THE ITINERANT

On the delayed arrival of images of socialist internationalism that confound contemporary exhibiting processes

By

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I hereby declare that the following work is my own.

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ABSTRACT

This practice-based PhD, titled *The Itinerant*, proposes a concept for exhibiting processes, detected along a route thought through various frames of geopolitical relations. Its point of departure is framed by a declaration of solidarity via state-socialist institutions, of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), in particular, with revolutionary independence movements, such as the P.L.O. (Palestinian Liberation Organization), manifested in educational collaborations around image production.

The project is built around the micro-political potency of a non-institutional archive of photographic images arriving from the GDR and P.L.O. in the 1980s, and therefore intends to enact the emergence of a vocabulary for deconstructing macro-political narratives of global Cold War histories. The work of deconstruction thus begins within the micro-political dimension of an archive whose mode of existence may even be limiting our ability to speak of an 'archive' in the common sense. Hence, the inherent archival function of the photographic image transforms the materiality at stake; it may decompose itself, or end up working against itself. Such work is absolutely necessary for the possibility of undoing the exhibition as a territorial and synchronic entity, as a major responsibility in exhibiting making in the early 21st century, when globalisation takes place in capital and data.

The focus of investigation inhabits the actual working conditions of making and exhibiting photographs as rehearsed in a series of educational gatherings around photography, which unfolded throughout the 1980s in Beirut, East Berlin and Tunis between the East German photographer Horst Sturm and former fedayeen / then photographers of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (P.L.O.), and which helped place the call for the liberation of Palestine on an international and public display. *The Itinerant* is the first project attempting to complicate the support for the Palestinian liberation movement by discussing image/exhibition production based in geopolitically defined ideologies of a socialist internationalism during the global Cold War. The collapse of the socialist project in 1989 that spilled into world-fracturing events demands that we situate ourselves within the changing geopolitical and economic order of the world. This project resonates deeply in an intergenerational contract along the continuities and discontinuities of that kind of internationalism, and thus takes a position within the realms of knowledge embodied by members of societies that experienced and are experiencing in everyday life the collapsed or as yet-unfinished project of becoming independent in relation to globalising powers of capitalism or from Western narratives of history.

Such investigation results in the necessity to conceive photography as a network of practices, which activates a spatiality between ‘here and elsewhere,’ the two being, simultaneously, the conditions of production. In other words, photography can be mobilised here through a deep questioning of its entangled practices, processes and conditions: firstly, as the continuation of a militant struggle by other means including a discussion on the question of solidarity, violence and economics; and secondly, as complex exhibiting processes in geopolitics, which demands to take position, not on-behalf of, but to speak from one’s own position for a Cause emerging today out of the problems of exhibition making in the field of contemporary art. I speculate about this network of practices as being constitutive of a concept of exhibiting in the geopolitics of the 21st century.

The thesis is repeatedly framed by a single sentence by Jean Genet, whose book *Un Captif amoureux* (1986) has provided a crucial resonating body and interlocutor throughout the entire research process. The multiple returns demonstrate a possibility to labour the complex set of layers that such geopolitical relations
constitute. In my attempt to dedicate the practice-based and theory-driven research to anti-colonial thinking, the thesis takes distance from producing a ready-to-use or copy/paste manual for ‘curatorial practice’ commonly understood as placing objects and/or images on public display. This contextualisation demands situating this research within a trans-disciplinary setting, i.e., The Itinerant entangles concepts from theory, lived experience, living memory, from travelling and teaching, from academia, the means of art, and from the militant struggle. My approach wishes to open up towards a thinking that affords the possibilities of transversing disciplines, regions, geographies, time-zones, borders, generations and economic systems from which a geopolitics emerges. Such possibilities shift from space to spatiality in exhibition-making. This geopolitical concern implicates us today in the prolonged conflicting wills in the Middle East, in which taking a binary position would perpetuate two strong forces of European enlightenment: representation and individualism. In this frame, an exhibition can only be a symptom as it insists on being interpreted, this being, in itself, a symptom of the limits of European modernity.

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At this pause in the journey, I wish to thank a range of travel companions who have been essential throughout. First of all, I am deeply obliged to my advisor Irit Rogoff for believing, over years, in my ability to produce the conditions for thinking new vocabularies that implicate geopolitics within exhibiting processes. Equally, I am grateful indeed to Kodwo Eshun who re-appeared over and over again along the long lonely roads as a great friend, fellow traveller, and generous interlocutor.

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Words limit the thanks owed to my parents: even though Hanna Mende and Reinhard Mende might not agree with several arguments in the following book regarding potentialities from the GDR and the Cold War, they have always travelled with me.
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TRANSIT B (insert)

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bodyguard takes a rest; secondly, its visuality is tempting and could easily make it to the cover of a glossy magazine; and thirdly, exactly because this photographs departs from an economy that appeared to defy capitalism (as elaborated in the chapter *Economic schizophrenia*), I had to find different means of making it public within the world of art and within an economic system different to the one it departed from. See: insert *Transit B*, ‘Proximity, Distance,’ p. 179. Photo: Armin Linke, 2012.
INTRODUCTION

This practice-based Ph.D. titled *The Itinerant* aims to (re-)activate geopolitics in exhibiting. Its point of departure is an archived image practice from the Cold War period, more precisely from within a socialist-driven web of relations that has been producing proximities between Europe (GDR/Germany, France), the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon) and North Africa (Tunis), up to the present. Revisiting such geopolitical entanglement from a contemporary perspective requires of us to problematise this practice on many layers: that of the agonising forces of the binary rhetoric of the Cold War, a state-directed solidarity in a place like the GDR, an ideological intimacy that finds expression in social-collective informal structures, an image practice as a continuation of militant struggle by other means, and the reasons for the attractions such practice presents today, within conditions of globalisation. The problematisation is laid out in detail in the first chapter, *From the Desert*.

The two main questions throughout this project are, firstly, what does this archived practice from a historical moment of socialist solidarity during the Cold War period have to do with us today in an era of globalisation? From the very beginning, therefore, this project is framed through a lens of the very present (globalisation), even though we will encounter a series of historical points (internationalism) that will be discussed particularly in the chapters *A Practice* and *Concerning Solidarity*. And secondly, which spatial conditions are needed to expose the archived practice to contemporary public, if at all? This latter point links to an investigation into aspects of spatiality with regard to our practice—as artists, curators, theorists—of making research public. Throughout the project, we will encounter a certain exhaustion of the term ‘exhibition’ for which I, therefore, suggest taking on board the figure of the *itinerant*.

In order to give form to the re-thinking process and, finally, to articulate the arrival in a differently geopolitical idea for the space of exhibiting, this Ph.D. wants to introduce the figure of the *itinerant*. The *itinerant* is both a spatial character and a travel companion in time. It may also appear in the form of photographs, images, films, books, as well as a thought, a gesture or a memory. The *itinerant* is economic, schizophrenic, archival, viral, spatial and bi-polar. It supports both the ‘work of mourning’ and the ‘power of transformation’ (Derrida, 1994) through all kinds of activities that aim to make public, i.e., to initiate a public debate. It has been
necessary to come up with this figure in order to allow for the complexity in re-thinking the space of exhibiting a body that rejects being classified, simplified, pinned down, and pictured in a single shot. The *itinerant* walks through this entire project and cannot be located within one particular chapter, but enjoys an extensive unpacking through the archived image practice from the Cold War period in the chapter *Geopolitical Exigencies*.

Two main threads are mentioned here briefly in order to highlight the project’s specificity with regard to re-thinking the space of exhibiting—both in its historical and present dimensions—that crosses borders, protocols, geographies, generations, disciplines and genres.

Firstly, a network of practices: classifying this archived image practice as photography in a media-theoretical way would narrow down the potentialities that this archived practice has to offer. It must be pointed out that these potentialities lie foremost in the informal side of the practice as it takes us into the social structures and collective grounding of the photo courses (conducted by an East-German photographer) in solidarity with the Palestinian movement in Beirut, Tunis, and Aden throughout the 1980s. It is within such framework that I will be arguing that this image practice had become the continuation of militant struggle (of a liberation movement) by other means and that this project thus discusses the ongoing conflict in the Middle East in proximity to Europe. In order to make use of the archived practice’s potentials, I deliberately distance this research from official press photography that would need to be discussed under the notions of ‘propaganda’ or ‘war photography.’ Instead, the focus is on the informal face of this practice, which will allow displacing this practice into a contemporary debate, addressing expressly the social-collective relations, the educational structures and making a practice public. Therefore, instead of taking us through a photographic-historical analysis of this archived practice (which will, however, leer at our project here and there), I begin by considering this practice as a network of practices, which arrives with contradictions through and through—as we will see later, particularly in the chapter *Micro-political Insistency*.

Secondly, the curatorial: I write this practice-based Ph.D. as a curator, theorist, perhaps also as an artist, as, originally, a trained pianist, and a traveller. Furthermore, I also write as a child from the GDR who, as a teenager, followed the breakdown of the Real-existing Socialism on the global scale in front of the television screen. The
tremendous impact of the world-fracturing events around 1989 clearly implanted a deep bond between the personal and political within all my thinking and making. Such a bond cannot be disciplined into one thread. It rejects being treated as if it were a conventional scholarly subject, because its vulnerability, affective weight and complexity simply demand distancing methods that exceed pre-defined research protocols. From a methodological point of view, therefore, this practice-based Ph.D. operates within several disciplines at once, i.e., it demands to develop its own research methodology. It emerges from the crossing of various disciplines, ranging from literature, filmmaking, photography, visual cultures, philosophy, politics, theory and spatiality; it questions deeply the Cold War rhetoric and state-dictated solidarity programmes; it considers a love declaration in 430 pages (Jean Genet) to be a resonating body for this research, while a GDR master-spy’s autobiography (Markus Wolf’s) provides essential historical details.

Image 1: Photo course, streets of Beirut, likely 1980. Practical exercises with camera accompanied each theme, as well as evaluation and discussion of the results. Several women participated in the course—Yassira Kubbeh, Marleine Bradely, Jivira Goef-Hadadine, Leila Zakaaria—but men made up the core group of the collective-social gatherings. Photo: Horst Sturm.
I am using this archived photographic practice as an environment for developing a vocabulary that does not intend to ‘exhibit’ and ‘display’ its physical outcomes (although this also is possible) within common curatorial practice. Instead, my approach follows the ‘incurable image’ (Elhaik, 2013) that throws the one who engages with it into a curatorial struggle, disorder and a transformative practice. There is nothing to curate, but if anything, there is much to learn. The power of transformation takes a distance from the ‘curatorial practice’ of placing objects or images on public display. Instead, it resembles an environment that can be called ‘field of the curatorial’ providing the possibilities of crossing all these different disciplines. Through such ‘solidarities of borders’ (Spivak, 2003), I was able to develop a new syntax—which found an appearance in the figure of the itinerant—that has helped me invalidate paralysing and agonising binary imperatives of the Cold War; and that has fostered the unpacking of what we do through trans-national, post-colonial and archival lenses as contemporary instruments.

Another word on the relation between image and text that also tangles up with the practice part of this practice-based Ph.D.: two layers are in operation here. One can be found within the body text itself. The images inserted there directly relate to the discussion in the text. I have, however, tried to avoid a merely illustrative function of the image towards the text, as well as a descriptive function of the text towards the image. Instead, I intended to use the captions as commentaries, similarly to how the theorist and curator Ariella Azoulay treats the photographic encounter as a potential for complicating photography as an ideological apparatus. The second layer operates as the practice part of this practice-based Ph.D., which I decided to call Transit A and Transit B, and that consists (A) of a small print object: I produced it alongside my reading of Jean Genet’s book Un Captif amoureux (1986), journeys to the Middle East, distracting forces that are—nevertheless—informed by and inform my practice; and using the photo archive of my father, which documents Angela Davis and Yasser Arafat as guests of honour at the World Festival of Youth in 1973, in East Berlin. Transit B is a visual essay that brings together a range of images, projects, and notes that, again, might not appear explicitly in the text itself, but indicate logics of assemblage within the curatorial from which to possibly read this Ph.D.
FROM THE DESERT

On the final proofs of the manuscript of *Un Captif amoureux* [Prisoner of Love] (1986), his last book, Jean Genet wrote: ‘Put all the images in language in a place of safety and make use of them, for they are in the desert, and it’s in the desert we must go and look for them.’ (Genet, 1986) One needs to re-read this sentence, countless times, in order to begin finding a travel route for this search. This route has a clear destination: the desert. Throughout the following pages, we will be coming back to images and words, which, here, open into a marginal region, not well populated by humans, without infrastructure for transport, dwelling, or electricity. But Genet takes us into this region, highly populated by images instead, as well as words, as if the desert were both our archive and exhibition venue. *Un Captif amoureux* is the result of Genet’s journeys from France to the Black Panthers in the U.S. in February 1970 and to Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Tunis, and Beirut, beginning in 1970.

This book is many things: it is a memoir, a travelogue, a history book of the Black Panther movement and of the Palestinian revolution, a journal, both a love declaration and a political pamphlet in 430 pages, a writing in search of a loved one, a writing in revolt, but also a writing in struggle with the means of writing itself. Genet’s writing has acted as a resonating chamber for many of my journeys from Berlin and London to the Middle East, more concretely to Beirut, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, for several years up to now. My research follows the geography of an archived image practice from the Cold War period, liberation struggles, socialist-socialist friendships, photographic and exhibition practice in solidarity, freedom fighters, an East German antifascism, and anti-colonial movements, and Palestine. This archived image practice is the result of photo courses held in Beirut and Tunis, in collaboration between the East German press agency ADN and the Palestinian press.

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1 ‘*Mettre à l’abri toutes les images du langage et se servir d’elles, car elles sont dans le desert, où aller les chercher.*’ (French original) The English translation by Barbara Bray suggests reading ‘mettre l’abri’ as ‘place of safety.’ The French expression, however, tends more towards ‘shelter,’ which I prefer to take into account. This differentiation is relevant with regard to an overloaded use of the term ‘safety’ nowadays in security regulations after 9/11 and CCTV operations in the public sphere. Therefore, considering Genet’s life-long resistance against normative structures, ‘shelter’ appears to be the more appropriate take on the French original.

agency WAFA. From a Cold War perspective, these courses line up perfectly with a politics of solidarity with people in struggle (liberation movements) and with struggle against the ‘class-enemy’ in general (capitalism). In contrast to state-controlled curricula, for instance at Schule der Solidarität³ in East Berlin, or upfront teaching in the subject of Political Economy, as we can see during a university lesson in Ghana, in the film The Black Star⁴, the photo courses (conducted by the East German photojournalist Horst Sturm) in the Middle East and North Africa throughout the 1980s win over tremendously through their social-collective and informal grounding. These photo courses consisted of theory and practice sessions in photography along a pre-conceived (and state-approved) curriculum, but also of social gatherings, informal dinners, life-long friendships, clandestine meetings with political leaders, and visits to military camps. Such a double-boundedness could be seen as an ideological intimacy, it could, indeed, be called that. Classifying this archived image practice, therefore, as photography in a narrow and media-theoretical sense, would dismiss a wide range of components that have constituted this practice. Instead of taking us through a photographic-historical analysis of this archived practice (which will, however, leer at our project here and there) I, therefore, begin our discussion of this practice by considering it as a network of practices.

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³ Its full name is Das Internationale Institut für Journalistik Berlin—“Schule der Solidarität.” Between 1963 and 1989/90, the school educated thousands of students, primarily from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and the Far East, following the GDR state-regulated curriculum in journalism, in image and text. Some of the students had to attend a two-week internship at the East German press agency ADN, the same structure at which Horst Sturm was employed as a photojournalist. See Castillon, M. Das Internationale Institut für Journalistik Berlin—“Schule der Solidarität” 1963–1989/90, MA thesis, 2010, published online with GRIN Verlag für akademische Texte. There have been many further educational frameworks in the GDR for students as well as pupils from decolonising countries. See Reuter, L. R., Scheunflug, A. Die Schule der Freundschaft. Eine Fallstudie zur Bildungszusammenarbeit zwischen der DDR und Mosambik, 2006. With regard to labour relations between GDR and Mozambique see Wandel, M. Einheit, Arbeit. Wachsamkeit, art and book project, 2012 http://www.maltewandel.de/http://www.maltewandel.de/ (accessed on June 19, 2013)
⁴ 1965, dir. by Joachim Hellwig and produced by DEFA.
Why today?

This archived practice from the GDR tangles up with a ‘ciné-geography’ (Eshun/Gray, 2011), even though we are dealing here with a photographic practice, whose main character is the ‘militant image,’ much discussed in recent debates within the scope of contemporary art, particularly in relation to the Palestine Film Unit⁵, Lusophone cinema⁶, and also, most recently, as artistic research with regard to current civic protest movements worldwide.⁷ ‘Ciné-geography,’ as defined by Eshun and Gray speaks of:

‘practices in an expanded sense, and the connections—individual, institutional, aesthetic and political—that link them transnationally to other situations of urgent struggle. It refers not just to individual films but also to the new modes of production, exhibition, distribution, pedagogy and training made possible by forms of political organisation and affiliation.’ (Eshun/Gray, 2011, p. 1)

Again, my concern is less a media-theoretical differentiation between cinema and photography and their specific roles in relation to liberation struggles, solidarity programmes, and Cold War politics. Instead, this network of practices opens for us today a space for thinking, i.e., a space in which to encounter and counter the Cold War conditions that come with this archived practice. It also indicates a geopolitical exigency, i.e., to understand spatio-geographic interlacements between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa through an image practice in a wider sense. I suggest considering the archived image practice from the GDR, which comes with a mission

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of internationalism—including its political and ideological difficulties—as a potential counterpart to re-thinking the exhibition practice in a globalised world of the present.

Problematising this *network of practices* from a perspective of today will help us indicate a geopolitical exigency interlacing different regions, as well as generations, economic systems and histories within the space of exhibiting. Such geopolitical insistency hinders us in calling what we do as artists and curators ‘exhibition.’ My proposal is therefore to, for now, introduce the *itinerant* into our practice in order to encourage a transformative wandering through that which we are looking for, as Genet suggests. In our case, we encounter an archived image practice, partly also concrete photographic material, from a moment of solidarity, particularly the early to late 1980s, that came to an abrupt end—on an institutional, political and systemic level—in 1989, and which has its public appearance today, in 2013. In other words, if Eshun and Gray defined ciné-geography as ‘practices in an expanded sense,’ then the *itinerant* walks through a *network of practices* from which we may begin thickening our concerns: what does this archived practice have to do with us today? Which space is needed in order to transform the network’s complexity, as well as support the militant desire into something that helps us discuss geopolitical concerns of the present, such as the ‘war on terrorism,’ the global financial crisis, and so on. However, it is important to note that this project, *The Itinerant*, won’t deliver solutions, alternative models or manuals for mastering the current concerns. Instead, the *itinerant* is more of a figure, a travel companion in looking for methodologies of such transformative wandering, one that takes shape within our practices in a globalised world, within the domain of contemporary art.

I have chosen to begin with Genet’s note in order to outline the major parameter within this project titled *The Itinerant*: the (re-)activation of a geopolitics in exhibiting that asks what the space of exhibiting is, as well as what exhibition (curatorial) practice is within a globalised world. If I write (re-)activation, with ‘re’ in brackets, I wish to stretch out the historical moment at which such geopolitics were in action through solidarity programmes during the period of the Cold War. I want to make clear that the geopolitics between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa—as in the cases discussed here—had been active on the ground of image production with regard to a trans-national and international agenda of revolutionary movements. The research at hand, however, aims to problematise such alliances without neglecting their possible potentialities for re-thinking our proximities and distances.
from today’s perspective. In other words, Genet taught me that such re-activation cannot exist in a step-by-step excavation of a great archival find, or a copy/paste procedure of a historical moment and material without risking a journey that both encounters, as well as counters such an archived practice. Genet’s approach to writing, which returns continually to the question of writing itself, taught me to try to ‘make use’ of an archived practice that departs from a troubling Cold War rhetoric but, at the same time, offers a resource to activate a geopolitics in exhibiting in the present. Genet’s won’t remain the only voice throughout this research, but his words remain similar to what Jacques Derrida called ‘travel-questions, like travel-kits, travel-bags, travel-agents’ (Derrida, 2004, p. 21) in his reading of *Un Captif amoureux*. Derrida writes that ‘Genet’s work based on travel, that is, Genet’s displacement, his geopolitical wanderings, his whole text being a series of border-crossings, expulsions, exiles, but also to authorize myself […]’ (Derrida, 2004, p. 20), and he concludes two pages later that ‘the combination of the poetic and the political allied with the motif of the traveller.’ (Derrida, 2004, p. 23) This is why Genet’s note that exists outside the manuscript, but inside the book, opens this project that I call *The Itinerant*.

We can read the space of the ‘desert’ as a suggestion Genet gives to us, us who deal with images and words every day, so that we would follow a series of activities in that geography: moving, going, searching, travelling, caring, and placing. Importantly, moreover, Genet speaks of making use of what one is looking for, meaning that the desert place does not simply store, administer and grade, but invites us to do something with all that might be sheltered there. In other words, this exhibition venue does not operate merely in displaying, but rather in archiving what we are looking for, with archiving here meaning to make use of what has been put there.

Archiving seems to be essential, if this place hosts all the images, meaning, really, *all* images that we can think of. Such an excessive concept of a place without public transport systems, educational institutions, health care schemes, and residential settlements demands a different understanding of the archival. The archive is not defined by an institutional set-up, a hierarchical ordering system, a panoptic architecture, as it can be observed in the film *Toute la memoire du monde* (1956) by Alain Resnais, or the manifest inscription in the form of a document (image, word).
The desert requests a different approach to the archive, one that will be discussed in detail in the chapter *Micro-political insistency*.

With such a concern at hand we are now in the middle of *The Itinerant*, a project that aims to re-think the practice of exhibiting by insisting on considering its spatial, foremost spatio-geographic and geo-political formations. I have found such formations in an archived image practice of the Cold War period that unfolds itself between Europe (GDR/Germany and France), the Middle East (Lebanon, West Bank) and North Africa (Tunis).

Re-reading Genet’s note the first time supported my doubts in locating this project, *The Itinerant*, within diagnostic investigations into an image practice as we can find them, for example, in W.J.T. Mitchell’s question ‘What do pictures want?’ (Mitchell, 1994/1998). He attributes images an existence as ‘”animated” beings, quasi agents, mock persons.’ (Mitchell, 1996, p. 81) In fact, Mitchell poses a rhetorical question in the provocative concluding remark of his essay “What Do Pictures Really Want?”: ‘Like people, pictures don't know what they want; they have to be helped to recollect it through a dialogue with others.’ (Mitchell, 1996, p. 81) But how does he know that ‘like people, pictures don’t know’? Mitchell puts himself, as an author, into a position of superiority towards the subjects of his writing, twice at the same time: firstly, he attributes non-knowledge to the figure that he calls ‘people’ and that he deliberately locates in the position of the helpless, of those lacking the language to speak, in fact, the figure that has ‘to be helped.’ Even more basically, which ‘people’ does he have in mind when he states that they need help? Secondly, how does he know that ‘pictures don’t know’? The latter counter-question might sound rather mystical. It appears, however, anything but obscure if we consider Heike Behrend’s ‘aesthetics of withdrawal’ in her long-term research of photographic practices on the Coast of East Africa, including, in particular, an analysis of the refusal by Muslim

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8 Also from a different, more feminist perspective, this positioning appears strange indeed. It reminds me of the Sigmund Freud -figure in the film *Freud’s Dora* (1978), dir. by the Jay Street Film Project, who insists on knowing why Dora no longer attends psychoanalysis sessions. Instead informing him about her resistance and reasons for absence, Dora prefers to write postcards (with visual icons of art history) to her mother.
communities of photographic representation after 9/11; if we think of Tarek Elhaik’s *The Incurable Image*, which will, in this project, remain a crucial concept for unsettling my project and disturbing the clinical-analytical position of the curator with sovereign power over what (or who!) is exposed; or Griselda Pollock’s *After-affects /After-images* that deliberately insists on the transformative potential of ‘artworking.’ In other words, theoretical concepts allied with curatorial thinking from feminist, post-anthropological and post-colonial environments of research have in recent years contributed profoundly to an approach in photography towards a new kind of materiality that puts into question its representational, documentary or ratio-analytical faculties. In concrete terms, the image can be seen here as a historical subject in its own rights, and occurs successfully, moreover, in the recent discussions within contemporary art on concepts such as ‘animism,’ as brought forward by Anselm Franke’s durational research exhibition, and which embraces even the indexical photographic work of Candida Höfer.

In fact, Mitchell’s determining this position reminds me of a brainstorming workshop for the Arafat Museum in Ramallah, to which I was invited to contribute

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9 ‘In spite of photography’s localisation and increasing routinisation, the multitude of photographic images and their global flow were accompanied, as I attempt to show, by a refusal to accept the medium’s representational capabilities and by an urge to counter them by defacement and the creation of new opacities.’ in: *Contesting Visibility. Photographic Practices on the East African Coast*, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2013, p. 19.

10 ‘We are the hinterlands of images, nothing more and nothing less: we are images’ expressions, bas-relief from the chaotic and and infinite world of images …’ from the manuscript for ‘The Incurable Image: Curation & Repetition on a Tri-Continental Scene’ in: *The Post-Colonial Museum: The Arts of Memory & The Pressures of History*. Eds. Iain Chambers & al., Ashgate, forthcoming.

11 ‘In my studies, I repeatedly stress the significance of form, formation, transformation in order to explore the mediation between after-affect and after-image, that moves from the psychic intimacy between aesthesis and trauma, structurally, to the role of artworking in touching and thus offering a novel, poietically generated form for the encounter with that which, by definition, is not yet in the grasp of representation.’ in: *After-affect /After-images. Trauma and aesthetic transformation in the virtual feminist museum*, Manchester, 2013, p. xxvi

12 ‘… I want the image to contain stories, not to tell stories, to be talkactive. […] And photographic images, like maps, invite you to use plenty of time.’ In: ‘Candida Höfer Speaks with Giovanni de Riva,’ in: *Conversaciones con fotógrafos / Conversations with Photographers* (Madrid: La Fábrica: Fundación Telefónica, 2007), 43.
alongside colleagues from European museums. In an informal conversation after the presentations, one of my Dutch colleagues repeated several times that ‘they’ (the Palestinian colleagues) do not know anything about how to maintain—technology-wise—the museum’s collection. He did not say this out of disrespect for the curators who live and work under the conditions of Occupied Palestine, but out of a conviction that he must help, and diagnose what ‘they’ need, because ‘people don’t know.’ This attitude can also be found in any UNESCO training protocol for the cultural sector (which I am familiar with through my independent consultancies for UNESCO Office in Ramallah), clearly separating the ‘international expert’ and the ‘trainee.’

Paradoxically, even though Palestinians working internationally, as well as local intellectuals, artists and filmmakers criticise this classifying, and one needs to add, stigmatising, the separation into knowledge and non-knowledge is kept alive—by all sides—within the official frameworks of UNESCO funded events. I will come back to this dilemma later in this text. For now, let me comment on it in the words of Jean Genet: ‘Did they have any choice?’ (Genet, 1986, p. 99)

Instead, encountering and travelling with an archived image practice, such as the one I suggest here, makes this question return to the one who asks: what do we want from these images, and why today? What do these images do to us? This approach does not align itself with the iconoclastic tradition that Mitchell aims to defy. Moreover, image archive theorists and historians of photography usually also consider the photograph as an object, as we also learn from Elizabeth Edwards’ writing, for example, when she places: ‘photographs as image-objects in sets of relationships in which they are made meaningful through different forms of apprehension.’ (Edwards, 2006) I share Mitchell’s proposal of Edward’s insistence on considering the photograph as ‘relational.’ The ‘itinerant’ has, however, taught me something else in the process of working, and more accurately, travelling with privately archived photographs over a period of four years. It comes closer to what Tarek Elhaik called an ‘incurable image,’ which is an image ‘that disorients us by

14 Presented in the conference The Post-Colonial Museum, University of Naples, February 7–8, 2013. Published in: Elhaik, T., ‘The Incurable Image: Curation & Repetition on a Tri-Continental Scene,’ in: Chambers, I. & al., eds.) The Post-
forcing us to return to chaotic affects that cannot be curated in the professional sense of the term.’ (Elhaik, 2013) In this space that Genet calls the desert there is nothing to diagnose and curate. If anything at all, there is something to learn.

**Unsettling knowledge**

For the past few years, I have been travelling to the Middle East with a small number of photographs. I got them from an elderly friend. His name is Horst Sturm. He is known as a photojournalist in the GDR and has worked for many years for the East German press agency called ADN. In Beirut and Tunis in particular, Sturm educated former freedom fighters (*fedayeen*) on working with photo camera as a way of enhancing the means of the Palestinian liberation movement to fight against the Occupation.\(^\text{15}\) One of the course participants was Youssef Khotoub. I do not know as much about him as I do about Horst Sturm. I only know that when he was about twelve years old, Khotoub was a freedom fighter, *fedayeen*, in the Palestinian Cause during the 1970s, which was then primarily headed by the militant organisation Fateh\(^\text{16}\) and further movements like the PFLP that formed the P.L.O. *Fedayeen* is an Arab word and could be translated as ‘guerrilla’ or ‘those who sacrifice.’ Very little research has been done with regard to photographic practice as a strategy of the Palestinian revolution and its transnational activities, particularly with regard to the solidarity relations with the GDR. This is probably due to the fact that Horst

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\(^\text{15}\) The educational exchange took place under the aegis of Verband der Journalisten der DDR (VJD) [Journalists’ Organisation of the GDR]. The VJD was a member of the International Organization of Journalists. The partnering bodies were the East German press agency ADN and the Palestinian press agency WAFA as the Information Unit of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (P.L.O.). It appears worth mentioning as well, that Horst Sturm was a member of AFIAP (*Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique*). As a delegate of the ADN, Horst Sturm also went to Mongolia and Yemen, while his agency colleagues travelled to Cuba, for example.

\(^\text{16}\) Two spellings are commonly in use, ‘Fateh’ and ‘Fatah.’ I am using ‘Fateh’ in my thesis, following the example of Edward Said, in particular as used in the chapter ‘The PLO Rises to Prominence,’ first published in 1979 and introducing the movement’s conditions of internationalising the Cause. See: *The Question of Palestine*, Vintage Books, New York, 1992, pp. 157–168, here: p. 160. In general linguistic usage, the Arabic term ‘fateh’ means ‘to open,’ while it also translates as ‘to conquer.’
Sturm has been the only GDR delegate, from the ADN press agency, to collaborate with the P.L.O., as well as the fact that the photographs of, as well as information about the photo courses are only accessible via Sturm. To my knowledge, I am, thus far, the only one to have asked about this and it can be argued that this investigation is the first of its kind. Today, Khotoub still works for the Palestinian press agency WAFA as a photographer, and is now based near Ramallah.\(^\text{17}\)

Image 2: Informal dinner in Beirut, likely 1980, Youssef Khotoub, Khotoub’s son, Horst Sturm, and further participants of the photo course (from left). Archive Sturm, Berlin.

The archived photographic practice from the solidarity-educational moments in Beirut and Tunis in the 1980s builds both a bridge and a divide between disparate

\(^{17}\) In comparison, the organisational structure of WAFA has remained basically the same since the early 1980s, even though its headquarters moved from Beirut to Tunis, Gaza to Ramallah and also throughout first and second Intifada. This can be detected, for example, in the fact that Mahmoud Nofal remained the Head of WAFA’s Photo Section from the mid-/early-1970s until his retirement in 2011. Nofal was Sturm’s closest partner during the photo courses; and whenever I talk with Sturm today, he always asks whether I have ‘heard from the Palestinians,’ in particular from Nofal. For an insight into the trajectories of Intifada see Roy, S. ‘The First Intifada (1987–1998)’ and ‘The Second Palestinian Intifada, Hamas’s Electoral Victory, and its Seizure of Gaza (2000 to Present),’ in: Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector, 2011, Princeton University Press.
practices, regions, and temporalities. Firstly, it links together a revolutionary struggle and artistic actions simply through the similarity of technological devices, concerns and means of production in photography. Sturm’s curriculum lists light measurement, exposure, film sensitivity, focal width, wide angle, telephoto, lens aperture, depth of focus, aperture, exposure time, equipment, flash technique, filter, chemistry of photography, negative / positive processing, and laboratory technique—the technicalities needed for any photographic practice independently from its field of operation. This observation might sound unnecessary, but it provides a structural connector point between photography for a Cause and that within the domain of art. A second face connects the geographies of the Middle East (Lebanon, Jordan), as well as North Africa (Tunis), with Europe (GDR/Germany). This geopolitical dimension pulsates throughout the entire project; and it will be addressed in depth in the chapters that follow. Thirdly, the archived photographs interrelate different periods of time, i.e., the 1980s and the early 2010s. Unfolding the material today disturbs linear concepts of time, and instead, introduces a heterotemporal ground. The issue of time has an effect on, fourthly, the juxtaposition of two different economic systems: on one side, the Real-existing Socialism informed by a Marxist-Leninist doctrine that shaped all institutional and governmental structures in the GDR and informed, to some extent, (PFLP in particular) the Palestinian liberation movement, and on the other side, the ‘capitalist realism’ (Mark Fisher, 2009) of today. And there is a fifth aspect, consisting of a linkage between macro-politics and micro-politics, which I borrow from Suely Rolnik, who introduces it in relation to a ‘compulsion to archive’

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18 Proposal for a photo course with ANA agency in Yemen in 1983, unpublished, archive Horst Sturm.
19 ‘Heterotemporality’ is used by Mieke Bal to specify ‘migratory culture’ in exhibition practice: ‘heterotemporality of a world that likes to think in progression, attending to cultures which are less obsessed with this narrowly linear temporality as well as to ‘asynchronicity’ and clash of temporalities and technologies belonging to different worlds and socio-cultural structures’ Bal, M., Hernández-Navarro, M. (eds.), 2 move video art migration, Murcia, 2008, p.11.
20 ‘Capitalist realism as I understand it cannot be confined to art or to the quasi-propagandistic way in which advertising functions. It is more like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action.’ Fisher, M., Capitalist Realism. Is there no Alternative?, London, 2009, p.16.
21 Archive Mania, Ostfildern, 2011.
within contemporary art that she locates in opposition to forms of dominant culture. She writes:

‘While the effect of totalitarian regimes of culture manifests itself most clearly through censorship—its macro-political face—its micro-political, imperceptible effect is much more subtle, but no less nefarious. It consists in the inhibition of the emergence of the creative process) even before artistic expression begins to take shape.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 7)

Many projects and investigations within contemporary art at the moment seem to fall into line with such ‘compulsion to archive,’ and more precisely in relation to an archival condition within the scopes of cinema and photography in the revolutionary contexts. This particular archival moment, the macro- and micro-political bond, provides the resonating frame for my curatorial intervention, particularly for an unfolding of the itinerant potential of the image by transgressing it between these different scenes, temporalities, economics, regions, and scopes of action. As we will see, it provides a major anchor for re-thinking the making of exhibitions in relation to and through the photographic practice of the fedayeen. The double-gesture of the archive, i.e., the macro- and micro-politics, resonates in the photographic practice of the fedayeen from the very beginning. One could argue that the macro-political face is nothing new within their photographic practice, which was supposed to feed into a regime of a culture of revolution.

Approaching the non-official images through an archival lens allows us to ‘insist on a micro-political vision in the debate that has taken place during recent

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22 Rolnik illustrates her distinction with an excerpt from the short film Je vous salue, Sarajevo, 1993, 2:15 min, by Jean-Luc Godard in which he says: ‘There is culture, and that is the rule. There is exception, and that is art. Everything tells the rule: cigarettes, computers, T-shirts, television, tourism, war. Nothing says the exception. That is not said. It is written, composed, painted, filmed. Or it is lived. And it is then the art of living. It is of the nature of the rule to desire the death of exception.’

decades in what has been called “postcolonialism.”” (Rolnik, 2011, p. 13) This debate is informed by re-defining what contemporary art is, if hitherto applied concepts of critique, modernity, post-modernity, and history have been the Occidental ones. The exhibition *The Short Century*, curated by Okwui Enwezor with stations in Munich, Berlin and New York in 2001/02, made clear at last that the Western take on creative practices (literature, poetry, film, photography, graphics, and so on) from Africa is outdated and limited if discussed through a vocabulary of the Western art historical canon.

The wide spectrum of creativity, neither explicitly defined as art nor as non-art, is addressed as an essential instrument in the different liberation struggles on the African continent. Enwezor’s exhibition inaugurated prominently, institutionally and curatorially the figure of the *would-be historian* within contemporary art, who engages with the archival not in order to reconstruct history that had been written already, namely, by regimes and faculties of colonialism. Instead, the *would–be* in the figure of the historian realises ‘that there was already in formation an emergent category of discourse that would furnish us with the tools to analyze.’ (Enwezor, 2001, p.14) Such a statement suggests considering the archive not as a container of found objects, but rather finding in it an acoustic chamber of questions, problems and issues of our current post- and anti-colonial times. The figure of the *would-be historian* certainly also resonates in my project. In other words, a project like the one at hand requests a setting within the space of contemporary art other than the invention of narrative displays or historian’s work alone. It needs a new vocabulary, other than that of the history of photography, as another branch of art history. The curatorial intervention stretches the link in between all these disciplines, which juxtaposes, contradicts, doubts and counters each other’s claim for truth. Such a snarl is needed not only because of a distrust in disciplines, genres and categories, but because this curatorial intervention enters a practice that intended to counter a Western narrative—ideologically, economically, politically—and which thus cannot help but be part of this project.

Terry Smith explicitly interrelates/interlaces his re-definition of contemporary art with the global geo-political changes around 1989, when he writes ‘The transnational turn during the 1990s and first decade of the twenty-first century […] It is a paradigm shift in slow motion that matches the changing world geopolitical and economic order. From this perspective contemporary art today is the art of the Global
South.’ (Smith, 2009, p. 52) The aim is not to regain control over the forms of practices that depart from the systems that no longer even exist, i.e., the Real-existing Socialism in Europe and the P.L.O. as a militant organisation before the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993. Instead, how can a curatorial intervention re-activate the micro-political that tangles up with ‘the memory of the bodies that inhabit the regions controlled by the dominant culture.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 14) This is a line of entry for working with the practice of the fedayeen.

In other words, if exhibition practice conventionally consists of mastering skills, selecting pieces from artist studios, managing the architecture and space, placing things, voices, images, sounds, and materials as objects on public display, then travelling with these images taught me something else. Travelling with images that emerged from an educational undertaking in Beirut, in 1980, evoked an imperative for this project, which consists in the fact that the images cannot be displayed through curatorial professionalism, as mostly required by institutions that ask for the curator’s historical analysis, contextual expertise, as well as an institutional purification of the artistic gesture and a clear division between the work of artist/photographer and curator. The images reject being treated as historical documents that have been just waiting to be put on public display, as objects to be dissected. They thus ‘resist the normalization of dominant forms of curation in contemporary life.’ (Elhaik, 2013) They also refuse to serve as a spectacular archival find, which would add another story to the current ‘archive mania.’ (Rolnik, 2011) Rolnik notes this as a worry, when she writes:

‘The globalized art world has been overtaken in recent decades by a true compulsion to archive—a compulsion that includes anything from academic research into pre-existing archives or those still to be constructed, through exhibitions fully or in part based on them, to frantic competition among private collectors and museums in the acquisition of these new objects of desire. Without a doubt, this phenomenon is not the result of chance. In view of this, it is urgent that we problematize the politics of archiving […]’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 4)

Rolnik’s text sends out a worry over that compulsion in a time of cultural capitalism, in which the domain of contemporary art appears to be providing a revealing litmus
test of how globalisation aims to satisfy ‘its thirsts for hegemony in the face of increasing cultural differentiation (the multeity that was released by decolonization) […]’ (Smith, 2009, p.49). With regard to my project, her worry points to a set of difficult concerns: how can we unfold (expose in public) these privately archived images then, if they are stored in private homes in Berlin and Ramallah, but speak at the same time from an important, though hitherto rather overlooked geo-political project of the Cold War period? The fact that they have never been on public display appears to fit perfectly with desires for new objects, narrations, discoveries and hidden agendas in the domain of contemporary art. Furthermore, how can we deal with a wish for decolonisation, which departs from a historical moment that actively opposed forces of capitalism, but dwelled at the same time in a totalitarian agenda of a Stalinist version of socialism? These troubling forces of an ‘archive mania’ induce a confusion over how to unfold, work through, display the images, documents, or notes, orally told stories, and embodied memories in a moment in time, in which exhibitions of contemporary art, biennales, jet-set curators, and museum collections depend on the discovery of the unknown, not-yet-seen, and the new.

My curatorial intervention wishes to transform a historical moment of solidarity by actualising, as well as problematising the social-collective (micro-political) side of the fedayeen practice through its complexity. Not by turning it into another ‘macro-political face,’ which would per definitionem connect this practice to an established historical canon that it has tried to resist, but by activating knowledge that unsettles the ground of a macro-political history.

‘The issue is to be aware not of the tensions (their extensive, representational, macro-political face), but of the experience of this state of things within the body itself, and of the effects mobilized by the forces that make them up (their intensive, unconscious, micro-political face). In this manner, focus is increased—the same focus that is lost when what is related to the social life of art is exclusively reduced to a macro-political approach,
which, as we have seen, tends to be fostered by situations of state oppression or extreme social inequality." (Rolnik, 2011, p. 11)

‘What I was seeing was an absence of images’

Let us re-read the above sentence once more, this time with regard to the kind of images that Genet is speaking of, those that we can find in a particular spatial environment: the desert. What kind of images must they be in order to be in such a marginal region, difficult to reach and travel to, in solitude even though ‘all’ the images are there, but away from organised frameworks, rather out of public sight, without reliable and constant infra-structures, technical capacities, professional ordering systems, and climate control? Genet seems to have in mind images of little relevance and value for institutional structures. They must be quite unspectacular with regard to market value. But such is the archived practice that Genet sends us to. These concerns indeed resonate in the images I have been working with.

Let us inquire why. The point of departure for my project are photographs produced in 1980, 1981 and 1986, when Sturm taught photography courses in Beirut and Tunis. In other words, this project does not want to deliver an analysis of official photographs’ visual grammar, as it has circulated in public and as still rests in press agency archives such as the German dpa, the Associated Press in New York, or the Palestinian agency WAFA. The photographs that Sturm entrusted me with on my own journeys to Ramallah and Beirut (over the past few years), are those that have been privately archived; showing a group of students during a photography course, photographers among fedayeen in camps in southern Lebanon, informal dinners with colleagues from the Palestinian press agency WAFA, walks on the streets in Beirut, reportage trips in the urban sphere, meetings with families, a clandestine meeting with Arafat, as well as with Arafat’s brother Fathi Arafat, and so on. Those are photographs that did not make it into the official press archives because they appeared to be, perhaps, too private, too focused on the practice of photography as such, or not useful for the Cause.

In other words, our project begins with individually archived images that have been resting, since the late 1980s, in private homes, on shelves, on computers, and in

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24 Documenta (13) (eds.), 100 Notes – 100 Thoughts / 100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken. No. 022 Suely Rolnik Archive Mania / Archivmanie, Hatje Cantz, 2011, p. 11.
albums in Berlin, Beirut, and Ramallah; they have not been exposed to the public until now. They are leftovers from an image practice whose main goal was to put the Palestinian Cause on international and public display. They could even be seen as a waste of material, if one takes into account that photo material is precious when working on the streets under war conditions, as well as on the battlefield. Nevertheless, I am concerned with this archived image practice, and more precisely with its educational importance that emerges explicitly from situations of mutual learning, from group discussions of the practice itself, and from a collective body within the concept of socialist-socialist friendships. These are, therefore, expressly the images from which I hope to find a possible ground on which to both encounter and counter solidarity relations of the socialist period in Europe of the Cold War era linking geographies such as the Middle East and North Africa. In other words, I am concerned with non-official images of this practice, those not produced for public purposes, but that appear as ‘souvenirs,’ as Genet imagined titling his book alternatively. But Genet’s souvenirs are hard to capture by optical devices such as a camera, as an evidence of truth, as much as it is impossible to decipher from the non-official images the social relations, the intimacy, friendships and collective body that have emerged during the photo courses in Beirut between the East German photographer and the fedayeen. Let us sojourn in an image in language, if you will, that Genet invited us to look for:

‘At the beginning of this book I tried to describe a game of cards in an arbour. As I said, all the gestures were genuine but the cards were not. Not only were they not on the table, but they weren’t anywhere; it wasn’t a game of cards at all. […] Withdrawal symptoms of cards, as if they were cocaine. The end of the game was its beginning: nothing at the start and nothing at

25 The GDR established the so-called solidarity relations with other countries, too, in particular on the African continent (Ethiopia, Congo, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau), in Asia (Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Mongolia, Vietnam), in South America (Chile, Nicaragua, Cuba). My focus here, however, moves around a specific and ongoing educational project that took place in the form of photo courses throughout the 1980s in Lebanon and Tunisia.

26 ‘This book could be called Souvenirs, and I’ll lead the reader back and forth in time as well as, inevitably in space. The space will be the whole world, the time chiefly the period between 1970 and 1984.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 38)
the finish. What I was seeing was an absence of images: no bastos, no knights, no swords.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 124)

In the context of a region such as Palestine, which has been excessively mediatised over the past decades, Genet’s proposal for such an image practice withdraws deliberately from the image as a representational surface. This concern is the core, for instance, of *Nervus Rerum* (2008) by The Otolith Group. I presented this work in 2010 during the course *Exhibition design and curatorial practice – case study Abu Jihad Museum for Prisoner Movements Affairs*. The Otolith Group’s film combines footage material produced by the Group, from the Palestinian refugee camp in Jenin, with text excerpts from writings by Jean Genet, e.g., the above quote concludes the piece, and from Fernando Pessoa’s *The Book of Disquiet* (1982, posthumously). Interlacing images that appear to be documentary with words that read like poetic journals unfolds the work into an essayistic space, which invites the viewer to join the scene. Screening the film during the course on exhibition design in Palestine allowed us to enter a group debate on potential strategies, e.g., the essayistic, in order to complicate the image’s burden of power that portrays (Genet speaks of imprisonment) the Palestinians only as victims. During the course, we discussed how living under the Occupation is a form of imprisonment, signified by the Separating Wall. But what kind of different languages, images, voices, desires, modes of production and knowledges depart from such a place beyond? Genet’s


28 UNESCO Office Ramallah commissioned me to programme this course, which was realised in a week-long session (considered as the first part), in November 2010 at the Art Academy in Ramallah as partnering body. The commission resulted from another museum project in Bethlehem, also funded by UNESCO, that I was supposed to direct artistically, but refused to. To make a long story short: the course was supposed to deliver a ‘new model’ for “Building local capacities in museums exhibition design and curatorial practices” as it says officially. Unpublished paper.


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approach to the image does not withdraw from the image as such, he suggests, rather, thinking the image in a way other than thinking it as part of the documentary, as a testimony or as an eyewitness.

These photo courses, as a 1980s solidarity moment during the Cold War period, have not been discussed in public yet, whether in artistic or academic debates. This research is, to my knowledge, the first of its kind with regard to the educational impact that a country like the GDR, and thus, Europe, had on liberation movements around the world, and in the case here discussed, particularly the impact on the Palestinian liberation movement, and thus, on the role of the Cold War within the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Such an image, as proposed by Genet, speaks of refusing to leave the right of inspection to the eye of the camera, whose presence in the picture-taking event can be seen as an untimely/early/premature eye of the future viewer. Genet speaks of absence, of invisibility in the optical sense, and an endless event without beginning and end. He also speaks of a failed attempt ‘[at] the beginning of the book’ to re-capture a scene of seeming playfulness, banality and quotidian life.


*The Itinerant* takes on these images, produced during several photo courses in Beirut and Tunis throughout the 1980s, which capture situations of the practice itself:
in the photo laboratory, looking at the developed film, during an exercise on the streets of Beirut, walking a walk, but also the foremost informal and intimate moments during dinners among friends, visits of comrades and fighters in military camps, and so on. These images are not at all spectacular in terms of what they show. This kind of unspectacularity is exactly what links them with Genet’s book, in which Genet captures ‘images in language’ of sharing informal and intimate moments during travels to Jordan and Lebanon in support of and in solidarity with the Palestinians. Through a distancing from the actual photographs (however, without neglecting them entirely, as we will see), we exceed the existence of the images as representational surfaces and move them closer to ‘images in language’ that Genet speaks of. Such a shift troubles many things: an image production that exists on its own, but that cannot, however, be detached from real-political and official protocols of the Cold War and state-institutional frameworks for solidarity actions. In doing so, it troubles a binary rhetoric that operates in clear-cut separation into pro and contra with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict; it, furthermore, also invalidates the notion of the Arab-Israeli conflict as merely a regional issue by placing it in proximity to the Cold War politics crystallised in Europe through the German/German division.

Two coordinates
Such unspectacularity leads us to a troubling point, namely, that the non-official images of this archived practice, these ‘images in language,’ do not provide sufficient material for public display a curator would usually work with. Again, there is nothing to curate—particularly with regard to the archived image practice from the 1980s—but, if anything, there is something to learn.

It puts pressure on what is commonly called ‘curatorial practice.’ The latter has had an incredible boom within the past two decades in the form of a new profession called the ‘independent curator.’ The task and role of the curator has been discussed at various conferences\textsuperscript{30}, in magazines\textsuperscript{31}, books\textsuperscript{32}, and new study

\textsuperscript{30} As an example, let me refer to “The Task of the Curator: Translation, Intervention and Innovation in Exhibitionary Practice” at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Museum and Curatorial Studies (MACS), May 14–15, 2010. Furthermore, “Genealogien künstlerischer Display-Strategien” of Sonderforschungsbereich Ästhetische Erfahrung im Zeichen der Entgrenzung der Künste, at Freie Universität Berlin, December 10, 2011.
programmes. An independent curator, who is not employed by an art institution, but hired by it (project-related) because of his or her non-institutional way of doing research, usually does the following: she or he travels a lot to artist studios, biennales, or exhibitions made by colleagues; he or she travels a lot because she is invited to a talk, preferably on the topic of her or his own research, but also about an artist’s practice. In addition, therefore, this type of curator has a huge network of contacts such as institutions, individuals, and also academia (if one realises a practice-based PhD at a university or teaches at an art academy, for example), because the independent curator depends on a reliable social, as well as intellectual network (as does the artist, though). Usually, the curator invites one or more artists to institutional projects (sometimes it can be also the other way around, when an artist insists on working with a curator who is not from the institution). Usually, the curator does research on artistic projects and artworks, he or she likes to socialise with artists and writes about their work; he or she has knowledge about other artists but also theorists, historians, filmmakers or novelists who could potentially be fruitful partners for a dialogue within a project; and she or he sometimes tries to theorise an artistic practice, which, conversely, is sometimes much appreciated by the artist, because the artist may use this theory to declare a certain place within a discourse that is debated in public within the frame of conferences, magazines, publications, and so on. The immense proliferation and insistency of the figure of the curator can be considered as a ‘symptom of a change on a much broader historical scale.’ (Buden, 2012, p. 135)

This scale, as Boris Buden argues, is made up of two coordinates: the first, a ‘so-called worldwide upsurge in memory,’ (Buden, 2012, p. 40) which has to do—reciprocally—with a dissolution of major institutional structures, defining as well as

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33 Curatorial Studies at Städelschule in Frankfurt; Cultures of the Curatorial at Academy of Visual Art, Leipzig; and while I am writing this thesis, the University of the West of England, Bristol, just announced a new master’s programme in curating.
governing cultural heritage,\textsuperscript{35} on the account of endless resources on the Internet. However, the change in tele-technologies coincided with a worldwide geopolitical tremor around 1989 that did not indicate the \textit{The End of History and the Last Man} (1992), as the often cited, as well as criticised claim by Francis Fukuyama proposes, but rather the end of the Cold War politics, the enclosure of ‘simple stories’\textsuperscript{36} within bodies of those whose biographies were turned upside down by the breakdown of a divided world; and the arrival of ‘zonenkinder’,\textsuperscript{37} who grew up with the immense mental disclosure / epiphany that a system (political, economic, educational) is neither naturally given nor state-regulated constitutional law. This shift, then, leads to an empowerment, an impetus to become a \textit{would-be historian} his- or herself, as elaborated previously with regard to an exhibition such as \textit{The Short Century}, which Okwui Enwezor realised in 2002 as an independent curator; but the \textit{would-be historian} already appears in \textit{The Other Story}, curated by Rasheed Araeen at the Hayward Gallery in 1989, wherein he examined the contributions to European modernism by hitherto unrecognised non-Western modernist artists.\textsuperscript{38}

On the other side, the general public itself, i.e., the regular visitor, could potentially change roles and become a curator her- or himself, as the installation \textit{Phenotypes / Limited Forms} by Armin Linke suggests. We developed it with students of Exhibition Design and Curatorial Practice at the ZKM in Karlsruhe in 2006. This installation invites the visitor to touch and to browse—in the institutional space of the exhibition—through appr. 1,000 photographs by Linke, in order to select eight

\textsuperscript{35} While I am writing this, the publisher Bertelsmann has declared the closing down of the print-version of the German encyclopaedia Brockhaus, which almost every single household in (West-) Germany passed on from generation to generation.

\textsuperscript{36} I am referring to the book \textit{Simple Stories} (1998) by Ingo Schulze.

\textsuperscript{37} I am referring to the book \textit{Zonenkinder} (2004) by Jana Hensel. ‘zonenkinder’ can be translated literally with ‘zone’s children,’ whereas ‘zone’ is a slightly pejorative term used in West Germany for the German Democratic Republic. Hensel describes the feeling of misfit within a generation that had been young enough to enter an academic education in the new system, i.e., to study in the West or abroad, but too old to share childhood’s pop-cultural icons and memory with fellow students from the West who speak German, but amongst whom one feels a stranger nevertheless.

photographs, each equipped with a RFID-chip that enables scanning the individual selection, and printing out—still in the exhibition space—an original low-key print object, which can be taken home by the now curator-visitor.

The second coordinate on the historical scale tackles the growing incompleteness of knowledge. In other words, the curator signifies a figure, within the exhibitionary set-up, who is not an expert in anything: she or he is neither an artist delivering a product, nor a historian capable of approving scientific data. This is the coordinate on which Buden locates the ‘curator as translator’ who wanders, rambles and struggles between the various disciplines, without mastering any language.

Image 4: Armin Linke: Phenotypes/Limited Forms, 2007, interactive user-oriented installation of 1,000 photographs, 1,000 RFID-chips, 16 RFID-scanners, two touch screens, two PCs, two BOCA micro-ticket-printers, video projector. Developed with Sony Computer Science Laboratory, Paris (Peter Hanappe), the students of study programme Exhibition Design and Curatorial Practice at University of Arts and Design / ZKM Karlsruhe (Wilfried Kuehn, Doreen Mende) Photo: Displayer 02, 2008, p. 182.

This permanent mode of wandering produces a space for ‘a new type of sociality, the one that is already subjectified in the figure of a “foreigner in us”.’
(Buden, 2012, p. 43) Several public and discursive platforms have recently elaborated on porous boundaries, particularly in directions from artistic to curatorial practice.\(^{39}\) For example, Anton Vidokle recalls that, as

‘[…] Group Material, Martha Rosler, and other artists in the 1980s demonstrated, curating can become a part of artistic practice just as any social form or activity can. For example, Martha Rosler’s *If You Lived Here* began as an immediate response to a lack of institutional support for an exhibition she was invited to do at the Dia Center for the Arts. Rosler felt that the best way to do something there was by positioning herself as curator/organizer—a kind of one-person institution rather than an individual artist.’ (Vidokle, 2010)

Certainly, in reverse, it is a little difficult for a curator to be that one-person institution by simply stating that one is an artist, if the entire economic-structural framework does not fit this concept. Boris Groys called the curator an ‘iconoclast,’ who will never have the magic power to turn an everyday object into a *readymade* of artistic, as well as economic value.\(^{40}\) The inevitable demand to produce ‘something’ that can be put on public display in an exhibition links artistic production to a capitalist logic, as Milica Tomić pointed out in a workshop on the politics of exhibiting,\(^{41}\) when she said

‘The requirement to exhibit the final product is something we can view in the framework of the capitalist system, along the lines that an employer who has made an investment now needs to see a result. These relationships are reproduced in the collaboration among artists, curators, and directors who have invested in a work in an institutional framework. The exhibiting institution, being the last link in the chain of this market transaction, needs a


\(^{41}\) See ‘Politics of Memory,’ in: Kuehn, W., Mende, D. *DISPLAYER 03*, 2009, pp. 101–111)
 visible, tangible result: a product.’ (Tomić, 2009, p. 101)

This very short and brief outline of curatorial practice will suffice here, because I would like to continue with Elhaik’s proposal to seriously consider the ‘incurable image’ that might not even care whether a curator, an archivist, a director, a theorist, an economist, a capitalist or socialist, a filmmaker or an artist is the partnering voice. In Elhaik’s view, curation takes place from ‘the pathetic point of view of images,’ through which various territorial places need to find a border-transgressing alliance between each other, because the image ‘requires from us to both engage the production of images as a radically de-authored process and to displace our subjectivities towards a commitment to the pathos of images that have a life and death of their own.’ (Elhaik, 2013)

The aim is not, therefore, to build an odd rivalry between the different places, i.e., artist and independent curator, because in the end, the space of exhibiting is the platform from which depart trains of thoughts that wish to exist individually, but that, in order to arrive somewhere, they take a journey together. Or, in continuation of Elhaik’s clinical view, the incurable image as a fellow traveller might painstakingly mirror, and thus, analyse, provoke, display, reveal, and shed light on its surrounding condition. In a narrow sense, this condition consists of curator’s desires, dreams, fears and knowledge. In a wider sense, the ‘incurable image’ exposes symptoms of a ‘capitalist realism,’ (Fisher, 2009) which names a shift—after the collapse of the socialist project in 1989 on a global scale—from capitalism as an abstract-economic system that just needs to be managed and administered, to a psychic condition that occupies our thoughts, minds and bodies. I will be returning to this all-embracing realism throughout the project.

The privately archived photographs I received from Horst Sturm, which initiated this long-term curatorial/theoretical/artistic project, do not operate as

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42 It has taken shape in various journeys to the Middle East and various meetings with Horst Sturm, Youssef Khotoub, Ali Hussein, Mahmoud Nofal since 2008; it found a forum within my role as an independent consultant for UNESCO Office Ramallah, in the framework of which I conceived the week long course Design and Curatorial Practice Case Study Abu Jihad Museum For Prisoner Movements Affairs in Abu Dis East Jerusalem at the Art Academy in Ramallah in Fall 2010; it formulated itself within a residency with the research programme of the Arab Image Foundation in
historical documents or as ‘image-objects’ (Edwards, 2006),) but as a troubling platform for unsettling a *practice* that emerges from a revolutionary intention of a project from the times of socialist solidarity, and its potential for us today. I will attempt to show how these images—and, in particular, the practice of making them—from the early 1980’s may affect a whole way of thinking about the practice of exhibiting today. This is the environment, in which the ‘itinerant’ articulates itself as a potential: it initiates a journey that moves in between all of those political entities that were involved back then, but have ceased to exist or have shifted drastically today.

**Double trouble**

This kind of image, which undertakes a journey crossing borders, appears almost impossible to catch. It is permanently on the road. It refuses to stand still in front of the curator’s eye, it says ‘no’ to the request to move onto the inspection table or to be mounted on the wall for the sake of observation and analysis. It does not want to respond to Mitchell’s question ‘What Do Pictures *Really* Want?’ as introduced earlier. (Mitchell, 1994) It simply is not interested in this question, because in times of ‘capitalist realism’ such an image does not trust this realism’s offer of living conditions, which Mark Fisher locates in two fields of action: mental health and bureaucracy. The image cannot, therefore, be curated in the professional sense, because it distrusts the cure, its funding structures, as well as its organisational framework. It will most likely remain silent to the question ‘What do you want?’ With luck, it might say something nice or nasty, just to get rid of that nerdy figure called Beirut in 2011; in the research-essay in form of a film called *I*ttineraries to *T*ranslucency (2013, with Armin Linke); in the conference contribution *R*eturns to *K*nowledge at the Birzeit University in 2013. It also found echoes in the research, exhibition project, publication and website *D*ouble *B*ound *E*conomies. *R*eading a *P*hoto *A*rchive *f*rom the *G*DR 1967–1990 (2010–2013), which I initiated and realised with Estelle Blaschke, Armin Linke and Philip Ursprung, as well as many others; and it continues currently in the new project *T*ravelling *C*ommuniqué. *G*oing into the *P*hoto *A*rchive (1948–1980) of Josip Broz Tito through the contemporary practices of art, theory, history, architecture, typography, cinema, and education, conceived by Armin Linke, Doreen Mende and Milica Tomić in discussion with more than 60 authors.

43 ‘I have chosen to focus on mental health problems and bureaucracy because they both feature heavily in an area of culture which is becoming increasingly dominated by the imperatives of capitalist realism: education.’ (Fisher, 2009, p. 20)
the curator. In other words, encountering the archived image practice from the GDR demands a model different from diagnostic curating.

It brings us back to the beginning, i.e., to Genet’s sentence on the final proof of the manuscript of *Un Captif amoureux*, which resides outside the memoire-writing, as if requesting some kind of solitude within the text: ‘Put all the images in language in a place of safety and make use of them, for they are in the desert, and it’s in the desert we must go and look for them.’ (Genet, 1986) Re-reading Genet’s note also brings to mind the concept of ‘intertextuality’ (Derrida, 1997) that we find hanging throughout and over *Un Captif amoureux* from the very beginning. It signals a possible way out of the dead end of trouble caused by the ‘incurable image.’ Let me elaborate on Jacques Derrida’s ‘intertextuality.’ For Derrida, everything is text.44 There is no way out of writing, and thus, ‘there is nothing outside of the text,’ (Derrida, 1997, p. 158). There must exist, therefore, various ways of writing, destabilising a generic recognition of the concept of ‘text’ as being composed exclusively through the linguistic writing system. In other words, Derrida’s ‘there is nothing outside of the text,’ is closer to a fabric, in which ‘the interweaving of different texts (literally “web”-s) in an act of criticism that refuses to think of “influence” or “interrelationship” as simple historical phenomena,’ as Spivak notes in her translator’s preface for *Of Grammatology*. (Derrida, 1997, p.x) This approach is based on the assumption of the existence of threads (‘texts’) of several sources (‘origins’), or if we would see it even more literally, each thread could be of a different colour and material. In other words, ‘text’ is anything but the final outcome of attaining a skill, such as mastering a language or decoding a text-message. Rather, such ‘text’ exists through any physical gesture of inscription, i.e., not only the capacities of the hands and the voice to announce a letter onto the white of a page and cut the silence of a space. Literal or not, and even if what it distributes in space is alien to its kind of order: cinematography, choreography, music and architecture, and importantly, the many physical gestures of inscriptions that the liberation struggle and the call for independence, even the military and the state produce could be termed as

44 ‘And thus we say “writing” for all that gives rise to inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural “writing”.’ (Derrida, 1968, p. 9) And we certainly can add that exhibiting is, then, also a form of writing.
‘text’ under Derrida’s proposal. Therefore, ‘there is nothing outside of the text’ certainly does not align with the post-modern slogan ‘anything goes.’ It demands instead the complication of our means of articulation that, perhaps, always reside within conflicting wills, entangled histories and transnational geographies, confronting the composition of a ‘text’ as always incomplete and in a permanent state of transition. If Spivak, therefore, states that these sorts of texts—in a condition of intertextuality—refuse any kind of influence as ‘simple historical phenomena,’ then that has consequences on the legibility of archival records in their various materialities: intertextuality declares an image a text, a body movement a text, a pre-linguistic utterance a text, a spatial setting a text, a state-protocol a text or a scheduled programme for a photography course a text, a delayed memory a text. More simply, intertextuality entangles an image with a written text—each of various origins and habits—without suspending each other’s difference and temporality. Such an entanglement produces utmost openness that grows from permanent overlappings, misfits, mistranslations and missing skills that, all together, end up in the failure to master the complexity of the given text. It strongly requests of one to work through an ongoing incompleteness of knowledge, and thus, to confess that one might have possibly missed the message. This kind of openness emerges from ‘the interweaving of different texts’ (Derrida, 1997, p.x), and results from the entanglement of all the different strands that touch, flatter, support and conceal, counter, or squeeze one another. In such entanglement, meaning (in terms of an absolute signification) cannot be definite, because each thread offers a reading different to the interwoven text as a whole. Returning to Genet’s note then, ‘all these images in language’ promote an image that is not a documentary picture; it is not evidence of truth; it does not offer a representational surface; a linearity; it is neither a visual document nor an ‘exhibit’ in

45 I am aware of Roland Barthes’ groundbreaking elaboration on ‘the photographic paradox’ in his clarification of the difference between the ‘photographic message’ and the ‘photographic image.’ However, Barthes’s writings do not offer a main reference for me in my attempts at re-thinking the politics of exhibiting along geopolitics through a biased photography practice from the Cold War period, because Barthes regards the photograph produced within the framework of press / public purposes as ‘never an “artistic photograph”.’ (Barthes, 1977, p. 18) What if these photographic images depart from a press photographer and arrive within the conditions of artworking and exhibition making, as my project wishes to propose by making use of such dislocation?
the curatorial or juridical sense. That means that the exhibition maker or curator does not here face an ‘image’ that can be framed as usual, or put on public display, and published in a magazine, without going through some sort of investigation into its entangled texture.

Returning to the archived image practice, particularly the privately archived images depicting the making of a photographic practice during the photo courses in solidarity with the Palestinian liberation movement, my approach takes distance from the photograph as a representational surface. Instead, I favour a ‘political ontology of photography’ (Azoulay, 2012) that opens up a space in which the

‘investigation of photography cannot concern itself with the technology of the camera alone. Nor can it be restricted to an investigation of the "final" product created by the camera, that is to say, the photograph. In other words, an ontological description of photography has to suspend the simple syntax of the sentence divided into subject, verb, predicate and adjective—photographer photographs a photograph with a camera—which has organized the discussion of photography for so long and which has gravely circumscribed that which it is to be deemed relevant to a discussion of photography.’ (Azoulay, 2012, p. 18)

Azoulay’s approach to photography comes close to Heike Behrend’s theory, which resulted from her research, as an ethnologist, on photographic practices on the East Coast of Africa (particularly in Kenya and among the Muslim communities on the cosmopolitan East Africa Coast), that I briefly introduced earlier while proposing to consider photography as an ‘aesthetics of withdrawal.’ Similarly to Behrend, Azoulay points out the contemporary relevance in order to shift our perspective on photography away from an apparatus-centered analysis of power mechanisms, which Azoulay defines as ‘the technology of the camera alone,’ towards the space of the photographs as ‘spaces of refusal’ (Behrend, 2013, p. 17) and, towards a ‘political ontology of photography.’ (Azoulay, 2012) Analysing the photographic image beyond the actual-technological conditions of its making, and thus, expanding the mode of production towards the conditions of exposure, offers the necessary frame for a discussion on the space of exhibiting as a geopolitical concern. Azoulay allows us to consider the photograph as not merely a “final” material product of a picture-taking
Her introduction to an ‘ontology of photography’ expands the photograph into a constellation of various subjects, crossing borders, time-zones, and geographies. It literally unsettles the semantic codifications that Roland Barthes still argues with, when he elaborates on ‘the photographic paradox’ by insisting on a clear-cut division between production (taking an image) and presentation (reading an image). It became clear to me, however, after the many interviews and encounters with the photographers who took part in the photo courses in the 1980s, and after developing a degree of sensitivity to their actual working conditions, that such clear-cut division is difficult to apply. This is so because, exposing these images today, and struggling to find the means of exposing them without re-producing a Cold War principle of binary order, must consider the conditions of showing them as production conditions of the very present. Therefore, an expanded approach to photography, within which everyone attached to the image as a space of production is potentially able to become a subject, conflates the line between ‘denotation’ and ‘connotation,’ as Barthes had suggested. In other words, the democratisation of the three gazes—photographer / photographed / photographer photographing a photograph as equal and responsible subjects—lay the foundation for an ontology of photography. The ‘political ontology of photography’—with my emphasis on Azoulay’s specification of the kind of ontology she has in mind—adds another crucial layer: Azoulay’s work, as an Israeli theorist and curator, on photographs from the Occupied Territories tackles political implications by the very nature of the tension between the theorist’s educational formation and the core of her ongoing investigation. The ‘political ontology of photography’ also resonates continually in this project, through the image practice departing from a strand of socialist internationalism during the Cold War in relation to the conflicting situation in the Middle East, and arriving in the paradigms of a neoliberal capitalism along globalising forces of the present day—or: a theorist and curator born in a state that does not exist anymore (GDR), impregnated with a socialist education up to her early teenage years, in an entangled history with a people’s Cause (Palestine) still struggling for a state at a time when the concept of the nation-state has absolutely lost its revolutionary promises.

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47 In the latter, I am referring to Frantz Fanon’s juxtaposition of the national claim in the struggle for independence from colonial rule in Algeria in *The Wretched of the*
Azoulay’s approach allows us to create a link with Genet’s proposal for images that are no longer images in the original-material sense. Importantly, Genet’s proposal goes even further, when he speaks of ‘all these images in language’ that demand from visuality a transformative, and, thus, optical visibility, and an outline framed to a different form of inscription, i.e., the language. In the case of Sturm’s images, it touches on issues such as the Cold War, liberation struggle, decolonialisation, socialist-socialist friendships, Palestine, Middle East, East German anti-fascism, and socialist internationalism. The curator’s role is in trouble here, because this exceeds his or her set of trained knowledge. It suspends the skills that she or he has learned in institutions while working with a collection, or with an archive from which she could simply select a range of material. It also affects collaboration with, say, an artist who is supposed to come up with an idea of how such transformation could look, meaning, how such transformation takes form in the exhibition space. In other words, such a transformative process moves her closer to the translator, in Buden’s words, who—nevertheless—still has to come up with something to be put on public display.

*Earth, 1961 (1963 translated into English)*: ‘In their speeches, the political leaders “name” the nation. The demands of the colonized are thus formulated. But there is no substance, there is no political and social agenda. There is a vague form of national framework, what might be termed a minimal demand. [… ] Sometimes even these politicians declare: “We Blacks, we Arabs,” and these terms charged with ambivalence during the colonial period take on a sacred connotation.’ (p. 29). In current debates, particularly in relation to the problem of sovereignty, see: Denise Ferreira da Silva, ‘NO-BODIES Law, Raciality and Violence,’ *Griffith Law Review* vol. 18, (2), 2009, pp. 212–236.
Image 5: Bruno Barbey: ‘JORDAN. Near Amman. 1969. The BAKA Palestinian refugee camp. Training of the Al Fateh fighters. All these young people come from Palestinian refugee camps - most of them are orphans, their fathers having been killed in fighting. Many come from Karame, a bombed village near the Jordan River, victims of March 1968 fighting. They go to school in the morning and usually train in the afternoon. They start their training between the ages of 10 and 13, but they are only allowed to go into combat at the age of 16.’ MAGNUM Photos: Image Reference PAR4114 (BAB1969006W00002/09A) © Bruno Barbey/Magnum Photos

Re-reading Genet’s note from the cover sheet of the proofs of *Un Captif amoureux*, therefore, reveals a struggle of the one working, walking, searching and looking for ‘all the images in language,’ in a place lacking a functional infrastructure for transport or light (electricity), when he takes us to the desert as our exhibition venue. This kind of struggle is different from a Marxist class struggle that sets out for direct action and calls for slogans such as ‘Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt Euch!’ It also is different from the militant struggle of the Palestinian liberation movement that took form in collective training in camps, which has been abundantly documented by, for example, the French photojournalist Bruno Barbey.

48 ‘Proletarians of all lands, unite!’ paraphrasing Marx’s *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* [The Communist Manifesto]. The slogan was printed, every day, on the front page of the newspaper *Neues Deutschland* [New Germany] of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in the GDR.
In order to simplify the complexity of re-thinking the space of exhibiting per geopolitical insistency, I invented the figure of the *itinerant*. It was needed in order to avoid positioning within a tiresome language game with regard to the term ‘exhibition’ and that comes with the desire to distance this project from the exhibition’s traditional format as a space where objects, things, photographs, research products, and so on, are displayed on tables, walls, or plinths. In the words of Tarek Elhaik, this project wants to ‘resist dominant forms of curation in contemporary life [that] culminate in blatant displays of power’ (Elhaik, 2013). This resistance, then, insists on re-thinking the space of exhibiting. In other words, what kind of space is needed for unfolding an archived image practice from the Cold War period in a space, for the sake of seeing, discussing, ‘making use’ as Genet suggests, and of debating its relevance for us today?

*‘We used to talk about photography on the plane’*

Re-reading Genet’s sentence on the cover sheet of his manuscript of *Un Captif Amoureux* again, this time with regard to an image practice that departs from the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in solidarity with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (P.L.O.). More concretely, Genet’s writing enables us to engage with and complicate the photographic practice of an East German photographer who started working with Palestinian photographers in Beirut in 1980. The collaboration between the GDR and the P.L.O. continued throughout the 1980s and must be seen within solidarity relations of the socialist internationalism of the Cold War period. Let us have a closer look at this photographic practice that articulates relations of solidarity between Europe and the Middle East, which we find differently unfolded in Genet’s book: by the end of the 1960’s, when Fateh became known internationally as a militant movement, a unit for photography was set up (and soon expanded into a cinema unit), providing an opportunity for the wounded people of the struggle to continue fighting for their Cause. Photography can be seen here as a continuation of militant struggle by other means. Former participants of Sturm’s workshop provide a crucial source for this assumption. One of them, Tariq Ibrahim, recalls its importance
in an interview more than 30 years later, by describing a direct connection between the militant leader Abu Jihad⁴⁹ and photographic practice:

‘I travelled with Abu Jihad more than once. We used to talk about photography on the plane. I still have the Canon F1 that he brought me from Abu Dabi in 81. It was expensive […] Yes, it was from Abu Jihad. He used to give many cameras as gifts. I once asked him why he gave cameras as gifts. He answered that he once was photographer like us.'⁵⁰ (Ibrahim, November 2011)

Such an interpenetration of the image, militancy, and politics resonates in Clausewitz’ famous thoughts in On War (1831), paraphrasing, that war is not led merely by an army, and directed by strategic-linear solutions, but that war—after people’s active role within the French Revolution in particular—must be located within a wider frame, namely, involving executive forces of state politics and the impact of social relations.⁵¹ This definition provided the ground for redefining war beyond a conflict fought on the battlefield: between armies, kingdoms or states. It is worth mentioning that a more recent debate in communication studies discusses the role of media as a further instrument of warfare⁵². Robin Brown, for example, reveals the issues that the governments in the so-called global North now face (he analyses the U.S. situation in particular): an increased sensitivity to media’s global infrastructures, because the public sphere has changed profoundly: the excessive flow

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⁴⁹ Abu Jihad is the nom de guerre of Khalil Al-Wazir who was assassinated by the Israeli army special forces in his flat in Tunis, in 1988.
⁵⁰ Interview with Tariq Ibrahim by the author in Beirut in November 2011.
⁵¹ ‘War is a mere continuation of policy by other means … War is not merely a political act, but also a truly political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.’ In: Foucault, M. Society Must be Defended. Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76, 2004 (first published in French in 1997), p. 15.
of information today comes out of various sources, ranging from national press agencies, NGOs, but also self-organised online forums and grassroots-journalism, which all constitute the public sphere. The public sphere is simply expanded by the possibilities for ‘comment, speculation, analysis and explanation,’ (Brown, 2002) which has an effect both on ‘the political discourse about war and the sphere in which this discourse takes place.’ (Brown, 2002) Therefore, governmental political structures must adjust their warfare strategies to this change in the public sphere. In the case of our archived practice, which must be seen as a force to counter both an Israeli politics of Occupation and the ‘class-enemy’ in the shape of the capitalist countries in the West, such image practice has already, decades earlier, enacted the potential of the image as a continuation of war by other means. However, it would be rash to simply juxtapose governmental structures, as indicated by Brown, equally with the fedayeen image practice at a moment in the 1980s, when the P.L.O. was still in transition from a militant movement to a political organisation aiming for a state-structure.53 In other words, Brown discusses, as much as Clausewitz, the notion of war under the umbrella of governmental state-organised structures. As we know, Palestine is still waiting to become a state, and in the 1980s, at the time of the photo courses, it was under an even more fragile and more strictly revolutionary agenda than it is today.

Therefore, my proposal that the photographic practice of former Palestinian freedom fighters, which sits within educational-solidarity relations with the GDR, is ‘a continuation of militant struggle by other means’ resonates strongly in Foucault’s inversion of Clausewitz’ proposition in his famous first lecture of the circle ‘Society Must be Defended’ at the Collège de France in 1975–76.54 Foucault begins his lecture by pointing out that this very lecture is ‘a public statement,’ (Foucault, 2004, p. 1) i.e., all that he brings into the auditorium (which is amplified in order to reach another

53 For an insight into this transformation see El-Wazir, H., De la Révolution à la Construction d'un Etat: Le Mouvement de Libération Nationale de la Palestine (le Fateh) et l'Autorité Nationale Palestinienne: Relation et Dilemmes, 2001 PhD thesis, Geneva/Zurich. The author is the daughter of the P.L.O.’s militant leader Abu Jihad.

audience listening outside of the lecture hall) results from a work of thought that has become knowledge as product of academia, which is an institution. By doing so, he compares the institution with an apparatus that similarly operates through power relations, hierarchies, instruments, protocols, and schemata akin to disciplinary forces of the state. In relation to our archived practice from the Cold War period, we can locate such disciplinary force not only within the politics of Occupation by the state of Israel, because this image practice emerges deeply and deliberately from the struggle for liberation from Israel, not only as a response to Israel, but also as a palpable manifestation of independence to the world, involving its international networks, such as the state-socialism-administered position of the small GDR in the global Cold War competition.

In other words, the state of Israel does not occupy constitutive forces of this image practice, despite the fact that the infrastructures of this practice, such as the lack of film material, result from the policies of Occupation dislocating a people into exile, which is what Horst Sturm encountered in working with the Palestinian press agency in Beirut and Tunis. It needs to be clear that these constitutive forces reside within state-like regulated protocols of institutional faces of solidarity (GDR) as well as—and this appears equally important—within the structures of the liberation movement itself. If the Occupation by the state of Israel wages a ‘war of pacification’ against the Palestinian people, it remains crucial to analyse—in the name of independence, so to speak—whether the organisational principle of the

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55 I am referring here to Michel Foucault’s proposal of ‘work of thought’ that he introduces with ‘problematization,’ as he writes: ‘This development of a given into a question, this transformation of a group of obstacles and difficulties into problems to which the diverse solutions will attempt to produce a response, this is what constitutes the point of problematization and the specific work of thought. It is clear how far one is from an analysis in terms of deconstruction (any confusion between these two methods would be unwise).’ (Foucault, 1997, p. 118)

56 I am borrowing this phrase from the Algerian architect and researcher Samia Henni, who analyses French counter-revolutionary military forces employed against the Algerian independence movements during the late 1950s and early 1960s in Algeria, as the first psychological global warfare—by the means of settlement architecture, displacement of people and institutional-structural violence. Henni also defines this psychological warfare as a ‘war of pacification.’ (Lecture at Dutch Art Institute for Travelling Communiqué project, January 2014; Henni’s contribution to Travelling Communiqué, co-authored research exhibition by Linke, Mende, Tomić, Belgrade June 2014.)
educational encounters between Horst Sturm and the former revolutionaries (mainly)/now photographers can be detached from the state-protocol of GDR’s foreign policy at that time, and the P.L.O. dominance among the liberations movements of the Palestinians. The latter becomes apparent in the importance of the collective force within the P.L.O. policies regulating living conditions, such as food, dwelling, and economics (the fedayeen did not normally receive a salary, or if so, only a very small amount), as we will discuss throughout this writing. Another apparent fact in our focus on the constitutive forces within this image practice, as a practice of independence, is the dominance of male figures. Sturm, his colleague Mahmoud Nofal of the Palestinian press agency and photographer Youssef Khotoub are the ones who mainly appear on the photographs in Sturm’s private archive, although the list of participants included female photographers—and, according to Sturm, two of them—Yassira Kubbeh (in 1980) and Sahna Abbulvahim (in 1981) were very talented. Why then do the two women not, at least, appear in more records or memories of their former male colleagues?

Foucault argues ‘that power is not something that is given, exchanged or taken back, that is something that is exercised and that exists only in action.’ (Foucault, 2004, p. 14) In other words, if common sense attributes power exclusively to the state, or institution-like structures even within a liberation movement, then it represses, neglects, and entirely disregards knowledge emerging outside of such framework. In our case, this ‘subjugated knowledge’ (Foucault, 2004, p. 7) as Foucault calls it, emerges from action, meaning, from the actual battlefield, fears during an attack, but also from walks on the street, informal dinners, and friendships—during the photo courses and beyond. These are all the kinds of activities I consider as contributing to a network of practices, which is no longer photography in a media-theoretical way. Now, how does this tangle up with my claim that this archived image practice indicates the continuation of militant struggle by other means (other than guns and weapons)? Again, Foucault suggests that power is not a natural given. Instead, he asks ‘shouldn’t we be analyzing it first and foremost in terms of conflict, confrontation and war’? And he hypothesizes on the same page that ‘power is war, the continuation of war by other means,’ and finally offers an inversion of Clausewitz: ‘politics is the continuation of war by other means.’ (Foucault, 2004, p. 15) This proposal invites us to locate this archived image practice, which branched out of a militant struggle, in the middle of a condition of war—nothing new in itself. But instead of subjugating
this practice entirely to the Cold War politics, institutional faces of the liberation movement, and a huge debate on the Israeli-Arab conflict, I prefer to consider this practice, and more concretely the social, informal and collective threads within this network of practices, as ‘subjugated knowledge.’ Such knowledge has the force, firstly, to analyse the power relations that cannot be separated from the condition of war, and secondly, to be part of politics itself. The latter is most crucial, both for my argument and for encountering, as well as countering, this practice from today’s perspective. Therefore, I wish to repeat that this archived practice emerges from the Cold War rhetoric, but at the same time, the informal threads within this practice have produced much more than photographs now resting in albums that look like family photo books on shelves in private homes. These privately archived images operate in politics. Politics is here not attributed to institutions, state-protocols, or the collective as a movement’s force. Politics also embraces all these informalities, intimacies, and sociabilities of the photo courses, within the archived practice, and the network’s afterlives.\(^5\) Let me finish this thought with Foucault: ‘these political struggles,’ (and we can now consider the militant struggle as a political struggle),

‘are interpreted as so many episodes, fragmentations, and displacements of the war itself. We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions.’ (Foucault, 2004, p. 16)

Again, this research does not aim to analyse the ways in which mass media was recognised as an instrument of warfare, already during the Cold War, but also today,

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\(^5\) This thought can be problematised and unpacked further through a request that Jean-Luc Nancy makes for differentiation between ‘politics’ (la politique) and the ‘political,’ (le politique) which, to me, appears useful, in particular with Nancy’s proposal that the political always emerges in the moment when difference constitutes a community (he does not speak of collective), not by unification in terms of ‘Proletarians of the world, unite!,’ but by disruption, disturbance, misunderstanding, conflict: ‘We can speak, and Nancy does this, of this moment of disruption as moment of the political, as a moment or event of being-together. Thereby, one would have arrived at a possible definition of moment of the political, that discloses itself as a disruptive event of being-with or being-together.’(Marchart, 2010, p.105) See Marchart, O., ‘Der Entzug des Politischen,’ in Die politische Differenz, 2010 pp. 87–117.
it does not want to define an image-theoretical analysis with regard to press agencies’ photographs or to reconstruct or even re-enact a no-longer-existing socialist solidarity project between the P.L.O. and whatever remained from the GDR.

I wish, instead, to complicate the conditions of a practice in photography (as one example of image production that we also find in the domain of contemporary art) that vehemently introduces a geopolitical moment into itself. In this case, the geopolitics consists of Europe (GDR/now Germany), the Middle East (Lebanon), and North Africa (Tunis). I aim to ask: what does this politically complicated and multi-layered practice tell us about exhibiting? Is there anything for us to take on today?

Having said this, I wish to engage with this practice in order to problematise contemporary curatorship in a globalised world of art. In other words, can a practice borne out of a forgotten solidarity project, a liberation movement, and an agenda of decolonialisation introduce into exhibiting a geopolitics from non-Western perspective? In order to engage with the complexity of this practice, but also with a certain disturbance, concern and bafflement instigated by these photographs, I introduce the figure of the ‘itinerant.’ The ‘itinerant’ figures around this archived image practice in order to unfold the continuously rumbling question: how to make such photographic practice (and not necessarily and simply its outcomes, i.e., photographs) public today, in the domain of contemporary art?

**New “world order”**

Let me end this part of writing with a strand that has been unsettling my research throughout, and since the very beginning. If there is nothing to curate from the archived image practice, but only something to learn (if at all), then The Itinerant has created a grounds for an educational process. The appraisal that there is nothing to curate also results from a rather concrete condition: the archived image practice at stake does not consist of an accumulation of raw material from which we could select, consider conservation strategies, or search for institutional help in maintaining the archival find. The archived practice is taken more widely here, to mean that it provides an environment to walk through, to search for links, geographies and alliances—through this image practice—that do not necessarily produce a photographic print. It can be argued that this archived practice is a desert, in terms Genet has put as: ‘we must go and look for them.’ Hence, an archived image practice may also take shape in other forms of articulation, i.e., in words, gestures,
assumptions, translations, texts, and projects like this one. Instead of operating as a curatorial practice in the usual sense, the *itinerant* has, as a figure, accompanied a curatorial struggle that goes far beyond making as organising an exhibition, accumulating information about spectacular art projects or excavating interesting finds from an archived image practice from the Cold War period.


In other words, if there is nothing to curate here, but there is something to learn, then writing about my activities in Palestine and the Middle East requires a note on a political concern that inevitably accompanies this project. Within a German/German frame, in many conversations with friends, activists and artists, Germans, in particular, my research and journeys to Ramallah and to the traces of the P.L.O. in Beirut were judged, attacked even, as taking a position *pro* Palestinians and *contra* Israelis. After 1989 the antifascist movement in West Germany appealed against a new national consciousness in ‘re-unified’ Germany. This led to movements such as the Anti-Germans, declaring unlimited support for Israel while contesting the right of Palestine to exist. The Anti-Germans are a heterogeneous group that has partly emerged from an anti-national Antifascism, such as the *Antifa*, which has also
been an environment encompassing artists with politically informed practice in West Germany.\textsuperscript{58} Ongoing research tries to untangle the relations between the Left, the Palestinians, as well as the Israelis.\textsuperscript{59} By undertaking journeys to the Middle East with the aim of revisiting solidarity relations between GDR and Palestine, one is confronted by a generational accountability in relation to the Holocaust.

In informal discussions with (German) friends and colleagues, my project was highly criticised for seemingly taking position against such accountability. It bears witness to the inheritance of an automatic, institutionalised struggle. These binary oppositions are much more agonising than simply opposing one another. This has (and still does) exerted some pressure on this research—in terms of friendships, work collaborations, debates and discussions. This pressure has, paradoxically, also increased the necessity and urgency for testing concepts that enable a proposal for a ‘third’ language articulating the rejection of the binary Cold War trajectories. This research, therefore, strongly aims to dis-affiliate itself from the binary imperatives of \textit{pro or against}. This decision has little to do with any personal position. It is linked, rather, to a political urgency to think, today, about solidarity outside of socialist-capitalist dichotomy, its institutional as well as ideological obligations, and through a vocabulary of decolonising the Cold War. Delinking myself from both sides and displacing my research into an academic environment other than that of Germany, has helped to keep open the space for thinking. Delinking from this strictly binary constellation does not, however, remove the importance of insisting on the fact that the existence of the state of Israel had been made necessary by the systematic murder of over six million Jewish people by the Nazi Germany. It is exactly this political initiation, the geopolitical complexity and Israeli politics of Occupation that request

\textsuperscript{58} It should be noted that the anti-national Antifascism movement criticised all nations (and still does), as well as national liberation movements. The Anti-German discourse is a group that has ‘hardened’ around 2000, and sees in an Anti-Germanic position a move for anti-fascism and anti-capitalism. Anti-national groups (not only Anti-Germans) have criticised the 1\textsuperscript{st} to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Intifada, the anti-Semitism of the R.A.F. (Thanks to Kerstin Stakemeier for clarifying notes on these movements.) For a further insight into these debates, its redefinitions and struggles within the radical left see the magazine \textit{Prodomo}.

responsibility, as Jacques Derrida demands in his book *Spectres of Marx*. He argues thus:

‘A time of the world, today, in these times, a new “world order” seeks to stabilize a new, necessarily new disturbance [*dérèglement*] by installing an unprecedented form of hegemony. It is a matter, then, but as always, of a novel form of war.’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 62)

My point should not be misunderstood as promoting a generational responsibility in the sense of some sort of natural inheritance of the ‘banality of evil’ or collective guilt. Instead, my worry emerges over the fact that the ‘new “world order”,’ which has produced—already—a novel form of war’ that has become known as the ‘War on Terrorism’, takes place in the slogan ‘We are the 99%’ during the Occupy Wall Street in New York, it takes shape in the generation *Preparados* in Spain, or in Bangladesh when the collapse of a textile factory kills hundreds of workers; this war takes place in the ongoing massacres of civilians in Syria by their own government while—at the same time—a shift to right-wing politics becomes increasingly constituent within governments in Europe (Netherlands, the UK); in neo-nationalism among the middle-class, in particular in German society, racism as in the murder of seven Turkish and two Greek immigrants in Germany, the suicide of the programmer-activist Aaron Swartz, and so on. Through the experience of the 1989 collapse of the Real-existing Socialism, as a communist project in Europe, which changed every

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60 With my father, I watched the documentary *Herrenkinder* (2008), dir. by Eduard Erne and Christina Schneider, consisting of a series of interviews with grandfathers and fathers, who went, at a young age, through the educational system of elite schools in Nazi Germany. A separate set of interviews was conducted with their children or grandchildren. Despite a few weak points in the dramaturgy of the filmic narration, the film uncannily reveals inter-generational dependencies—emotional and unconscious—that trouble not only the parents’, but the children’s generation as well.

61 ‘Preparados’ names a Spanish generation who graduated from University within the last five years or so, but cannot find any paid work in Spain because of the economic crisis. ‘Preparado’ is Spanish and means ‘qualified,’ ‘trained.’ But if we split the word: ‘pre-’ as a prefix for ‘in advanced,’ ‘before’ and ‘parado’ for ‘unemployed person’ then the ‘preparado’ is a well-educated young person ready to be unemployed before ever having had employment. One of my students at the Dutch Art Institute introduced me to this expression through her research on the urban face of the economic crisis in Spain.
single stratum of life for those who lived it, i.e., education, culture, politics, economy, labour, urbanism, design, transport, mobility, art, and lifestyle, this responsibility then can and must be different to one fixed to biological agendas, generational patterns, state politics or governmental orders. Derrida continues his thought by saying:

‘we must take into account another essential meaning: the act that consists in swearing, taking an oath, therefore promising, deciding, taking a responsibility, in short, committing oneself in a performative fashion – as well as in more or less secret fashion, and thus, more or less public, there where this frontier between the public and the private is constantly displaced, remaining less assured than ever, as the limit that would permit one to identify the political.’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 62f)

In other words: between 1988 and 1990, as a young teenager, I followed daily on TV (West German channels) and with great fascination, the manifestations of the ability of people’s street protests, of the power of society to dismantle a state structure such as the GDR. Being confronted, even impregnated by images and sounds of a collapsing system, certainly displaced the frontier between public and private, or political and personal. This is one example of a region from which responsibility grows, as Derrida demands.

This project, however, is not a work of writing about the Palestinian liberation movement or the history of the socialist project in Europe. It is rather an attempt to step out of a thematic-analytical approach. It wants to, instead, link with the making of solidarity as a practice that carries paradoxes, contradictions, insecurities and actualities, which may be progressed and enacted through the means of contemporary art (practice/theory). In doing so, it aims to follow a desire to shift, maybe as a side product, the debate of today to a domain other than dichotomic forces. The academic frame of my research, a postcolonial implicitness in thinking within the landscape of particular British institutions, new important friendships in London, close work relations with Israelis, as well as Palestinians have helped me develop a language during discussions, based in trust, during many dinners, with patience and projects. It fostered a framework that allows slowly stepping out of the agonising forces of binary rhetoric, towards a ‘bi-polarity of the social productivity.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 27) I will come to this last point later in this project.
Sometimes it is better to hide
a good thought between
images and sounds of a space
(2010/11)

The following is a print object I designed and produced as a result of a curatorial residency in the woods of West Germany, interrupted by an extensive journey to Ramallah and Beirut between April and October 2010. It edits together different kinds of material; some of them directly related to the ongoing research, e.g., writings by Jean Genet, images of Angela Davis, Yasser Arafat; and a snippet from the TV series *The Wire* (2002–08) that kept my life in the woods connected to the possibilities of a bi-polarity undoing the ‘good guy – bad guy’ binary (addressing issues of race, class, gender), and thus, delineating a space for social productivity. The aim of this booklet was to tackle the concern over how to make something public without exhibiting a thought or an idea as an object to be vivisected on public display. Published by boabooks, Geneva.
Images between thought. A good to hide. It is better sometimes and.
We can do that in white, India inked, or pink carnations.
Die Jugend der DDR grüßt
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its hollows became as terrible as abysses. In the process known as
demascening the patterns are engraved on a steel plate and inlaid
with gold. In me there is no gold.

Being abandoned and left to be brought up as an orphan was
a birth that was different from but not any worse than most.
Childhood among the peasants whose cows I tended was much
the same as any other childhood. My youth as a thief and prostitu-
tute was like that of all who steal or prostitute themselves, either
in fact or in dream. My visible life was nothing but carefully
masked pretences. Prisons I found rather motherly—more so than
the dangerous streets of Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin and Barcelona.
In jail I ran no risk of getting killed or dying of hunger, and the
corridors were at once the most erotic and the most restful places
I've ever known.

The few months I spent in the United States with the Black
Panthers are another example of how my life and my books have
been misinterpreted. The Panthers saw me as a rebel—unless
there was a parallel between us that none of us suspected.
For their movement was a shifting dream about the doings of
Whites, a poetical revolt, an "act," rather than a real attempt at
radical change.

Once these thoughts were admitted, others followed. If my life
was really hollow although it was seen in relief, if the Black
Movement was regarded as a sort of imitation both by Amer-
ica and by me, and if I entered into it as simply and naively as I've
described and was accepted without demur—then it was because I
was recognized as a natural sham.

And when the Palestinians invited me to go and stay in
Palestine, in other words in a Betjem, weren't they too more or
less openly recognizing me as a natural sham? Even if I risked
annihilation by being present at actions of theirs which were only
shams, wasn't I already non-existent because of my own hollow
non-life?

I thought about this, sure that America and Israel were in no
danger from a sham, from feats presented as victories, with-
drawals as advances—in short, from a shifting dream floating over
the Arab world, capable only of such insubtle acts as killing a
plane-load of passengers. By agreeing to go first with the Panthers
and then with the Palestinians, playing my role as a dreamer inside a dream, wasn’t I just one more factor of unreality inside both movements? Wasn’t I a European saying to a dream, “You are a dream—don’t wake the sleeper!”

Scarcely had this thought occurred to me than I saw Bonaparte trembling on the bridge at Areola, the Five Hundred cursing him, Bonaparte passing out. What marshal was it who was really behind the victory at Austerlitz? I saw David painting Napoleon’s mother at his coronation though she wasn’t there. And wasn’t he forced to crown himself because the Pope wouldn’t knuckle under? Aren’t the memoirs written on St. Helena one great hollow portrayed as a relief?

But from these thoughts there emerged another: all that we know of men, whether famous or not, may only have been invented to hide the abysses of which life is made up. In that case the Palestinians were right to set up the Potemkin camps, the camps of the young lions—though their wretched guns served to reveal rather than conceal them. Is the event that shows someone for what he is a sort of epic eruption, a fleeting upsurge of depths, of hollows that people as well as individuals shrink from admitting?

Perhaps the objectness of the natural sham lifts him high enough to be seen permanently sticking up out of the lava. Another freak of nature.

Not only seeing oneself, but also touching, hearing and smelling oneself is part of the horror—and under it the joy—of becoming a freak. Escape from the world at last! Changing sex doesn’t consist merely in subjecting one’s body to a few surgical adjustments: it means teaching the whole world, forcing upon it, a change of syntax. Wherever you go people will address you as “Madame” or “Mademoiselle”; they’ll stand aside to let you go first, the driver will hand you out of your cab; when you hear “Women and children first!” you’ll know that you’ll be put in a lifeboat while the male passengers of the Titanic will go to the bottom. You see yourself in the mirror with your hair in a chignon or an Eton crop—your fingers will touch it. Your first fragile high heels will
of love / Jean Genet ; translated from the French by Barbara Harshav.
With an introduction by Abdal Souef.

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A PRACTICE

How can a photographic moment complicate the space of exhibiting in contemporary times? That moment sits within a geography, one between the Middle East, North Africa and Europe; and this contemporaneity takes place between Palestine’s desire-to-become-a-nation, and the geo-politically disappeared state called GDR, which entails the collapsed/failed international project of socialism. In order to unfold the ground let us look briefly at this photographic practice from the GDR and its surroundings.

Horst Sturm is one of the most successful photojournalists from the GDR. While working for the East German news service, called ADN, he initiated with agency’s colleagues the so-called Reportagedienst [reportage service] within the agency, as an attempt to leave to others the so-called Protokollfotografie [protocol photography]. However, this decision had less to do with ideological reasons (whoever worked for the press agency in the GDR must have proved his or her ideological trustworthiness to the ruling party (Pürer et al 2007, p.186f), than with a serious interest in photographic practice. The new structure of the Reportagedienst allowed the photojournalists to come up with their own stories, to look for themes, publish in magazines, and to work out their own visual grammar that would, nevertheless, aim to promote and illustrate the socialist idea in one way or another.62 The fact that Sturm’s practice speaks through a certain agenda of East German agencies that have been tied to the GDR state-agenda has caused, from time to time, a feeling of strong discomfort during my research. It might have been much easier to encounter a photographic language that we could quickly agree to term a dissident practice, meaning a practice that would have criticised the socialist doctrine through visual means and for that reason have possibly been banned from public visibility during the time of socialism in the GDR.63 However, it is more complicated than such

62 See the exhibition So habe ich das gesehen [That’s the way how I saw it], 2010. Images can be found at: http://www.niederlausitz-aktuell.de/artikel_278_10833.php (accessed May 1, 2013)
63 ENTDECKT! Rebellische Künstlerinnen in der DDR [Discovered! Rebellious female artists in the GDR], exhibition, Kunsthalle Mannheim, cur. by Susanne Altmann, July 2–October 10, 2011; Ostpunk – Too much future, exhibition, Berlin, August 26–September 25, 2005; This ain’t California, dir. by Marten Persiel, 2012.
a clear-cut division between good and bad, dissident and conformist, meaning that moral judgments are highly interpenetrating.\textsuperscript{64}

**Sketching the frame**

In an interview with the writer, publisher and philosopher Sylvère Lotringer for *The German Issue*\textsuperscript{65}, the dramatist Heiner Müller locates such complication in a ‘schizophrenic position, but none other seems to me real enough.’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50) Müller’s framework differs from the position taken by Sturm, who never considered his practice as art that could provide instruments of reflection on the mechanisms of Real-existing Socialism or of opposing a Stalinist doctrine. Reflection or critique did not exist in the concept of Real-existing Socialism, because its foundation relied on the idea of revolution / unity of workers against imperial capitalist forces, the so-called Klassenfeind [class enemy]; this was deemed to be embodying all the necessary criticism. Müller reflects his self-positioning within an economic sphere that, on one side, speaks through a socialist programme (workers own the means of production) and which, on the other side, flirts with capitalist consumerism (class society). The economic space of the International Trade Fair in Leipzig exemplifies such double-bound relations, when GDR-factories (people-owned combines) presented their products to non-socialist countries, in particular to earn freely convertible currency (West-mark, pounds, dollars) (Judt, 2013). In other words, the Real-existing Socialism could have not existed without the concept of the enemy.

Müller’s elaboration comes from the place of a writer who takes inspiration from such a split existence, i.e. ‘one leg on each side of the wall’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50), and he continues with a proposal that does not quite fit into the socialist doctrine of a unified front: ‘I believe in conflict. I don’t believe in anything else. What I try to

\textsuperscript{64} In the research and exhibition project *Double Bound Economies*, I have investigated this issue through the photo archive of my father who worked as a freelance photographer in the GDR and was not a member of the socialist party, thus consciously taking position against the Stalin-Soviet doctrine. But his photographic practice revealed a contradicting position, because he took photographs in people-owned factories to be used as background displays at the International Trade Fair in Leipzig during the time of GDR; the photographs were supposed to advertise goods from socialist production.

do in my writing is to strengthen the sense of conflicts, to strengthen confrontations and contradictions.’ (Müller, 1982, p. 51) Such an approach helps to complicate Sturm’s practice as a photographer whose aim has always been to portray life in the GDR as ‘real’ as possible. This claim is, first of all, implicit to the photographic practice itself, as Allan Sekula indicates with regard to the photographic culture’s imperative to serve as evidence of objective truth; it contradicts another co-existing imperative that directs its quality towards art, and ‘the cult of “subjective experience” […] This dualism haunts photography.’ (Sekula, 1987, p. 448) And secondly, Sturm’s understanding of photography resonates within the aesthetic principles of Real-existing Socialism; it is discussed from a Marxist perspective in theoretical writings on photography of the time, and deliberately demands a scientific application of photography.66 In many of our conversations, Sturm repeated his request to be understood as a photographer, and not as an artist. His approach to photography, therefore, neglects any contradicting threads within photographic practice. My curatorial intervention attempts to bring these conflicts into a practice, i.e., to locate a practice in proximity to a certain schizophrenia that Heiner Müller declared as a working condition:

The ‘schizophrenic position’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50) also helps to unsettle an ideological assumption that demands territorial-like demarcations between dissident and conformist practices, i.e. a division that requests standing on one side. Evelyn Richter’s brilliant work provides a good example of this with regard to a split condition in relation to photographic practice in the GDR. Her work has become known as a photographic-artistic voice opposing the visual imperatives of 'Socialist Realism', a Soviet state doctrine codified in the 1930’s dictating a visual grammar that places the worker as a heroic figure in the scene.67 As a student in the 1950s, Richter was, for political reasons expelled from the University of Arts in Leipzig. It is, therefore, tempting to locate her exclusively on the side of a ‘dissident realism’ as a critic proposed in an exhibition review (Schimke, 2010). Richter’s work has been

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66 See Beiler, B. Weltanschauung der Fotografie [ideology of photography], 1977.
analysed, exhibited and theorised under the umbrella of a critical, (some writers also speak of a dissident) position. (Ihle, 2000, pp.45–55)


Without question, Richter’s practice must be seen as a major contribution to countering the visual grammar of the paradigm of Socialist Realism. Her photographic practice attempted to portray the worker, in particular the female worker, as a human being—not as a heroic figure—by approaching the space of labour photographically in relation to developmental psychological processes. Her book project Entwicklungs wunder Mensch [The Human—Miracle of Development] from 1980 bears witness to it. This part of her practice can be seen within the genre of Arbeiterfotografie.68 She worked as a freelance photographer in the GDR, per se a critical position in relation to Real-existing Socialism, simply because the socialist dictum implied that everyone in the GDR—and in particular the ‘socialist human

68 East German photographic practice, particularly under the umbrella of Arbeiterfotografie provides a double-gesture: it translates as ‘workers’ photography’ that could be read as practice that documents workers, but it could also imply a practice by workers themselves. See James, S. ‘Photography’s Theoretical Blind Spots. Looking at the German paradigm,’ in: Visual Anthropology Review, Volume 21, Issues 1 and 2, Berkley, 2006, pp. 27–46.
being’—is capable of obtaining employment, primarily in order to contribute to the *Wohl des Volkes* [welfare of people; a major slogan], by issuing her labour to an employment contract with the state.

However, when discussing the production conditions of her photographic practice, particularly with regard to her project portraying female workers in people-owned factories in the GDR, one needs to consider an interesting aspect that seems to be left aside in art historical analysis of her work. As a freelancer, she collaborated with a design-collective (Kollektiv Fürstenberg), which developed presentation strategies for the International Trade Fair in Leipzig. Her photographs promoted socialist production through images documenting workers in production’s locations, i.e. factories. Delivering photographs for such commissions, she indirectly worked on a visual grammar supporting an image of GDR-socialism in alliance with Soviet-Stalinist totalitarian agenda. Such working conditions indicate a double existence, one in search of an independent voice, and the other in the sphere of a totalitarian state. It transports a representation of socialist life rather than promoting a socialist state. As a teacher, Richter influenced generations of students at the Academy of Visual Arts in
Leipzig, where she taught from the early 1980s. Interestingly, one of her students in the early 1980s was Mahmoud Dabdoud, a Palestinian born in Lebanon.

Let us return to Heiner Müller once again, this time with regard to the question of the ‘real’ in image production in the GDR. It is necessary to layout a few points in relation to a past educational moment in photography that will prepare ground for a curatorial process today. In an interview with Harun Farocki in 1981, near the time frame of Sturm’s educational journeys to Beirut, Müller concludes that ‘Here realism doesn’t work at all, only stylization works, because East Germany is not photographable—a variation of Brecht’s remark that a photograph of the Krupp Works says nothing really about the Krupp Works.’ (Müller, 1981/1990, p. 161) And he continues ‘The actors here in the West are much better at Naturalism, at working with photographic texts, plays or films. And our [East German] actors are better in productions of classics, i.e., anything that entails a stylized removal from immediate reality.’ (Müller, 1981/1990, p. 162, my emphasis) Let us look at an example from the photo archive of my father Reinhard Mende, a striking example of revealing a ‘stylized removal’ of reality. My father worked as a freelance photographer in the GDR, i.e., he was self-employed in order to be able to reject membership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). At the same time, he was commissioned by AKA ELECTRIC Warenzeichverband der DDR [AKA ELECTRIC trademark association of the GDR] to portray workers in people-owned factories (it places his practice in proximity to Evelyn Richter’s and a difference from Horst Sturm’s). He was paid per photograph, an essential detail, as it tells us something about a particular economics that is closer to a free-market economy. The market here is a state-regulated factory that decides which photograph is worth paying for and which is not. Such labour condition also defines the single photograph as a commodity, because the photographer does not receive money for his practice, but for the product.

In this example, the photographic process consists in picturing the same labour situation three times in a row, presenting it differently each time. The repeated, consistent shot shows that the setting of the picture is being tested, and in Müller’s word ‘stylized’: in all three photographs, the female worker is central, but in one case the work tools are shown stacked and in another lined up in a row; the machine used

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by the worker to screw in something serves a different purpose in the first photograph than it does in the second; and in the third this machine has been replaced by a hand tool. The photographer has to establish a situation of trust with the female worker so that she continues to ‘play’ at being a worker, even though she is not working at that very moment. In other words, the factory becomes a photo studio in which various elements are arranged, adjusted, altered and recomposed. The actual image for public usage emerges from postproduction, out of a process of selection by both the photographer and the commissioner. The selected photograph is supposed to contribute to the background design within promotional presentation of goods produced in the same factory in the GDR in which the female worker is employed.

Image 9: Reinhard Mende, Fahrzeugelektrikwerke Ruhla Karl-Marx Stadt. Likely to have been taken in 1978. Archive Estate Mende and Group Produzieren.

This way of working seems closer to an ‘instrumental realism’ (Sekula, 1983, p. 450) that Sekula detects in the practice of the U.S. commercial photographer Leslie Shedden, who documented workers from the industrial and coal-mining regions of Cape Breton (Canada) between 1948 and 1968. In the case at hand, i.e., the photographic depiction of workers and labour conditions within a people-owned factory in Real-existing Socialism, such ‘instrumental realism’ is then in operation when the photographic image intends to fit within the symbolic order of socialism while, at the same time, the ‘stylized removal’ of reality turns the photographed

situation into an object. That object, placed on public display is, in fact, the ‘Real-existing Socialism’ or the socialist production itself.

In other words, under an agenda of Socialist Realism, a photographer is not able to produce a photograph that would capture ‘real’ life. Socialist Realism disintegrates itself from reality while capitalist naturalism flourishes in endless repetitions of instructions on how to live in capitalism. Any photograph here, including those that promise to document the real, conceals reality because the photograph is supposed to deliver truth as an instrument of staging socialism as it would be seen from a position within capitalist logic (e.g., the eyes of the trader of a French, Belgian or Swedish company, or of a ministerial delegation from West Germany).

If, according to Müller, photography and film in East Germany were only in production of classics at their best, and these kinds of production removed the actual reality by staging socialism as a consumable image, what, then, did Sturm teach in Beirut in 1980 and 1981? What became of Socialist Realism in a profoundly disunited society?

The brief description of the intellectual as well as the photographic-practical condition in the GDR will help to problematise the fact that Horst Sturm was the only photographer, according to his former students Youssef and Ibrahim, to repeatedly go to the Middle East as well as North Africa. In his function as a photojournalist for the East German press agency ADN, he certainly acted within and through an ideology, which neglected the fact that photography fosters a ‘stylized removal from immediate reality.’ (Müller, 1981/1990, p. 162) His practice defined the retraining of fedayeen learning in order to improve on ways of conducting Palestinian struggle with photographic means. Their realism was a different one, because naturalism was not possible there. Importantly, therefore, the ‘schizophrenic position,’ Müller defined as the source of his writing practice, was certainly not a source for Sturm.

‘Such composition is the first’

Sturm writes in his final report on the photo course in Beirut in 1980 that the participants of the course were members of various political, as well as militant

groups of the Palestinian Liberation Organization: ‘Such composition is the first, I was told.’ Before we investigate the educational moment in which Horst Sturm met the former freedom fighters and, in the 1980, photographers, let us turn the view towards an internationalisation of image production, i.e., filmmaking and photography, that seems to have had its peak ten years prior to this. In this frame we will see that the geo-political dimension of image production has thus far been mainly discussed as a practice of a Leftist scene in countries like France, West Germany and Japan. For example, Irmgard Emmelhainz suggests in her brilliant elaboration on Jean-Luc Godard’s film projects in Palestine a geography that emerges between non-socialist countries, activities of European militants (e.g. Jean-Luc Godard called himself a ‘French Maoist’ and ‘French militant’ and the P.L.O., with one of its branches, the PFLP, orienting its revolutionary agenda along Marxist-Leninist lines. In other words, this educational geography consists, on one hand, of intellectuals’ militant convictions in western countries, which cannot be quite considered a political movement, but rather as self-organised artistic groups, e.g. The Dziga Vertov Group. And on the other hand, this geography is also made up of freedom fighters, whose militant training implied the reading of texts by ‘Clausewitz, Guevara, Castro, Mao Tse-Tung, and Giap [...] and Lenin,’ for followers of the PFLP. In contrast, the Fateh guerrilla had Castro, Guevara, Mao Tse-Tung, Giap, Rodinson, the Mémoirs of General De Gaulle as well as Mein Kampf; Frantz Fanon, and Régis Debray’ on their list. (Emmelhainz, 2009, p. 154) It is disturbing and troubling indeed to see the name

73 Emmelhainz, I. Before our Eyes: Les Mots, Non les Choses Jean-Luc Godard’s Ici et Ailleurs (1970-74) and Notre Musique (2004), PhD-thesis, University of Toronto, 2009. Brilliant analysis of Palestine-related films by The Dziga Vertov Group (Jean-Luc Godard. Jean-Pierre Gorin, Armand Marco), Sonimage (Godard, Anne-Marie Mièville) and Godard himself.
of the Algerian revolutionary, liberation activist and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon next to De Gaulle and the book of genocidal German race-ideology. The majority of the fighters were male and female workers, peasants, and children of native Palestinian families expelled from their land in the year of the Nakba\textsuperscript{76}, in 1948. During the 1970s, particularly in the year of 1970, a range of ‘political tourists’ (Emmelhainz, 2009) arrived to Palestinian refugee camps and militant bases in Jordan, whose capital Amman hosted the parliament in exile until 1971. After the events of Black September\textsuperscript{77}, which mark a decisive reversal in the liberation movement, the organisation’s headquarters found a new base in Beirut, until 1982. During that period, which Horst Sturm experienced at its very end,

‘Sympathetic political tourists (journalists, intellectuals, and revolutionaries from elsewhere) flocked to the Palestinian resistance’s militia bases, refugee and training camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to document the revolution. These western sympathizers—including Bruno Barbey, Armand Deriaz, Francis Reusser, Masao Adachi, Jean Genet […] Dario Fo, Manfred Vosz, The Dziga Vertov Group, Carole Roussopoulous, Gérard Chaliand, and members of the Rote Armee Fraktion—came to put themselves at the service of the Palestinian struggle, either on their own or as invitees from the Information Services Bureau of the P.L.O. [Palestinian Liberation Organization], having aligned themselves first with its different factions ideologically.’ (Emmelhainz, 2009, p. 150f.)

Emmelhainz develops the notion of ‘political tourist’ from Hans-Magnus Enzensberger, who sees in this figure ‘the role of the observer that devolves from the Western Left with respect to those countries where socialism has found—if not realization—at least serious attempts in that direction.’ (Enzensberger, 1982, p. 159) His or her position can only remain in a ‘blind identification […] from the outside.’


\textsuperscript{77}Dobson, Ch., \textit{Black September. Its short, violent history}, 1975.
The question is whether the role of the photographer and educator from East Germany, a sovereign country only since 1974, was that different to that of an ‘observer’ played by his Western colleague. It is certain that Sturm’s journey’s organisational infrastructure was different. Sturm arrived in Beirut as a delegate of the East German press agency, definitely operating through state institutions of the GDR, of which the press agency ADN was ‘the institutional side,’ and is thus considered by Enzensberger the socialist delegate, ‘without which the “Tourism of Revolution” remains incomprehensible.’ (Enzensberger, 1982, p. 164)

From this perspective, the difference between a ‘radical tourist’ (Enzensberger/Trotzki, 1982, p. 164) from the West and one from the East is marginal, at least in terms of political implications. Why is then so little known of the forms of image practice of collaboration between seemingly similar-minded structures from places where socialism (e.g., Marxist-Leninism as favoured by state-institutions in the GDR and partly in the P.L.O.) appears to suggest an international ground?

Let us take a closer look at the practical framework of the images Sturm found upon arrival, as an already present image practice. Around 1970, a new, different image departs from the Palestinian resistance, which has to do with a change in the organisational structure of the liberation movement. Mirko Aksentijević, a TANJUG correspondent from the Middle East, reports after a visit in May 1970 that

‘Until recently the Palestinian man was barely surviving in refugee camps. Now, he has taken a rifle in his hands and has become a member of the force that has regular supplies of food and clothes [...] They have nothing to lose and by joining the commandoes they gained a lot.’ (Batović, 2009)

1970 is also the year in which Mahmoud el Hamchri, who was a leader of the P.L.O. in Paris, invited the French writer Jean Genet to visit Palestinian refugee

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78 Importantly, photographic and cinematic practice already existed and was built up by local actors, as Khadija Habshneh writes: ‘[T]he Department of Photography was established early in 1968 and later came to be known as the Palestine Films Unit. In the 1970s, the unit was transformed into the Palestinian Cinema Institute.’ In: ‘Palestinian Revolution Cinema,’ in: This Week in Palestine, Issue No. 117, January 2008. http://www.thisweekinpalestine.com/details.php?id=2355&ed=149&edid=149 (accessed, May 7, 2013)
camps in Jordan. He went in October, and met the French photojournalist Bruno Barbey, who documented Genet’s meetings with the fedayeen (Ditchy, 2004, p.312). Bruno Barbey, a prominent representative of the MAGNUM photo agency, accompanied Jean Genet on his journeys to Jordan, in particular to refugee camps near Amman. MAGNUM PHOTOS Inc., founded in 1947 by photojournalists in Paris in order to secure their copyright against corporate magazines and image agencies, must be seen as a branch of capitalist service and cultural industry. Over decades, it developed from a self-organised initiative into a brand of photojournalism. Barbey travelled as a ‘tourist of the revolution’ (Enzensberger, 1982) taking pictures of military training, gatherings in the camps, and of the ‘Palestinian man [who] has taken a rifle in his hands’ (Batović, 2009). In contrast to the East German photographer and educator Sturm, Barbey remained in the place of a documentarist, even though his photographs reveal a proximity, cordial terms with the fedayeen. Barbey went to photograph the fighters in their training sessions, while they were resting, and children’s training. He portrayed leaders such as the PLO leader Arafat, Jordanian King Hussein, and doctor and PFLP-founder George Habache. In the MAGNUM online databank, however, not a single photograph shows Barbey with the fedayeen, as we see Sturm in conversation with them ten years later. Of course, Barbey took the photographs, so he cannot be in the picture, but behind the camera, depicting Genet in informal encounters with the fedayeen. However, Barbey’s visual absence refers not only to a logical consequence of a photographic practice, but also tells us something about the relation between the photographer and the photographed. Jean-Luc Godard dramatises this unspoken contract in Changer d’Image as following: ‘And so I thought, because on TV they always show victims, as they do in photographs too, you never see soldiers shooting, from the back.’ (Godard, 1982) Paraphrased, this

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80 The fact, however, that Barbey took portraits of leaders (particularly in 1970) instead of the people, might have become a reason for Jean-Luc Godard to demand in his text for the Fateh-magazine, when he writes: ‘In the newspaper published by Fateh, we still see too many pictures of leaders and too little of fighters.’ (Godard, 1970)
sentence could read: you never see the photographer in the picture itself, just as you see always a soldier from the back, without a face.

Image 10: Bruno Barbey, Jean Genet at Baka’a Camp in Jordan, 1971. It is chosen here because the three men (Genet in the centre) seem to be discussing / testing an audio recording device, which implicitly relates to Genet’s continuous critique of media reports on the Palestinian struggle as he elaborates in *Un Captif amoureux*. © Bruno Barbey/Magnum Photos

Informed by his prolonged visit to Jordan, partly with Barbey, Genet begins his essay *The Palestinians* with a reflection on conflicting messages of and through the image:

‘Images, as we know, have a double function: to show and to conceal. These images begin with a gunman and his rifle, but why? And then after that, why so many guns? Why so many photographs showing a Palestine armed and fierce?’ (Genet 1971/Ditchy, 2004, p. 71)

This ‘double function’ will remain a vivid concern throughout Genet’s reflections on image production. It certainly articulates a sincere doubt about the truth of the image, as it has been intensely discussed in ethnography and filmmaking, for example in and
through the work by Jean Rouch;\textsuperscript{81} as well as recent debates on documentary practice in contemporary art.\textsuperscript{82} More importantly, however, we gain an insight into a practice, which tangles up with Heiner Müller’s earlier observation when he described himself as inhabiting a ‘schizophrenic position, but none other seems to me real enough.’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50) Genet’s complicating consideration refers to images, photographs, films and texts as systems of signification, e.g., an image signifying a people in struggle. This signification has a consequence.

Let us understand this consequence through a specific moment: an image that shows a group of fighters as a group of unity, but conceals the fact that one of them offends and insults his comrade, one day in June 1970, in a camp in Jordan, after their return from a failed operation in the Territories. Emmelhainz directs our attention to this particular scene that makes the last ten minutes of Ici et Ailleurs [Here and Elsewhere], a film project started by Gorin and Godard (as Dziga Vertov Group) under the title Jusque à la Victoire: Méthodes de travail et de pensée de la révolution Palestinienne [Until Victory: Working and Thinking Methods of the Palestinian Revolution] in June 1970 in Jordan, preceded by a tour to New York in the spring of 1970.\textsuperscript{83} It was a project by invitation, commissioned by Fateh, as the major part of P.L.O., the same organisation that invited Genet, that same year, as well as Horst Sturm ten years later.

**Excess in display**

The events of the Black September in 1970 interrupted Godard’s/Gorin’s ambitious project. Two years later, in France, Godard again attempts to finish the film by inspecting the footage taken in Jordanian camps with the Palestinian writer Elias Sanbar. From the concluding sequence of Ici et Ailleurs, Sanbar translates a seemingly enraged conversation involving four fighters, who had just returned from a mission in the Occupied Territories (Palestine). It looks as if they discussed their militant actions in the manner of Marxist-Leninist self-critique, as we see similar settings in Bruno Barbey’s photographic reports, and as Godard hoped/thought to

\textsuperscript{81} Rouch, J., Ciné-Ethnography ed. Feld, S., University of Minnesota Press, 2003
\textsuperscript{82} Lind, M., Steyerl, H., eds., The Greenroom: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art #1, Sternberg Press, 2008
have recorded. But the image conceals the fact that the fighters had an argument, as Godard only realised after Sanbar translated the scene’s audio recording, revealing their hurling insults at each other.

Godard’s image, both produced and imagined, of revolutionaries with a Marxist-Leninist attitude thoroughly contradicts with the other image, of ordinary and emotional people in disagreement. But this latter, ‘other’ image could not appear until he understood the sound’s message. This image was concealed by ‘photographs showing a Palestine armed and fierce.’ (Genet 1971/Ditchy, 2004) The too many photographs of the Palestinian as an earnestly political figure concealed the fact that the image does not say anything about social structures, frustrations, disappointments, modes of discussion, and possible disunity.

Two points shine through this concern: the first being that the excess of images—Genet calls it ‘excess in display’ (Genet, 1986, p. 99)—blinds the spectator’s gaze; she does not see anything anymore, because too many images of similar kind operate, conduct and dictate the formation of her imagination. The excess closes down the space for a future image to come. This is, at least, how Genet describes in Un Captif amoureux the ‘excess in display,’ without delivering, though, a speculation about its necessity:

‘But both the Blacks and the Palestinians are without land. Their two situations are not completely identical, but they are alike in that neither group has any territory of its own. So where can these virtual martyrs prepare their revolt from? The ghetto? […] And the spectacle would work because it was the product of despair. The tragedy of their situation—the danger of death and death itself; physical terror and nervous dread—taught them how to exaggerate that despair.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 99)

The ‘excess in display’ is ‘the desert [where] we must go and look for’ all these images, as Genet makes us, reading—if we remember the very beginning of my text—from his manuscript note at the top of the final proofs of his book. Even though the excess risks blinding the other’s gaze, even though such excess exhausts the sensitivities of perception—it also provides a place from which to prepare
independence, resistance, and to continue a war by other means.\textsuperscript{84} The excess, this vast geography, needs to continuously produce images for the sake of defence, protection, and cultivation that alone make it possible to conduct a liberation movement.

In other words, ‘excess in display’ exhausts image production to such extent that significance may have a chance to emerge through the absent, undocumented, unofficial, and the unauthorised.\textsuperscript{85} This may sound as if contradicting my earlier thought, but such excess endangers taxonomic categories that would otherwise help organise the sheer endless amount. The excess cannot but produce waste, unusable images, leftovers, and sojourn within unspectacular moments of the everyday. This is the precise moment at which Sturm’s privately archived images, i.e., all these snapshots of gestures of friendship during the photo courses, enter the scene without occupying a representational surface. They carry a latency of the image, which requests a thorough, as well as a struggling curatorial search for the conditions of making use of it. To make use, then, is not simply to analyse the inherent ideological weight or visual grammar, which comes with this archived image practice from the Cold War period and the troubling forces of photography as a continuation of a militant struggle by other means. To make use of such excess, i.e., in the case of these privately archived images, is to transform it into something that supports the relevance of its potential.

A second link can be made to the famous Brechtian critique of photography, which Heiner Müller also refers to in the above mentioned conversation with Harun Farocki: ‘Here realism doesn’t work at all, only stylization works, because East Germany is not photographable—a variation of Brecht’s remark that a photograph of the Krupp Works says nothing really about the Krupp Works.’ (Müller, 1982/1990, p. 161) The photograph of a group of fedayeen, who sit in the grass and seem to be in conversation or discussion, does not say anything about a lost battle, a feeling of mistrust, reproaching another comrade, and so on. Attempts to photographically determine a situation, which eventually consists of struggle, here defies all realistic or

\textsuperscript{84} See my chapter ‘We used to talk about photography in the plane.’

naturalistic intentions. The realism vanishes in this unavoidable, but palpable distance.

Emmelhainz suggests that we read it in relation to the blindness of a politically engaged filmmaker, who arrives from an *outside* that does not only mean France as a place ‘elsewhere,’ but also an *outside* of socialism’s institutional apparatuses. She writes:

‘theories and convictions had “covered” up what the fedayeen were saying along with the fact that their dialogue was not self-critique, but a matter of life and death […] Godard reiterates in the voice-over [of *Ici et Ailleurs*] that “his” voice as a Maoist had covered up the voices of the men and women they had filmed, pondering on the fact that he had denied these voices and reduced them to nothing.’ (Emmelhainz, 2009, p. 126)

Support in the form of image production came from Poland, as well as from Yugoslavia. 86 Yugoslavia, in particular, as one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), had developed organisational contacts with Palestinian structures in terms of health, education, and information. 87 The first summit of the NAM was held in 1961 in Belgrade. According to WAFA’s current Chief-Editor, the photo section of the Palestinian Press Agency WAFA was part of the Non-Aligned network. 88 In 1971, Suleiman Taufik appears to have been the representative of the Palestinian Information Bureau in Belgrade, as the first in Europe and outside the Arab World. 89 Press agency-wise, the relation between the Yugoslav TANJUG and

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86 According to Youssef Khotoub and Tariq Ibrahim.
87 The foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement resulted from an initiative by the Indonesian president Sokarno, Indian Prime Minister Nehru, Egyptian president Abdel Nasser, Yugoslav Marshal Tito, and Ghanian president Nkrumah, in a coalition since the mid-1950s with the aim to transnationally organise anti-colonial liberation struggles, processes of decolonisation, to counter the Cold War politics and to develop a third way, also called ‘Colour Curtain’ (Wright, 1955).
88 Source: Interview with Ali Hussein at WAFA headquarters in Ramallah, November 2011.
89 See the conference paper: Batović, A. ‘Non-Aligned Yugoslavia and the Relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation,’ http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac:128788 (accessed May 7, 2013) for
the Palestinian WAFA had been of importance, mostly in the form of a mutual correspondents’ service. In several conversations with contemporary representatives of WAFA, Yugoslavia emerged as an essential partner in Europe ten years before the partnership with the GDR came into full existence. For instance, Hamed Nawaf, Head of the photo department of WAFA since 2011, studied in Belgrade and speaks fluent Serbo-Croatian; he confirmed my assumption that a large quantity of photographs and film footage produced during the 1970s might be found in the archives of the former Yugoslavia, predominantly in Belgrade. Official contacts between GDR and P.L.O. existed as early as 1972, as Markus Wolf writes in his autobiography:

‘At the end of 1972, East Germany formally opened political contacts with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and Honecker received Arafat in East Berlin. Immediately after the meeting, our service was ordered to establish intelligence links with the P.L.O. Moscow backed the move with great alacrity, since the P.L.O. was in the process of being accorded observer status at the United Nations, and the Soviet Union was keen to develop a variety of contacts with the P.L.O.’s leadership.’

It appears worth considering that the early 1970s seems to be a period in which film production dominates the international support of the struggle, while the early 1980s, particularly 1982, report on exhibitions on Palestine and/or the Cause in Washington, Nicaragua, and Potsdam.

The participants of the Beirut workshop in 1980 came from various political and militant organisations, such as Fateh (PLO), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and

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The workshop-conference *Superpower Rivalry and the Third Way(s) in the Mediterranean*, Italy, 2010.

90 It is certain that these relations started in 1971, to my knowledge. However, historical research is missing on how long the Yugoslav state supported the P.L.O., in particular after Tito’s death in 1980.


Palestinian Arab Front (PAF). These different groups operated together for the first time, which reads in the report as a great achievement when Sturm writes ‘Such composition is the first, I was told.’ Photographic practice succeeded in suspending political separations within a revolutionary movement. Each workshop took about four to six weeks. The course was structured around ten points, which read in another course’ programme proposal as follows:

1. Personal introduction—get-together with the participants—discussing the programme—clarifying technical-organisational questions—splitting into working groups
2. General introduction of photography, history to present—discussion of terms
3. The light—the film—light sources, light measurement, exposure, film sensitivity, which film for which purpose
4. Optics, the basics: focal width—from wide angle to telephoto and its applications—lens aperture—depth of focus—aperture—exposure time
5. Design issues. Form and content of the image. Looking, power of observation. The conscious moment. Image composition, lines, detail, focus and blurring
7. Practical advice for the work of the photojournalist in protocol- and reportage photography, on equipment, on flash technique, panorama photography, when which filter!
8. Chemistry of photography, the basics. Negative—positive processing, development. Negative—positive, how chemicals influence the image! Process after the development (with regard to this topic, one has to depart from the level of laboratory technique and its results of the local agency, in order to achieve most likely an improvement of the current insufficient state over the period of the course.)

9. Preferably, practical exercises with camera accompany each theme, as well as evaluation and discussion of the results. Beyond that, advisory conversations about image production of recent years.

10. At the end of the course, the best participants’ pictures will be shown in a small photo exhibition.

Sturm’s presence in Beirut and Tunis, in terms of his presence in situ, his dedication and endorsement, is unequivocally considered to have had a transformative impact. The officials of the Palestine press agency, such as Mahmoud Nofal, consider it to have been one of the most important moments in the work on internationalising the Occupation of Palestine through image production. The participants and photographers, such as Youssef Khotoub and Tarik Ibrahim, consider it a life-changing, formative experience with regard to friendship and photographic education.

In a conclusion to this portion of the text, let us link this research with contemporary concerns: the domain of contemporary art has over the past several years provided a deeper introduction to the historical moment of the cine-photographic practices related to the Palestinian liberation within the history of cinema and photography. For example, the large-scale research-installation From/To (1999/2002) by Fareed Armaly unfolds a ‘diasporic network’ (Draxler, 2007, p. 122) that discusses image production as a spatial practice; the film-essay Nervus Rerum (2006) by The Otolith Group thinks through the image’s ‘two dimensions’ (Genet, 1982) with regard to Jenin, a Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank; the Lebanese artist Lamia Joreige refers in Houna wa roubbama hounak [Here and Perhaps Elsewhere, 2003] to aforementioned Godard’s Ici et Ailleurs;95 Reem Shileeh and Mohanad Yaqubi explicitly unfold in various projects the foundation of the Palestinian militant cinema during times of revolution, as in Off Frame (2009) and the more recent Al-Jisser (2012), and Palestine in the Eye (2012); film productions include Mohamad Soueid’s Nightfall (2000); Azza El-Hassan’s Kings and Extras (2004); Annemarie Jacir’s When I Saw You (2012); as for the Japanese radical filmmaker Masao Adachi’s involvement in the struggle, it has been actualised through

95 See: http://www.lamiajoreige.com/films/films_houna.php
Eric Baudelaire’s project *The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi, and 27 Years Without Images* (2011).96

**Connected to people**

To my knowledge, it is only the very recent work by Shilleh and Yaquby that tackles the socialist-socialist relations, through their ongoing exchange with the East German filmmaker Monica Maurer.97 This kind of constellation takes up the ‘institutional side’ (Enzensberger, 1981, p. 165) of solidarity, socialist internationalism, liberation struggles and wars, and its implicit geopolitics interrelating, in our case, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe up until today, a fact that cannot remain unmentioned in any project aiming to revisit and actualise these important historical trajectories.

During my research, I encountered a striking realisation. Namely, none of the projects mentioned above, while contributing to a better contemporary understanding of such geopolitical complexity, place much interest in places like the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, despite their particular crucial roles (which, however, need careful differentiation) within the Cold War rhetorics, as well as the international socialist network. In the case of GDR, the state itself is not that interesting (especially from today’s perspective). It acted in total dependency on Soviet Union; the exchange between the P.L.O. and the GDR government also seemed to depend on Moscow’s approval, as the former East-German spymaster stated in his memoires. While the mere existence of the GDR has, over decades, assisted and co-directed a world-political disaster (the Cold War), it has, more importantly, also embedded an educational exchange within a set of geopolitics that ask for a trajectory other than that imposed by clear-cut and dichotomist Cold War concepts. In this process of embedding an educational exchange, it exceeded the

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96 See the project’s collection of data, texts, images: http://baudelaire.net/extras/anabases/Anabase_Livretto.pdf (accessed May 8, 2013)
97 Monica Maurer is German born filmmaker who worked with the Palestine Film Unit of the 1970s on militant and information films alongside Samir Nimr, Mustafa Abu Ali, Khadijeh Habashneh, and others. Her films include groundbreaking accounts of the PLO’s medical and social services such as *Palestine Red Crescent Service* (1979), and key works on the armed struggle including *The Fifth War* (1979, with Samir Nimr), *Born Out of Death* (1981), and *Why?* (1982, with Samir Nimr). She now lives in Italy and is working on a film re-examining this revolutionary era. (Source: http://www.palestinefilm.org/media/LPFF2012_final_web.pdf, accessed May 30, 2013)
clearly brilliantly militant intellectuals from the Leftist scene in the West, or a Western colonialism.  

One reason for this absence could be that the GDR was out of fashion as long as it was taken seriously in real-political terms; that Palestine and the Palestinian Territories respectively only came into closer interest through the contemporary art world when ‘political art’ evolved into a full blown genre, when a kind of disORIENTation, as an exhibition was called in 2003, provided the needed reforms and refreshment for European institutions and biennales that had to start coping seriously with biennales in Johannesburg, Dakar, Sharja, and so on; and when a global North’s thirst had to ask for a prolongation of the Short Century, because so many relevant moments have been simply missed out, repressed, and neglected, but are now the only voices capable of teaching a different view in the ambivalent and contradicting times of globalisation today. Our project differs largely from the genre of ‘political art.’ It also refuses to simply add a further missing view to the canon of diversity. Rather, this project aims to potentiate the shifts made necessary in consideration of practices that have spectacularised the so-called global South for an art scene (museums, collections, galleries) in the so-called global North.

Images from Sturm’s private archive are mostly black/white and in various small formats. Some of them have a short description on the back, indicating the year and place, or, though rarely, also carry a stamp with the name ‘Horst Sturm.’ They differ from the official press photographs for several reasons. They are the surplus of a photographic practice and had been not been made public until now. These photographs were not considered useful for reporting on the struggle of the Palestinian people in the early 1980s; they simply did not make it into the official

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98 The report of the First Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961, for example, lists the German-German division as one of the highest priorities to solve after, of course, the importance of decolonisation processes, liberation struggles from colonial rule. The report mainly addressed and was sent to J.F. Kennedy and N. Khrushchev, among other Cold War countries.

99 Exhibition curated by Jack Persekian from March to April 2003 at House of the World Cultures in Berlin. It indicates one of the first large-scale institutional presentations of contemporary Arab artists from the Middle East.

press agency archives. It is this leftover from a solidarity programme, in the form of a photo course in Beirut, that forms the point of departure for this project.

Firstly, they contain a self-reflexive nature because they show moments of and around the photography workshops. We see the photo laboratory of the Palestinian press agency WAFA in Beirut; a group of photographers testing various cameras; a series of posters in the back of the laboratory mounted near the ceiling; we see a young woman with a camera discussing something with her colleague; several informal dinners, some with children; we see Horst with a Palestinian family in Saida and in Tunis, as well as in the military camps; we see walks, resting on the street; informal political meetings; a bodyguard reading a book; and so on.

Image 11: During a meeting in November 2011 at WAFA agency office in Ramallah, Youssef Khotoub brings several photographs from his private archive that show Sturm with WAFA colleagues, for example, Mahmoud Nofal (left), and Khotoub (sitting). Archive Youssef Khotoub. Photo: Armin Linke, 2011.

These pictures were not necessarily taken as press coverage, but perhaps as ‘souvenirs’, as visual memory pieces or simply for the joy of taking pictures and continuous tests of the camera. They did not serve the purpose of delivering a public report on the everyday life of the Palestinians in struggle and under occupation, but a report about the making of solidarity. We can say that they indicate the conditions, i.e.
the social framework, infrastructures and ideological parameters of the production of an image that ought to result in a ‘significance of the political photographs […]’ connected to people’ (Ibrahim, 2011) as Ibrahim describes the mission of the workshops. Secondly, the workshops’ images did not make it into the official press agencies’ archive, neither on the Palestinian nor the (East) German side. They are archived outside institutional paradigms. In order to see them one needs to know the person who owns them (Horst Sturm, but also his former students, in Ramallah, who kept some of the images in their homes), one has to visit them at home and each photograph comes with oral history and storytelling. There is no digital databank, agency protocol or institutional regulation. Any inquiry depends on informal conversations and trust.

These aspects direct our perspective onto a promising path, because they suggest an interlinked geography between Europe and the Middle East, which differs from the grand narrative of the Israel-Palestinian conflict as a regional problem, but also from the Cold War rhetoric. Because they place photographic practice in between a lived socialist experience, official socialist doctrine and informal social structures, this practice connects, as well as separates the state structures from informality, authority from collectivity. In any case, despite its ideological programme, their point of departure from a moment of socialist internationalism, also counters a deeply inscribed legacy of a Western narrative, which has been discussed in academic debates to some extent, as for example with regard to documentary practice in filmmaking and the British Empire. Film theorist Lee Grieveson, for example, elaborates in depth on how in cinema the genre of ‘documentary’ is linked with the industrialisation and, commercialisation (e.g., Empire Marketing Board) in Britain, as well as institutionalisation of the imperial trade of the British Empire, both within the colonies worldwide and within the British Isles. Furthermore, the founding of the British Film Institute in London must be seen as a result of the relationship between adult education and British documentary cinema, associated with the Empire Film

101 The archive of the East German General German News Service (ADN) had been transferred into the German Press Agency (dpa) after 1990.
103 Ibid., here: Grieveson, L. ‘The cinema and the (common)wealth of nations,’ pp.
Library and later with the Empire Marketing Board. In the context of the conference Film and the End of Empire at Birbeck College in London, the curator Kay Gladstone staged a film screening at the Imperial War Museum in London, which addressed, in particular, the implementation of a separation via a cinematic grammar between the ‘old’ (Palestine) and the ‘new’ (state of Israel), by the British Mandate in Palestine. The short film Portrait of Palestine (1947), produced by Anglo-Scottish Pictures for the Colonial Office, provides an exemplary insight into how the establishment of the Zionist movement in Palestine is pictured as future progress, enlightenment through technology and arrival of modernity. It thus appears to be contrasting the native Arab population as backward and poor, and therefore, forcefully calling to be ‘modernized’ by colonial societies. In conclusion of this latter point, however, it must be clearly said that the state of Israel is not simply an evil colonialism, but a political initiation made necessary by the systematic murder of over six million Jewish people by the Nazi Germany. In other words, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a disaster produced, industrialised, and fostered for over a century in various appearances of European forces, such as British colonialism, Nazi-Germany, Cold War. I will problematise the latter aspect in particular in the chapter Concerning Solidarity.

**Demanding the collective**

In order to better understand the attraction of these images from a curatorial point of view, let us consider two strands in the photographic practice of the fedayeen that allow us to speculate on their way of working as an exhibition practice. In other words, the following pages intend to reveal connector points creating a certain proximity and even familiarity between a militant project, socialist internationalism and contemporary art in an era of globalisation. After all, what made them so appealing to travel with? We will see, through this elaboration, why an insight into their practice is useful for unfolding their itinerant potential. Let us look now briefly

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105 Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire, a three-years AHRC-research project by Lee Grieveson and Colin MacCabe. See: http://colonialfilm.org.uk/node/2477 (accessed March 26, 2013)
to the more obvious strand before elaborating on the other one, which focuses explicitly on the non-official photographs.

Image 12: Final presentation photo course Beirut, 1980/81, Horst Sturm on the left. Several women participated in the course—Yassira Kubbeh, Marleine Bradely, Jivira Goef-Hadadine, Leila Zakaaria—but the men made up the core group of the collective-social gatherings. Archive Horst Sturm.

Firstly: we are facing a photographic practice that will result in a picture of a people in struggle, to be distributed internationally and in public. It is an exhibition practice in the most literal and predictable sense: the aim of the photographic practice was the production of press photographs for the Associate Press, the East German Press Agency, the Palestinian Press Agency, and so on. These images were published in print media of the time (P.L.O. information bulletin, A.D.N. newspaper, Wochenpost). Furthermore, organising exhibitions also appears as a major activity, tested at the end of each Beirut workshop, as we can see in Sturm’s archived photographs. These final presentations invited a small audience, but were also used as a public platform to hand over the certificates, giving the space of exhibiting a ceremonial function. More exhibitions, however, took place. Youssef Khotoub reiterated several times that he organised four to five exhibitions per year in Beirut, as
well as elsewhere (Tunis, Iraq). As elaborated in an interview with Yussef Khotoub, Ramallah, 2011. One of the display strategies of the *fedayeen* was to mount as many photographs as possible. One could consider it as an attempt at building an ‘immersive space,’ as it could be called, surrounding the spectator by an excessive amount of photographs, a literal visual bombardment that suggests a mosaic-like narrative, while disenabling a complex report about a single event. In doing so it unfolds cartography of scenes and gestures of war. Any white space between the photographs has been filled with images. Another example is the exhibition *Die Standhaften* (The Steadfast People) at the gallery in the TV tower on Alexanderplatz in East Berlin, in November 1982, opened officially by a representative of the Palestinian delegation in East Germany, the photographer Horst Sturm and the head of the Committee of Solidarity, as a press image reports.

Secondly: let us turn now our view towards the obverse side of image production, which directs us away from the outcome of the courses towards the actual conditions of production, its structures, randomness and social dynamics. This turn places in focus a kind of counter-force or counter-shot, counteracting the official photographic material for magazines and exhibitions. From a photo-ideological point of view, as found in writings by party-conformist photo theorists in the GDR, the obverse side carries ‘Null-Bilder’ [null-images], meaning the snapshots not taken with the political awareness, e.g. under the programme of ‘solidarity,’ or the revolutionary mission, e.g. ‘struggle;’ they are worth nothing—economically and politically; in terms of functionality they are ‘bad’ pictures because they cannot be used by the agency or the party; they also can easily be seen as waste of photo material, particularly in a region and situation where such material is precious. I would like to consider these ‘null-images,’ those bad pictures or simply leftovers, with no value warranting a public appearance (until now), as ‘commentaries’ (Brecht, 1967/1992) on this photographic practice. In a moment I will address the ‘commentary,’ which I borrow from Bertold Brecht’s proposal to counter the

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106 As elaborated in an interview with Yussef Khotoub, Ramallah, 2011.
107 A similar strategy, though much more elaborated, extensive and institutionalised, can be observed in the exhibition *Family of Man* at the MoMA in New York, 1955, historically the first exhibition to have used photographs in installing a space in which the spectator would get highly immersed.
108 See Beiler, B. *Weltanschauung der Fotografie* [ideology of photography], 1977, here p. 58
paradigm of representation. From a perspective of today, such commentaries begin to destabilise, fray beyond repair, and exhaust dichotomic rhetoric (as of the Cold War); they dismantle solidarity dictated by institutional power and disturb a protocol (as we can find in the curriculum under point six: ‘Partiality and Truth. Protocol photography. The conscious lie of the image.’) As commentaries, they instigate an unconscious of a photographic practice that cannot be categorised within an ideological and rational agenda. Therefore, they appear to be promising to deconstruct the institutional fixation and enforcement of the Cold War politics, but also a purely technological approach to photographic practice that we find in the written outline of the course curriculum. In highlighting this side, our project begins to play out a discrepancy between the course’ written, as well as reported on curriculum, and a practice that is much broader and full of contingencies and unpredictabilities, than perhaps a party protocol wishing to control, but unable to do so fully.

For the sake of precision, it must be repeated that the non-official side—which we have just discussed as ‘commentaries’ of a practice—cannot exist without the official press coverage. The ultimate aim of these photography workshops, conducted within a solidarity project, was the production of suitable material that would be accepted by international press agencies. This permanent link between production and presentation, as well as between collective practice and the materiality of the image requires alertness within our considerations, as it might carry a certain danger of romanticising collective effort and informality of the fedayeen, or of using it as one-to-one blueprint for re-thinking the exhibition practice today.

Such an entanglement, however, in particular with a focus on the unofficial side of the photographic practice of the fedayeen, proposes a ground for imagining a new approach to exhibition practice. It offers a possible approach to exhibition practice from a perspective that complicates its conditions by considering political implications, the idea of a ‘socialist friendship’ and collective infrastructures of production.

109 The outline of the curriculum can be found in the section ‘Excess in Display.’ Upon completing each course, Sturm had to submit a report to the East German press agency. Unpublished documents, archive Horst Sturm. It also is worth mentioning at this point that a representative of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany of the GDR regularly monitored the courses.

110 I will elaborate on this in the chapter Concerning Solidarity.
We could elaborate on the collective-social impact by looking at it through Frantz Fanon’s reflections, in particular in relation to the affection of the colonised body within the Algerian liberation struggle. Fanon certainly remains one of the most important thinkers on the organisations of emancipatory politics. Based on his work as a revolutionary and a psychiatrist during the Algerian liberation anti-colonial movement, his writings dissect and describe the dependencies between psycho-affective conditions, the mechanisms of a colonial consciousness and structures of governance. In his foreword to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Homi Bhabha explains the entangled arena of the ‘psycho-affective realm’ (Bhabha/Fanon, 2004, p. xviii) with the collective as following:

‘[Fanon] places the problem of development in the context of those forceful and fragile “psycho-affective” motivations and mutilations that drive our collective instinct of survival, nurture our ethical affiliations and ambivalences, and nourish our political desire for freedom.’ (Bhabha/Fanon, 2004, p. xix)

Some recent projects, particularly in the domain of moving image, deal with the consequences that the failure of the collective revolutionary project brought up in relation to the ‘psycho-affective realm,’ which can be considered as inscriptions within the body, as we can see, for example, in *Nightfall*, 2000, by the Lebanese filmmaker Mohamed Soueid. Soueid himself was part of the liberation movement in Beirut, as a member of a Lebanese student party. Years after the Lebanon Civil War, he re-visits some former comrades from the Palestinian resistance who still live in Beirut. It seems that the pleasure of drinking alcohol together legitimises an admission to a past for which a strong collective desire remains, but which simply lacks means of articulation; drinking together provides the substance for articulating the mourning the traumatic loss of the collective vicinity as a condition of the everyday. As such, it appears that the failure of the revolutionary project only plays a subordinate role to the loss of the collective-social structure as an active part within
Another example is the short film *Toi, Waguih*, 2005, by the young Egyptian filmmaker Namir Abdel Messeh. The film is a magnifying lens, observing the inscriptions into generational links within the filmmaker’s own family. Messeh tries to understand his father’s total withdrawal from political engagement today, despite having been a member of the communist party in Egypt in the 1960s. Whenever the son wishes to inquire into ‘the political desire for freedom’, his father obviously misses the language of speaking about the ‘‘psycho-affective’ motivations and mutilations’ (Bhabha/Fanon, 2004, p. xix) that has enabled him in sustaining imprisonment and torture over several years, during his politically active period. Instead, he describes in detail the organisational structure of the collective order and the subordination of the individual to a Cause, by recalling prison locations and techniques of torture. Within this present tense, the subjectivation, which the struggle had opened up, becomes un-anticipatable, while the horrid structures of punishment and defeat are perpetuated. How can a curatorial intervention not solidarise, or rather, solidarise not only with the revolutionary past, but also with the failure of its strategies, and with a ‘lost’ present?

I am referring briefly to these projects in order to indicate the importance of the collective condition within a revolutionary movement, which appears to have informed the photographic practice of the *fedayeen*, as well as the East German photographer’s engagement. It remains essential to keep in mind the framework of this practice outside of the world of art. Instead of, however, opening a debate on whether the informally archived photographs of the *fedayeen* are art or not art, I would like to ask: what if we, as curators today, imagine our practice through the lens of a *fedayeen* who operates in group structures in which the production and publication of images are part of a project larger than a six-week exhibition? What if we declare the *fedayeen* photographers earnest curators? These questions liberate exhibition practice from its conventional setting in museums, historical analysis, art project spaces, biennales, curatorial study programmes, jet-set curating, and so on.

In conclusion, it can be said that this photographic practice appears to be framed by a particular set of methods informed by further domains such as militant action, self-organisation, collective structuring, both economically as well as socially,

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111 For an extensive elaboration see http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc49.2007/lauraMarks/ (accessed April 29, 2013)
psycho-affective inscriptions into the body and a clear aim: namely, to produce images to be exposed in public. This can be considered as an exhibition practice from a curatorial point of view. This approach takes a certain distance from a purely analytic-theoretical perspective, but not because of impotence and inability to know how to read the archival material, or what to do with it. By pointing to the collective significance along an absolutely sincere request for public appearance, this image cannot be thought without its conditions of production, i.e., we need to articulate their absence today. In so doing, this approach rejects the concept of ‘curating’ as a technique of taking care, caring, guarding and managing a treatment. It comes close to Tarik Elhaik’s appeal against curators

‘[as] new figures of the public intellectual [that] have managed to create a status for their practice by capturing the desires of academics too often trapped in their lonely ivory tower […] that often culminate in ostentatious displays’ (Elhaik, 2013)

In other words, to begin with the collective moment is not a question of time (chronology), but of exigency. It disturbs the conventional deeds of a curator (selecting something from an archive with the assumption of giving it a voice if placed on an ‘ostentatious’ display), and attributes the ‘incurable image’ (Elhaik, 2013) the power to declare independence from institutional agenda, curatorial studies and schools, from scenographic phantasies.

In contrast to prominent Leftist intellectuals, photographers, filmmakers and journalists, such as Jean-Luc Godard, Bruno Barbey, Jean Genet, the particularity of Horst Sturm’s presence in the Middle East resides in its educational character: the former freedom fighters, who were also already working as photographers, were supposed to improve their photographic practice through these courses. In contrast with Barbey or Godard, Sturm’s photo courses opened up an educational frame on equal footing with the Palestinians. Unlike Barbey, Sturm left his cameras and photo material behind in Beirut. The photo courses indicate practical events within the concept of solidarity, socialist friendship and international socialism as an essential face of the Cold War.

In other words, if we argued at the very beginning, that the photo courses in Beirut declared the continuation of an armed struggle by other means, then this shift
must also have an effect on photography. If the armed struggle continues by means of image production, then it expands, alters and stretches the means of such photographic practice by any means: the discussions in the photo laboratory, the dinners, the evaluation and selection of publishable material, in testing the cameras. The deeply social engagements exceed any technology-bound definition of photography. This unfolds a practice as a network made up of various registers including discussing, eating, walking, waiting, longing, reading, gathering, testing, travelling, and allying. Such an expansion of photographic practice is, henceforth, an image practice by other means; it exceeds mere technicalities and moves the practice closer to a ‘ciné-geography.’ (Eshun/Gray, 2011) This term, which takes inspiration from Irit Rogoff’s proposal of ‘relational geographies,’112 is defined by Ros Gray and Kodwo Eshun as the following:

‘practices in an expanded sense, and the connections—individual, institutional, aesthetic and political—that link them transnationally to other situations of urgent struggle. It refers not just to individual films but also to the new modes of production, exhibition, distribution, pedagogy and training made possible by forms of political organisation and affiliation. A critical component is the invention of discursive platforms such as gatherings, meetings, festivals, screenings, classes and groups founded by a range of students, activists, workers, film-makers, artists, critics, editors, teachers and many others at decisive moments in order to mobilise collective strategies that may have been evolving for some time. It includes the speeches, statements, essays, poems, declarations, manifestos and anthologies in which the aspirations of this transnational network of affiliated movements were clarified and articulated.’

A question, however, remains: what happens to this network of a practice that exists through its discursive platform, informality, collectivity and social structures when put on public display, today? For the moment, I would like to argue that the transfer requests engagement with the practice, i.e., with all its contradicting forces, those we find in the photographic practice of the fedayeen, as well as in the East German’s

practice of solidarity. The curatorial intervention does not just display the privately archived images from the East as spectacular finds, discoveries, and counter-evidence to a Western narration, but demands a process that transforms these images without losing their relevance. The great archival find refuses to become a treasure on public display in the world of art. It instead demands passages, journeys, travel routes, and transits. This is the environment in which the *itinerant* joins the group.

**‘Not a show but a struggle’**

Different sources indicate that image production has been, historically, a crucial instrument in the Palestinian politics. For instance, in relation to cinema, the filmmakers, researchers and artists Mohanad Yaqubi / Reem Shilleh specify its significance in their ongoing film project *Off Frame*. Their research investigates the visual arm of the P.L.O. that aimed to create an independent visual grammar as another face of the armed struggle. From today’s perspective, Reem Shilleh and Mohanad Yaqubi claims to be approaching the cinematic practice in order to challenge the social and political implications of the image, when he says: ‘I don’t call it a revolution anymore; I see it as a struggle for representation.’ *Off Frame* is a project that attempts the unfolding of a cinematic geography of the establishment of the Palestinian Film Unit during the early 1970s, ranging in his project between Beirut, Cyprus, London, and Rome. While the beginnings of the Palestinian cinema deliberately connected to the idea of revolution, as it was practiced in alliance with the institutional structures of the P.L.O., Shilleh’s/Yaqubi’s reconsideration questions such an agenda from today’s perspective. Their conclusion can be read in two ways: one approach places ‘struggle’ within the terminology of political-ideological structures with regard to class conflict. It re-inscribes itself into a traditional Marxist programming that speaks of an absolute oppositional constellation between the class

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115 One of the founders, Mustafa Abu Ali, says, “We were aware of the importance to find our own cinematic language, which can be summarized as: „the people’s cinema is for the people‟.” In: *Off Frame*, ibid.
of workers and that of factory owners (capitalists). This is the framework in which the foundation of the Palestinian cinema took place.

Image 13: Mohanad Yaqubi/Reem Shilleh, Off Frame, research project, 2011 – present: ‘After 34 years, 30,000 metres of negative was found in the archive of AAMOD [Archivio Audiovisio del Movimento Operaio e Democratio], this finding represents a rare raw material of a film made by the Palestine Film Unit, it contains images of the Lebanese civil war from 1975 till 1977. In this part of the project we only see images from one reel; another 400 reels are waiting to be viewed and restored.’ (Yaqubi/Schilleh)

The ideological, binary confrontation, however, lost its validity after the collapse of the communist project in Europe, as Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau have usefully analysed, a few years before the collapse of Real-existing Socialism in Europe.116 With regard to antagonism towards a system, Palestine does not fight for another ‘system,’ but to become a capitalist nation. This is expressed, for example, in WAFA’s most recent reform strategy: to offer an online e-commerce service. Until recently, WAFA photographs could be used for free. Now, the aim is for the e-

116 ‘The object of struggle is not simply punctual gains, but forms of articulating forces that will allow these gains to be consolidated. And these forms are always reversible. In that fight, the working class must struggle from where it really is: both within and outside the State.’ In: Laclau, E., Mouffe, Ch., Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a radical democratic politics, 1985, p. 36.
commerce to realise profit for the agency. Not only has the GDR vanished, the progressive politics of the movement itself have vanished, too. Yaqubi’s statement can be read in this way. By replacing ‘revolution’ by ‘a struggle for representation’ he opens up a further possibility of looking at it, which brings into mind a scene from *Le Gai Savoir* (1968/69) by Jean-Luc Godard. In minute 50, the two main and only figures, that of Patrice Lumumba in the character of Patricia (Juliet Berto) and of Emile Rousseau in the character of Emile (Jean-Pierre Leaud), discuss in an abandoned French TV studio the potential, contradictions, and limits of the image in political work, with regard to the May ’68 revolts unfolding outside on the streets. 

Patricia’s response to Emile’s reflections on images as representation is: ‘No, not representation, but presentation. Not a show, but a struggle.’ (Godard, 1968) Since they both question and inquire the possibility of ‘implement[ing] a new representational regime’ (Silverman, 1998, p. 113), this other reading of ‘struggle’ rather points to seeking, to provoking, endeavouring and striving towards new means of articulation. These means might yet need inventing, just as *Off Frame* struggles to find relevant film footage of the early days of Palestinian cinema in an archive in Rome. I am aware of the danger of misinterpreting the scene from *Le Gai Savoir*, since this period in Godard’s practice deliberately attempted to define cinema as a revolutionary instrument. Cinema was not seen as operating in support of the protests on street, or as an auxiliary means. It was supposed to operate through its independence from institutions, structures and grammars. However, it remains useful to approach struggle in ways other than through its ideological Marxist connotation as direct political action in the binary, conventional configuration of placing itself in opposition to the ‘other,’ which is a reactive position. Perhaps one other way would be to aim for new grammars, rather than the ones inaugurated 50 years ago, which now appear to be outdated. However, the double gesture of ‘struggle’ seems to be inherent in *Le Gai Savoir*, although within a different political concern, geography, economic condition and social framework. I have chosen *Le Gai Savoir* in order to indicate a double gesture that comes with a project dealing with a revolutionary moment and the space of exposure, so to speak. It brings us back to Genet again, whose writing in revolt also enacts a struggle, of two types: the first is a solidarity

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with the militant struggle of the Palestinians for liberation from Israeli Occupation and with the struggle for freedom of the Black Panthers in the U.S., which takes side in support of a people without land. The second is Genet’s continuous re-consideration of the means of writing – as elaborated above and defined as a performance of complicity—indicating an arrival of a people’s struggle within the means of writing itself.

118 ‘Of course I was on the side of the people who rebelled. Because of course I myself also questioned all of society.’ (Genet, 1985, p. 39)
EXHAUSTED REFLEXIVITY

Throughout this writing, we encounter a network of practices that consists of lessons in theory, as well as practice of photography, but also continues over dinners, walks on the street, camera tests, discussions in the photo lab, or in the form of visits to the fedayeen camps. If one considers this link, the official press coverage contradicts the image of collective pleasure while programming an image of war. Therefore, we can find a double gesture within this practice: one consists of the collective pleasure, joy and friendship—an inward dynamic; the other gesture urges towards the exposure to an international eye. Both sides are deeply tangled up with each other, since there could not be an image of war without collective friendship.

Let us journey now further into the privately archived images from the early 1980s that invite us to begin our reflections from the conditions of image production for a Cause. These unofficial images are spin-offs of products intended for public purposes, published in magazines and exhibitions; they have not been considered as part of the professional practice and exist as a surplus of the actual production process. Problematising and unfolding it prepares a ground that might consider the practice of the fedayeen as an impulse for re-thinking today’s exhibition practice on a global scale.

Social incidents

In view of such grounding, the archived image practice takes us toward considering a transformation from a ‘performance of reflexivity’ to a performance of complicity. Let me explain why: unveiling the means of production lines up with the potential to gain distance from the official side of this image practice, that—as we know—supplied press agencies worldwide and supported the creation of a public image of Palestine. It adds a self-reflexive weight to the photographic practice, which reveals its production side, one that usually lies outside the public debate on visual representation of the Palestinians. Continuing on, these aspects contribute to an instrumental assumption, namely, that these non-official images host the possibility of activating ‘alienation effect’ of the actual mission. Borrowing Bertold Brecht’s words:

\[119\] Thanks to Kodwo Eshun who pointed out this expression to me.
‘… the so-called A-effect (alienation effect) […] is, briefly, a technique of
taking the human social incidents to be portrayed and labelling them as
something striking, something that calls for explanation, is not to be taken
for granted, not just natural.’ (Brecht, 1964/1992, p. 125)

In Brecht’s Epic Theatre, the A-effect is the project itself as a political instrument of
articulating a critique of separation between labour and leisure, reality and illusion,
and stage and audience. It is used here to indicate the space of resources alluding to a
set of ‘social incidents,’ which contribute to an understanding of the constructedness
of the to-be-produced press photographs that had the purpose of depicting Palestinian
life under occupation. Introducing Brecht’s technique of alienation will emphasise the
call for the explanation of social relations as part of the process of image production.
It enables looking at this practice in a way more complicated than an analysis of
official imagery. It also makes clear that these images are ‘not to be taken for granted,
not just natural.’ Instead, as we will see, the photographic practice is to be taken as
another voice that directs our engagement with the archived images in a different
way. In other words, the shift to the courses’ surplus disturbs seemingly clear genres,
such as propaganda, war photography or misery.

The public exposure of images that have been archived privately (as leftovers
of a professional practice, mainly by Horst Sturm and Youssef Khotoub as press
photographers), indicates the inward dynamics and structures of that very practice,
and places the photographing subject on display with all its ‘human social incidents.’
It thus also allows a critical insight into the social relations of the photo courses.
However, the photograph does not function as a representational document of a
particular situation, but appears as a ‘commentary’ (Brecht, 1964/1992) that informs
us – today – about the structures behind the actual press photography. Brecht focuses
on this point in the following: ‘The direct changeover from representation to
commentary that is so characteristic to epic theatre is still more easily recognized as
one element than any street demonstrator.’ (Brecht, 1964/1992, p. 126) This links
with the privately archived images depicting material resources of production, absent
in the press images, but necessary for producing its public face: the camera, the
architecture of the photo laboratory, and the material film celluloid that will produce
the image-to-be on public display. Moreover, informal meetings with leaders, dinners
at private places, Sturm’s introduction into family structures, but also a certain level
of intimacy within a group for a revolutionary Cause exceed any official agreement on institutional grounds and party protocols.

Introducing the A-effect requires an elaboration on two layers. Firstly, as much as it is tempting, as well as necessary, to consider the ‘social incidents to be portrayed’ not as representation, but as commentaries on the archived image practice, it must be said that such self-reflexive strand—proposed by Brecht—had been erased from its public side at the outset.

Image 13: Horst Sturm looks at an image showing the laboratory of the Palestinian press agency WAFA in Beirut, 1980, during the photo course. It corresponds with point eight of Sturm’s preconfigured curriculum: ‘Chemistry of photography, the basics. Negative—positive processing, development. Negative—positive, how chemicals influence the image! Process after the development (With regard to this topic, one has to depart from the level of laboratory technique and its results of the local agency, in order to achieve most likely an improvement of the current insufficient state over the period of the course)’ It indicates, firstly, the collective dimension and ‘social incidents’ (Brecht, 1964/1992, p. 125) of the production conditions of this practice, and secondly, the means of production in the form of film processing and material. Archive Horst Sturm.

Conditions of production during the photo courses, i.e., all the informal and social encounters that cannot be quite documented in a representational manner, have thus far been located outside the public domain. The privately archived images were not produced for public display, instead, again, appear as leftovers, almost a waste of material, and ‘null-images’ (Beiler, 1977, p. 58) considered of no use for publicity strategies. This project, The Itinerant, is the first public exposure of the informal side
of the practice, one that was not supposed to be made public. I am using the A-effect here, however, in order to dramatise the means of production, meaning the insistence on a critical point of observation from today’s perspective. Following Brecht’s technique, the critical distance defines the social impact within this practice as a demonstration: it demonstrates—without feelings\(^\text{120}\)—the mechanisms that show how photography was conceived as a continuation of militant struggle by other means.\(^\text{121}\)

In other words, such a critical point of view was not in conscious play at the moment of production itself. And thus, indicating the relevance of sociability and collectivity during the photo courses as crucial features of this practice can only occur through its transfer from a historical moment into the space of the contemporary. It is exactly this transfer, which again alludes to a wandering in time, that our project can achieve.

With regard to our privately archived images: encountering them today provides an insight into the means of their production, including the social-collective importance. It disturbs and breaks through a forced empathy for the photographed, who appear as the representation of the Palestinian living under the Occupation. As commentaries of an image practice, speaking with Brecht, they indicate a distance to representation. Such distance allows inquiry into the conditions of production and enables us to ask: where did the film material for the photo course come from? When was Tariq Ibrahim on a flight with Abu Jihad, and which trip did they take together? Where did Abu Jihad get the Canon camera from? Which criteria were discussed for selecting photographs relevant for public, i.e., international distribution?\(^\text{122}\) Why did the photojournalists of the East German press agency prefer working with a Nikon camera, Japanese technology officially only available in West Germany or other non-socialist countries?\(^\text{123}\) In other words, the A-effect delineates a stage for political agency that acts in distance from the actual situation, as Eva Horn points out in her approach to Brecht:

\(^{120}\) ‘The feelings and opinions of the demonstrator and demonstrated are not merged into one’ (Brecht, 1964/1992, p. 125)
\(^{121}\) See section ‘We used to talk about photography on the plane’
\(^{122}\) This kind of questions resonates from the quote by Tariq Ibrahim, Beirut 2011 as earlier written. See the chapter ‘We used to talk about photography in the plane’
\(^{123}\) Horst Sturm worked with a Nikon camera, as he told me.
‘Agents are actors, and actors are agents: the subject becomes a political subject to the extent that she/he is able to play-act, to present and perform a certain position and by this performance explore its consequences. Political agency is thus always linked to the ability to distance oneself from the position one affirms’ (Horn, 2006, p. 46).  

We will return to this point in a moment by insisting to bring in Jean Genet in order to complicate that distance, which seems to place us in an analytical constellation that, at the very beginning, seemed inappropriate for this archived image practice with regard to the question ‘What do pictures want?’ (Mitchell, 1995) Before that, let me address a worry Rey Chow poses when she speaks of a ‘mediatized reflexivity’ (Chow, 2012, p. 20). In sight of the proliferation of projects and works of art, especially also within the art market, working through Brechtian theory in the field of film particularly, Chow supports my assumption that we have reached a total exhaustion of reflexivity as a critical space for political debates and arrived within the spectacle of reflexivity itself, as it could be called. The ‘performance of reflexivity’ has itself become a genre and a promising strand for inscription into art-institutional agendas (collections, Documenta, biennials, commercial galleries), as a younger generation of artists bears witness, e.g., Omer Fast, Clemens von Wedemeyer, Filipa César, Mario Pfeiffer, Anton Vidokle, and Sven Johne.

**A kind of uneasiness**

For example: *The Fourth Wall* (2008–10) by Clemens von Wedemeyer, presented in the Curve Gallery at the Barbican Centre London, plays out profoundly the mechanisms of the image apparatus (photography, cinematography) and its application in visual anthropology in defining the notion of the ‘other.’ Wedemeyer applies the notion of the fourth wall to anthropology, as well as to photography and film—disciplines and media that have claimed the authority of adequately and

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125 ‘The Fourth Wall,’ a notion used in theatre and introduced by Diderot (*Discours sur la poésie dramatique*, 1758), refers to an imaginary divide between stage and audience.
authentically describing the humankind and the conditions of life. This power, too, builds on the assumption of a fourth wall: a wall that is set up both by the desire of the audience for an illusion of reality, as well as by the willingness of art and social sciences to deliver such an illusion.

In *The Fourth Wall*, Wedemeyer problematised a spectacular anthropological ‘find’ in the ‘Tasaday,’ the tribe discovered in the Philippine rain forest in 1971. Western media declared this discovery a sensation. Apparently, the 26 members of this tribe were still living in Stone Age, seemingly unaware of the modern world. Doubts arose, however, as to the authenticity of this discovery, already in the eighties. It was soon suspected to have been a swindle. *The Fourth Wall* is an impressive project that operates on several stages: original TV material, films, books, magazines, and newly conducted interviews with protagonists, as well as large-scale staged and filmed sceneries in the Barbican Centre. The project can be seen as massive demonstration—in the Brechtian way—of the mechanisms of the image apparatus, of its systems of distribution, and power of manipulation. In other words, it can be read as a multiple performance of reflexivity on image production, in the means of which the filmmaker
himself does not trust. Wedemeyer articulates his distrust through a network of analytical instruments, in which, for example, various film formats (16-mm, digital video, 4:3 TV format) come into play. He uses the means of image production excessively in order to reveal its mechanisms, and thus, its power of manipulation. It must be said, though, that ‘political agency’ as proposed by Horn, loses its relevance. This has not so much to do with the fact that the project was shown in a major art institution in the UK, but rather with the fact that its analytical overweight re-manifests the entire apparatus that the work aims to criticise. The assumption that the anthropological ‘find’ had been a swindle is already sufficient to argue that the excessive investigation into the apparatus, in fact, kills an educational dimension that the ‘Tasaday’ tribe may have to offer in relation to a divided world: a total discomposure of Western disciplines called anthropology and ethnology, and thus moreover, revealing these disciplines as a supplement to ongoing colonial-governmental actions, a massive invalidation of the superiority of the image technology of the West, and a dilution of just the notions that Wedemeyer re-inscribes within the institutional apparatus, after over 30 years, when he, for example, entitles a work *Interview with Geoffrey Frand or: How to deal with the uncontacted?* (2009) For all the realisation and thoughtful complexity of the *Fourth Wall*, however, the project stops at the point when another concern appears much more important: what do we do with our distrust in the medium now? Where does this distrust take us?

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127 Wedemeyer speaks of the ‘contacted’ and ‘uncontacted.’ See *First contact - filmmaterial* 5, 2010, newspaper, published on occasion of the exhibition *The Fourth Wall*.

128 There exists a rumour that the ‘discovery’ of the ‘Tasaday’ tribe, by the U.S.-American anthropologist Elizaldes in 1971, came just at the moment when the Philippine president Marcos planned to install a military dictatorship in the Republic. One has to add, that the U.S. had been the colonial power over the Philippines and remained influential after the official independence in 1946. Thus, it is speculated that the ‘discovery’ was administered by Marcos and would allow him violations of human rights (military dictatorship) and, in exchange, deliver international scientific recognition of an anthropologist from the U.S. See Rosaldo, D. ‘Utter Savages of scientific value,’ in Leacock, E., Lee, R., *Politics and history in band societies*, 1982, pp. 309–325.
Taking a certain distance to this kind of art works,\(^\text{129}\) which I see within the line of the described exhaustion of reflexivity, does not wish to judge the works’ inherent quality that I, in fact, I appreciate. I also wish to make it clear that I do not want to contest the artists’ success, public recognition and presence within the world of art.

But, firstly, all the promises that Brecht had formulated with regard to a politicisation of one’s own practice are simply insufficient in the realm of a spectacle of reflexivity. In the case of Wedemeyer’s project, the ‘political agency’ (Horn, 2006, p. 46) invoking the spectator (that includes the filmmaker himself) as an actor on stage, has lost its political radicality, and thus requires a re-thinking of the agency’s educational promises from today’s perspective.

Image 15: Personalised email, received on June 20, 2013, from Jon Carson, Executive Director of ‘Organizing for Action’ (OFA). It is a nonprofit social welfare organization and community organising project in the United States, advocating the agenda of U.S. President Barack Obama. The organisation calls itself non-partisan, but in practice it is strongly allied with the Democratic Party of which Obama is a member. It is the successor of Obama's 2012 re-election campaign and of Organizing for America, which itself succeeded Obama's 2008 campaign. Since the beginning of Obama’s election campaign, the invitation to take a view ‘behind the scene’ counts as a major strategy to win votes for Obama.

\(^{129}\) Another example is *Nostalgia* (2009) by Omer Fast.
While for Brecht, and in Horn’s analysis, the exposition of the means of production deliberately wants to carve out an educational as well as political concern within the space of art (theatre, film), then in a time when Barack Obama applies the behind the scene view as a strategic element in his election campaign, as well as governmental policy, the concept of reflexivity as a critical instrument of confronting disciplinary mechanisms (reappolitik, science, art as disciplines) appears fairly outdated.\textsuperscript{130}

Chow locates the performance of reflexivity within a European modernist agenda of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, which is, of course, also Brecht’s environment for articulating his groundbreaking ideas for de-colonising the means of theatre from a bourgeois tradition. She writes:

‘What is at stake, in the imagined and (in some cases) literal acts of uncovering, taking things off, minimizing, dispensing with ornamentation, and so forth that are typical modernist artistic practices, is a vision of purification that seeks to revive a certain before – before the onset of corruption, before the loss of innocence.’ (Chow, 2012, p.27)

This leads us to the second point: because our archived image practice departs from politically different settings (the Cold War as a post-1945 phenomenon), let us return to Jean Genet. It is worth doing so because his book \textit{Un Captif amoureux}, which I have chosen as the acoustic chamber of our project, contains numerous interruptions that could be misunderstood as a performance of reflexivity, but that differ from reflexivity in terms of ‘a vision of purification,’ in which I follow Chow’s critique. We will see in the following why Genet asks to speak of a transformation from reflexivity to a performance of complicity; and what this means for our project.

Demonstrating the means of production, in his case of writing, Genet starts his book by announcing that ‘The page was blank to begin with is now crossed from top to bottom with tiny black characters—letters, words, commas, exclamation marks—and it’s because of them the page is said to be legible.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 5) It is a

precise indication of what is needed for populating the stage of writing. However, learning from Genet, the exposition of the technical means won’t achieve any distance that would determine a distance in which the ‘demonstrator,’ as Brecht calls the figure that reveals the as-found situation’s constructedness, remains untouched by gestures, gazes, temptations, and seductions from the actual scene. Instead, Genet speaks of ‘a kind of uneasiness, a feeling close to nausea’ (Genet, 1986, p. 5) that embraces the process of writing. From the very beginning, hence, Genet writes through the presence of the body, i.e., subjective, irrational, unconscious incidents that inevitably come with the analysis of the means of production, without neglecting or erasing the necessity of analysis itself. It is the first thing that must be seen in dissonance with Brecht who—let us remember—requests a rigid separation between ‘the feelings and opinions of demonstrator and the demonstrated’ (Brecht, 1967/1992, p. 125) Furthermore, Genet declares the means of production to be a ‘barricade to hide the void’ (Genet, 1986, p. 86), which is, again, in dissent with an objective-scientific analysis that claims to be disclosing the politics behind real-political events (as much as a view’ behind the scenes,’ when we see Barack with Michelle, the kids and his team waiting for the public performance, does not say anything about the apparatus that secures them, his political programme, and so on). In a different place, Genet writes that ‘The construction, organization and layout of the book, without deliberately intending to betray the facts, manage the narration in such a way that I probably seem to be a privileged witness or even a manipulator.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 354) Such confessions speak of no innocence or purity at all. Distance is here not defined by objective observation, but by the intrusion of the body and both the realisation and articulation of one’s own implicitness within the scene and web of relations.

There are many more circumscriptions in Un Captif amoureux that direct our perspective to a power of obscurity through the means of production, for example, ‘These lines, this whole book, is only a diversion, producing quick emotions quickly over’ (Genet, 1986, p. 136); ‘beneath the disguise of words’ (Genet, 1986, p. 353) And a longer quote: ‘The words also summons up the old image–Chinese, Indian, Arab, Iranian, Japanese–of a dragon swallowing the sun, which is eclipsed by the moon. In French the reflexive verb s’eclipser, literally to eclipse oneself, hovers between the usual meaning, to slip away, escape, and the figurative connotation, to disappear because of the brightness of another.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 362).
In other words, if Giorgio Agamben saw in the demonstration of the medium itself, and more precisely in the demonstration of the medium’s means of production, an ‘exhibition of mediality’ (Agamben, 1992, p. 58)—as he writes famously in Notes on Gesture and specifies in a later text by calling them ‘pure means,’ (Agamben, 2004, p. 318)—then Genet demonstrates in Un Captif amoureux an exhibition of impure means. Such impurity is not tightly held to ideological concepts, meaning that the means of production (writing, photography, film, exhibition making) are neither socialist, colonial, nor capitalist per definitionem. Impurity rather departs from the demonstrating body, and from the power of obscurity through the means of production that cannot be controlled, tamed, analysed and dissected to any absolute extent. We will see in the following how it grounds the transformation from reflexivity to complicity. In order to do so, let me continue with the archived image practice of a socialist-socialist friendship that is imbedded in an ideological intimacy, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

**Complicit Commentaries**

We are able to quite accurately indicate production conditions in re-reading the curriculum that Sturm delineated for a photo course in Aden/Yemen with ANA press agency. Under point eight, he lists

‘Chemistry of photography, the basics. Negative—positive processing, development. Negative—positive, how chemicals influence the image! Process after the development (With regard to this topic, one has to depart from the level of laboratory technique and its results of the local agency, in order to achieve most likely an improvement of the current insufficient state over the period of the course)’ (Sturm, 1983)

This departure can be deciphered, to some extent, in an image that shows a group of participants in the photo laboratory of the WAFA press agency in Beirut in 1981. It shows the production room, or more precisely, the students inspecting developed films. Each student looks carefully at the results of the chemical process. Such an image could easily line up with the strand indicating a reflexivity of the photographic practice. In Sturm’s note, moreover, we also can read an awareness of the fact that the means of production might be different to the production conditions of his work for
the East German press agency. This small detail is important for us. It shifts the reflection on the means of production to an entirely different framework, which no longer deals with a critique of existing structures, of labour conditions or how to become an actor in Brechtian sense. Instead, the reflection on the means of production ‘goes beyond digging to expose what lies beneath the surface and towards the invention of new sensibilities through which one might live out and experience them.’ (Rogoff, 2009, p. 113) This quote by Irit Rogoff reads as if describing the situation in the Middle East in the 1980s, where an East-German photographer engaged in ‘field work’ (Rogoff, 2009, p. 111) and declared it a necessity in such context to ‘depart from the level of laboratory technique and its results of the local agency.’ (Sturm, 1983) It speaks of the relevance of ‘new sensibilities’ that cannot be pre-planned, or protocolled.

Re-visiting the curriculum for a photo course from 1983 in support of the revolutionary Cause and a liberation movement, indicates a connector point linking a moment of solidarity departing from a socialist agenda with current debates, exigencies, limits as well as potentialities in relation to the field of art. The reader hopefully will not mistake such a juxtaposition for a simple cross-cut between internationalism of the Cold War period with globalisation, and an ideology of photography (linked with a Marxist agenda) with contemporary artistic practices. However, I wish to insist on a network of practices. It was at stake during the photo courses in Beirut, and it is at stake today when we as curators, theorists and artists travel from one unfamiliar region to the next. With regard to the beginning of our elaboration on the means of production, it can be argued that reflexivity does not foster and further this elaboration much besides gaining some distance to institutional protocols of Cold War politics. Which is, however, a lot.

However, if the aim of this project is to learn from the archived image practice, then analysis, distance and reflexivity are not enough. Let me expand on this through a note by Gayatri Spivak, when she elaborates on a double boundedness in education in an era of globalisation. She writes:

132 Rogoff suggests to speak of ‘field and field work’ in order to indicate a kind of split condition in relation to space that consist of, first, the actual location (in our case the Middle East) and a mind-set departing from a different location (the GDR, Europe) all entangled, whatsoever, by political agenda. See Rogoff, I. ‘Geo-Cultures,’ in: Open 2009, no. 16, The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomena, pp. 107–115.
‘Now when [my] students ask me why I am teaching the canon, I say to them it is not to excuse them, but not to accuse them either. We must see our complicity; we are in the same kind of situation in the bosom of the super-power, wanting to be good.’ (Spivak, 2012, p.116)

In other words, and with regard to the archived practice: the Cold War politics are a historical canon. It is essential to analyse it, to be aware of it and also: there is no possibility of distancing oneself from it in a purely analytical way. I have indicated in the first part of my writing, in the chapter ‘new “world order”,’ how the complex and traumatic entanglement between Nazi Germany, the conflict in the Middle East as well as the Cold War rhetoric put pressure on our project, which aims to deconstruct binary forces within these historical threads. The ‘feeling of unease’ Genet describes at the beginning of his book *Un Captif amoureux* has accompanied this project from the outset. It came along with the question: how to make public the archived image practice from a moment within the period of the Cold War? What does it do with us, and why do we re-visit these leftover-images today? I wish to consider such ‘unease’ as a potential for transforming a practice in solidarity with a Cause from a historical protocol into a contemporary framework for our field of activities. Therefore, all the inquiries into the conditions of production, the journeys to the Middle East, the conversation with Horst Sturm in Berlin, with Tariq Ibrahim in Beirut and Youssef Khotoub in Ramallah come with the promise of articulating a connector point between an archived practice, which carries ideas, limits, problems, but also potentialities and methods (that I wish to gain from the individually archived images), and concerns within a globalised world today.

If there is analysis, and there certainly is, as we can see from Genet, who carefully and thoroughly looks into the means of writing, or as we can understand from Spivak, then it always comes with a ruthless confrontation of being in *complicity* with ‘super-powers’ as Spivak describes working conditions within the era of globalisation. ‘Super-powers’ emerge from, firstly, the Cold War politics that rest within the archived practice; and secondly, within a globalised world of art that has turned the political potential of reflexivity into a spectacle, emptying out any transformative hope.
Jean Genet reports about a dream in which the soundman and cameraman revolt against Genet who has taken the seat in front of the camera, i.e., the place from which to speak, while the crew behind the camera is silenced by the binary norm (who is allowed to speak / who not). Along this line, he compares being interviewed by a journalist with being interrogated by the police. He must state, however, that by accepting the invitation, he subscribes to the normative binary, i.e., performs complicity with the norm set by the institution (BBC). Instead of analysing the norm, he response is an annoyance (with himself).

For Spivak, complicity emerges from being within a 'same kind of situation in the bosom of the super-power.' (Spivak, 2012, p. 116) Whether we call it Cold War politics, socialist imperialism, socialist internationalism, capitalism, or globalisation, we mean the kinds of systems that operate through some sort of dominant structures. To be in the same kind of situation results, by any means, in a sobering conclusion: ‘culture will not be perfect. Thus our usual radical project is not all that different.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 116) It requests from us instruments for relating to, for dealing with and—nevertheless—for making use of as Spivak continues: ‘Therefore we should learn from this. We must at least try not to get involved.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 116)

After all, instead of reflexivity within the Brechtian understanding, Genet cannot take distance at all. Instead of distance, the feeling of ‘uneasiness, close to nausea’ (Genet, 1986, p. 5) introduces and even needs the body, along with the inevitable fact that one cannot step out of these means that one perhaps aimed to analyse in order to gain distance from. This brings to mind a little anecdote that Sturm remembers from the course in Beirut: one of the participants’ results during the course did not succeed in fulfilling the criteria, i.e., Sturm did not approve of the student’s work. This student got very angry with Sturm, going so far that he had to be taken off the course. Such a tense situation points to the relevance of the body, psychic conditions, and misunderstandings that won’t win through reflexivity at all. Instead it

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133 Spivak deliberately speaks of ‘ab-use’ when she writes: ‘I used the expression “abuse” [not abuse] because of the Latin “ab” says much more than “below.”’ Indicating both “motion away” and “agency, point of origin,” “supporting,” as well as “the duties of slaves,” it nicely captures the double bind of the postcolonial and the metropolitan migrant regarding the [European] Enlightenment.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 4)
performs complicity that Rogoff suggests

‘in the ways in which inarticulacy of the phantasmatic is brought into play, a condition that cannot be made subject to rational, analytical discourse.’

(Rogoff, 2009, p. 113)

Furthermore, the archived image practice we are investigating indeed carries certain, self-reflexive weight, and it is important to re-activate this possibility from today’s perspective. Importantly, however, these ‘commentaries,’ as Brecht would perhaps have called those images exceeding the Cold War codified visual grammars, are not the opposites of the ‘official side,’ or an alternative narrative replacing the narrative of the Cold War and a neglected history that finally comes into light. We must speak of complicity within this network of practices. By transferring it from that historical moment, from an agenda of internationalisation of a socialist project on a global scale, such knowledge about complicity must be taken on. I am not speaking here, obviously, of being a silent civil servant, a party-member or a fellow-runner to the dominant voice (in politics, in art, in business). The transformation from reflexivity to complicity suggests the possibility for a critique that unfolds itself into, firstly, a texture in which we can no longer speak of an objective distance as it can be detected in Brecht’s A-effect.

And secondly, learning from such an approach to complicity teaches us a lesson, in that we share structures with the ‘super-power,’ as Spivak alluded to the forces of globalisation, even though we do not wish to share them. With regard to a globalised world of art, such super-powers appear in the form of an international biennial system, an art market, or a spectacle of reflexivity.

Therefore, again, the aim of this project lies in an interest to make use of the privately archived images considered—until this project came about—as leftovers and surplus of a photographic practice for a Cause, in order to articulate its complicity with a super-power. Countering the archived practice may teach us to relate to such power, to ‘ab-use,’ in Spivak’s word, and to learn how ‘not to get involved’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 116) neither by withdrawing from repressing nor affirming the power’s mechanisms.
CONCERNING SOLIDARITY

In order to address the issue of solidarity in more detail, let me elaborate briefly on the crushing forces that emerged through the East / West binary: in school, I became impregnated with a pedagogical serum, which aimed to implement the following phantasm within a third generation after GDR’s foundation: a superficial summary could be made out that the the creation of East Germany was based on the successful fight against fascism. It includes the claim that all followers of the Nazi dictatorship lived in the country of the class enemy (West Germany), and that the GDR liberated itself from the fascist sperm by revolutionary forces. Ines Weizman reveals the constructedness of this phantasm in relation to urban planning strategies after GDR’s foundation in East Berlin, for example. She suggests that the urban planning strategy in East Berlin followed the urban model of the Bolshevik Revolution—1917—and instituted, through spatial-architectural means, a ‘mimetic revolution. The choreography of national ceremonies, with their movement of bodies in space, functioned as a simulation of this non-existent revolution.’ (Weizman, 2009, p. 22)

The urban grid of East Berlin implements urban-architectural elements consisting, firstly, of the wide street for large-scale military or party parades; secondly, of large squares for mass gatherings and demonstrations celebrating the party; and thirdly, of certain landmarks such as a tower, visible from afar and delivering orientation during a parade. The urban grid here can be seen as an insurrectionary apparatus that aims to fix the image of the revolution, even if this revolution did not take place, as Weizman argues.134

‘A special aircraft’

How does the phantasm operate? Jacques Lacan illustrates the operational mode of 'phantasm’ through a cinematic set up. Dylan Evans summarizes Lacan’s take on the ‘phantasm’ as following:

While Lacan accepts Freud’s formulations on the importance of fantasy and on its visual quality as a scenario which stages desire, he emphasises the protective function of fantasy. ‘Lacan compares the fantasy [phantasm]

The phantasm needs the darkness of the projection room, in which the ‘frozen image’ (Evans, 1996, p. 60) is able to perform its role. It needs the projection apparatus that operates by mechanical instruction, which may be gleaned from ideological protocol, the party programme, the official doctrine and language. For example, in Sturm’s archive, there are press images reporting on the arrival of wounded Palestinians and Lebanese in East Berlin in mid-1982 for medical treatment. The images come with captions that transport moral judgment into the reading of the image, shaping the events into a frozen shot. Wordings like ‘awaiting ambulances’ indicate an ultimate readiness of medical care on the ‘airport Berlin-Schönefeld’ in socialist Germany / East Berlin. It is placed in opposition to phrases such as ‘Israeli extermination campaign’ and ‘Israeli aggression and attacks by the fascist militia’ that define the
enemy as clearly not only in opposition, but on the lethal, ‘other’ side.\textsuperscript{135} It tackles two crucial points of the Cold War rhetoric from the socialist perspective: one, ‘we’ in the East are ready to help rescue the campaign’s victims by any means, and ‘they’ (in this case Israel) aim for aggression. The second point alludes to the phantasm that ‘they’, i.e., the opposing side, operate through a fascist face, which is opposed by those protecting not only against the enemy, but also against fascism, and thus, seem to stand on the non-fascist side (fighters, socialists, victims). Historians\textsuperscript{136} have already pointed out that many liberation struggles of young African countries, as well as the conflict in the Middle East, were a playground for the Cold War—militarily, ideologically, economically and politically. These two press images offer an example of how Cold War politics have been executed through media, exhibition practice and on account of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

\textsuperscript{135} For an insight into military relations between GDR and ‘Third World’ countries see: Storkmann, K. \textit{Geheime Solidarität}, 2012.

aggression and attacks by the fascist militia. – 1982/0204/304N’ [my translation]

Let us continue with the cinematic analogy proposed by Lacan: ‘just as the
film may be stopped at a certain point in order to avoid showing a traumatic scene
which follows.’ (Evans, 1996, p. 60) Lacan sees in the ‘phantasm’ a protective
function that rescues the subject from the existential fear of being violated,
‘castrated,’ humiliated, robbed, unproductive, expelled, and dispossessed. The
protection’s organisational mechanism operates through an object that appears to be
abstract, but familiar enough for the subject to attach to. The object can be, e.g., the
figure of the citizen of a socialist state placed per definitionem onto a seat against
fascism, metaphorically speaking. This fixed position results from the protocols, party
programmes and the state-doctrine that form the apparatus. It produces an image, in
which the subject will, or even wants to, disappear, because she is anxious about
being violated. She tries to prevent herself from seeing the ‘traumatic scene which
follows.’ In order to achieve this, the subject is destined to remain in her seat in the
dark room, staring at the frozen image. The frozen image covers the subject’s interest
in contributing actively to current public debates, because she is too preoccupied with
her anxiety. The frozen image here is not a stoppage that makes us aware of the
constructed situation of the cinematic moment, but a stoppage that insists on
arresting and fixing the seemingly seamless narration of the object (the antifascist
state). For the sake of being protected from the trauma that is not allowed to occur,
the subject/the viewer subjugates itself totally to the ideological will of the projection
apparatus. If the subject did not want to disappear in the object – and this becomes
another story now – but started to question why the image got frozen, then she
would ultimately also start questioning the order of the phantasm, and consequently, the
antifascist state (object) and its state institutions (apparatus). She starts overcoming
her anxiety and begins to hear her unconscious that cries out to debate the trauma of
the Second World War and its aftermath, she realises her struggle with terms such as
‘fascism,’ the trouble with the application of terms like ‘extermination,’ and
‘fascism’—as we read in the press photo captions—to describe those who had been

137 As it can be found in Giorgio Agamben’s essay ‘Difference and Repetition: On
Guy Debord’s Films,’ in: McDounough, T., Guy Debord and the Situationist
exterminated, massacred, killed, and expelled not many decades earlier. In a totalitarian system, leaving the assigned seat puts the subject’s life in danger.

But what if the desire resides in the wish to become the director of the future film instead of sitting in front of a frozen image and being frustrated by either the broken or the ideological hegemony of the apparatus? What if one wants ‘Persistently to critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit’? I am borrowing here a sentence by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who gives voice to a desire, which wants to open up space outside of a normative structure while being absolutely implicated in it.\textsuperscript{138}

What if one looks at the metaphor of the frozen image from a different perspective, e.g., resonating in experiences from \textit{expanded cinema} that implicates the viewer, the projection setting, and the architecture, in the cinematic act?\textsuperscript{139} A different point of departure could also be that the viewer perhaps does not yet know quite how to operate, maintain and direct the means of projection apparatus. But it seems to be a matter of time and an issue of learning, either how to utilise the apparatus or invent the means needed for re-introducing movement into the image.

Borrowing the cinematic apparatus as a spatial set-up, i.e., one is tied to a seat to watch the frozen image on the screen, and so on, operates as a link in our discussion on activating a photographic practice from the 1980s that has resulted from a socialist-socialist friendship, an institutional organisation of solidarity, and Cold War dichotomies. Troubling the fixed display configurations, i.e., the ideological-political doctrine, here appears possible only through the above-formulated request for an educational process. Such a process is crucial within the process of re-thinking the space of exhibiting, and not only in terms of re-thinking the space of exhibiting. The educational process, moreover, builds the very conditions for it. They are perhaps not entirely approved yet, a bit clumsy still to walk on, fragile in usage, somewhat unstable, without proper production facilities, or without technical equipment. This might sound like a really badly equipped venue lacking, on top of it, a technician and helping hands.

However, let us assume that, at this stage of the educational process, we do not need a technically, logistically or professionally perfect infrastructure, but rather, an open space that allows us to enter a passage of learning, which we can read here as an *itinerant* dynamic. It is the beginning of the process of transforming spatial rigidity, exhibition standards, and fixed positions that we might find in art history books, curatorial manuals *how to* …, and in practical handbooks on exhibition practice. My aim here is neither to dismiss the massive work in exhibition studies, architecture and design studios, curatorial study programmes (the latter is a very general comment but made here now for the argument), and academic courses in the many places in Europe and North-America; nor should it be misunderstood as a claim that all these materials are wrong. But travelling to the Middle East taught me that these kinds of manuals, scripts, or handbooks, are simply not helpful. We will see in the next chapter how strongly such transformative process works through and with the *itinerant*. For now, let us recall that the socialist delegation system, the special aircraft transporting wounded people from the Middle East to Europe, and transnational solidarity agreements suggest modes of travelling that form connector points, firstly, with the rumbling aftermaths of institutionalised solidarity, party programmes, phantasms of socialism, and secondly, with modes of travelling that seem to highly define our contemporary lives as artists, curators, theorists within the globalised world of art. Instead of re-enacting a past’s journey, securing historical data, and remaining in the analysis of official contracts, however, the *itinerant* acknowledges the relevance of travelling while awaiting new arrivals.

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142 For example, when I started to work as an independent curator with UNESCO Office Ramallah in 2010, the Head of Culture Programmes introduced the book *Running a Museum*, edited by Patrick J. Boylan and published by ICOM, Paris, 2004 to me as the main source for a series of museum’s projects in the region funded, and ‘implemented’—as it says officially on the construction plates of these projects—by UNESCO.
**Stamp, school, committee**

In order to problematise the institutionalisation of solidarity within the socialist-socialist frame, some examples will clarify its crucial role—from outspoken to implicit—in the GDR’s foreign politics. The faces of solidarity become apparent in small details. In the mid-1950’s, for example, the people-owned East German Post started issuing postal stamps in order to raise money in solidarity with Egypt (1956), Vietnam (1973), Chile (1973), Guinea Bissau (1978), and so on. In the GDR, solidarity was state-organised. Major institutional-educational structures mirror this form of organisation. It found expression in the form of the so-called *Galerie der Freundschaft* [The Gallery of Friendship] in primary schools that ran exhibition programmes conceived by art teachers in order to educate in topics such as solidarity and international friendship. Another example is the School for Solidarity in East Berlin (founded in 1963), set up in response to the so-called ‘Afrika-Jahr’ in 1960, when the GDR government initiated institutional frameworks particularly in regard to journalism, both text and image production, primarily for students from countries that had gone through liberation struggles, either from a monarchy, such as in Ethiopia, or from colonial rule like Egypt, Tanzania, Congo, Syria, India, and so on. Only rarely were European students invited to participate in the programme.  

143 The School of Solidarity had a clear ideological agenda, affirmed in reports of the time stating that ‘lessons and lectures’ aimed to discuss ‘questions of Marxism-Leninism […] and on the German and West Berlin issue,’ in order to build a ground that ‘ensured a strong ideology for young people’s work in Africa.’ (Castillon, 2010, p. 19) Another faculty of state-regulated solidarity is the Committee of Solidarity (in its early forms since 1960) that coordinated cooperation with liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America.  

144 While the School operated foremost within the GDR, as an  


144 It started as a Komitee für die Solidarität mit den Völkern Afrikas, and expanded then by a Vietnam-Ausschuss into Afroasiatisches Solidaritätskomitee in 1964, before it also included a section for Latin America, initiated by the foundation of Chile-Zentrum in 1973.
educational instrument in order to internationalise the socialist idea, by inviting students from non-European socialist regions, the Committee seemed to be both an instance of control and of representation with regard to actors within the country.\footnote{See: ‘Our Socialist Friends: Foreigners in East Germany,’ in: Göktürk, D., Gramling, D., Kaes, D. (eds.), \textit{Germany in Transit}, Berkley, 2007, pp. 65–104.}

The Committee had a representational function, such as, for example, when the committee’s president attended the opening of the exhibition \textit{Die Standhaften} [The Steadfast] at gallery in the TV tower on Alexanderplatz, in the fall of 1982, together with the Palestinian delegation. Horst Sturm organised this exhibition of photographs from the photo courses in Beirut in 1980 and 1981, which he presented to the official delegation during the opening. The exhibition was covered by the press. One could thus say that under the umbrella of state-organised solidarity, the exhibition (in a wider sense also photographic practice) operated as a platform for strengthening political relations, the socialist-socialist friendship, and the institutionalisation of solidarity.

Engaging in this project thus brings up the question of how we (curators, artists, theorists) might be implicated in a complex political cause that goes beyond national territory, party programmes, Cold War rhetoric and inherited collective weight. By engaging with Sturm’s privately archived images, I propose to problematise a \textit{practice} instead of a party programme, an ideology, an institutional set-up, or moral criteria. Engaging in this practice will enable the activation of a ‘micro-political vision,’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 13) that cannot be separated from a macro-political protocol of the Cold War. In doing so, the aim is to follow Rolnik’s words:

\begin{quote}
‘In totalitarian regimes, as we have seen, the exercise of thought is concretely hindered, and this ultimately leads to its inhibition, threatened by fear and humiliation. In contrast, in the context of financial capitalism, the unconscious repression operation is much more refined. The goal is not to prevent such exercise, or to aim at its partial or full inhibition, but to foster it, even to celebrate it, in order to place it at the service of the purely economic interests of the regime, voiding it of the immanent disruptive force of its poetics.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 9)
\end{quote}
This part of the text will attempt to open up a hitherto barely considered area, both in relation to the GDR and to Palestine: the question of solidarity in its not so obvious faces. It will try to encounter incidences of inhibition, which can certainly be detected in a photographic practice as an enactment of solidarity. In other words, Sturm’s privately archived images, defined previously as leftovers, as surplus and commentaries of a practice, undeniably hold such ‘partial or full inhibition.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 9) This is so because they seemingly insist on rejecting any exhibitionary function—perhaps without wanting, but that we do not know. We only know that until now they simply have not made it onto the public display. Even at the very moment of their production in 1980, they had no proper function for magazine editors, agency’s directors of Associate Press, the East German or Palestinian press agency. I found one example, however, of one of these images attaining some public use. Not to the extent that it could stand alone, however: in the ADN-bulletin, we see an arrangement of photographic images resulting from photo courses in Beirut. One of the pictures shows Youssef Khotoub handing his camera to an orphan child who looks through the viewfinder.

Image 19: Detail from ADN-bulletin (1980/81) of the article ‘Beim Abschied waren wir Feunde’ [At Farewell We Had Become Friends] with a series of photographs by Horst Sturm and Youssef Khotoub. Archive Sturm/Khotoub.

The picture showing Khotoub with a child could be considered as one of the non-official photographs; we see one of the photographers plus the visible occurrence of photographic practice. The picture, however, cannot stand by itself. It is framed, countered and juxtaposed by official press coverage, i.e., a freedom fighter portrayed
from below as a hero, wounded people, an elderly woman with, likely, her granddaughter, and children in a refugee camp looking through a gate. Not just one, but four images accompany the presumably non-official image.

The substance of this one image suggests acting dysfunctionally in the literal sense, i.e., it destroys and disturbs an order, and cannot be analysed according to protocol. In addition, it is dysfunctional because it does not have the courage, stability, and power to stand for itself, but needs support, explanation, and framing as we can see in the arrangement for the press agency’s bulletin. It appears to be dependent on the official photographs, making it into a kind of a difficult picture, not easy to handle. Having said this, speaking about the social-collective side of solidarity, which attains an intimate dimension when one looks at the non-public photographs, cannot be discussed without the totalitarian regimes’ institutions (Stalinist socialism). In other words, inhibition cannot be separated from exhibition here. In contrast, turning our view towards inhibition, as an essential counterpart in this relation, clearly must result in the assumption that exhibition cannot be separated from such inhibition. Rolnik suggests we ‘foster it, even […] celebrate it.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 9)

‘I just want to say I am interested in the year 2000.’

Another spectrum of solidarity unfolds the DOK Leipzig Film Festival, which followed the slogan of ‘turning against colonial suppression, neo-colonialism and racism, standing up for anti-imperialist solidarity.’146 It must be pointed out that the DOK Film Festival in Leipzig operated as a kind of Non-Aligned ‘island’147 within the Soviet doctrine of socialism in the GDR. Particularly under the direction of Wolfgang Harkenthal (1964–72), the festival went through a fascinating period of internationalisation that oscillated between an international programme, sometimes

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147 During the first Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961, the German-German division was discussed ‘what may be called an international frontier.’ (Jawaharlal Nehru). See footnote 87.
not state-conformed and clandestinely staged, and state-regulations. Already in 1963, the French film essayist Chris Marker was a regular guest of the festival and his film *Le Joli Mai* [The Lovely Month of May] (1962) won the festival’s first prize *Golden Dove*. The Cuban filmmaker Santiago Alvarez received first prizes in 1964, 1965, 1967, 1969, in 1971 ‘only’ a *Silver Dove*, and in 1972, a special award of the international jury. Alvarez’s practice is discussed in ‘Towards a Third Cinema,’ the manifesto-like text by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino who argue for a cinematic grammar in ‘relegation of national contradictions to those between two supposedly unique blocs—the USSR and the USA.’ (Solanas/Getino, 1969)

Considering these brief examples provides enough insight, however, for understanding that the Leipzig Film Festival seemingly achieved an articulation of the ‘schizophrenic position’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50) that the East German dramatist Heiner Müller suggested to be the only possible position for processing reality through a creative practice. Embedded within state-controlled, -organised, and -supervised structures, the Leipzig Film Festival fostered conditions that came close to ‘the revolutionary opening towards a cinema outside and against the System, in a cinema of liberation: the third cinema.’ (Solanas/Getino, 1969) In contrast, this claim speaks up against the Cold War principles, and against state-organised solidarity protocols. It vehemently contradicts the party-functionaries’ definition of ‘anti-imperialist solidarity’ as formulated in the Interior Ministry Protokoll Nr. 04/77 from 1976: ‘Permanent residence may be withheld from persons who […] oppose the socialist societal order of the GDR or can be expected not to integrate into the socialistic life of the GDR’ (Gramling et al, 2007, p. 79)

With regard to another terrain of image production, namely film, the East German, people-owned, production company DEFA commissioned a series of films that would deal with the issue of solidarity, potentially within a complicating range.

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148 For example, the festival in 1967 screened Jürgen Böttcher’s critical film *Der Sekretär* [The Secretary] outside of the official programme, which invited a warning from the cultural ministry of the GDR.


During the Summer Film Institute *Cold War, Hot Media: DEFA and the Third World* at Smith College in Northhampton / Massachusetts, organized by the DEFA Film Library of Amherst University in 2011, we discussed various feature films, documentaries, and news reports focusing on the role that film played in the GDR and in its international and inter-cultural relations with countries of the so-called Third World.\(^{151}\)

Image 20: Inauguration of the Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Economics and Political Science or the Winneba Ideological Institute in Ghana, founded on ‘scientific socialism, based on Marxism-Leninism, and having as its guide Nkrumahism as its present philosophical consciousness’ as the speaker announces in the film *Schwarze Stern* [The Black Star] (1965, dir. by Joachim Hellwig, produced by DEFA, 35min).

For example, *Flammendes Algerien* [Algeria in Flames] (1958, dir. by Willi Müller), which was shot by French communist-filmmaker René Vautier, is one of the rare films that portray the struggle from within the battlefield;\(^{152}\) *Messe in Damaskus*


\(^{152}\) Thanks to Yasmina Dekkar for providing this information.
[Trade Fair in Damascus] (1958, dir. by Wolfgang Landvogt) stresses the economic relations between socialist countries, such as the GDR, as well as the Soviet Union, with the short-lived United Arab Republic, i.e., Syria and Egypt; *Indien – DDR, in fester Freundschaft verbunden* [India – GDR, Bound by Friendship] (1972, dir. by Joachim Hadaschik) features an exhibition by the Indian photographer Raghu Rai in the GDR; and *Der Schwarze Stern* [The Black Star] (1965, dir. by Joachim Hellwig) follows the constitution of educational systems in Ghana after independence, based on ‘scientific socialism’ as one speaker declares during the film. The process was supported by teachers from the GDR, who taught political economy (Karl Marx, Petr Nikitin). These are just a few examples mirroring the importance of film production in the GDR as an instrument of the declaration of solidarity. Through documentary and feature films, the powerful medium transmitted images of identification and solidarity with these countries, and created images of enemies.¹⁵³

In an intermediate summary, it can be said that the concept of solidarity was highly instrumentalised and ideologised within institutional structures such as the School of Solidarity and the Committee of Solidarity, while at the same time, the environment of film, seems to have provided a more nuanced and less institutionalised weight. ‘Showing solidarity,’ as the East German filmmaker Iris Gusner put it, ‘had become a bureaucratic act; the monthly “solidarity contribution,” which was automatically deducted from your wages, fulfilled your obligation without your having to think about the meaning of it.’¹⁵⁴ Gusner was one of only five female film directors employed by the DEFA Studio for Feature films. She studied at the film school in Moscow throughout the 1960’s, and came to DEFA in 1970. Her first feature film *Die Taube auf dem Dach* [The Dove on the Roof] (1973) was, however, censored by the Studio direction. The plot’s location is a construction site of a Plattenbau-Siedlung [settlement of prefabricated concrete slabs], managed by a


¹⁵⁴ Interview with Ralf Schenk, press material of the DVD-release *Die Taube auf dem Dach* (The Dove on the Roof) by Iris Gusner, production by DEFA Foundation.
female engineer,\(^{155}\) who has a relationship with a young student and with a party functionary. However, it was not the triangulated love-constellation that was the reason for censorship, but rather Gusner’s portrait of a work ethic that did not conform entirely to the essentialist figure of the heroic worker.

Gusner recalls the reasons for censorship by relating them, firstly, to her depiction of the work ethic of the young student who spends more time fantasising about travelling to outer space than finishing his work; and secondly, to that of a party functionary, who attempts to embody the picture of the heroic worker but fails—personally and professionally.\(^{156}\)

A further aspect makes Gusner’s work important for our consideration. It relates to the fact that this film and *Wäre die Erde nicht rund* [Were the Earth Not Round] (1981) complicate the protocols of officially celebrated solidarity relations,

\(^{155}\) It resembles the unfinished novel *Franziska Linkerhand* by Brigitte Reimann, published in the GDR in 1974.

which did not reckon with the possibility of love, desire, longing, and inner conflicts, or the feeling of loss, loneliness, displacement, and mourning. In both films, the partnering regions are the Middle East, which ‘appear to be the only two DEFA films containing Middle East topics.’ (Heiduschke, 2011)

Let us see how the film complicates official concepts of solidarity. They deliberately enter the film in an early scene showing the construction site coordination office with a poster of Angela Davis on the back wall; it provides the setting for a scene in which the young student complains about the boredom of work on the construction site. He asks for work that involves at least ‘a digger, or a crane,’ and wraps up his grumble by saying: ‘I just want to say I am interested in the year 2000.’ A further scene takes us into the dormitory room he shares with the Lebanese-Palestinian Kerim; the walls hold a poster with ‘Palestine’ written on it and photographic images of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon; one of the latter will be portrayed in a close-up, in a long take, as if the image were another character in the scene. Kerim will try to tell Daniel about the situation, living conditions and despair in the place he comes from, but Daniel is busy hanging a galaxy map right next to the image from the refugee camp. In another scene, Kerim talks in Arabic without expecting a response, understanding or unity in language. He rather talks for himself, speaks aloud his native language he has not heard for a while in this foreign place. This scene transports a sense of loneliness in the foreign country and discontinuity within the social structures around him. It certainly also disturbs the official language that comes with photographs documenting, for example, young Palestinians in the GDR, as in press photographs by Horst Sturm.

The non-comprehensibility and distance between the Arabic and German language, as we see it in Die Taube auf dem Dach, can be read as a signifier that indicates differences in culture, the work of thought, labour conditions, and ideas about sociability. Let us remember that both Angela Davis and Yasser Arafat were the officially declared super stars during the World Festival of Youth in East Berlin in the Summer of 1973; they both appeared on the ‘tribune of honour’ next to Erich Honecker [General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR from 1971 to 1989], and the Soviet female cosmonaut Valentina Terechkova. Such politically meaningful positions appear rather deformed in Gusner’s film, i.e., as wall decoration and as a rather unhappy worker from Beirut, who, officially, ought to be happy, but seems to be disconnected, despite being in a country that has written the word
solidarity on banners in schools, factories, parades, meetings, a country that takes solidarity as a paradigm for a film festival, and the activities of the photo section of a news agency.

Image 22: Press photo by Horst Sturm taken near Berlin shortly after his second journey to Beirut. The communiqué on the back says: ‘For subscribers of the ADN-reportage-service! On the contribution: They ask where they home is / With Palestinian children and their temporary father Manfred Brack. ADN-ZB-Sturm / 25.8.1981 / ha. They made friends quickly: Palestinian children and the children of workers of the VEB [people-owned factories] Kohlehandel Magdeburg in the holiday camp “Glück auf” [Good Luck] at Großer Zechliner See [Large Zechlin Lake]. Here, at a shared walk. Walid (front, left) and Thomas (right) learn each other’s language, Arabic and German, by pointing to an object and speaking out the proper word.’ Archive Sturm.

**Solidarity of borders**

The above elaboration has shown us the limits and problems of solidarity as state-formatted agenda, enacted through a range of institutional structures in the GDR. It must then be also linked to educational ambitions in activities like the photo courses in Beirut and Tunis during the 1980s, since these photo courses took place under the observation of control-systems, even monitored by representatives of the state. But examples like the International Film Festival in Leipzig, indicate that state-organised structures allow a public recognition of filmmakers such as Santiago Alvarez as a major protagonist of Third Cinema in Latin America and embrace regular presence of figures like the French film essayist Chris Marker. ‘Public recognition’ is linked here

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157 Throughout Sturm’s presence in Beirut and Tunis, a GDR state-representative followed the progress of the training. He appears in a series of the privately archived images, e.g., during the final presentation at the WAFA, during seemingly informal meetings between Sturm and WAFA colleagues at the Palestinian agency.
with infrastructures—we may well call it an institutional set-up—consisting of secured funds, research positions, creative minds, managing skills, and diplomatic aptitudes with regard to public relations that must manage between the controlling apparatus (state) and rather non-aligned or critical voices (e.g., Jürgen Böttcher’s critical film Der Sekretär [The Secretary] screened in the Festival in 1967 caused serious trouble with the authorities). All of these multiple capacities are what we (curators working independently in the world of art today) depend on, because it is impossible to re-establish and self-organise anew for each project. They are also all that one needs to make a network of a practice public.

The social-collective dimension of the courses that can be found in the archived images may exceed state control (GDR), but the GDR’s foundation and inscription into Soviet, Stalinist type of socialism, cannot be cut-off from this training in photography. Do such entangled forces between state-structures and collective intimacy of a practice produce a particular potential that enabled films like Die Taube auf dem Dach (1973/2010) by Iris Gusner? Gusner’s film had to wait almost 30 years to appear in public. At the time of production, the ideology of the state-socialism prohibited the public release of Gusner’s film, as it placed the issue of labour in the centre of solidarity programmes. Moreover, we could speculate that the privately archived images would have, at their time, had problems passing the official criteria defining what the Palestinian liberation movement looks like, as we could see from the reports about the arrival of the Palestinian wounded at the Berlin-Schönefeld airport. However, I want to argue that this potential is not gone. Viewed today, Gusner’s film discusses migration politics on the account of labour within socialist production, so often commonly assumed to be an alternative to neo-liberal and precarious labour conditions. Regarding the informal side of the image practice in solidarity with a Cause, the re-emergence of the collective informality during the

158 It brings to my mind Adrian Piper’s text ‘Wearing Three Hats’ (1996) that she originally presented at the Third Annual Tillie K. Lubin Symposium, Who Is She? Conversations with Multi-Talented Women (with Mary Catherine Bateson, Perri Klass, Kristin Linklater, and Sherry Turkle) at Brandeis University / Rose Art Museum Multi-Disciplinary on March 17, 1996. See http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/WebsiteNGBK3Hats.pdf (accessed June 23, 2013) Furthermore, the Adrian Piper Research Foundation issued a Fellowship for the very reason that artists in particular work within and through several skills at the same time http://www.adrianpiper.de/foundation/video.shtml (accessed, June 23, 2013)
photo courses shifts our perspective away from solidarity within the Cold War protocols and towards solidarity in practice. In other words, such potency may have been erased from public discussions the moment the socialist project disappeared from the political map, but it still exists as much as the photographic images enable a mode of travelling along names, dates, details and locations. Not only is it, therefore necessary to view the archived images as a network of practices, this network today offers a contemporaneity. Furthermore, the individually archived images invite us to enter a passage, the destination of which is rather easy to locate with regard to places, locations, and names, but not with regard to that which Gayatri Spivak called ‘the solidarity of borders.’¹⁵⁹ (Spivak, 2003, p. 15) In alliance with the above-formulated proposal that announces a wish to realise a future film, so-to-speak, the social-collective moments are essential, not only because they contradict a ruling protocol, but because these moments speak of a ‘fragility of collectivity [that] enters a discussion of the originary curvature that is the law of the social as such. (Spivak, 2003, p. 28f.) Re-visiting these archived practices, i.e., undertaking journeys, informal meetings and conversations as I did through our project, invokes fragility in such collective-social compositions, so vehemently that they broke apart after the actual encounter seemed to be over, and only survived in private homes, i.e., in an archived image practice that rests outside press agency archives, the national archive.¹⁶⁰

Now, if in the beginning we asked what we can learn from the archived image practice, this time it is possible, through a lens trained on solidarity to re-connect with a network of practices: an educational ground that cannot be entirely governed by controlling forces, but it may easily cross borders within institutional constraints as a ‘permanent from-below interruption.’ (Spivak, 2003, p. 16) In such troubling and contradicting forces, the itinerant provokes and releases the photographic practice

¹⁵⁹ Spivak suggests such ‘solidarity of borders’ with regard to trans-disciplinarity, which arrived in Academia of the global North basically through the inauguration of Cultural Studies as a forum that fostered postcolonial thinking, a critique of globalisation, and the insistency on cultural differences. However, instead of mapping, classifying and categorising all the differences risking being led into a new territorial formation, she introduces a formation of borders that relate to each other in solidarity. See Spivak, G. Death of a Discipline, 2003, p. 13–16 in particular.

¹⁶⁰ After the annulment of the existence of the GDR in 1990, all the East-German press agency press photographs were transferred to the Bundesarchiv [national archive], and the DPA (German Press Agency).
from a socialist phantasm and (re-)links it with a network of practices. But in order to do so, this network of practices needs to unfold itself; solidarity needs to spread over those areas that seem to have no impact on the scale of the Cold War rhetoric, but that cannot be cut-off entirely from its institutional apparatus in the fragility of social-collective texture. Such ambivalence, and even agony (the possibility of re-staging such collective composition ‘died’ with the annulment of the GDR in 1990), is precisely the echo that we can take on today, and the one into which I wish to place the sensibilities of the itinerant.
In November 2011 at WAFA headquarter in Ramallah, Palestinian photojournalist Youssef Khotoub comments on a range of photographs that he took during the early 1980s, and which were meant to be published in magazines, bulletins, as well as exhibited. Khotoub worked with the East German photographer Horst Sturm in Sturm’s photo courses in Beirut, June 2 to July 2, 1980. Beirut, October 12 to November 20, 1981. Aden (Yemen), October 10 to November 15, 1983. Tunis, March 22 to April 19, 1986. That means that his photographic production for public purposes in the early 1980s was probably influenced by Sturm’s courses. Khotoub’s practice can thus arguably be discussed within a Marxist aesthetics of photography, which can be found in literature adhering to the official GDR party line. Let me indicate three attributes of this aesthetics: the first being that photography was a declared instrument for taking a political position that reads, with a judgmental weight, as ‘parteiliche Fotografie ist zugleich die wirklich freie Fotografie.’ It needs to be pointed out that, by that point in time, theorists, filmmakers, and photographers have been problematising ideological implications of the photographic medium for roughly a hundred years already. The second being that photography deliberately operated as ‘ästhetische Erziehung des ganzen Volkes’ that can be understood as a distinctive statement against bourgeois traditions in art and culture; it is mirrored, for example, in the public recognition and proliferation of the genre

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161 Dates from reports and curriculum proposals, archive Horst Sturm, unpublished documents.
162 ‘parteilich’ can be translated as ‘biased’ but this translation misses the political undertone, which resonates from the linguistic root ‘party’ that must be linked to the doctrine of the one-party-state in the GDR. The quote, therefore, translates: ‘partei-biased photography is the only free photography’ In: Beiler, B., 1977, p. 14.
163 At the same time, it needs to be said, in fairness, that the author Berthold Beiler refers to the history of photography by listing David Octavius Hill, August Sander, and Dorothea Lange among others. Goethe and Schiller appear together with Lenin and Marx. The West-German photo-theorist Karl Pawek is cited as a major source. The publisher of the book is the West-German DKP-near publisher kürbiskern und tendenzen.
164 ‘aesthetic education of the entire people’ In: Beiler, B., Weltanschauung der Fotografie [ideology of photography], 1977, p. 15.
Arbeiterfotografie [worker photography], which had its own magazine in the GDR (that still exists). And the third, but not least, photographic production clearly aimed to depict the world as real as possible; the photographer is only the ‘Steuermann eines physikalisch-chemischen Prozesses’ legitimising the claim for image as evidence of truth. In addition, however, the photograph was not supposed to be a result of everyday banality, or the random, but a most distinctive decision made in order to execute its above-mentioned political function.

**Null-images**

Such definitions contradict with the privately archived photographs taken during the photo courses, on which we see street scenes, gatherings, informal dinners, and chilling out. These photographs would be considered as ‘Nullbilder’ [null-images] and not worthy of existence. However, as elaborated in the previous chapter, the photographic practice of the fedayeen is shaped deeply by collective-social moments, informality and psycho-affective implications. Such characteristics stand in contradiction with the official press coverage, in particular during the early 1980s, that departed from elsewhere, which was located on the streets of Beirut, in camps and the countryside of southern Lebanon, in the streets of Chatila, or that takes place elsewhere when children play in Sabra, and local families in Tunis welcome the guest from East Germany. Not the privately archived images, but the official ones—from elsewhere—arrived to magazines, books, newspapers, and exhibitions here, which is in France, in Berlin, Potsdam, Nicaragua, and Holland in the early 1980s, and

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165 The term contains a double gesture, because Arbeiterfotografie can be translated, on one hand, as practice that exclusively places the worker-figure in the centre, and the other hand, as a workers’ practice. Or ‘Vom Arbeiterfotograffen zum fotografierenden Arbeiter’ [From the photographer of worker to the photographing worker] In: Beiler, B., Weltanschauung der Fotografie [ideology of photography], 1977, pp. 83–87.

166 ‘the steersman of a physical-chemical process’ In: Beiler, B., Weltanschauung der Fotografie [ideology of photography], 1977, p. 29.


169 Exhibitions with photographs opened in Managua/Nicaragua as well as in Potsdam in January 1982, and at the gallery of the TV-tower in East Berlin in November 1982. See also P.L.O. Information Bulletin, Vol 8. No. 2, January 1982,
potentially any other time. The aim of this research strand is to arrive at a configuration between the photographer, the photographed and the spectator, which is other than a disciplinary order in which the photographed might occur as a voice that is conducted, ‘steered,’ and classified by a superior power (photographer’s apparatus).

I want to follow the wish to come closer to a contract that places all partners—including the photographed as well as the conditions of production—at a negotiating table through the act of making this practice public today. The latter intention is borrowed from Ariella Azoulay’s approach to photography that links a photo’s making with its public displays. In doing so, we can speak of a network of actors as a practice that links its various formulations, in particular taking a photograph with making it public. It opens up a space that can no longer be considered in an image’s two-dimensional formation. Instead, it is a space in which Azoulay sees the possibility for the emergence of citizenship, which operates independently from nationalities, from the sovereign’s rule, and from institutional regulations. Instead, it unfolds a non-hierarchical web of relations between the participating partners (photographer, photographed, spectator). This photographic encounter constitutes a ‘civil political space.’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 12) Through the following process, in which I will focus on economic conflicts within the fedayeen as much as the East German’s photographic practice, I would like to activate a paradox that seems to me essential for engaging with a practice that departs from a socialist project and arrives in capitalist logics. While Azoulay in her profound elaborations proposes a political ontology of photography, I wish to highlight an economic strand here that is taken on by the itinerant as a curatorial intervention, and which will contribute to the larger project at hand. In other words, the itinerant’s economic life resides within a ‘schizophrenic position’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50), a condition that is ‘paradoxically of discipline and freedom,’ (Sekula, 1981, p. 15), it comes with a ‘dualism [that] haunts photography’ (Sekula, 1981, p. 450); it can be considered with regard to today’s


Azoulay, A. The Civil Contract of Photography, 2008
global economics as an ‘overheated factory.’ (Deleuze/Guattari, 1972/2009, p. 53) with an appropriation of life both ‘as its object and as its functional model’ (Muhle, 2012), and by inhabiting the ‘double-bind at the heart of democracy’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 4) In other words, I locate the itinerant’s economic face in between the tension of contradicting forces that are deeply and mutually entangled.

‘*He thought it was a gun*’

Having just introduced these entangled forces, let us take a closer look at the archive’s ‘official’ thread that emanates a Marxist ‘ideology of photography’ (Beiler, 1977) in the form of a repetitive motif: the image of a lonely, crying kindergarten-aged child standing within a bombed environment. It can be called an ‘environmental image’ because the child is always portrayed as a character embedded within an environment of destruction, violence and war. It does not take up the language of a classical portrait format that would attempt to capture the personality or the features and sociability of the human face. The child always appears as a half portrait, the body placed within a surrounding space and facial features blurred. Plenty of these fill Khotoub’s photo albums that take up an entire row in a cabinet. Their large number appears as a visual scheme in Khotoub’s practice. Considering the fact that he has been working as a photographer for the Palestinian press agency WAFA from the late 1970s'/early 1980s until today, it can be discussed whether this motif indicates a stereotypical image of the Palestinian struggle, which stands in relation to the educational side of socialist solidarity, distributed in public. In other words, the albums’ photographs confront us with the obverse of the same practice that had been highlighted in the previous chapter under the umbrella of social-collective implications, the potential of informality, and a socialist network among photographers in solidarity. Let us look at some of the official photographs that remained important for Youssef Khotoub.

The first example consists of a series of four images: it shows a three-year old child in half-portrait leaning against a tree. The first image shows a child looking straight into the eye of Youssef’s camera; looking curiously, wondering, but also anxiously; the second shot of the same scene shows the child crying—a few seconds might have passed between the first and the second image, but it is the same scene, something has happened that made the child’s expression change from observing to crying; the third one is a further shot of the crying child, but this time the
photographer minimised the distance noticeably in order to get a close-up of the crying child who now has closed eyes; and the fourth one pictures a crying and screaming child, mouth wide open. Khotoub comments on this series of pictures by saying:

Image 23: Palestinian photographer Youssef Khotoub, who attended Sturm’s photo courses in Beirut and Tunis since and throughout the early 1980’s, at his desk, pointing to four photographs in a row of the same film, in the WAFA-office in Ramallah in 2011. Archive WAFA/Khotoub. Photo: Armin Linke, 2011.

‘He is from Tal al Zaatar. Look at him first how he was. And when I put the camera on him or capture him he thought that it was a gun so he was crying. This is the third one. He was so afraid of the camera itself how it is and his mother came out and she was shouting what I was doing with that kid.’¹⁷²

Khotoub’s comments on the series of four pictures stress his awareness of the camera’s ability to appear as a threat/menace, a device producing fear of punishment, and a power-defining device. This resonates remarkably with Susan Sontag’s thoughts on photography as a violating machine that turns the photographed into an object due to the photo camera’s ability to cut out a ‘neat slice of time, not a flow’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 17), and this neatness produces ‘a series of unrelated, freestanding particles

¹⁷² Translated during the interview by Sandi Hilal, November 2011.
[...] which denies interconnectedness, continuity’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 23). Such intervention cuts as keen as a razor into the movement of everyday banality, even in a situation of war, whose vehemence arrives in the child’s eye—literally—as a possible act of violence. Sontag writes: ‘To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them that they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 14) It turns the subjectivity of the photographed into an object that operates as an ‘icon’ through repetition, the figure’s passivity, the image’s capacity to capture the spectator’s gaze, the boy’s namelessness, and the stoppage of narration, as Laura Mulvey argues. The boy now appears as a singled-out piece, to be more easily consumed by a ‘possessive spectator’ (Mulvey, 2006) who enacts violence by taking possession over the boy’s actual story. Violence in the form of superior power thus progresses from the photographer’s to the spectator’s position, as much as power reproduces itself when it operates along a ranking order, in the tension between subordinated voices and superior control within institutional structures. Let us now complicate somewhat the economics of the image, i.e., the production of the image, along its educational frame within a socialist project.

Sontag draws her camera/gun analogy from the fact that the technology of photography has become a mass medium in terms of its practical application. She expands the spectrum of critique from consumption of images to, importantly, the increase in their production due to existence of consumer-friendly photographic devices, camera’s pocket-formats, industrialised production of cameras, and affordable materials. Sontag holds that the clear-cut between production and consumption ceased to exist with the industrialisation of photography. Under such technological conditions, she argues, photographing turns a situation into an event without interfering with the as-found moment, though on a paradoxical ground. In relation to Khotoub’s four photographs, we may understand this paradox thus: it operates through the irrefutably violating action that is to invade the boy’s life in the refugee camp and ‘to ignore whatever is going on.’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 11). But the boy starts crying. Something definitely interfered with the found situation, and Khotoub also gives us the reason: namely, the simple fact that he pointed his camera to the

boy’s face changed the found situation. With Khotoub’s comment we only know that the boy does not cry for another reason. The photographic act invaded quite noticeably and violently to an affective extent. What did Khotoub do after he took the photos? Did he try to appease the child and his mother? We do not know. At the same time, the actual photographic act does not change anything in the boy’s life under occupation. Photographing him is ‘an act of non-intervention.’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 11)

In the 2011 meeting, Khotoub showed us albums containing photographs and photographs of lonely children in destroyed environments, in a zone of war, and under daily violent attacks. Sontag’s perspective puts pressure on this practice as a violating force against the people. From her perspective, Khotoub’s practice, then, would be similar to that of the Frenchman Bruno Barbey, or of any press journalist from the outside, i.e., a ‘tourist of a revolution’ (Enzensberger, 1982, p. 159) as described in the previous chapter. Allan Sekula called such representational use of photography an ‘instrumental realism,’ (Sekula, 1981, p. 16) which aims to deliver a social diagnosis, and isolate a human figure in such a way that it becomes recognisable as the ‘other,’ and thus, to systemically separate between the partners in the photographic act (photographer, photographed, spectator). It uncannily echoes Sontag’s definition of non-intervention, when she concludes that ‘To take a picture is to have an interest in things as they are, in the status quo remaining unchanged […] including, when that is the interest, another person’s pain or misfortune.’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 12) We can be sure that the latter was certainly not Khotoub’s interest. We can also surely assume that not a single Palestinian wishes to prolong the life under occupation. However, we see here an economic paradox that Sontag has not considered, as she can, obviously, only read photography in alliance with capitalist economics. She suggests that the practice of photography, in 1973—one ought to add, is entirely and inseparably bound to capitalist social relations. Returning to the educational encounter with Sturm in Khotoub’s practice demands to question whether Sturm’s photo courses also problematised the fact that Khotoub’s photographs would potentially be distributed, exhibited and consumed in ‘industrial societies [that] turn their citizens into image-junkies.’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 24) Did the group of photographers discuss the type of industrialisation or the economic system in Nicaragua, Berlin, Potsdam, Holland, or Bagdad as part of their practice? My questions must remain rhetorical here. They are not answerable because the process of distribution is not finished yet, and these considerations, in particular with the project at hand—a curatorial intervention into an
archived photographic practice within the globalised world of art—seem to re-appear with greater vehemence. This set of question can only problematise the economic tension between a socialist moment of production that importantly also includes education, as well as a capitalist environment of presentation / exhibition / public appearance. This tension makes it necessary to re-consider the terms and conditions of presentation, i.e., the space of exhibiting in contemporary art. This tension makes it necessary to propose an arena in which the socialist moment and the capitalist environment may trouble one another, without denying each other’s existence. From a curatorial point of view, for one wishing to work through Khotoub’s practice (which I consider here to stand for the socialist-socialist friendship, informality, social-collectivity), it is crucial to encounter this tension, to give it a name, to take it on, to process it and make it public as a potential: this is what I want to call the itinerant.

‘He refused to sell’
Susan Sontag’s ‘image-junkies’ indicate a state of addiction. All means are justified in maintaining the level of intoxication. This resonates with Godard’s proposal from the time when the excess of images on television, already perceived by Godard as such during the televised transmission of the Vietnam War, concealed the single image’s public appearance: one does not see anything anymore. Too many images blind the gaze. Godard, therefore, suggests a withdrawal from images, at least for a moment, just like a detoxification process, in order to ‘build quality in the image’ (Godard, 1970) again. It is of value here that he discusses detoxing strategies on a tour, in New York, in early 1970, when he introduces to students—with Jean-Pierre Gorin—a planned journey to Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan in order to make a film there. We return to Godard’s project several times throughout this research, starting with as Jusque à la Victoire in 1970 to get to Ici et Ailleurs a few years later. At this place it indicates a sincere conflict that, consequently, departs from the image’s capacity to travel. It tangles up, therefore, with our fathoming of the itinerant, which will help to open up the tension between the picture-taking event, potentially embedded in a socialist setting (solidarity project) and the public display in a magazine, an art space,

174 Godard proposes a twofold-strategy: ‘complexity from a sound-point of view’ and ‘simplicity from an image-point of view’—‘for a few years.’ See Thanhauser, R., Godard in America, 1970, here min. 6:07.
exhibition venue, a book, and the Internet, that is embedded in capitalist economics. Both Godard and Sontag argue from a position well informed by a critique of the ideological apparatus of culture industry, commodification of desires, and a world in which ‘photographs became part of the general furniture of the environment.’

(Sontag, 1977, p. 21) Image production has become muzak, i.e., a functional sound that imposes concepts of race, sexuality, and class. From today’s perspective, such argument’s point of departure sounds like a superfluous given, and I will provide a more contemporary perspective in a moment. Let us sojourn in the early 1970s in order to sketch an acoustic body for a discussion on the economic conflict that emerges in transit from a photographic practice, close to a socialist project, to a public appearance today, operating through capitalist mechanisms (that have already operated thus in places, e.g., Holland or France in the 1970s or 1980s). At the time of Sontag’s essay in 1973, the transformation of photographic practice from a studio-based technology into mass culture had yet to be theorised. Sontag lists Chris Marker, Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni, Michael Powell, among other contemporaries (and major references today), as those who practically problematise the shift from consumption to production of images along capitalist economics. Both Godard’s and Sontag’s place of argumentation is a critical analysis of photography that cannot be thought outside of a capitalist paradigm.

However and in contrast, for Palestinian photographers like Khotoub and Tariq Ibrahim (another student-colleague of Sturm’s during the photo courses), who have just refined their capacities to continue armed struggle by other means, this place of critique does not make sense. The aim of their liberation struggle was not a critical analysis of the capitalist system, but the liberation struggle from the Zionist project. The industrialisation of photography that has resulted in easily portable and manageable photo technology also enabled Khotoub to work as a photographer on the streets, in the refugee camp in Tal al Zaatar; it allowed the militant leader Abu Jihad175 to carry a ‘Canon F1 that he brought me from Abu Dabi in 1981. It was expensive […] Yes, it was from Abu Jihad. He used to give many cameras as gifts.’ (Ibrahim, 2011); it allowed Sturm to transport photo material when he travelled to the region for the photo courses and to teach the set-up of an ad-hoc laboratory on the

175 Abu Jihad is the nom de guerre of Khalil Al-Wazir who was assassinated by the Israeli army special forces in his flat in Tunis in 1988.
battlefield. Ibrahim finds clear words to describe their position: ‘We didn’t need their [bourgeois Europeans, as he calls him earlier] experience. We had already built ours!’ In other words, the fedayeen neither waited for a ‘tourist of revolution’ nor did they need an introduction into the capitalist logic of image distribution, nor a course in Godard’s detox strategies as mentioned above, nor to be taught in another photographic language. Instead, Ibrahim stresses: ‘We had already built ours!’ It resonates in the fact that the photo section of WAFA existed even already before the Palestinian Film Unit, founded in 1970, and—as the co-founder of the Film Unit, Mustafa Abu Ali, pointed out in an interview in 2006—followed an agenda for independence in image production: , ’We were aware of the importance of finding our own cinematic language, which can be summarized as: “the people’s cinema is for the people”’ 177 as Abu Ali remembers in a TV interview in 2006. In focussing on the people, we can see an alliance with photography’s educational assignment, formulated similarly in the GDR, as elaborated at the beginning of this text. In continuation of the economic terms, let us assume that during the 1980s when the GDR implemented the solidarity project through official institutions of the Real-existing Socialism, photographic practice also operated through such framework. It found a partnering voice—politically spoken—in the agenda of the P.L.O. In order to understand it in practice, let us look at another image from Khotoub’s archive, which—at the same time—contributed to the official press pool on the Palestinian side. This further, striking photograph, of a visual scheme similar to the series of four just described—a lonely child in a bombed environment—will indicate an economic conflict within photographic practice itself: once more an environmental shot showing, again, a crying and screaming child behind whose back we see a large cloud of smoke, probably emanating from an explosion. This is another relevant image in Khotoub’s album of which he says ‘that there is a picture of 1982 war that is very significant … it’s actually on the computer now.’ And he continues by saying ‘that he suffered a lot just to take that picture.’ 178

176 This information cannot be found in the report, but it was repeated during informal conversation between Sturm and the author several times.
177 In: Off Frame, art project by Mohanad Yaqubi and Reem Shilleh, 2009 and ongoing.
178 All quotes taken from a video-recorded meeting with Youssef Khotoub at WAFA headquarter in Ramallah in November 2011.
Khotoub’s following comment is telling in regard to the economic conflict that emerges through ‘the traffic in photographs’ (Sekula, 1981); it also speaks about a troubling misunderstanding of the image’s function, its economic role, and its resistance to being automatically turned into a commodity.

Image 24: Palestinian photographer Youssef Khotoub, who attended Sturm’s photo courses in Beirut and Tunis since and throughout the early 1980’s comments on a photograph from 1982 on his computer in the WAFA office in Ramallah in 2011. The photo was taken in 1982 during the bombardment of Al-Damoor/Lebanon. Archive WAFA/Khotoub. Photo: Armin Linke, 2011.

‘He said something about something that happened to him in 1982 war, he was staying in Damoor. It’s a place that was full of bombardment at that time. He just got out of there and took a lot of pictures of bloodied bodies and the destruction there. He said a French cameraman and photographer met him at that time and offered to buy his work…his film and pictures…. he refused to do so… he said I usually… you’re the only one that won't sell his pictures…usually he would buy them for one hundred dollars… hundred dollars at that time. He offered him three hundred dollars for the pictures of Al-Damoor and he refused to sell him and he called him a stupid man for not selling.’ (Khotoub, 2011)

This comment links to the above line on cinema, which can be easily adopted for photography: people’s photography is for the people, i.e. people’s photography is not
for the foreign journalist, neither for selling and making money, nor for accepting the role of the fool. It needs to be pointed out that Khotoub and other photographers working for the Palestinian press agency WAFA did not get much of a salary, but as Khotoub explains in an interview:

‘From 1968 to 1972, they worked without a salary. They lived in camps.\(^{179}\) The P.L.O. Fateh was responsible for the food and water and you know, living and tents. Even the payment in Lebanon was really low. Even though it was really low, we were very happy because at least we were able to live. We were happy even if we did not take a salary, because we worked for Palestine, our homeland, and not for ourselves. People who used to have money, they brought money and gave to people with no money. People who had food, they brought food for people with no food. We never thought that we were employees. We felt that we are fighters for freedom. All of us were brothers.’ (Khotoub, 2011)

Sontag’s and Godard’s analytical instruments are limited here, and slightly inappropriate with regard to the simple refusal or non-alignment with a capitalist logic. A critical point in my analysis might be that both Sontag and Godard deliberately argue through a politically agitational leftist attitude within structures of capitalism. That means that their thoughts emerge from an everyday confrontation with Hollywood-industry, commercial advertisement and culture industry; they argue through the experience of May ’68 in Paris, Vietnam War, the shootings of four students at Kent State University by the National Guard of the U.S. in 1970; they follow intellectual desires to subvert long-term established bourgeois traditions through reiterated critique on the interlacement of money and images. However, Godard’s thoughts, in particular, provide a valuable comparison, since in 1970 he travelled—invited by the P.L.O., i.e., as did Horst Sturm ten years later—to Palestinian refugee camps to make a film in support of the liberation struggle. It helps us to stretch the tensions within the economic conditions of this practice that operates through ‘image-junkies’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 24) and ‘proletarians of creation’

\(^{179}\) The usage of the third person in plural, ‘they,’ remains from Sandi Hilal’s translation of Youssef Khotoub’s words.
(Edelman, 1973/1979, p. 45) as Allan Sekula brings to mind when he addresses the seriousness of a practice as a ‘sensible means of local promotion.’ (Sekula, 1987, p. 443) The photographic practice of the fedayeen aimed to place the Palestinian question on international platform, and into public visibility. In comparison to the early 1970s, when Godard travelled there, the P.L.O. had to trust a distribution system of a group of passionate self-declared militants, already known as seminal western filmmakers. Now, with an East German photographer, who came as a state-delegate, and thus brought with him an institutional set-up for refining, internationalising, and perhaps also re-activating the Palestinian information system, the production of images appeared to be more important than the reflection of its twofold economics: socialist in production and capitalist in presentation. We find an awareness of this economic schizophrenia in the thoughts of dramatist Heiner Müller, as already cited, when he declares: ‘I like to stand with one leg on each side of the wall. Maybe this is a schizophrenic position, but none other seems to me real.’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50)

Such double-folded relation becomes apparent in another GDR photographer’s practice: Reinhard Mende (who also happens to be my father) worked as a freelance photographer in the GDR. He was commissioned primarily by AKA ELECTRIC Warenzeichenverband der DDR to produce reportage-pictures of workers in people-owned factories in the GDR fabricating household products specifically for international trade. These pictures, aimed to depict labour conditions of socialist production as an image, were exhibited together with the products at the International Trade Fair in Leipzig in the GDR, in order to promote socialist production to an international public. I highlight here the interlacement of the consumer goods’ production and presentation as a unique display strategy, which cannot be found in any concepts of advertisement companies in capitalist countries.¹⁸⁰ This display strategy was used from the late 1960s until the very early 1980s.

Delegations from West-Germany, France and Belgium, i.e., countries from so-called Nicht-Sozialistische Wirtschaftsgebiete [non-socialist economic areas] were preferred trade partners for selling goods made in the GDR, since they brought hard currency to the socialist state, needed in order to be part of international trade circuits.

¹⁸⁰ See Ein Tag im Leben der Endverbraucher [A Day in the Life of the End-Consumer], dir. by Harun Farocki, 1993, 44 min.
Image 25: Reinhard Mende, factory reportage and Leipzig Autumn Fair in 1973. The image on the left is taken on July 30, 1973, to be exhibited as a background-design to promote VEB Leuchtenbau lamps during the International Trade Fair in Leipzig, here September 9, 1973. The finally displayed photograph is not in the archive anymore, because the negative was taken out for the production of the actual mounted picture. But the archive shows us the moment shortly before or after. Archive Estate Mende and Group Produzieren.

At the same time, the economic space was used as a public stage to officially welcome young countries like Angola, Mozambique, Congo, or Zimbabwe, liberated from colonial rule in the mid-1970s. These politically formatted delegations from all over the world, and in particular from the ‘class-enemy,’ as much as from the ‘brotherland,’ stood equally next to each other in the economic space of the Trade Fair through the practice of photography, from the early 1970s until the last Leipzig Trade Fair in the GDR, in the spring of 1990. In other words, due to the fact that photographic practice was used to promote socialist production (commodities) as partnering with capitalist regimes, which needed to suspend the Cold War dichotomic and agonising rhetoric, this practice moves between various genres such as

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181 For an elaboration on the economic schizophrenia, photography and design in the GDR with regard to the International Trade Fair in Leipzig see my essay ‘Of Unsettled Knowledge,’ in: (Mende, D., Blaschke, E., Linke, A. (eds.) Double Bound Economies. Reading a Photo Archive from the GDR (1967–1990), 2013, pp. 77–93.
propaganda, *Arbeiterfotografie* [workers’ photography], advertisement, industrial photography, or documentary.

This is exactly the schizophrenic position emerging from an expanded economy, which rejects being located on one side (socialist) or the other (capitalist) but operates through their mutual entanglement. This example furthers the argument in relation to the photographic practice within the Palestinian liberation movement. Moreover, Khotoub’s refusal to sell the image of the crying girl in Al-Damoor in 1982 indicates an economy of the practice aiming to distance itself from a capitalist imperative that seems to govern Godard’s thinking about images. Allan Sekula articulates the contradicting economic forces as follows:

‘As a social practice photography is no more a “reflection” of capitalist society than a particular photograph is a “reflection” of its referential object. Conversely, photography is not a neutral semiotic technique, transparently open to both “reactionary” and “progressive” uses. The issue is much more complicated than either extreme would have us believe. Although I want to argue here that photography is fundamentally related in its normative way of depicting the world to an epistemology and an aesthetics that are intrinsic to a system of commodity exchange, as I’ve suggested before, photography also needs to be understood as a simultaneous threat and promise in its relation to the prevailing cultural ambitions of a triumphant but wary western bourgeoisie of the mid nineteenth century.’ (Sekula, 1981, p. 22)

In other words, while Godard asked for a withdrawal from the production of images, because there are simply too many of them in the world already, as he stated in preparation of his journey to Jordan in 1970, the practice of the fedayeen—in 1980, one ought to add—arrived with extended possibilities of producing images. Sturm’s privately archived images report about social relevance within a photographic practice that thus may operate through the ‘promise’ of countering bourgeois traditions; it also allows Khotoub to refuse to agree on the deal offered by the Frenchman and hand over the image showing the crying child in Al Damoor in 1982.

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182 See *Godard in America*, dir. by Thanhauser, R., 1970, 44 min.
From a perspective of today, when excess of space, the individual and of the event indicates our era of ‘supermodernity’ as the anthropologist Marc Augé explains,\(^{183}\) the social practice of photography may wish to withdraw, not from the complexity of the image, but rather from the simplicity of the economics. Instead, photography is a discourse that ‘speaks paradoxically of discipline and freedom.’ (Sekula, 1981, p. 15)

**The double-bind strikes back**

After this elaboration on two particular photographic moments in the practice of a single photographer, let me emphasise that I consider the photographer Khotoub here as a partner within a series of reflections. He speaks from a position of practice consisting of various strands, including the geopolitical relations between the Middle East (Beirut), North Africa (Tunis) and Eastern/Europe (GDR). It should be clear that I do not consider him a representative by any means, a figure delivering a model for an entire Palestinian generation that fought as freedom fighters and who subsequently became photographers, or one who represents a political-economic programme, and the continuation of armed struggle by means of photography. Instead, I borrow these concrete moments of a practice to unfold an economic conflict, which only emerges in banal anecdotes. It will help to emphasise the importance of this gesture of withdrawal that today, with Khotoub’s comment, appears on public display as a different proposal for an image’s economics. It does not circulate through the international media agency, through e-commerce (as it is now being planned for the WAFA photo section) and it does not win the world press photo prize of the year.\(^{184}\)

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\(^{183}\) ‘Supermodernity (which stems simultaneously from the three figures of excess: overabundance of events, spatial overabundance and the individualisation of references) naturally finds its full expression in non-places. Words and images in transit through non-places can take root in the—still diverse—places where people still try to construct part of their daily life.’ (Augé, 1995, p. 109)

\(^{184}\) If one looks at the first prizes throughout the decades, one will realise that most of the images depict war and conflict, mainly in non-Western regions, by portraying victims as passive actors. In 2012, for example, Swedish photojournalist Paul Hansen won the prize with ‘Gaza Burial’ (it is rumoured, though, that it was photoshopped), an image showing grieving men who carry to the funeral two-year-old Suhaib Hijazi and her three-year-old brother Muhammad, killed by an Israeli missile strike in Gaza City that killed their father, Fouad, and critically injured their mother. See
The official press images, the selected and publishable products of the photo courses in the 1980s, stand for a ‘macro-political face,’ which I borrow from Suely Rolnik’s reflection on the archive. They ought to ‘transmit ideological content,’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 7). Such an ideological framework is explained by one of Sturm’s former photography student in Beirut, Tariq Ibrahim, in the following way:

‘Horst used to say that he came to the East to see other people who are facing the American beast before they get rid of Europe. He used to talk about capitalism and gave examples on how cruel it was. Back in the past when we were young we used to sing in the South of Lebanon songs from Russia, Cuba and Che Guevara. We used to talk how [East] Germany succeeded in confronting [U.S.] America. We hated American movies and loved people who were against America.’ (Ibrahim, 2011)

Ibrahim speaks about an ideological framework that impregnates production of photographs with a macro-political weight. Let us be clear that the educator in photography from East Germany here also appears as an agitator against [the U.S.] America. Images were not taken just for the sake of the image; they were supposed to feed into a macro-political agenda. We need to recall the period of production of the above series of pictures, ranging from the end of the 1970’s to the early 1980s,’ a period during which a series of massacres took place in Tel al-Zataar (1976), Sabra and Chatila (1982). These genocidal events also frame the photo courses in Beirut. Not all of the discussed photographs may have been influenced by Sturm’s curriculum, but it can be certainly said that Khotoub’s photographs of 1982, i.e., including the image coverage of the massacres in Sabra and Chatila, carry an educational imprint of the courses.

It would not suffice to conclude by a shortcut that Sturm’s photo courses in Beirut have supported a visual grammar aiming to document misery, war violence, and living under Israeli occupation by modelling signifying forces into the form of environmental shot with ‘the crying lonely child’ as unfolded in the above section. Furthermore, the shortness of my elaboration also appears inappropriate for defining

the official visual grammar violating those who are photographed, as we have seen in Sontag’s argument, due to the economic complication within a practice that travels from one place to the other, from one economic system into another, that crosses borders and customs, or in Sekula’s words:

‘[…] the possibility of meaning is ‘liberated’ from the actual contingencies of use. But this liberation is also a loss, an abstraction from the complexity and richness of use, a loss of context. Thus the specificity of ‘original’ uses and meanings can be avoided and even made invisible, when photographs are selected […]’ (Sekula, 1987, p. 444f)

Image 26: Film sleeve from the photo course in Beirut in 1980/81 with the name Yousef Qutob [Youssef Khotoub], presented by himself in November 2011, at WAFA in Ramallah. On the computer screen in the back is a photo with Horst Sturm during the photo course in Tunisia, 1986. Photo: Armin Linke, 2011.

The elaboration on the violence hanging over the official photographs does not claim to be fully grasping the limits, problems and complexity of the practice. In particular, the role of the image as a warfare strategy has been discussed in relation to
recent conflicts in the world. It is not the aim of this PhD to analyse those pictures that had been commissioned, programmed and evaluated by directors of press agencies, ‘image-junkies’ (Sontag, 1977, p. 24) and editors of newspapers or magazines of the socialist party in the GDR as publishable. In other words, the official photographs are here brought in for the sake of complicating the photographic practice of the fedayeen, which appears, in the light of its other face (the collective-social gatherings during the photo courses in Beirut), as a result of a solidarity contract between the GDR and the P.L.O. Revealing their violent character does not generalise the visual grammar of Palestinian press photographers, but problematises the collective-social conditions of production, particularly during the photo courses in Beirut. A troubling condition within this curatorial intervention, in 2013, that cannot be taken out of it. The public face of the practice, that is, all that which appears on public display via newspapers, exhibitions, and magazines, and that can be seen as the ‘macro-political tendency’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 7) as much as photography has been an ‘instrumentalized medium, a medium that has demonstrated repeatedly its complicity with the forces of industrialization.’ (Sekula, 1981, p. 16) At the same time, the social-collective structures of Beirut photo courses in the 1980s locate the practice within a ‘micro-political potency’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 8) of the archive. I borrow the differentiation from Suely Rolnik, when she writes:

‘Artistic actions of a macro-political nature basically transmit ideological content. And this brings them [artistic practices] closer to activism than to art. In contrast, in the second type of action the political constitutes an element that is intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, to poetic investigation. Independent of the value that might be assigned to each of these types, unfortunately, the macro-political tendency has been taken by hegemonic art history as a general interpretative tool for all Latin-American artistic practices from those decades, through the label of “political” and “ideological” Conceptual art. This category was established by certain texts and exhibitions in the mid-1970’s within the Western Europe-U.S.-axis—

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texts and exhibitions that have become canonical. It contributes to the denial of micro-political artistic actions, hindering both their recognition and their expansion.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 7)

Let us ignore for a moment that the photographic practice of the Fedayeen was not being produced under the umbrella of artistic actions or deliberately related to Latin America\textsuperscript{186}. A discussion on whether the practice of the fedayeen is artistic action or not, is not useful at this point. Let us rather speculate on the reverse: artistic action that walks on the ground of a revolutionary project. Sketching out the macro-political side in the photo practice of the fedayeen, with Rolnik’s help, will sharpen our understanding of such micro-political potential, since the two sides of the practice cannot be separated, but exist in different registers, tenses, functionalities, and regions of memory. We will see in a moment how the micro-political in difference with the macro-political enables us to connect the practice of the fedayeen to an exhibition practice within another scope of space and time, which is closer to our current activities as artists, curators, theorists and exhibition makers. Is there anything we can learn from the micro-political potential of this practice? Or is there anything that the micro-political can do for us that disturbs the macro-political in relation to official imagery? Is there anything in here capable of complicating our own practice within the field of contemporary art? I hope it will become palpable that such journey would not only transform the appearance and materiality of these photographs, but also create an affective impulse that allows us to look at conditions of exhibiting from a perspective that cannot be thought outside of the double-gesture, or ‘two modes of politics […] that are the object of [an] archive mania: macro- and micro-politics.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 7) In other words, when Rolnik detects in currents movements of contemporary art two modes of politics that relate to the politics of exhibiting in a wider sense (how is archival material being made public today in the globalised world of art?), then it can be claimed that these two modes have already been tested,

\textsuperscript{186} To my knowledge, during the 1970s and 1980s, the P.L.O. had no strong relations with Cuba, unlike with Yugoslavia and East Germany. But Fidel Castro and Arafat met in South Africa several times. Furthermore, there was an exhibition in Nicaragua in January 1982. See footnote 169.
rehearsed, played out, juxtaposed and enacted in the two modes of the *Fedayeen* practice.

In concluding this part, let me again take up the notion of the ‘schizophrenic position’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50) that we have discussed in the chapter *Sketching the Frame* and that seems to run through our elaboration. Such an internal split can also be located in the ‘archive mania: macro- and micro-politics.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 7) of which Suely Rolnik speaks, and which will be discussed in more depth in the chapter on the archival, however, with insistency on the micro-political potential.

For Müller, again, such a double-bind—as it also could be called and we will see in a moment why—defines the source for his writing practice, i.e., dramas, theatre plays, in the GDR. He writes: ‘I like to stand with one leg on each side of the wall. Maybe this is a schizophrenic position, but none other seems to me real enough.’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50) We have said that such economic schizophrenia is not in play and at stake in Sturm’s practice as a source. He was employed by the East German press agency and, most likely, also received salary for his educational activities in the Middle East and North Africa. We have also seen that Sturm deliberately stood with both legs on the side of the Real-existing Socialism, as we could read in Tariq Ibrahim’s comments. With regards to the image practice of the *fedayeen*, who did not receive a salary, or a low one if at all, it must be said that such economic schizophrenia certainly was not a source for their practice. But such entangled existence of contradicting economic systems on global scale, in short, of capitalism and socialism, becomes even stronger in the fact of the unpaid labour of the *fedayeen* who had become photographers (which was not, however, seen as labour in the economic sense), as well as in the confrontation between Youssef Khotoub and the French cameraman/photojournalist in Al-Damoor. If the project at hand wants to introduce the *itinerant* as a transformative force, from an internationalism of the Cold War towards a living in a globalised world today, then the contradicting forces as found in this archived practice deliver a serious resource for addressing the ‘double-bind’ that Gayatri Spivak locates ‘at the heart of democracy’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 4) of the global present. In her introduction to *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (2012), Spivak explicitly elaborates on the ‘double-bind’ in relation to the collapse of an international socialist project, when she writes:
‘Here let me point out the obvious failure of any Marxism to produce the impulse to redistribute without state control and enforcement. The breakdown of the first wave of Marxist experimentation through the seduction of capitalism for leaders and people alike may have something to do with the absence of the ethical aspects of communism in the epistemological project of popular education. If ethics and aesthetics are defined as devoid of and even as opposed to the political […] we can hope for a short or enforced life of the communist system’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 18)

Spivak here opens up strands like ‘ethics and aesthetics’ that I cannot elaborate on further, as that would turn my research into another project. Let us, however, take from her the proposal for focusing on ‘popular education’ that she wishes would exceed institutional constrains. In other words, Khotoub’s refusal to sell the spectacular photograph (the crying girl framed by a huge cloud of smoke caused, most likely, by a missile detonation) to the French photographer can be read as an absolute commitment, not to a Real-existing Socialism, as it existed in the GDR, but to a really existing possibility of communism as an effective instrument of enacting the Cause. Following Spivak’s proposal, such possibility only occurs if communism remains outside of state-structures, if it does not become a principle in the form of a party programme, if it rejects any institutionalisation of solidarity, and if its aim is not state-formation. The latter consequence in particular contradicts entirely the P.L.O.’s machinery during its revolutionary period, as well as today’s Palestinian Authority; it also stands in opposition to the political-institutional programme of the GDR-government that hoped for as many governmental allies as possible during the Cold War period, in order to declare its state-sovereignty. I wish to argue, therefore, for a problematisation of the link between the political and the aesthetic. The latter tangles up deeply with the popular, everyday, non-official imagery, i.e., it operates through to the surplus, the waste of an image practice, the ‘null-images,’ and so on. After all, such a ‘double-bind’ does not tell us what the best solution would be. In other words, the archived image practice does not deliver a model that could be easily copied from internationalism (during the Cold War) to globalisation. Instead, ‘at best the double-

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187 As elaborated in the chapter Concerning Solidarity.
bind does not remove the problem,’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 18) which sounds like another sobering conclusion, as discussed earlier, with regard to complicity, \footnote{See the subsection \textit{Complicit commentaries}.} but it allows us to step out of the institutionally established agonising forces.
TRANSIT B

**Proximity, Distance**

(2012/13)

Transit B, designed by Laure Giletti, is conceived as an archival texture from which this Ph.D. can be read. It contains various materials ranging from films, places, sequences, through observations, projects, texts, seminars, to news that played a certain role during the research (captions on page 182 and 183).

It also includes a poem after which this transit is named, *Proximity, Distance*, which I wrote in order to deal with a request to publish this image, on the back of which it is written: 'KHALED Beirut PLO “Mein Sandokan” für meine Sicherheit! Im Hotel. Horst Sturm AFIAP' [KHALED Beirut PLO “My Sandokan” for my security! At the hotel. Horst Sturm AFIAP] It was taken in 1980 at the Hotel Beau Rivage in Beirut. I refused to publish the photograph for several reasons. Firstly, it departs from an intimate moment in a hotel when Sturm’s bodyguard takes a rest, Secondly, its visuality is tempting and could easily make it to the cover of a glossy magazine; and thirdly, it is exactly because this photographs departs from an economy that appeared to defy capitalism (as elaborated in the chapter *Economic schizophrenia*), that I had to find different means of making it public within the world of art and within an economic system different to the one from which it departed.
Proximity, Distance
Doreen Mande

A young man
Chest naked
With a moustache
Black skin
Curly hair

He wears glasses
He sits in a bed
Seemingly relaxed
Reading a book

He lies more than he sits
He is lost in the book
Absorbed in reading
As if he observed his lover

His gaze absorbs
Letters and images
Is he aware of the third person
Represented by a camera?

The man reads a book
PENTACONSIX PRAXIS
W. Gerhard Heyde
VEB Fotokinoverlag
Pentacconsix

It was the only professional photo
camera in the GDR
My father worked with the same model

A middle format camera
Six by six negative films
Professional press images

He could pay you 400 dollars
Are you stupid not to accept?
He called me a stupid man
(Laughter)

This camera in the book
It is a good one
It brings details in focus
Even if it was a bit more distanced
It is good also
In capturing the architecture of a space
With depth of sharpness

It seems to be a gun for proximity
While the camera in the book is able
to shoot in distance
The gun next to him can potentially manage proximity

It seems that
The young man
Chest naked
With a moustache
Black skin
Curly hair
That he replaced
The gun by the book
For a moment

The gun takes a pause
in order to be fresh
Ready for the potential action

The guy with the book/gun
He is at a hotel room in Beirut in 1980
Hotel Beau Rivage

The book, the gun, the camera, the guy
The proximity and distance at once
They are an allegory for ‘solidarity’
It’s not a metaphor
But it requests
A certain weight

A compulsive desire
Perhaps a force
Closer to struggle
Than to direct action
Closer to stammering
Than to proper words
This allegory requests
For this moment
Some transformation
In June 2013
Vois là deux chercheuses d'or
Dans un meeting de la Golden League
À leur image donc
L'histoire ne cherche pas
Il trouve

Mettre à l'abri toutes les images du langage
Et se servir d'elles
Car elles sont dans le désert
Où il faut aller les chercher

C'est en 1839 que la Palestine accueille son premier photographe.
La quadrature du cercle était trouvée avec la
Pommeuse métaphore X + 3 = 1
Qu'Einstein chercha toute sa vie.
Claram per obscurius
Al-Jabah [The Mountain], 2010, Lebanon/Gaza, written and directed by Chasem Sahab, 84 min. Release at Metropolis Empire SoHo Beirut, December 6, 2011, 8PM. The Mountain follows an unnamed man, played by Fadi Abi Samra, who retreats from the city and sniffs himself off from all contact with the outside world. Sahab explains, ’Unfortunately the way cinema has been taken is that comfort of a script when you have reason and a consequence. For me things are more complex, mysterious and not so touchable as we think.’ (Shooter, N. 2011) The sequences here consists of writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (My First Words), and striking it out again.

Le Mépris [Contempt], 1963, France, written and directed by Jean-Luc Godard, 102 min. ‘In search of Homer’ (Farocki/Silverman, 1999, pp. 31–57).

From left: Armand Marcus, Jean-Pierre Gorin, Jean-Luc Godard, Basra refugee camp in Jordan, 1970. Begin of the project IC- Et Ailleurs [Here and Elsewhere] which was then still called Jusqu’à la victoire: Méthodes de travail et de pensée de la révolution palestinienne [Until Victory: Working and Thinking Methods of the Palestinian Revolution]


Exhibition design and curatorial practice – case study Abu Jihad Museum for Prisoner Movements Affairs, one-week seminar that I declared in the very beginning as the exhibition itself in order to compulsate the transfer of research into an exhibition as the actual exhibition-making. The seminar was conceived by Doreen Mende in partnership with Tina ShervulviInternational Academy Palestine and commissioned by UNESCO Office Ramallah, with contributions by Khaldou Hourani, Yazid Anani, Aysa Chehab, Reem Hamami, Wolfdi Kuehn, Milica Tomic, Baha’s Jubran, and others, in East-Jerusalem/Ramallah, November, 2010. Here: Yazid Anani’s students from the BZRT University are the first external public of the declared seminar as exhibition, joining the group on November 13, 2010, and reading the writings as outcomes (exhibits) of the debates, discussions of the seminar-sessions. Photo: Milica Tomic

Abu Jihad Museum for the Prisoner Movements Affairs on the campus of the Al-Quds University, Abu-Dia, East-Jerusalem. The museum has been designed in reference to prison architecture to illustrate the prisoners’ experience. It can be and has been highly debated, however, one must keep in mind that the museum was founded by former political prisoners; therefore the museum itself can be understood as an attempt to encounter the trauma of imprisonment. Interior Design and Landscape architecture: Sarah Khaleed Ossany. Design and Creation of Art Works: Bashar Al-Houb, May 2010.

07 Photo that circulated on Facebook in the first days of Occupy Gaz Movement in Istanbul: Picture of the day: Protesters tear-gassed in Istanbul [REUTERS/ Murad Sezer] #occupygezi. Shared from Zinio Turks on June 1, 2013.

08 Lettre à Freddy Beuche [A Letter to Freddy Beuche], 1961, France, written and directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Shown in the group exhibition Right to Refusal. 2012, curated by Eva Krenz and Doreen Mende at Kunsthalle Bregenz, Austria. The short film was realized shortly after Godard had been in Mozambique (end of 1970s) for the reason to build up a state TV station after independence (1975). But his attempt failed and resulted in the short film Changer of Image [To Alter the Image]. 1962.

09 Swimmingpool und Schützengraben. Blick aus mainem Fenster im Beinbrück Hotel, 1980 [swimming pool and defensive fighting position. View from my window of the hotel in Beirut, 1980], taken by Horst Stumm. It is the Hotel Beau Rivage near the comiche, which was bombed only few days later after Stumm left for Berlin again. Archive Horst Stumm. The enclosed poem Proximity, Distance relates to this picture in such a way that the poem transcibes, transforms, and translates a photograph taken inside of one of the hotel’s room.

10 Film Socialisme. Dialogues avec visages auteurs [Film Socialism. Dialogues with auteurs’ faces], written by Jean-Luc Godard, P.O.L., Paris, 2010, p. 79.


12 Kontinent im Aufruch [continents on the move], A2-folder with photographs by Thomas Billhardt, 1962, published by Verlag für Ästhetische- und Ausschmuckmaterial der DDR [publisher for decoration- and demonstration materials of the GDR], Images from Asia, Africa, and Latin-America. In this collection of images, we encounter people from Asia, Africa and Latin-America: starvelings and hopeful ones, victims and fighters, protesters and triumphant ones. The period of these images’ production ranges over two decades. Within this time frame, the revolutionary process on global scale took a huge step, the homelands of these people that are introduced here achieved or defended their independence. In the struggle against colonialism and imperialism, they had and have GDR’s strong solidarity. These images mirror expression of the subjective-emotional signature of the photographer. Thomas Billhardt: the face of our international solidarity…” (Short introductory text on the folder; my translation) Image here: Cuba, 1961.

13 Slave to the Rhythm. album/hong. 1985, making of the artwork, which is designed by Jean-Paul Goubin.

15. Film Socialisme [Film Socialism], 2009, directed and written by Jean-Luc Godard / Anne-Marie Méléville, 102 min.

16. Processing an Archive, a collective outcome from the project Double Bound Economies that also is presented in exhibitions by Amin Linaua, Estela Baschiera, Doreen Mende. Luigi Corti Rappis and Nicholas Deleil (development), Giulia Bruno, 2010-present. The collective outcome grounds in a database software that was needed to develop as an instrument to work with the specific needs of a number of 19,500 photographs. There are just over 2,500, selected from about 10,500 photographs. The entries without a photograph have yet to find a specific use. The database software makes it possible to set up 'projects.' When a photograph is selected for a project, the person who selected it is recorded. The photo archive is thus processed using a collective method: students, historians, curators, artists, journalists, and theorists. Hence, the software transforms into a collective image machine that can, when needed, present a display wall around 10 meters long, with thirty photographs for each series of images or a complete list distributed on 180 pages. Each of these applications is inscribed into the software by various uses and in the process constantly influences how the archive is used and thereby influences the overall structure of the database. The result is a texture that intertwines it with other materials — e.g. text, a film still, a collage, an essay, an image from another archive. The archive begins to be an archive in motion.


18. Abu Jihad Museum for the Prisoner Movements Affairs, research and library area. The third floor is the most active and lively area of the museum. From one of the books chosen here for the montage of various materials, advertisement graphics as a way to protect the book for further usage, May 2010.

19. Film Socialisme [Film Socialism], 2009, directed and written by Jean-Luc Godard / Anne-Marie Méléville, 102 min. The sequence of four images here is from an early scene that shows a famous conversation between two cats on a computer screen, which has been circulating on YouTube for a while already. The male character (for in the image at this moment) brings in a sentence from Iphigenia in Tauris by Goethe in a montage-like technique: 'Du liegest mich mit edlen guten Worten.' [The well-intentioned counsel troubles me.]

20. Abu Jihad Museum for the Prisoner Movements Affairs, research and library area. The third floor archive of the prisoners' writings as well as the prisoners' readings. The third floor is the most active and lively area of the museum, May 2010.


22. First lecture by Michel Foucault, on January 2, 1976, of the circle ‘Society Must be Defended’ at the Collège de France in 1975-76, suggested by Milica Tomic for a reading group in the frame of Exhibition design and curatorial practice – case study Abu Jihad Museum for Prisoner Movements Affairs, a one-week seminar as an exhibition (see note 35) in East-Jerusalem/Ramallah, November, 2010. The lecture provided the possibilities to discuss the notion of marginalised knowledge to large extent; it became a main anchor point for our discussions on what the Abu Jihad Museum for Prisoner Movements Affairs should achieve to provide.

23. Four Fases of Omurake, 2009-present, Milica Tomic presents on behalf of the Radina Trupa the project in the frame of Exhibition design and curatorial practice – case study Abu Jihad Museum for Prisoner Movements Affairs, a one-week seminar as an exhibition (see note 35) in East-Jerusalem/Ramallah, November, 2010.

24. Dear Doreen, the trip was in April 1978. The pics all taken officially by the GDR hosts, strangely enough no pics were taken of our Sachsenhausen visit. This pic from left to right: the German translator, Fandi Jubeis (holding the box), vice president of the progressive socialist party (behind him another man who accompanied us), one of our German hosts (some official), Arab-baathist socialist party (pro-reas, unsure who he is), Fawwaz Traboubi (organisation for communist action in Lebanon), Siran Barzoug (independent nasserite movement-muradatoun), Nadim Abdul Samad (Lebanese communist party), Jamal Fakhoury (Syyrian national socialist party). I have a few others. Will send when I have time.” Email on December 19, 2011 from Fawwaz Traboubi (historian, Beirut) that came with this photograph which was taken when he was in East Berlin during GDR times.

25. Film Socialisme [Film Socialism], 2009, directed and written by Jean-Luc Godard / Anne-Marie Méléville, 102 min. Patti Smith with her guitar on deck of the cruise liner ‘Costa Concordia‘ that Godard used as the location of his film, it is the same cruise liner that capsized in January 2012 near the coast of Italy and the island Elba.

26. Archive book: For the project Double Bound Economies. Reading a Photo Archive from the GDR (1967-1990), we digitalized 1,500 contact sheets in order to begin to work with the archive’s excessive dimension. Most importantly, however, has been the actual reading process: the polysemic narrations arriving from the archive, and the utmost contradicting voices. The different colors of the post-it's indicate different voices to read the archive. In other words, the project has been not interested in the interpretation of the representation surface of the photographic image, but in finding the means to articulate the differences, ambivalences and contradictions that from an archived practice emerge. The colourfulness of the post-its is one expression of it.

27. Campus of the Al-Quds University, Abu-Da, East Jerusalem, which is opposite of the Abu Jihad Museum for the Prisoner Movements Affairs. The lively and informal atmosphere contrasts strongly with the museum’s prison-like architecture on the other side of the walkway, May 2010.
GEOPOLITICAL EXIGENCIES

The following part intends to link the economic-political dimension of the photographic practice, as elaborated in the previous chapter, with spatio-geographic implications. This is needed foremost with regard to a geopolitical exigency of transnational solidarity, as in the case, discussed here, between Europe (GDR/now Germany), Middle East (Lebanon), and North Africa (Tunisia) during the 1980s, until the collapse of the socialist project. While we have, in the previous chapter engaged with a link—roughly summarised—between two different economic systems (socialism / capitalism), this part of my writing fathoms the geopolitics of this photographic practice of the 1980s as a trajectory for geopolitics in exhibiting. This will enable me to stress a spatial trait within the making public of the privately archived images, which is here not considered as an exhibition in the conventional sense, but as the act of making something public enacted through what I call the *itinerant*. The *itinerant’s* spatial formation—which cannot be detached from a practice—crosses borders, customs, countries, ideologies, systems, generations, and habits. It intervenes within the exhibition space’s territorial spatiality and introduces a geopolitical dimension that requests to speak of a relation between *here* and *elsewhere*.

Beyond encounter

In other words, we have so far seen that the *fedayeen* and an East German photographic practice can be understood as a network of practices consisting mainly of three layers that can be summarised as social-collective conditions, the photographing act itself, and the ‘photographic encounter.’¹⁸⁹ (Azoulay, 2008) I borrow the expression ‘photographic encounter’ from Ariella Azoulay in order to exceed a merely optical grounding that remains in *looking* at a photograph. She writes:

‘As we have seen, in the classical photographic situation, the camera mediates an encounter between the photographer and the photographed, and an image is produced. In the legal institutionalization of this encounter, the photographed individual has not been recognized as its owner, whereas the

photographer who produces the image has been given legal rights. However, this appropriation of the photographed person’s rights, in which there is always a measure of violence, which was taken for granted by both sides from the start, and which has remained unaltered, cannot be understood without assuming that a certain pact or agreement lies at its foundation. Such an agreement is what makes the photographic encounter between the photographer and the photographed possible. It is important to emphasize, however, that this agreement does not mean there is willing consent, and in no way is it based on knowledge of the conditions of exchange or the possibility not to agree.’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 105)

Let me repeat this depiction for the sake of underlining its relevance within further investigation: the network of practices ranges, firstly, from adhering to the Palestinian Cause in Beirut and Tunis during the 1980s, a practice along the idea of a people’s photography for the people, the collective discussions and gatherings, walks on the streets, and informal dinners during photo courses in Beirut, and return-visits by Palestinian photographers to East Berlin.

Image 27: Youssef Khotoub also kept photographs from social-collective and private moments. For example, the picture on the right (slightly covered) was taken at the foot of the TV tower on Alexanderplatz in East Berlin, in the 1980s. It shows a group of international photographers visiting East Berlin, Khotoub among them. Archive Khotoub. Photo left: Armin Linke, Ramallah, 2011.

This network implies, secondly, the physical image production that tangles up with the camera itself: taking a photograph, struggling with the conditions on the ground in terms of bombardment and violence in a situation of war, but also
considering technical details such as light, aperture, film material, the right lens, filter, and postproduction (i.e., development of the film, the selection of photographs and possibly, and so on). And thirdly, the network lines up with its utterly public side that no longer depends on the camera device itself, but constitutes a relation with the actual photograph and takes places in what is conventionally called ‘the exhibition space’ in our field. I wish to propose a possibly different understanding of this latter space by considering its dispersed, de-territorial, and transnational agenda through the complexity of this practice, from today’s perspective. In so doing, my approach appreciates Azoulay’s insistence on photography’s juridical quality when making the photographs public. However, my concern unfolds the actual photographs, departing from the privately archived images, into the question of how to work with, to relate to, and to transfer—in curatorial terms—such a network of practices today. It steps back from the photograph as a meeting platform and negotiating table of the participating partners (photographer, photographed, spectator) that Azoulay addresses through juridico-political paradigms; but also because within the privately archived images the photographer and photographed are basically the same. The geographic dimension within this practice aspect is therefore strikingly essential for the case discussed. In other words, the geopolitical exigency that today arrives from these images appears to be relevant: if we have seen in the last chapter which set of narratives these privately archived images tell with regard to an economic schizophrenia within this practice, than this part of writing aims to activate an immanent geopolitics that draws a geography different from that of the Western colonialism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a regional problem, and—from the perspective of my work as an independent consultant for UNESCO in Palestine—an approach to exhibition practice different from the Western concept of exhibition practice.

I aim to discuss the geopolitical exigency within this archived practice through

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190 ‘In addition to the right to ownership of the image, other juridical concepts, such as “the right to privacy,” “defamation,” or “malicious use” have thus been introduced into the discourse on photography.’ In: Azoulay, 2008, p. 101.


192 The latter point will be discussed extensively in the last chapter. It is informed by my curatorial activities for the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, the Abu Jihad Museum in East Jerusalem, and a brainstorming workshop for the Arafat Museum in Ramallah. Not all of them took place within a UNESCO-shaped constellation.
a few places in Jacques Derrida’s *Spectres of Marx*. This will provide a framework for understanding the potential in the collapse of a socialist project in relation to spatiality and geography, and how we can make it fruitful for the curatorial intervention at hand. In the case of Derrida, spatiality cannot be thought without time and temporality, and more concretely, without an allusion to a future that is not utopian but always in the mode of arriving: à-venir. Derrida pointed out a time of arrival, when he described ‘what-is-to-come [l’avenir], with the opening to the to-come [l’à-venir]—that is, not only to the future [futur], but to what happens [ce qui arrive], comes [vient], has the form of an event.’ (Derrida, 2001, p.19) Such arrival, which is an opening towards that which will arrive ‘consists not only of inscribing itself in a context (…) but thereby also in producing a context, transforming a given [donné] context’ (Derrida, 2001, p. 19). We will see later in this writing that the transformative potential of a movement remains absolutely essential; and if we, in the coming pages, engage primarily with spatial concerns, then the temporal dimension hangs over this whole elaboration. What follows, however, does not purport to be delivering an analysis of Derrida’s complex cosmos of thought, but aims instead to cross-read the aforementioned practice along a geopolitical face.

**Work of mourning**

To begin with, Derrida in the *Spectres of Marx* indicates three major strands that ‘decompose’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 8) the deeply entangled surroundings we live in today. Derrida calls this surroundings ‘a single thing, spirit, or spectre’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 8) that we can understand through entangled strings departing from state-socialism, the socialist project’s collapse on global scale, various forms of communism, Marxist ideologies, Marxist doctrines, the figure of ‘Marx’ himself, including his texts. With regard to the project at hand, we can include, concretely, the ideology of photography as it had been practiced in genres such as *Arbeiterfotografie*, which aimed to deliver on public display an image of unified working class (as the basic

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193 A note: In the documentary film *The Black Star* (1968), directed by Joachim Hellwig and produced by the East German film production company DEFA, a scene shows us a classroom in a university setting in Ghana. An East German female teacher in Political Economics, Grace Arnold, introduces Karl Marx’ *Das Kapital* as well as *Wage-Labour and Capital and Value, Price, and Profit* and Petr Nikitin’s *The Fundamentals of Political Economy* as mandatory reading for the studies.
principle of communism) through photographic means; we also can include official press photographs from a war situation, produced during the photo courses in the 1980s; they join a visual grammar of a stereotypical picture of the Palestinian as a powerless victim, e.g., signified by the repeated motif of the crying, lonely child in a bombed environment, as discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, today’s surroundings consist of fibres from capitalist societies, neo-liberal economics, self-exploitation in the field of arts, and a globalised art world; it resonates also in the economic crisis of 2008 in the West that formatted a ‘Capitalist realism [which] hasn’t weakened since the bank crises; if anything it has intensified.’194 (Fisher, 2010)

Threads also weave into this from many recent attempts to bring revolutionary movements onto the streets worldwide, as we have seen in recent years. They arrive from the Iranian Green Movement, from the people in Tunisia and the so-called Jasmine Revolution, from the Tahrir Square in Cairo, the Occupy Movement in New York, the 15M Movement in Spain, the student riots and insurrections in London, the protests in Greece, and as I am writing this part of my research, the OccupyGezi in Turkey is not yet a week old.

Derrida proposes to decompose this entangled texture through ‘three things’ that I here sketch out roughly as an introduction:

1. First of all, mourning. […] in the first place by identifying the bodily remains and by localizing the dead […]’
2. […] the condition of language – and the voice, in any case that which marks the name or takes its place. […]’
3. […] the thing works, whether it transforms itself, poses, or decomposes itself […] a certain power of transformation […]’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 9)

My focus in what follows will be on the first and the third step, i.e., the need to ‘localize’ and the need for ‘transformation.’ Let us begin with the first, the ‘work of mourning,’ that requests precisely locating an event from the past, which is said to be dead, but appears to be alive in the very moment of travelling, when it re-appears in the form of an archived photographic practice:

194 In an interview with Alex Andrews. See: http://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/interview-mark-fisher-on-capitalist-realism-and-more/ (accessed June 5, 2013)
‘First of all, mourning. We will be speaking of nothing else. It consists always in attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present, in the first place by identifying the bodily remains and by localizing the dead […] One has to know. *One has to know it. One has to have knowledge* [Il faut le savoir]. Now, to know is to know who and where, to know whose body it really is and what place it occupies—for it must stay in its place. In a safe place. […] Nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt: one *has* to know who is buried where—and it is necessary (to know-to make certain) that, in what remains of him, he remains there. Let him stay there and move no more!’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 9)

The work of mourning needs to look for the place of ‘localizing the dead.’ It is simply necessary to encounter the picture in such a way, and thus, to liberate it from being a picture-taking event in the past only. In order to begin the ‘work of mourning,’ we must establish photography as ‘an infinite set of encounters,’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 26) which unfolds a web of relations (photographer, photographed, and spectator[s]) in the present.

Image 28: Horst Sturm’s notebook from his educational journeys, as a photographer, to Beirut in 1980. The notes indicate the archive number, the title, and reprints in magazines or newspapers, if published. The photograph on the bottom left was published prominently in an East German magazine, though in a slightly different version in *Wochenpost* [The Weekly Post] in January 1983 (as a report on the massacres of civilian population of the Palestinian refugee camps Sabra and Chatila in Beirut in September 1982), and received an award at the Fotoschau der DDR [photo show of the GDR]. Archive Horst Sturm.
In other words, socialist friendship produced a knowledge hosting the capacity to re-locate itself within the image’s spatiality. The privately archived photographs open up a possible space in which the ‘work of mourning’ can begin: in difference with the official press coverage, these images allow precise locating of the memories of social-collective encounters, not only between an East German man and a group of former Palestinian freedom fighters, but also of a solidarity project through photography. This knowledge lacks its ‘safe place’ in today’s public debates, because it is covered by political events, such as the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993; and it is covered by the Unification Treaty of 1990 between the two German states that basically regulated the accession of the GDR to the economic and political systems of West Germany, and thus an erasure of knowledge about a different set of systems. Yet, this knowledge has dates, social structures, places and names. ‘One has to have knowledge [Il faut le savoir]’ must re-assure the knowledge’s location. Pointing fingers, then, localising gazes, faces, names, dates, and streets. The encounter with photographic image depicting social relations of the photo courses in the 1980s allows for clearly locating the knowledge, while the localising gesture reassures that everything has its ‘safe place’: collectivity, informality, the delegate, the agency’s representative, the press photographers, the socialist-socialist friendship, the Cold War politics.

Such activation of ‘One has to know’ also needs to locate the contemporary traveller within this space. Despite some astonishment, doubts, and uncertainty on the curator’s side, additionally also with regard to the utterly male-structured sociability, this passport turned an international curator from the field of contemporary art into a delegate of socialism. In other words, Sturm’s former students, but also, in 2010, the representatives of the Palestinian press agency WAFA, welcomed the curator as if the photo course in 1980 had never finished, as if the socialist project in Europe did not collapse, as if the geopolitical change in 1989 did not take place, and as if socialist solidarity still existed along a real existing alternative to Israeli occupation. Travelling with individually archived photos issued an identity with an unexpected weight of trust, which introduced her into social-local structures as if they (the former fedayeen) had known her for long, as if she were a friend even without knowing her before, as if she had brought something along that had been lost or expected for a long time. I arrived in Ramallah as an international curator from the field of contemporary art, but she was welcomed as a delegate of socialism. The images issued a contract vividly
correlating with the ideas of a delegation system of socialist countries, which
Enzensberger describes as following:

‘He [the delegate] is invited. Normally he does not pay his own expenses. He
is the guest and is therefore under the aegis of the unwritten laws of
hospitality. [...] He isn’t supposed to—no, he isn’t allowed to—worry about
anything.’ (Enzensberger, 1982, p. 165)

Image 29: Photo course Beirut, 1981. Horst Sturm (centre with glasses) in
conversation with photographers of the P.L.O. photography section during the course
at WAFA in Beirut. Photo: Youssef Khotoub (?). Archive Horst Sturm.

A former delegate of an East-German institution, e.g., Horst Sturm, might be
trained in, informed about and familiar with these laws, but not so a curator of
contemporary art. Nevertheless, the passport kept its utterly unexpected and unbroken
validity, when Sturm’s former students and colleagues in Ramallah invited the curator
for dinners in their homes, took her around the Occupied Territories in their cars,
made presents, and invited further colleagues and friends. Something arrived from the
privately archived images that re-staged a spatial constellation, a geopolitical concept,
a solidarity pact, and social structures that resonated as a plan for a better future
(liberation of Palestine) through the means of photography (its production and
distribution). In other words, the curator of contemporary art must be the ‘bodily
remains’ of the delegate of socialism, otherwise she falls out of the ‘safe place.’

Such a return of knowledge is spatial and operates locally. From a curatorial
perspective, we can say that in this way the function of the photographs resembles
‘exhibits’ in the juridical sense of the word: to hold out evidence, in which the
knowledge finds and re-assures its absolute and trustful location as a right of appeal,
defence, inspection and existence.

Such severe enforcement of knowledge into spatial surveying sounds like a
‘historical knowledge’ (Foucault, 1984), which is needed for mastering everyday
life—it braves sadness, loss, disappointment, concerns, repression, fear, and
subjugation. Foucault writes: ‘Quite simply because historical contents alone allow us
to see the dividing lines in the confrontations and struggles that functional
arrangements or systematic organizations are designed to mask.’ (Foucault, 1984, p.
7) ‘One has to know,’ as Derrida calls it, is a functional instrument as a survival
strategy, which wants to take side and signal a clear position within the work of
mourning. This ‘exhibit,’ however, not only localises existing knowledge, but also
masks that which cannot be localized in the juridical sense, i.e., in precise
measurement and demarcation. This is a crucial aspect to which we will come soon.

**Unfamiliar icon**

Before elaborating on that which cannot be localized, as elaborated above, let me
bring in at this point the essay-film *November* (2004) by Hito Steyerl, in which
Steyerl explicitly introduces the notion of a ‘travelling image.’ The calling for a
‘travelling image’ seems perfect to look at in relation to unpacking what the *itinerant*
within our project is. Apparently, the *itinerant* often arrives through an image, but it
also may arrive in the form of a book, of a film, of a sound, of an encounter, or a
thought that does not let us sleep. Bringing in Steyerl’s essay-film, which explicitly
questions the constitution, mechanism, lives and afterlives of the image addressing the
optical sense, will help to delineate differences between the *itinerant* and a travelling
image. As *November* even calls up an image that is on the road, let us see what it
does, where it has limits (which will be articulated by Steyerl) and why it remains
necessary to travel with it.
November follows, among many things, the transformation of a woman, from a friend to a leader of a girl gang in West Germany, then to a militant fighter for a political cause in Kurdistan. The woman, as we learn in the very beginning of November, has a personal relationship with the filmmaker herself: ‘My best friend when I was 17, was a girl called Andrea Wolf. She died 4 years ago, when she was shot as a Kurdish terrorist.’ (Steyerl, 2004) We learn about Andrea’s transformation through images of her appearing in various scenarios, communities, displays, locations and struggles. For example, her image shows up in an 8-mm film, made by Steyerl in the Bavarian countryside in 1983, when Andrea, Hito and her friends stage a combat against each other, in which the girls emerge as the winning heroines that will have defeated the boy’s group at the end; and Andrea appears as the heroic protagonist. Several years later, after Hito’s best teenage friend went underground as a female fighter in the Kurdish liberation movement and they lost contact, Steyerl encounters her in a cinema where she recognises Andrea in an image on a poster promoting a film, as Sehît Ronahi, her nom de guerre.

A significant travel route of Andrea’s image in November can be observed in minute 5.33, when we see a close-up of an image of a woman wearing a keffeyeh around her neck. It is obviously played from a VHS player, and stopped at this moment, creating visual interferences. It turns from colour to grey when the voice-over introduces that ‘This is Andrea in Kurdistan.’ The voice-over corrects herself in minute 6.00 by saying, ‘This is a picture of Andrea in Northern Iraq.’ It is not Andrea on the screen, but a picture of her. Shortly after, it turns into a moving image in colour again and we learn something about Andrea’s reason for being in this particular military camp, when she explains why she is in a training camp in Kurdistan. The voice-over points to the travelling aspect of the image more precisely in the remark: ‘Images of armed struggle spread around the globe by satellite channels.’ (Steyerl, 2004, min 5.48). A little later we see Andrea in the form of an image during a demonstration in protest against the imprisonment of the leader of the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) in Germany. Demonstrators carries the same poster that we have seen minutes earlier, when November took us to the cinema in which Steyerl found Andrea on another copy of the same poster that a young boy now carries down the street. This also is the sequence in which we learn what the ‘travelling image’ is:
‘[TRAVELLING IMAGES] Andrea herself became an unfamiliar kind of icon. A travelling image when she was proclaimed a martyr for the Kurdish cause. This is a demonstration in Germany shortly after Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the PKK was taken prisoner. First we picked up and processed travelling images, global icon of resistance. Then Andrea became herself a travelling image wandering over the globe; and image passed on from hand to hand, copied and reproduced by printing presses, video recorders, and the Internet.’

Whilst Pablo Lafuente emphasises in a critical review of Steyerl’s work the populist life of the image as a political instrument (according to Laclau), which is certainly of importance, let us shift our attention again to the image’s request for being on the road. Because another aspect appears to be more urgent: it relates to a spatio-geographic re-configuration in an era of globalisation that T.J. Demos discusses through his proposal of ‘the migrant image,’ which he developed in order to indicate a paradigm-shift in image production, particularly with regard to documentary practice within the domain of contemporary art. Demos touches on the question of truth (traditional claim of the image as a document), when he writes, ‘No doubt our time of disaster and emergency […] placed post-Enlightenment paradigms of truth in crisis’. (Demos, 2013, p. xvi) His analysis exceeds a disciplinary debate, it considers, rather the old debates on the truth of the image as a given, and places the image in relation to geopolitics and globalisation. It is an era shaped by migration policies, refugees and border control while the role of contemporary art is regulated by conservative governments in Europe, such as in the Netherlands and the UK, with Creative Industries highly in demand; it is an era in which the economic crises in the global North dramatically limit contemporary art production in countries such as Greece and Spain; it is an era in which the point of departure in art shifts from the global North to the global South, as Terry Smith argues in his thoughts on the ‘contemporary.’

196 Smith writes: ‘The transnational turn during the1990s and first decade of the twenty-first century—a shift into transitionality, especially with regard to concepts of the nation—has led to the art of the second current becoming predominant on international art circuits, in the proliferating biennales, with profound yet protracted
How does the public exposure of the image relate to such geopolitical shifts, in both its potentials and conflicts? How does the act of exposure relate to such spatio-geographic aspect, when exhibiting certainly is a spatial practice? It is hardly possible to think these questions without considering a politics of verticality, daily disasters for African people who arrive in Lampedusa to immediately be confronted with the fortress ‘Europe,’ and the generation of *Preparados* in Spain. Or in Demos’ words:

‘Representing a series of analytical inquiries into these three interrelated categories—the cultural imaginary of globalization, the representation of statelessness, and the war of images that defines globalization today—*The Migrant Image* also emphasizes the creative ways contemporary artists have imagined forms of life capable of inspiring hope and belief in a better world to come.’ (Demos, 2013, p. xxii)

Back to *November* and the question of the image’s itinerant potential, which I wish would extend into the space of exposure. While Demos proposes with ‘the migrant image’ a theoretical-analytic concept of highlighting ‘the creative ways contemporary artists have imagined forms of life,’ this research wants to take the movement of the image towards questions of exhibiting and making public, i.e. it wants to exceed the work of art as a closed and disciplinary category. It wants to

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197 I put the emphasis on the aspect of ‘space’ for the sake of making the argument, but it permanently resonates in the dimension of time. Such marriage has been discussed more in depth but less with regard to geopolitics in the third issue of the publication series *DISPLAYER*, 2009, which I headed as Editor-in-Chief between 2006 and 2009.

198 The ‘politics of verticality’ result from the analysis in 2002 by architect Eyal Weizman of the Occupied Territories, where the ground is Palestinian (zone X) and the bypass-road crossing that ground is Israeli. It can provide a point of departure to re-think the organisation of space in a time of globalisation when territory is piled up as if on a container boat. See: [http://www.opendemocracy.net/ecology-politicsverticality/article_801.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/ecology-politicsverticality/article_801.jsp) (accessed on April 1, 2013)
address display issues, the space of exposure and ask: does this space provide the means for prolonging the movements of migration into exhibitionary constellation?


However, a detail in *November*, and more precisely in Steyerl’s definition of the ‘travelling image’ that seems to be essential has not been discussed either in Lafuente’s proposal of a ‘populist cinema’ or in Demos’ analytical insight into a ‘truth in crisis’ in an era of globalisation that he calls ‘post-Enlightenment.’ If one listens carefully to the ‘travelling image’ in *November*, then one hears that the multi-stop journey through customs, struggles, image-formats, political programmes and TV channels has turned ‘Andrea herself [into] an unfamiliar kind of icon.’ (Steyerl, 2004) Considering the fact that Andrea had been Hito’s best friend, as she introduced her in the beginning of the film, then the image’s travelling obviously produced a kind of unfamiliarity—towards her friend, but perhaps also towards the way she remembers her. Hito may recognise her friend, of course, but not with the same sense of friendship, closeness and familiarity that she might wish for. All that this image does is travelling—always in the same outfit and in the same look whose greatest variation consists in appearing either in black/white or in colour. But this ‘travelling image,’ always showing the same profile of Andrea’s face, appears to call for Derrida’s ‘One has to know.’

In other words, as elaborated above, this kind of knowledge, which re-appears in *November* over and over again through reproduction (copy/paste) of the same or similar image of Andrea, offers the work of mourning as proposed by Derrida. In fact, this is what mourning is about: the realisation of a loss of a beloved person, and then, the preparation of a ground for surviving sadness, insecurity, loneliness and a deep longing for a person that will only return in an image. But this image needs to always look mostly the same. In other words, *November* can be celebrated as a ‘populist cinema’ breaking through existing frontiers between the world of art and popular culture; it can be introduced as a creative way in which artists can deal with ‘cultural
imaginary of globalization’ (Demos, 2013, p. xxii) when the ‘travelling image’ indicates a multi-national network. But reading it through an itinerant lens, so to speak, which always asks for the possibility to produce its own context, i.e., to transform a given ground, the November can also be seen as the beginning of a work of mourning: looking for the dead body, localising it through the image as the only space at hand. In other words, if we started this brief elaboration on Steyerl’s work with the observation that November tells us about the transformation of a woman from a friend to a militant fighter for a political cause in Kurdistan, then the ‘travelling image’ has become the place for ‘identifying the bodily remains and by localizing the dead.’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 9)

We see a similar version of this kind of image in the film Genet à Chatila (1998/99), for example, a road-movie-like film that takes Genet’s book Un Captif amoureux (1986) as a travel guide in re-tracing Genet’s journey to Jordan and Lebanon in support of the Palestinians; it uses photographs by Bruno Barbey as historical knowledge for localising Genet’s stays in the Middle East in 1971 and 1982 (I will elaborate on it in more detail in the chapter on the archival). It also occurs in Rostov-Luanda (1997) by Abderrahme Sissako, which starts with a scene in a phone service office in Kiffa/Mauretania, where Sissako calls a student-friend in Rostov, now Russia, asking her for an image that he lost; it shows a group of students from Angola, who studied with him in the Soviet Union (I will elaborate on it in more detail in the following part with regard to transformation). It also appears in Gardienne d’Images (2010) by Zineb Sedira, when Sedira, her friend Amina Menia, and Safia Kouaci look at photographs by Safia’s husband, Mohamed Kouaci, who extensively documented the Algerian liberation struggle from the perspective of an Algerian freedom fighter. We find this kind of knowledge also in Annemarie Jacir’s film When I saw you (2012) that re-stages social-collective moments of the fedayeen formatting a children’s generation, similarly picking up the iconic image—a group of men wearing keffeyeh and sitting in the grass that can be read as a visual brand of the Palestinian revolution. This kind of knowledge also appears in Laura Horelli’s The Terrace (2012).

199 Such interpretation finds support in the fact that Andrea Wolf was assassinated as Sehît Ronahî, her nom du guerre in the Kurdish liberation movement, in 1998. Steyerl’s work Lovely Andrea (2007) can be seen as a continuation of the search for a ‘place of safety’ (Derrida, 1994, p.9) in which to mourn for a lost friend.
Listing these projects will not result in a comparative interpretation of each single work, since they follow very different forms of practice, intentions and methodologies. However, all of them indicate the importance of the spatial capacity of the image, when a photograph serves as a travel route in order to retrace a memory in space, and a geopolitical web of relations. All these works operate through a ‘photographic encounter’ (Azoulay, 2008) that potentially exceeds the physical photographic space while, at the same time, providing a space to locate ‘him, he remains there. Let him stay there and move no more!’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 9) ‘One has to know’ requests a manifestation, demonstration and public appearance, in which the image plays the character of an ‘exhibit,’ i.e., the evidence of truth in the court of history. However, continuing with Derrida, the work does not end here.

**Power of transformation**

What if the contemporary traveller, as elaborated above, is no longer a proper delegate of socialism, but appears in the form of a woman, a mere messenger of the images, a foreigner, a ‘writer in revolt,’ (Laroche, 2010), or a wanderer crossing borders continuously, to paraphrase Derrida’s definition of Jean Genet’s travelling to the Palestinians? What if the traveller, even, is a ‘manipulator’ of facts, stories, memories, narrations and observations that he or she has witnessed, concluded or heard of; and moreover, perhaps aims to make public in solidarity with a Cause?

In other words, even the most ambitious and sensitive curatorial work, which

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201 This expression is taken from the book *The Last Genet. A writer in revolt* (2010) by Hadrien Laroche, who focuses particularly on Genet’s activities in relation to the Black Panthers and Palestinians, since the later 1960s. It indicates a crucial point in Genet’s relation to all these revolutionary movements: his writings are not a distanced report from the struggling ground, but the struggle itself arrives in writing, as I have elaborated earlier.

202 ‘[…] Genet’s work based on travel, Genet’s displacement, his geopolitical wanderings, his whole text being a series of border-crossings, expulsions, exiles […]’ (Derrida, 2004, p. 20)

203 This ‘face’ of the traveller borrows from Genet’s confession at the end of the book *Un Captif amoureux*: ‘The construction, organization and layout of the book, without deliberately intending to betray the facts, manage the narration in such a way that I probably seem to be a privileged witness or even a manipulator.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 354)
consists of research, engaging in a practice, reading, and moving around, cannot entirely subscribe to the ‘work of mourning,’ which asks to fix a place. Even the most attentive curator, who wants to make something public by making use of an archived practice, cannot keep intact the ‘place of safety’ that Derrida suggested is the first step in the work of mourning. Re-reading Genet’s line on top of the last proof of the manuscript of *Un Captif amoureux* connects both, the ‘place of safety’ and looking for something that is archived there: ‘Put all the images in language in a place of safety and make use of them, for they are in the desert, and it’s to the desert we must go and look for them.’ (Genet, 1986) The desert offers a safe shelter that enables us to confirm knowledge, but it requests walking around, moving, and searching.

Let us return to the *itinerant* that I introduced in this project as a travel companion: the figure of the *itinerant* not only insists on taking leave from the ‘place of safety,’ on taking a risk and moving on, it also insists on working with that which has been handed over. The *itinerant* is curious, interested in learning things it does not know. It keeps the known knowledge in its place of safety not out of ignorance, but in favour of processing further that which has lost its amplifiers, networks, infrastructures, as well as political power (e.g., real existing socialism, Cold War rhetoric). The *itinerant*, with regard to our archived practice, helps us take on the secured knowledge, not for the sake of re-establishing the same ordering structures as, for example, in the Real-existing Socialism, institutional solidarity protocols or the Cold War rhetoric from which the archived practice departed. These structures will rest in peace, where we have localised them. Rather, such taking on (or making use) departs from a safe place in order to arrive elsewhere: in a globalised world today, and we must figure out what kind of potential it may activate ‘here’ that is—at the same time—this ‘elsewhere.’ Derrida teaches us that such movement in space, this *arrival*, is not simply a copy/paste procedure, as we have understood from the ‘travelling image’ as proposed by Hito Steyerl in the previous chapter, but it comes with a transformative impact on the actual given:

‘In dealing with what-is-to-come [*l’avenir*], with the opening to the to-come [*l’à-venir*]—that is, not only to the future [*futur*], but […] with a movement that consists not only in inscribing itself in a context—and from this point of view there is nothing but context—but thereby also in producing a context, transforming a given [*donné*] context […]’ (Derrida, 2001, p. 19)
The given here is twofold: firstly, in concrete terms, it embraces a range of privately archived images that enabled our project to articulate itself, to unfold a travel route, and to search for its relevance today. And secondly, from a curatorial perspective, the given also consists of the space of exhibiting, i.e., the globalised world of art, in which the archived practice arrives today. In general terms, the ‘exhibition’ appears as a product of European Enlightenment. The paradigm of ‘light’ in this space of exhibiting must be problematised, even more so as we encounter an image practice that has been discussed here in alliance with liberation movements, such as that of the Palestinian people supported by a socialist friendship with the GDR, calling for an independence not just in terms of territoriality but also with regard to people’s image that is meant to be for the people. In other words, an archived image practice from the Cold War period allows us to look at this space in a different way without refusing the potentialities that it provides.\footnote{Let me point out that the term ‘enlightenment’ itself speaks about lightening in its very structure. To enlighten means into light, to illuminate, to spot-light—all attributes that come with the exhibition space that per definitionem ‘holds’ something ‘out’ in public. According to its European modernist grounding, preferably in bright light so it can be seen, watched, looked at, and distinguished from its surrounding. The weight of inspection through the exclusive paradigm of light can be observed, for example, in a film like Spotlight on the Colonies (1950) \url{http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/757} (accessed June 14, 2013) In fact, such spotlighting blinds the gaze for the brutality of colonialism, race ideologies, racisms, exploitation of labour and resources, and colonial capitalism. Blindness did not disappear today, as Fatima El Tayeb elaborated in her remarkable paper ‘European Others: Whiteness and Racial Violence in Colorblind Europe’ at the conference Rethinking Cosmopolitanism at Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin, February 2–3, 2013. But let us not be paralysed by such approach to exhibiting. It can be problematised through a post-colonial lens that suggests ‘to learn to use the European Enlightenment from below’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 3) Such ‘use’ must always be enacted through ‘ab-use’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 3) or an ‘affirmative sabotage.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 510) Spivak concludes: ‘If we can use this “from below” (ab-use, rather), we can have an enlightened practice that is not merely opposition.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 18)}

With regard to the photographic practice from the Cold War period, the given certainly cannot reconstruct a context of production, or let us call it a ‘condition of production’ for the sake of re-connecting to our vocabulary, because it needs a safe place. Transferring the archived practice from a moment in the past, from a period of an international socialist network, therefore cannot re-inscribe itself entirely into a globalised world without the power of transformation, as we will elaborate further in
what follows. Let us not mistake such ‘producing a context, transforming a given’ (Derrida, 2001, p. 9) with the notion of ‘intervention’ as it can be often found nowadays with regard to artistic practice that already seems to have turned into its own new genre.\(^{205}\) The notion of ‘intervention’ links up here with, for example, a kind of emergency action, similarly to intervening in a crisis or into an area of conflict, which—however—does not consider the consequences after such intervention has taken place.


Speaking about ‘transforming a given’ is also different from what we find in UNESCO protocols\(^ {206}\) that operate through the concept of ‘implementation,’ which is the regular term used for a series of cultural activities in Palestine. One example is the

\(^{205}\) See, for example, ‘Interventionen: Neue Orte des Politischen’ [interventions: new spaces of the political] within the symposium Die Kunst der Intervention [the art of intervention], Körber-Stiftung, June 15, 2011.

Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, a project ‘funded by the government of Norway and implemented by the UNESCO Office Ramallah’ as one could read in 2010 on the construction site’s sign. It is a project in which I was involved as an independent curator asked to develop a curatorial concept for a museum on the grounds of an archaeological site and as part of the Peace Centre in Bethlehem, right next to the famous Church of Nativity. The aim of the museum was to produce a space in which the Palestinian history articulates itself in narrated stories instead of a mere display of archaeological objects without transferring their contemporary relevance.

I introduce this project in order to indicate the implementation’s absolute dead-end. The project failed tremendously, because the ‘implementation’ obviously operated literally: UNESCO in Ramallah commissioned an Italian architecture studio to develop exhibition design that was discussed within a week-long workshop with local experts. It was supposed to be finalised afterwards in Milan, and then ‘implemented,’ when ready, into the museum. However, the implementation came with a kind of lobotomistic cut between the exhibition space, the archaeological site that comes with a complexity—politically, culturally, curatorially, the content to be exhibited and a contested (political) relevance of archaeology within the region in the present, and—finally—the necessity to produce something to put on public display, nevertheless. To top it all off, the museum’s concept was basically grounded in a handbook called *Running a Museum* (2004), very seriously handed to me by the UNESCO’s cultural programmer, a very nice Italian architect, as guidelines for conducting this project. It summarises—from UNESCO’s perspective—all the

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207 The Arabic ‘riwaya’ means ‘story’ in English.
208 On October 31, 2011, the UNESCO’s General Conference voted for Palestine to become UNESCO’s 195th official member, which involves embracing all the cultural heritage in the Occupied Territories as cultural heritage of Palestine (and not of Israel). Palestine’s entrance was highly contested, particularly by the U.S. and Germany among other countries. In preparation, the U.S. government under Obama announced a cut of the annual budget for UNESCO, and particularly for the region (ca. 60–80 mio U.S.-Dollar), which was enacted after Palestine was elected. See [http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/11/20111119120755995.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/11/20111119120755995.html) (accessed on June 26, 2013)
209 After gaining insight into this mess of ‘implementation,’ I decided to withdraw from the assignment and leave the UNESCO to solve its, mainly self-produced, irresolvable problems. However, it must be said in fairness that the project also involved a heavily loaded constellation of different interests—besides the architects
seemingly essential strands that a museum should have, from a European perspective. To cite some points from the table of contents: professionalism, accessibility, education, syntax and terminology, staff and financial resources, care and preservation of collections, defining and understanding the visitor, museum management, leadership styles of directors and other senior staff, Evaluation, and— the best—‘Museum Security, including Disaster Preparedness.’ Firstly, ‘implementing’ the idea of a ‘museum’ appears foreign, if not even neo-colonial, in a region that has had no museum thus far; it also particularly and entirely neglects the sensitivity that the region of the Middle East has developed within colonial trajectories since the 18th century. And secondly, if a European political apparatus aims to ‘implement’ a project, then it cannot operate through application of a blueprint, i.e., a handbook that follows the guidelines of its publisher, the International Council of Museums (ICOM). Under such conditions, any possible power of transformation—of the concept of the museum, of the local archaeological site, of collected oral stories, new exhibits, and so on—must collapse. In the following, we will see in more detail what the power of transformation may enable instead.

In other words, ‘transforming a given’ is neither an act of crisis intervention nor a project implementation. It works very differently. With regard to our project, it works along the dynamics of the itinerant, or, at least, this is what I trust the itinerant can do for us. It moves us to the third strand that Derrida suggested: it ‘works, whether it transforms or transforms itself’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 9) and Derrida reasons the necessity of such work in Spectres of Marx:

‘Capitalist societies can always heave a sigh of relief and say to themselves: communism is finished since the collapse of the totalitarianisms of the twentieth

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210 ‘evaluation’ is one of the key-terms in UNESCO-conducted projects.
211 Edward Said’s book Orientalism is crucial here, and since its release it continues to provide a profound source for the historical colonial project in the region, its mechanisms, subtleties, its knowledges, habits, and its meaning for present times.
century and not only is it finished, but it did not take place, it was only a ghost. They do no more than disavow the undeniable itself: a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back.’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 123)

The distinct localisation of a dead body, which can be identified here in the form of images picturing a solidarity project, might be satisfying only for the moment of pointing to that particular place. It won’t remain satisfactory, because we cannot always point to this place; we have to move on, to continue a journey, perhaps to inquire more into the fedayeen practice, to organise daily life, to manage unpredictabilities and moments of insecurity during the journey, and so on. Derrida warns us—if it were to remain in this ‘safe place,’ it will be in danger of being deprived of its existence, simply overlooked, overheard, invisible, covered up by other voices, not recognised, perhaps even its existence would be doubted, as if ‘it was only a ghost.’ And ‘a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back.’ A ghost is a traveller.

Let me introduce briefly at this point the Double Bound Economies213 project that takes my father’s photo archive as a point of departure, because that project reconnects us with archived image practice, with the troubling forces of the Cold War period, and the importance of contemporaneity within the work of transformation. My father worked as a freelance photographer in the GDR. Twice a year, between 1967 and 1990, he was commissioned to travel throughout the Republic and take pictures of workers, mainly female, in the people-owned factories, with the purpose of exhibiting them as part of product presentation at the International Trade Fair in Leipzig. These photographs were supposed to, firstly, frame the products fabricated, notably, in the factories in which my father took the pictures, and secondly, to promote socialist production goods to an international (and thus, also non-socialist) eye. I am referring to it because the project deliberately engaged with the question of what these archived images (ca. 1950) can do for us today? Why do we encounter, unpack and use this archive that has rested for about 20 years at my parent’s house? This project, however, operates through a slightly different set of concerns than the project at hand aims to, with regard to the archive, in particular as Double Bound
Economies explicitly worked with material photographs as exhibition pieces, among many other materials and practices. But there is a connector point with regard to the question of why there seems to be a need for re-visiting these historical moments, particularly in relation to the socialist project on global scale.

In the essay for the publication, Mark Fisher writes that ‘[i]n a time of crisis for capital, such as now, the spectre of communism is once again invoked, not only by those who oppose capitalism, but also by those who defend it.’

Perhaps the proliferation of many related projects in the world of art indicates a travelling noisy ghost that cannot be missed and insists on being heard. No one can help overhearing its rumbling, not even those who have been sure—until the so-called global financial collapse in 2008—of their being on the seemingly winning side of history, i.e., capitalism, when the real existing socialist project collapsed in 1989.

Sturm’s privately archived images departing from a socialist trans-national geography also produce such noise, one that has continued over the past few years since I started the project. It might be the reason why this photographic practice from the 1980s kept returning to my research, to the world of art, to journeys to the Middle East, and into discussions and debates with friends. Fisher ends his essay by stating that these photographs from the GDR do not transmit the ‘actuality of really existing socialism […] rather, the virtuality of a communism which never actually arrived […] ‘[we] can see them as the projective simulation of a society to come.’

We can certainly adopt this observation for our project. However, our project does not stop there. Rather the opposite, because we may ask, figure out, and

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215 Let me list here only a few: Reading Capital (2004) by Milica Tomić, marxism today (prologue) and use! value! exchange! (2010) by Phil Collins, or the ongoing research-project Playtime: Capital (2012–present) by Isaac Julien.
216 It has been troubling and fascinating at once to hear from Hans Otto Bräutigam, who, as a state secretary, headed the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany in the GDR from 1982 to 1989, in an interview: ‘The history of the GDR was very much influenced by the magnetic attraction of the affluent FRG, whose economic system was much more successful and efficient.’ (Bräutigam, 2012, p. 29) See ‘Inscribing, Recording,’ in: Mende, D., Blaschke, E., Linke, A. (eds.) Double Bound Economies, 2012, pp. 21–33. It was impossible to suggest a different perspective on economics in the German/German comparison than this one; it simply was not within his protocol, and thus, we can speculate that a West German voice today also needs to learn to localise the dead, and to begin ‘the work of mourning.’
speculate on what this society could be and how it could look. It sounds too great a task, as if a curatorial project were supposed to save the world, secure us in a time of crisis or propose an alternative to ‘capitalist realism’ (Fisher, 2008). But let me put it this way: if the privately archived practice from the 1980s cannot be located on the side of the ‘sentimental realism’ (Sekula, 1987, p. 450) as Allan Sekula describes the stratum of photographic archive that looks like family pictures or private snapshots, and if these images instead indicate a highly political moment, within as well as through social relations and geopolitical exigency of socialist internationalism, then engaging with this practice today invites us to speculate within such dimension: a society to come that listens, reflects, perhaps responds and speaks through the rumbling noise of an unsettling past. In fact, this is not asked often at all from the space that we—artists, curators, theorists—populate in the form of projects, exhibitions, texts, research, journeys, field work, and talks in public within a globalised world. It brings to mind an observation by Irit Rogoff with regard to the emergence of ‘geo-cultures,’ i.e., of trans-cultural and trans-national alliances in the world of art, of self-organised structures that take place outside large-scale institutions but contribute tremendously to international biennales, new forms of art practice, informal professional network, and modes of knowledge production that move below institutional-academic structures:

‘What is at stake here is a recognition that politics cannot fully account for the conditions that we live in, so while these conditions are political in nature, they require a far broader range of models that will allow us to account for them and their effects, at different registers. […] As a result we came to inhabit a far more international, far more socially attenuated, more formally adventurous and more intellectually grounded art world than ever before.’ (Rogoff, 2009, p. 107)

**Being in politics**

Let us understand the rumbling noise, which Derrida attaches to the power of transformation, through a note by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in relation to the ability

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of crossing borders that I wish to take on in our field of activities, and which Derrida’s ghost is obviously doing all the time:

‘What I am proposing is not a politicization of the discipline. We are in politics. I am proposing an attempt to depoliticize in order to move away from a politics of hostility, fear, and half solutions.’ (Spivak, 2003, p. 4)

Such being in politics puts, firstly, a demanding and serious pressure on what we do, because the space of art is then no longer the remaining island of freedom within ‘capitalist realism’ in a globalised world, or a protected and peculiar chamber that would secure a place of observation. Being in politics is also different from coming up with a political project, to mean a project that shows political content in big letters. Returning to our archived photographic practice from the 1980s, being in politics requests the problematising of the dimension of solidarity, as we have done in the previous chapter; it also requests the exceeding of a mere analysis of the visual grammar of the representational surface. Being in politics here also alludes to the fact that these images look like family pictures, unspectacular in terms of a political message, the reason why they were not selected by press agencies back then; and why they do not appear suspicious to a security pattern, e.g., at the Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, which specialises in identifying the visual grammar that carries the image of a ‘terrorist.’ It also unfolds a being in politics that links us—working with it today—to that noisy and uncanny voice, which cannot be cut-off from the fact that we are confronted by a heavily dispersed, folded and complex terrain: the end of the Cold War has substantially changed the geopolitical world order. This tremendous shift spread over all the 20th century generations born after 1945 who have been implicated politically, ideologically, mass-culturally and practice-related (in our case, of image production) within the geopolitics of the Cold War map. Such spatio-geographic relations have not just been replaced by different ones, which we have seen amplified after 9/11 by new rhetoric of ‘axis of evil,’ ‘coalition of the willing,’ or ‘war on terrorism.’ But the period of the Cold War, including its totalitarian systems as well as countering forces such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the different forms of
communism, phantasm of solidarity,\textsuperscript{218} and even this—in comparison—tiny but really existing photographic practice in the Middle East in alliance with a disappeared country (GDR) has produced really existing subjects that still exist today and through which this project comes into being.

In other words, and the second point for now, the archived photographic practice is an active network of practices, certainly as it had been rehearsed and performed in the 1980s. In doing so, it rejects clear-cut divisions between professional territories such as artist, curator, archivist, historian, or theorist. It troubles the politics of singled-out positions of the militant, the leftist intellectual, the fedayeen, revolutionary, the socialist, or capitalist. It ignores a curatorial practice that simply places things on public display. It also refuses the division between administrative functions, content research and exhibition productions within working processes as they can be found in the UNESCO cultural programmes’ guidelines in relation to ongoing museum projects in non-European regions.\textsuperscript{219} It needs, for example, to turn the international curator into a delegate of socialism, it needs her (the curator) to become a \textit{would-be historian} who tries to trace all these geopolitical manifestations and forms of articulation of a solidarity project, it needs to think the space of exhibiting as something other than what the conventional gallery space provides.

Speculating on being \textit{in} politics (particularly what one can do within and through it) \textit{displaces} all these borders between professions, generations, disciplines, political apparatuses and actual acting subjects. This displacement, which also speaks again of a spatial and even geopolitical exigency, as much as of the ‘work of mourning,’ makes us arrive—after all—to the third ‘thing’ that Derrida calls upon for making use of our current living conditions, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The displacement results from the struggle with such noisy and rumbling

\textsuperscript{218} I elaborated on the phantasm of solidarity in the chapter \textit{Concerning Solidarity.}

\textsuperscript{219} UNESCO, Boylan, P. J. (ed.), \textit{Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook}, 2004, ICOM, Paris. The book, tellingly, is supposed ‘to provide an overview of the key aspects of the operation of a museum that is anxious to serve the needs and hopes of its visitors and the wider community in the 21st century. […] the rapid trend towards the decentralisation of such functions [maintenance and the management of the museum buildings and of both financial and personnel operations], and therefore the transfer of such responsibilities to the museums themselves, has made both general and personnel management far more important, and a key responsibility of the director and other senior staff in particular.’ (UNESCO, Boylan, 2004, p. vii)
return from the past; it might be scary for a moment, but it should not paralyse us. Derrida writes:

‘[…] this frontier between the public and the private is constantly being displaced, remaining less assured than ever, as the limit that would permit one to identify the political. And if this important frontier is being displaced, it is because the medium in which it is instituted, namely, the medium of the media themselves (news, the press, telecommunications, techno-tele-discursivity, techno-tele-iconicity, that which in general assures and determines the spacing of public space, the very possibility of the res publica and the phenomenality of the political), this element itself is neither living nor dead, present nor absent: it spectralizes. (Derrida, 1994, p. 63)

In order to conclude this section, let us briefly take a look at the film project Rostov – Luanda (1997) by Abderrahmane Sissako. In this film, Sissako himself travels along the route of a black/white tattered photograph. It can be quickly described: the photo shows a group of seven students of which Sissako is one, among other black as well as Asian male students, and Natalia Lvoyna, a young woman from Rostov where the young African studied during the 1980s.


This journey, along that of the photograph, takes us into a shattered contemporaneity in Angola that has, in 1997, been in a disastrous civil war for two decades. Like so many young Africans, Sissako went to the Soviet Union in the 1980s for political and technical training. There he met an Angolan, Baribanga, whose confidence in his
country's future embodied Sissako's own hopes for the continent. But the intervening years of civil war, which broke out immediately after Angola liberated itself from Portuguese colonialism in 1975, between Angolan factions, each backed by a superpower, have devastated the optimism of Sissako's generation. Sissako begins his search by returning to his birthplace, Kiffa, a small town in the desert interior of Mauritania. His cousin can't understand why as soon as he comes home he must move on to Angola but Sissako explains ‘Man is born to travel, to suffer, to meet people, to learn customs; I go to Angola to live my adventure.’ (Sissako, 1997)

Everywhere Sissako looks he finds evidence of displacement: he meets two orphans, by definition disconnected from their origins. One of them, Nandinho, lost his parents in the war and joined the multitudes of children living on the streets; he is now staying with his uncle—but we cannot be sure for how long. Sissako also asks a group of young people on the street whether they can recognise anyone on the photograph; the arrival of this photograph constitutes a temporary group of people, gathering around this picture, pointing on it, and recalling friends who possibly could further any help. He approaches frequenters of a bikers’ bar, where, after a series of abortive meetings, he finally, opening the final sequence of the film, meets a person who knows Baribanga and may even provide him with his address in East Berlin. Sissako also asks his driver Eurice, who then begins to tell his story of how he lived through the years after the independence, his anxiety over maintaining the house he was given by his European foster-father who returned to Portugal in 1975; and his lost dream of becoming a Formula One driver. The Angolan core of this documentary is framed by an interview with a resigned but engaging young professional woman. Her pessimism, in a sense, serves as a ‘shadow’ or counterpoint to the earlier optimism of young African students such as Sissako and Baribanga, who both stand for a generation that had left the continent in the 1980s full of hope for a ‘new’ Angola. She feels that Africa is utterly hopeless, pointing to Zaire and Rwanda. She confesses that, unlike Baribanga, she was never really political, participating in the MPLA merely to be with her more militant friends. Her father, in particular, as she tells us in the beginning of the interview, insisted that she should learn a European life style: she learned French, as well as how to play the piano. But, despite the hopeless situation, she feels ‘called by the soil’ to return to Angola.

People’s displacement, which appears to be a living condition for more than one Angolan generation in the decades-long civil war, finds a resonating chamber in
the journey Sissako’s takes along that of this one photograph. It does not travel, as in Hito Steyerl’s film *November* (2004), instead, each exposure of it—in the most literal form, namely, being shown to a range of different people—initiates a public platform, and a network of people that all share a similar trajectory. The displacement of the frontier separating the private from the public, that Derrida proposes as a transformative potential from the work of mourning towards the arrival of ‘what-is-to-come [l’avenir], with the opening to the to-come [l’à-venir]’ (Derrida, 2001, p. 19), occurs in the displaced image. It is not a displacement in the physical sense, but exposing this photograph to a person, to a group of people, and also towards us who are looking at it throughout the film, induces an opening that ‘determines the spacing of public space, the very possibility of the *res publica*’ (Derrida, 1994, p. 63)
MICRO-POLITICAL INSISTENCY

In the following text, I aim to fathom an *itinerant* potential in the privately archived images (and not the already exhibited final photographic products) through an archival lens. It will enable me to take a journey from a historical moment to a contemporary stage. The archival condition is here not thought along a category of quantity, but, again, refers to the multiple faces of a practice. It cannot be taken out of photography, because ‘the camera is literally an archiving machine, every photograph, every film is *a priori* an archival object.’ (Enwezor, 2008, p. 12)

Image 33: Youssef Khotoub explains the selection process for single photographs, WAFA agency in Ramallah in November 2011. He comments: ‘The beginning of the photo is talking about the aim of the photo. Here, the woman is working and interested in the work and behind her is another woman, they are working. It was the best factory in the PF on the West Bank. The sons of the martyrs were also wearing clothes from this factory. No spaces around the picture. Mr. Horst chose the best photos and then they printed those large.’ (Khotoub, 2011) Photo: Armin Linke.

Claiming an archival moment within this practice will allow us to look into the surplus (in allusion to the economic strand). It will provide a perspective that makes use of image production in our times of ‘supermodernity.’ (Augé, 1995) In other

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220 ‘The three figures of excess which we have employed to characterize the situation of supermodernity—overabundance of events, spatial overabundance, the
words, the following part of this writing attempts to undercut a withdrawal from the
distribution of images in public—as Godard suggested with regard to the Palestinian
Cause in 1970—instead, it wishes to fathom a transformative process exactly through
bringing the archived photographic practice to public attention. Archival materials are
not necessarily documents in the conventional sense, meaning that their reason to
exist goes beyond the authentication and functionality of a historical moment as
History. It does so because an archive provides the spaces, temporalities and
conditions for unfolding narratives that contradict, counter and comment on each
other’s public moment. In other words, an archive ‘shelter[s] itself and sheltered, to
conceal itself.’ (Derrida, 1995, p. 10) For us, this means that unfolding the privately
archived images, thus, conceals the visibility of the official press footage in this
moment. Vice versa, looking at the official press coverage literally covers up its
educational formative moments in the 1980s, as well as its process and conditions of
production, which, as we have learned, delineate from the privately archived images.
Such mutual countering makes the archive a valuable source to work with. Let us
 unfold why, and how it informs the itinerant potential of an image.

**Unspectacular protection**

To begin with, the never-published and non-official photographs from the early 1980s
are archival material. This fact might be problematic from a discourse-analytical
perspective. As elaborated by Michel Foucault, the archive emerges through ordering
logics and signifying systems, as when he writes: ‘The archive is first the law of what
can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events…it
is the system of its enunciability.’ (Foucault, 2002/1972, p. 145f.) From this
perspective, Sturm’s photographs are doubly archival material in the discourse-
analytical sense, because they linger, dwell and slumber, fairly unorganised, in private

individualization of references—make it possible to grasp the idea of supermodernity
without ignoring its complexities and contradictions […]’ (Augè, 1995, p. 40) For us,
moreover, particularly informative is the excess of time: ‘So it is with an image of
excess—excess of time—that we can start defining the situation of supermodernity,
while suggesting that, by the very fact of its contradictions, it offers a magnificent
field for observation and, in the full sense of the term, an object of anthropological
research.’ (Augè, 1995, p. 30)
homes. It comes closer to forces of domiciliation,\(^{221}\) which Jacques Derrida defines as an archive’s topological condition, in which the archived ‘call[s] on or impose[s] the law’ (Derrida, 1995, p. 10). The photographs at Sturm’s private archive in Berlin have archive numbers, they are stored and accessible, on a shelf, they dwell in a shelter that is maintained by an ‘archon,’ i.e., a person of power that opens the door, allows access, shares the living space and narrates the image’s story. In our case, the person of power is the material’s photographer himself: Horst Sturm in Berlin or Youssef Khotoub, and Sturm’s colleague and friend Mahmoud Nofal in Ramallah. These male characters literally comply with the ‘archic, in truth patriarchic function, without which no archive would ever come into play or appears as such.’ (Derrida, 1995, p. 10) The project would not have happened in this way, had they refused to meet.

But something is different. It is not so much about the relations of power, i.e., the functionality and topological protocol, as it departs from the image itself, which seems to have taken over the archon’s rules without subscribing to the law of language. Something becomes different in the movement of travelling, which has to do with a transfer not only in time and space, but also with a kind of transgression. It emerges from the image’s itinerant desire that has settled on the micro-political side of the archival. This desire for the itinerant—which I would like to attach to the individually archived image that interrelates with the archive’s micro-political vision—can be described as following: the individually archived images are able to travel easily in a bag, between books, without an institutional permission, without a copyright fee, without iconic heritage, on a USB-stick, or on a computer drive; they can be copied from one format to the other. They are also most likely not recognised as a continuation of militant struggle by other means, because their visual narrative appears too banal, too unspectacular, and simply not appropriate for the function of evidence for any revolutionary action. They do not fit into security protocols and pattern recognition programmes predicting what a ‘terrorist,’ a militant struggle or a liberation movement looks like.\(^{222}\) It brings to mind the notion of ‘poor images,’ (Steyerl, 2009) which Hito Steyerl usefully developed from a contemporary lifestyle

\(^{221}\) ‘of domiciliation, with this house arrest, that archives take place […] with this archic, in truth patriarchic, function, without which no archive would ever come into play or appear as such.’ (Derrida, 1995, p. 10)

in and through images that makes us upload, download, send, receive, copy, paste, of course take, but also to crop, dislike, cut and delete images everyday. Steyerl calls them ‘the contemporary Wretched of the Screen, the debris of audio-visual production, the trash that washes up on the digital economies’ shores.’ (Steyerl, 2009) Our individually archived images indeed come out as leftover, surplus, and not quite attractive enough to use for the Cause on public display. They have no promising exchange-value on the market of the spectacle at all, even though they are totally embedded within the spectacle, which is also the only choice these images have, as Genet speculated on the ‘excess in display.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 99) This is a paradoxical condition, because this kind of image is permanently in danger of being invisible, although it pretty much exists as a surface and a body, to be overviewed, neglected, and ignored. At the same time, such highly precarious living condition is exactly what protects them from being caught and categorised as a signifier for—in our case—a militant struggle. Along this line, the ‘poor image’ re-politicises its public appearance without calling it political action, without writing it on protest banners, and without operating through stereotypical protocols, as we discussed in the previous chapters. Such an image, which we hopefully do not overload with our plans and aspirations, carries the ability to organise

‘anonymous global networks just as it creates a shared history. It builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates.’ (Steyerl, 2009)

Travelling between Berlin and the West Bank as a citizen with a German passport implies an arrival or departure via the Tel Aviv airport, which usually comes with a security check, a bag inspection as well as an interrogation at the airport. However, the images’ captured informality and sociability protects them from being potentially confiscated, interrogated, analysed, and so on, although they departed from a militant

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223 ‘But spectacle is only spectacle, and it may lead to mere figment, to no more than a colourful carnival; and that is a risk the Panthers ran. Did they have any choice?’ (Genet, 1986, p. 99)
moment in the conflict. At first glance, it seems easy to categorise them as photographs perhaps from a family album, or any other private environment, but they are not. They are closer to ‘souvenirs’ in the sense of Jean Genet who meant his last book *Un Captif amoureux* to be a memoir-writing, like a ‘souvenir’ that makes him ‘remember like an owl. Memories come back in “bursts of images.” Writing this book, I see my own images far, far away, dwarf size, and more and more difficult to recognize with age.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 96)

The lack of institutional support, the absence of an agency’s support, or another formalized maintenance makes them vulnerable, fragile, and places them on a marginal terrain. This weakness puts them possibly in danger of being thrown away by a son, daughter, caretaker or a curator who sees in these images nothing more than a gathering of some men around a dinner table. However, their strengths come with exactly this structural (signifying) weakness that degrades their economic validity on the scale of commercial viability, and subverts a security alert-system that builds its detectors on forces signifying what ‘resistance,’ and ‘terror,’ as well as ‘misery’ and ‘poverty’ are supposed to look like. But what if this archived practice only holds relevance for those who worked through it? What if the micro-political remains decipherable only within a closed circuit of confidentiality? ‘What if this book [*Un Captif amoureux*] were only a mirror-memoir for me alone, on which I conjured up my own shape among a few others in a time not of their choosing but of mine?’ (Genet, 1986, p. 381) What if they only have a certain validity for Sturm,

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224 An anecdote from one of my recent journeys to Israel and Palestine: In Ramallah, I met Reem Shilleh to talk about the progress of her and Mohanad Yaquby’s research on the Palestinian militant cinema in relation to the Documentary Film Festival in Leipzig. Reem gave me two small brochures that contained stills from films such as *The Fifth War*, directed by Monica Maurer in 1979, *L’Olivier* directed by Ali Akika et al. in 1976, and so on. At the airport Ben Gurion in Tel Aviv, these brochures raised serious interest by one of the security guards and made him call his supervisor. The supervisor asked: ‘What kind of material is this?’—‘I don’t know. I haven’t looked at it yet. Why?’—‘It is propaganda material that claims that Israel deprives the Palestinians of their right to exist.’

225 Curator here in a bureaucratic sense: When I looked up on my online-dictionary a translation for the German term ‘Verwalter,’ revealingly enough, ‘curator’ appeared as a possible term in English.
Khotoub, and Ibrahim, but even for them their brightness undergoes a process of eclipsing that makes it ‘more and more difficult to recognize with age,’ if we followed Genet words above? A beginning to answering these questions lies in the fact, firstly, those privately archived images, suggesting a collective-social intimacy outside of the macro-political frame, point to a highly political project that rather makes a requests on the reverse, namely: the private cannot be separated from the public, and the social not from the personal. 226

Image 34: Horst Sturm points himself out on a picture documenting his meeting with Yasser Arafat, which took place during a night in 1981 in Beirut. Arafat is on the very left, to the very right is Sturm and next to Sturm is Mahmoud Nofal (Head of the Photo Section of the Palestinian Press Agency WAFA) Berlin, 2012. Archive Horst Sturm. Photo: Armin Linke.

Although, or rather, because, we do not find the images that I travelled with in an institutional archive, but in private homes, their implicit informality and sociability unfolds the ground for countering and problematising an ideological protocol. 227 This does not mean that one partners with the reiterated slogan ‘Things weren't all that bad

227 The ideological protocol resides in the official press images, in the state apparatus, in the totalitarian agenda of the Soviet-socialist doctrine (in the GDR)—as elaborated previously at various points.
at all.’ Instead, looking at the informal side offers the possibility to complicate its everyday, banality, institutionalisation and disorder. And a second line into these questions is simple: the memory’s eclipses, the fading sharpness, blurring images, the aging, and the low resolution, are an intrinsic part of the project. Learning from Genet, the process of aging delivers a relevant resource for re-entering a revolutionary moment without nostalgia or longing for ‘good old times,’ when socialism was still a really existing project. He writes:

‘Perhaps I needed this story in the past in order to understand the time and place they’d taken on in my memory; so that via the writing I could see a little more clearly the struggle as a whole, its advances and retreats, resolutions and whims, altruism and greed.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 381)

Taking on Genet’s writing that aims to clear blindness from his view so as to see a certain impurity within the struggle, supports my curatorial intervention in releasing Sturm’s privately archived images into a contemporary practice. Their main purpose was not the transmission of a political programme to an international community, but an utter banality that departs from them—‘its advances and retreats, resolutions and whims, altruism and greed,’ as Genet describes it in relation to his experience of being among the revolutionaries—‘that locates the macro-political on a turbulent ground. It makes it hard to categorise the photographic practice and place it in a secure position. It fits neither into protocol photography, propaganda, family pictures, nor reportage. Travelling with these images to Beirut and Ramallah, meaning more precisely, encountering through them the former students and photographers, nearly 30 years after these images were produced, exposes predominantly speechlessness, silence, a missing language, misunderstandings, incomprehensibilities, and gestures. These forms of articulation reside outside a ‘system of [the archive’s] enunciability’ (Foucault, 2002/1972, p. 146) and outside any law of speaking, however, within an archival moment whose unspeakable and psycho-affective exterior is part of it. The photograph’s micro-political face slumbers both outside and inside of a Foucauldian

This generic slogan stands (from a post-GDR perspective) for that part of the GDR-population that profited from the political system in some way and lost their personal privileges after the collapse in 1989.
archive’s juridical paradigms. It asks to take the archive beyond its patriarchic function.

Gathering together

Travelling with them allows for the recognition of the images’s ‘micro-political vision.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 13) It emerges from a historical horizon that does not carve out pictures and stories from history books, films that had been produced as militant instruments, or news reports, and it does not recall silhouettes of the Palestinian struggle on our computer screens. Instead, this historical horizon is an open surrounding whose end is not quite measurable. It hosts a plethora of possibilities; most of them literally still in the air, not quite formulated, and existing as floating signifiers. They form a volatile zone in which the system of enunciability simply does not operate in the way it has learned, and is used to, continuously on public display. Let me repeat, once more to be sure, that the archived images at Sturm’s, as well as Khotoub’s private houses cannot be cut-off from the official press images. Together they gather an archival substance, but in a way different from what Foucault had proposed. Displacing the privately archived images from the archon’s house to an open-ended journey sabotages ‘the law of what can be said’ (Foucault, 2002/1972 p. 145) During that journey, they process a linguistic disorder resulting from ‘the sensation mobilized by the tension of the paradoxical dynamics of this experience’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 13). This experience consists of looking at them, and

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230 I borrow here Heidegger’s definition of the ‘horizon,’ when he writes: ‘In consequence the horizon is still something else besides a horizon. Yet after what has been said, this something else is the other side of itself, and so the same as itself. You say that the horizon is the openness which surrounds us.’ In: Martin Heidegger, ‘Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking,’ Discourse on Thinking [Gelassenheit—1959], translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 64.
232 ‘The archontic power, which also gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, must be paired with what we will call […] the act of consigning through gathering together signs.’ (Derrida, 1995, p. 10)
more precisely: encountering a displaced image of a moment of solidarity that departed from a socialist-international project in the 1980s and arrived in an environment of a ‘pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education’ (Fisher, 2009, p. 14) The latter tangles up with ‘capitalist realism’ as defined by Fisher, which is more than an economic system. It is a condition; it points towards a global economic change that effected as well as formatted the globalised world of art, as elaborated earlier. On a local level, the image’s presence in 2013 might also reveal a recent displacement within the region itself: it departs from a strong liberation movement and revolution that have not finished yet and arrives in a contemporary Palestinian society struggling with a politics of normalisation through its own government.\textsuperscript{233} The paradoxical moment emerges exactly from the space in-between the official and the informal, macro-political and micro-political, familiar and unfamiliar, 1980 and 2013, Berlin and Ramallah, art and non-art, and so on. The image does not travel only from one location to another, but also from a macro-political programme—such as party programmes, structural violence, brutality of war, dominant organisational forces within a group, external requests, and an official homogenised visual grammar—into a micro-political vision, which we can entrust with countering, but also troubling vigour, also when it comes to the domain of contemporary art. All these strands constitute sensations that exceed the borders of that which can be said.

There must be, therefore, another kind of language for exactly this kind of substance that travels around, somewhat unprotected, in someone’s bag; that waits undefined in a cellar of a private apartment, in the leftover from a seemingly worthless parental inheritance, and in the surplus of photo agencies;\textsuperscript{234} that exists on a


\textsuperscript{234} I would like to refer here to the public seminar \textit{Precarious Archives}, organized by Dora Imhof and Philip Ursprung, in the frame of the opening of the exhibition \textit{Double Bound Economies} on April 10, 2013, at the institute of Theory and History of Architecture (gta) at ETH Zurich. The seminar aimed to discuss the ‘archive’ beyond a discourse-analytical approach, as we find it particularly in Michel Foucault’s groundbreaking elaboration in \textit{Archaeology of Knowledge} (originally published in French in 1969). Foucault’s theory reaches its limits with regard to the many archives
shelf, perhaps, of a press agency, but totally unorganised; or that hopes for better conditions—financially, politically as much as climatically\(^{235}\)—but, nevertheless, exists with the potency of undertaking a journey.

Image 35: Photo course, Beirut, 1981: Horst Sturm, Mahmoud Nofal (Head of the Photo Section of Palestinian Press Agency WAFA), and photographer/translator (from left). Archive Horst Sturm.

outside of (Western) institutional frameworks as in relation to the archived images practice in the project at stake.

\(^{235}\) In particular, as the mix of the latter is a fact that I have been facing while aiming to build up a structure to help digitalise the photo archive of the Palestinian Press Agency WAFA, storing photographs from the period of the 1970’s, in Gaza. They are archived in extremely unstable weather conditions, and on the top, financial resources are missing (both from the PA authority obviously and international support). Another case relates to the film archive of the Cinématheque in Guinea-Bissau, a former colony of Portugal, whose cinema production was an essential instrument in the anti-colonial struggle and liberation movement.
Let us turn our view again to the collective-social gatherings, discussions over dinner and informal political meetings between the educator and his students during the photo courses. Tariq Ibrahim remembers that

‘When Horst came here, we felt that he was one of us and we loved him. We never felt that he was our teacher. I think he was a well-known person in Germany, but he was so down to earth that we never felt we were his students. He never praised himself, but I felt that he was an important person. […] During a month of training, we had intensive lessons not just in the lab! Even when we were eating! Because as you know, time passes quickly. For example, he taught us three methods of taking photos: You can shoot a picture suddenly. You can plan to shoot it. Or you can shoot it using both methods. He taught us these three methods.’ (Ibrahim, 2011)

This description delineates an educational environment that actively tried to continue and improve an image practice within non-hierarchical structures, i.e., a mutual exchange between teacher and students as rather equal partners. We also hear from this description the importance of social structures, which supports my argument that this archived image practice must be discussed not only through its outcomes, but also through its conditions of production. In other words, the social (eating) and spatial (outside the lab) parameters are not simply anecdotes. They break an image practice into various strands that together form a network of practice, rather then just photography in a narrow sense. Such an educational set-up differs deeply from institutionalised structures as it becomes apparent, for example, in the film *The Black Star* (1965, dir. by Joachim Hellwig), which reports about solidarity relations of the GDR with Ghana. In this film, the East German Grace Arnold teaches Political Economy in a classroom of ca. 100 students. A lectern spatially separates the teacher from the students. The reason to conduct a class in this way certainly arises out of the

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236 A small note: her first name does not sound not East German, and it does not appear to be a usual East German adoption of a name that sounds ‘foreign,’ as it has been a practice since the 1970s, in particular. My given name ‘Doreen,’ for instance, is a name that was intended to attach a certain international dimension to a girl who grew up in a country that issued international travelling only according to political protocol.
size of the class, very large in comparison to the photo courses in Beirut, where we speak of ca. 15 participants per course. However, even though these two different settings are difficult to compare due to different frameworks and content, we can argue that the photo courses in Beirut, and particularly also Sturm’s way of teaching, suspended institutional protocols of solidarity.

The educational-social, as well as non-hierarchical dimension of this archived practice seems to resonate in a call by Jean-Luc Godard from 1970, when he worked on a Fateh commissioned film demanding a stronger presence of the people, the fighters and workers. ‘In the newspaper published by Fateh we still see too many pictures of leaders and too few of fighters.’ (Godard, 1970, p. 138) In contrast to Godard, Horst Sturm, as a delegate from a really existing socialist state, was the right person ‘to interact with us’ (Ibrahim, 2011) since he also arrived there as a delegate of the working class. Sturm appeared to be just the right partner, i.e., there was a silent—ideological—agreement between the teacher, who did not appear as a teacher in the hierarchical way; and the students, who brought in a knowledge from the organisational structure of the militant struggle, which helped to welcome Sturm as one of them.

‘My friend. My friend!’

In order to counter the archival image as a historical-representational document by introducing the potential of the itinerant, let me elaborate on an example that tells us how the itinerant does NOT work. The Swiss filmmaker Richard Dindo realised in 1999 the film Genet à Chatila, in which he uses photographs by the French photographer Bruno Barbey as a travel guide in re-visiting places, locations and people in Jordan that Jean Genet visited in 1970/71. Genet à Chatila is a road movie, close to a documentary, along Jean Genet’s grandiose book Un Captif amoureux. I will take one sequence from the film in order to designate what is itinerant in an

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237 Genet à Chatila (1999, 99 min) is based on Jean Genet’s book UncCaptif amoureux in which Genet reflects on his journeys to Jordan (1970/71) and Beirut (1982) in support of the Palestinians; it also takes up a journey to the Chicago (1970) where Genet travelled to in support of the Black Panthers movement. Un Captif amoureux is neither a book ‘about’ the Palestinian revolution nor the Black Panthers but, instead, it continuously writes through the experience of being limited—both in support of people in struggle from the ‘outside’ and within the means of writing itself. The book brilliantly unfolds the displacement of memory through writing.
image. In *Genet à Chatila*, Barbey’s photograph travels physically from Paris to the Jordanian city of Irbid in the form of a printout, much as an *itinerant* image would do. It also travels in a travel bag, between books, and as a cheap copy.

In the following text, I will elaborate on why Dindo’s approach to the itinerant potential of an archival material, however, neglects its micro-political potency, despite the fact that it visually speaks about the social-collective structures among the *fedayeen*, as we have defined the micro-political in the previous chapter. What kind of photographs did Dindo choose, which would allow his protagonist Mounia (Mounia Raoui) to meet Palestinians in Jordanian refugee camps: about ten years earlier than Sturm, between 1969 and 1971, the French photojournalist Bruno Barbey traveled to Jordan several times to document the freedom fighters’ daily life, their armed and unified appearance, military preparations, and social-collective gatherings. They wear *keffiyeh*, and often a gun—these have become recognisable icons of the Palestinian revolution, but are not as present in the photographs from 1980. Barbey’s photographs can still be found in the archive of the well-known cooperative French photo agency.
MAGNUM. Not a single one, however, shows the photographer Barbey among the fedayeen, in contrast to Sturm’s images. Barbey neither conducted photo courses there nor left photo material with them,\(^{238}\) which noticeably draws an essential difference with the East German’s photographic activities in the region. However, his photos sketch out the informality and sociability among the fighters during that time in the early 1970s, which is highlighted by Genet’s presence in these photographs. Barbey met the French writer Jean Genet in the Baq'a refugee camp, near Amman, in 1971. The image at stake here must have been a day in the early months of 1971, since we know that Genet arrived in the region in October 1970 already, on the invitation of Mahmoud el Hamchri\(^{239}\) and left the region in March 1971 again.

One of Barbey’s images acts in minute 61 of *Genet à Chatila*. The place of its appearance is the Abu Bker Hotel in Irbid in Jordan, which is the city where Genet met the young fedayeen Hamza whose image followed Genet throughout his life\(^{240}\). In 1999, Mounia arrives in the Abu Bker Hotel that Genet described:

> ‘I’d thought for so long about that street and the white door into the courtyard—and in my memory the street didn’t slope down; it was level. That’s how I’d described it to the Palestinian manager at the Abu Bker hotel near the customs post in Irbid in 1972. He’d warned me against going back there. “I’d like to have news from Hamza and his mother.”’ (Genet, 1986, p. 410)

This description helps Mounia to re-visit the hotel in which Genet stayed almost 30 years earlier. She enters the building, looks around and finally encounters an elderly man, possibly the hotel’s manager, sitting at a table. She is served tea. And she presents to him one of Barbey’s photographs from 1971 in the Baq'a refugee camp. It shows four fedayeen and Genet in a casual moment, one of them must have just

\(^{238}\) As confirmed in an E-mail from Bruno Barbey, May 2013.

\(^{239}\) Leader of the P.L.O. in Paris in 1970.

\(^{240}\) ‘Who or what made me to come back to this house? The wish to see Hamza again after fourteen years?’ (Genet, 1986, p. 67) ‘But what will remain with me is this little house in Irbid where I slept for one night, and fourteen years during which I tried to find out if this night ever happened. This last page of my book is transparent.’ (Genet, 1986, p. 430)
made a joke, because we see how they bubble over with laughter. Genet reaches out his arms slightly towards the guy who joked, so that he appears more in proximity with him than the others, while the fedayeen on the right has taken Genet’s arm as if gaining some hold from it. They relate to each other through gestures of intimacy. Admittedly, the slight bodily contact signals a sense of courtesy.

The film briefly portrays the image in a close-up as if it were a character in its own right. The hotel manager looks at it. It is displayed in front of him on the table in the entrance area. While pointing to the image, the man at Abu Bker Hotel in 1999 says in English: ‘My friend.’ These seem the only words that he knows in English. He knows Genet! Mounia sits next to a person who seemingly remembers this French man! Linking this moment with my own journeys in search of people who remember Sturm’s presence in the region, this is an incredible moment on a journey. It gives reason to wait for the unexpected through which a space opens—a space of memory, of possibilities and of actuality (as part of a contemporary project), that reaches beyond one’s own research, learned knowledge, and history books. Everyone who has undertaken a long journey to meet people they have seen only through an archival image, knows about the excitement and joy, but also insecurity and uncertainty of this moment. In this very scene, Barbey’s photograph reveals its potential that would enable a conversation, further questions, and inquiries into ambiguities that might have emerged from reading Genet’s book. Mounia seems not to understand the man’s words. She looks at him tentatively. She seemingly does not trust her ears or wants to have a double-confirmation, which makes the man repeats ‘My friend!’—‘Your friend?!’—‘Yeah, yes.’ A moment of silence. Mounia eventually found a person who remembers Genet from when he was in Irbid, Jordan’s third-largest city, supporting the Palestinians shortly after the events of the Black September in 1970 had happened! It took 60 minutes of the film to arrive at the Abu Bker Hotel and to find the person she was looking for. But she inquires solely ‘The hotel, has it changed much?’ It is surprising that she does not ask in return how he knows Genet, what has made him into a friend, in which moment he met him, whether he saw him again, whether he was a fighter or the ‘Palestinian manager at the Abu Bker hotel’ (Genet, 1986, p. 410), whether he remembers Barbey also, whether he knows Genet’s famous
writing *Four Hours at Chatila*\(^{241}\) and the book *Un captif amoureux* where the hotel plays a role, and so on. There seem to be so many questions to ask.

But in minute 61, the camera portrays the photograph in close-up. The way it remains framed, it becomes a document of fixed character. It stays a silent character, almost like a hunted artefact on the inspection table, told to hold back its potential in order to initiate an unexpected coming trajectory. From a curatorial point of view, which here means from an exhibition-driven questioning, Barbey’s photographs operate as an ‘exhibit’ in the juridical sense: used as a legitimising tool for the filmmaker himself, and thus also, for Mounia to travel to Irbid following Genet’s writings. It remains an exhibit, i.e., a proof of evidence that explains the filmmaker’s argument, but not the hotel manager’s presence in the film. It does no more than follow a seemingly pre- configured script. Without a doubt, when one realises a film or a research project, a kind of script is needed, of course, that helps to think thoroughly through a series of possible incidents, issues and alternatives for a journey. A precise preparation is indispensable in order to save money, to use the travel time as effective as possible, and to generate as much footage as possible for post-production. The hotel’s manager who remembers Genet and whose name we unfortunately do not find out, remains as much a fixed character, although he seems to offer to take us elsewhere. We already can only speculate on whether he remembers stories, places and encounters that—perhaps—Genet had forgotten to write down in his book.

I entrust the *itinerant* with work different to that of an exhibit, if we are to remain with this terminology for a moment. The *itinerant* is not a photographic image in the technical sense. In Dindo’s film, for example, a book (Genet’s *Un Captif Amoureux*) carries the possibility of becoming *itinerant*, even though the film does not play out the book’s itinerant potential. It is a sketch that assists with a journey. It is an excuse to make a journey, but it cannot explain it. It is an open container for stories-to-come. It is a social space. It is an image that loses its object-related relevance while departing from it. It is a connector point between Mounia and the hotel manager. The *itinerant* is certainly not an evidence of truth, but it emerges from a texture that is made of two threads. The first is the moment of making it (the

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photograph) public, meaning configuring a condition to display it that—as we have seen—can be done as easily as just putting something on the table. And the second is listening, waiting, questioning, inquiring, wondering, asking back, or giving up a seemingly proper script. This is the image’s *itinerant* potential that needs the act of travelling, meaning, being on the road, asking for the way, searching for someone, searching for a place to stay, not understanding the language, missing its destination, or feeling lost. In *Genet à Chatila*, the hotel’s manager double-confirmation ‘My friend. My friend!’ indicates an *itinerant* potential that could have exceeded the fixed and the scripted. It could have troubled the celebration of a well-known French writer and invited an unexpected voice onto the stage. In other words, the *itinerant* tends to tell the maker what to do next; it might change a carefully prepared production plan, the actor’s disposition, schedule and perhaps even the budget. Such movements exceed the functionality of an image as a documentary device, as evidence of a true past, and turn the silent character of a still image into a movement. While it needs the moment of exhibiting (showing an image, etc.) the *itinerant*, instead of an exhibition in the conventional sense, suggests tangling it up with an unexpected voice, with a conversation, with an open end, or also a misunderstanding. Instead of an exhibition, the *itinerant* enables something that can be called an act of exposure.

**Viral knowledge**

Let us return to Tariq Ibrahim’s elaboration on Sturm’s collaboration with the photographers from the liberation movement:

‘When Horst came, his goal wasn’t to teach us such things […] We already had good experiences about shooting pictures but he gave us an idea about the significance of the political photographs. That a picture is similar to fine art and how pictures are connected to people […] He never tried to convince us of any political ideas. We never talked about politics. He used to listen to our opinions and respected them.’ (Ibrahim, 2011)

This resonates in an image I received from a private archive and shown to Khotoub, Nofal, and Ibrahim during my journeys to Ramallah and Beirut. It was taken on the beach by the Mediterranean Sea, probably in the South Lebanese city of Saida, I was told, and it shows Ibrahim with a group of people during the photo course with Sturm
in Beirut in 1980/81. They gathered for a dinner, nothing special, as it happened many times. Let us take it as a possibility of detecting a micro-political moment within this archived practice, which moves it closer to art than culture if we are to follow Rolnik’s proposal:

‘The special vulnerability of some artists to this experience in its bodily dimension (regardless of whether or not they are aware of it or of its ideological interpretation) is what drives them to seek the micro-political potency that is immanent to artistic practice—an attitude that is very different from the use of art as a vehicle for macro-political information.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 8)

Interestingly enough, Ibrahim speaks about ‘the political photographs [which is] similar to art and how pictures are connected to people.’ (Ibrahim, 2011) It links up with Rolnik’s understanding of how the micro-political does not just counter the macro-political as its corrective, its poetic, but perhaps a feeble reflection or logical counterpart that would support the position of a dominant culture instead of disturbing a macro-political protocol. In other words, investigating into the poetic weight places the privately archived images into the realm of art that looks at a long history within the avant-garde of Western modernity. It needs to do more, and it does so by carrying an uncontrollable force that does—in Ibrahim’s words—connect to people, and which Rolnik calls the ‘poetic virus’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 18):

‘This operation provides the core to the poetics of those artistic proposals, and the conditions for the potency of their thinking—here resides the vitality of those artworks and the virus that they carry.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 5)

What kind of poetics, then, are we searching for? What is the artwork’s virus in a practice that is not supposed to be art in the conventional, Western sense? The poetic virus that I attach to the itinerant image, speaks of the necessity to encounter a ‘colonial unconscious repression.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 13) I would like to accentuate at this point, in order to be precise in the differentiation between the diverse trajectories, the methods and processes of an unconscious colonial repression that settled, activated, and informed decolonising liberation struggles in Africa, Asia or in Latin
We also need to be aware of the varying roles and different methods of dominant colonial powers in Europe. A further point must increase sensitivity, particularly within the field of contemporary art, which tends to equal a socialist force as a decolonising countering potential per se. For now, let us continue with the symptoms of a ‘colonial unconscious repression’ in order to see later how it might resonate in my project, and also perhaps how it opens the possibility to understand a ‘colonial unconscious repression’ here and elsewhere. Rolnik explains, that the repression affects

‘the body itself, and the possibility of inhabiting it. In this operation what is repressed is its ability to listen to the diagram of forces of the present, as the key compass for the exercise of the cognitive production and its interference in the world—a compass that is meant to guide us not in the visible space, but in the invisible states of life-pulse.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 13)

The repressed does not have a language yet. It stands outside of 'the law of what can be said,’ and thus troubles the archive’s topological stability. It claims a pre-linguistic potential contradicting Michel Foucault's understanding of an archive, which he had located in 'the law of what can be said.’ This archival thread then does not even care about the law. It carefully listens to the present, which indicates clearly that the micro-political—carrying a virus—of an archived practice is not a historical knowledge. The repressed rumbles in bodies, creating a condition of mourning, helplessness, bareness, and symptoms that the collective moment is over.243

For example, asked about the difference in the organisation of the Palestinian struggle between the 1970s and today, Ayshah Odeh244 would, first of all, address the breakdown of the collective drive within the movement. Today, she says, the struggle is much more dismembered, individualised, economised, and located deeper ‘under

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243 See the film Nightfall (2000), dir. by Mohammad Soueid.
244 Ayshah Odeh is a writer and former political prisoner, who lived in Jordan after imprisonment (she became famous for being imprisoned the longest as a female Palestinian), and moved in the mid-1990s to Ramallah. She has published a series of books.
the skin’. It addresses the body.

Travelling with the privately archived images, and more precisely, showing them to Khotoub and Nofal in Ramallah but also looking at them with Sturm in Berlin, often remained only in the gesture of pointing fingers. The missing language had much to do with the continuous need for an Arabic to English translation, but also revealed a space of speechlessness, bafflement, anxiety and bodily affection. On my side, anxiety emerged from the macro-political weight that accompanies this photographic practice, one for which I had no words for until now. In other words, the ideological frame of the Real-existing Socialism, i.e., its institutional, punishing and controlling faculties that I grew up with or carried with me alongside a repressing amount of criticism that browbeat the micro-political potency as a possibility of stepping out of the agonising, binary histories. But such conflicting situation between the two modes of politics is the particularity of this type

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245 Interview with the author, Ramallah, April 2013.
246 This reminds me on the film Transmission (2007) by Harun Farocki
247 An elaboration on this can be found in the chapter On Solidarity.
of micro-political, which unfolds its transformative power by carrying an infectious virus. It remains attached to a macro-political structure, but its viral latency conveys a poetic power that disturbs and distorts an official (art) history. Only viral processes constitute such critical-poetic ability. The micro-political insists vehemently on its infectious vision, otherwise

‘Without such activation, the only possibility is to produce variations around the modes of production of subjectivity and of cognition that found us as colonies of Western Europe—precisely the condition from which we want to escape.’ (Rolnik, 2011, p.15)

In order to do so, the virus needs the right conditions for breaking out. However, it is never quite clear what the right conditions are. With regard to exhibition making, conventionally, they consist of research on artistic projects, of selecting projects that seem to fit the curatorial idea, the curator takes care of the selected ones, organises a space and production, develops—perhaps with architects—a display set up, writes the press release, and takes visitors around the show (mediation) when artistic works are literally ‘held out.’ Such practice turns the micro-political on the Western European table ready for vivisection, which the virus only allows when dead. Working in that way, we have to cope with an inability to prepare the appropriate ground in which the virus would be ready to spread. It disenables, blocks, and represses an infectious, micro-political vision. The virus itself decides about ‘the right condition to reactivate itself and escape from its confinement’ (Rolnik, 2011, p. 15). It can wait for years, and it can settle down without even breaking out. Perhaps the nature of this virus exists exactly in the ability to change its codifications just at the moment when an utterance wants to establish its signifying power.

Only the virus knows when it has eaten up the resources of the host, which may be the image, the spectator, the unconscious, but also a PhD-project, or the writing of a text through a work of art (and not about it). How schizophrenically the

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virus operates then, when it metabolises until the host is totally exploited and killed, the point at which the virus’ appetite has destroyed its own condition for active life!

Travelling with Sturm’s images taught me the about the existence of the virus’ knowledge as a crucial force within our practice as exhibition makers. It unsettles the ground on which I thought to act professionally, and relentlessly requests a process of transformation when

‘we are asked to emancipate ourselves from figures of sovereignty (the monarch, the militant, the curator), on the one hand, and the moral landscapes and affective geographies of cosmopolitan nationalism and Third Worldism on the other.’ (Elhaik, 2013)

Waiting, incubation and disappearance reside in the ‘poetic virus’ as a survival strategy, which contradicts entirely the traditional claim that an exhibition unveils, reveals, and makes public as an act of transparency. In doing so, the viral knowledge turns its face against the conventional form of exhibiting, as described above, and produces a situation in which exhibiting acts against itself.

It spreads spatially, it needs to travel from host to host and can only survive when it covers distances. The virus’ knowledge can be dangerous, perhaps toxic, epidemic and protracting. Because one never quite knows when a virus breaks out, it survives without being visible, it sometimes waits for decades, it looks for the right medium, it needs time to incubate, and it is utterly unpredictable. In terms of space, the itinerant insists on a fertile breeding ground, it infects its surrounding, it co-exists with another structure (the host), it jeopardises itself when it occupies its host, it needs to cover distances in order to spread, and thus, it only unfolds its potential when it moves. Such virus’ injunction supports the itinerant’s desire to move spatially; and it makes it fruitful for our project, which aims to work through the question of how to make public today this photographic practice from 1980s that implicitly asks for the geo-political issues to be considered. It is needed, attentively, because the photo courses in the Middle East took place in exchange with institutional partners from the GDR, i.e., in a socialist period in Europe. It pursued a photographic practice that would continue the Palestinian liberation movement by means other than guns. It is highly informed by the Cold War politics, as well as by an anti- and de-colonial agenda, and international solidarity relations.
CONCLUSION

This project, The Itinerant takes place in a time of an ‘archive mania’, to utilise a phrase by Suely Rolnik in order to describe the highly increased interest both in historical archives of decolonising movements of the second half of the 20th centuries and archiving practices in a globalised world of art. The Itinerant stages many contested issues—most importantly the question of economics and solidarity—that I have been able to discuss, at length, through the lens of an archival image practice from the Cold War period. The archival practice in play and at stake in The Itinerant comes from photography courses (conceived by the East-German photo journalist Horst Sturm) in the Middle East (Lebanon, Yemen) and North Africa (Tunis) throughout the 1980s. In collective collaborative efforts, the courses trained former Palestinian freedom fighters in photography, thus enhancing the public presence of the Palestinian Cause in the international arena. Complicating the internationalisation, including the troubling agonising forces of Cold War rhetoric, as a continuation of militant struggle, by other means, in the chapter From the Desert has been one of the efforts of the thesis.

From an expanded curatorial perspective, though, it is not enough to discuss historical data and themes or to remain in the theoretical analysis of the archived (mainly photographic) material. One must also consider how such research and thinking process may take shape as a project to be exposed in public.

The hypothesis, therefore, with which I would like to end my project is that the inquiry into the archival image practice from the Cold War period allowed the delineation of a new understanding of the space of exhibition making: the exhibition is not only a measurable space consisting of walls, lighting system, display devices and so on. I propose, firstly, to look at it in geopolitical terms articulating a relation between ‘here’ and ‘elsewhere,’ as already suggested in the archived image practice. Such an approach insists on considering the troubling double-bind made of the social-collective importance of the archived practice (i.e., a micro-political potential) and official party protocols as well as the institutionalisation of solidarity (i.e., a macro-political dimension). Secondly, in order to distance the work from defining the archival material as an anthropological invention, I deliberately speak of a network of
practices through a geopolitical concern. This links to Allan Sekula’s request that ‘The archive has to be read from below, from a position of solidarity.’\(^{249}\) (Sekula, 1987, p. 451) In other words, the project insists on an actualising approach to an archived practice, i.e., the transfer from a historical moment into a contemporary frame is the actual project itself, asking for a vocabulary that allows us to problematise binary forces of a Cold War period in order to re-think a geopolitical dimension of solidarity, as a spatial potentiality in exhibition making. Within these two layers, I locate a new spatiality of exhibition making that embraces border crossing geopolitical exigencies.

Such an approach to a geopolitical spatiality in exhibition making introduces an entangled relation between the archival and the exhibition itself. I found a similar concern in Jean Genet’s approach to writing, particularly in his book *Un Captif amoureux* (1986), which re-articulates his journeys to the U.S. and the Middle East in the 1970 as well as in the 1982, in support of the Black Panthers and the Palestinians. Therefore, let us re-read Genet’s thought, on top of the last proof of his manuscript *Un Captif amoureux*, for the last time within the context of this project: ‘Put all the images in language in a place of safety and make use of them, for they are in the desert, and it’s in the desert we must go and look for them.’ (Genet, 1986) This geography suggests that we think the spatiality in exhibition making both in archival and exhibitionary terms, which immediately introduces a paradox between that which is possible to expose and that which is not.

In order to address all these various strands, i.e., the complexity that a transfer of an archived image practice demands, if such a transfer is to enable a comprehensive educational process as the project itself, I designed the *itinerant*. The *itinerant* delineates a space of exhibiting as defined not only by architectural constructions, i.e., walls, lighting system, and display devices. Without disregarding the importance of these practical issues, however, the *itinerant* suggests a spatiality in exhibition making that emerges from crossing borders of economic systems,

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\(^{249}\) Sekula’s request resonates in Spivak’s thoughts on aesthetic education in the era of globalisation, when she writes: ‘to learn to use the European Enlightenment from below’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 3) Such a ‘use’ always must be enacted through ‘ab-use’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 3) or an ‘affirmative sabotage.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 510) Spivak concludes: ‘If we can use this “from below” (ab-use, rather), we can have an enlightened practice that is not merely opposition.’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 18)
generations, territories, genres, and ideologies. Such space unsettles closed spatial concepts of the exhibition, e.g., the gallery room, exhibition venue, or the museum; it also disturbs the idea that a most thorough analysis of a given structure will transform what we, possibly, criticize. Instead, encountering an archived image practice from the Cold War period that interlaced Europe, the Middle East and the North Africa in the cases discussed here, allowing to consider ‘relational geographies’ (Rogoff, 2009) as a framework for such new exhibition’s spatiality that only emerges from crossing borders. In other words, with regard to a network of practices that we have discussed in the chapter Concerning Solidarity from a perspective of today, through the ‘solidarity of borders that are easily crossed, again and again, as a permanent from-below interruption’ (Spivak, 2003, p. 15).

Image 38: Horst Sturm holds an image that says on the back: ‘KHALED Beirut PLO “Mein Sandokan” für meine Sicherheit! Im Hotel. Horst Sturm AFIAP’ [KHALED Beirut PLO “My Sandokan” for my security! At the hotel. Horst Sturm AFIAP] I refused to publish the photograph for several reasons. Firstly, it departs from an intimate moment in a hotel when the bodyguard takes a rest; secondly, its visuality is tempting and could easily make it to the cover of a glossy magazine; and thirdly, exactly because this photographs departs from an economy that appeared to defy capitalism (as elaborated in the chapter Economic schizophrenia), I had to find different means of making it public within the world of art and within an economic system different to the one it departed from. See: insert Transit B, the poem ‘Proximity, Distance,’ p. 179. Photo: Armin Linke, 2012.

I took as my point of entry the privately archived images that did not make it to official press agencies or into reports of the secret service, exhibitions and
international distribution networks. In other words, they appear unspectacular, in terms of their representational value, which—at the same time—protects them from being caught, classified in a genre, and inscribed only on the totalitarian side of Real-existing Socialism. In the words of Suely Rolnik, this side of the archived practice insists on a micro-political dimension, which cannot, however, be cut-off from the archive’s macro-politics, in our case party programs, government-directed solidarity regulations, and so on. This double gestures, the micro- and macro-political within our archived practice, allows us to both complicate the historical weight of the Cold War, which Heiner Müller described as a ‘schizophrenic position’ (Müller, 1982, p. 50); and to develop from such tensions a vocabulary that helps us make use of such schizophrenia in a globalised world of the present. In doing so, as elaborated in the chapter Micro-political insistency, the itinerant as a transformative force also moves the notion of the ‘archive’ away from a purely structural framework made of ordering systems and the ‘law of what can be said’ (Foucault, 1972/2002, p. 145) towards an archival present that resides in-between all the images: ‘they are in the desert, and it’s in the desert we must go and look for them.’ (Genet, 1986)

In other words, encountering an archived image practice does not find a repository of raw material, or documents to be easily selected and put on public display. In fact, there is nothing to curate from such an archive, but if anything, there is something to learn from it. The figure of the itinerant then follows the ‘incurable image,’ as proposed by Tarek Elhaik, which unsettles curatorial practice to such an extent, that we—as curators, artists, theorists—must bravely accept the disorders, disorientations, and curatorial struggles accompanying what we do. Such a realisation puts pressure on common understanding of what curatorial practice is, as discussed in the sub-chapter ‘Two coordinates,’ and allows for the introduction of the figure of the itinerant that thickens the geopolitical texture, which enables the unfolding of a spatiality exceeding territorial concepts. In doing so, it pays attention to a ‘diasporic’ network that finds appearance in the exhibition practice itself, as Helmut

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Draxler describes the consequences of such geopolitical exigency for the actual exhibition presentation:

‘[It generates] a different site: not of unilinear perspective, but a site of intersection, of the always already present ‘other’ and one’s own implication in the social relations of representation. The museum display seeks to mark a specific site that can underscore and expose the universalistic perspective without thus filling it with content. At the same time, the ‘diasporic’ network of relations and references that defines the post-colonial space shimmers through’ (Draxler, 2007, p. 121f.)

This project has been informed by philosophical thought\textsuperscript{251} and the work of theorists.\textsuperscript{252} It grew tremendously through engaging with practices in writing, photography, curating and filmmaking, which all\textsuperscript{253} reside in the domain of art in a wider sense. But most importantly, this project exists through the voices of numerous militants, revolutionaries and photographers some of whom reject being called artists but who produced or still produce images for the sake of making them public\textsuperscript{254}. Let us be clear that the latter’s practices are not ‘just’ case studies to look at in terms of interesting material that finally should be made public in the world of art. Rather, I wish to place these various voice on the same ground, not in order to declare a big harmonic encounter or as if the ‘same’ were a common ground. This ground, instead, is defined by differences, inconsistencies and contingencies. Such an ambivalent

\textsuperscript{251} Foremost Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
\textsuperscript{252} Suely Rolnik, Ariella Azoulay, Tarek Elahik, Irit Rogoff, Maria Muhle, Boris Buden, Mark Fisher, Allan Sekula, Edward Said, and others.
\textsuperscript{253} Jean Genet, Jean-Luc Godard, The Otolith Group (Kodwo Eshun/Anjalika Sagar), Heiner Müller, Iris Gusner, Brigitte Reimann, the Monument Group (Milica Tomić, Branimir Stojanović), Abderrahamane Sissako, Okwui Enwezor, Catherine David, Armin Linke, Black Audio Film Collective, Martha Rosler, and also of a younger generation, e.g., Reem Shilleh and Mohanad Yaqubi who, with Dan Rees form the group Subversive Film, Zineb Sedira, Filipa César, Katrin Mayer, and others.
alignment can vastly be summarised as following: our common interest is making something public, i.e. to use the means that we have for initiating a public debate on a trans-national base. Instead of a common ground, therefore, we share a common interest that connects various means of articulation that arrive from philosophers, theorist, artists, militants, historians, travellers, writers, filmmakers, and photographers. In such a network of practices, which I found in the archived practice from the Cold War, misunderstandings in language, political struggles and cultural significations, as well as the untranslatability of certain terms leads to ‘a sort of heteronomic and dissymmetrical curvature of social space’ (Spivak, 2003, p. 29) that Spivak attaches to the emergence of collectivities. This kind of collectivity is not anchored in the real-socialist claim of unification under one slogan, but appears in utmost fragility, differentiation and—more importantly—through a process of learning. It is a highly fragile and porous being-together. Another wording can be found in a later proposal by Spivak, again, particularly with regard to what we have called a network of practices, i.e., when the borders of disciplines, classes and cultures cross one another: ‘bi-polarity of social productivity’ (Spivak, 2012, p. 27)

This network, therefore, should not be misunderstood as a rivalry between theory and practice, art and academia, or street and institution, a political Cause and an art project. Instead, my focus on practice, both with regard to images and words,

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256 Spivak uses a quote from Derrida’s Politics of Friendship, p. 230.
257 ‘Proletarians of the world, unite!’ (It paraphrases Karl Marx’s famous (translated) sentence in Das Kommunistische Manifest: ‘Working men of the world, unite!’)
258 ‘For the real text, you must enter the classroom, as a preview of the formation of collectivities.’ (Spivak, 2003, p. 28)
259 Oliver Marchart concludes in his elaboration of political difference: ‘We can speak, and Nancy does this, of this moment of disruption as moment of the political, as a moment or event of being-together. Thereby, one would have arrived at a possible definition of moment of the political, that discloses itself as a disruptive event of being-with or being-together.’ (Marchart, 2010, p.105)
on the street, in the library or on the road wishes to link to a ‘postcolonial thinking’ (Mbembe, 2008) that Achille Mbembe describes as:

‘a way of thinking that derives from a number of sources and that is far from constituting a system because it is in large part being constructed as it moves forward. That's why it would in my opinion be an exaggeration to call it a “theory.” It derives both from anti–colonial and anti–imperialist struggles on the one hand, and from the heritage of Western philosophy and of the disciplines that constitute the European humanities on the other. It's a fragmented way of thinking, which is both a strength and a weakness.’ (Mbembe, 2008)

Within this double-directed environment, I locate the work, the desires and the capacities of the figure of the itinerant. It suggests spatiality in exhibition making through trans-national, post-colonial and archival conditions as contemporary instruments. The itinerant always arrives from a troubling doubled position, which I have complicated by the attempt to undo the agonising and paralysing rhetoric of Cold War protocols that found an unsettling already present in the social-collective, as well as informal importance within a photographic practice in solidarity with a Cause. However, both sides (Cold War / social informality) cannot be cut-off from each other as much as we cannot step out of the ‘capitalist realism’ (Fisher, 2009) of the present.

Furthering my research beyond the project at hand would tangle up in a ‘coercive cosmopolitanism and impossible solidarities’ (Dhawan, 2013) This is a new strand assisting the problematisation of what has recently become known in the world of art as ‘global arts,’ which I wish to unpack through the means of exhibiting, now as a space that emerges out of a geopolitical exigency, i.e., through the itinerant’s power of transformation as the actual project itself.

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260 Nikita Dhawan is a philosopher, political theorist and postcolonial thinker arguing for a politisation of silence in relation to violence.
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The Otolith Group, *Medium Earth* (2013)


Sivan, E., *montageinterdit*, since 2011 (*montageinterdit.net*)


Working Group Four Faces of Omarska, *Four Faces of Omarska*,
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**Selected Exhibitions Cited (chronological order):**

*Dritte Deutsche Kunstausstellung*, Dresden, 1953

*Family of Man*, New York, 1955

*Die Standhaften* (The Steadfast People), gallery in the TV tower, Alexanderplatz, East-Berlin, November 1982

*Documenta 10*, curated by Catherine David, Kassel, 1997

*The Other Story*, curated by Rasheed Araeen, Hayward Gallery, London1989

*Documenta 11*, curated by Okwui Enwezor with Ute-Meta Bauer, Sarat Maharaj, Carlos Basualdo, Susanne Ghez, Mark Nash, Octavio Zaya, Vienna/Berlin/Neu-Dheli/St. Lucia/Lagos/Kassel, 2002

Inverted Utopias Avant-Garde Art in Latin America, curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez, Houston, 2004

So habe ich das gesehen [That’s the way how I saw it], Gut Geisendorf, 2010


Travelling Communiqué: Going into the Photo Archive (1948–1980) of Josip Broz Tito through the contemporary practices of art, theory, history, architecture, typography, cinema, and education, curated by Armin Linke, Doreen Mende and Milica Tomić, Addis Ababa, Arnhem, Belgrade, Belgrade, 2013–2014

Conferences referred to (chronological order):


Superpower Rivalry and the Third Way(s) in the Mediterranean, Italy, 2010 (paper: Batović, A. ‘Nonaligned Yugoslavia and the Relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation’)


Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire, a three-years AHRC-research project by Lee Grievson and Colin MacCabe. First Conference ‘Film and Empire,’ Birkbeck, University of London, 7–9 July 2010. See: http://colonialfilm.org.uk/node/2477 (accessed March 26, 2013)


Concentrationary Imaginaries/Imaginaries of Violence, conference, University of Leeds, April 2011.
Cold War, Hot Media: DEFA and the Third World, Summer Film Institute of the DEFA Film Library of Amherst University, Smith College in Northhampton / Massachusetts, July 17–24, 2011. See: http://www.umass.edu/defa/sfi2011/ (accessed May 29, 2013)


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‘Precarious Archives,’ public seminar as part of the exhibition Double Bound Economies, April 10, 2013, Institute of Theory and History of Architecture (gta) at ETH Zurich.

Framing Prisoners, workshop, Birzeit University, Birzeit/Palestine, April 20, 2013 (paper: ‘Returns to Knowledge’ by Suhair Jubeh, Baha Jubeh, Doreen Mende)

Selected Magazines/Newspapers Cited:

Afterall, London

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**DISPLAYER**, Karlsruhe/Berlin

**e-flux**, Berlin/New York

**Fillip**, Vancouver
Number 12, Fall 2010: Lütticken, S., ‘Once more on Publicness: A Postscript to Secret Publicity,’ online: http://fillip.ca/content/once-more-on-publicness-a-postscript-to-secret-publicity (accessed on June 29, 2013)
Number 17, Fall 2012: Muhle, M., ‘Imitation of Life: Biopolitics and the Cinematographic Image’

**Ibraaz. Contemporary Visual Culture in North Africa and the Middle East**

**P.L.O. Information Bulletin**, Beirut

**tageszeitung**, Berlin

**Third Text**, London
Vol. 20, Iss. 3-4, 2006: Gertz, N., Khleifi, G. (eds.), ‘From Bleeding Memories to Fertile Memories’

**This Week in Palestine**, Ramallah/Jerusalem
Issue No. 117, January 2008: ‘Palestinian Revolution Cinema,’
Project-related interviews (chronological order):

*Horst Sturm*, Berlin, 2008–present (Doreen Mende)

*Youssef Khotoub*, Ramallah, May 2010 (DM with Filipa César); November 2011 (Armin Linke)

*Ali Hussein*, Ramallah, May 2010 (DM with Filipa César); November 2011 (Armin Linke)

*Nawaf Hamed*, Ramallah, May 2010 (DM with Filipa César); November 2011 (Armin Linke)

*Tariq Ibrahim*, Beirut, November 2011 (Doreen Mende)

*Aysha Odeh*, Ramallah, April 2013 (Doreen Mende)

Other Archive Materials:

ADN-bulletin (1980/81) with the article ‘Beim Abschied waren wir Feunde’ [At Farewell We Had Become Friends], archive Horst Sturm, Berlin

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Schenk, R. Interview with filmmaker Iris Gusner about *Die Taube auf dem Dach* (The Dove on the Roof), production by DEFA Foundation, press material of the DVD-release, 2011

Sturm, H., final report photo course at WAFA in Beirut 1980, unpublished, private archive Horst Sturm, Berlin

Sturm, H., Curriculum proposal for a photo course with ANA agency in Yemen in 1983, unpublished, private archive Horst Sturm, Berlin
