

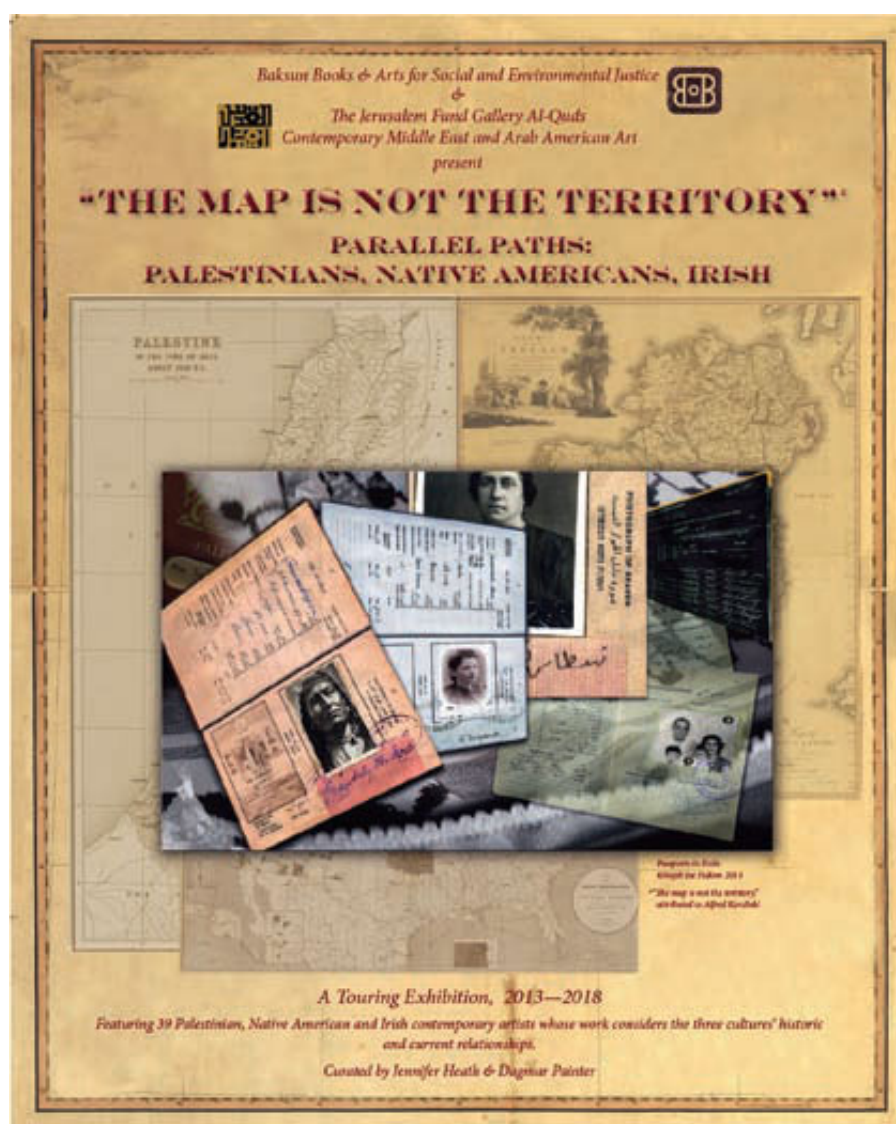
The Map Is Not the Territory: Parallel Paths—Palestinians, Native Americans, Irish

Dagmar Painter

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Special Report

By Dagmar Painter



(Poster designed by Dagmar Painter)

A major exhibition, “The Map Is not the Territory: Parallel Paths—Palestinians, Native Americans, Irish,” will be on view from Sept. 6 through Oct. 18 at the Jerusalem Fund’s Gallery Al-Quds in Washington, DC. That is the first stop on a five-year tour of the exhibit of works on paper by 39 international and U.S.-based artists. This concept show, co-curated by Jennifer Heath of Baksun Books and Arts in Boulder, Colorado, and this writer, explores the profound connections and commonalities among Palestinians, Native Americans and the Irish.

Contemporary artists from all three cultures have created original paintings, photographs, prints, drawings, artist books and films considering their historical and contemporary links. Accompanying the exhibit will be a series of films, an artists’ panel featuring three of the participating artists, and a scholarly panel exploring the topic.

The exhibited works consider such topics as identity, words, persistence, occupation, conflict and resistance, land and food, and diaspora, among others. Each artist includes a personal statement exploring his or her ideas about the concept and their work for the exhibition. A series of text panels illustrate some of the historical connections among the groups, such as their deep reverence for the land; struggles against occupation, oppression and colonization; starvation, disease, exposure; and forced migrations. Among the contemporary connections explored is the fact that the Irish are among the leaders of the Gaza Flotilla movement, and have long been involved in many other aspects of the Palestinian resistance. In the mid-20th century, Palestinian refugees landed in New Mexico, where some have intermarried with the Navajo—whose own forced migration west began in the 1860s on the Long Walk, not unlike the 1948 Palestinian displacement during the *Nakba*. During the Irish Hunger in the 19th century, the Choctaw people, themselves well acquainted with famine, sent \$750 to Ireland, and in 1992, the Irish repaid them with great ceremony.

One of the artworks included is a collaboration between Lisamarie Johnson and Fantin el-Tamimi, who describe “Dublin, Palestine 2012” as “a photograph of a protest in solidarity with Gaza, during an Israeli attack. ...The protest...took place on O’Connell Street, in front of the General Post Office, which served as the headquarters of Irish rebellion leaders during the Easter Rising in 1916. The 800-year British occupation of what at last became the Republic of Ireland in 1922 closely resembles today’s occupation of Palestine. The Irish strongly empathize with Palestine’s quest for freedom and independence, for the return of the land, and with the long-term generational trauma that has affected Palestinians, Native Americans, and the Irish.”

Among the well-known and world famous artists included in this juried exhibition is Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, who submitted her archival pigment “Print, House and Home.”



“Print, House and Home” by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith; John Halaka’s “Forgotten Survivors”.
(©Jaune Quick-to-See Smith 2013) (©John Halaka 2013)

In his digital print from his “Forgotten Survivors” series, John Halaka seeks to “make images of the refugees indelible.” Halaka, who recently

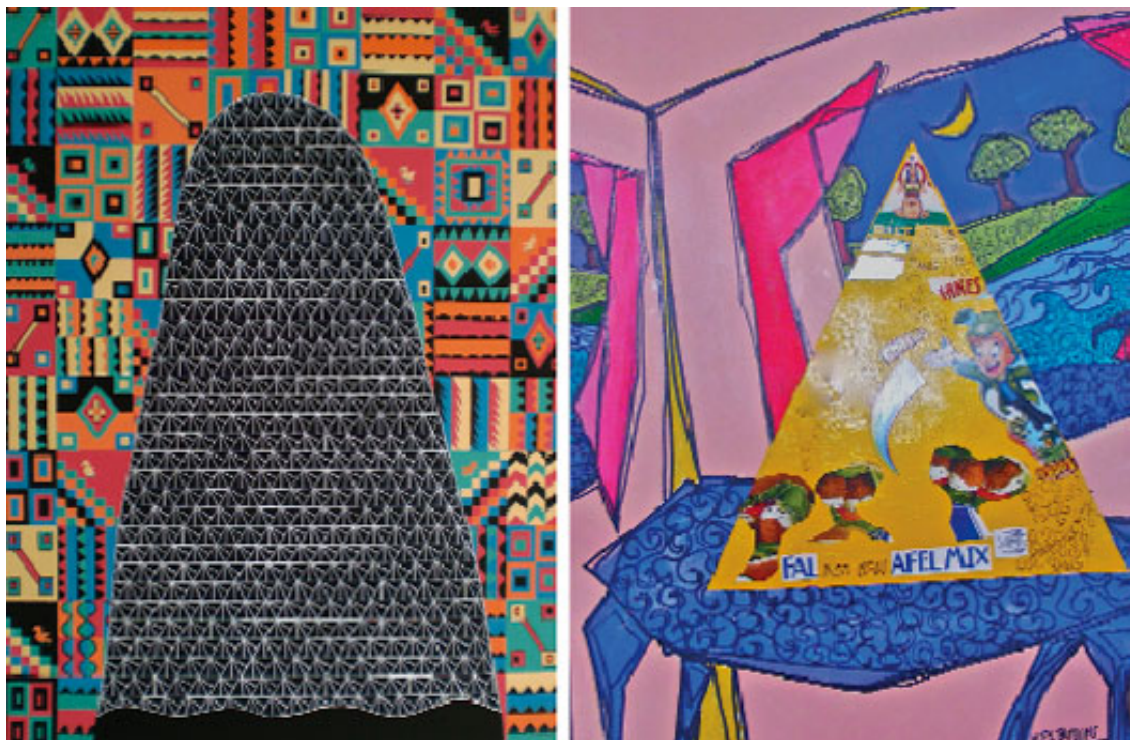
returned from a Fulbright fellowship in Beirut, is a visual artist, documentary filmmaker, and professor of Visual Arts at the University of San Diego.

“Clearing,” a print by leading Irish artist Rita Duffy, is one of three examining “elements of a post-colonial condition intersecting with post-conflict agendas and our society’s movement from a war/warrior footing toward civil processes.”



Helen Zughaib served as United States cultural envoy to the West Bank, where she worked with Palestinian women artists in 2008. One of her paintings—which are included in the collections of the Library of Congress, World Bank, U.S. State Department and Arab-American National Museum—was chosen as a presidential gift by the Obama administration. Zughaib’s work in this exhibit portrays a powerful female image in her signature

style, combining elements of all three cultures.



Lucky Can't Find a Piece of Land to Sit and Eat His Falafel Peacefully," by Mona el-Bayoumi; and Helen Zughuib's "Woven in Exile." (©Helen Zughuib 2013) (©Mona el-Bayoumi 2013)

Mona el-Bayoumi, whose work was recently exhibited at Espace Galerie Europa in Paris, is represented by an acrylic and mixed media painting, “Lucky Can’t Find a Piece of Land to Sit and Eat his Falafel Peacefully.” In her artist statement she describes the piece as “attempt[ing] to express how symbols of an appropriated culture are commodified in the form of advertisement.”

Another work, “Mohegan Wigwam,” is by locally based Phoebe Farris, a member of the Powhatan-Renape Nation whose expertise is contemporary Native American art and culture. Dr. Farris has consulted for the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian and the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian Art. She was the curator and a participating artist in the five-year traveling exhibition, “Visual Power: 21st Century Native American Artists/Intellectuals,” sponsored by the Cultural Programs Division of the United States Department of State. □

Dagmar Painter is curator of the Jerusalem Fund's Gallery Al-Quds in Washington, DC.

SIDEBAR

Participating Artists

6+Collective, Alan Montgomery, Andrew Ellis Johnson, Claudia Borgna, Donna Schindler, Elena Farsakh, Fatin Al-Tamimi, Hani Zurob, Helen Zughaib, Jane McMahan, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, John Halaka, Kerry Vander Meer, Lisamarie Johnson, Malaquias Montoya, Manal Deeb, Mary Tuma, Matthew Egan, Melanie Yazzie, Michael Elizondo, Jr., Michael Keating, Michele Horrigan, Mick O'Kelly, Mona el-Bayoumi, Nadema Agard, Najat El-Khairiy, Najib Joe Hakim, Neal Ambrose-Smith, Norman Akers, Phoebe Farris, Rajie Cook, Rawan Arar, Rita Duffy, Scott Benesiinaabandan, Sherry Wiggins, Susanne Slavick, Tom Quinn Kumpf, Vivien Sansour and Wahsontiio Cross.

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