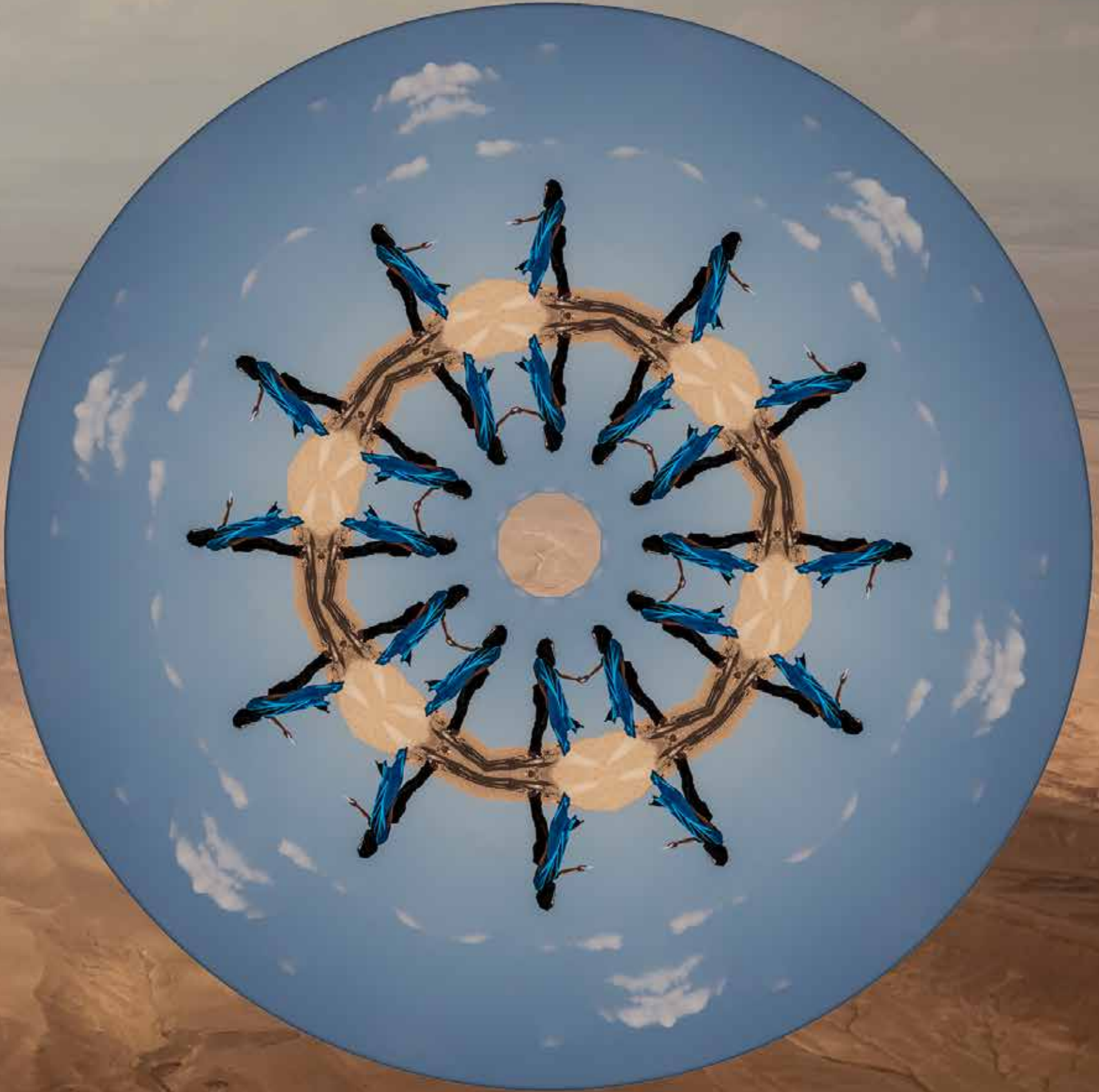


tribe **ترييب**

Photography and New Media from the Arab World



ISSUE 10/2020

INDUSTRY

Vetera Novis, Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, Dubai. For You Mother: Ayyam Gallery, Dubai. The Place I Call Home: Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, The Red Palace: Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi. Colour Bar: Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah. Past Tense: Birzeit University Museum, Palestine. Sourna: National Photography Museum, Rabat. Theater of Operations: MOMA PS1, New York. FOCUS: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas. Keyword Palestine II: Middle East Institute Gallery, Washington, D.C.. I Am Who I Am Who Am I: Anahita Contemporary, Berlin. Disclosed: United Photo Industries Gallery, Brooklyn. Staff of Life: ICA London. Plastic: Tashkeel, Dubai 12 - 15

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Editor's note

Community, cultural significance, uncertainties, belonging and reflection describes the landmark 10th edition of *Tribe*, that comes out at this time of uncertainty. The March art madness we typically wait for with abated breath in the UAE has been knocked out of left field—as the world copes with the impact of COVID-19. Major events have been postponed and others have shifted to online platforms. However, we adapt and still bring you an edition that opens to the evolving future of this publication.

To rewind, *Tribe* captures the dynamic and growing community of creatives in photography and image-based media throughout the Arab world and its diasporas. *Tribe* continues its journey, taking on additional team members, like Creative Director David Howarth.

March celebrates International Women's Day, so we would like to thank the many creative women who have cheered *Tribe* on since its inception. Sama Alshaibi encapsulates this moment on our cover and warriors on as our feature portfolio story. Her latest work takes ownership of the image while opposing problematic Orientalist framings, as Woodman Taylor, also *Tribe's* Associate Editor, explains. Other projects in this edition explore and reexamine issues of identity and belonging, transformations, reflection and memory. Exhibitions covered range from how identities are expressed on the Arab street to that of a young girl in the work of Rania Matar, as reviewed by Stella Peisch. While the viewpoints are diverse, fragility and awareness echo in both. As many returning writers engaged in conversations about and reviews of recent exhibitions, we also learn about exciting new photo galleries, in Cairo as well as the first in Yemen. In the United Arab Emirates, Sabrina DeTurk focuses on the archive in Akram Zaatari's *Against Photography*. In Saudi Arabia, Rachel Bennett describes how 21,39 grasps the community in riveting conversations while Kevin Jones reflects on the 'mirror' and photography in a new exhibition at Ithra. Meanwhile, on the streets of Lebanon, creatives take hold of the moment of chaos that reverberated through social media in the revolution—*Thawra*—of 2019.

Many have expressed a welcoming hope for 2020, so the team here looks to new ventures now postponed due to the pandemic until the Fall 2020 edition—when many art platforms and events plan to reignite. Stay safe and connected, follow us for the latest @tribephotomag.

Thank you for your indulgence. Enjoy...
Janet Bellotto

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Cover Image: Sama Alshaibi, *Ma Ijtama't Aycina 'ala Qabdah illa wa-Kanat Mu'attalah* (What our hands joined was broken) with *Mu'allaqat* (Suspended) in the background, from the *Silsila* series (2009) Digital collage.

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Writers

Aimee Dawson is the Associate Digital Editor at The Art Newspaper. She specialises in art and culture from the Middle East and North Africa having a BA in Arabic and Middle East Studies and an MA in Contemporary African and Asian art. She has contributed to a number of publications including Harper's Bazaar, Ibraaz and MOJEH, and was the writer-in-residence for Shubbak Festival of Arab Culture and Nour Festival of Arts in 2015. @amldawson

Anna Seaman is an art writer and curator, specialising in Middle Eastern contemporary art. She has been working with different publications in the Gulf for the past 12 years and also works alongside artists and cultural institutions in advisory roles. Originally from the UK, Anna began her career as a journalist working for newspapers and magazines in London. @annaseaman1

Cecilia Ruggeri received her MA from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London and is currently completing a Ph.D. in Art History at The University of Lausanne, Switzerland. She has contributed to several museum exhibitions and has published extensively on Renaissance art. She is particularly interested in the artistic exchange between the East and the West.

Dr. Effat Abdullah Fadag is an Associate Professor of Fine Art at the University of Jeddah and an artist, academic and curator working in the field of higher education since 1990. She received her BA in Islamic Art, King Abdulaziz University, MA and PhD of Fine Art from the UK. Fadag participated in the pioneering visual art movement in the Kingdom. She served as the Chair of the of Islamic Art Department at KAU, and the Dean of the Hekma School of Design and Architecture. In 2019 she was the curator of the 21,39 Jeddah Arts with the theme Al Obour or 'crossing' and Ard Altoud, with Misk Art Institute. @effatfadag

Janet Bellotto is an artist, curator, writer and educator from Toronto. A Professor of Visual Arts at the College of Arts and Creative Enterprises at Zayed University, Dubai, she engages in projects that promote cultural exchange, while examining the ever-changing world that she travels. Her work has been exhibited in a variety of collective, group and solo exhibitions, as well as at international art fairs. Her major research project on Sable Island was published in 2017 by lightbox, Venice, with MAP Office in the book *Our Ocean Guide* (2017). Her forthcoming monograph, *Planetary Fluke*, is to be published by impulse b. @janetbellotto

Katrina Weber Ashour is an arts strategy and communications specialist. Her extensive experience in the Middle East spans cultural organizations from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Lebanon and Palestine, as well as global institutions from Belgium, Canada, Hong Kong, Italy, Korea, Switzerland and across the United States. She graduated with honors from Wellesley College and is currently based in Washington, D.C. @katrinaweberashour

Kevin Jones is an independent arts writer based in Dubai. New York-born and Paris-bred, he has lived in the Middle East for the past 13 years and is currently the UAE Desk Editor for Art Asia Pacific. He has contributed to The Art Newspaper, Artforum.com, Art Review Asia and Flash Art International. Regionally, his writing has been published in Harper's Bazaar Art Arabia, Bidoun, Canvas, Brownbook and The National. Formerly a brand strategist with international branding and communications agencies, Kevin is also the creator of the niche consultancy Juniper Mind, which mingles critical and creative thinking from the art world with strategic storytelling from brand culture. The mantra: help brands be more like artists, and artists more like brands. (www.junipermind.com) @junipermind

Lizzy Vartanian Collier aka Gallery Girl is a writer and curator based in London. Her work has been featured in publications including Dazed,

Hyperallergic and Vogue Arabia. She was the curator of *Perpetual Movement* during AWAN Festival in 2018 and in 2019 had a residency at The Lab at Darat Al Funun. Later that year she co-founded Yemen's Arsheef Gallery. She has given workshops at Manara Culture in Amman, Jordan and the V&A, London. @lizzycollier

Rachel Bennett is a writer and editor who recently relocated to London. From 2013–2018, she lived in the UAE and spent significant time in Saudi Arabia, where she worked on publications on art, music, architecture and urbanism with artists, galleries and cultural organisations. @speculative.realness

Rachel Dedman is the Jameel Curator of Contemporary Art from the Middle East at the V&A, London. Until 2019 she was an independent curator based in Beirut, where she curated projects for Home Works 8 – Ashkal Alwan, Surssock Museum, Beirut Art Center, and the Palestinian Museum. In 2020, Rachel is curating Material Power: Palestinian Embroidery for Kettle's Yard and the Whitworth Gallery in the UK. @rachelddedman

Rebecca Anne Proctor is the former Editor-in-Chief of Harper's Bazaar Art Arabia and Harper's Bazaar Interiors, a role she held since January 2015. A speaker and moderator at art and cultural events, her writing has been published in The New York Times Style Magazine, Bloomberg Businessweek, Canvas, Artnet News, Frieze, BBC, Arab News, Galerie, FOLIO, The National, ArtNews and The Business of Fashion. She has also written several texts for books and catalogues on Middle Eastern art and culture. Proctor obtained her MLitt from Christie's London in Modern and Contemporary Art History, a double MA in Middle Eastern Studies and Conflict Resolution from the American University of Paris and a Master's in Sociology of Conflicts from the L'Institut Catholique. @rebeccaanneproctor

Reem Farah received a Masters degree in Migration, Mobility, and Development from SOAS, University of London and identifies as a serial student of the social sciences. Having moved to Dubai, she sees art as a medium for social commentary, awareness and impact. @teenage_bambi

Sabrina DeTurk is an art historian, curator, writer and Associate Professor in the College of Arts and Creative Enterprises at Zayed University in Dubai. Her book *Street Art in the Middle East: Place, Politics and Visual Style* was published by I.B. Tauris in 2019. @deturk13

Stella Peisch is a researcher and consultant focusing on the Middle East and North Africa region. She has worked for policy think-tanks, NGOs, academic research centers, tech companies and consulting firms focusing on dynamics, trends and current events in the region. She has a Bachelors from Georgetown in government, Arabic and justice and peace studies and a Masters from the London School of Economics in international development and humanitarian emergencies. She has recently been focusing on collective trauma in post-conflict periods, specifically on contested memories and incidences of mass killings, as well as the role of service provision in the social contract between the state and the population. She is currently based in Beirut, Lebanon and is from Cambridge, Massachusetts. @stellamla

Suzy Sikorski specializes in modern artists of the Gulf region, completing her thesis on three generations of artists in the UAE at Fordham University, New York. She was

a Fulbright Scholar in the UAE during 2016-17, furthering her thesis by documenting the pioneering Emirati artists at their studios. Currently, she is a Junior Specialist in Christie's Dubai, in Modern & Contemporary Middle Eastern Art department. Her exhibition reviews and interviews have been published in The National, Canvas, Harper's Bazaar Art Arabia and Art Asia Pacific, Oxford University Press' Benezit Dictionary of Artists and mideastart.com. She is continuing to document the pioneer artists in the UAE while also traveling throughout the Gulf on photography and research trips. @mideastart

Tara Aldughaiter is an independent curator, writer and budding sonic artist. Aldughaiter's passion for music and performance is integrated with an education in cultural communication and curatorial studies. This merge found her practice forming a special interest in curating, writing about and making art that mirrors the influence of intangible culture on society. Her independent practice is fully focused on empathy-driven initiatives that are informed by the sonic and performative elements of any context—with a special focus on retrieving women's folk culture and exploring its role in contemporary spaces. @tara3mad

Valerie Behiery is a Canadian independent scholar and arts writer whose research focuses on historical and contemporary art and visual culture from or related to the Middle East. Possessing a background in academic teaching and museum consultancy, her writing has been published in many reference works, books, art catalogues, art magazines and peer-reviewed journals.

Veeranganakumari Solanki is an independent curator, writer and researcher based in Mumbai, India. Her interest lies in the manner in which interdisciplinary forms merge with art to create dialogues that travel from public spaces into private ones and the way curatorial research can be structured around artistic practices that expand the idea of medium specificity through dialogue and story-telling. She has contributed papers and articles to several international art journals and publications. She has curated exhibitions, lectured on curating and art practices, and conducted workshops internationally at prestigious institutes and galleries. Solanki was recently the Curatorial Brooks International Research Fellow at the Tate Modern, and a resident at the Delfina Foundation (2019), and is the Programme Director for Space Studio, Baroda. @veequine

Woodman Taylor is a scholar of West and South Asian art. Trained at Harvard as a curator of Islamic and South Asian art, he later curated at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. With a University of Chicago doctorate, he taught at the University of Illinois, Chicago, Jawaharlal Nehru University and the American University in Dubai, where he was Chair of the Department of Visual Communication. Taylor has published on a wide variety of topics, including the visuality of Indian cinema and contemporary Emirati photography. In 2018, he curated *Growing a Global Community: Celebrating the NYUAD Institute*. Currently Taylor is Professor of Art History at both Dubai and Abu Dhabi campuses of Zayed University. @woodmantaylor

PROFILE

Images - Courtesy of the artist.
Writer - Valerie Behiery, arts writer.

Abu Samir from the series *Faces From Erased Places* (2015) Sepia print, 112 x 213 cm

John Halaka: Faces of Erased Places

Photography, memory and the dispossessed

Abu Samir does not look at us. His mournful eyes stare off into space somewhere over our right shoulders. His hands, framed by a striped shirt and clasped at the waist, also appear lost in thought. A landscape of rubble figures in lieu of his chest. The mound of destroyed houses topped by a lone minaret illuminates the pain etched across his creased face. Unfurled at the level of his heart, the image deciphers a life built around the burden of exile and loss. Umm Aziz's gaze is also oblique. In the central image, the elderly woman holds a poster carrying the faces of four men. Her facial expression and downcast eyes convey that the men are dead or missing. In the image on the right, her fingers are clutching a small piece of earth, a treasured, tangible memory of her homeland, long left behind.

Like all of the works in John Halaka's *Faces of Erased Places* addressing the issues of Palestinian displacement and occupation, the two photographic triptychs visually communicate the centrality of memory in contemporary Palestinian lives. Palestinians have not only been dispossessed of their land; their history and culture, along with the tragic effects of the Nakba have equally undergone endless attempts of obliteration. Because memory often remains the Palestinians' sole connection to their motherland, its survival constitutes an act of resistance. In *Will the Young Forget?*, the Palestinian-American artist consciously counters the Israeli adage "The old

will die and the young will forget." The triptych's central mandala-like photograph references the land, while the double exposures on either side narrate the transmission of cultural memory from the elders to the youth. In both photographs, a significant object is passed on; on the left, a set of keys from a lost or confiscated house promises return and, on the right, prayer beads signal the faith of hope and the hope of faith. Halaka masters the use of the multiple exposure as an aesthetic strategy to meld person and place, past and present, as well as dream and reality.

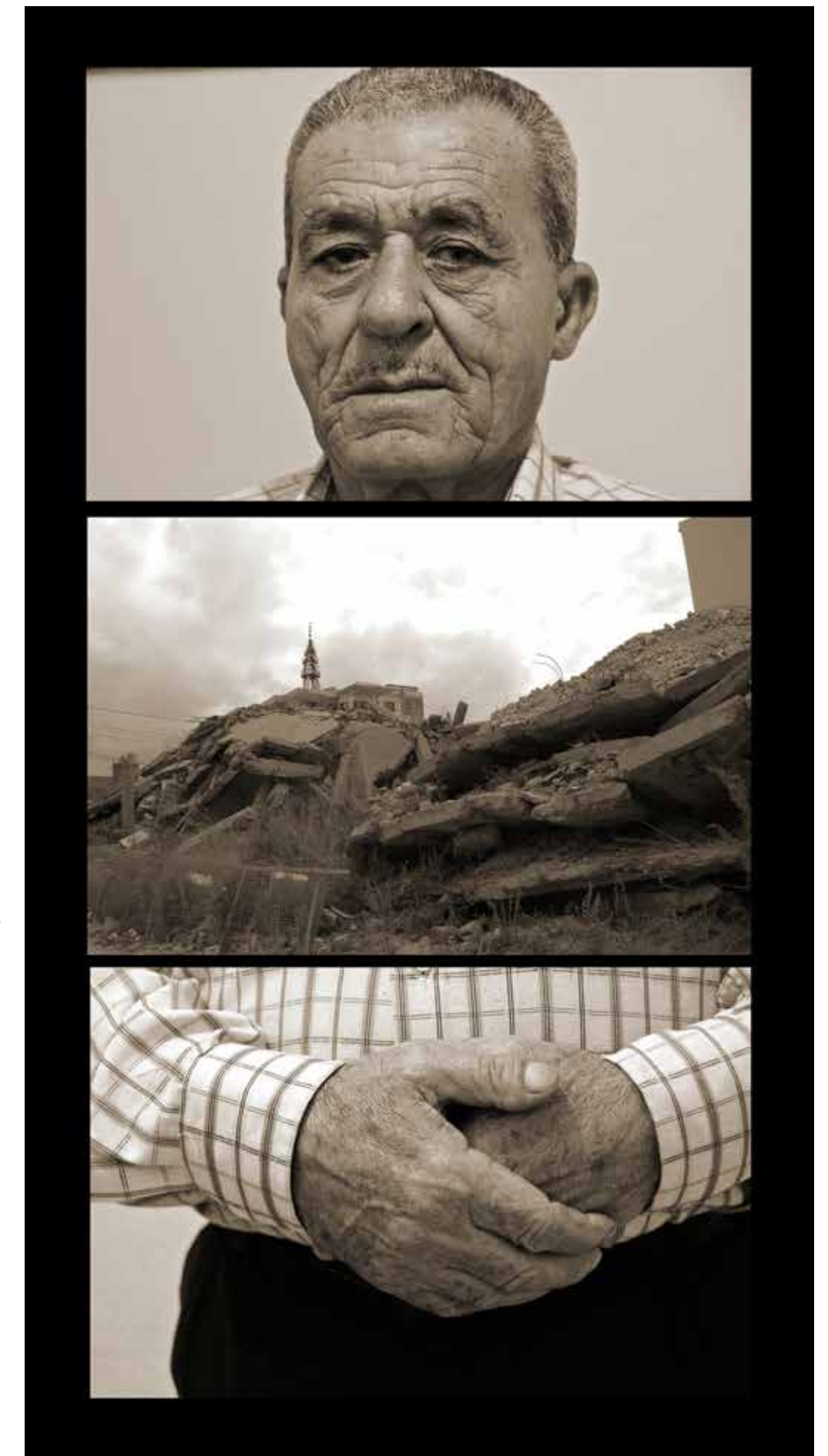
Faces of Erased Places reveals photography's capacity to act as a witness to human experience and history. The series, forming part of the much larger *Portraits of Denial & Desire* project on Palestine involving not only photography, but also drawing, film, an oral history archive, and writing, effectively possesses a documentary dimension. Contesting the erasure of Palestinians from media, political, and public discourses, *Faces of Erased Places* records the experiences of individual Palestinians, mapping, in particular, the deep existential scars that the Nakba inflicted. While the multipart portraits function as autonomous visual documents, all are accompanied by texts that succinctly recount the life stories of those represented. We learn, for example, that Abu Samir, who became a refugee at age eleven, remembers a time when Muslims, Jews and Christians

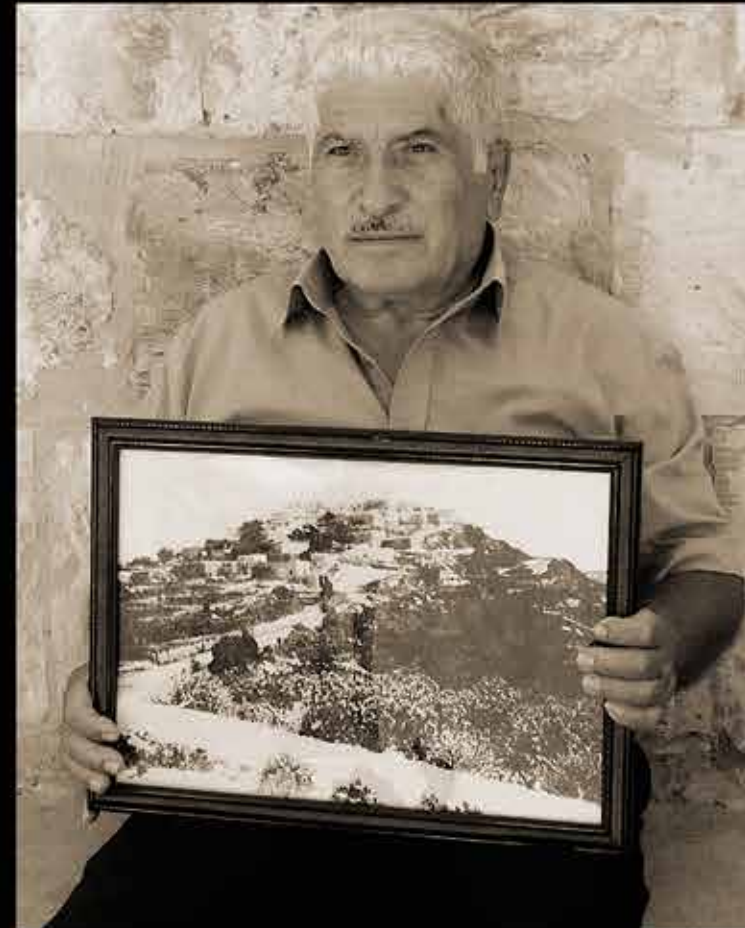
lived peacefully together in Palestine or that the studious Hussein Lubani, forced to flee El Damoun, Palestine as a young boy, had to guide his blind grandmother during the harrowing escape. Umm Aziz lost two infants after Israeli army gunfire chased her from her native village and, then much later, her four sons during the Sabra and Shatila massacre. Abu Ibrahim's story offers some reprieve as he continues to live in the West Bank village where he was born, carrying on the farming tradition of his ancestors, despite much adversity.

If the texts are difficult to read, they secure a place in history for Palestinian lives that mainstream history ignores, denies or dehumanizes. Like all indigenous peoples facing annihilation, Palestinians require an archive to ensure that the memory of their suffering and resilience be preserved. John Halaka has devoted thirty years of travel, discussions and artmaking to creating such an archive. Identifying with the philosophy of 'the artist as public servant,' the University of San Diego professor strives relentlessly in his life and work to be on the right side of history. As he explains, "Recording the narratives of Palestinian survivors and presenting them through art, literature and films is part of a critical effort to make the unseen seen, and the unheard heard, so no one can ever say, "I didn't know."

Like all indigenous peoples facing annihilation, Palestinians require an archive to ensure that the memory of their suffering and resilience be preserved.

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Will the Young Forget from the series *Faces From Erased Places* (2018) Sepia print, 112 x 279 cm

Abu Ibrahim from the series *Faces From Erased Places* (2018) Sepia print, 112 x 256.5 cm

