritage and creativity to coexist. Furthermore, I will compare De Cesari's proposition of the 'world-making' project generated by modern Palestinian heritage practices with other cultural studies which have dealt with imaginaries of possible/impossible futures to come.

In order to understand what tradition is, Noyes (2010) suggests that the process of creating the tradition can be thought of as 'slow open resource' borrowing the software development concept in which multiple participants get involved in a generative process of production. Unlike most technological innovations, "[tradition] is less specialized in function and precise in execution" (Noyes 2010: 2), since it entails recycling and repurposing and ease of transmission. According to Noyes, the difference between the two processes lies in the 'scarcity' and 'greater constraint' that shape the work of tradition compared to contemporary capitalist inventions. Noyes (2010) explains that to negotiate the terms and conditions of modernity, folklore and tradition practitioners make strategic use of older environments while they adapt to new ones.

At the level of heritage policies, Gradén and O'Dell argue that heritage is practiced in the Nordic context to "perform values, articulate priorities, and ensure soft power" (Gradén & O'Dell 2018: 3). The study shows that the global understanding of heritage has expanded to include tangible and intangible objects that are "Imbued with a message from the past" and performed by assemblages of people, objects, networks, and interests (Gradén & O'Dell 2018: 4). In the Palestinian context, De Cesari argues that the nation's past is not performed by museums or by the state (PA); rather,

it is controlled by the NGO sector supported by international funding (De Cesari 2010: 630). She draws a direct connection between creative acts of restoring the past and the resistance project (De Cesari 2010: 627). De Cesari's focus on the agency of non-state infrastructures for producing creative heritage oversees the wider spectrum of active actors such as individuals, collectives, and grassroots organizations. An example of such research attention can be found in the work of Meleney (2021) where she portrays the artistic practices of Yara Bamiah as both "food/agro-activism and cultural heritage preservation" (Meleney 2021: 208).

## 2.2**. Futurizing Palestine**

Inspired by De Cesari's (2010) main argument of how heritage works as a 'world-making' project, this section will discuss different propositions of futurizing Palestine in cultural and heritage studies. In her study, De Cesari (2010) examines a heritage-informed art intervention as a 'world-making' project performed by a non-governmental actor (*Riwaq*; Center for Architectural Conservation), aiming at introducing alternative ways of governance in absence of state structures (De Cesari 2010: 627). The ultimate endeavor for De Cesari's world-making project is the future Palestinian nation-state.

Theoretically, this 'world-making' project – a kind of 'imaginary' – has limitations. Willim (2017) criticizes the homogenizing dimension of such imaginaries: "when culture has become less used as a fruitful analytical concept, imaginaries have been said to replace the word as something holding societies, communities, and groups of people together" (Willim 2017: 51). He also addresses the urge to approach imaginaries as both purposeful and paired with positivity (Willim 2017: 56).

Abu Hatoum (2021) explores the struggle for liberation as a future-oriented endeavor in contrast with what she describes as "hegemonic narrative of a futurity that singles out the path to statehood as the ultimate future for Palestine" (Abu Hatoum 2021: 397). Salih and Richter-Devroe (2014) argue that such state-centered paradigms rely heavily on political economy approaches. They suggest that these paradigms are usually based on views that "either understand power and resistance through an economistic, class-based angle, or one where the state and its bureaucratic institutions are the main enforcers of power" (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014: 15). Despite De Cesari's critical approach to the concept of the state, the heritage movement's objectives are shown

as progressing toward a certain future endeavor in her study, which is the state project. Time works differently in Abu Hatoum's (2021) article. The research looks into four ethnographic scenes: two conversations with two artists, one play, and one letter. According to her, the concept of future is more embedded in the present and everyday life in these four scenes than it is in "an imagined collective national maseer – or destiny, generated by a collective national telos" (Abu Hatoum 2021: 399). She proposes a cyclical motion of time in which the past is repurposed as a compass that directs the way into imagined futures. This time movement tries to break through the linear movement in which the concrete goal of a nation-state defines how the past, present, and future work together in the collective memory.

In her study "Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible", El Shakry (2021) explores 'world making' attempts in the most recent cultural productions in the fields of art, literature, and cinema. El Shakry explains how these works are fundamentally reliant on the past and future moments "in order to render legible the unviability of the present" (El Shakry 2021: 669). Her argument is based on both the concept of *Sumud*; social resilience in post Oslo cultural productions and the discussions of counter-futurism in Afrofuturism studies which refer to the processes of re-examination of narratives on historical fiction, while eliminating the effect of cultural nostalgia.

Both El-Shakry (2021) and Abu Hatoum (2021) investigate future narratives in cultural productions using a discourse analysis methodology. In this thesis, however, the focus will be on understanding the practices and discursive narratives of individual practitioners in order to gain insight into what I believe to be new experiences in creating creative forms of heritage. This is a process which is bound by the concept of time and its multiplied representations.

### 2.3 **The Contemporary Heritage Movement**

De Cesari (2010) argues for an emergence of a new Palestinian heritage that can work as both political and cultural movement. I will discuss here the three main features she suggests of this movement. The first feature is this heritage movement's entanglement with cultural and artistic productions. In her essay she shows how the tangible act of restoring old buildings is combined with efforts of activating these spaces through cultural and artistic events organized by local and international artists. In my opinion, this space utilization is tied to both the NGO's network and project's timeframes. The temporality of these projects leaves some of the restored buildings

empty after the assigned activities are implemented, which raises the question again regarding the degree to which this entanglement is accomplished outside the framework of NGOs' work plans.

Twelve years after De Cesari's historization of this movement, artistic and heritage practices were affected by a series of local and regional events such as the Arab revolutions, and the continuous offenses of the Israeli occupation faced by different forms of resistance. This means that the movement is currently functioning in a new/different context. Salih and Richter-Devroe (2014) argue that new Arab aesthetics opened the door to new subjectivities, identities, and imaginaries. Their article highlights the capacity of everyday forms of artistic expressions in challenging "resistance and classic nationalist art" that functions as cultural hegemonic meta frames (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014: 20). I would say that this subjectivity has encouraged new critical readings of the work of institutions and other forms of production's infrastructures, and stimulated individual and collective forms of artistic and heritage practices that are not necessarily tied to traditional structures. At the same time, it should not cancel artistic and heritage projects that function in between these areas.

In fact, time has also changed the main players and agents in heritage practices. According to De Cesari, heritage practitioners are a globalized elite: "highly educated, middle-class individuals working in the NGO sector, endowed with well- paid jobs and worldwide connections. Palestinian heritage is part of this transnational infrastructure. Projects are funded by international donors, mainly from Europe and the Gulf" (De Cesari 2010: 632). I argue that heritage infrastructure is broader in terms of practitioners and narratives; it used to and still does include individual and collective storytellers, artisans, researchers, food artists, and other producers of different sorts who are not necessarily reliant on NGOs for their survival. The NGO sector professionals may fit into the globalized elite category more than other heritage practitioners.

The second feature of heritage practices in Palestine according to De Cesari (2010) is how this process blends the local and transnational "into a poetic and scientific practice that is both nationalist and cosmopolitan" (De Cesari 2010: 627). To problematize this poetic blend, I would bring out the question of power structures that frames what subjectivities are accepted to emerge in the global trajectory (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014: 14). It is important to consider how these artistic expressions were designed from the first place to be hosted and well-received in the global context, by internationals visiting Palestine or by international biennales that hosted *Riwaq*'s work.

At the ‘local’ level, the limitations on movement in Palestine force organizations and individuals to perform a certain degree of selectivity in choosing who gets to do what, which reduces any chances of real ‘national’-scale participation in any project. Palestinian refugees and Arabs are historically excluded since they are not allowed to enter Palestine, and those living inside the historical borders are forcibly scattered by imposed means of separation. There is an ideological background behind the decision to name projects that only bind locals inside Palestine and international artists as ‘national’, which is further connected to De Cesari’s view of such projects as a form of government and not a broader project of liberation.

The third feature of the new Palestinian heritage movement according to De Cesari is that it “go[es] against the view that heritage is fundamentally ‘conservative’ in its preservation of the status quo” (De Cesari 2010: 627). De Cesari argues that preserving the past in Palestine is more of an activist effort of resisting the occupation and achieving political and social freedom. In her discussion of this idea, De Cesari brings a number of explanatory arguments and evidence on this type of activism which will be further discussed in the theoretical framework section. I would add here that if De Cesari’s (2010) article had included other practitioners from outside the NGO sector, a broader spectrum of resistant and active forms of political engagement may have been captured in her analysis.

## 3. Theoretical Frameworks

The overarching concept in this thesis will be the foundational concept of *Sumud,* in this section, which I claim had undergone a *Mundanisation* process (Willim 2017) in Palestinian culture. *Sumud*, entails a practical definition of embedded forms of long-term decolonization activism which can explain multiple experiences. The concept also provides a window to a contextual analysis of the craftculture. Considerations of *time* are also highly relevant for understanding both practices and meanings behind the craftworks. Therefore, I will explore concepts of *slowness* (Kapchan 2016) and attentive acts of *noticing* (Tsing 2010) to conceptualize artisans' pattern-based practices, while the contextual view on time will be explained through the *ontology of waiting* (El Shakry 2021) and *counter-futurisms* (Parikka 2018).

### 3.1. Introducing *Sumud*

Before exploring how the concept of *Sumud* has been applied in cultural and social studies, it is appropriate to introduce El Shakry's (2021) definition of the term:

> [*Sumud*] is a richly polyvalent term in the Palestinian collective consciousness. Generally understood as a mode of non-violent protest or resistance, *sumud* often carries the connotation of everyday survival, endurance, and resilience. 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. (El Shakry 2021: 672)

Cited in several recent cultural and social studies by El Shakry (2021), Abu Hatoum (2019), Alkhalili (2017), Saleh (2016), and Meari (2014), the concept of *Sumud* provides a site-based explanation of daily acts of facing settler-colonial practices. In her doctoral dissertation Alkhalili (2017) tracks the historical and geographical changes that have affected the ways in which *Sumud* has been perceived and enacted, through a wide range of strategies ranging between resistance and survival. Alkhalili touches on the broader societal applications of the term which had previously been used to frame confrontation strategies of Palestinian prisoners inside Israeli prisons (see for example Saleh 2016, and Meari 2014). Meari works with *Sumud* as a self "de-subjectivation" mechanism performed by political prisoners. This analysis touches the core meaning of the fluid

term. It is a way of relating self-emotions and actions to a wider collective sense of reason. According to Meari (2014), *Sumud* entails a continuous process of making and re-making the self, and it is a generative process of undoing the colonial fear.

As lived rather than discussed collectively, ways in which the term functions are not very clear. People are *Samedoun* but they do not necessarily discuss how they do it in daily life. This ignored un-graspability is what Willim (2017) refers to as Mundanisation in which the unspoken agreement on the term is strong enough but does not necessarily guarantee a clear definition of it. On the other hand, the term's opposite connotation refers directly to unacceptable social behavior. In linguistic terms, saying that a person is not *Samed* means they are traitors or less committed to the 'national cause'. The positive side of the term is open to interpretation while its opposite meaning is closed and well defined.

El Shakry (2021) addresses *Sumud* as a complex form of agency. She shows how the artworks she analyzes in her study exceed the representation of the characters' daily lives. She describes mechanisms through which main characters in these artworks interact with the core of their existence through "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 *sumud*" (El Shakry 2021: 672). This muted affect in futuristic artforms goes hand in hand with Abu Hatoum's account of the Palestinians' approach towards the daily through a "cautious and uneventful imagination (and relation) with the future" (Abu Hatoum 2021: 399). In both articles, complexity is added to *Sumud* as an act that goes beyond the patience-waiting state of being, into a silent but a strong form of agency.

The society of Palestinian anthropologists, *Insaniyyat*, organised a panel to discuss the limits and possibilities of *Sumud* in 2018. One of the main arguments discussed was around ways in which this term might be contributing to silencing critical readings of resistance and/or 'being'. The implication was that it might be imposing a romanticized reading and framing of events. The panel also critically "questioned the contradictions, conundrums, and possibilities of a political imagination in a reality that arguably witnesses 'tragedy's triumph' in Palestine" (Insaniyyat, 2018). I understand this discussion in light of how dominant narratives in contexts of political resistance to settler-colonial regimes tend to praise voices of strength and resilience while giving

less attention to experiences of vulnerability to avoid victimhood discourse, and to grant agency to the studied communities.

In the analysis chapter, I will discuss *Sumud* as a de-subjectivation (Meari 2014) mechanism that shapes the artistic practices of artisans and informs their daily decisions. The fluid term will be approached as a set of practices that situates individual resisting modes within a collective set of values, and as a lens to read and analyze their craftworks.

### 3.2. **Dissensus, Presence and Landscape Repopulation**

In this section, I will go through a number of terms that intersect with *Sumud* in approaching artistic and cultural works such as technologies of dissensus, presence and landscape repopulation.

Markussen (2013) explains the disruptive aspect of aesthetic dissensus in terms of “the subtle way it cuts across and exposes hierarchies—hierarchies that control both practice and discourse—so that zones can emerge where processes of subjectivization might take place” (Markussen 2013: 45-46). In his account this subtle way is what distinguishes this type of dissensus from the political one since it is not designed to be in contest with power. According to Markussen, artistic capacity to dissent unfolds systems used in place to preserve the status quo. Other scholars have identified more direct linkages between political and artistic interventions as part of the effort to better understand what art can offer in terms of the politics of resistance. Art has the capacity to signal presence, reclaim public spaces, and unfold the centralist state, and it can also create powerful shared vocabularies and mutual imaginaries that can challenge hegemonic narratives (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014:16). In terms of heritage practices, the performance of dissensus exceeds the act of creating a counter-memory, as De Cesari explains the fundamental work involved in imagining and mapping out a different Palestine “disengaged from the Israeli infrastructure of rule: a Palestine that is both independent, in that it relies on functioning local institutions, and part of global flows” (De Cesari 2010: 633). This view on the term is also in line with how it works differently in different contexts. As Salih and Richter-Devroe explain, “the global spectator is part of the Palestinian stage, and what is legible, sensible, and thus possible ‘here’ depends also on the ‘there’” (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014:22). This means that practitioners in the arts and heritage fields consider different spectators and enact various imaginaries in order to deal with complex systems of filters and power structures while they perform aesthetic dissensus.

De Cesari explains how heritage practices generate their value through the 'memory scape' in opposition to the 'military technoscape' enforced by the colonial regime. By working to 'repopulate the landscape', these practices reclaim the historical space as both land and memory through a technology of presence (De Cesari 2010: 633).

The previously mentioned terms: dissensus, memory scape, repopulating the landscape, and technology of presence, provide a comprehensive set of terms for interpreting artisans' practices and works. They will be discussed in the analytical chapters especially when I answer the second research question related to stories and messages that artisans are trying to convey through their work.

### 3.3.Theorizing Time in Heritage Practices

In "Arts of Inclusion, or How to Love a Mushroom", Tsing (2010) identifies noticing, love and conjuring as acts of inclusivity within the lively cosmopolitanism that we tend to ignore as humans. In this process all senses are recalled to actively engage in forming bonds with the surrounding environment. This deep noticing intersects with slow modes of activism which aim to reach levels of empathy amongst those who share the same environment. Kapchan's (2016) account on *slow activism* explains how the sonic experience provides an environment of empathy with the other in a more engaging manner through attending to the process of attentive and careful listening. Both Tsing (2010) and Kapchan (2016) highlight what we can achieve by deeply exploring the processes in which life happens around us. Against static forms of communication, processes themselves are rich in meaning. The concept of 'slow activism' (Kapchan 2016) will heavily guide my interpretation of the slow practices and time experiences that artisans go through. I will argue in the first analytical chapter that the slow perceived time experiences are lived with attunement to the material which provides a multilayered time experience. In addition, I will use El Shakry's (2021) *ontology of waiting* as an approach to understanding the politics of time in the colonial context. This ontology explains cultural producers' poetic forms of disrupting the temporal politics of power.

As mentioned earlier in this text, slowness distinguishes artisans' practices from other forms of cultural production. At the same time, it entails attentive acts of noticing towards the past but also it can host futuristic imaginaries. According to Abu Hatoum (2019), the manifestation of visual

dominance is constantly affecting forms of artistic expression: “It is against this colonial regime of visual domination that the work of Palestinian artists should be read as forcefully subversive” (Abu Hatoum 2019: 1062). This thesis will address visual subversion by focusing on futuristic narratives of heritage work. Therefore, I will use Noyes’s (2010) conception of *tradition rework*, in which meanings are granted to the traditional work when it exceeds the direct processes of copying the past. Moreover, the analysis will benefit from Parikka’s (2018) conceptualization of *counter-futurism* in visual practices. In Parikka’s account, counter-futurism acts as a means to displace hegemonic power systems and to explore ways of living the current moment. Both these terms apply to crafts as an artistic heritage form of work. I will discuss both terms more thoroughly within the analytical chapters.

The previously suggested collage of concepts evolves around the concept of time which is of a significant importance in the field of craftculture. It is an experience that is lived with time, to understand time, and to produce a point of view on time. Therefore, the concepts suggested for analyzing this movement were initially inspired by artisans’ attentive research-based heritage-artistic projects and were informed by their futuristic visual language.

## 4. Methodology and Empirical Material

This section will introduce the ethnographic methodology used to answer the research questions within the framework of cultural analysis. It will also explain processes of producing knowledge about the studied ‘field’, while bearing in mind issues of relevance and contextualized knowledge (Haraway, 1984) in approaching the research work theoretically and empirically.

In regards to the meeting point between the concrete and the abstract, Abu Hatoum (2021) argues that the abstract may not always be approached by comprehending the concrete. In her case, the field’s inaccessibility prompted her to approach it from afar. Nevertheless, the issue of ‘translatability’ (Benjamin, 1997) remains present even when we work from a closer viewpoint to the concrete. For example, Skeggs (1997) demonstrates the complexities that accompany ethnographic work, beginning with issues of selection and representation of the interviewees’ accounts and experiences, and the questionable assumption that “experience is an origin or foundation of knowledge that is more immediate and trustworthy than secondary knowledges” (Skeggs 1997: 9). In her discussion of this idea, she stresses that partiality can be detected in any research, but it is particularly visible in ethnography. With this in mind, this thesis approaches ethnography as an act of ‘worlding’ (Haraway 2016) in which the stories we tell to tell stories and the concepts we think of to think concepts matter. According to Haraway this storytelling contributes to the state of sympoesis in which we stay with the trouble caused by “damages and achievements of colonial and postcolonial natural culture histories” (Haraway 2016: 125). In her account, the role of the ethnographer is to keep stories going, mainly by paying attention to hidden systems and non-studied forms of relationships in search of what she describes as recuperation. Consequently, stories exist as a result of a long series of decisions, as O’Dell and Willim (2011) explain the Nordic compositional paradigm: ethnographies are made out of a multitude of bits and pieces – which are more or less consciously coproduced in collaboration with informants, and through confrontation with various phenomena and experiences – that are not ‘naturally’ connected, but which have to be linked together by the ethnographer (O’Dell & Willim 2011: 31). Based on this understanding, the next section will explain how different pieces of empirical materials were captured in the context of today’s ‘rapid’ ethnography (Issac 2013) practices.

### 4.1 Issuefication as An Open Process

This research ‘issuefication’ process (Asdal 2015) started with discussions I had with friends on mutual observations about the craft and visual arts scene in Palestine. We acknowledged the emergence of fresh faces and new craft design concepts in recent years. As new agents have appeared, a number of questions have arisen regarding whether this field has become more inviting or if other inter-relational factors have influenced its expansion. Several assumptions were challenged during the process of research. For example, I had preconceptions about the extent to which new mediums did impact the knowhows of artisans. Therefore, I expected mediums to be a central part of my research. These constructive challenges happened when my preconstructed knowledge was in confrontation with others’ views and experiences. This generative process spared a space for participants and more recent readings to actively contribute to guiding my research.

The way I approached the field was affected by my previous experience as a person. Living in Palestine my entire life and working in the visual arts field for almost four years gave me a sense of familiarity that served as a strength point at times, allowing me to navigate the space and make the most of the limited time I had there, but it also led to an assumption that I fully understood the experiences of participants who came from various genders, backgrounds, cities, and points of view. As a researcher who received the majority of my ethnographic theoretical and methodological training at Lund University, I developed thematic discussion topics based on my academic background. I thought of concepts such as space, medium, materials, identity, and emotions. Later on, I understood that I needed to integrate additional contextual knowledge of cultural studies created in or about Palestine to my theoretical tools. When I was thinking about particular concepts and trying to imagine their applicability and relevance in the Palestinian context, this reevaluation occurred. All this was part of the open and ongoing problematization process that this research underwent, or what Birkbak (2015), and Adsal (2015) describe as the simultaneous processes of modification and transformation that shape the forming of issues and public engagement with them.

## 4.2 **Participants and Methods**

I began by approaching one artisan and gradually the remainder of the process was inspired by Brichet and Hastrup's (2018) 'dustballing' method in which the fieldwork opened up to me in a gradual, "improvisational, situated, open-ended, and somewhat random" way (Brichet & Hastrup 2018: 8) in which one person introduced me to another, and one incident led to the other. Artisans I reached out to were generous and flexible. I was pleasantly surprised by their prompt welcome messages accepting to participate in the research. They all had active Instagram profiles, and we used that platform to exchange messages. Instagram messenger was a friendly communication space. In addition, I collected screenshots of several Instagram posts for later use.

I reached out to participants who practiced creative forms of reproducing and rethinking heritage through crafts. The group of participants consisted of one male and six females, all of whom were in their twenties. They were from the cities of Ramallah, and Jerusalem. They work in studios, in small stores or galleries, and in their own houses. The last section of this chapter will introduce them and provide brief overviews of their projects.

To conduct interviews, I visited the working spaces of five artisans' numerous times in January 2022, while I met the rest over Zoom later in February. Fieldwork also included a visit to a modern handicraft showroom in Ramallah, conversations I had with friends prior to conducting these interviews, interactions with other practitioners, and my previous visits to summer markets. I made visual documentation of people, spaces and materials, and those I interviewed online were generous enough to share with me samples of their work that they felt relevant to my research interest.

A non-linear movement around different parts of the field and what O'Dell and Willim (2011) refer to as depth of field shaped my daily research practices. For example, an interview would end up with a cup of coffee with more people and a broader discussion about the research topic, or it would end with me sitting in a café listening to a radio interview with one of the artisans or reading what I considered to be useful theoretical material at that time. The lines separating the 'field' from the rest of my day were blurry, as the topic was also an enjoyable point of discussion with friends.

The fieldwork methodology was designed to obtain discursive narratives from emerging artisans regarding the ways in which they experience time, material, and space, as well as to discuss

meanings they believe they convey via their works. In-depth interviews and observations suited this purpose. In-depth interviews were conducted to address a number of themes. The talks were conversational, allowing participants to reflect on what they considered to be valuable and relevant. For the majority of the in-person interviews I began with an initial visit to introduce myself and the research as well as to take some notes from workspaces. The in-person interviews were long and included a go-along with one artisan. Interviews were infused with intimacy, openness, familiarity and most of the time music and coffee. In addition to friendly discussions and unplanned walks, we also shared emotions and aspirations. I felt like a welcomed guest to those who owned little shops or galleries, and I was the companion who helped the artisan working in a residence studio to feel less lonely.

Personal narratives acquired through in-depth interviews, even if they do not necessarily provide answers to grand questions, do help "take account of emotion and the relationship between text, lived experience, and social reality" (Dixon 2015: 639). They are, moreover, a way to comprehend different forms of practices including 'emotional practices' (Scheer 2012). If we consider an interview to be a listening process, Kapchan (2016) explains how the researcher comes to their views from a position of greater understanding when they slowly listen. Listening, she claims, "has the power to unmoor us from categorical preconceptions. Intentional listening demands an openness to what is between categories, a material attunement to both the pain and praise of others" (Kapchan 2016: 118).

I should also mention that not all participants were necessarily able to articulate, recall, or share their everyday experiences, as the lived is not always easy to be translate into words. In one interview I spoke more than the interviewee, and afterwards they informed me that I phrased their work more effectively than they would. Consequently, observation as a method helped provide an entry point for capturing non-discursive facets of the research which is an essential dimension for understanding what people do in addition to what they say (Löfgren, 2014). Pink (2008) points out that accessing others' imaginaries would be impossible unless we could trace expressions of these imagined futures through verbal or embodied practices.

Another tool used for this research was memories. Memories perform as a space for unwritten notes that, in some situations, have more impact on us than those we write. According to Wall (2008) "It might be that headnotes are more important than field notes" (Wall 2008: 45). Wall

explains how memories are later collected on top of our experiences of being in the field. I would also argue that memories drive our decisions to prioritize one story over another, one intuition and concern over another, since they are infused with emotions and unexplainable orders. That is why I believe memories play a role in the way I recall and write stories and examples within the analytical chapter.

After they were completed, I transcribed the interviews. Interview transcription is considered, as the rest of the prior fieldwork steps, as a subjective process that differs from one researcher to another. The transcribing process includes acts of reduction and selectivity and, as Bucholt argues, such acts operate politically and cannot be seen separately from their context (Bucholtz 2000: 1440). The interviews were transcribed in the chronological order in which they were conducted, while I tried to write down comments on the non-discursive gestures such as laughs and thinking pauses. Transcribing interviews entailed the complex process of translating parts of the interviews into English which is a second form of transforming the ‘original’ sonic material into words, but this time with trying to assure the translatability of intended meanings and contexts. On some occasions it felt like a process of translating a culture while having different readers in mind.

### 4.3 **The Researcher Self: Researcher-Semi Friend-Stranger**

According to Landén (2011), ‘The researcher’ is just one of many possible subject positions relevant to the field while Pink (2008) refers to different selves and forms of being that a researcher goes through while being in place and time of performing fieldwork. My experience was mainly informed and influenced by familiarity with both the space and the people. I will introduce here three different self-positions I encountered while on the fieldwork.

Five of the participants, those I interviewed in-person, were people from my social network; they were not friends, but they were not strangers either. This in-between relationship allowed me to approach them as a researcher. Interviews shed light on their newly established projects, which was of great value to some of them. Several participants had a personal interest in research, and the discussions with them went beyond the research topic and into other areas of mutual interest. We also discussed questions and preliminary analytical themes. In this scenario, my researcher self was tolerant and adaptable, willing to rethink and rebuild ideas with participants after we established mutual senses of trust. With the other three people whom I interviewed via Zoom, I

had fewer complex encounters. Through interviews, I was able to get to know them for the first time. The virtual world was less of an intimate environment for interaction which made me more aware of myself as a researcher and a stranger.

I visited Jerusalem's old city several times to meet participants. I have always felt a special sense of connection to the city because it is where my late father's shop, my grandparents' house, friends and family, and memories from childhood to the present are all located. Every time I go there, I am overwhelmed with sentiments of kinship, as well as stress and grief, coupled with pride in people's everyday resistance. Nonetheless, the aromas of spices and the sight of modest touristic stores stimulate the senses, as they do in every lovely ancient city. In narrow streets, shop owners sit on the thresholds of their shops; they speak, laugh, and stare at the pedestrians. When I glance at them to get a sense of what their lives look like, they look back with their own set of curiosity. Both artisans I interviewed in the city mentioned place-related issues, such as difficulties obtaining ownership of their businesses while being threatened to lose these spaces due to the occupation expansion plans. When conversations went in this direction, my researcher-self had to pause to enable a space for sharing emotions of sadness and anger. Coming from the same city made it easier for me to emphasize and deeply understand these feelings. I also realized that my deeply embodied perspective of the place has muted some of my experiences and memories and naturalized some incidents such as crossing military checkpoints on my way to conduct interviews. In such incidents, my researcher self was impacted by my political self and situated my knowledge and experiences within the context of living under a settler-colonial regime.

At the same time, a sense of care and a desire to work together was developed between me and the participants. These emotions originated from my realization of the difficulties they face launching their projects, as well as my gratitude and, at times, my sense of 'indebtedness' for their participation. For example, one artisan asked for the interview recorded material, and I gave it to her because she is a researcher herself. In addition, I did share a number of opportunities with participants, such as open calls and contacts I knew. When I asked them to provide me with written consent forms, all artisans expressed a desire to read my thesis, which I took as a true acknowledgment of our cooperation.

## 4.4 **Ethical Considerations**

This section will portray a number of ethical concerns I had while conducting the fieldwork, as well as some ideas I had for addressing them. I will start with the participant selection process, which functioned as a first filtering mechanism, with some persons passing and others not. From my own subjective viewpoints, I tended to approach people I thought were approachable and relevant. At the same time, I acknowledge that my focus was on practitioners from two specific cities, which may appear to contribute to these cities' centralization and add to the ongoing marginalization of actors from other cities.

I have kept in mind that this thesis will not incorporate all of the accounts offered by participants. This sorting is typically done in their absence, implying that they are not totally involved in all aspects of the production of their stories. As a result, I told those who indicated an interest in the study that I would disclose my findings as soon as I completed writing them. Now I am wondering why I felt compelled to make such promises. What was the source of that necessity? Perhaps it stemmed from the fact that requesting an interview includes an underlying promise in which participants might think that what they consider to be worthy of sharing will be included. On another related note, I used real names of people, places, and projects, which was mutually agreed upon between me and the participants. This was decided because I perceived artisans as participants in this thesis, and this is how I referred to them all over the text. It made more sense to refer to their real names when I tell their stories.

In my experience with the majority of the participants, particularly those I interviewed in person, and because I had the opportunity to properly introduce myself in a short meeting before the actual interview, I communicated the research questions and goals, in the hopes of establishing trust and transparency. Aspers claims that "to safeguard actors' perspective, it may be useful to allow people from the field to read a research report. One could never, however, demand that they agree with the conclusion" (Aspers 2009: 7). I also offered information about the angles of analysis I was thinking about at the time. At a later stage, when I requested written consent forms, I once again expressed my gratitude to the participants, shared more information about the research topic, and shared some early thoughts I had following transcribing the interviews.

Another point to examine was labeling participants into groups such as ‘artisans interested in heritage-based crafts’, or members of what I assumed to be ‘a new generation of practitioners’. To overcome this issue, I asked participants about their feelings about these categories and whether they prefer to be identified in one of them. Nonetheless, this study presupposes that their actions are representative of others in their categories, which may not be the case. When empirical materials meet theory, another difficulty connected to participants' representation arises, namely the way theoretical assertions portray their practices in ways they may not be aware of.

To sum up this section, I would say that what prompted me to write this thesis was the potential of bringing new and significant knowledge about the subject matter. It is a question of how much my work is a creation of something of benefit. Having said that, I recognize that my research does not provide full answers to questions it was designed to address, but rather makes a partial subjective contribution towards approaching them.

## 4.5 **Introducing the Artisans**

To make the following discussions in the analytical chapter easier to follow, here I briefly introduce the artisans' projects. Since I'm aiming at analyzing the practices of these artisans and the meanings and stories they deliver through their work, this section will present background information on their projects and describe their current working spaces.

### 4.5.1 **Lara Salous**

Lara is an architect and Interior Designer. She designs handmade furniture pieces using local materials. In her current project she produces artsy woven stools and chairs using organic hand dyed wool. Salous received her master's degree in interior design at Westminster University-London, and her bachelor's in architectural engineering at Birzeit University-Palestine. She is a lecturer on Local and Regional Industries at the college of Arts, Music and Design at Birzeit University. At her studio we were surrounded with chairs, wooden pieces, wool, leather, and other materials. She is a visual artist as well, so she had some of her works hanging on the walls. It was not easy to pick a chair to sit on since it might be a prototype. Salous does not own her own workspace and she depends on residencies provided by different organizations to secure a space to work and to store materials. At the time of the interview and go-along, she was an artist resident within the Ramallah Municipality residency programme. She spent three months at one of the renovated old houses in the old quarter of the city. It was almost the last few days in her residency period when we met.

*Figure 1: Lara Salous, regular and bar stools, posted in her Instagram account. Image used with permission from Lara.*

### 4.5.2 **Alef Studio**

Iman Hamdieh is an artist who works currently in designing accessories, tote bags, posters, and printed items. Her designs are inspired by Islamic geometry and the traditional arts. Her bachelor's degree was in interior design, and she is currently a master student at the Jerusalem Studies program at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. To gain her knowledge in drawing the Islamic geometry Iman received intensive courses in Istanbul, Southern Spain, Cairo and Jerusalem. She spends her time working from home and from Alef Studio, a space she co-founded in the summer of 2021 to serve as a gallery and arts training venue. I visited Iman at the studio in January 2022 to introduce myself and the research to her while the interview took place over zoom in February 2022.

*Figure 2: Salah Edin pulpit from inside Al-Aqsa Mosque. Image from Iman's Instagram, used with her permission.*

*Figure 3: Iman Hamdieh. Modern lighting unit with revived motifs from the Salah Edin pulpit. Image from Iman's Instagram, used with her permission.*

### 4.5.3 **Chamber of Art**

Jihad Sabbah is a musician. He plays and teaches oud. In 2019 he expanded his interests to include making handmade jewelry in addition to his career in music. He founded 'Chamber of art', a small gallery and working space he rented in October 2021. The gallery is located in the old city of Jerusalem. He showcases his works and other artisans' works at the gallery.

His designs of multiple material accessories (mainly silver, seashells, and wood) are inspired by the architecture of the old city, especially Islamic geometry patterns, and he integrates religious and national icons in his work. In his Instagram posts, Jihad adds a historical description for each piece, introducing basic units of the design, the materials and the detailed process.

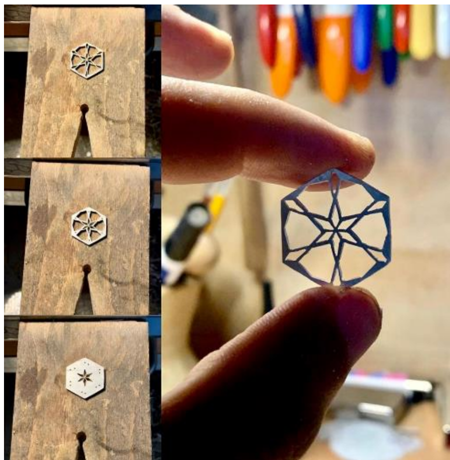

*Figure 4: Process of making a necklace inspired by Islamic motifs. Image from Jihad's Instagram page, used with his permission.*

*Figure 5: Jihad in front of his gallery. Image from Jihad's Instagram page, used with his permission.*

*Figure 6: Jihad at his working space. Taken by researcher. Used upon Jihad's permission.*

*Figure 7: Palestine map Necklaces made with silver and blue shell. Image from Jihad's Instagram page, used with his permission.*

### 4.5.4 **Darza Studio**

Waad Hammad is a fashion designer. She studied Arts and Design at Bezalel college in Jerusalem. In January 2020 Waad started her project Darza studio. The project is promoted as a slow fashion, anti-consumption, transparent and sustainable brand. Waad works from home where she has a knitting workshop. In her designs Waad combines modern fashion with traditional embroidery. Most of her designs are minimalist, plain pieces with embroidery details. In addition to the fashion line, Waad and her sister are active in introducing their work online. They post information related to the stitches and patterns they use in their designs, including the origin of each stitch and short tutorials on how to make them. They also organize local and regional workshops on stitching.
The interview with Waad took place over Zoom in February 2022.

*Figures 8 and 9: images of Waad's fashion designs. Pictures by Ani Robakidze. Image from Waad's Instagram page, used with her permission.*

### 4.5.5 **Shireen Salman Designs**

Shireen studied interior design in Amman. She spends time at her father's souvenir shop in the old city of Jerusalem which made her notice how shops offer the same designs of ceramic tiles. She started her own project focusing on custom-made interior home accessories. One major design project of hers is inspired by floor patterns where she uses a 'Shami' tile as a basic design background and then she adds other layers inspired by nature, national icons, daily life, etc. The interview with Shireen took place at her father's shop in the old city of Jerusalem in January 2022.

*Figure 10 Shireen Salman at her father's shop. Picture by researcher, used with permission from Shireen.*

*Figure 11 coasters decorated with Sham tile. Image from Shireen's' Instagram account, used with her permission.*

### 4.5.6 **Fawasil 48**

*Figure 12 metal bookmarks. Image from Sabreen's Instagram account, used with her permission.*

Sabreen Haj Ahmad studied fine arts at An-Najah National University in Nablus. While she was a student, she created Fawasil 48, a collective project specializing in handmade bookmarks. The group uses materials such as cartons, paper, metal, and fabric. The designs they make portray human and non-human figures, such as known Arabic and international cultural figures, animals and plants. Haj Ali, who was born in Jenin in the northern West Bank, lives and works between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Her current artistic projects reflect her interest in issues of biodiversity and

wildlife, veganism, and nature. The interview with Sabreen took place on a very rainy day in January 2022. I visited her at her home in Ramallah where she works.

### 4.5.7 **Rand Dabboor Gallery**

Rand Dabboor is a visual artist, freelance graphic designer, and the founder of Rand Dabboor gallery in Ramallah. She studied graphic design and worked in this field before she started her own project. The gallery is a small space where she showcases her works and the works of numerous other hand makers and artisans. She designs stickers, mugs, posters, bags and other printed products such as notebooks and postcards. The gallery serves as a workshop space, and Rand organizes regular short workshops in crafts making, mostly attended by women. I visited her twice at her gallery in January 2022.

*Figure 13 A workshop at Rand's Gallery. Image from Rand's Instagram, used with her permission.*

*Figure 14 Laila Khalid sticker, Rand Dabboor design. Image from Rand's Instagram, used with her permission.*

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

Since the late 1990s the Palestinian contemporary visual arts scene has expanded and experienced what has been called 'a golden age' marked by significant material and institutional transformations and significant opportunities for artists (Pal journeys, 2021). This timeframe intersects with De Cesari's (2010) historization of the emergence of a new heritage movement, a cultural-artistic one led by non-governmental bodies, that merges poetic, scientific, nationalist, and cosmopolitan practices, all while performing as an activist project of resistance against the occupation. While her research concentrated on heritage as a defiant art of government for NGOs, this research will position it as a fluid space for emerging heritage actors, namely individual artisans, aiming to express their subjective art practices and political imaginaries.

The first three sections of this chapter will provide an answer to the first thesis question on artisans' day-to-day practices and ways in which they experience time, space, and materials through themes of *slowness* as a time experience, *sensitivity to the familiar*, and *Earth Democracy*, *Sumud* and *material sustainability* as values framework. The fourth section will analyze stories and meanings they convey through their works using themes of *tradition rework* and *counter-futurism*.

### 5.1 Slowness as a Time Experience

Inspired by Lefebvre's space triad, I would like to discuss ways in which time is designed, lived and perceived (Merrifield, 1993) by artisans. My argument here is that the perceived slow movement of time is lived in an attentive attunement with materials and a special sensitivity towards the familiar and is deeply impacted by the broader ontology of waiting (El Shakry 2021) in which time in Palestine can be framed. The following stories will demonstrate how the three aspects of time are intertwined and how they inform one another. Concepts of slowness, attunement to material, sensitivity to the familiar, and the ontology of waiting will be addressed and will inform the discussion of empirical material in the following paragraphs.

I will start with Lara's story. In her project (introduced in section 4.5.1) she produces traditional chairs and stools to examine the possibilities of locally reproducing this traditional piece of furniture while also integrating an esthetical perspective into its details. All different components of this chair were researched, and handmade by Lara. Her project is a visual and material return of

this piece of furniture back into homes after years of being replaced by modern alternatives. The moral and ethical values of this project are connected to the authenticity and roots of this chair, and what can be referred to as the terroir (Paxon 2010). This investment in intimacy and familiarity requires a careful multitasking work dynamic to revisit how this piece was originally executed while adding her personal touch to it. Salous explained her day-to-day activities and movement from one task to the other:

> Every day is different. This morning, I did some writing, as a form of expression and research. This chair is developing into a research project, practical research. Afterwards I went to see a young woman who requested that I teach her how to weave the wool. I would like her to assist me in the future. After that, I went to see Shihada [a carpenter]. With him I collected pieces of a chair and then I went back to the studio to continue weaving. On other days, I enjoy sketching. Drawing and sketching help me come up with ideas for new colors and designs. On some days I merely weave, or I would just sit here and do nothing. (Salous L., in-person interview, January 9$^{th}$, 2022)

Lara deconstructs the elements of this chair as part of her research, questioning how they were originally designed. She chose to make two significant changes to the traditional design. The first was to alter the jointing details of the wooden parts, primarily to expose these joints rather than covering them as is customary among local carpenters. Long debates with older carpenters, who, according to Lara, considered the old approach as the 'correct' and more functional way, have resulted from this modification. Lara is adding more modern characteristics to make the stool/chair more relevant to contemporary settings, since conventional stools were designed to fit old houses' interiors and to work with the ground and materials typically used decades ago. She also develops bar stools by adding a new length to the chair's legs. The customary beige straw seat was replaced with colorful braided wool as the second big adjustment she made. At the beginning, Lara spent about thirty hours making one chair. She had to experiment for more than two weeks with various fabrics, colors, and designs. She explained: "I needed to experiment with the yarn's proportions and thickness to test the stool's functionality and strength to carry human weight. Experiments accounted for 80% of my time. I keep doing the same thing over and over". We notice here how her experimentations were described as time consuming. The conversation on time comes naturally. Lara perceives time as a slow, repetitive and lengthy experience. The 'lived' time

experience will manifest differently in the following paragraphs. My question to Lara about thoughts and emotions she experiences while she weaves the seat of one chair for hours unfolded previous experiences and expanded the conversation in a more meaningful manner.

When I visited Lara at her art residency studio, she served me Arabic coffee which took a long time to prepare while we waited next to the oven. The kitchen was cold, so we moved the coffee pot inside the studio and heated it over the heater again. To answer my question Lara said: "I think of woolen yarns while I work" then she laughed. She explained that her work demands high concentration and added:

> I used to think that I could keep my mind busy with other things while I work, but then I realized that I needed to focus on what I'm doing; how much I stretch or release the fibers, the mix of colors I'm using. I often find myself thinking of women who used to weave rugs, thinking of how patient and impressively smart they were, especially those who worked on the loom which is made up of five pieces; to make one rug you need really high concentration skills.

While working by herself to create these chairs and stools, Lara reflects on and lives the experiences of other women who have worked in this field. Each seat takes a long time to treat, dye, and weave, bringing her closer to their lives. She attempted to make the seat out of leather, straws, and other materials when she first began her project but after visiting a Bedouin village in the Khan Al-Ahmar area, she settled on wool as the main material. While there, she talked to women and asked them about the process of making wool yarns, and how they weave it into rugs and other things. According to Lara, one old lady described the process in three poetic steps, saying [يغسلنه ويمشطنه وينسجنه] "they wash it, they brush it and then they weave it". The three words in Arabic rhyme and sound like cautious steps of caring for a baby. She met ten women there but was surprised to learn that only one of them knew how to weave the wool. According to Lara this skill used to be more widespread amongst women in this community because they herd sheep, and it used to be their source of income. This craft became extinct due to market changes. Lara was saddened by the disappearance of wool rugs in households since the wool is "here and we toss it away instead of using it". Previous studies suggest that sophisticated ornamental Bedouin rugs used to be very expensive and rarely to come on the market. "They are Kelims [an expression for a common Persian weave but also the name of the technology used in its manufacture] of both

warp and weft pattern of very elaborate design and many colors and are the result of skillful hand-spinning and weaving" (Stewart 1944: 267). This encounter made her consider wool as the primary material for the chair's seat. As a result, she learned how to weave it and how to attach it to the chair's wooden parts.

In her project Lara is deeply engaged with raw materials, which makes her work stand out as an attempt to fully embody and follow the traditional slow processes of production. Lara collects the natural wool from Bedouin women, and colors it herself. She also joins the carpenter in cutting and carving the legs and aprons. According to Tsutsumi (2014), being *materially attuned* enables designers to "access tacit and experiential knowledge that is embodied and manifested in material things that afford the work a voice; an engaging quality" (Tsutsumi 2014: 81). Lara is aware of this attunement through her senses as well. She refers to the act of listening to yarns while she is weaving. A particular sound catches her attention. She describes the sounds that come in a rhythmic form as a result of using the awl, as well as the changing sound she hears as she nears the end of a piece. An emotional dialogue with the material shapes this process: "I'm happy when I weave, I feel relaxed and at peace, but sometimes I feel angry because the work is really hard [she laughs]. It gets really hard, especially when I have to repeat the work, I don't like it [she laughs]". This auditory experience and emotions attached to it, including the intergenerational empathy with women who did that kind of handwork before, can be viewed in light of Kapchan's (2016) auditory ontology. According to Kapchan, a 'discomfort' accompanies the listening process: "listening demands that we linger in the space of discomfort, where otherness is experienced empathically as one's 'own' and where ownership itself is put into question" (Kapchan 2016: 116). We can think of Lara's experience with the material in terms of how it places her existence in and outside the lived moment. This is a process in which empathy with women who did this kind of work before takes place, but emotions of discomfort are also part of this experience since it requires concentration, effort and attunement to the present moment. It is the material in this case that infuses her 'lived' time experience and gives it a meaning and purpose and consequently motivates her to work.

In the broader perspective, Lara's project resists the easy, straightforward production processes. El Shakry (2021) refers to cultural producers' disruption of the temporal politics of power. We can track this through Lara's attunement to slow production processes versus the accelerated market

rhythm, and also in her efforts to revive the traditional stool and normalize its usage. This memory scape (De Cesari, 2010) is a creative way of generating meanings from a specific moment and object from the past.

The 'Stitch' clothing project *Darza*, which is a garments and tote bags brand, is another illustration of terroir in artisans' practices, but the aim of this project is to find a new and unique treatment to the commonly used embroidery. *Darza* is owned by Waad and Ahd Hammad, who both live and work in Jerusalem (see section 4.5.4). The brand is introduced on Instagram as 'celebrating heritage through modern designs and sustainable lifestyle' (Darza, 2022). Waad further explained this in an interview:

> We are *falahin* [peasants], and I enjoy wearing *thobe* [a traditional embroidered women's dress]. However, nowadays, when you go into a store to buy one, you find yourself bombarded with designs that overuse embroidery. It became mainstream. Machines are making stitches nowadays and some people buy it because it is cheaper. People like modern designs but they also like to see a touch of heritage, which is why we decided to return to embroidery, but to use it in a meaningful way, rather than for the sake of using it. To invest in an art piece. The idea was to use this concept because we are young, we like embroidery and traditional clothes, but we also want fitting modern clothes that show the beauty of our bodies and young girls like this. (Hammad, W. Online interview, February 2nd, 2022)

Waad explains her personal motivation to start this project by saying that her family are peasants. This usually means that her family historically moved from a village to the city, and they still follow the village's traditions even if they are not villagers/farmers anymore. She also sees her project as a response to the machine-made *thobes* that are cheaply made and lack aesthetic values. She proposes a new presentation of embroidery within the modern outfit designs which in her opinion respects both the customer's taste and the tradition of stitching. Waad's work involves coming up with concepts for each season, and these seasonal concepts usually involve two main components; the first one is the modern minimalistic style of the garment and the second is the embroidery touch. She and her sister choose one stitch that is originated in a specific geographic area for each season: they study it and collaborate with other women to handcraft the embroidered elements that they later add to their pieces.

> In the summer collection the idea was to use the Hebron city stitch. My sister and I are from Hebron, and we wanted a site-specific stitch, so we searched for details and patterns in that stitch, read books and talked to a woman who masters the stitch and we saw what kind of details were used to make it. The idea for the winter collection is to take a piece of a *thobe* and position it in a different spot in our designed garments, like for instance to take the collar of the Hebron or Gaza *thobe* and to use it in the back area of the jacket. Each season we think of new concepts.

In her daily work she perceives the slow flow of time to be tiring, while this comes from the different steps the project entails and the attention given to the main unit of their designs: the stitch. Waad describes this process as delicate, since they have to carefully add the embroidered parts while making sure that the size is right, and the fabric is not affected. Time is perceived as moving in a slow pattern. She makes pieces on demand which means that customers will also have to wait a while before they receive their orders. She describes her feelings about it as: “It is scary that each piece requires this long time. When we tell our customers that we are not a ready to wear brand or a mass production line, people get excited”.

This slow movement of time is experienced through a network of cooperation with other women with whom she shares intimate moments and creative working projects. It is her basic choice to add handmade embroideries and not printed ones that creates this network of cooperation. She searches for women with previous experience in stitching. When Waad started her project two years ago, she worked with a woman from the Al-Aroub refugee camp in Hebron city. Waad explains the reason behind this choice: “She lived far away from my place, but she was the only person I know of with experience in making the specific stitch that joins different pieces of the same dress *Al-Minjal* stitch”. Younger women, according to Waad, are no longer familiar with this stitch because it is difficult to master. Waad visits women she works with to deliver the fabrics, and with time they start sharing food and spending time together. They establish an intimate relationship and ‘become part of our family’ in Waad’s words.

Waad's lived experience is affected by her personal connection to *thobes* and embroidery. She dedicates time and effort to pursuing specific details in stitches which stems from her own interest in the history of the craft. Coming from a family of *Falahin*, Waad and other women in her family

have worn *thobes* at social occasions, particularly weddings, since childhood, and they have also learned to sew. She explained: "my grandmother taught us to stitch before schools did, and I have a close bond to embroidery and to my heritage". The continuous presence of this inherited craft over time has contributed to her effort to bring a new visual language to overcome lazy forms of repetition. It has also resulted in this lived attunement with old material as a topic of research and a source of recreation in which she combines her education as a fashion designer with her personal, inherited stitching expertise.

In addition to the waiting embedded in the process of producing each piece of her designs, Waad is surrounded with other forms of waiting. Waad collaborates with other women who live in refugee camps, one in Hebron and one near Jerusalem. As refugees live in a temporary status of waiting for the right of return to their homes, their movement is also restricted, like the majority of Palestinians, and none of them can access Waad's home in Jerusalem. Waad's time experience is affected by these movement complexities, while we can also observe the active form of waiting that she and the other women perform. Their active agency oversees the space/time limitations. This particular detail intersects with El Shakry's (2021) concept of the Palestinian ontology of waiting. According to El Shakry:

> 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. (El Shakry 2021: 675)

This engagement with the everyday in both Lara and Waad's projects can be framed as an act of *Sumud*; a de-subjectivation process and undoing of the colonial fear as Meari (2010) explains it. Further, insisting on the handmade stitch instead of the machine-made one in Waad's project opens the door to this wide network of meaningful cooperation with other forms of active waiting.

To sum up this section, I would like to mention that repetitive acts of body movements in Sufi prayer circles that Kapchan (2010) writes about, intersects with artisans' body and hands movement while they perform craft related tasks. These embedded performances (Schechner, 2006) suggest a slow perceived time experience, while artisans are actively engaged in their surrounding environment through acts of noticing and intentional connection with the materials

they work with. This attunement and time experience is manifested in the way Lara recalls and interacts with other women who used to weave rugs, and in Waad's continuous research on meanings behind the shapes and stitches that she uses in her project and her engagement with other women. The overall frame of this picture of time is the active waiting experience in which the artistic and cultural forms of expression stand as a *Sumud* state in front of the constant space and time loss caused by the settler colonial regime.

## 5.2 Sensitivity to the Familiar

This section explores how artisans' practices are informed by their sensitivity to the familiar past and present spaces. In the following projects, artisans perform deep acts of noticing (Tsing 2010) their surrounding landscape, architecture, and community to come up with new concepts. They rely on their ability to observe and look for stories that can be converted into visual language. They use an ethnographic approach – which is a practice element in all projects of artisans I interviewed – where the knowledge-generating process runs concurrently with the practical aspects of their projects. However, in the following cases, we can see how the surrounding environment encourages artisans to go from one design project to the other as they pursue their curiosity in material history.

*Figure 15 Image from the artisan's Instagram page, used with her permission*

Rand's designs are inspired by photographs she takes or collects online of traditional dresses, personal portrayals, natural scenes, and antique artifacts. Figure 15 demonstrates a mixture of elements used in one of her posters: a woman from Jerusalem, the Sun bird of Palestine and a poetic text. She designs stickers, mugs, posters, notebooks, tote bags, and postcards among other items. In addition to photographs and visual representations of objects, she considers the presence of tangible material to be an important part of her work methodology. For that reason, she collects antiques of all kinds, such as *thobes* to study patterns and motifs used in various dresses. She also collects stories. Her fieldwork, which occurs before the design phase, comprises of taking photos and videos, conducting interviews with elderly individuals, particularly

women, and taking notes. "I have my big notebook where I write everything I see", she explained (Dabboor R., in-person interview, January 17th, 2022).

As observed from most of her designs, the idea of the city stands as a main theme of interest. She uses this framework to connect colors, words, plants and items that are related to a single site or city. A sensitive step in her work is to conduct an in-depth verification to assure the relevance of all the design items to this specific site. Rand's project is an example of the recent interest of urban sites in heritage projects. The notebook design in Figure 16 is an example of this theme. By mixing materials from both the village and the city she offers a fresh perspective on the history of cities, which has been disregarded in past heritage projects, since the village life used to be highlighted and centered as a way to symbolize the Palestinian lost relationship with the land. In an attempt to recollect the modernism project that was interrupted by the creation of the colonial settler regime in 1948, artistic undertakings are now bringing attention back to the lost metropolis. When it comes to the city/village split in Palestinian memory, Bishara (2003) claims that the 'collective defeated memory' was created either by returning to the lost village or by entering the victorious city but only as a margin.

*Figure 16 Notebook designed with the doors of the city and its famous wood crafts and Arabic calligraphy in the background. Image from artisan's Instagram page, used with her permission*

Rand depends on three sets of knowledge resources. The first one is books and information that she describes as hard to get due to the absence of governmental efforts to centralize such knowledge. In my second interview with her, she was excited to show me a book – an 'Atlas of Palestinian Rural Heritage' – which lists objects, customs, traditions, songs, and popular remedies. The second source of knowledge she depends on is the tactile and visual connection and experience with heritage items: "when I touch things, I start to envision myself in that period of time; I feel like I'm searching for this lost object, as if I'm the true owner and I want to find what I have lost. I prefer to view things with my own eyes to discover exactly what they are, and why they appear as they do". The experience of touch transforms Rand's body into a previous time zone. Kapchan

(2010) explains the state of encounter between the 'juridical body' and the 'sound body' in which the listening subject is deeply engaged with the sound environment even if the spoken language is not familiar: "the sound body emerges in the paradox of being a part of and yet distinct from the social field of listening" (Kapchan 2016: 115). Kapchan's point applies to variant sensory engagements, such as touch and vision. We can see here how the social field in Rand's case is the past which she will never be able to achieve except through her imagination. We can understand artisans' 'sound bodies' as their in-place motions of working with the material and sticking to repeated small steps while they are mentally engaged in an imagined, unreachable social environment of emotions and memories, within the slow 'touch' experience.

The third knowledge resource that Rand depends on in her work is interviews. She conducts interviews with older women in order to gain a better understanding of their lives and the objects they own. She explained: "Look, if I see an old lady walking down the street with a basket or a jar over her head [a traditional mean of carrying water or groceries], I stop her and ask her how she learned to carry the basket this way, and how old was she when she did it. I start chatting with her to gather more data, and I enjoy myself while doing so". This is an act of noticing and also as the title of this section implies it is a form of sensitivity towards the familiar, in which such a regular scene of older women wearing traditional customs captures Rand's attention and inspires her artistic practices.

At the personal level, Rand's research and design project compensates her lack of knowledge on her family's history. Her Lebanese mother did not live in Palestine before marrying her father. Her grandfather lived the Nakba of 1948 but then he was forced into exile. His house was in Ein Karem village in Jerusalem, which was occupied by Israelis. Rand says that she went to visit her grandfather's house one day, and settlers refused to let her in. Her grandparents from her father's side are from Al-lyyd, now an occupied city. She said she never had the chance to go there, and only her late uncle knows the location of the house. She interviews refugees from these two areas to learn more about these forbidden spaces. This particular detail which Rand mentioned to me as a given fact of how most people in the West Bank are not allowed to visit their original cities in the historical occupied Palestine, and the way she is coping with this limited time and space while working on her project, is another form of active waiting and *Sumud* in which the artisan not only transmits an old image of life as it used to be, but the art project also becomes a confrontation with

and defiance of the temporal geopolitics imposed on Palestinians. Through reworking pictures of occupied unreachable cities, using different elements from these places in her designs, and reproducing a possibility to visually interact with them, Rand is making amends for her family's lost memories, time and space.

Rand’s work requires a sensitive approach towards the familiar, a curiosity to research and a desire to chase stories. This sensitivity has other manifestations as other artisans perform it differently. In the following examples, shapes become the center of the story. Jihad and Iman use Islamic geometric patterns as the basic design unit in their projects. They recreate the motifs they observe in the buildings of Jerusalem's old city. According to Iman, the study aspect that precedes the design is as follows:

> If the trace [the artifact decorated with Islamic geometrical motifs] hasn't been drawn previously and hasn't been renovated, I read its shapes first and then I analyze its existing 'family' or roots. I research the forms and lines, as well as how they relate to each other, before drawing it from scratch. I need to make two distinct drawings utilizing two different ways to complete this process scientifically. My copy of the trace is correct if both sketches are compatible. (Hamdieh, I. online interview, February 3rd, 2022).

Jihad goes through the same process. The following step for him is to use the motif’s sketch to design jewelry. In his project the material interferes in the design: “I get half of my ideas from stones or materials I’m working with” (Sabbah, J. in-person interview, January 20th, 2022). Iman, on the other hand, designs tote bags, posters and other printed materials, all inspired by the motifs. She adds new layers to the design, such as colors and lines, but the basic unit of the design must be what she considers to be the ‘original’ copy of the ornament. The design procedure for both Iman and Jihad consume time due to this focus on 'authenticity' and accuracy. In the practices of interviewed artisans, this delicacy and careful attention to the 'ancient' component of their work is a frequent observation. This changes the past from a moment of inspiration to a space that is actively remembered and lived.

When Jihad and Iman walk around the old city of Jerusalem, they track and smartly observe the ornaments that they consider worthy of highlighting. Their projects require a particular type of

engagement with the surrounding culture. Tsutsumi (2015) explains how designers' sensitivity "enables them to produce objects of the familiar; a potential for bringing the world closer towards us" (Tsutsumi 2015: 9). Accordingly, designers seek to feel, find but also 'create' this sort of 'familiarity'. In the interview with Iman, she touched on this issue when she explained that her visual project acts as a tool to normalize the usage of shapes that she considers to be relevant to the collective identity, and to integrate them into daily life whether by designs or by the workshops she gives to teach this type of art. She explains that: "In my seminars, I'm trying to bring these geometries back to life. I don't want this identity to vanish or to be reduced to a collection of artifacts. I would like to see these shapes in our everyday objects, such as our bags, and for them to become familiar". By transforming motifs and shapes of historical artifacts and old buildings into design units of daily items such as bags and jewelry, Iman and Jihad make it more accessible to interact with this historical visual language and propose a new relationship with the past. As Markussen (2013) reminds us in his definition of the aesthetic dissensus, design activism can be read as a way to expose and cut across hierarchies, and to unfold systems of preserving the status quo in a nonviolent manner. Producing history in the colonial context is a curated process of place making in which the power hierarchy of the oppressor grants them the superiority to manufacture historical stories and accounts which feed into the colonial narrative. In this case, Jihad's and Iman's works contribute to producing a counter historical narrative, when they work with the historical material, which functions against the cancelation polices of the colonial regime.

Another example of sensitivity to the familiar and the surrounding cultural environment can be found in Shireen's project. Shireen incorporates everyday life scenes into the design of traditional tiles. She designs prints for ceramic tiles that are initially ornamented with 'Al-sham' patterns, and then she adds another layer of graphics – usually illustrations of local plants, birds or objects from her surroundings. In one of her design projects, Shireen captured the simple but significant aesthetic of the bread cart (a famous wooden cart used in the old city of Jerusalem) and used it in her designs to introduce a new design for what she described as "touristic boring blue tiles". A visit to her father's souvenir shop shows how the shelves where she showcases her works are very different from the rest of the shop's religious touristic souvenirs. To think of touristic gifts in a way that portrays the city as a living space and not only an old city with religious significance is what Shireen is trying to do.

Shireen collaborates with Armenian storeowners in Jerusalem's old city, who are famous for mastering tile drawings. When she approached them to print her designs, it was their first experience with printing on ceramic. She explained to me that she and the storeowner went through printing experimentation sessions:

> The man I worked with for printing on the ceramics learned more about his printing machines while we worked together [she laughs]. He owns lots of ceramic pieces and he didn't know how to print on them. He used to print before, but he didn't get good results. He asked me to change the background of my designs, but I did not accept, so he tried different printing techniques, until it worked well with him. (Salman, S. In-person interview, January 18th, 2022).

For Shireen, the time flow includes actions of pure artistic practice in which she learns about the history of her material, such as her research on the old tile factories and the patterns they used in their craft. Then she looks for inspiration from her environment, she draws/sketches her designs, then she goes through the printing experimentations. In addition to this, and like the other artisans, she is constantly reaching out to new selling and exhibition points, which requires a lot of her time and effort.

The artisans interviewed for this thesis perform diverse types of research throughout their projects. Their projects are not only time consuming in practice, but they are also conceptually demanding. It takes a long time to 'be' with the material, in which it becomes the center of the experience, which according to Kapchan (2015) enacts unexpected intimacies that confound rational understanding. Several subjective forms of the slow esthetical pedagogy in artisans' practices were demonstrated in this section. An example of this is the complex anti-machine geometries hand sketching process that Iman and Jihad follow in their work, which comes before the numerous steps of integrating this design unit within other materials. A similar practice is seen in Shireen's sensitive approach towards her daily life observations which brings another inspiration to her interest in the traditional craft of ceramic decoration.

Slowness shapes all artisans' practices, yet it manifests differently in each of their projects. Slowness is a result of their need to conceptualize their projects first by collecting information,

conducting particular types of studies on design patterns, and spending time analyzing and developing ideas, just as slowness is a result of the time required to make one item in one project. Another common aspect that defines the artisans' diverse projects is their constant revisions of their practices. For most artisans the process is as crucial as the ultimate product.

### 5.3 Artisans' Values Framework

In their slow and collective processes, the artisans adhere to systems of values that inform and shape their practices. Indeed, contemporary scholarship around heritage practices perceives concepts of identity, community, and values as frames for understanding these practices (Gradén & O'Dell 2018). According to Bratich and Brush (2011), craft work can be approached as a 'pattern' producing work that connects humans with nonhuman practices. Craft work produces new webs of networks inspired by nonhumans (Bratich and Brush 2011: 252). In the following stories we see how values act as direct motivation for daily decisions and choices and not only as conceptual or philosophical frameworks.

In her text *Principles of Earth Democracy*, Shiva (2005) provides an overarching understanding of how environmental, political and human values are connected, arguing that culture, politics and economy are not isolated from each other. In this holistic perspective, inspired by indigenous cultures, she defines *living economies* as processes of equally sharing resources and creating meaningful livelihoods, *living democracies* as acts of reclaiming freedoms and defending human rights and justice, and *living cultures* as the human connectivity with Earth and reintegrating human activities into the Earth's ecological processes and limits. Earth democracy principles fundamentally contradict the essence of settler colonial projects in which the deconstruction of such values is usually covered up with soft civilized narratives.

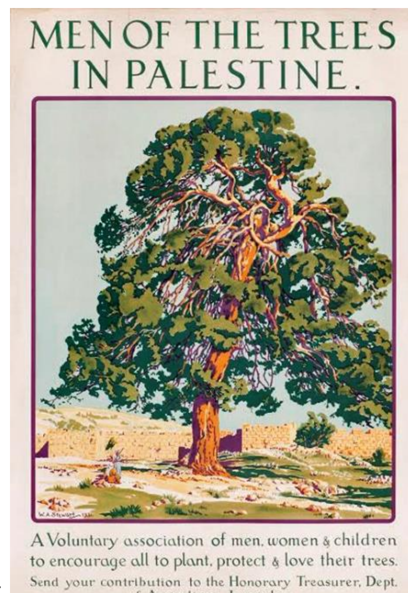


*Figure (17) W. Stewart. 1931. Poster downloaded from Palestine poster project website on April 18th, 2022.*

In the following example we can see how values of nature love were smartly promoted. A painting by W. Stewart (1931) was used in a poster by the Department of Agriculture in Jerusalem (see Figure 17). It shows a natural landscape outside the walls of the old city. It takes more research to read behind the positive

loving narrative in this poster in which the Department of Agriculture is encouraging Palestinians to 'plant, protect and love their trees'. The Department at that time was part of the British Mandate institutions. In her study 'The Implementation of British Agricultural Policy in Palestine in the 1930s', El-Eini (1996) explains how agricultural policies were deployed as part of the British on-the-ground facilitation of the establishment of the coming settler colonial regime "in order to increase land resources and therefore the economic absorptive capacity of the country" (El-Eini 1996: 215). This economical effort according to El-Eini was to provide a new place for the Jewish settlement to be established through the creation of more possibilities for immigrants. Jabaily (2004) explains how natural resources confiscation by the colonial regime had started long before its establishment: "as in the United States, settlement was a primary goal in the creation and maintenance of the State of Israel. However, rather than use treaties to gain control of natural resources, the Israeli government used and amended laws already in place" (Jabaily, 2004: 237). The laws Jabaily refers to are the ones left over from both the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate which according to her study provided the opportunity. In her article she argues for similarities in natural dispossessive strategies in the US settlement/preservation and Israeli settlement/development dichotomies.

In later contemporary policies, we can track a continuation of natural, economic, and cultural exploitation. This context explains the broader context of artisans' projects, and it shows how they define their rights and responsibilities map. In general, artisans aim to provide alternative production modes and to convey political and cultural messages, all while remaining committed to environmentally friendly practices. This can be seen as a defense of their share of ecological, cultural, economic and political space, but also on the macro scale, following Shiva (2005), as a confrontation of profit-driven globalization which aims to create cultures of exclusion, dispossession, and scarcity.

To apply this moral and value framework, I will discuss a few cases from artisans' experiences. Lara's answer to my question on how she defines the chair/stool she produces provides a good example:

> For me this chair is a craft, industry, tradition, Palestine, environmentally friendly. It is for those of us who want to sit in a sustainable chair made with

> no chemicals, with Arabic carpentry. I see all these meanings in this chair. I also see women who weave the wool and the ones making rugs. I see beautiful colors. I feel that it represents me as a person and not only things that I have mentioned.

For Lara this chair/stool symbolizes a cultural, economic and environmental project. The moral and cultural value of reviving a traditional object with its social and cultural references can also be seen as an attempt to recall the relationship with nature, and to strengthen local industries, while at the same time positioning this chair within a political context, namely an exploited and occupied land in which any form of production and economic independency is by default a political project towards justice and freedom. The goal of her project is to provide a tangible example of how young people can work together to revive not only heritage but also the weakened local economy. We can also read aspirations for independence from the occupation and the capitalist market behind her words:

> We have two options to resist occupation: either by going to the street, and confronting the occupiers directly, which is beyond my capacity, or by working to achieve economic independence and by sharing knowledge on the importance of the local economy. Maybe I'm a perfectionist, and I don't know if my way of thinking is realistic or if it will take us somewhere eventually. We need to think collectively, and we need more people to think this way to achieve an impact. I'm not only working against the occupation here; I'm also confronting old ways of thinking; I want people to understand that I'm doing this for us all. I want to cooperate with them. When I talk about my project, some people would ask: why don't you get your materials from China or Turkey? But this is not my goal.

Here we observe how the choices that Lara makes are based on a set of ethical considerations. Easier and less expensive options such as importing the wooden parts of the chair and the materials used to make the seats from countries like China and Turkey are 'not my goal' according to Lara since she prefers to cooperate with local providers. The economic independence Lara refers to has a particular meaning under occupation. The protocol on economic relations, commonly known as the Paris Protocol, which was signed between the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organisation] and

the Israeli colonial state in 1994, aimed at organizing the economic relationship between the two parties. A closer look at the implications of this agreement shows how it imposed and continues to maintain a 'draconian system' of restrictions on the Palestinians' movement of people and trade (Samhouri, 2016). In addition to the severely limited access to land, water, and other natural resources, there were also limitations on importing raw materials and machinery, and the agreement restricted Palestinians' ability to reach regional and international markets. Samhouri (2016) lists examples of the lack of sovereign control over resources under the settler colonial system: "the construction of the separation barrier, restrictions on the use of modern telecommunications technologies (e.g., third- and fourth generation high-speed services) and their related equipment and infrastructure, the lack of economic access to the resource-rich Area C (which amounts to 60% the West Bank's land), including the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea" (Samhouri, 2016: 603). According to Shiva's paradigm this inequality of shared resources intersects with humans' ecological approach towards the Earth and human rights.

We can see that Lara's project acts as an attempt to survive this cruel system by providing windows of agency and autonomy to the local economy and through reviving traditional perspectives towards the land as a resource for income and dignity. To produce this colorful stool/chair which symbolizes togetherness, intimacy, and comfort, and facilitates circles of people sitting next to each other sharing time and conversations in a modern setting, Lara recalls and activates a wide set of assemblages with Bedouin women, local artisans, and material suppliers. She believes that if the cooperation between this assemblage of people is strengthened, a stronger and more independent economy is possible.

To further understand the political aspect of their projects, De Cesari (2010) argues that the care for heritage is nationally perceived as a disposition toward the public good, and as a form of *Sumud*. Most of the interviewed artisans consider their work as a way of protecting and reviving the heritage and bringing it back to the daily scenery, or as a way of familiarizing cultural symbols and encouraging their circulation outside traditional or old frames. Artisans practice *Sumud* as a form of political activism in different forms. Their spaces and work decisions are framed and informed by this national value. As explained in the theoretical framework chapter, *Sumud* is defined as a self "de-subjectivation" mechanism (Meari 2014) which means that it explains acts of collectivity that artisans perform in their daily life under the colonial system. A direct example of

*Sumud* can be tracked in the way Jihad and Shireen deal with uncertainties surrounding their workspaces' locations. Jihad's gallery is threatened to be confiscated any day by the 'city municipality'. He mentioned that he had the chance to start his business in other cities but for him there is a meaning and value behind starting the project in Jerusalem. *Sumud* in this case is translated into the bare act of 'being' somewhere where the colonial regime does not want you to be. The simple act of being in his gallery every day is an act of *Sumud*. Shireen's father's souvenir shop, where she also owns a little work corner, is located in the Christian quarter of the city. For Shireen and her sister, their presence in the shop means a lot to their late father since his family was one of the first shop owners two hundred years ago. With most of her family members located outside Palestine today, she feels responsible to prove their existence in the shop as Christian Palestinians, even with almost three years of bad tourism seasons caused by the pandemic. *Sumud* is also embedded in the way artisans filter their clients and collaborators. Iman and Rand had received offers to work on designs for international organizations. The design offers came with political conditions on language and symbols. Rand tried to overcome these conditions and made the design in her way, but it was eventually rejected by the client, while Iman said no from the beginning. These organizations negotiated the use of certain political terminology which for both artisans represented an alteration to their artistic identities. In the previous examples we can see how heritage as an act of public good (De Cesari 2010) becomes part of the structure in which certain actions are expected from artisans. Such as 'national', 'anti-colonial' and 'anti-creativity censorship actions.

Material sustainability is another value that shapes artisans' practices. They are inspired by both local, traditional approaches towards reusing and recycling materials and also by modern environmental narratives. We can see this sensitivity towards material in Lara's care of using wool and natural dyes in her chair/stool, in narratives used on social media to promote Waad's fashion brand as 'anti-consumerism, sustainability, environmentally friendly processes', and in the choices of using recycled paper, carton and fabrics in Rand's and Iman's projects. In terms of processes, they cooperate with other handcrafters, like Bedouin women, instead of working with mass production materials providers. In their analysis of sustainable materialism, Schlosberg and Craven (2019) argue that the current sustainable movements aim at creating new systems of counterflow to face previous modes of power, and to practice just flow of everyday life goods. According to this analysis, these practices do offer an alternative flow of goods, and a sustainable system of

exchange which also challenges the politics of production that prizes ‘service’ over ‘creation’ (Williams 2011). This challenge is clearly demonstrated in ways in which artisans share knowledge and spaces. On social media, many of them explain how they work with material, and they provide contextual knowledge on their pieces. Most of them are engaged in organizing short workshops for those interested in learning their crafts. Moreover, they open their spaces for exchange and for other artisans. Rand and Jihad for instance showcase handcrafts of multiple other artisans in their little galleries.

As this thesis studies the practices of artisans and aims at situating their practices within the framework of visual resistance to the colonial regime, we see here how the abovementioned values are directly connected to ways in which craftculture functions within the Palestinian cultural and social environment through the values and choices made by the studied artisans. Reading through the set of values that overlap in various projects is interesting. On the one hand, artisans are committed to making their projects profitable and financially successful, but they also have ethical frameworks that are informed by their connection to the land, which I was able to understand through Shiva's Earth Democracy Principles that are inspired by indigenous cultures and provide a wider perspective of understanding the entanglement of economy, culture, and politics especially under settler-colonialism. Their national values were studied through concepts of Sumud and dignity, while their collective forms of production were analyzed within their attempt to find alternative just flows of goods and materials.

### 5.4 Analysis of Artisans Craftworks

This section will answer the second research question about stories and meanings conveyed through artisans’ work. I argue through the following two sub-sections that the ‘popular’ visual identity of crafts has been revolutionized by the newly introduced visual language, in which artisans *rework* traditional symbols, materials, icons, shapes and colors and they produce *counter-futuristic* narratives.

The assumption of new subjective heritage artistic language is resulted from a number of factors, one of them is the impact of the Arab spring on the Palestinian art/craft scene which created an environment for new subjective art forms to appear (Salih & Richter-Devroe 2014). We can also

witness this subjectivity in the local craft work scene. Known historically for being a family and location-oriented field, certain crafts used to be connected to particular geographies, such as the glass craft in Hebron city, soap industry in Nablus, and wood crafts in Bethlehem. Other factors might have contributed to this contemporary language, such as the arts and crafts academic programs. Today, younger artisans acquire their knowledge and also produce outside traditional structures of family and location.

The second sub-section will further the discussion on futuristic decolonized imaginaries in the artistic-heritage work that are understood through Mear's (2015) definition of *Sumud* as a way of relating self-emotions and actions to a wider collective sense of reason which entails a continuous process of making and re-making the self in a generative process of undoing the colonial fear.

### 5.4.1 **Tradition Reworked**

According to Noyes (2010), "Most of what makes folklore meaningful is not susceptible to straight copying: folklore has to be recreated, and that depends on a social context as well as on key performers" (Noyes 2010: 3). She argues that this recreational process of folklore is a learning endeavor that demands time and effort to be complex and meaningful, and practitioners have to approach it with their sense of 'honor' and 'responsibility' towards their automatically inherited tradition. In the colonial context, this sense of pride is associated with how a heritage practice "provides a way to reinstate value and pride among craftsmen and women in their struggles against alienation and exploitation" (Bshara 2020: 18). Bshara suggests another value and role for the heritage preservation work in the Palestinian context which is to protect practitioners from alienation and exploitation while he also explains that by practicing this act, a process of unlearning the colonial aesthetics and associated mode of production takes place "without falling back to straightforward vernacularism and primitivism" (Bshara 2020: 18).

In the coming examples I will show how a traditional craft and traditional visual icons were reworked in a search for complexity and novelty. The first example comes from the way Lara thinks of the chair/stool design. Lara inserted a number of changes to the chair. I asked her if she knew why the older chair was made the way it was made, with one color of straw and usually out of a few key materials. She mentioned that the available materials and the commercial movement at that time were behind that static shape that lasted in the region for decades.

*Figure 18: traditional straw chair, picture from Albaath Media website. Retrieved 2022-04-22.*

*Figure 19: Lara Salous, bar stools, posted in her Instagram account. Image used with permission from Lara.*

Lara replaced the widely used straw seat with woven wool. By this change she is not only *reworking the tradition* (Noyes 2010); she is also replacing the comfort zone of using trusted functional materials (such as straw seats) with the experimentation of a weaker yet esthetic one (handmade wool). The past as a space of inspiration and source of knowledge adds more complexity and meanings to her project. She explains that her choice of colors is inspired by local embroidery, or the work of her favorite artists: "I know that colors have significance locally. I chose colors that reflect our climate and geography. I like to have a variety of colors that give strong and energetic vibes". Moreover, Lara is constantly studying patterns and shapes that might inspire her project: "I'm interested in Persian rugs because they are full of motifs, patterns and shapes like flowers, triangles and other shapes. They are made to be visually recognised and the shapes act as signs and I have always searched if we have local interpretation for these signs or if we did copy them from other cultures [Persian and Turkish] since the local Bedouin rug has less motifs". On the day of the interview, Lara called a woman who makes rugs to ask if she was familiar with the meanings behind the patterns she uses. She also showed me a book she was reading. She was excited to learn about Foucault's interpretation of the garden as heterotopia. The third principle of heterotopia, according to Foucault, is its capability of 'juxtaposing' several spaces and sites in one real place. Rugs as reproductions of gardens function as places where the

whole world enacts its symbolic perfection. The garden is a happy universalizing heterotopia (Foucault, 1986). The openness of this space works well with Lara's aspiration to find meanings.

I could see that her research is a mean of intensifying the symbolic capital of this piece of furniture as each element of the chair holds a social and cultural story of its own. In Lara's story, the reworking of the stool/chair is a creative process, but it is also a heritage-based one where the replaced material/colors are locally rooted. The subjective, creative aspect of Lara's project is clear in her openness to learn new meanings behind its different elements. In De Cesari's (2015) proposition of heritage as a landscape repopulation she addressed renovation projects of old houses, while in these craftworks, we can see how landscape is symbolically repopulated and materialized through the creation of these daily life objects, such as Lara's chairs/stools and or other handmade craftworks. This is a usage which activates remembrance and belonging feelings to times and spaces it refers to.

Another example of this theme of *reworking* tradition is Iman's redesign of the local headscarf, *Keffiyeh*. In Figure 22 we see the traditional *Keffiyeh*. The lines and patterns of *Keffiyeh* have different interpretations. Some people read its symbols as representing olive tree branches. Others read it as a fishing net. Some see sea waves within the shapes and others see wheat spikes. This variety of readings suggests that there is no single, correct interpretation. Historically, wearing *Keffiyeh* according to Swedenburg (1992) used to be a sign of geographical and class-based social categorization before the revolution of 1936 when fighters wrapped the *Keffiyeh* around their heads, which provided them with anonymity and distinguished them from spies, thereby helping them escape British capture. Arab revolutionaries against the Ottoman Turks wore *Keffiyeh* as a way of rebelling against wearing the Turkish 'fez'. Swedenburg explains that *Keffiyeh* as a symbol of national coherence was one of the few symbols that survived the repressions of the Israeli occupation, unlike other symbols such as the flag. This symbol did, however, attract the attention of the Israeli army during the first Intifada (i.e., series of popular uprisings) of 1989 which was targeting 'masked' people (Swedenburg 1992). We can also say the same thing about the symbolic representations of this piece today.

*Figure 22: traditional Keffiyeh. Picture from Ethnic-Market website.*

In her designs, though, Iman changes the traditional design of *Keffiyeh* and replaces familiar patterns with Islamic geometric motifs. Iman chose to send me an example of her work to demonstrate how she likes to combine two different times and designs together (see Figure 23). This design is an example of how familiar iconography is ingrained enough to incorporate more icons while preserving its significance. This *rework* method is an experimental exploration of how religious and national cultural symbols can live together in one piece. In her project we can see how icons are reworked while their meaning mediums are expanding to carry more references. In his theorization of the history of Arab political nationalism in the nineteenth century, the intellectual Azmi Bishara (Alrai, 2007) argues that Islamic civilization functioned as a cultural umbrella for Arab nationalists of different religions. The general character of Arabism according to him, whether Islamic or secular, was relaxed within the framework of the Islamic civilization, ensuring that Arabism and Islam were generally inseparable. At that time, Christian Arab intellectuals perceived historical Islamic political figures such as *Salaheddin* as national heroes for their historical role in 'liberating' Arabic lands from intruders (Alrai, 2007). This collective overall view on identity explains how the two cultural signs in Iman's design might seem visually as a new proposition of *Keffiyeh* but the meaning behind this work has cultural references.

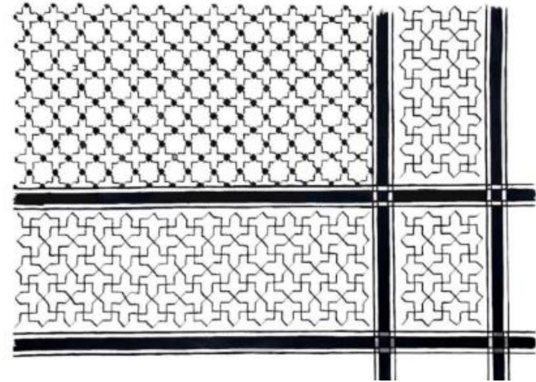

*Figure 23 Iman Hamdieh, redesign of Keffiyeh; the national scarf, using Islamic geometric motifs. Image from Iman's Instagram, used with her permission*

When Iman is expanding the geography of symbols used in the scarf, she is challenging the national imaginary of this item. In doing so, she is drawing on "art's ability to rework 'the frame of our perceptions and the dynamism of our affects', and to generate new forms of political subjectivity" (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2014: 18). At the same time, her work with geometrics is, in itself, considered a challenge to social norms. She was laughing when she told me that in Jerusalem there is only one retired old male who inherited this craft from his father, he is currently working from his house, and was suggested by her friends to teach her the craft. We both thought of the 'age' and 'sex' of those who can transmit this craft to the younger generation, and how this has drastically changed nowadays with more young people learning it in other countries like Iman

and Jihad who took courses in Egypt, Spain and Turkey. Another key finding in this thesis is the transformation of some crafts from male-dominated ones into a more diverse space.

Other examples of tradition rework can be found in the work of Waad and Shireen. They both obtained a deep knowledge of traditional crafts through their families or educational backgrounds, and then they decided to avoid lazy forms of copying and initiated designs that combine heritage elements such as the stitch or the tiles patterns with new materials and visual layers. The methodology of thinking and making reworked artforms requires and results in subjective expression forms in which the delicate treatment of folkloric elements of artisans' work triggers complex and meaningful recreational processes.

### 5.4.2 **Futuristic Elements**

This section will approach reworked projects by focusing on the component of imagination they hold. According to Abu Hatoum (2021), "Palestinian artists and writers have started rigorously to engage with the future of Palestine through speculative fiction" (Abu Hatoum 2021: 400). Another example in this field is Gil Z. Hochberg's book *Becoming Palestine* (2021), in which she examines contemporary Palestinian artists' use of archives in imagining a Palestinian future unrestricted by colonial space and time. Imagining the future of Palestine is a thematic direction in the work of the studied artisans. This can be seen in light of how cultural heritage acts as a way "to divide space and constitute collectives through embodied practices and engagement" (Gradén & O'Dell 2018: 6). In this section I will discuss how imaginaries are not only informing the presentation of heritage materials, but also supporting collective space acquisitions by *normalizing* the presence of what used to be perceived as 'lost' or 'purified' because of the colonial condition.
As individual and collective acts of *waiting* in artisans' daily practices were discussed and analyzed in previous sections, here I focus on the presentation of *waiting* in craft works, as an active embedded act of *Sumud*. According to Jamal (2016), the transformation of the homeland into a spiritual goal happens through a process of 'purification' that aims at protecting time from the space of contemporaneity by using a common myth as a time expanding mechanism. As a result, prolonged waiting and 'expectations' become what Jamal refers to as a universal Palestinian characteristic (Jamal 2016). This shared world is a different mode of existence, one in which the 'whole world' is never achieved without the essential act of imagination (Willim 2017). To approach imaginaries and futurism in artistic and crafts practices, Parikka (2018) argues that in the

context of Afrofuturism time turns into a central field of struggle in both a symbolic and an economic sense. In this context, cultural activism is based on the necessity to act towards the future as much as the past. According to Parikka, the generated counter-futurism in visual practices acts as means to displace hegemonic powers systems and to "investigate the conditions of existence of the contemporary moment" (Parikka 2016: 41).

*Figure 24: Notebook cover. Image taken by researcher, used with permission from Rand.*

By visually relocating names and signs of the occupied cities of Jaffa, Tyberia, Akko, and Bisan from a distant unreachable terrain of imagination into a tangible design of a notebook cover, Rand employs a futuristic approach towards the current moment (see Figure 24). The town of Um Reshrash, which was renamed Eilat after its occupation in 1947, appears with its original name in her design in an act of reclamation of the symbolic reference of the place. She also refers to Ben Gurion airport -which was named after the establisher of the colonial regime; David Ben-Gurion and was built over the ruins of the Palestinian al-Lydd airport-by its original name. The contemporary rejection of the entry visa of refugees to the land of Palestine is replaced by the 'approved' stamp in her design which resembles a futuristic scenario in which refugees can return to the land. Here again we see how contemporary designs such as Rand's use the urban signs, such as names of cities, as a reference of the land instead of the previous focus on the village landscape in artistic works. The colorful 'happy' icons in her design indicate a hopeful futuristic agency towards the future while also referring to past symbols. For instance, the oranges in Figure 24 are a historical and political charged symbol of Jaffa city in the Palestinian memory, as the city was famous of its oranges. Currently, the fruit is struggling to survive, and its agriculture has fallen due to the colonial shift from basic agriculture to top-of-the line tech, as the land used to grow this fruit was bulldozered to make ways for malls and urban

bodies (Levingston 2020). Yet, this fruit is still present in the Palestinian memory and Rand's design shows the intimate dynamics of recalling this fruit which is deeply rooted in the Palestinian memory.

In the second interview with Rand, she told me that people have started to approach her with their old family pictures asking if she can use them in her designs. One story was of a person whose family was forcibly expelled after the war of 1948. He lives in Jordan now. He sent Rand a picture of his father and his father's passport and told her the family's story. This active form of 'waiting' includes efforts of keeping the story going. It comes from a collective approach towards *Sumud* as a virtue, which explains how this person, who knows that Rand owns a profit project, did trust her with his personal intimate story that will end up in a public space, visually designed and told by others.

*Figure 25 Summer dress design. Pictures by Ani Robakidze. Image from Waad's Instagram page, used with her permission.*

We can use the same futuristic approach to analyze other artisans' projects. For instance, the modern fashion line of Waad (see Figure 25) is an example of how the futuristic approach towards fashion, fabrics, lines, shapes – which also represents a contemporary approach towards the body image – encompasses 'national' embroidery in its pursuit and search for new meanings. Preserving embroidery or *Tartreez* in Arabic is culturally perceived as a form of resistance. Embroidery on traditional *thobes* is used as a medium to show symbolic references in which certain stitches do hold signs of the land, or other national symbols. This situates Waad's project within slow forms of resistance and within what De Cesari (2010) refers to as reclamation of memory and space through

the technology of presence. The technology works here as an educational method as well, where *thobes* from Jaffa city for instance are decorated with stitches in the shape of oranges, the city's famous fruit, which means that by being engaged in this process of reproducing stitches in modern dresses, Waad is contributing to the symbolic presence of this occupied city in the memory and life of those who see the stitch. The entanglement of past symbols and present outfit design within the same material acts as a carrier of futuristic aspirations of recognition. It enacts the time struggle in the existence of the contemporary moment (Parikka 2015) through suggesting a variety of time connotations.

In the above-mentioned examples of heritage work, the dissensus exceeds the act of creating a counter memory; it maps out a different Palestine (De Cesari 2010). This visual language confronts the power order by envisioning a counter future in which a return to the pre-colonial time is possible. This brings us back to Parikka's argument of time as a space of struggle in artistic media forms since the recreation of reality is connected to 'modalities of time': "And those modalities of time both as technical infrastructures and as they are circulated for example in popular culture and contemporary art participate in conditioning experience too" (Parikka 2016: 44). The idea of conditioning experiences intersects with art's ability to produce new shared vocabularies and new mutual imaginaries (Salih & Richter-Devroe 2014) which is an essential character in all the projects mentioned above, as many artisans mentioned that their projects were perceived as new/unusual by their surroundings.

What this section proposed is an aesthetically futuristic element behind artisans' treatment of material based on their propositions of new narratives and production modes. This proposition intersects with De Cesari's (2010) framing of the contemporary heritage movement as a resistant project. This perspective shifts the function of old materials from a static source, into an open memory of life pre the settler colonial era, a time where materials, symbols, objects, and narratives existed in a different mode. The cyclical movement of time, however, enables a possible usage of these materials in futuristic design concepts and producing counter futuristic narratives.

# 6. Conclusion

## 6.1 Main Findings and Reflections

The aim of this thesis was to situate the practices and works of young Palestinian artisans within the framework of visual resistance to the settler-colonial regime. To do so, the study was designed to answer two main research questions. The first one was connected to artisans' daily practices and their experiences of time, space, and material. The second question addressed the stories and messages artisans conveyed through their craftworks. At the same time, and while studying craftculture, interesting findings related to the characteristics of the contemporary heritage movement in Palestine were discussed and highlighted. This section will deepen the discussion on the main findings.

To answer the first research question on artisans' daily practices, the study tracked three entangled dimensions of time experiences; the perceived slow time, the lived time in which attunement to material and assemblages of people and material were deeply experienced, and the third dimension was the surrounding controlled time that is usually experienced through *waiting* as an active act of confronting the colonial time politics. The thesis also analyzed artisans' attunement to material through their sensitive attention to the familiar and gave an insight of how their values systems informed their daily practices.

In their perceived time experiences, artisans performed repetitive body movements, sometimes the same piece of design needed to be executed more than once, repetition means living longer with the material, relocating the self-outside the process, and practicing different emotions caused by this lengthy encounter, including happiness, frustration, anger, calmness. This dialogue with the material reached a deeper level through the shared experiences of learning and working together with the raw material providers and other practitioners. The lived time expanded to include the experiences of former practitioners such as women who used to weave wool in Lara's project. It expanded when Waad collaborated with refugee women who master certain stitches, and it also expanded when the design projects were based on researching stories and histories of the materials they use in their designs. Craft practices exceeded the handwork with material and included sharing intimate experiences and new knowledge. A knowledge that is needed to articulate linkages

between the present and the past which consequently informed their contemporary designs in both levels of practice and meaning making.

Through understanding these experiences of the lived time, another dimension of time was unfolded. It was necessary to capture the wider frame of waiting that frames the practices of artisans. Waiting, as a time experience, was not only manifested in their lengthy processes but it was also embedded in their personal stories. Waiting was discussed in its connection to the limited accessibility artisans have to the colonized spaces. The slow time flow was lived as a form of resistance to the easy, straightforward production processes. The active waiting experiences in this study were framed by combining two concepts. The first one was Meari's (2014) Sumud, which she defined as a continuous process of making and re-making the self in a generative process of undoing the colonial fear. The heritage work as a process of reproducing stories of the past can be approached as a process of making and re-making the self. Re-visiting stories that were subjected to cancellation in the colonial narratives is an act of remaking the self. At the same time, the colonial fear, that resulted from various forms of spatial violence was confronted by artisans' persistence to critically approach the colonial borders of the 'allowed' spaces of being and doing. They do collaborate with material providers, practitioners, and storytellers no matter what the limitations were, which is again not the easiest straightforward way of doing things. The second concept that informed this discussion was the ontology of waiting (El Shakry 2021) in which a disruption of colonial time politics takes place within the creative and cultural production. The creative work of producing craftwork here, while it documented and interacted with other experiences of collective waiting, did contribute to the narrative-making process of decolonization. Yet the contribution of this thesis to El Shakry's application of the term is the demonstration of how waiting is not only expressed in the final product of the cultural project, but it was embedded in the slow processes of production.

The second characteristic of artisans' practices that was analyzed and discussed in the study was the ways in which artisans approached the material through their skills of being sensitive to the familiar. They treated their surrounding landscape, architecture, and community as a resource in their concepts' development processes. Surrounding visual scenes were carefully noticed in their work and turned into a research project. This noticing process can be also analyzed as an awareness of the present time. This phase of their work might be one of the times in which they are deeply

present in the current moment. A presence that is necessary for this attentive part of their work. Moreover, and through this process, artisans were engaged in the place making through their propositions of using on-site visual observations in designing daily objects in an attempt to normalize the scenery of these icons/shapes in personal objects such as bags and notebooks. While doing so, they contributed to producing a counter-historical narrative, which functioned against the cancelation policies of the colonial regime.

On the values level, a set of different values were put together to provide a comprehensive reading of the background motivations behind the practices and visual language that the studied artisans decided to adopt. Interestingly, it felt natural and relevant to link artisans' answers to the question of 'why' to Shiva's (2005) vision of how the economy, culture, and politics are connected. Issues of environment, nature, and political and economic justice were equally present in their projects. *Sumud* on the other hand explained their choices of raw material, and tendencies to include national connotations in their work, and also explained their decisions to resist displacement and censorship. Their projects were also aware of environmental and sustainability obligations. This was directly communicated through their pages and informed their choices of raw material and people they work with.

The second research question was about stories and meanings conveyed through artisans' work. The world-making and futuristic narratives informed the main argument in this discussion. As tradition was reworked in different ways in artisans' projects, whether through introducing new material, new shapes for national icons, or introducing counter-futuristic elements to portray and imagine a future Palestine, freed from colonization, with land and symbols reclaimed. Within this part of the analysis, it was clearer that time flow in creative craftculture practices was closer to Abu Hatoum's (2021) proposition of viewing time as cyclical, which, unlike De Cesari's (2010) worldmaking approach, does not necessarily result in the creation of a nation-state but rather a vision of decolonization and what Abu Hatoum refers to as future-oriented struggle for freedom (Abu Hatoum, 2021). Nevertheless, through studying artistic craftworks inspired by the past, this thesis adds another layer to this discussion of world-making through showing how the attunement to material provoked networks and assemblages amongst the artisans and their collaborators, which were framed by their experiences of waiting as an active form of disrupting the temporal colonial time systems as El Shakry (2021) explains. Here we can closely read the past impact in

this time cycle not only as a symbolic remembered moment but rather as a space for bonding with the present temporal moment. This happens, for instance, when Waad cooperates with refugee women in hand-making time and space-inspired stitches, or when Rand uses particular past references of cities and locations in her designs. References that were subjected to colonial canceling policies are presented in her designs in a futuristic daring yet aesthetic language.

Artisans' approach to the traditional visual identity of crafts came as a bonding bridge with history and not as cancelation or refusal of previous working traditions or materials. Previously used materials were carefully studied and the ways in which crafts persons used to do things were negotiated to come up with modern production styles, and the past as a source of inspiration was respected yet tailored to fit urban settings and contemporary tastes. The delicate and careful usage of the past material was combined with a revolutionary approach toward the future. It allowed for the emergence of a new visual vocabulary in which previous heritage narratives were challenged, and multiple signposts of time interacted inside the same craftwork. This approach acted as a courageous presence technology in which modern designs of clothes, printed materials, furniture, and jewelry had strong statements about time and space. They provided examples of how different time modalities in these works can condition experiences (Parikka 2015).

It was argued in this thesis that heritage practices can also be used to tell futuristic stories. Nevertheless, heritage as a framework hosted numerous time experiences, including the past, present, and future.

### 6.2 **Applicability and Indications of Further Research Needs**

The situated time and space experiences in Palestine provide a complex yet interesting approach to framing and understanding artistic activism. The context of settler colonialism showed how local terms such as *Sumud* were more applicable and explanatory in understanding why and how people do what they do in their daily lives. On the other hand, the thesis took the discussion on *Sumud* to other areas, namely the area of aesthetic heritage practices. This application showed also how the time component of Sumud entangled with the slowness of artisans’ practices and provided a deeper meaning to their lived time experiences.

On the other hand, it was noted during the research process that further research on the applicability of other conceptual frameworks such as craftivism (Greer, 2014) is needed. Important knowledge on forms of aesthetic activism will be produced through studying such applicability, especially in terms of how activism and materiality work differently in different political and social contexts.

In addition to the above mentioned, this thesis produced new knowledge on the contemporary heritage movement in Palestine, through studying the heritage practices of young artisans. the following points provide a summary of this point:

1. This thesis widened the understanding of the landscape of actors in the heritage movement. While De Cesari (2010) overviewed this movement through the work of NGO sector in Palestine, this thesis has, by contrast, highlighted individual actors' contributions to this movement. Their critical perspectives toward the authorities and institutions and their professional ambitions explain their tendency towards independence. Yet, they collaborate with each other and share spaces and knowledge.

2. Young artisans introduced new practices and narratives that challenged traditional production structures such as family, gender, and location, and they were also self-sufficient in terms of governmental and non-governmental support. They challenged the conventional production modes and infrastructures of family and location in which crafts were previously transmitted and inherited in Palestine. More females are interested in crafts that were known to be male dominated as we saw in Iman's experience. Moreover, and in contrary to what De Cesar' (2010) suggested in her study of Palestinian heritage in which the heritage movement in Palestine was a governance project of the non-governmental sector funded mainly by the foreign fund, mainly European funds. This thesis presented other forms of heritage work that are less reliant on such sector. In fact, artisans did challenge creativity censorship that came with conditional foreign funds as some stories in this thesis proved.

3. The subjective heritage artistic language introduced in this thesis included ways in which artisans had their own say in local ways of looking at heritage and negotiated production processes. They challenged the easy straightforward copying of the tradition, but also,

they were courageous enough to challenge the design of icons and located traditional materials in contemporary settings.

4. Artisans had their special treatment for the issue of city/village dichotomy in heritage work. In conventional heritage work, organizations and actors are used to highlight the lifestyle and landscape of the village, in reference to the Palestinian lost relationship with the colonized land. By mixing materials from both the village and the city in their projects, artisans reacknowledge the modernity project of the Palestinian city which was disrupted by the establishment of the colonial regime. Moreover, they redefined the heritage work by introducing this new visual language in which heritage can be understood in relation to its relevance to both the city and the village. This perspective is also important because it means that artisans as researchers are keener to explore stories that are not limited to the previous understanding of heritage work. We witnessed this approach in Iman and Jihad's work on the history of Jerusalem city, in Rands' focus on visual elements of cities such as doors, and in Lara's work to design furniture suitable to urban settings.

On a more applicable level, this research is relevant to the national discussion on heritage work. It benefits actors at the level of policymaking and practitioners. On one hand, the discussion on heritage needs to be broadened to include the accomplishments and needs of individual practitioners in terms of production infrastructures. It was clear in the thesis how artisans' practices provided examples of independent and national heritage work, but it was also clear that political and sometimes financial challenges may prevent them from sustaining their projects. Therefore, a more structured channel of support that is in line with their values is important. On the other hand, with my understanding of artisans' critical approaches toward conventional infrastructures and governmental and non-governmental organizations, I believe that their creative projects should get more attention, especially from the cultural and artistic organizations in Palestine. This could take place when the creative components of their crafts are viewed and acknowledged as artwork which is again another topic of further research on how the two fields of crafts and art were historically framed in Palestine.

Artisans can also benefit from this study. The in-depth analysis of their practices and works could inform messages in which they communicate their stories to their community and clients. By communicating the symbolic value of their work, they can ensure both a better understanding of their work and a better appreciation of their surroundings. As many artisans informed me of how their handwork is not appreciated enough and is unfortunately compared to ready-to-use or to wear objects in the market. Artisans do share their processes via social media platforms, and they target a wide range of audiences. It is a matter of strengthening the content they convey and making it more process and value oriented.

Finally, this thesis captured moments of the potential appearance of such projects and initiatives while it acknowledges possibilities of disappearance and fragility which might take place when individuals/collectives resist systems of power. It is also from a creative perspective that generative disappearances might take place to open windows for new readings and propositions of the future. I feel ethically obliged to point out this possibility since frustrations and vulnerabilities were also part of what artisans shared with me. They are aware of how their projects are flourishing in a challenging environment. Nonetheless, they took the challenge of ‘being’ and doing what they are slowly yet creatively doing.

## 7. References List

Abu Hatoum, N. (2021). Decolonizing [in the] future: scenes of Palestinian temporality. *Geografiska Annaler Series B: Human Geography*, *103*(4), 397–412. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/04353684.2021.1963806

Abu Hatoum, N. (2019). Unsettling Visual Politics: Militarized Borders in the Work of Palestinian Artist Raeda Saadeh. *American Quarterly, 71*(4), 1059–1067. https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2019.0077

Alkhalili, N., & Lunds universitet. Institutionen för kulturgeografi och ekonomisk geografi. (2017). Between Sumud and submission. [Elektronisk resurs]: Palestinian popular practices on the land in the edge areas of Jerusalem. Lund University, Faculty of Social Science, Department of Human Geography.

Asdal, K. (n.d.). What is the issue? The transformative capacity of documents. *Distinktion, 16*(1), 74–90. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/1600910X.2015.1022194

Anani, N (2019). Emerging to the Light. Institute for Palestinian Studies

Aspers, P. (2009). Empirical Phenomenology: A Qualitative Research Approach (The Cologne Seminars). *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology, 9(2)*, 1–12. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/20797222.2009.11433992

Benjamin, W. (2008). The work of art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction. Penguin.

Birkbak, A. Petersen, M. Jensen, T (2015). Critical Proximity as a Methodological Move in Techno-Anthropology. *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology* 19:2 (Spring 2015): 266–290.

Bishara, A. (2003). turuhat ‘an al nahda al mu'aqa [Theses on a Deferred Awakening], Beirut: Riyadh al-Rayes

Bratich, J. Z., & Brush, H. M. (2011). Fabricating Activism: Craft-Work, Popular Culture, Gender. *Utopian Studies, 22*(2), 233–260. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.5325/utopianstudies.22.2.0233

Brichet, N., & Hastrup, F. (2018). Industrious Landscaping: The Making and Managing of Natural Resources at Søby Brown Coal Beds. *Journal of Ethnobiology, 38*(1): 8-23. https://doi.org/10.2993/0278-0771-38.1.008

Bshara, K. (n.d.). Building Crafts in Palestine: From Production to Knowledge Production. *Journal of Modern Craft, 13*(1), 77–81. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/17496772.2020.1735130

Bucholtz, M. (2000). The Politics of Transcription. *Journal of Pragmatics: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language Studies, 32*(10), 1439–1465. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00094-6

Burton, A. Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories. In Archive stories: facts, fictions, and the writing of history. (2005). Duke University Press.

De Cesari, C. (2010). Creative Heritage: Palestinian Heritage NGOs and Defiant Arts of Government. *American Anthropologist, 112*(4), 625-637. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2010.01280.x

Dixon, K. (2015). A woman's place recurring: structuration, football fandom and subcultural subservience'. *Sport in Society, 18*:6, 636-651. ISSN 1743-0445

El-Eini, R. I. M. (n.d.). The implementation of British agricultural policy in Palestine in the 1930s. *Middle Eastern Studies, 32*(4), 211–250. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/00263209608701127

El Shakry, H. (2021). Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible. Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies, 23(5), 669–690. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/1369801X.2021.1885471

Foucault, M., & Miskowiec, J. (1986). Of Other Spaces. *Diacritics, 16*(1), 22–27. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.2307/464648

Gradén, L., & O'Dell, T. (2018). Introduction: Museums and the Performance of Heritage in Nordic Contexts. *Scandinavian Studies, 90*(3), 311-330. https://doi.org/10.5406/scanstud.90.3.0311

Greer, B. (2014). Craftivism: the art of craft and activism. Arsenal Pulp Press.3

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14* (3): 575-599.

Issacs, E. (2013) The Value of Rapid Ethnography. In Jordan, B. (Ed.), *Advancing Ethnography in Corporate Environments: Challenges and Emerging Opportunities.* (pp. 92-107)

Jabaily, A. (2004). Water Rites: A Comparative Study of the Dispossession of American Indians and Palestinians from Natural Resources. *Georgetown International Environmental Law Review, 16*(2), 225–246.

Jamal, A. (2016). Conflict Theory, Temporality, and Transformative Temporariness: Lessons from Israel and Palestine. *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical & Democratic Theory, 23*(3), 365–377. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1111/1467-8675.12210

Kapchan, D. (2016). Slow Activism: Listening to the Pain and Praise of Others. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 48(1), 115–119. http://www.jstor.org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/stable/43998794

Landén, A. (2011). From ethnographic 'self '- discovery to processes of identification *Qualitative Research 11*(5) 536–551. DOI: 10.1177/1468794111413238.

Levingston, I. (2020). The End of the Jaffa Orange. Bloomberg Businessweek, 4648, 29–30.

Löfgren, O. (2015). The Black Box of Everyday Life. Entanglements of Stuff, Affects, and Activities. *Cultural Analysis, 13*, 77–98.

Markussen, T. (2013) The Disruptive Aesthetics of Design Activism: Enacting Design Between Art and Politics. *Design Issues*, Winter 2013, (29), No. 1, 38-50. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24267101

Meari, L. (2014). Sumud: A Palestinian Philosophy of Confrontation in Colonial Prisons. *South Atlantic Quarterly 113*(3):547-578. Doi:10.1215/00382876-2692182

Meneley, A. (2021). Eating Wild: Hosting the Food Heritage of Palestine. *PoLAR: The Political and Legal Anthropology Review, 44*(2), 207–222. Doi: 10.1111/plar.12446

Merrifield, Andrew (1993). Place and Space: A Lefebvrian Reconciliation. In: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1993), pp. 516-531

Myzelev, A, (2022). Craftivism Between Nationalism and Activism in Ukraine and Belarus. *Frontiers in Sociology, 6*. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.3389/fsoc.2021.659103

Noyes, D. (2011). Traditional Culture: How Does It Work? *Museum Anthropology Review*. 5(1-2), 39-47.

O'Dell, T., & Willim, R. (2011). Composing Ethnography. *Ethnologia Europaea, 41*(1), 27–40.

Paxson, H (2010). Locating Value in Artisan Cheese: Reverse Engineering Terroir for New-World Landscapes. *American Anthropologist, 112* (3), 444–457

Pappe, I. (2007). The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine. Oneworld Publications.

Parikka, J (2018) Middle East and other Futurisms: Imaginary Temporalities in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture. *Culture, Theory and Critique, 59*:1, 40-58, DOI: 10.1080/14735784.2017.1410439

Pink, S. (2008). An urban tour: The sensory sociality of ethnographic place-making. *Ethnography, 9*(2), 175–196.

Saleh, S. (2016). The Politics of Sumud: Former Palestinian Women Prisoners Experience of Incarceration under Israeli Occupation. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.25602/GOLD.00019422

Salih, R. & Richter-Devroe, S. (2014). Cultures of Resistance in Palestine and Beyond: On the Politics of Art, Aesthetics, and Affect. *The Arab Studies Journal (22)* 8-27. Special Issue: Cultures of Resistance.

Samhouri, M. (2016). Revisiting the Paris Protocol: Israeli-Palestinian Economic Relations, 1994–2014. *Middle East Journal, 70*(4), 579–607.

Schechner, Richard 2006. What is performance? In Performance Studies. UK: Routledge.

Scheer, M. (2012). Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion. *History and Theory 51*(2): p. 193–220. ISSN: 1468-2303.

Schlosberg, D., & Craven, L. (2019). Sustainable Materialism: Environmental Movements and the Politics of Everyday Life (First ed.). Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198841500.003.0004

Shiva, V. (2005). Earth democracy - justice, sustainability and peace. Zed Books Ltd.

Skeggs, B. (2002). Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable. SAGE Publications Ltd. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446217597.n2

Stewart, W. A. (1944). The Recent Development of Crafts and Industries in Palestine. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 14*(5), 265–270.

Swedenburg, T. (2021). Seeing Double: Palestinian/American Histories of the Kufiya. *Michigan Quarterly Review, 60*(1), 341–362.

Tsing, A. (2010). Arts of Inclusion. Or How to Love a Mushroom. *Manoa, 22*(2), 191–201. (10 pp.) http://australianhumanitiesreview.org/2011/05/01/arts-of-inclusion-or-how-to-love-a-mushroom/

Tsutsumi, M. (2013). What Does It Mean to Be a Materially Attuned Practitioner? In *International conference for design education researchers.* (1-22) DRS CUMULUS Oslo 2013. http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/5847/1/What_does_it_mean_to_be_a__materially_attuned__practitioner_.pdf

Wall, Sarah. (2008). Easier said than Done: Writing and Autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 7*, No.1: 38-53 https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/160940690800700103 (16 pp.)

Williams, K. A. (2011). “Old Time Mem’ry”: Contemporary Urban Craftivism and the Politics of Doing-It-Yourself in Postindustrial America*. Utopian Studies: Journal of the Society for Utopian Studies, 22*(2), 303–320. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.5325/utopianstudies.22.2.0303

Willim, R (2017). Imperfect Imaginaries. Digitization, Mundanisation and The Ungraspable. In G. Koch (Ed.), *Digitization: Theories and concepts for empirical cultural research 25* (53–77). Routledge.

Willim, R. (2017). Art probing and worldmaking: Exploring Museum imaginaries. *Hamburger Journal Für Kulturanthropologie, 7*, 77–97.

Web pages

*Alhoash Gallery,* 2021. Retrieved 2022-04-12 from shorturl.at/cnwDI

*Al Rai Newspaper*, 2007. Retrieved 2022-04-20 from shorturl.at/qCHTV

*Duke University,* 2021. Retrieved 2022-04-22 from *https://www.dukeupress.edu/becoming-palestine*

*Insaniyyat*, 2018. Retrieved 2022-01-02 from https://insaniyyat.org/palestinian-sumoud-limits-and-possibilities

*Pal Journeys*. 2021. Retrieved 2022-02-15 from https://www.paljourneys.org/en/timeline/highlight/10593/palestinian-visual-arts-iv

*The Arab Weekly*, 2019. Retrieved 2020-04-10 from https://thearabweekly.com/how-palestinian-art-evolved-under-siege.

*Oxford bibliographies*, 2017. Retrieved 2020-04-20 from https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0029.xml

*Darza.* Profile page. Retrieved 2020-04-12 from https://www.instagram.com/darzastudio/?hl=en

Interviews

Asli, Kareem (2022-02-01). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

Dabboor, Rand (2022-01-17) and (2022-01-19). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

Haj Ahmad, Sabreen (2022-01-26). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

Hamdieh, Iman (2022-02-03). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

Hammad, Waad (2022-02-03). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

Sabbah, Jihad (2022-01-15) and (2022-01-20). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

Salman, Shireen (2022-01-18). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

Salous, Lara (2022-01-09) and (2022-01-16). Interviewer Iman Sharabati

## 8. List of Figures:

Figure 1: Lara Salous, regular and bar stools, posted in her Instagram account. Image used with permission from Lara.

Figure 2: Salah Edin pulpit from inside Al-Aqsa Mosque. Image from Iman’s Instagram, used with her permission.

Figure 3: Iman Hamdieh. Modern lighting unit with revived motifs from the Salah Edin pulpit. Image from Iman's Instagram, used with her permission.

Figure 4: Process of making a necklace inspired by Islamic motifs. Image from Jihad's Instagram page, used with his permission.

Figure 5: Jihad in front of his gallery. Image from Jihad's Instagram page, used with his
Figure 6: Jihad at his working space. Taken by researcher. Used upon Jihad's permission.

Figure 7: Palestine map Necklaces made with silver and blue shell. Image from Jihad's Instagram page, used with his permission

Figures 8 and 9: Images of Waad's fashion designs. Pictures by Ani Robakidze. Image from Waad's Instagram page, used with her permission.

Figure 10: Shireen Salman at her father's shop. Picture by researcher, used with permission from Shireen.

Figure 11: Coasters decorated with Sham tile. Image from Shireen's' Instagram account, used with her permission

Figure 12: Metal bookmarks. Image from Sabreen's Instagram account, used with her permission.

Figure 13: Laila Khalid sticker, Rand Dabboor design. Image from Rand's Instagram, used with her permission.

Figure 14: A workshop at Rand's Gallery. Image from Rand's Instagram, used with her permission.

Figure 15: Notebook designed with the doors of the city and its famous wood crafts and Arabic calligraphy in the background. Image from artisan's Instagram page, used with her permission

Figure 16: A poster of a woman from Jerusalem, designed with the Sun bird of Palestine and a poetic text. Image from the artisan's Instagram page, used with her permission

Figure 17: W. Stewart. 1931. Poster from Palestine poster project website. Retrieved 2022-04-18 from https://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/men-of-the-trees-in-palestine

Figure 18: Traditional straw chair, picture from Albaath Media website. Retrieved 2022-04-22 from: shorturl.at/pAFU6

Figure 19: Lara Salous, bar stools, posted in her Instagram account. Image used with permission from Lara.

Figure 20: Traditional Keffiyeh. Picture from Ethnic-Market website. Retrieved 2022-04-22 from: shorturl.at/rvT01

Figure 21: Iman Hamdieh, redesign of Keffiyeh; the national scarf, using Islamic geometric motifs. Image from Iman's Instagram, used with her permission

Figure 22: Summer dress design. Pictures by Ani Robakidze. Image from Waad's Instagram page, used with her permission.

Figure 23: Notebook cover. Image taken by researcher, used with permission from Rand.