

FILM
FESTIVAL
PROGRAM



APRIL 11 - 13 Gaza On-Screen Film Festival at Columbia University



The master copy of Adel Salam Shehada's film To My Father (2008) was destroyed by Israeli bombs, but the film – a remarkable and moving meditation on Gaza's photographic archives and the people who produced, who posed for, and who re-arrive to vision through them - of course lives on precisely because of its dispersion, reproduction, circulation. The human beings trapped in Gaza exist as do all humans in dialogue with their images, and those images most often circulate along global conduits of corporate and state ideological networks that are themselves imaginary prisons – but sometimes, as here, with the help of the transformative work of curator Nadia Yaqub, one gets a taste not just of lived oppressions but of beautiful acts of courage and imagination. For Gaza is not simply "made visible" by the films made there and viewed here; just as important, Gaza and its filmmakers make visible, make, in fact, new, unique, transformative visibilities, in which we are all invited to participate. Yes, Gaza's imprisonment is a condition of your viewership here; but in these films you will also see Gaza's freedom being made and brought into visibility, not just before your eyes, but in them too. That is a gift not to be lightly accepted.

James Schamus

Opening Night

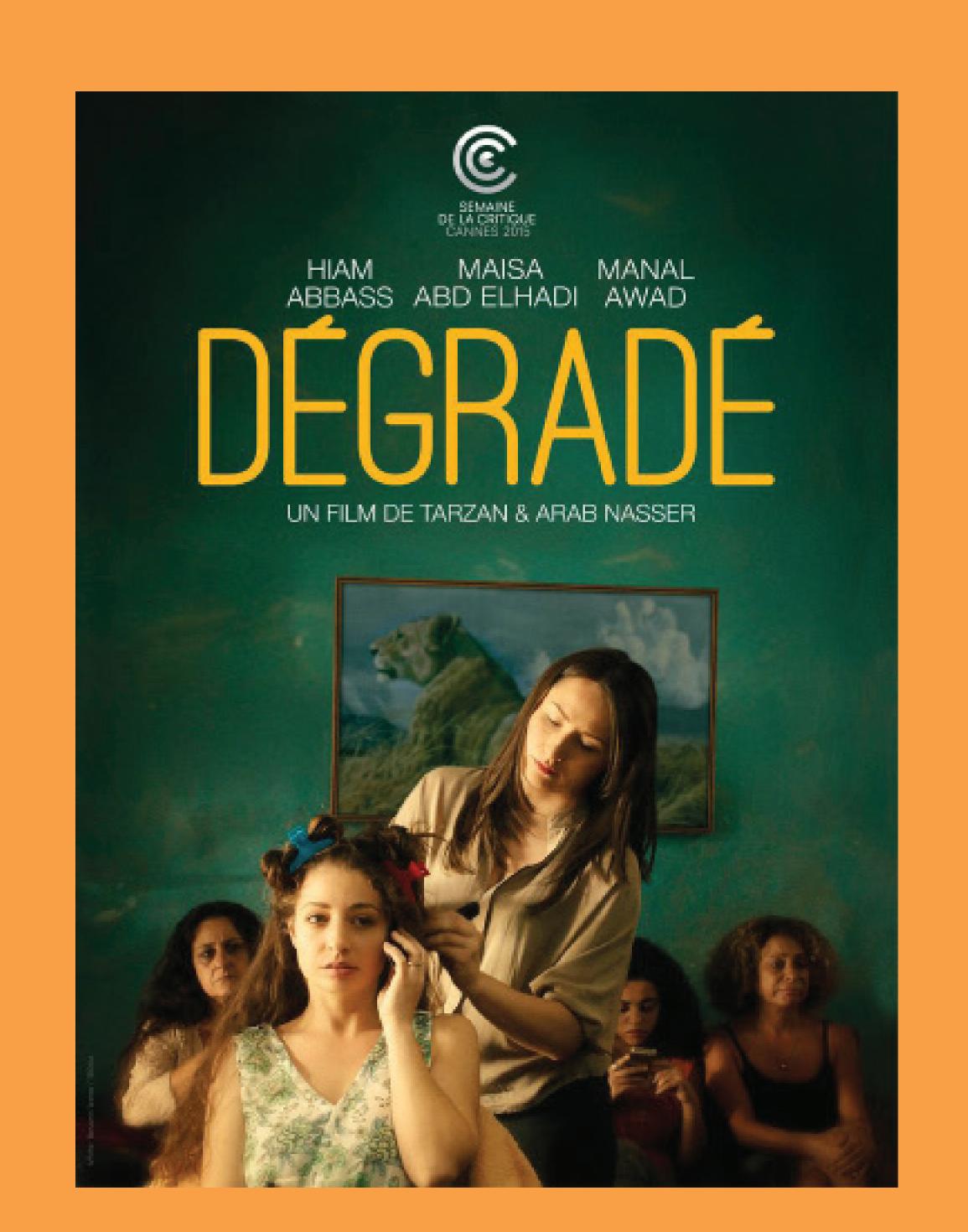
Thursday, April 11th 7 pm - 9 pm



Paper Boat (2017) directed by Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa.

A shelter in Gaza during a bombing. A young couple waits in the small claustrophobic room. She is pregnant, but how can she give life to a human being in these conditions? The future father is lost in the memories of his childhood. A reflection on freedom, slavery and surrender, sustained by a pressing emotional tension.

Director in attendance.



Degrade (2015) directed by Ahmad Abu Nasser and Mohammed Abu Nasser. The Gaza Strip today. Christine's beauty salon is croweded with female clients: a bitter divorcée, a religious woman, a woman addicted to prescription drugs and a young bride-to-be, among others. However, their leisure is disrupted when gunfire breaks out across the street. A gangland family has stolen the lion from Gaza's zoo, and Hamas has decided it's time to settle old scores. Imprisoned in the salon, the women begin to unravel.

Followed by Q&A with Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa, moderated by Hamid Dabashi

Location: Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University

1180 Amsterdam Ave, Room 612

Friday, April 12th 10 am - 12 pm



Scenes from the Occupation in Gaza (1973) directed by Mustafa Abu Ali. A work created from a French news report about the Gaza Strip that Abu Ali re-edited, adding additional footage and a new commentary. This is the only film produced by the Palestinian Cinema Group, a large collective of Palestinian and Arab filmmakers and artists who came together in 1973 for the purposes of creating a vibrant Palestinian revolutionary cinema.



Voices from Gaza (1989) directed by Antonia Caccia and Maysoon Pachachi. Voices from Gaza is the first full-length documentary produced after the start of the first Palestinian intifada. With minimal commentary, it allows the people of Gaza - 70% of whom are refugees - to tell their seldom-heard story. In the film Palestinian men, women, and children speak frankly about the effect of Israel's occupation on their lives, but also about their organized and empowering grassroots resistance to the occupation.



Gaza Diary (2001) directed by Taysir Batniji.

Combining still and moving images, Batniji's short experimental film invites reflection on daily life and violence.



Al-Wafaa (2014) directed by Yassir Murtaja.

Al-Wafaa is the sole hospital in the Gaza Strip that serves the needs of the disabled. This is the story recounted by its staff and patients of their experience being shelled and bombed during the 2014 Israeli attack.



Shuja'iyah: Land of the Brave (2014) Directed by Hadeel Assali.

Shuja'iyah: Land of the Brave represents one filmmaker's personal reflection on the meaning of "crimes against humanity" in the context of Israel's 'Operation Protective Edge' waged in the Gaza Strip in 2014. Juxtaposing footage of her family filmed in the summer of 2013 against audio from the summer of 2014 Assali poses the question, when we say 'crimes against humanity', what 'humanity' are we talking about?"





Followed by Q&A with Hadeel Assali, moderated by Nadia Yaqub Location: Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University 1180 Amsterdam Ave, Room 612



Friday, April 12th 1 pm - 3 pm



Daggit Gaza (2009) directed by Hadeel Assali and Iman Saqr. Politics, food, and family are the topics of a phone conversation between Houston and Gaza that serves as voiceover commentary to the preparation of a spicy tomato salad.

Ouroboros (2017) directed by Basma Alsharif.

Ouroboros is acclaimed visual artist Basma Alsharif's first feature film. This experimental film is an homage to the Gaza Strip and to the possibility of hope based on the eternal return. The film follows a man through five different landscapes, upending mass-mediated representation of trauma. The film is a journey outside of time, marking the end as the beginning and exploring the subject of the eternal return and how we move forward when all is lost.



Followed by Q&A moderated by Gil Hochberg Location: Dodge Hall, Columbia University 2960 Broadway, Room 511

Masterclass

Friday, April 12th 4 pm - 6 pm

Abdel Salam Shehada is a film director, journalist and cameraman from Gaza. He has been producing films and programming for over 30 years. He has produced & directed over 20 documentary films.

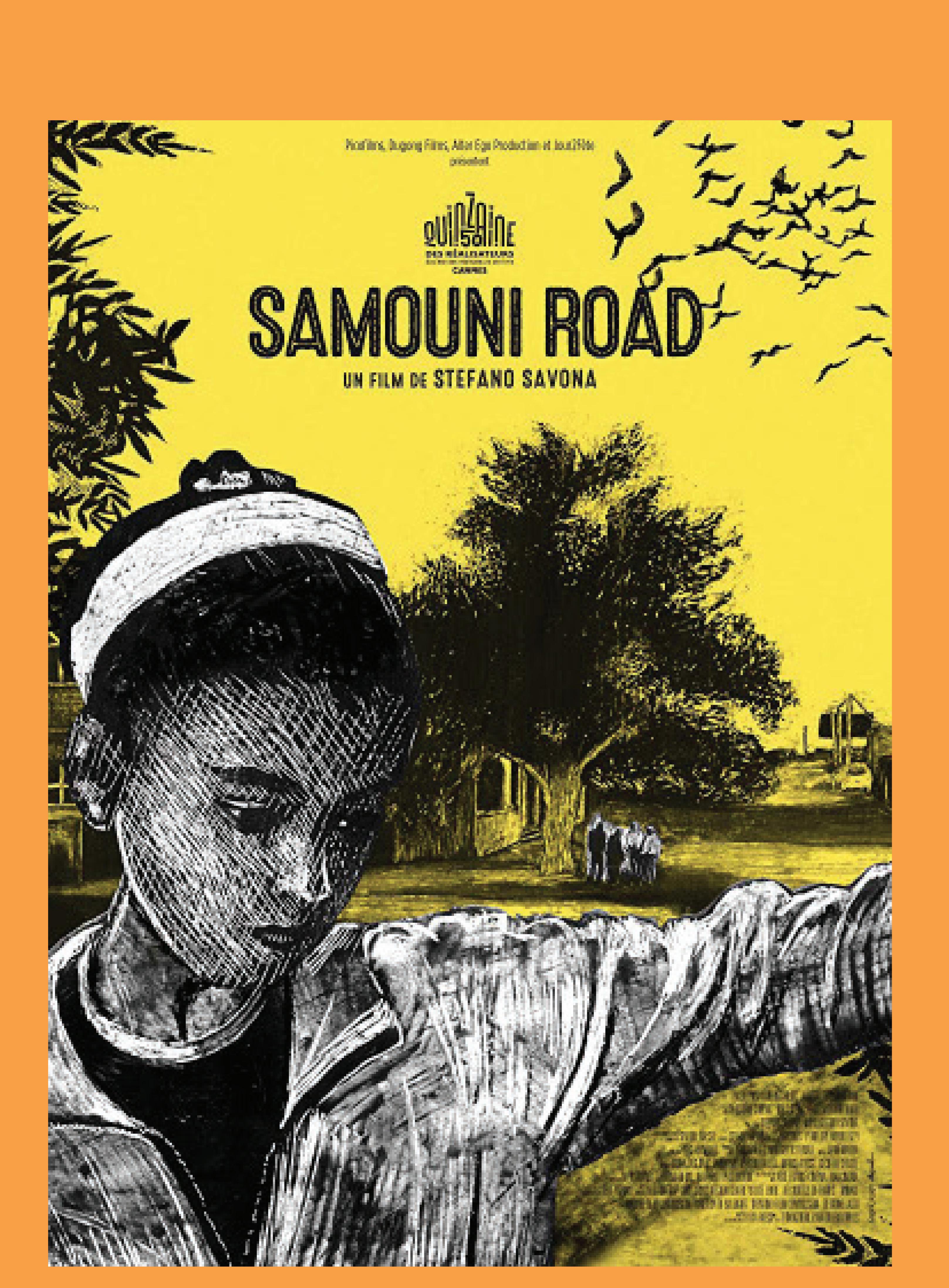
His films have screened throughout Europe, Asia, Africa & North America. His last film *To My Father* won the Golden Eagle award for top film in the documentary category at the Rotterdam Arab Film Festival in 2009. He has finished the screenplay for a new film entitled *Al Bokja (The Package)* and is in the process of securing funding for its production, but due to the ongoing military siege of Gaza he has not been able to produce his film in Gaza.

In this Masterclass, Abdel Salam Shehada will talk about dreams and reality, images and imagination. He will share stories from his life, his beginnings in film as a cameraman and a visual album of his journey.

With translation assistance by Ahmed Mansour Location: Dodge Hall, Columbia University 2960 Broadway, Room 511

Screening

Friday, April 12th 7 pm - 9:30 pm



Samouni Road (2018) directed by Stefano Savona. In the rural outskirts of Gaza City a small community of farmers, the Samouni extended family, is about to celebrate a wedding. This will be the first celebration since the latest war. Amal, Fuad, their brothers and cousins have lost their parents, their houses and their olive trees. The neighborhood where they live is being rebuilt. As they replant trees and plow fields, they face their most difficult task: piecing together their own memories. Through these young survivors' recollections, Samouni Road conveys a deep, multifaceted portrait of a family before, during, and after the tragic event that changed its life forever. Winner of the L'Œil d'or prize for best documentary at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival.

Location: Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University 1180 Amsterdam Ave, Room 501

Student Films

Saturday, April 13th 10 am - 12 pm

My 3 Dreams (2018) directed by Mohamed Nayef Ahmed Ali, Birzeit University. In Gaza, Mohammed Mahani dreams of race cars, playing oud, and karate. 5.03. Director joining via videoconference.

Dema (2015) directed by Amjad M. A. Al Fayoumi. Al-Azhar University. Too young to be a bride. 3.15.

Seekers for Life (2017) directed by Mahmoud Awad. Al-Aqsa University. Gaza's used clothing market. 4.32.

Private Number (2012) directed by Omar Elemawi, Al-Aqsa University. An unexpected warning. 8.03.

We Love Life (2015) directed by Mohammed S. Ewais. Al-Aqsa University. A portrait of graffiti artist Bilal Khaled in Gaza. 7.13.

Director joining via videoconference.

Moving Dream (2012) directed by Alaa Alaloul. Birzeit University. Nader dreams of going back to work. 2.00.

The Cage (2016) directed by Khaled Tuaima. Birzeit University. The hazards of catching birds in Gaza. 6.42.

Parkour on the Rubble of Gaza (2014) directed by Khaled Tuaima. Birzeit University. A team of athletic daredevils. 2.33.

Followed by Q&A with Mohamed Nayef Amned Ali and Mohammed S.

Ewais, moderated by Nancy Kalow, translation by Ahmed Mansour

Location: Dodge Hall, Columbia University

2960 Broadway, Room 511

Our exemplary set of eight short films by Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip includes both documentary and fiction on a variety of topics. The films directly communicate the interests and concerns of these seven creative and skilled university film students. Student filmmaking in the Gaza Strip has been nurtured by a variety of local and international instructors, such as Palestinian filmmaker Khaled Halabi and Swedish filmmaker Per-Åke Holmquist. Al-Aqsa University's Department of Radio & Television and Birzeit University's Media Development Center, in particular, have had notable success in teaching both documentary and fiction film production within a community that has been under blockade since 2007. Themes of mobility ("Moving Dream") and freedom ("The Cage") are artfully explored by portraying individuals at work. The student filmmakers eloquently document young people's aspirations as expressed in music ("My 3 Dreams"), graffiti ("We Love Life"), and movement ("Parkour on the Rubble of Gaza"). Economic, social, and political conditions in the Gaza Strip are pointedly treated in documentary ("Seekers for Life") and fiction ("Dema" and "Private Number"). This screening is a collaboration between filmmakers and faculty in the US and Palestine. My colleague on the project, Sarah Friedland (Skidmore College), and I are especially grateful to Professors Buthayna Alsemeiri and Nibal Thawabteh at Birzeit University, Professor Khaled Halabi at Al-Aqsa University, and filmmaker Ahmed Mansour (NYU).

Nancy Kalow



Screening: two films by Abdel Salam Shehada Saturday, April 13th

Saturday, April 13th 1 pm - 3 pm

Rainbow (2004) directed by Abdel Salam Shehada.

Of *Rainbow*, his film essay made in the aftermath of Israel's 2004 attack on Gaza, Shehada says "These are people who have crossed my path...Some of these rose from among the debris. Carrying their tears, some were looking for answers to worries that haunted them...Others were exhausted by contemplating the reality ...They appeared like me...I used to love the camera and believe in what it could do to transfer the pain...forget sorrows, or may be promise of a better life."

To My Father (2008) directed by Adel Salam Shehada.

"Those were the days when girls were prettier, when eyes were in all colours, without any colour. What is different now - the camera, or the eyes?" asks Abdel Salam Shehada's poetic and mesmerizing homage to the studio photographers of the 1950's - 70's. Set partly in a refugee camp in Rafah, this is a remarkable look back at fifty years of Palestinian and Arab history, through photographs, reportage and the voices of these photographers today.

Director in attendance.

Followed by Q&A with Abdel Salam Shehada, moderated by Joan Mandell

Location: Dodge Hall, Columbia University

2960 Broadway, Room 511

Academic Panel

Saturday, April 13th 4 pm - 6 pm

Gaza Film Between the Event and the Everyday

Nadia Yaqub: Nadia Yaqub is Professor of Arab Culture at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ghazza ala bali: Memory, Place and Trauma in Rashid Masharawi's Haifa

Kamran Rastegar: Kamran Rastegar is Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature at Tufts University

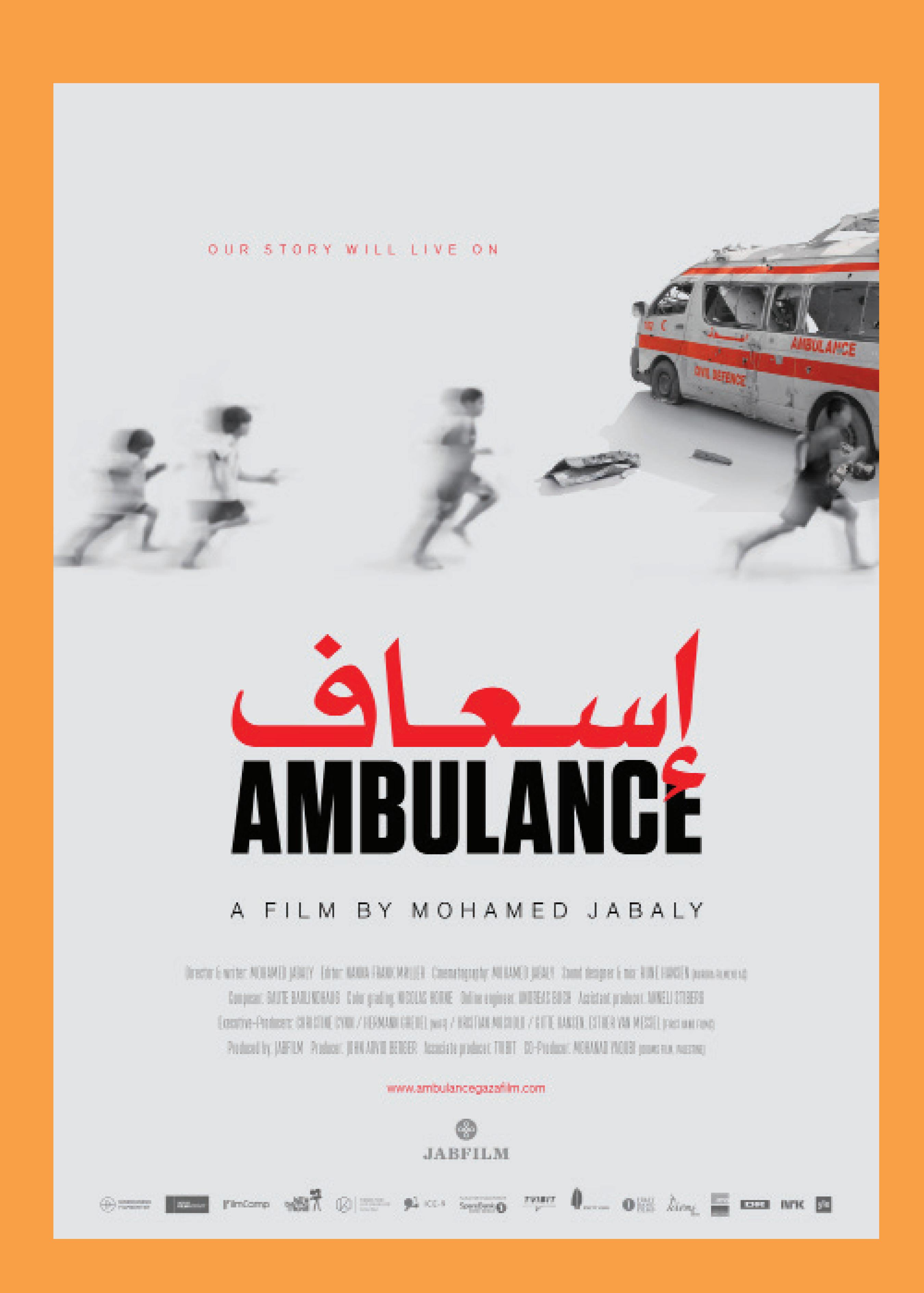
Documentary Art Films "About" Gaza

Samirah Alkassim: Samirah Alkassim is Adjunct Associate Professor in the Film and Video Studies at George Mason University

Moderated by Hamid Dabashi: Hamid Dabashi is Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University

Co-sponsored by Studio-X Amman and GSAPP





Closing Night

Saturday, April 13th 7 pm - 9 pm

We Will Return (2018) by Ibrahim Ghunayim, Samir al-Burnu, Sami Shahadah, Arkan Gharib, and Faris Abd al-Malik.

A music video by rapper Ibrahim Ghunayim shot at the Great March of Return. Ghunayim has dedicated the song and video to the journalist Yaser Murtaja who was shot and killed by Israeli security forces while reporting on the March in April 2018.

Ambulance (2016) directed by Mohamed Jabaly. A raw, first-person account of the Israeli war on Gaza in the summer of 2014. The filmmaker joins an ambulance crew as war approaches, looking for his place in a territory blockaded under siege, and films their harrowing and heroic lifesaving work. In response to the dark chaos of war, the filmmaker learns to rely on the ambulance captain and crew, who in turn support him to make a film that expresses both the trauma and hope of the Palestinians of Gaza.

Director in attendance.

Advisory: Graphic war violence

Followed by Q&A with Mohamed Jabaly, moderated by Richard Peña

Location: Lenfest Center for the Arts

Katharina Otto-Bernstein Screening Room

615 West 129th Street

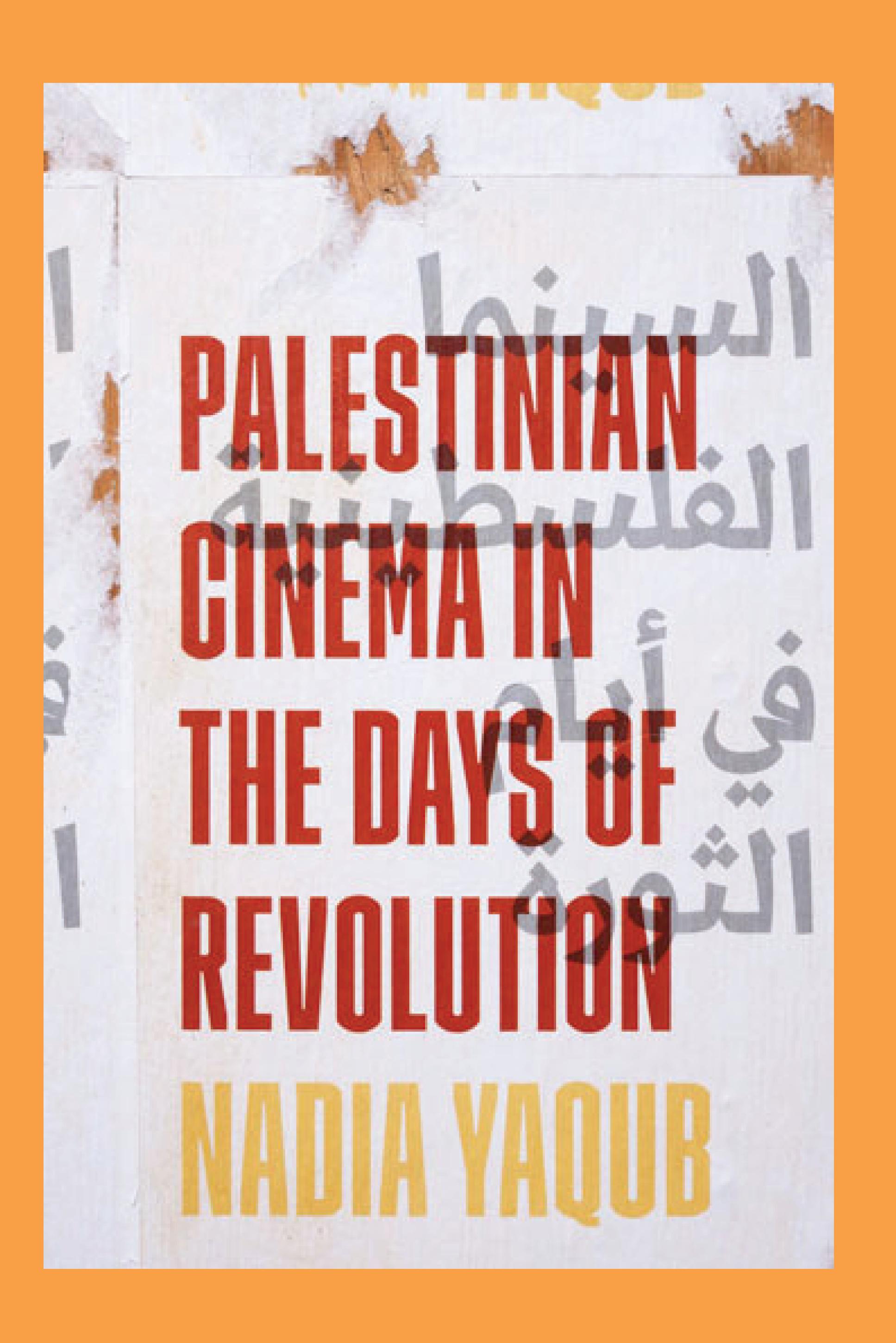
Reception

Saturday, April 13th 9 pm - 10 pm

Join us for a closing reception nigth reception at Dear Mama Coffe's location in the New Manhanttanville campus. It is in the southwest corner of the Jerome L. Greene Science Center's ground floor, facing the Lenfest Center for the Arts.

Location: Jerome L. Greene Science Center 3227 Broadway

Copies of Nadia Yaqub's book "Palestinian Cinema in the Days of Revolution" will be available for sale at the opening screening.



Curator's Statement

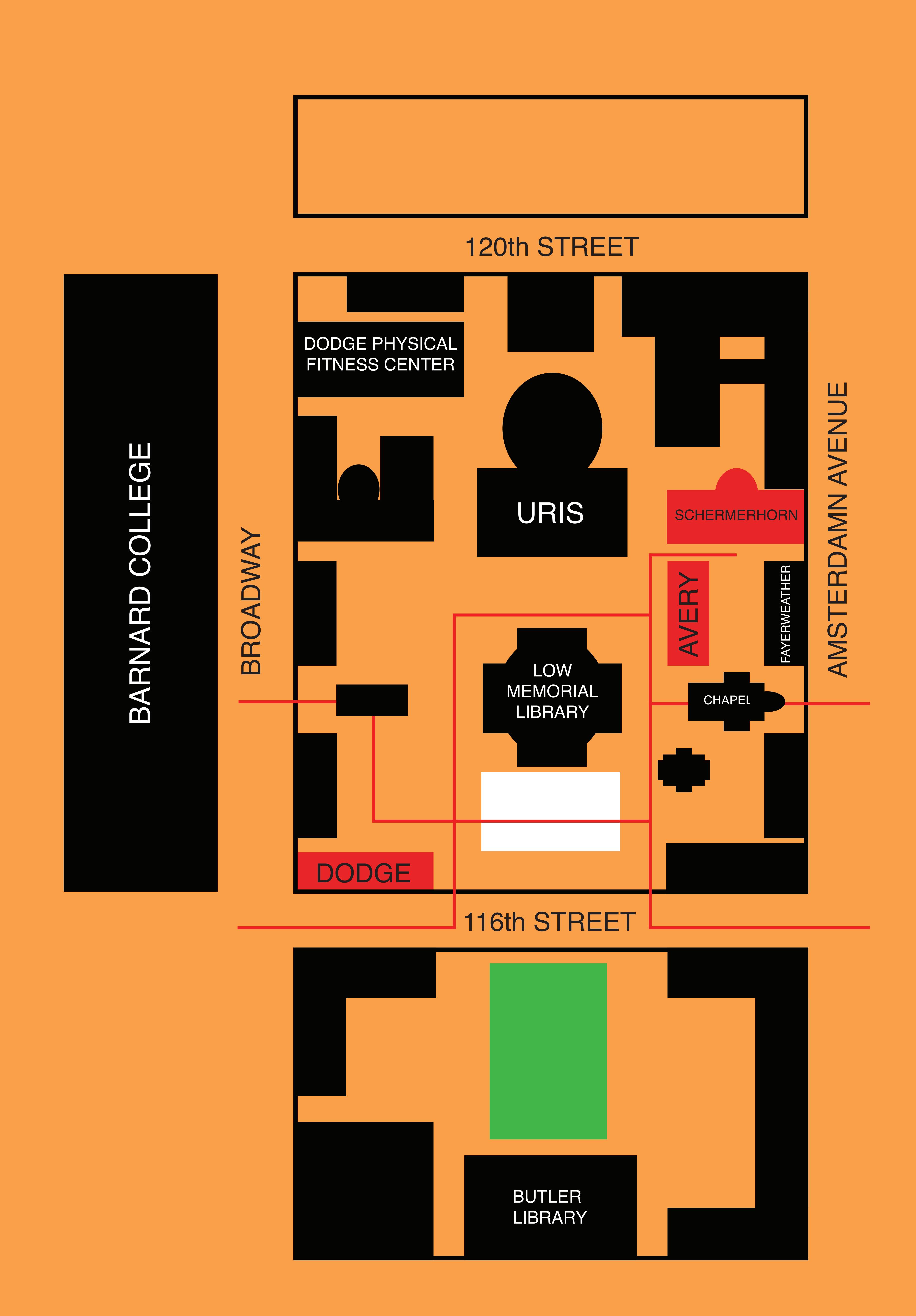
When Hamid Dabashi asked me to curate a film festival on Gaza for Columbia University, it immediately struck me as exactly the right project for this particular moment. New developments on the ground in Palestine (the Great March of Return and its consequences, an escalation in house demolitions), many of which are centered in Gaza, and changes to U.S. foreign policy (the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, cuts to UNRWA funding, current proposal to endorse the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights) create a sense of urgency that demands our attention and action. At the same time, Palestinian cinema has flourished, relatively speaking, in recent years. Palestinians are making more films now than ever before and increasingly screening them in major international film festivals. Palestinian film festivals, a phenomenon that began in the late 1990s, have proliferated, and many are now institutionalized in major cities around the world. Gaza in particular has drawn the attention of filmmakers, with several high-profile documentaries garnering significant international recognition in the recent months.

It seems paradoxical that while the political prospects for Palestinians are rapidly dimming, Palestinian images and narratives are perhaps reaching their widest audiences. There is a wide gap between the practice of Palestinian politics at the state level by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, and Palestinian representations of themselves and the circulation of those representations. The former operates within a global political order that has always been hostile to Palestinian claims. The latter are, of course, framed and delimited by the media and information circuits and ideologies that accompany and inform that global order. However, it has always been possible for those representations to slip outside that framing to reach individuals and groups who are open to receiving them, creating opportunities for solidarity, education, emotional and intellectual engagement, mourning, and perhaps, on occasion, celebration.

It is precisely in moments of political despair that communication in all its forms becomes most urgent. Communication protects and sustains the fragile networks of principled engagement that make life bearable. In a world that increasingly privileges the visual, films are a particularly effective means of reaching out to others. The indexical quality of film footage—its nature as a trace of a real encounter at a particular moment—provides a means for Gazan filmmakers to share evidence of their experiences with spectators. At the same time, because film footage always contains a surfeit of information that is beyond the capacity of any interpretation to comprise, films are potentially open texts. Film can be manipulated, collaged through montage and the layering of sound and images. Through the tools of cinema, Gazan filmmakers comment on their experiences, process their traumas, analyze, fantasize, and express emotions. For spectators, films create embodied experiences, which, in turn, form the basis for new relationships among people as well as new understandings, both affective and intellectual, of events and their circumstances.

As a thematic film festival, *Gaza on Screen* brings spectators together to create a temporary community who share the experience of viewing and discussing films. In "Towards a Third Cinema," Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino discuss the political possibilities, indeed, the political necessity of such gatherings for a film to have a revolutionary effect. Solanas and Getino wrote their manifesto in 1969. Fifty years later, the possibility for political revolution feels vanishingly faint, but the importance of political community is as important as ever. Watching these films together, we sustain our communities of solidarity and forge new ones. Our solidarity makes a difference for us and for Gazans who know that we are watching their films. We must be humble about what films can do; they will not end the violence, lift the sanctions, open the borders, or provide clean water and electricity, but they can help us to remain stead-fast in our own political engagements.

	129TH STREET
LENFEST CENTER FOR THE ARTS	
	125TH STREET



B105

Abdel Salam Shehada is from Rafah in Gaza, Palestine. He has worked in television production and media and as a camera and sound technician, and in various capacities for international news crews. Shehada is the director of more than 20 Documentary and essay films.

Ahmed Mansour is a NYU Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute - News and Documentary Program - graduate. Ahmed was born and raised in a refugee camp in Gaza Strip, Palestine. He worked as an organizer, translator and guide for international journalists covering the 2014 war. He's the 2019 Mountain-Film Emerging Filmmaker Fellow based in Telluride, Colorado.

Alaa Alaloul is a film director and producer in Gaza City; he studied with Swedish filmmaker Per-Åke Holmquist in a Birzeit University film class held in Gaza.

Amjad M. A. Al Fayoumi studied film at Al-Azhar University in Gaza and is a filmmaker and photographer. Mahmoud Awad was a film student at Al-Aqsa University.

Antonia Caccia was part of the collective that created the groundbreaking 1970 film *End of a Dialogue* about apartheid in South Africa. Since then she has worked on several widely acclaimed documentaries about Palestine and the Palestinians, including *On Our Land, Voices From Gaza, Stories of Honour and Shame,* and *Bethlehem Diary.*

Basma Alsharif is a visual artist who uses moving and still images, sound, and language to explore the anonymous individual in relation to political history and collective memory. She received an MFA from the School of Art and Design at the University of Illinois, Chicago in 2007 and has been working in Cairo, Beirut, and Amman since then.

Gil Hochberg is Ransford Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature, and Middle East Studies at Columbia University. Her research focuses on the intersections among psychoanalysis, postcolonial theory, nationalism, gender, and sexuality. She has published essays on a wide range of issues including: Francophone North African literature, Palestinian literature, the modern Levant, gender and nationalism, cultural memory and immigration, memory and gender, Hebrew literature, Israeli and Palestinian Cinema, Mediterraneanism, Trauma and Narrative. Her first book, *In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs, and the Limits of Separatist Imagination* (Princeton University Press, 2007), examines the complex relationship between the signifiers "Arab" and "Jew" in contemporary Jewish and Arab literatures. Her most recent book, *Visual Occupations: Vision and Visibility in a Conflict Zone* (Duke University Press, 2015), is a study of the visual politics of the Israeli-Palestinian. She is currently writing a book on art, archives and the production of historical knowledge.

Hadeel Assali is a Palestinian-American filmmaker, writer, and a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Columbia University. She has created several experimental short films centered on the Gaza Strip that have been screened in several small film festivals, academic conferences, and art exhibitions. Assali is currently working on her first feature-length documentary.

Hamid Dabashi is Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He is a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, as well as a founding member of the Center for Palestine Studies at Columbia University. He has written 25 books, edited 4, and contributed chapters to many more. He is also the author of over 100 essays, articles and book reviews in major scholarly and peer reviewed journals on subjects ranging from Iranian Studies, medieval and modern Islam, comparative literature, world cinema, and the philosophy of art (trans-aesthetics). In the context of his commitment to advancing trans-national art and independent world cinema, Hamid Dabashi is the founder of Dreams of a Nation, a Palestinian Film Project, dedicated to preserving and safeguarding Palestinian cinema.

Joan Mandell is a Detroit-based journalist, oral historian, and documentary filmmaker. She has taught at the University of California/ Irvine, College for Creative Studies/Detroit, Birzeit University/Palestine, and aboard a ship travelling around the world with the University of Virginia/Semester-at-Sea. She co-founded *Al Fajr* news-weekly, served on the editorial board of *Middle East Report* and was a Fulbright scholar. Joan recently directed two documentary segments for the Emmy award-winning PBS series, Arab American Stories. And she is proud of her ground-breaking work producing and curating Patriots and Peacemakers, a multimedia exhibit for the Arab American National Museum.

Kamran Rastegar is Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature at Tufts University. Rastegar research encompasses the study of modern Arabic and Persian literatures and cultures. His book *Literary Modernity between Europe and the Middle East* explores the origins of the conception of literary modernity in Arabic and Persian literatures. His book *Surviving Images: Cinema, War and Cultural Memory in the Middle East* explores the role of cinema and visual culture in the formation of cultural memory in conflict and post-conflict social settings.

Khaled Tuaima studied with Birzeit University's Gaza program and is a photographer and filmmaker in Gaza City.

Nadia Yaqub is professor of Arab cultures in the Department of Asian studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is the author of *Palestinian Cinema in the Days of Revolution* (University of Texas Press, 2018) and *Pens, Swords and the Springs of Art: The Oral Poetry Dueling of Palestinian Weddings in the Galilee* (Brill, 2006), coeditor with Rula Quawas of *Bad Girls of the Arab World* (University of Texas Press, 2017) as well as numerous articles and book chapters about Arab and Palestinian film and literature.

Nancy Kalow is a folklorist and filmmaker who has taught at Duke's Center for Documentary Studies since 2000. She began researching student filmmaking in Palestine in 2016. She was a co-convener, with miriam cooke and Maha Houssami, of the Humanities Writ Large project, Arab Refugee Oral History: Collecting Life Narratives. Her documentary, *Sadobabies*, was the winner of a Gold Hugo at the Chicago Film Festival and the Special Jury Trophy at the San Francisco Film Festival. *The Great Dictator* screened at the Strange Beauty Film Festival and the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival. She has been co-chair of the Selection Committee of the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival since 2003.

Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa is Gazan photographer, screenwriter, editor, producer and director for documentary and fictional films, educational series, and TV productions for local and international humanitarian organizations and media companies. In addition, Abu Ghalwa has participated in a variety of independent productions. In 2014, he worked as technical director of the Red Carpet Human Rights Film Festival in the Gaza Strip. Abu Ghalwa currently works as producer and director for the satellite channel of the United Nations Works and Relief Agency (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip.

Maysoon Pachachi is a London-based filmmaker of Iraqi origin. Her documentary films include *Iraqi Women* — *Voices from Exile, Bitter Water, Return to the Land of Wonders, Iranian Journey, Our Feelings Took the Pictures; Open Shutters Iraq.* She has also taught filmmaking and is a founding member of ACT TOGETHER: Women's Action for Iraq (www.acttogether.org). In 2004, with London-based Iraqi filmmaker, Kasim Abid, she set up the Independent Film & Television College (www.iftvc.org), a free-of-charge film-training center in Baghdad.

Mohamed Jabaly is a Palestinian filmmaker and artist from Gaza. He has been working in several organizations and projects, training children and young adults in filmmaking and photography. He has created several short films, documentaries, and music videos since 2011. He has participated in many local, regional, and international exhibitions, film festivals, and workshops in Europe and the Arab world.

Mohammed Ewais studied at Al-Aqsa University and is a freelance filmmaker in Gaza City.

Mohammed Nayef Ahmed Ali is a filmmaker and photographer who studied documentary through a Birzeit University film production class taught in Gaza.

Mustafa Abu Ali is one of the founders of the Palestine Film Unit in 1968. Mustafa Abu Ali went on to make several films within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). He also served as the director of the PLO's Palestine Cinema Institute from 1973 to 1982.

Omar Elemawi studied film at Al-Aqsa University and now lives in Turkey.

Richard Peña is Professor of Professional Practice in Film in the Faculty of the Arts at Columbia University. He has also served as the Program Director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Director of the New York Film Festival from 1988 to 2012. At the Film Society, he has organized retrospectives of Michelangelo Antonioni, Sacha Guitry, Abbas Kiarostami, Robert Aldrich, Gabriel Figueroa, Ritwik Ghatak, Kira Muratova, Youssef Chahine, Yasujiro Ozu, Carlos Saura and Amitabh Bachchan, as well as major film series devoted to African, Chinese, Cuban, Polish, Hungarian, Arab, Korean, Japanese Soviet and Argentine cinema. He is also currently the co-host of Channel 13's weekly Reel 13.

Samirah Alkassim is Adjunct Associate Professor in Film and Video Studies at George Mason University. She is an independent filmmaker, film scholar, and curator with published articles about Arab cinema and media appearing in such journals as *New Cinemas Journal, Nebula, and Bidoun*. She recently edited and introduced the English translation of *The Dream – Diary of a Film*, written by film director Mohamad Malas (American University Press, 2016) and is currently an editor for a forthcoming book series on Arab cinemas published by Palgrave Macmillan. As an experimental and documentary filmmaker, her films include *Far From You* (1996) about Egyptian singer Umm Kulthoum and Memory, and a current work in progress about Palestinian artists in Jordan, among various other experimental films and installations.

Stefano Savona was born in Palermo in 1969 and began directing and producing documentaries in 1999. His films include *Mirrored Border, D-Day, Notes from a Kurdish Rebel, and Cast Lead, Palazzo delle Aquile*, and *Tahrir Liberation Square*. Since 2009 he has been collecting the testimonies of "Il Pane di San Giuseppe" ("Saint Joseph's Bread"), a visual history archive dedicated to the living memory of 100 years of rural civilization in Sicily. He is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards.

Taysir Batniji, who divides his time between France and Palestine is a multi-media artist whose practice includes drawing, installation, photography, video, and performance. Taysir Batniji's artwork, often tinged with impermanence and fragility, draw its inspiration from his subjective story, but also from current events and history. His methods of approach always distance, divert, stretch, conceptualize or simply play with the initial subject, offering, at the end, poetic, sometimes acrid, point of view on reality. He has partipated in numerous exhibits and residencies in the Arab world and beyond. His works can be found in the collections of the Centre Pompidou and the Fonds national d'art contemporain in France, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Imperial War Museum in London, the Queensland Art Gallery in Australia and Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi as well as other prestigious institutions.

Yassir Murtaja was a self-taught filmmaker who worked as a journalist and a cameraman for other artists and filmmakers, most notably the Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei and Basma Alsharif. He also directed news documentaries. In 2012 he founded Ain Media which covered the 2014 Israeli attack on Gaza for a number of news agencies. On April 6, 2018 Murtaja was murdered by an Israeli sniper while covering the Great March of Return.

The Center for Palestine Studies (CPS) promotes the academic study of Palestine by supporting research, teaching, and intellectual collaboration among scholars within Columbia University and beyond.

Palestine Cuts is a new space for emerging and established filmmakers and video-artists to present and discuss their work in an engaging and encouraging environment. It promotes stimulating audiovisual projects (documentary and fiction film, video, installations, etc.) that challenge existing conventions and offer critical and alternative views about Palestine and Palestinians.

