

---

ARCHIVE  
2008

## Khalil Rabah

---

Khalil Rabah, *After 12 Years* (1995-2008). Photograph by Adatabase

Using narratives that hover between fiction and reality, Khalil Rabah (b. 1961, Jerusalem) produces installations, objects, videos, actions and interventions that articulate the very real situation of occupation experienced by Palestinians. His ongoing Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind, which has had manifestations in Athens, Istanbul, Amsterdam, and elsewhere, playfully interrogates history as an accumulation of fact and artifice. Yet the 'evidence' he presents cannot be taken at face value, playing around as he does with ideas of objective truth and authenticity. His fictionalised museum also questions and subverts the notion of archiving, documentation and the idea of the museum itself as a repository of objects and the construction of collective knowledge.

In 1995 Khalil Rabah planted olive trees outside the United Nations Office in Geneva. Uprooted from their original home in Palestine, the trees were replanted as symbols of peace in Switzerland. Metaphorically they referenced the continuing effects of war on Palestinian agriculture, economy and identity. In recent years, Rabah has learnt that only one tree remains and the others have been removed, although it is not clear where they have been relocated to, or why.

In Liverpool, the Botanical Department of the Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind has initiated a legal investigation of the status of the trees. Presented in glass cases, the 'evidence' sat alongside a diorama of the absent trees, text panels, national flags and other accoutrements of the museum experience. Like his construction of an office for the United States of Palestine Airlines in London in 2007, this work continued Rabah's examination of fact and fiction, in which ownership of the past and reclamation of a future denied were played out.

### **Khalil Rabah at Liverpool Biennial 2008**

---

*After 12 Years* (1995-2008)

Installation

Commissioned by Liverpool Biennial 2008

Exhibited at the Bluecoat