Notes on the Palestine Poster Project Archive: Ecological Imaginaries, Iconographies, Nationalisms and Knowledge in Palestine and Israel, 1947–now

Meghan Clare Considine and Max Gruber

Michel Khleifi's important 1985 documentary *Ma'loul Celebrates its Destruction* chronicles a community of internally displaced Palestinians' devastating annual return to a homeland rendered unrecognisable. The remains of the village of Ma'loul, destroyed in the 1948 *Nakba* (catastrophe), have since been covered with a pine forest (called the Balfour Forest) by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). The short film ends as an elderly villager named Abu-Zaid tries to locate and identify the trees of his memory, including olive, fig and cactus, and narrates his fond recollections of almonds and apricots, all this among a proliferation of pine.¹

This ecological imagination in Palestinian cinema, art and visual culture has likewise been taken up by a new generation of artists, including Jumana Manna in her recent film *Foragers* (2022). The film blends documentary, fiction and archival footage to mine the existential conflict between traditional Palestinian foraging practices and the Israeli state's futile attempt to eradicate these practices through punitive criminalisation, while industrially cultivating those very same plants, including *za'atar* (thyme) and *'akkoub* (an artichoke-like delicacy). Like Khleifi, Manna interviews elders to mine the relationship between landscape and memory. She stages the interrogation of an older forager accused of damaging the landscape through his foraging, who poignantly notes that 'I am a part of nature, nature is me... I am nature. I would not harm myself.'2 Together, these two Palestinian filmmakers of different generations make a strong case for the centrality of land in articulating identity, indigeneity, citizenship and nationhood. However, they move beyond the tropes of longstanding nationalist ecological imagery to triangulate between landscape, memory and ongoing destruction, showing that the connection to homeland is rooted in a deep relationship with and knowledge of the land and the plants that inhabit it.

The visual history of protest, activism and anticolonial liberation movements has spawned numerous archives, both digital and analog. One of the most vital and expansive of these is the crowdsourced digital archive of the Palestine Poster Project (www.palestineposterproject.org).

¹ Michel Khleifi, Ma'loul Celebrates its Destruction, 1985: 21:55–24:37

² Jumana Manna, Foragers, 2022: 7:00–8:00

What began as Daniel J Walsh's class project during his time in the Arabic Studies department at Georgetown University has grown into a formidable resource: a collection of nearly 16,000 posters, as of the time of this writing (June 2022). The collection presents a polyvocal and dynamic representation of issues, including Palestinian sovereignty, settler colonialism, the history of Zionism, and visual expressions of solidarity writ large.

As we – two graduate students in the field of art history – explored this archive, we began to notice the preponderance of botanical imagery, landscapes and plant motifs present in these posters. We asked ourselves and others why that might be? In this collection, the use of ecological imagery is a visual – and therefore rhetorical – strategy used by poster artists coming from a range of contexts: in other words, it is not a purely Arab nor purely Israeli aesthetic tactic. As evinced by the archive, for nearly a century plants have been used to articulate both Zionist agendas and an anti-Zionist politics. And yet the problem remains: how to situate ecological imagery in relation to nationalist imagery and iconography? How might we look for the visualisation of human/non-human relationships outside of the restrictive framework of the nation-state?

Scholars such as W J T Mitchell, Jill H Casid and Maggie M Cao have compellingly probed the intersection of landscape, nationhood and (de)colonisation, defamiliarising any notion of political or ideological neutrality within landscapes as an artistic genre.³ Furthermore, the historian of Islamic art Avinoam Shalem is currently at work on a project on post-1947 Palestinian landscapes and the relationship between land, memory and ideology.⁴ These are contributions with profound stakes, but overall art historians must do more to reckon with the nefarious visualities of empire formation and settler-colonialism — which presents itself as unchanging, neutral and permanent — on a global scale. Although we, the authors, do not share the lived experience of the artists we address, and face language barriers when confronting this corpus, our study of art history and visual culture has given us some tools to comb the Palestinian Poster Project archive with a critical eye toward how aesthetics are central to the formation of ideology. In so doing, we noticed how text and image work in tandem towards rhetorical ends, and how the recurrence and transformation of these aesthetics across time form a revealing visual genealogy of these issues.

One way of organising and navigating any vast archive is through the practice of 'tagging', which here is implemented to reflect iconography on the posters. Combing the archive with an ecological eye, we noticed that each of the following tagged categories holds a wealth of posters ranging from roughly one hundred to thirteen hundred: 'Agricultures/Symbols/Implements/Products/Farms; Cactus; Flowers/Fruit/Plants; Olives/Trees/Branches; Orange/Citrus; Trees/Roots/Branches.' And of course, the iconography of the olive tree, orange grove and cacti have long operated as a visual shorthand for Palestinian resistance and

See W J T Mitchell, Landscape and Power, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994; Jill H Casid, Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2004; Maggie M Cao, The End of Landscape in Nineteenth Century America, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2018

Avinoam Shalem, 'When Nature Becomes Ideology: Disclosing the Ruined Landscapes of Palestine (after 1947)', lecture, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, 18 October 2016

resilience, but Palestinian artists have also long demonstrated a capacity of uplifting and celebrating ecological knowledge beyond nationalist iconography. Take, for example, the New Visions Art Collective, which included Sliman Mansour, Vera Tamari (**fig 1**), Nabil Anani and Tayseer Barakat. Following the outbreak of the First Intifada (1987–1991), they called for a boycott of Israeli art supplies and turned instead toward materials understood as natural and local, such as coffee, henna and mud.⁵ Attending to this collective demonstrates how ecological considerations in Palestinian art history figure not only in the iconographic manner privileged by this poster archive, but also at the most basic level of materiality.



Figure 1: Vera Tamari, Tale of a Tree, 2002, mixed media (660 ceramic pieces, photo transfer on Plexiglass), dimensions variable, courtesy of the Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut

What follows are notes from a research project that led us to critically examine many hundreds of posters. An initial selection was culled to consider and trouble both their ecological implications and resonances with other media – an exercise that is in no way comprehensive, but begins to get at the political stakes of studying artistic representations of a rapidly changing landscape. Adopting a comparative method to study the archive alongside contemporary artistic representations of similar themes implicitly illuminates the interlocking issues of Palestinian sovreignty, historical Zionism and anti-Zionist critique as urgent political projects with firmly ecological implications, indeed illuminating the tenuous relationship between ecology and ideology in this region.

See Vera Tamari, 'Along New Paths: The New Visions Collective in Occupied Palestine', in Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents, Anneka Lensen, Sarah Rogers and Nada Shabout, eds, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2018, pp 446–449

The JNF's 1967 poster 'Plant the Victory Forest in Jerusalem Restored' is one of the most glaring examples of the Israeli state's use of afforestation as a tool for legitimating a claim to recently appropriated land (**fig 2**). While there is little archival information on the nature of the 'victory forest', the poster's text would appear to reference the Zionist state's overwhelming victory in the June 1967, or Six-Day, War and their subsequent control of East Jerusalem. Here, the JNF's exhortation to plant the victory forest equates to a form of ecological settlement which echoes the Zionist settlement of the predominantly Arab East Jerusalem. Furthermore, the implication that this Jerusalem is 'restored' is consistent with much of the Zionist rhetoric around land after its seizure by Israel. These posters imply that only the Zionist state is capable of stewardship, the word 'restoration' serving as an indictment of the nameless peoples who came before. Ultimately, 'Victory Forest' evinces a sustained conviction on the part of the INF that each instance of territorial appropriation should be accompanied by an intervention in the landscape, placing trees, gardens and growth at the centre of the Zionist propaganda machine.

In a 1970 poster also published by the JNF, a smiling child wearing a helmet wraps their arms around the shape of a triangle, suggesting a pine tree (**fig 3**). At the top of the tree children gather around a campfire and a man relaxes in a hammock. Beneath these sweet scenes, however, tanks and trucks and barbed wire weave through a forest. The effect is nothing short of shocking. With militarised imagery at the base of the tree, the composition suggests that this militarised surveillance is the very foundation on which the ability to play and enjoy leisure rests upon. Written in bold, red Hebrew text is the phrase: 'the forest protects you[,] protect the



Figure 2: Artist unknown, Jewish National Fund, *Plant the Victory Forest in Jerusalem Restored*, 1967, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive



Figure 3: Artist unknown, Jewish National Fund, *The Forest Protects You. Protect the Forest!* 1970, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

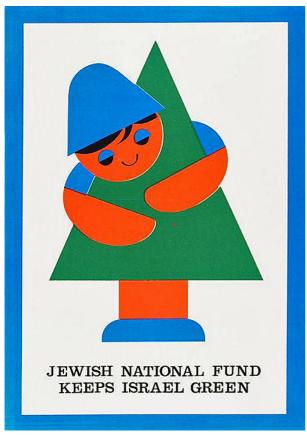


Figure 4: Artist unknown, Jewish National Fund, Jewish National Fund Keeps Israel Green, 1970, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

forest!' thereby introducing a reciprocity and affinity between notions of militarisation, defence and ecological conservation.⁶

In another contemporaneously published poster, the JNF introduces a related composition: another child hugs another tree formation, but whether they wear a helmet is less clear, this may be an innocent cap (**fig 4**). This child's eyes are half-closed in a relaxed and loving manner, and they calmly smile as they embrace the geometric formation of a pine tree. Similarly, the tree, which once held dissonant scenes of leisure and militarisation, is rendered totally opaque in kelly green. Here, the text reads (in English): 'Jewish National Fund Keeps Israel Green'. These subtle but quite meaningful differences suggest reception from an international, English-speaking audience. They point towards what some scholars and activists have called 'green-

washing', or the minimising or masking of state and corporate injustice and atrocity in the name of environmentalism.

The use of children in the visual culture propagated by the JNF in the 1970s was not new, and, like the very rootedness of trees, is an implicit gesture toward a militant settler futurity (these are the same children who will enter the Israeli Defense Forces at age 18). Nearly twenty years earlier, around 1950, the JNF published and distributed a poster designed by artist Gerd Rothschild titled 'We Will Set Down Roots Here'. It features children planting saplings in the foreground and another group dancing around a blossom-laden tree in the background (**fig 5**). The ongoing JNF afforestation perpetuates harmful mythology. The JNF has crafted a nationalised landscape — what filmmaker Jumana Manna defines as a 'reconfigured landscape to mirror the state's image' — through funding the vast (and largely monocultural) planting of trees, especially pine trees. These images of sweet children, these literal 'tree huggers,' are mobilised to frame the Zionist project as innocent. There is no evidence, save perhaps for the tanks, of precisely what, or who, is being displaced or masked through these afforestation projects. Between the projects of the tanks of precisely what, or who, is being displaced or masked through these afforestation projects.

Especially notable here is the multivalent associations and phonetic proximity of the Hebrew words 'hagen' (אָהָגּן), to protect or defend) and 'hagan' (וֹא, the garden); our thanks to our mentor Dr Amal Eqeiq for her help in identifying this

Irus Braverman, 'Planting the Promised Landscape: Zionism, Nature, and Resistance in Israel/Palestine', Natural Resources Journal, vol 49, no 2, Spring 2009, pp 317–365, cited in Jumana Manna, 'Where Nature Ends and Settlements Begin', e-flux journal, no 113, November 2020

The first critical study of the JNF is Walter Lehn, 'The Jewish National Fund', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol 3, no 4, Summer 1974, pp 74–96; for a more recent intervention, see Yossi Katz, The Land Shall Not Be Sold in Perpetuity: The Jewish National Fund and the History of State Ownership of Land in Israel, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, Berlin and Boston, 2016



Figure 5: Gerd Rothschild, Jewish National Fund, We Will Set Down Roots Here, ca 1950, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

In many cases, development projects and afforestation efforts, far from a violent act of displacement and erasure, were perceived as bringing life to an otherwise barren landscape. The categorisation of Palestine as a 'desert', as a lifeless and barren landscape, was a flexible one for Zionists. This imagery was notably absent from posters depicting tourism, Israeli citizens, and children (earlier we noted how the JNF 'keeps Israel green'). However, this language was pervasive in images dealing with industry or develop-ment, as in the poster titled 'Zionism is Life to the Desert' (**fig 6**). In his article, "Making the Desert Bloom" A Myth Examined', Alan George disproves the assumptions guiding the Zionist visual rhetoric of 'Life to the Desert'. He notes that only about half of Palestine has a true desert climate, that much of the desert area 'reclaimed' by Israel for cultivation was actually abandoned

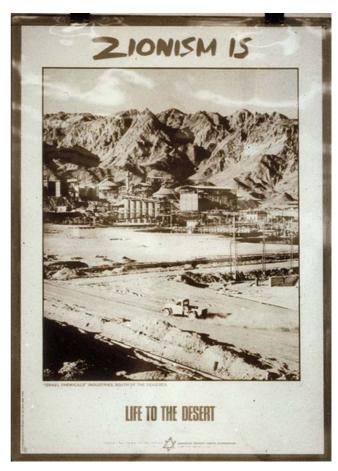


Figure 6: Artist unknown, American Zionist Youth Foundation, *Zionism is Life to the Desert*, ca 1960, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

⁹ Alan George, "Making the Desert Bloom" A Myth Examined', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol 8, no 2, 1979, pp 88–100

refugee farmland from 1947-48, and that the process of expanding cultivable land in the Negev desert and throughout Palestine was well under way before mass Zionist immigration. George notes that much of Zionist agriculture's success before and after 1948 has come from the large-scale importation of capital, especially from the American Jewish community. 10 Produced by the American Zionist Youth Foundation for an English-speaking audience, 'Life to the Desert' is both a propagation of the myths of pre-1947 Palestine as arid and uncultivated, as well as a fundraising device for the foreign capital that was driving the large-scale development and land reclamation efforts in the region.

Important when we consider the relationship between ecology and ideology in this region, the imagery and poetic valences of trees and their enduring

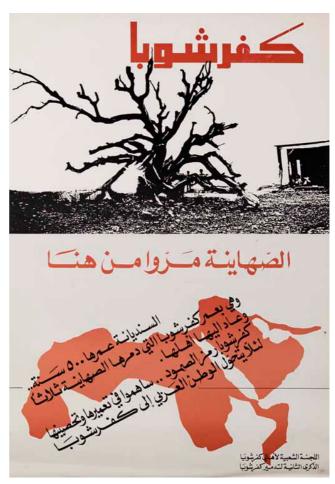


Figure 7: Artist unknown, Popular Civil Council of Kfar Shouba, *The Oak Tree Was 500 Years Old*, 1977, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

rootedness were not unique to Zionist visual culture, nor was the use of photography. Take a 1977 poster published by the PLO and the Popular Civil Council of Kfar Shouba, for example (**fig 7**). A Lebanese village on the border of Israel, Kfar Shouba was targeted by Israeli troops three times during 1975 with the assumption that the village was harbouring *fedayeen*. The top half of this vertical poster features the haunting photograph of a collapsed oak tree with children climbing it. In bright red Arabic text is the phrase, 'Kfar Shouba: Zionism passed through here'. Note how both this poster and the one we examined previously personify Zionism. Laid over the wreckage, through destroyed plant life, Zionism is likewise framed as an active agent with material consequences and ramifications, but here a decidedly destructive force.

The lower half of the poster features black text overlaid upon a map of the Arab world, providing further context to the destruction above. The text reads: 'The oak tree was 500 years old... It was as old as Kfar Shouba which the Zionists destroyed three times. But her people always returned to the village. Kfar Shouba is the very symbol of steadfastness... Help rebuild and fortify it, so that the Arab World will not end up like Kfar Shouba.' Devoid of borders, the composition is a distinct call for a politics of solidarity. Today, this poster is in the collection of

¹⁰ Prior to 1948, the Jewish community in the US contributed \$445 million to the Jewish community in Palestine; between 1948 and 1979, Israel had a net import of capital \$31.5 billion (see Katz, op cit, p 97)

the Palestinian Museum, which itself features a large garden of indigenous plants designed by Jordanian landscape architect Lara Zureikat. The project endeavours to narrate a 'horticultural history of Palestine'.

The village of Kfar Shouba suffered further destruction from Israeli airstrikes and invasions in both 2002 and 2006. These are alluded to in a series of thirty-one powerful prints published by the Lebanese conceptual artist Walid Raad between 2004 and 2008, which are titled, fittingly, Oh God, He Said, Talking to a Tree (**fig 8**). In Raad's series, clouds of dust from explosions are precisely cut out, as if with a razor, and pasted onto stark white backgrounds. Omitting violence and brutality but maintaining a sense of injustice and wanton destruction through plumes of smoke, Raad generatively challenges our expectations of what political art and artmaking might look like. Through taking up the same site of Kfar Shouba and putting it in relationship with other cities, he charts a geography and chronology of mourning, struggle and memory, not unlike those evoked by the posters and their circulations across time and space both digital and physical.

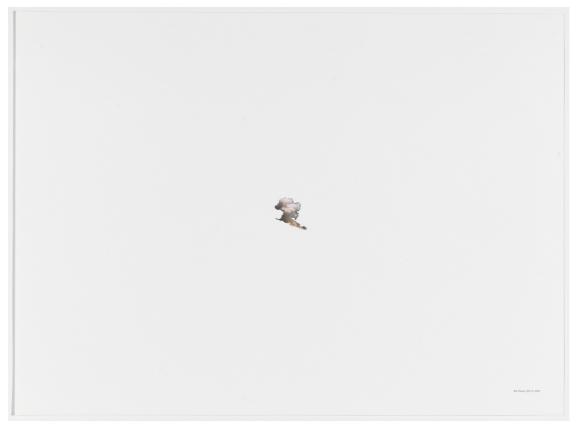


Figure 8: Walid Raad, Oh God, He Said, Talking to a Tree, 2004/2008, from a series of 31 digital prints, each 43.1 x 55.9 cm, published by AG Publishers, New York and Beirut, in an edition of 7, courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery

In a manifesto-like essay in *Artforum* in 2006, that shares a title with this series, Raad laments the destruction of thousands of trees and other ecological crises, such as oil spills, resulting from over sixty years of Israeli invasions of Lebanon – while also obliquely referencing the practice of purchasing trees in Israel from abroad through the JNF. For Raad, existential violence can take the form of an explosion or a sapling. Taking Raad's title seriously and in dialogue with some of the posters addressed here, trees can be understood as witnesses and records of human solidarity and atrocity.

The idea that trees might be settlers or colonisers themselves is at the centre of Israeli artist Dor Guez's 2011 exhibition 'The Nation's Groves'. 11 Through a practice based in photography, archival research and film, Guez takes aim at the history of the Ben Shemen Forest, the first and the largest of the JNF's afforestation initiatives, located approximately 25km southeast of Tel Aviv. The pine trees that make up the JNF forests, Guez notes in an interview with *Haaretz*, are 'pioneer trees', ¹² meaning they require little care in order to grow. Because of this, Guez asserts, the INF found these trees preferable to the longer-lived if higher maintenance trees indigenous to the Levant, such as olive, almond and fig trees: 'The irony is that the pioneer trees are also "first stage" trees – they will gradually disappear, whether in fires or as a result of diseases. They're like a brief colonial visit.' In an image titled Two Palestinian Riders, Ben Shemen Forest (fig 9), Guez photographs two blurred figures on horseback weaving their way between the pines and the picnic tables. The long shutter speed gives these riders an ethereal quality, like that of two spirits in a form of limbo. As Palestinians whose ancestral homes may have been cleared out and replaced by this very forest, Guez's technical choices contribute to a pointed political statement. And yet, the riders themselves remain. Despite the colonisation of the landscape, their presence in a leisure space predicated on dispossession amounts to a form of subtle resistance, even if the camera only registers the faintest hint of their existence.



Figure 9: Dor Guez, Two Palestinian Riders, Ben Shemen Forest, 2011, print, 45 x 100 cm, edition of 3 + 1AP, courtesy of the artist and Dvir Gallery

Where the Zionist state looked to greenwash their annexation of land through art-making and development that centred trees, posters from Palestine and the Arab world often drew on this iconography as tool of memory and resistance. In the years following the events of 30 March 1976, or Land Day, posters in which Palestinian nationhood was manifest as a tree became more prevalent. Protests against the confiscation of approximately 1,500 acres of land from Palestinian

¹¹ 'The Nation's Groves' opened at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art in 2010, and was also presented at Carlier Gebauer Gallery, Berlin in 2011 www.carliergebauer.com/exhibitions/the_nation_s_groves

¹² See Dalia Karpel, 'The Forest for the Trees', *Haaretz*, 6 May 2011 <u>www.haaretz.com/2011-05-06/ty-article/the-forest-for-the-trees/0000017f-f73a-d5bd-a17f-f73abf740000</u>

villages for military bases and Jewish settlements were violently suppressed in March of 1976. After this forcible removal from their land, two separate examples from 1977 produced by the PLO speak to this experience through the inclusion of both branches and roots (**figs 10 & 11**).





Figures 10 & 11 left: Artist unknown, PLO Unified Information, *The Martyrs of March 30th 1976, 1977*, poster, courtesy The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive; right: Artist unknown, Palestine Liberation Organization, *First Anniversary–Land Day in Palestine*, 1977, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

Here, the Palestinian 'tree' and its presence as a memorial for this sombre day gestures towards the association between land appropriation and a sense of being 'uprooted' and displaced. A 1978 French poster paying homage to the recently assassinated Ezzeddine Kalak and Adnan Hammad, two PLO representatives killed in Paris that August, also invokes Palestinian nationhood through trees, this time exchanging the sprouting borders of the 1977 PLO posters with a lush tree whose coloured leaves create a mosaic in the form of the Palestinian flag (**fig 12**). It should be noted that



Figure 12: Claude Lazar, Palestine Liberation Organization, *Hommage*, 1978, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive



Figure 13: Artist unknown, Palestine Liberation Organization, *A Tree Grows in Palestine*, 1990, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

the incidence of the Palestinian flag in the Poster Archives grows significantly beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, reflecting a new sense of nationalism and national symbol-making. These symbols would in many cases remain intertwined with motifs of trees and nature, as a later poster from 1990 (**fig 13**) centres a similar tree to that of 1977 in its memorial of Land Day. Unlike the French poster, which displayed photographs and advertised an event, the tree from 1990 is an austere, solemn memorial, simply reading 'Land Day' in English and Arabic. Where the white band of the flag in 1978 was made up of thick leaves which stood out against the blue background, the white band from 1990 sees leaves blending into the background, giving the tree a bare, fragile appearance.

Another salient motif in the Palestine Poster Project Archives is the blurred lines between spaces of recreation and dispossession. Of course, this is most evident in the existence of the forest itself as a space of recreation founded on the land of the dispossessed. However, it is also present in many of the recreation structures that populate the forests themselves. In a 1965 poster produced by the JNF (**fig 14**), families are seen on a watchtower looking out over a vast green forest dotted with fields and farm equipment silently performing development and agricultural projects. Here, the JNF's afforestation and the sort of land reclamation present in posters such as 'Life to the Desert' come together, with a surveillance platform at the centre of it all. The message is clear: every aspect of the land, even that meant for recreation, is a part of the state's effort to mould the ecology, and peoples, of the region to its whim.



Figure 14: Artist unknown, Jewish National Fund, Watchtower in the Forests of the Jewish National Fund, ca 1965, poster, courtesy of The Liberation Graphics of Palestine Poster Archive

In a black and white typological series from 'The Nation's Groves', Dor Guez explores this same tension by photographing playgrounds in the JNF forests (**fig 15**). The series, which recalls the systematic photography of Hilla and Bernd Becher, proposes that these structures, with their slides, swings and lookouts, would be read by the Jewish-Israeli eye as resembling the Tower and

Stockade settlement model first implemented by Zionist settlers between 1936–1939. Guez's decision to shoot in black and white helps facilitate this visual metaphor, lending these photographs an archival quality. This, along with the severe vacancy of the images, each completely devoid of human life, helps suggest a space which has not just been altered, but emptied out. In Guez's images of the JNF forests, playgrounds and pine trees intertwine to eerie effect, haunted by their intervention on a landscape whose history is buried underfoot.



Figure 15: Dor Guez, *Pines 5*, 2011, black and white photograph, 40 x 33 cm, edition of 6 + 2AP, courtesy of the artist and Dvir Gallery

As we have seen, poster art and art-making in general is deeply complicit in the formation of ideology. Whether promoting a Zionist agenda through greenwashing and mythmaking or fighting against it with memorials and calls to action, each poster in the archive purports to offer the viewer a stable view of the world. That is, a view in which their ideology is reinforced, made to feel permanent and inevitable. By looking at how land, environmentalism and growth are marshalled by posters towards the formation of ideology, we have seen how the political and the ecological are inextricably linked. From the most iconic symbols of national memory such as the olive tree to the culturally specific practice of harvesting 'akkoub, every aspect of the environment evinces a colonialist ideology that has increasingly shaped the landscape to its will.

Contemporary art, in the form of film, photography, archival research, and more, has the power to destabilise many of the dogmatic aspects of these ideologies that resist nuance. Works which speak to the meditative ritual practised by foragers of *za'atar* and *'akkoub* despite conditions of surveillance, or which depict the insistence of a people to use for leisure a space that was built to remind them of their loss, operate in a different way from those posters created by the JNF and PLO. Here are narratives that weave themselves throughout the same stories told by the posters of land, memory and ecology. Where they differ is in their resolve that no narrative be distilled into a slogan. Instead, these works call us to resist simple answers and to think about the entire ecosystem at play in their explorations of nationhood, memory and mourning. Manna, Khleifi and contemporary Palestinian artists are less concerned with the nationalist symbolism seen in the poster archive, but with iconography that is more immediate, urgent, and not romanticised. Behind Manna's lens 'akkoub is as important as za'atar, which is as important as olive or orange groves. All speak to the resilience of tradition and lifeways in the face of wanton state destruction. Thus, imagery and imagination must be forged (and foraged) outside of the bounds of a restrictive nation-side visual or political model.

Meghan Clare Considine is a writer and curator. She is the 2022–23 graduate curatorial fellow at MASS MoCA, where she is organising the group exhibition 'to see oneself at a distance', featuring artists who defamiliarise the archives of anticolonial liberation movements.

Max Gruber is a writer whose research and criticism have focused on contemporary global and Latin American art, photography, visual culture, social practice and environmental art.

Meghan and Max are master's students in the Williams College and Clark Art Institute Graduate Program in the History of Art, in Williamstown, Massachusetts.