

ذِكرٌ قَلِقٌ

PAST DISQUIET

EXCAVATING SOLIDARITY IN THE ARTS

A discursive and screening programme with workshops and discussions

4–8 FEBRUARY 2026, IBRAAZ, LONDON

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Filmmaker Othmane Balafrej contributed to the filming of videos in Rabat (Morocco). Filmmakers Mohanad Yaqubi and Sami Said, contributed to the research and filming of videos in Ramallah (Palestine) and Tokyo (Japan). Gabriel Serra and Arielka Juárez contributed to the filming of interviews in Managua (Nicaragua).
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The first edition of the exhibition was produced by the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) in 2015, and the second by the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) in Berlin in 2016. The third edition was produced by the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende (MSSA) in Santiago de Chile, in 2018, and the fourth version was co-produced by the Sursock Museum and Lucid in Beirut, also in 2018. The fifth edition was produced by Zeitz MOCAA (Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa) in Cape Town, in 2023. The sixth edition was produced by the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, in 2024. The seventh edition was produced by Framer Framed in Amsterdam, in 2025.

Research in Nicaragua was conducted in collaboration with and support from the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende.
Research in South Africa was conducted in collaboration with and support from Zeitz MOCAA and Koyo Kouoh.
Research in Amsterdam was conducted in collaboration with and support from Framer Framed and The International Institute of Social History (IISG).

The research and production for *Past Disquiet* has been made possible by the generous support of Rana Sadik and Samer Younis, Sharjah Art Foundation, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), ZedGrant, A. M. Qattan Foundation, Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW under the mandate of Bernd Scherrer 2006-2022), Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Foundation for Arts Initiative (FfAI), Lucid, Tensta konsthall, Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, Zetiz MOCAA, transit.hu, the Institut National de l'histoire de l'art, Paris, Sursock Museum, the Palais de Tokyo and Framer Framed.

Cover photograph: An anti-apartheid demonstration, Trafalgar Square, March 1960. Photographer: Henry Grant. Source: Henry Grant Collection/London Museum. CC BY-NC 4.0.
Graphic Design: Farah Fayyad

Past Disquiet: Excavating Solidarity in the Arts was commissioned and produced by Ibraaz London in 2026.

Invited by Lina Lazaar, with curatorial support from Odessa Warren.

PROGRAMME

Opening Lecture: Tariq Ali
Wednesday 4 February, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1: Museums in Solidarity
Thursday 5 February, 3-5pm
Early in the research process, we encountered the ideas of the *museum-in-exile* and the *solidarity museum*. One version of the genesis story of the International Art Exhibition for Palestine links it directly to the Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende (MIRSA). At the *Salon de la Jeune Peinture*, Ezzedine Kalak, the Palestine Liberation Organization representative in Paris, met exiled Chilean artists who were involved in the administration of the MIRSA, and this encounter inspired him to pursue a similar initiative for Palestine. Two other museums-in-exile were also inspired by – and had strong connections to – the MIRSA. In solidarity with the people of Nicaragua after the success of the Sandinista revolution, the Museum of Latin American Art in Solidarity with Nicaragua was organized by Ernesto Cardenal and Chilean curator Carmen Waugh. In 1981, artists Ernest Pignon-Ernest and Antonio Saura initiated the Artists of the World Against Apartheid Committee, which assembled the *Art Contre/Against Apartheid* collection and toured in forty countries around the world between 1983 and 1990. Along with their core idea, these four museums-in-exile demonstrate notable overlaps in terms of the artists who participated and the people responsible for their organization.

Workshop 2: Transnational Solidarity and Artists Networks
Friday 6 February, 3-5pm
Past Disquiet threads the connections among collectives of artists, public interventions and exhibitions in Baghdad, Paris, Tokyo, and Venice. In doing so, it uncovers the contexts and mechanisms of mobilization of artists, as well as how political engagement impacted their practice. Ranging from the anti-establishment, artist-run Association de la jeune peinture in France, to the Japan Asian African Latin American Artists Association (JAALA), a group engaged with anti-imperialist struggles that lent sustained support to the Palestinian

cause in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the Union of Palestinian Artists, the League of Palestinian Artists, the Union of Arab Artists, the Brigade internationale de peintres antifascistes and several others.

Workshop 3: Critical Considerations on Archives, Scenography and Transnational Solidarity
Saturday 7 February, 11:30am-1:30pm
Past Disquiet's research looks into documents and histories that were lost, blinded or discarded in the canons of the historiography of art. With scant, dispersed or destroyed archival traces, few of these still exist in institutions. A significant part was transmitted via oral testimonies that were often impossible to fact-check. Images outlive their authors and the ideological context in which they emerge. What happens when their stories are forever lost?

PANELS

Panel 1: Festivals and Exhibitions in London
Thursday 5 February, 6:30 - 8:00pm
This panel focuses on the institutional practices of cultural spaces in London in the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, it will look at the festivals and exhibitions which took place in response to the Pinochet dictatorship and the Palestinian struggle.

Panel 2: Solidarity for Chile and Nicaragua in the UK
Friday 6 February, 6:30 - 8:00pm
Focused on the work of artists and activists in the UK in support of Nicaragua and against the dictatorship in Chile, this panel pays attention to mural production and other cultural and artistic practices in the UK in the period of the mid-late 1970s and 1980s.

Panel 3: Publishing and Archiving Movements and Struggles
Saturday 7 February, 3:30-5pm
This panel focuses on the production of archives around the Free Palestine publication and the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives. It will centre on the work of building archives and participating in movements, and look at the development of resources and tools to preserve and study the history of liberation struggles.

SCREENINGS

The screening programme runs during opening hours from **4-8 February** and is screened twice daily from 11am-2:30pm and 2:30-6:00pm.
All screenings are free with no registration required.

Screening Programme 1: *Museo de la Solidaridad, Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende and the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano en Solidaridad con Nicaragua*
Showing at 11am-12pm and 2:30-3:30pm; Duration 50:34 min

Screening Programme 2: *Art Contre/Against Apartheid*
Showing at 12-1pm and 3:30-4:30pm; Duration 48:24 min

Screening Programme 3: *International Art Exhibition for Palestine*
Showing at 1-1:30pm and 4:30-5pm; Duration 29:07 min

Screening Programme 4: *The PLO Representatives and the Arts*
Showing at 1:30-2:30pm and 5-6pm; Duration 50:41 min

PROLOGUE

The past we refer to in *Past Disquiet* is recent, with several protagonists still living. Nevertheless, for the most part, the stories narrate undocumented chapters in the history of modern and contemporary art that chronicle the actions of groups of artists engaged with political change. Throughout the various editions of the exhibition, we always questioned the significance of reviving images and stories decades in their aftermath- after the defeat of the Pinochet dictatorship, the end of Apartheid and after the PLO created the Palestinian National Authority. This aftermath comes with its own set of problems, unresolved internal conflicts and scars that have yet to heal. Still, if we zoom out and take a broader perspective, ours is a time when utopian ideals have lapsed and the struggles for liberation have yet to achieve their promises. Some might even argue that ours is a time marked by the aftermath of defeats. The histories we have unearthed have scant, dispersed archival traces, few of which still exist in institutions. And some archives have been destroyed. The exhibition's raw material consists of interviews, archival documents, images and moving image footage. During our interviews with artists and militants, we were aware that we were, in fact, asking them to harken back to historical moments when hope and aspirations were vibrant. The images (photographs, posters, artworks) and documents had 'survived', while the political, discursive and ideological frameworks in which they were produced had subsided. This type of time travel has its trappings, the most obvious being the lure of nostalgia; therefore, it was necessary to look at the images 'historically'.

A museum in solidarity is a collection of artworks donated by artists, their gift being a political gesture intended to demonstrate support for a movement of national liberation or a struggle for justice and equality. Museum-in-exile is often the form they take- living outside of the country or cause they are supporting, in exile and touring until they can return or go 'home'. Solidarity collections are important models of museology that have been almost entirely marginalised in the annals of art history and museum studies. These collections are emancipated from the systems of power and patronage to which museums are usually beholden. They are neither symbols of wealth accrued through the exploitation of human beings or natural

resources, nor spoils of colonial rule. They represent a thoroughly subversive interpretation of museums and their collections are donated in the name of people, not governments.

Circling back to questions about our intentions, the attribute 'disquiet' in the title holds an answer, at least in part. It points to the unsettled nature of this past, its wounds, deceptions and betrayals. And at the same time, it points to this past's refusal to lie quietly, to be silenced or be dismissed and boxed away. 'Disquiet' also portends to our resistance to indulge in nostalgia. The exhibition invites a reckoning and reflection on the failures and spoils of such impressive mobilisations of imagination, creativity, and audacious action.

One of the chief motivations that have carried us throughout these years is our desire to make these histories visible and tangible to transmit a memory all too easily eluded. The choice to reproduce documents- posters, photographs, flyers, journals, catalogues, newspaper clippings, newsletters, and meeting notes, and not to display originals is deliberate. We wanted to avoid using vitrines or display strategies that create barriers between materials and visitors. Past Disquiet is a vibrant and tirelessly proliferating archive intended to be shared and appropriated.

The second motivation is to decentre art historical narratives of the latter half of the 20th century and to complicate the narratives of the East-West divide during the Cold War, by shifting the paradigm through which we revisit artistic practices, specifically from the perspective of the agents and actors of the (so-called) south, and from the perspective of solidarity. A potent notion that still has the power to reclaim streets and headlines today, 'solidarity' manifests in myriad actions, symbols and expressions across our exhibition and is in a constant state of regeneration and reinvention. What we want to offer is what the images and documents show: artists from Botswana, Japan, Morocco, Cuba, France, the Netherlands and Chile resisted oppression and indignity, and together they dreamt of another, better world in resonant ways across the world. They dislodged art from its 'conventional' sites and relocated it into political and social life.

The gender disparity in the documents and archives indexes the dynamics of the time. Although women are present and have played key roles, save for a few exceptions, they often appear in 'the

second row' of photographs, testimonies and acknowledgements. Our mission was to reclaim the overdue recognition they are owed. These women include Carmen Waugh, Dore Ashton, Lucy Lippard, Gracia Barrios and Maeda Rae, to give a few examples. However, besides the introduction, the texts in the exhibition do not follow the codes of gender inclusion because it would have suggested an equality between genders that was neither real nor lived at the time. Over the decades covered by our research, transnational struggles have intersected with feminist struggles, but the complicity and shared sentiments of solidarity were far more at the level of discourse (and lip service); patriarchy and misogyny still wielded mainstream currency.

The novel proposal of creating a solidarity museum began to take shape a few months after Salvador Allende's leftist Popular Unity government took office in 1971 and launched 'Operación Verdad', a communications campaign to counter the assault by Chile's media outlets, which were mostly controlled by the right-wing parties. Intellectuals, journalists, and artists from all over the world were invited to visit Chile to witness the changes that were transforming the country. Guests included Spanish art critic José María Moreno Galván and Italian senator Carlo Levi, who came up with the idea of establishing a museum for the people of Chile that would constitute donations from artists around the world as an expression of their support for the 'via chilena al socialismo' (the Chilean road to socialism). Mário Pedrosa, a renowned Brazilian art critic, was living in exile in Chile after fleeing the military dictatorship in his home country. He was assigned to lead the project's executive committee and became the principal manager and founder of the Museo de la Solidaridad (Museum of Solidarity). The Comité Internacional de Solidaridad Artística con Chile (CISAC - International Committee of Artistic Solidarity with Chile) was set up in late 1971, and was made up of leading artists, art critics, and museum directors from Europe and the United States, that included Committee members included Dore Ashton (USA), Rafael Alberti (Spain), Louis Aragon (France), Giulio Carlo Argan (Italy), Edy de Wilde (The Netherlands), Carlo Levi (Italy), Jean Leymarie (France), José María Moreno Galván (Spain), Aldo Pellegrini (Argentina), Mariano Rodríguez (Cuba), Juliusz Starzynski (Poland), and Danilo Trelles (Uruguay).

Chilean President Salvador Allende signed the call to artists to donate artworks in solidarity with the people of Chile, the first nation in South America to elect a socialist government democratically. The call was disseminated actively by the International Committee of Artistic Solidarity. The response by artists around the world was enormous.

The Museo de la Solidaridad was inaugurated in 1972. Intended to constitute a seed collection of modern and experimental art, it was on the path to becoming the most important modern art museum in Latin America, with a collection that exceeded 650 artworks by diverse, emblematic artists including Lygia Clark, Jean Dewasne, Roberto Matta, Joan Miró, Arnulf Rainer, Josefina Robirosa, Frank Stella, and Joaquín Torres-García, to name just a few.

After the coup d'état on 11 September, 1973, the collection was dispersed, some works stored in various institutions, others confiscated by the military junta. Several prominent Chilean exiles, among them Miria Contreras (Allende's former secretary who had escaped to Cuba), and several members of the International Committee of Artistic Solidarity with Chile like José Balmes, Mário Pedrosa, and Miguel Rojas Mix, gathered in Paris. Together with French academic Jacques Leenhardt, sent out a second call to artists, to request donations for a new itinerant museum that would build on the legacy of the Museo de la Solidaridad to denounce the Pinochet dictatorship and its human rights abuses. A general secretariat was formed, headed by Pedrosa and coordinated through the Casa de las Américas in Havana by Miria Contreras, Allende's former assistant, who lived in Cuba.

The resulting Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende (MIRSA) was conceived as a museum-in-exile and presented as a continuously growing collection and itinerant exhibition that would find haven in different places until it could return home to Chile after justice and democracy were restored and liberation achieved. Committees to oversee the solicitation and donation of artworks and their exhibition were formed in countries including Algeria, Colombia, Cuba, Finland, France, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the United States, and Venezuela. Works were collected with the help of artists (including many who had responded to the first call, as well as Chilean exiled artists) and local solidarity committees. Over the years, parts of the collection toured in numerous countries.

In 1990, during the presidency of Patricio Aylwin, the process of repatriating the various segments of the collection that had been compiled around the world began. The Salvador Allende Foundation, instituted by presidential decree, was assigned to this undertaking. Under a third and current name, the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende (MSSA) was inaugurated at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Santiago on September 4, 1991. The museum has since moved. Today, the collection comprises more than 2,700 works from the three phases of its evolution.

During their exile, Chilean artists revived the practice of mural painting that had thrived during the 1960s amid the political polarisation between the left and right-wing movements. Inspired by the revolutionary legacy of Mexican muralists, *muralismo* emerged in Chile out of an urgency to galvanise popular support around social justice and human rights struggles, when the Communist Party and other leftist parties were under attack by the Chilean media, which was almost entirely controlled by right-wing political groups. In 1968, the Brigadas Ramona Parra were born. Each brigade consisted of 15 or 20 students and workers and murals were generally executed during the night or at dawn. The heat of electoral campaigns emboldened their proliferation throughout the country. Several well-known artists joined the 'brigadistas', Alejandro 'Mono' González was one of the brigade's founding members.

After the coup d'état, the military erased thousands of these images of struggle and hope. As soon as they arrived in France, Chilean exiles rekindled the practice of *muralismo*, forming brigades across Europe with other artists. They were hosted at major art exhibitions, namely, the Venice Biennale in 1974, the Avignon Festival in 1974, and documenta 6 in 1977. Guillermo Núñez, a Chilean artist who was a dynamic 'brigadista', living in exile between Europe and Cuba, explained: "*I think that art does not only belong to galleries, private collections and museums, it also belongs to the people, to the street. Art is linked to the struggles, the hopes of the working class, so we could not be content with our individual action as militant artists, hence the need that gave birth to the Brigadas Internacionales de Pintores Anti-Fascistas.*" Formed in 1976 in France, the Brigade internationale des peintres antifascistes produced a 20-metre mural in Paris, commissioned by the MIRSA, and in 1978, another mural titled *People at Crossroads*, in Montgaillard (France), that honoured the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.

In 1977 in the United States, Brigada Orlando Letelier was founded to honour the assassinated Chilean diplomat. It included Orlando Letelier's two sons, Francisco and José, and René Castro and Beyhan Cagri. Over the years, they painted murals in eleven cities across the US, in the Chilean muralist style, for causes ranging from denouncing the dictatorship in Chile and supporting the struggles of the people of Nicaragua, of domestic workers, as well as other local and international causes. They were invited by Ernesto Cardenal to Nicaragua in 1980 to paint murals as part of the countrywide literacy campaign.

Another group in the US, the Concerned Artists from the US and Latin America, led by feminist writer and curator Lucy Lippard, launched an initiative to produce murals, in the fashion of the brigadistas. This initiative was a sign of solidarity with the Allende government and opposition to the coup d'état, and included Jaqueline Barnitz (art historian), Jaime Barrios (exiled Chilean filmmaker), and Enrique Castro-Cid (Chilean artist). On West Broadway between Houston and Prince streets in Manhattan, one of the most well-known of Ramona Parra Brigade's murals, that had been destroyed by the Chilean military, was recreated. It was approximately 30-metres long.

Several countries in Central and South America were ruled by military dictators or civilian autocrats who prohibited basic freedoms and instituted stark social and economic disparity. Their governments served the interests of extractive and exploitative multinational corporations based in the US or Europe. As a result, dissenting artists, intellectuals and militants had to flee persecution. Many found a haven in Western and Eastern Europe. They were instrumental in the local solidarity movements where they made a new home. There was also another place where Latin American exiles met, exchanged ideas, and discovered each other's work: namely, in Havana, at the behest of the Casa de las Américas. Founded first as a publishing house in 1959, the Casa de las Américas grew to become a cultural centre a few years later. Its mission was to strengthen ties between Latin America, the Caribbean and the rest of the world. The organisation was founded and headed by Haydée Santamaria. The annual encounters of artists, writers, poets and filmmakers were especially inspiring and bolstered bonds that would have otherwise never existed.

For the exiled Latin American artists in Europe, these encounters empowered them to create associations in their countries of exile. It was in Havana that Ernesto Cardenal, the Nicaraguan defrocked priest, poet and prominent militant in the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN — Sandinista National Liberation Front) first learned about MIRSA.

In 1980, during a festival in Rome held to celebrate the first anniversary of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, Ernesto Cardenal, by then Minister of Culture in the new Nicaraguan government, met Carmen Waugh, a Chilean gallerist and arts administrator who had played a key role in establishing the MIRSA. It was there that the idea for a museum in solidarity with the Nicaraguan people was born. Waugh spearheaded the project, and a year later exhibitions opened in Paris and Madrid. Latin American artists (mostly in exile in Europe) and Spanish artists donated works to build a collection. Many of these artists have also donated to the Chilean museum initiative. The overall collection (of nearly three hundred works) was sent to Managua and was inaugurated in December 1982, after which time it continued to grow, under the label of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano de Managua. In 1985, it was renamed the Museo Julio Cortázar, in acknowledgement of the writer's attachment to Nicaragua. Administered by an association of artists from 1988 to 1994, the collection was expropriated by Sandinista government officials and dispersed because disagreements broke out between elected officials and the collection's custodians. In the past couple of years, there have been attempts to reopen a museum with what remains of the collection, though the initiative has been delayed numerous times. Today, the collection is stored at the Palacio Nacional de la Cultura and includes 1,921 works by 923 artists from 36 countries.

On 6 November, 1962, the UN General Assembly voted on Resolution 1761, which deemed the apartheid system in South Africa to be in violation of the UN's Charter and to represent a threat to international peace and security. The resolution also established the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. That special committee appealed to governments and grassroots organisations to isolate and boycott the South African government. The committee reached out to French artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest in 1979 to devise actions to mobilise international artists to endorse the campaign

against apartheid. Inspired by the MIRSA (to whom he had donated artworks), Pignon-Ernest and Spanish artist Antonio Saura (who was exiled to Paris because of the Franco dictatorship in Spain) proposed to establish a museum-in-exile in the form of an itinerant exhibition of artworks incarnating international artists' denunciation of the apartheid regime in South Africa. They established the Artists of the World Against Apartheid Committee to oversee the collection of artworks and tour of the exhibition. With the help of French sculptor Arman, who lived in New York in the 1980s, approximately 100 works by 96 internationally acclaimed artists and writers were assembled. After opening in Paris in 1983, the *Art Contre/Against Apartheid* exhibition travelled to Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Greece, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Italy, Japan, Martinique, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as several other countries.

In our research, we focused on the story of the collection's tour in Japan, in part because it is at once unusual and exemplary. In 1987, Maeda Rei, a Japanese sociology student returned to Japan from a visit to Paris, where she had attended the UNESCO-organised International Conference Against Apartheid and learned about the *Art Contre/Against Apartheid* touring exhibition. She was determined to bring the collection to Japan and showed the catalogue to Kitagawa Fram, a publisher who became impassioned to edit a Japanese version of the texts, and to tour the exhibition throughout Japan. They negotiated with the Artists of the World Against Apartheid association in Paris and obtained authorisation for a two-year-long Japanese tour, which was to be handled by non-professionals, displayed in as many towns as possible, in non-museum spaces such as gymnasiums and community centres. Kitagawa and Maeda devised a system whereby the exhibition could be hosted for as short a time as a single day, and for as long as a week. To that end, a climate-controlled 'moving-storage' truck was custom-designed by PH Studio, a group of artists and architects who worked with artist Kawamata Tadashi and architect Hiroshi Hara. The truck was named 'Julia Pempel,' a reference to a character in a poem by Miyazawa Kenji. The exhibition's Japanese title *Apartheid Non*! International Art Festival was shortened to *Apa Non*. On top of the truck, a huge red balloon was fastened to attract the attention of the local population. The *Apa Non* tour started in Okinawa, in the very south of Japan, and was exhibited for 500 days at 194 venues to

380,000 visitors. The final stop was at the Parliamentary Museum in Tokyo, with political officials in attendance, including Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu. The collection was shipped to Korea after Japan –as per the Japanese organisers' intentions– where it was exhibited in Seoul. South Korea was then under military dictatorship, and the exhibition was subjected to vigorous censorship.

After the collapse of the apartheid regime, the collection was donated to the government of South Africa and was exhibited in the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town for the nation's first democratically elected legislators. The collection was placed in the custody of the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape, which also safeguards one of the largest archives of liberation struggle materials in South Africa. Acclaimed writer Mongane Wally Serote, Chair of the Parliamentary Select Committee for Arts and Culture at the time, mediated between the Artists of the World Against Apartheid Committee and the African National Congress. Ernest Pignon-Ernest accompanied the collection from France to South Africa.

The fourth and last museum-in-exile, or solidarity, is the story of the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine*. In truth, this marks the beginning of our research project. We came across the catalogue of the exhibition in the library of an art gallery in Beirut and were intrigued by its scale and scope: approximately 200 works were donated by almost 200 artists from 30 different countries. The main text of the catalogue stated that these artworks were intended as the seed collection for a future museum in Palestine. Organised by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) through the Plastic Arts Section of its Office of Unified Information, the exhibition was inaugurated in the basement hall of the Beirut Arab University on 21 March, 1978. The director of the Plastic Arts Section was Jordanian artist Mona Saudi. And yet, the exhibition is not mentioned in any local, regional, or international art historical accounts; neither is there any reference to it in exhibition histories. *The International Art Exhibition for Palestine* catalogue was our inexhaustible guide. It contains all the clues our research followed and remains the most reliable source for imagining the exhibition. Of the 200 artists in the exhibition, some, like Julio Le Parc, Joan Miró, and Antoni Tapiès, were very well-known internationally; others less so; others were entirely unknown. The progress of our research changed dramatically when we met Claude Lazar, a French artist who lives in Paris and who had

been close to Palestinian militants in Paris during the 1970s. He had been a key protagonist in imagining the 1978 Beirut exhibition as a cornerstone for a museum-in-exile. He also mobilised many artists in France to donate work to the exhibition.

Precisely one week prior to the inauguration of the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine* on 14 March, 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon, advancing as far north as the Litani River and the outskirts of the city of Tyre to stop PLO commando incursions launched from the southern Lebanese border. The incursion lasted a week and concluded with an UN-brokered truce and the deployment of UN-sponsored peacekeeping forces to oversee the implementation of the accord. Despite grave security concerns, Yasser Arafat attended the exhibition opening, accompanied by the PLO's highest-ranking cadres. In addition to Beirut's intelligentsia, visitors included rank-and-file fighters, diplomats, journalists, and a dozen international artists, as well as the public. In an interview recorded in Ramallah, Ahmed Abdul-Rahman, the head of the PLO's Office of Unified Information at the time, underlines the importance of inviting artists to witness firsthand the reality of the struggle. Claude Lazar attended the opening in Beirut, as did Gontran Guanaes Netto (Brazil), Bruno Caruso (Italy), Paolo Ganna (Italy), and Mohamed Melehi (Morocco). Michel Troche, a prominent French curator and critic, visited the exhibition after the opening. Liana Badr, a Palestinian writer who was living in Beirut at the time of the exhibition, was also interviewed in Ramallah. She recalls with emotion how important the exhibition was for Palestinians and the joy of seeing in person original artworks by renowned Arab and international artists. Artist Nasser Soumi (Palestine), who assisted in the exhibition's organisation, surveyed visitors during the first days following the opening of the exhibition, indexing their reactions.

In 1982, the Israeli military advanced into Beirut again, holding the city under siege with the objective of forcing the PLO to quit Lebanon. The building where the collection of artworks had been stored was shelled, along with the offices of the Office of Unified Information, which housed the Plastic Arts Section and the exhibition documents. All that remained of the story of the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine* were the memories of those who made it happen and who visited it. Also, in 1982, Abdul-Hay Mosallam, a Palestinian artist who worked with the

Plastic Arts Section, produced an artwork titled "*The Destruction of the Plastic Arts Section*" as a homage to the creativity and accomplishments of those involved with it. At the centre of the work, he placed the key to the office where the collection had been stored.

The *International Art Exhibition for Palestine* was certainly the PLO's most ambitious endeavour, but it was not the only art exhibition it presented. Both the Plastic Arts Section and the Department of National Heritage and Culture (established in 1965) were mandated to commission, fund, and promote the production of posters, art, film, theatre, dance, music, and publications; to preserve folklore and cultural traditions; and to galvanise support for the Palestinian struggle internationally, in the arenas of art and culture. Exhibitions of traditional folk dress and crafts toured Europe between 1978 and 1980 to showcase the nation's heritage.

The PLO's Plastic Arts Section reproduced artwork on posters, postcards, calendars, and holiday cards that were circulated widely. It also organised exhibitions and supported artists. Posters were the foremost tool for disseminating representation and narrative: they were lightweight, relatively inexpensive, and quick to produce, and they could reach across social classes, cities, and countries.

The PLO's leadership also needed the means to communicate with its own constituency, which was scattered across neighbouring territories in refugee camps and cities. A second challenge was to communicate to the world the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause and to mobilise support for the struggle for emancipation. The most effective means to counter the traumatic dispersal of Palestinians was in safeguarding their sense of peoplehood through culture and the arts. If houses were lost, the poetic record of having had a home would remain alive; if the land was far removed from sight, its depiction would make it visible in myriad forms; if citizenship was denied, then the indignity that Palestinians endured was vanquished. In the hands of artists, poets, filmmakers, musicians, and writers, the representation of Palestinians transformed them from hapless refugees living on handouts to dignified, steadfast freedom fighters who had taken charge of their own destiny.

Film was another important means of communication and mobilisation. In 1968, Mustafa Abu Ali, Sulafa Jadallah, and Hani

Jawhariyyeh, three young Palestinians living in Amman, decided to establish a film unit amid the Palestinian revolution to document the struggle and disseminate a different representation of the Palestinian people. The Palestine Film Unit soon fell under the wing of the PLO and made a significant contribution to capturing this new image of Palestinians.

The PLO was only recognised as the official and legitimate representative body of Palestinians at the UN General Assembly in 1974. However, with the help of the Arab League, the organisation lobbied, one country at a time, to establish offices to represent Palestine that functioned like makeshift embassies, to manage the affairs of Palestinians in the countries in question, as well as to build support for the Palestinian cause. The first generation of representatives was culled from refugee camps and the Palestinian diaspora; their political imaginaries and aspirations were informed by the lived experience of indignity and the revolutionary emancipatory fervour that swept the region (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, and Sudan) and the world (Chile, Cuba, and Vietnam). Some PLO representatives– for example, Fathi Abdul-Hamid (posted in Tokyo), Mahmoud al-Hamshari (Paris), Ezzedine Kalak (Paris), Naïm Khader (Brussels), Wajih Qasem (Rabat), and Wael Zuwaiter (Rome)– operated with the conviction that mobilising support for the Palestinian cause had to involve thorough, patient, and creative engagement with grassroots associations, unions, syndicates, and collectives of students, workers, and artists. In the countries where they were posted, they inspired artists and intellectuals to see in Palestine a mirror of the world's injustice. They invited them to produce posters, exhibitions, conferences, and publications. In the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Japan, they also facilitated collaborations between artists' unions.

The involvement of Ezzedine Kalak in realising the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine* was pivotal. He was assassinated in Paris several months after the exhibition's opening. He developed strong friendships with some members of the Association de la Jeune Peinture, particularly Claude Lazar. In addition, Kalak was close to a group of militant filmmakers from *Cahiers du cinéma,* known as the Groupe Cinéma Vincennes, which counted among its members Ali Akika, Guy Chapouillié, Danièle Dubroux, Serge Le Péron, and Jean Narboni. The group directed collectively *L'Olivier: Qui sont les*

Palestiniens? (1975 — *The Olive Tree, Who Are the Palestinians?*), a documentary about the Palestinians. Kalak had guided the filmmakers during their travels in Lebanon and Syria and helped fund the film.

Another PLO representative, Wajih Qasem, was very successful in creating links between artists and the Palestinian struggle. He was living in Algiers when, in 1969, the PLO appointed him as their representative in Morocco. The PLO had strong friendships with leading figures from the Moroccan left. The PLO rented a small office in Rabat in a building across the street from the office of the Moroccan writers' union, which was also quite sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. Coincidentally, the office was also on a floor below the apartment of Abdellatif Laâbi, one of the founders of *Souffles*, a pioneering and radical Moroccan cultural and political review. The PLO's connections to the radical Moroccan artistic and intellectual vanguard were thoroughly organic. The editorial team of *Souffles* was known as its 'action committee,' and comprised of poets, writers, artists, and militants. Three prominent artists intimately associated with the review were Farid Belkahia, Mohammed Chabaâ, and Mohamed Melehi, all of whom were participants in the exhibition in Beirut. Intolerance of political dissent in Morocco was, however, mounting in the 1970s, and leftist militants were prosecuted and jailed for treason. *Souffles* was increasingly regarded as a subversive platform. The publication of a special issue on Palestine marked a transformation in the review's history: several contributors resigned because they disagreed with allowing political concerns to override its cultural mission. Political and social engagement were integral to the practice of these Moroccan artists, who were also founding members of the Association of Moroccan Plastic Artists.

It was also important to look at Palestinian artists, and, specifically, how they were organised given the challenges of dispersal or living under Israeli occupation. Artist unions represented a nexus of activity. In the Arab world, most unions and artists' associations were formed in the 1960s and early 1970s out of a necessity to defend artists' rights, create a support structure for the promotion and dissemination of their work, and solidify existing organic bonds of fraternity across the Arab region.

The Union of Palestinian Artists (UPA), founded in 1973 in Lebanon, established an exhibition space known as Dar al-Karameh, which presented the work of Palestinian and international artists. The UPA also established protocols of collaboration with international artists' unions in the GDR, Vietnam, and Japan. These collaborations included artist exchange programmes and touring exhibitions. The establishment of the Union of Arab Artists (UAA) formalised networking, exchange, and cooperation among artists at a regional level. Ismail Shammout president of the UPA, was voted President of UAA, a role he held from 1971 until 1977. The UAA's mission was grounded in promoting relations between the Arab and Third Worlds. Two editions of the Arab Biennial, which were held in Baghdad in 1974 and Rabat in 1976, were organised by the UAA and foregrounded the dedication of Arab artists to the Palestinian struggle.

Inspired from the Union of Palestinian Artists established by artists who were refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, Palestinian artists living in the West Bank and Gaza, under Israeli occupation since 1967, undertook the step to establish a framework for collective action. Although the Israeli military administrator refused their request to form an association, they nonetheless created the League of Palestinian Artists officiously. The League organised several exhibitions that toured in the cities and towns of the West Bank, and in parallel, artists of the League chapter in Gaza as well. The Israeli administrators often shut down the exhibitions during the opening or a few days afterwards. They had imposed strict rules that forbade the use of Palestinian national symbols, including the Palestinian flag and the use of its colours (red, green and black) in a single composition - this is the reason watermelons became a subversive symbol in Palestinian art. In 1981, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (the counterpart to the Christian Red Cross Society), founded by the communist militant and intellectual Haidar Abdel-Shafi, hosted an exhibition by the League that was presented in several cities in Gaza, the West Bank, as well as Israel. That exhibition became the official de facto recognition of the League, which was able to register as a union under the umbrella of the existing Union of Engineers.

According to the catalogue of the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine*, the largest number of participating artists came from France, Italy, Japan, Iraq, and Poland. We pushed our investigation to elucidate why more artists from France donated artwork than from Egypt or Lebanon.

In the case of Japan, the answer seemed to be with Fathi Abdul-Hamid, the PLO's representative in Japan (1977-83), who is acknowledged in the catalogue of the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine*. He was in close contact with the Japan Asian African Latin American Artists Association (JAALA) and its founder, Haryu Ichiro, a radical art critic, theorist, and writer. On the occasion of the international biennial exhibition *The Third World and Us* at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in July 1978, JAALA invited Palestinian artists to present work alongside Japanese artists. In addition to hosting exhibitions, the association organised conferences promoting anti-war, anti-nuclear, and anti-imperialist consciousness, in which artists and intellectuals from countries such as Palestine, South Korea, and Thailand were involved. The collection, in solidarity with Palestine, had its first tour in Japan, where one hundred works were selected and exhibited in July 1978.

In the case of Italy, many of the Italian artists who donated artworks to the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine* belonged to the anti-establishment artist collectives that gravitated around the Italian Communist Party and participated in the annual Festa de l'Unità throughout the 1970s. Some were connected through artist collectives, particularly L'Alzaia. Its members began to collaborate informally in 1968, but the collective was formally founded in 1971 by Ennio Calabria, Pietro Campus, Nicola Distefano, Angelo Fattori, Luigi Ferranti, Franco Ferrari, Giuseppe Frattali, Paolo Ganna, Francesco Pernice, and Giovanni Puma. They rented a space on Via Minerva in the historic centre of Rome, where they hosted exhibitions, performances, and workshops and produced posters and serigraphic prints. The collective was engaged with issues of social justice, fair access to public housing and urban development in Rome, and it organised direct interventions in public spaces. The collective also extended its support for international causes. In December 1973, for example, L'Alzaia organised an exhibition in solidarity with the Chilean people. A year earlier, it had presented exhibitions, including a display of documents denouncing the military dictatorship in Greece, a collection of silkscreen prints from Cuba, and a series of posters of the Palestinian struggle. Ennio Calabria had become a close friend of Wael Zwaiter, a Palestinian translator and the PLO representative in Rome, who was assassinated in October 1972.

L'Arcicoda was another collective; its member artists were based in Tuscany, in and around the town of San Giovanni Valdarno in 1973. L'Arcicoda was cemented around the conviction that art should be produced against and outside the gallery system and the market. The collective organised exhibitions and interventions in independent and public spaces, looking for direct, anti-elitist contact with the public. Between 1973 and 1976, its member artists included Luca Alinari, Stefano Beccastrini, Giampiero Bigazzi, Renato Bitoni, Aurelio C., Fabio de Poli, Enzo Dei, Walter Falconi, Giuseppe Giachi, Franca Gori, Valeria Gori, Mirko Gualerzi, Giancarlo Marini, Graziano Martini, Piero Nincheri, Nicola Pagallo, Enzo Sciavolino, Simonetta Partorelli, Claudio Resti, Enrico Roccato, Emanuelle Romanelli, Daniela Rossi, Sergio Traquandi and Venturino Venturi. They made serigraphic and lithographic prints and posters around local and international issues.

And last but not least, many of the French artists who donated artworks to the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine* belonged to the anti-establishment, artist-run Association de la Jeune Peinture, which gathered militant artist collectives, radicalised after the upheavals of May 1968. Formed in Paris in 1950, and officially established in 1953, the Salon de la Jeune Peinture was a singular event created by artists and for artists, entirely free of the direct or indirect intervention of galleries and the market, in response to the scarcity of opportunities for artists, emerging or otherwise, to exhibit their work. The Association de la Jeune Peinture's main resource was annual membership fees, its organisational structure included a general assembly that elected a committee to oversee its salon every year. The committee was, in turn, mandated to select artworks. In 1968, the Jeune Peinture dedicated the salon to the victory of the Vietnamese people, named it *Salle rouge pour le Vietnam*, and held exhibitions in factories. In 1969 and 1970, the Salon's theme was "Police et culture"; a multitude of artist collectives exhibited collective work, marginalising contributions by individual artists. The Salons of 1971 and 1972 engaged with the social and political crises in France, exhibiting exclusively collectively made works. By 1972, the salon had become an eminently political platform that hosted a range of artists' collectives mobilised around local and international issues, among them the Palestinian struggle, the feminist struggle, workers' rights, and environmental issues. In 1999, the Jeune Peinture was renamed Jeune création, and the salon was reconfigured as an exhibition that bridges the public, institutions, and galleries.

In the years following the May 1968 revolt, several French and international artists living in Paris maintained their political engagement and even radicalised it. Parallel to their personal practice, these artists formed collectives that re-integrated art into the heart of local and international social and political struggles. Some such collectives emerged spontaneously and were short-lived; others were more structured and endured longer. Radical, subversive, and confrontational, they embodied different modes of production, representation, aesthetic language, and creative subjectivity and produced works that were invariably visible outside the conventional sites of the art system. Moreover, the works were ephemeral (posters, banners, serigraphs) and today, only their documentary traces remain. A vast number of these collectives and the artists who participated in them were involved in the Association de la Jeune Peinture between 1968 and 1978 and featured on the list of artists who donated works to the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine*.

The Front des Artistes Plasticiens (FAP) was formed in 1971 by artists who wanted to build on radical political engagement and change the art system. They saw themselves as intellectual and creative workers and it was natural to stand in solidarity with factory workers.

The FAP artists wanted to take charge of their destiny. They opposed censorship, the precariousness of living and working conditions, the eviction of artists from studios, the banalisation of education, the impossibility of exhibiting, the disregard of artists in cultural policy making, lack of transparency in the selection of acquisition of artworks by the state. The artists signed their posters as FAP, not their own names, they included Jean Attali, Pierre Bouvier, Gérard Fromanger, Lavigne, Julio Le Parc, Maurice Matieu, Claude Rédélé, Guy de Rougemenont, BMPT, Peignot and many others. The FAP were very active in leading the charge for mobilising around local and transnational struggles. Its members were also part of other collectives, including the Collectif antifascistes de plasticiens (CAP), the Brigade internationale de peintres antifascistes and others. It disbanded after a few years.

The Collectif de peintres des pays arabes (also known as the Collectif Palestine) was founded in December 1975, spearheaded by Claude Lazar. Between 1976 and 1977 its members included Khouzaima al-Alwani, Achraf Bakleh, Farid Ben Yahia, Brigitte Dustmann, Yasmine al-Hakim, Ilhem, Rachid Koraïchi, Claude Lazar, Moustapha Nachar, Ahmed Said, Mohamed Saci, Samir Salameh, Gouider Triki, Nicole Vennat, Marc Weirich and Marc Zuate. It was created to help overcome the artists' isolation and was based on shared principles, both theoretically and practically. The collective participated in the Palestine Day event organised in Vincennes in 1976, where they presented paintings, screen prints, and a collectively painted 3x6m banner (made for use during rallies, mobilisations, and gatherings) dedicated to solidarity with the Palestinian revolution. The collective also contributed individual and collective works to the Salon de la Jeune Peinture. Some of these works were donated to the collection for the Palestine solidarity collection.

In 1976, the siege (lasting 88 days) and massacre of Palestinian refugees in the Tal al-Zaatar camp on the outskirts of Beirut made headlines in the international media, but this was not sufficient to impose pressure to relieve the civilians caught in the siege. In solidarity, PLO representatives and pro-Palestinian militants mobilised protests, collected donations, and staged events. An impressive number of posters were produced to raise consciousness. The Italian artist collective L'Arcicoda collaborated with the Collectif Palestine and other groups staging exhibitions and painting interventions in public squares in several towns in Tuscany to inspire solidarity with the people under siege in the Tal al-Zaatar camp. The painting interventions consisted of placing a large canvas on the ground, with artists standing at each of the four corners, using a stencil drawing of the face of a fidai; the stencil was reproduced by the artists as well as the general public invited to participate until the surface was covered entirely. The gathering occasioned discussions of the situation in Tal al-Zaatar. The most memorable took place at the Piazza Ferretto in Mestre on 7 September, 1976, during the 37th Venice Biennale. Luigi Nono performed live music, and Rachid Koraïchi painted the words Tal al-Zaatar in Arabic when the canvas was covered. In Mestre, the event was produced in collaboration with Lotta Continua, the Partito di Unità Proletaria and the Federazione dei Giovani Socialisti Italiani, and was supported by the Municipality of Venice and the Venice Biennale.

CONCLUSION

In the format of the exhibition of *Past Disquiet*, we imagined each museum in solidarity to be like a tree, the roots of each intersecting with the other. The stories we tell are those of the soil and rhizomes that live around them in symbiosis. The artists who organized exhibitions, murals and interventions in public spaces, created posters, banners, and protested while re-imagining the vocation of art, the sites for exhibition and the mission of museums. In the context of the UK, the practices of solidarity in the visual arts ranged from mural making, poster production and exhibition making. It also included institutional responses to the struggles which took the form of biennials and festivals. The programme at Ibraaz aims to unearth the histories of solidarity and art in the UK linked to these four transnational struggles.

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The curators wish to express their deepest gratitude to all the people who were interviewed, opened archives, shared expertise and helped throughout the research and making of the project.

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Bibliothèque, archives, musée des mondes contemporains, Sophie Cras, Lincoln Cushing, Ziad Dalloul, Salma Samar Damluji, Dar Assayad, Svetlana Darsalia, Catherine David, Clare Davies, Lionel Davis, Ekaterina Degot, Pauline des Mazières, Catherine Dossin, Jo-Anne Duggan, Guy Emmanuel, Laura Enriquez, Virginia Espinoza, Catherine Faciéras, Emily Fahlén, Patricia Falguières, Imane Farès, Solange Farkas, Simone Fattal, Ghassan Fawwaz, Franco Ferrari, David Fichter, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Maria José Fontecilla, Pilar Fontecilla, Freedom Park Archives, Juan Fuentes, Fundació Joan Miró, Yvonne Fredriksson, Vincenzo Gaetaniello, Nina Galanternick, Jacopo Galimberti, Gendaikikakushitu Publishing, Stefan Gierowski, Carolien Glazenburg, Jorge González, Mercedes Gordillo, Heidi Grunebaum, Paz Guevara, Yamily Habib, Joana Hadjithomas, Ramzi Haidar, Liesl Hartman, Mitsue Hasegawa, Ruba al-Hassan, Brynn Hatton, Ibrahim Hazimah, Dóra Hegyi, Christian Heinze, Lars-Gösta Hellström, Belal Hibri, 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