

ABOUNADDARA

أبُونَضَّارَة

THE RIGHT TO THE IMAGE

الحق في الصورة



PROGRAM GUIDE

10.22–11.11.2015
EXHIBITION

10.22–10.24.2015
CONFERENCE

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This publication documents the programs organized in celebration of the second Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics, awarded to Abounaddara on October 22, 2015.

Design by Manuel Miranda Practice (MMP)
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Vera List Center for Art and Politics, 2015

Cover: Abounaddara, *The Unknown Soldier*, 2012, film still
Verso: Abounaddara, *Syria Today*, 2012, film still

ABOUNADDARA

أبُونَضَّارَة

THE RIGHT TO THE IMAGE

الحق في الصورة

By Anne Marquez and Dork Zabunyan

“Molotov cocktails thrown in the face of the world”: such is the metaphor used by Abounaddara to explain the collective’s release of a film once a week, every week, since April 2011, shortly after the start of the Syrian revolution. To change ways of seeing, and to help gain acceptance of the “right to the image” for all, which should be recognized as a fundamental human right, these “artisans du cinéma” try to shape each of their films within a set of strict exigencies: that is in effect to render images of a society that reflect its harmonies as well as its glaring dissonances and failed connections. The exhibition of their work at The New School is placed under the aegis of the “right to the image” defended in the course of their more than 200 films, that are themselves fragments of Syrian society portrayed by the collective with neither Manichaeism nor self-pity. It is the expression of

the conditions that the collective has set for itself in its vitality as well as in its distress, offering an alternative complex view to static media scenarios that exploit the image of the victim in the name of the duty to inform, condemning it to the abjection of that single label and that one degraded image. This “abjection” is similar to the one that filmmaker Jacques Rivette pointed his finger at in an article published in 1961 in *Les Cahiers du cinéma*, an idea shared by the collective by holding the person who films responsible—and even more responsible is the one who releases such images.

At a time when filming does not always mean seeing, Abounaddara is behind every image, even one that it has not shot, but to which it gives a framework for comprehension, allowing real historical perspective. By producing films that do not give in to the temptation of compassion,

4 Introduction

by suggesting speech that is never univocal but a testimony of humanity caught up in contradictory doubts and aspirations—whether on the side of the opposition or the regime—Abounaddara deconstructs media strategies in order to sabotage stereotypes of victimhood or inventing ways of representation that work to suspend a sense of narrative. Abounaddara shifts the position of the visible, giving us access to realities that we didn't know of, to voices that we have never heard; indeed, informing us about our own relationship with these images. Their cinema creates a space of otherness, of which critic Serge Daney spoke in the beginning of the 1990s, during the Gulf War: the image that allows us to think about the other. Their cinema has a power that lies precisely in that ability to gather up in one single, extremely concentrated cinematic gesture (their films rarely exceed three or four minutes) the complexity of a group of events that can never be reduced to one single, unique truth. Against the litany of complaint and against the narrowing of meaning and the transformation of the individual into a symbol, there is still a revolution going on, and the collective strives to show this actuality via a multiplicity of faces.

While their project continues to make a new film available on the web every Friday, The New School

presents for the first time, in the form of montage, sixty of their films produced between 2010 and 2015. The spatial set-up for showing their work using a triple projection aims to increase the force of the films by offering possibilities of perception other than those of a computer screen, which is our usual means of viewing such work. With three montages (“Stop the Spectacle!”, “Look at Our Faces: Portraits of a Becoming Revolution”, “See and Wait”) that change every week, the set-up is such that the experience of viewing their films is reconfigured. This brings an awareness of the sometimes underlying echoes that exist between the films, which remain virtual due to their method of broadcast. This exhibition in three stages will take place over three weeks, paced by the programs, focus groups and round tables, as well as parallel programs that may help form an “ethical view” (Sylvie Lindeperg) and examine various esthetic, political and legal issues that are brought forward by the Abounaddara collective.

THE NEW SCHOOL EXHIBITION

Abounaddara.
The Right to the Image
10.22–11.11. 2015

Arnold and Sheila Aronson Galleries
Sheila C. Johnson Design Center
Parsons School of Design
at The New School
66 Fifth Avenue at 13th Street
New York City

Each week of the exhibition features a different selection of Abounaddara's films organized around a particular strategy that drives the collective's work.

Abounaddara: The Right to the Image is curated by Carin Kuoni (Vera List Center for Art and Politics, The New School), Anne Marquez (independent commissioner) and Dork Zabunyan (Université de Paris 8, France), in dialogue with the Abounaddara collective.

10.22–10.28



Abounaddara, *All the Syria's Futures*, 2015, film still

STOP THE SPECTACLE! On Remixing Found Footage, Still Images, and Sound in Times of Complex Realities

Kill them, 2015
Media Kill, 2012
The News, 2015
The Warrior's Rest, 2015
REC, 2012
Starvation, 2014
GoBro: The War From Within, 2015
End of Broadcast, 2011
After Facebook, 2012
Don't forget the Plums, 2014
After the Image, 2013
Syria Today, 2012
From Syria with Love, 2014
Absence of God, 2013
Once upon a time in Syria, 2011
All the Syria's Futures, 2015
The Eagles of Syria, 2013
Leaving for Pitchipoï, 2015
Apocalypse Here, 2012

Duration : 15'57

10.29–11.4



Abounaddara, *The Unknown Soldier*, 2012, film still

**LOOK AT OUR FACES:
PORTRAITS OF A
BECOMING REVOLUTION**

**On Portraiture and How
People's Own Voices and
Images Complicate Fragmented
Understandings of Syria**

The Stamp Man's Last Stand, 2010
The lady of Syria— part 1, 2014
Children of Halfaya, 2013
Chronicle of a Fall Foretold, 2012
Over the Toys, 2014
My School, 2013
The Exodus, 2013
The Day After, 2015
Bikidam Requiem, 2012
Diary of an armed gang, 2013
Vanguards, 2011
National Dialogue, 2013
The Child who Saw the Islamic State, 2015
Zeina, 2012
Diaries of an Illegal Doctor — part 3, 2014
The Woman in Pants, 2013
With our Souls, with our Blood, 2015
Blowing in the Wind, 2012

Duration : 26'19

11.5–11.11



Abounaddara, *Kill Them*, 2015, film still

SEE AND WAIT

**On the Suspension of Narratives
to Create Spaces for Engagement
and Interpretation**

The Unknown Soldier— part 1, 2012
Hassoun, 2015
The Sniper, 2014
Everything is under control Mr.President, 2011
Then what, 2011
October, 2012
The Road of Aleppo, 2015
The Infiltratos, 2011
Salamiyah Why ?, 2013
What Justice ?, 2014
Two minutes for Syria, 2013
No exit, 2014
Warning, 2012
Betraying the Revolution, 2013
The Mysterious Plant, 2013
Humanitarian Aid, 2015
I am what I will be — part 1, 2014
The Islamic State for Dummies—part 1, 2013
I will dance tomorrow, 2014
Waiting for Messi, 2012
Palmyra Now —The Beginning, 2015

Duration : 23'04

ONLINE EXHIBITION



Abounaddara posts their videos openly, and everyone is free to use them, forward them, present them on video screens, or create an expanded video program. This online exhibition was developed with this approach in mind and in consultation with Abounaddara. Institutions, non-profits, and media organizations around the world are invited to participate by posting Abounaddara's videos and texts on their website and sharing them with their own audiences.

To that end, a media kit can be downloaded from www.veralistcenter.org, featuring instructions, select images, a suggested playlist, exhibition credits, an artist statement and links to further resources, to allow each host institution to present Abounaddara. The Right to the Image in the appropriate context.



The goal of the online exhibition is to spread awareness of Abounaddara's work among other communities that contest misrepresentation or lack of representation and inspire counter movements. The exhibition will be activated through postings of new work at exactly 12 pm noon EST on three Fridays: October 23, October 30, and November 6, 2015.

The online exhibition has been organized by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Slough, and Project Projects/P!, in consultation with Abounaddara. For an updated list of participating organizations, visit www.veralistcenter.org.

CONFERENCE

Around the world new critical practices of image production, scholarship, art making, activism, and legal action are evolving to combat political and humanitarian crises. This conference dissects these practices, focusing on the work of the anonymous filmmaking collective Abounaddara.

Abounaddara releases one film each week, presenting all sides of the revolution to global audiences in an “emergency cinema” that includes more than two hundred films to date. Collectively the films seek to establish the right to the image as a recognized human right. Each panel addresses one aspect of Abounaddara’s practice through diverse contexts to see how it is enacted in other global sociopolitical situations and to build an analysis of methods of worldwide.

The three panels on October 23 reflect Abounaddara’s filmmaking tactics and also mirror the three thematic shifts in the concurrent exhibition. Every week, the exhibition focuses on a different strategy and features a different selection of approximately twenty films. These central themes are portraiture and participation, subverting images, and open-endedness as tactic.

The two panels on October 24 shift to the broader implications underlying Abounaddara’s work, first through a discussion of organizing in the contemporary world and concluding with an evaluation of their core campaign of a right to the image for all, proposed as an amendment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each panel opens with a brief section of related Abounaddara films, selected by the filmmakers.

Curated by Carin Kuoni and Johanna Taylor,
Vera List Center

THU 10.22

5–6:30 pm

Exhibition Opening

Abounaddara. The Right to the Image

Arnold and Sheila Aronson Galleries, Sheila C. Johnson Design Center
Parsons School of Design
66 Fifth Avenue at 13th Street

6:30–7:30 pm

Prize Ceremony and Conversation

Charif Kiwan, *member and spokesperson, Abounaddara*

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director, Human Rights Watch*

The Auditorium at 66 West 12th Street

FRI 10.23

Theresa Lang Community and Student Center

The New School

55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor

11 am–1 pm Panel I: Portraiture and Participation

1–2 pm Lunch break

2–4 pm Panel II: Subverting Images

4–6 pm Panel III: Open-endedness as Tactic

SAT 10.24

Theresa Lang Community and Student Center

The New School

55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor

12–2 pm Panel IV: Ways of Organizing in Post Democracy

2–3 pm Intermezzo. Revolution and Music

3–5 pm Panel V. The Right to the Image

5–6 pm Closing Reception and Book Launch for *Entry Points:*

The Vera List Center Field Guide on Art and Social Justice, No. 1

THU 10.22

The Auditorium at
66 West 12th Street

Prize Ceremony

6:30–7:30 pm

With

David Van Zandt
President, The New School

James-Keith Brown
Chair, Vera List Center Advisory
Committee

Carin Kuoni
Director/Curator, Vera List
Center

Conversation

Charif Kiwan
Member and spokesperson,
Abounaddara

Kenneth Roth
Executive Director, Human
Rights Watch

FRI 10.23

Theresa Lang Community
and Student Center
55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor

Panel I:Portraiture and Participation

11 am–1 pm

This inaugural panel offers an introduction to Abounaddara and their work. Film is a natural medium to depict a portrait—whether of a place, a person, or a historic moment. Many of Abounaddara's films present intimate portraits of individual Syrians from all sides of the conflict telling their stories on film. Deeply rooted in histories of art and filmmaking alike, this method of portraiture complicates our fragmented understanding of what is happening in Syria.

Abounaddara Films

In the Name of the Father
The Unknown Soldier—part 3
Aïcha

Panelists

Charif Kiwan
Member and spokesperson,
Abounaddara

Lisa Wedeen
Mary R. Morton Professor of
Political Science and the College
and Co-Director of the Chicago
Center for Contemporary Theory
at the University of Chicago

Edward Ziter
Associate Professor of Drama,
New York University

Peter Lucas
Assistant Professor, Graduate
Program of International Affairs,
The New School, moderator

Panel II:Subverting Images

2–4 pm

Appropriating and recontextualizing images is a key tactic in Abounaddara's work. Subverting film and video to layer deeper meaning within a complex political

reality is a method with ties to creators across the world.

Abounaddara Films

Kill them
Vanguards

Panelists

Peggy Ahwesh
Filmmaker, Professor of Film and
Electronic Arts, Bard College

Kader Attia
Artist

David Levi Strauss
Writer and critic, Chair,
Graduate Program in Art Writing,
School of Visual Arts

Christiane Paul
Associate Professor of Media
Studies, The New School,
moderator

Panel III:Open-Endedness as Tactic

4–6 pm

Representations of narratives and histories without closure leave space for audience interpretation and engagement. Abounaddara employs open-endedness as a tactic in their filmmaking, engaging not only global audiences but also methods of sustaining local networks from afar to support people living in challenging political environments to remain in their homeland. In this way open-ended art has political potential for processes of reconciliation.

Abounaddara Films

The Syrian street
All the Syria's Futures

Panelists

Moustafa Bayoumi
Professor of English,
Brooklyn College, City University
of New York

Ruba Katrib
Curator, SculptureCenter

Aleksandra Wagner
Assistant Professor of Sociology,
The New School, moderator

SAT 10.24

Theresa Lang Community
and Student Center
55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor

Panel IV:
Ways of Organizing in
Post Democracy
12–2 pm

Activists and artists alike are increasingly adopting new organizing tactics as the structures of power shift around them. These new ways of organizing respond to the challenges imposed by shifting post-democratic regimes of power, whether they are anonymous, governmental, or artistic.

Abounaddara Films
The Lady of Syria—Part One
What Justice ?

Panelists
Emanuele Castano
Professor of Psychology;
Chair, Psychology Department,
The New School for Social
Research

Ruth Wilson Gilmore
Professor of Earth and
Environmental Sciences,
and American Studies at
the Graduate Center, and
Director, Center for Place,
Culture and Politics, City
University of New York

McKenzie Wark
Professor of Culture and Media
Studies, Eugene Lang College
of Liberal Arts, moderator

Intermezzo: Revolution and Music
2–3 pm

Music and revolution are deeply intertwined. This legacy is provoked through an intervention of sound pieces created by New School students in response to Abounaddara's work. Featuring original commissioned work by Omer Berger and Anna Zinovieff Papadimitriou.

Organized by
Evan Rapport
Assistant Professor of
Ethnomusicology, Eugene
Lang College of Liberal Arts

Panel V:
The Right to the Image
3–5 pm

Representations of human suffering and injustice are not only aesthetic choices but also political and ethical choices. In an era when images captured in one place can be consumed instantly around the world, the proposed "right to the image" is a complex and multilayered solution that promotes freedom of speech and is not associated with any single right but a group of rights. This conversation questions the next steps for developing a right to the image that protects the dignity of subjects, as well as the integrity of the journalists, filmmakers, photographers, and researchers who work in these situations.

Abounaddara Films
Two minutes for Syria
The Child who Saw the
Islamic State

Panelists
Charif Kiwan
Member and spokesperson,
Abounaddara

Hani Sayed
Chair, Department of Law
and Associate Professor, The
American University in Cairo

Jasmine Rault
Assistant Professor, Culture and
Media, Eugene Lang College of
Liberal Arts

T.L. Cowan
2015–16 Bicentennial
Lecturer of Canadian Studies
in the MacMillan Center for
International and Area Studies
and Digital Humanities Fellow,
Yale University

Closing Reception and
Book Launch
5–6 pm

Entry Points: The Vera List Center
Field Guide on Art and Social
Justice, No. 1

Entry Points celebrates the inaugural Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics awarded to Theaster Gates for Dorchester Projects in September 2013.

12 RELATED PROGRAMS

Classes

Throughout the run of the exhibition and conference students, faculty and staff across The New School are connecting to Abounaddara's work in multiple ways.

Abounaddara Films Across The New School

Abounaddara's films are being screened on several monitors in public spaces throughout the university for the duration of the exhibition.

Media Studies Workshop, The New School

Media Studies graduate students are developing their own film programs inspired by Abounaddara, particularly their practice of anonymity.

Intermezzo: Revolution and Music

Music, revolution, and protest are deeply intertwined. This legacy will be provoked through an intervention of sound pieces created by New School students in response to Abounaddara's work. Coordinated by Evan Rapport, Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts. Featuring commissioned work by Eugene Lang College student Anna Zinovieff Papadimitriou and School of Jazz student Omer Berger.

This performance takes place as a part of the conference *Abounaddara. The Right to the Image*.

Saturday, 10.24
Theresa Lang Community and Student Center
55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor
3–4 pm

Program Crossings

Students in the class Take Care: Introduction to Curatorial Studies will collect video interviews with gallery visitors, reflecting on their

own take on representation and dignity. Others are collaborating with local community organizations including the Emperial Gallery series at Camaradas El Barrio in creating response events to the work of Abounaddara. Still others are placing the online exhibition within their networks of alternative spaces and student activist organizations.

Curricular Integration

Students from across The New School are engaging with Abounaddara's work in fall 2015 as a part of their classes. Participating classes and faculty include:

All Together Now:
Witnessing Another World.
H. Lan Thao Lam

Art and Social Engagement
Julia Foulkes

Cinematic Aesthetics Proseminar
Lana Lin

City Studio:
Activating Urban Spaces
Johanna Taylor

Core Studio 1: 3D
Shane Aslan Selzer

Core Studio 1: 4D
Norene Leddy

Designing Digital Knowledges
T.L. Cowan

Digital Filmmaking
Lana Lin

Encountering Pain
Aleksandra Wagner

Global Images of
Metropolitan Futures
Margarita Gutman

Global Soccer, Global Politics
Sean Jacobs

History of the Electronic Image
Kenneth White

Integrative Studio 1:
Fake Shane Aslan Selzer

Introduction to Art History
and Visual Studies
Kenneth White

Intro to Screen
Genevieve Yue

Media and International Affairs
Sean Jacobs

Music and Politics
Virginia Dellenbaugh

Photography and Social Change
Michelle Materre

Social Action and Solidarity
in Difficult Times
Alexandra Delano

Social Practice
Lydia Matthews

Take Care: Introduction to
Curatorial Studies
Carin Kuoni

Ways of Looking: Interpreting
Cities and Space
Margarita Gutman

For an up-to-date listing, please visit
www.veralistcenter.org.

In conjunction with *Abounaddara. The Right to the Image*, related film screenings and conversations are happening at The New School, around New York City, and beyond.

MON 10.19

*Syria: Snapshots of History
in the Making*
Film Screening and Discussion
5 pm

Stata Center, 32 Vassar Street
Massachusetts Institute
of Technology
Cambridge, MA

Screening of Abounaddara's
feature film *Syria: Snapshots of
History in the Making* followed by
a conversation.

MON 10.26

*Syria: Snapshots of History
in the Making*
Film Screening and Discussion
4:30–6:30 pm

Hayden Hall Room 100
Manhattan College
New York, NY

Screening of Abounaddara's
feature film *Syria: Snapshots of
History in the Making* followed
by a panel discussion of the
documentary, the crisis in Syria,
and human rights reporting and
media ethics. Light welcoming
and closing refreshments served
at 4:00 and 6:30.

WED 10.28

Centers of Gravity
Film Screening and Discussion
7–9:30 pm

University Center
The New School
66 Fifth Avenue at 13th Street, L104

Curated by Jason Fox

Filmmaker Mohammad Ali Atassi
will be here for this New York
premiere screening of his film
Waiting for Abu Zaid and a post-
screening discussion.

*"I was looking for an intellectual
father."*

—Mohammad Ali Atassi

This screening features works by
renowned Syrian filmmakers Joude
Gorani and Mohammad Ali Atassi.
Gorani's *Before Vanishing* presents
a portrait of a dying ecosystem,
tracing the changing social and
ecological life of the Barada, the
river that cuts through the heart of
Damascus. Ali Atassi's *Waiting for
Abu Zaid* offers an intimate portrait
of the prominent Egyptian scholar in
exile, Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid. Both,
in very different ways, illuminate
fault lines that shape a region on
the verge of war, and both gesture
towards ways of framing common
ground.

Participants
Mohammad Ali Atassi
Filmmaker

Jason Fox
Filmmaker and teacher

Charif Kiwan
Abounaddara member
and spokesperson

WED 10.31

Revolution on Film 1
12–4 pm

Kellen Auditorium
The New School
66 Fifth Avenue at 13th Street

Abounaddara's films draw on
cinematic legacies of filmmakers
using experimental methods to
document revolution, war, and
growth in times of crisis. A selection
of films mixed with Abounaddara
shorts has been organized into two
days of educational screenings in
support of New School classes.
Program developed in consultation
with exhibition curators Anne
Marquez and Dork Zabunyan.

Abounaddara, *Children of Halfaya*
Roberto Rossellini, *Germany Year
Zero* (1948) (78 min)

Abounaddara, *Media Kill*
Jean-Luc Godard/Jean-Louis Gorin,
Letter to Jane (1972) (52 min)

Abounaddara, *The Sniper*
Ari Folman, *Waltz with Bashir* (2008)
(90 min)

FRI 11.6

Haunted (Maskoon), 2014
Film Screening and Discussion
7:30–10pm

UnionDocs Center for
Documentary Art
322 Union Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11211
www.uniondocs.org

Curated by Jason Fox

Liwa Yazji, *Haunted* (Syria, 2014),
will be present for a post-screening
discussion with Jason Fox.

14 RELATED PROGRAMS

Film Screenings, Here and Elsewhere

Building on Syria's vibrant film scene, this feature-length portrait of exile by one of Syria's most highly acclaimed poets, Liwaa Yazji, captures a situation of profound displacement and uncertainty in the midst of Syria's revolution. Yazji's first film, *Haunted* bears the mark of a distinct literary voice and brings the viewer close to a visceral confrontation with the repercussions of the political strife in Syria. The film has been shown in art cinema houses in Europe; this is the first New York screening.

"When the bombs fell, the first thing we did was run away. It was not until later that we realized we had not looked back. We were not allowed to say goodbye to our home, our memories, our photos, and the life that was lived within them. We have become vacant like these spaces; our hastily packed belongings and the forgotten things haunt us." An uncertain existence follows the escape and expulsion from Syria as its displaced tumble into a physical and mental nowhere, a non-space between yesterday and tomorrow. A house, a home, has in one's life.

Participants

Liwaa Yazji

Writer and filmmaker

Jason Fox

Filmmaker and teacher

Program developed in consultation with exhibition curators Dork Zabunyan and Anne Marquez.

Abounaddara, *Apocalypse Here*
Harun Farocki, *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (1988)
(75 min)

Abounaddara, *Kill Them*
Brian de Palma, *Redacted* (2007)
(90 min)

Abounaddara, *Syria: Snapshots of History in the Making* (52 min)

SAT 11.7

Revolution on Film 2

12–4 pm

Kellen Auditorium

The New School

66 Fifth Avenue at 13th Street

Abounaddara's films draw on cinematic legacies of filmmakers using experimental methods to document revolution, war, and growth in times of crisis. A selection of films mixed with Abounaddara shorts has been organized into two days of educational screenings in support of New School classes.

A RIGHT TO THE IMAGE FOR ALL



Abounaddara, Two minutes for Syria, 2013, film still

CONCEPT PAPER FOR
A COMING REVOLUTION

By Abounaddara

We live in a world filled with images that are captured, edited, and published at hyper speeds, images referring to images. Our political, ethical, and intimate lives are constructed around images, through images, and in images.

In situations of war and mass violations of human rights, it is our hyper-mediatized world that creates the typical images of victims. Our impulse to expose human suffering and injustice has taken humanity away from individuals and groups who, in dignity, are resisting the conditions that led to their oppression. The images are too frequently about mutilated and starved bodies, not about persons; they are too frequently images of the dystopian landscapes of wretched camps and the ruins of devastated neighborhoods and not images of the networks of social relations and forms of collective cultural and political life that sustain individuals in their struggle for life in dignity and peace. Representations of human suffering and injustice are not only aesthetic choices; they are also political and ethical choices. These political and ethical choices are partly determined by the legal institutional framework that constrains options, and enable and facilitate the choices of another, and many legal systems enforce such representations. Legal systems protect the privacy of persons.

They also protect the right of celebrities to control the use of their images. Individuals can own their image if they are legally—and by virtue of social conventions, economic power, or political circumstances—empowered to speak. But what about those who cannot speak? The persons whose humanity is suppressed in images from wars, mass violations of human rights, and other similar situations are not allowed to speak. Their humanity stops at the rights of bystanders to freedom of expression. You can have the dignity of a person or be a victim, but you are not allowed to be both; most importantly, you are not legally allowed to choose what you want to be. Your wounds can speak, but you cannot.

Many intellectuals have engaged the dilemmas and paradoxes surrounding the representation of human cruelty and suffering. Courts in some legal systems have started to formulate a right of every person to the respect of her image. In a world where images can be captured in one place and consumed instantly around the world, these paradoxes and dilemmas are immediate to all legal systems and should be addressed in a principled manner across cultural, political, and economic divides.

Authoritative accounts about justice in modern societies have always emphasized the centrality

of the principle that “every person is entitled to equal concern and respect in the design of the structure of society.”¹ The right to the image finds its legal and ethical foundation in such core principles. A consistent interpretation of the rules of international human rights law must address the dilemmas surrounding the representation of persons and groups reduced to “bare life” in wars, human rights abuses, and other similar situations. A broad and inclusive process for the progressive development of a right to the image is possible under existing rules of international human rights law.

The concept of a right to the image is complex and multilayered. It is not derivable from one specific right (for example, privacy), but from a holistic reading of the existing corpus of international human rights law as codified by binding international treaties. In a way, the right to the image is a bundle of rights. This bundle is what we get when seek the concrete meaning of the fundamental human rights included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) as they relate to the images of individual and groups. It is as much implicit in the right to self-determination

(Article 1, ICCPR) as it is in the right to privacy (Article 17, ICCPR) or the right to the freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19, ICCPR). It is as much about individual choice and the dignity of the human person as it is about the right of a people to freely determine the terms of their political association including issues related to the expression of cultural identity.

1

R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000).

ABOUNADDARA FILMOGRAPHY

2010

The Smiters for Damascus (4'52) ; The Architect and Nothingness (4'27) ; The Inheritors in Discord (5') ; Eve after the Apple (4'20) ; The Stamp Man's Last Stand (4'31) ; Believers without Borders (4'40) ; The Extras' Starlette (4'48) ; The Man who stopped the Earth (4'34) ; The Prodigal Son's Progress (5'25) ; The Old Man and Jihad (4'42) ; The Carpenter and the Inferno (5'15) ; The Mother and the Dogs (4'48).

2011

Al-Mondassoon 1 (3'47) ; Al-Mondassoon 2 (1'26) ; Askar ala min (00'45) ; Everything is under control Mr. President (1'21) ; The End (3'30) ; Vanguard (1'30) ; Once upon a time in Syria (1') ; Then what (2'20) ; Yes we can ! (1'40) ; The mufti wants to... (1'13) ; SANA (2'32) ; Child of Baath (1'42) ; My name is May ! (1'14) ; The Syrian street (3'53) ; Kurdistan Sûriya (2'16) ; Rima (1'30) ; The screen (1'04) ; Allah is elsewhere (00'53) ; Under Damascus' Sky (1'34) ; Un-Holiday (1'53) ; Prayer (1'08) ; Citizen George (1'54) ; October (2'42) ; The Gravedigger (2'24) ; End of Broadcast (1'48) ; The Wall (2'36) ; Monsters (3'05) ; Viva Mama (1'30) ; Corrective Movement (1'24) ; When I was a Revolutionary (3'10) ; The Syrian Lady (3'07) ; My people love me (1'49) ; A Citizen from Tomorrow (3'48) ; Strike or Die (00'42).

2012

Hair (00'49) ; In Shadows (2'26) ; The Other (1'46) ; Syria Today (00'53) ; REC (00'50) ; Chronicle of the coming Syria (1'58) ; Waiting for Messi (1'03) ; Even blindfolded (2'36) ; Amro (00'56) ; Revolution to Revolution (1'45) ; Warning (00'38) ; Jihad à la Assad (2'34) ; Chronicle of a Fall Foretold (2'12) ; Pacifique, mais... (3'06) ; When the soldiers depart (1'06) ; Nothing but light (3'48) ; From Saidnaya with Love (1'22) ; The darkness (00'47) ; Diary of a Syrian Saboteur (2'57) ; All I need is Love (1'57) ; I will cross tomorrow (3'53) ; Zeina (00'55) ; Entertainment for the June 1967 War (4'07) ; What I died to the soldiers (4'33) ; They're playing (1'07) ; Immolation (00'56) ; There is no prisoner (3'03) ; The child who doesn't cry (1'11) ; My School (1'48) ; Prayer in the Dark (1'35) ; Media Kill (2'06) ; The Casseroles of the Revolution (1'39) ; The Journalist, Revolution and Facebook (3'43) ; Assad Hospital (1'49) ; No mother, no cry (2'18) ; The Mother of the Hero (1'27) ; Apocalypse Here (2'28) ; Pause café (3'28) ; Aleppo by Night (00'58) ; Bikidam Requiem (3'11) ; Save citizen Osama (00'35) ; Blowing in the Wind (1'51) ; En attendant la Palestine (2'43) ; After Facebook (2'12) ; Corrective Movement (1'22) ; The Unknown Soldier — Part One (1'57) ; The Unknown Soldier — Part Two (2'03) ; The Unknown Soldier — Part Three (2'20) ; The Unknown Soldier — Part Four (2'18) ; Soldiers of Assad were here (00'38) ; Anatomy of Rape (3'06).

2013

Of God and Dogs (12'13); It Was Made To Appear To Them (2'43); The Eagles of Syria (00'49); Citizen of the Shadow — Part One (2'08); Citizen of the Shadow — Part Two (1'47); Citizen of the Shadow — Part Three (1'41); Salamiyah Why? (1'24); City Lights (2'00); Ahmad The Syrian (2'02); My Terrorist Brother (1'59); Tom and Jerry (1'18); The day I left the Free Army (2'10); Round Midnight (2'36); Solitary Cell (2'14); Flags and Men (2'20); The Mysterious Plant (3'05); Children of Halfaya (4'17); Against the Tide (2'26); Absence of God (1'09); Betraying the Revolution (1'45); In the Name of the Father (2'13); National Dialogue (1'52); No Rap, No Master — Part One (2'15); No Rap, No Master — Part Two (3'10); Born in Syria (1'49); Guide for a Free Activist (3'16); Syrian Chronicles (a 15-episode series); Once there was an Alawite (3'09); When my brother left (3'54); Two minutes for Syria (1'26); After the Image (2'45); Diary of an armed gang (3'34); The Deserter (2'56); The Woman in Pants (4'15); The Revolution according to Kafranbel — Part One (2'); The Revolution according to Kafranbel — Part Two (3'38); Lost and Found (2'30); You Shall Not Steal (6'15); The Exodus (2'59); The Islamic State for Dummies — Part One (3'14); The Islamic State for Dummies — Part Two (1'49); The Islamic State for Dummies — Part Three (1'58); Children First (4'02).

2014

Syria : Snapshots of History in the making (52'); I will dance tomorrow (3'05); Over the Toys (1'41); Starvation (00'26); The Intellectual and his Militia (2'58); The Lady of Syria — Part One (4'21); The Lady of Syria — Part Two (1'53); The impossible (00'45); Confession of a Woman — Part One (2'59); Confession of a Woman — Part Two (3'17); Marcell — Part One (3'50); Marcell — Part Two (2'05); Marcell — Part Three (3'03); The Student (5'47); Campaign (1'49); The Sniper (2'18); Security (3'10); The Flight from Homs (4'13); Together (00'48); State of Siege (2'); Congratulations (00'41); The Man Who Split — Part One (1'46); The Man Who Split — Part Two (1'32); From Syria with Love (1'29); Prisoner Nr. 7 — Part One (3'02); Prisoner Nr. 7 — Part Two (1'20); Prisoner Nr. 7 — Part Three (3'12); The Screen II (1'04); The Time of the Prison — Part One (4'46); The Time of the Prison — Part Two (3'12); The Truth about Osama (00'38); Diaries of an Illegal Doctor — Part One (2'17); Diaries of an Illegal Doctor — Part Two (3'05); Diaries of an Illegal Doctor — Part Three (2'47); Diaries of an Illegal Doctor — Part Four (2'55); Watch your Brain (00'52); I am what I will be — Part One (4'53); I am what I will be — Part Two (2'59); Aïcha (3'29); The Mysterious Disappearance of Khaldoun (3'16); Inappropriate CV (4'40); Don't forget the Plums (2'25); The Departing (1'46); Suffocation (3'26); What Justice (2'52); Be prepared (1'00); La dernière séance (1'23); No Exit (3'56); The Cave (3'57).

2015

Detention (00'42); Kill them (1'58); My Uncle — Part One (1'36); My Uncle — Part Two (3'10); This is Syria (1'20); Humanitarian Aid (2'04); The Day After (2'21); Friend, if you fall (1'28); Happy Birthday Comrades (1'01); The First Time (1'58); Rendez-vous with a Shell (2'10); Warrior's Rest (00'51); The Fly (1'27); The Life Before Us (2'49); The Metamorphoses of Bashar (3'19); All the Syria's Futures (1'49); The Child who Saw the Islamic State (3'15); Ordinary News (2'35); Il faut faire quelque chose (2'31); The Road of Aleppo (2'25); The King Never Die (1'56); Leaving Pitchipoi (00'56); Hassoun (4'05); GoBro: The War From Within (00'30); With our Souls, with our Blood (2'18); How the Regime Didn't Fall in Aleppo — Part One (3'34); How the Regime Didn't Fall in Aleppo — Part Two (3'30); How the Regime Didn't Fall in Aleppo — Part Three (3'44); The News (1'37); We are Palmyra (1'42); The Chickens (1'01); The Widow and the Orphan (1'53); Palmyra Now — The Beginning (2'35); Palmyra Now — The End (2'06)...

SYRIA: WAR IN THE AGE OF TELEVAMPIRISM*

By Abounaddara

Newsweek, December 7, 2014

In the wake of the 1990–91 invasion of Iraq, we were introduced to war “live” in our homes. Television is now in the process of inventing war as seen “from the inside.” This novel approach is radically overturning standard news-reporting protocols observed by the media since the Vietnam War: reporting is no longer based on images created by professional correspondents, but on images taken by anonymous local sources for social media. It seems that this war seen from the inside has captured the interest of other branches of the media and entertainment industry, notably the movie and video game industries.

Since March 2011, this approach has become the *modus operandi* for many. At that moment, the Assad regime, which was confronted by a popular uprising against the backdrop of the Arab Spring, refused journalists entry to Syria. The only images available ever since have been those—taken by Syrians themselves—that are posted on YouTube as a sort of cry for help. There, we see nonviolent protesters calling for democracy and soldiers shooting in plain sight—one resembling David standing up to Goliath, the other more like Cyclops devouring people.

Television networks behave as if they had no choice but to broadcast these images that create buzz online. They do so claiming their duty to inform, but also to maintain their edge—and a slice of the advertising market in the face of fierce competition from social media. The news integrates YouTube clips into broadcasts, supposedly contradicting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s

storytelling, which relentlessly claims that the rebels are all terrorists.

In fact, these images are shot by stakeholders in the conflict, people with shaking hands and a stunned gaze, who want to defend a cause. Their low informational value is matched by high emotional value, and often a desire for revenge.

This renders them vulnerable to accusations by supporters of the Assad regime of a media conspiracy. Nevertheless, major TV stations encourage the swelling ranks of militants/reporters to pitch them such footage. Television companies even invest—directly or via NGOs—in training such citizen-reporters, turning them into subcontractors to better serve their needs.

Why continue to invest in these problematic images when Assad’s stories have been vindicated by the spread of violence and the emergence of jihadists? The answer reveals itself to be as simple as it is despicable: war “from the inside” offers television an opportunity to indulge its viewers’ voyeuristic urges without having to follow journalistic, legal, or ethical guidelines, as the clips relate to a person’s right to his or her own image.

This frees television to broadcast sensational images cheaply, without regard for the conditions of their production, under the pretext that these are the only images available from the “land of evil.” It gives television permission to exhibit bodies that have been murdered or humiliated for the simple reason that it is Syrians themselves who create these images.

In this way, the decline of foreign correspondents in Syria who would be accountable for their work places any potential blame for inappropriate images on the anonymous local source posting clips on YouTube. At the same time, the moral convention that compassion be shown for suffering people renders politically incorrect all criticism of television’s alignment with social media, where images are subject to more permissive regimes.

What then to do in the face of this unending war from the inside that assaults the dignity of both Syrians and television viewers, reducing the former to violators or violated bodies and the latter to obscene voyeurs? The question is all the more urgent as this apparatus favors the war criminals—Bashar al-Assad and the jihadists—who consciously toil on the banalization of evil. To we Syrians who use social media to bear witness to the war, the cinema of American filmmaker Samuel Fuller (1912–1997) provides the necessary model: he saw no need to exhibit murdered or humiliated bodies in his eye-witness accounts of the horrors of the Falkenau concentration camp in May 1945.

We believe that television can inform while respecting human dignity. At the very least, it must refrain from exhibiting the bodies of victims, just as it did after the attacks of September 11 2001.

* Published as “Cellphone War Reporting Dumbs Down the Truth,” December 7, 2014, <http://www.newsweek.com/cellphone-war-reporting-dumbs-down-truth-289763>, and as “Syrie: la guerre au temps du télévampirisme” in *Libération*, December 15, 2014.

ليس للسوري الحق في الصورة

هناك، في بلاد حقوق الإنسان، شيء اسمه «الحق في الصورة» يقضي بعدم التصرف بصورة أحد من دون إذنه. بناءً عليه، لا يحق لمدرسة أن تنشر صورة أي من تلامذتها من دون إذن ولي أمره، كما لا يحق لمحطة تلفزيونية أن تعرض صورة فلان من الناس من دون إذنه، وذلك تحت طائلة المسؤولية القانونية والتعويضات المالية.

في تلك البلاد، لا يجوز أحد على تجاوز الحق في الصورة إلا في إطار الاستثناءات التي يحددها القانون. فالإعلام المحصن بحرية التعبير والحق في الوصول للمعلومات يمكنه عرض صورة أي شخص شريطة التقيد بشرطين أساسيين: احترام الكرامة الإنسانية وعدم توهي الإثارة. لذا لم ير العالم أجساد ضحايا هجوم 11 أيلول (سبتمبر) 2001 على نيويورك ولا ضحايا الهجوم على مقر صحيفة «شارلي إيبدو» الفرنسية في 7 كانون الأول (ديسمبر) 2015. أما الفنان الذي يجوز له ما يجوز للشاعر، فبإمكانه تصوير شخص بعينه من دون إذنه في سياق مشروع فني شرط ألا يتسبب للمعني وذويه بأي ضرر مادي أو معنوي.

لا يخلو الأمر من بعض التجاوزات، بالطبع. فالسلطة الرابعة تستغل أحياناً نفوذها وتتجاوز حق المستضعفين ممن ليسوا على دراية بالقانون. لكنها قد تحاسب على ذلك من قبل المجالس الوطنية للإعلام التي تتمتع هناك بصلاحيات قانونية حقيقية، أو الهيئات المدنية التي لا تتوانى عن الدفاع عن الحق في الصورة بصفته شأنًا عامًا. وإذا انتهك حق أحد من عليه القوم، وهو أمر لا يجوز عليه سوى الأشقياء ممن ينشطون على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تحت غطاء السرية، فقد يجري التعامل مع الموضوع وكأنه انتقاص من هيبة الأمة، وقد تتدخل السلطة التنفيذية لمطالبة اليوتيوب والفايسبوك بحذف الصور المسيئة في حين يهب أهل الثقافة والفن مرديين بتصريف ما قاله شاعرنا الروبوي: «ما ذلت صورة شعب إلا ذل، ولا انحطت إلا كان أمره في ذهاب» (وإدبار).

باختصار، يبدو الحق في الصورة وكأنه مجرد ترجمة للحق في تقرير المصير والحق في حرمة الحياة الخاصة. فلا هذا الحق ولا ذاك يعنيان شيئاً إذا كان الفرد عاجزاً

عن التحكم بصورته في عالم تسوده لغة الصورة، ولا الحرية ولا الكرامة تعنيان شيئاً إذا كان المواطن عاجزاً عن حماية صورته من السلطة الممثلة بالدولة أو مؤسسات الإعلام، التي باتت كاميراتهما تراقب جل الفضاء العام والخاص. هذا، على الأقل، ما تقوله هيئات المجتمع المدني التي تسعى لمساعدة الأفراد على التخلص من صورهم المسيئة المنتشرة على الانترنت، وقد دعمتها أخيراً محكمة الاتحاد الأوروبي من خلال حكم يطالب شركة «غوغل» باحترام «الحق في النسيان» والنزول عند رغبة من يريد حذف ما يضر بصورته في ذاكرة محرك البحث الشهير. لكن، في بلاد حقوق الإنسان، لا أحد يكثر لحق السوري في الصورة رغم كون القانون في صفه وثورة الكرامة من صنعه. فترى التلفزيون والسينما والمتاحف والغاليريات يتسابقون لعرض صور الجسد السوري المعذب في أشنع حالاته بحجة إدانة المجرم، والمؤسسات الإعلامية تنشر تلك الصور بذريعة أنها من صنع النشطاء والفنانين المحليين ممن توظفهم أحياناً لتعذر تواجدها على أرض الحدث، والمنظمات الدولية تزين بها أروقتها باسم العدالة. وترى المشاهد يتلصص بمزيج من النفور والمتعة على الجسد السوري وقد جرد من كرامته وأضحى صنفاً جديداً من «سينما الواقع».

عبثاً تقول لأصحاب الشأن في تلك البلاد أنه لا يجوز مخالفة الحق في الصورة على هذا النحو، وأن في ذلك انتهاكاً لكرامة السوري والمشاهد الكريم، ناهيك عن كونه مساهمة في تطبيع الشر وثقافة الموت. عبثاً تكتب في صحف تلك البلاد مطالباً مجالس الإعلام الوطنية التدخل لإحقاق الحق وحصر تداول الصور المذلة في المحاكم ومنظمات حقوق الإنسان. عبثاً تنتج فيلماً بعد فيلم وتنشرهم على الانترنت لتثبت قدرة السوري على تصوير جحيمة من الداخل بعيداً عن المقاربة البورنوغرافية السائدة. وعبثاً تذكر أن عرض صور الجسد السوري المعذب على شاشات العالم لم يردع القاتل قبيد أنملة، وبالكاك خفف من ظهوره على تلك الشاشات بهيئة السيد الرئيس الحريص على محاربة الإرهاب.

إنه الاقتصاد يا غبي! والاقتصاد لا يرى «الحق إلا في السوق. والسوق وجد فرصة جديدة للربح بالخروج عن القيود القانونية الخاصة بالحق في الصورة تحت غطاء «الاستثناء السوري». فالتلفزيون ينشر فيديو اليوتيوب «المؤثرة جداً» أو يشارك بإنتاجها بهدف استقطاب مزيد من المشاهدين واسترجاع ما كان قد خسره من العائدات الإعلانية بسبب منافسة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. والمؤسسات الإعلامية تداوم على نشر تلك الفيديوات أو فبركتها أحياناً بذهنية استهلاكية أو تحريضية بهدف الحفاظ على موقعها في سوق الإعلانات. أما صناع السينما والفيديو، فقد وضعوا آلية خاصة لإنتاج سلع فنية أو إعلامية تحاكي فيديوات النشطاء السوريين، حسيماً يبدو في الشريط الذي تم انتاجه أخيراً في النزويج وتصويره في مالطا قبل أن يغزو شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي تحت عنوان «الطفل السوري البطل الذي أنقذ حياة شقيقته من قناص الأسد».

في بلاد حقوق الإنسان، إذاً، أسقط الاقتصاد الحق في الصورة جاعلاً من السوري التائر في سبيل الكرامة مجرد جسد ذليل يثير الشفقة أو النفور، مثله مثل أي ضحية حرب أو مجاعة ممن يحلو للسيد الأبيض التفرج عليها. بناءً عليه، لم يبق أمامنا سوى المصادقة على المذلة وتصوير مواطنينا المنكوبين وفق معايير الفرجة الاستهلاكية، أو اللجوء إلى محاكم تلك البلاد وهيئاتها المدنية من أجل محاسبة من يسقط حقنا متوسلاً التعاطف معنا، لذا وجب التنويه.

مجموعة سينمائيين سوريين *

UNE POLITIQUE DE L'IMAGE POUR SORTIR DE L'ABJECTION*

By Abounaddara

A la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, les cinéastes ont contribué à ouvrir les yeux du monde sur l'abjection nazie. Ayant mis leur art au service des droits de l'Homme, leurs images ont été montrées dans les cours de justice, les écoles et les salles de cinéma. Elles ont aussi été montrées en Syrie où nous avons nous-mêmes réalisé, en 2012, un court métrage à partir des images de la libération du camp d'Auschwitz.

Mais nous avons beau faire, le monde ne voit pas l'abjection qui renaît de ses cendres. Il assiste sans broncher au spectacle d'un crime contre l'humanité transmis quasiment en direct depuis la Syrie. Comment le monde peut-il ainsi se résigner à voir les cadavres qui s'amoncellent sur ses écrans jour après jour depuis 2011 ?

Une pareille question a déjà été posée à propos de l'attitude des habitants des villages voisins des camps de concentration nazis. Car ces bonnes gens s'étaient résignées des années durant à sentir l'odeur de la mort dans leurs foyers à l'ombre des fours crématoires. Pourtant, elles se sont défendues de toute complaisance envers les assassins en affirmant n'avoir rien vu d'illicite. Tant et si bien qu'il a fallu aller filmer à l'intérieur des camps pour mettre les cadavres sous le nez de ceux qui ne voulaient pas voir.

Mais il ne suffit pas d'exhiber les cadavres pour que le monde ouvre les yeux. Encore faut-il que les images soient réalisées et diffusées dans un cadre approprié. C'est du moins ce qui s'est passé à la fin de la seconde

guerre mondiale où les armées alliées avaient pris en charge la production des images attestant du crime nazi, et la justice internationale leur promotion en tant que preuves. Une politique de l'image a ainsi pu être mise en œuvre par les pouvoirs publics avec l'aide des cinéastes, tels John Ford (USA) et Roman Karmen (URSS), afin de donner à voir l'impossible, selon l'expression du cinéaste Samuel Fuller qui ne crut pas ses propres yeux en découvrant l'horreur au camp de Falkenau.

Or donc, une politique de l'image paraît aujourd'hui difficile à défendre. D'abord, parce que toute intervention des pouvoirs publics en matière d'image génère son lot de censure ou de nivellement esthétique par le bas. Ensuite, parce que notre religion des cinéastes indépendants prescrit une défiance absolue à l'égard du pouvoir, qu'il soit politique ou médiatique.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que nous nous devons d'assumer nos responsabilités alors que l'industrie des médias ne parvient pas à assumer les siennes. En effet, ayant été privés d'accès au terrain syrien où se déroule un crime de grande ampleur, les médias du monde ont cru bon recourir aux images réalisées par les victimes d'un côté et les bourreaux d'un autre. Ils y ont recourus parce qu'ils se devaient d'informer coûte que coûte, et parce que les annonceurs leur réclamaient du sensationnel et du jamais vu. Mais en y recourant, ils ont fini par relayer l'abjection qu'ils

censés dénoncer dans la mesure où les images des victimes et des bourreaux portent atteinte à dignité humaine.

* At time of printing, this text is under consideration by a number of news outlets.

FOUR FILM MOMENTS. SELECT READINGS

The following four articles provide theoretical and scholarly context for Abounaddara's films and ways of working. They were selected by members of the collective and are organized chronologically.

HIROSHIMA NOTRE AMOUR

LOVE OR HORROR:

GODARD There is one thing that bothers me a bit in *Hiroshima*, and which also bothered me in *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*), it's the facility of showing scenes of horror, because we are quickly beyond esthetics. I mean that whether they are filmed well or poorly, it doesn't matter, these types of scenes always make a terrible impression on the spectator. If a film about concentration camps, or torture is signed Couzinet, or Visconti, to me it's almost the same thing. *Before Au seuil de la vie* (*Brink of Life*), UNESCO produced a documentary that showed all types of human suffering on earth, the crippled, the blind, the infirm, those who were hungry, old people, young people, etc., filmed with a musical background. I have forgotten the name. It might have been *L'Homme* or something like that. Well, the film was disgusting. No comparison with *Nuit et Brouillard*, but it was still a film that left an impression on people, like recently, *Le Procès de Nuremberg* (*The Nuremberg Trials*). The problem is that by showing scenes of horror, we are automatically overwhelmed by their meaning and we are shocked by these images a bit like by pornographic images. Basically, what shocks me in *Hiroshima*, it's that conversely, the images of the couple making love in the first shots

frighten me as much as those of wounds caused by the atomic bomb, also shot as close-ups. There is something that is not immoral, but amoral, to show love or horror using the same close-ups. That is perhaps why Resnais is truly modern compared to, for example, Rossellini. But I think that it is a regression, because in *Voyage en Italie* (*Voyage to Italy*), when George Sanders and Ingrid Bergman look at the charred couple in Pompeii, we experience the same feeling of anguish and beauty, but with something more.

"Was he French, the man you loved during the war?"

RIVETTE The reason Resnais can allow himself to do some things that others filmmakers can't, is that he knows ahead of time all of the objections in principle that people might make. Also, not only does Resnais ask himself questions of moral or esthetic justification, but he includes them in the very movement of the film. In *Hiroshima*, Emmanuelle Riva's comments and reactions play a role of thinking about the document. And that is why Resnais is able to go beyond the first stage of facility of using documents. The very subject of Resnais' films is the effort that he must produce to solve this contradiction.

DONIOL-VALCROZE Renais often pronounced the words *terrible sweetness*. For him, that is what describes the effort.

RIVETTE Finally, Resnais' films all draw their strength from an initial contradiction. We always come back to that: an attempt (or

a temptation) to solve the basic contradiction which is everywhere in the world and which leads to the universe becoming an accumulation of contradictions. First, the local contradiction has to be solved or overcome by becoming aware of it, and at the same time, show that there isn't an accumulation, but a series, an organization, a construction.

GODARD This idea is also evident in the directing, since Resnais wants to make a tracking shot using two static shots.

DONIOL-VALCROZE Yes. In the end, Resnais' long foreground tracking shots give a great feeling of permanence and immobility. While on the contrary, his static angle and reverse angle shots, provoke a feeling of insecurity, thus movement. His way of mounting tracking shots side-by-side at the same speed, is a way of searching for immobility.

DOMARCHI It's Zeno of Elea.

GODARD Or Cocteau who said: "What's the use of a tracking shot to film a galloping horse?"

Extract from round table discussion, originally published as "Hiroshima notre amour" in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 97 (July 1959), pp. 11–12.

ON ABJECTION

Jacques Rivette

Kapo, Italian film by Gillo Pontecorvo.
Script: Franco Solinas and Gillo Pontecorvo.
Cinematography: Alexander Sekolovic.
Music: Carlo Rustichelli.
Cast: Didi Perego, Gianni Garko,
Susan Strasberg, Laurent Terzieff,
Emmanuelle Riva.
Production companies:
Vides, Zebro, Francinex, 1960.
Distribution: Cinédis.

The least that one can say is that it's difficult, when one takes on a film on such a subject (the concentration camps), not to ask oneself certain preliminary questions; yet everything happens as though, due to incoherence, inanity, or cowardice, Pontecorvo resolutely neglected to ask them.

For example, that of realism: for so many reasons, all quite easy to understand, total realism—or what serves as realism in cinema—is impossible here; every effort in this direction is necessarily *unachieved* (that is immoral), every attempt at reenactment or pathetic and grotesque make-up, every traditional approach to “spectacle” partakes in voyeurism and pornography. The director is bound to make it tasteless, so that that which he dares present as “reality” is physically tolerable for the viewer, who can't help but conclude, maybe unconsciously, that, of course, it was troublesome (those Germans, what savages!), but ultimately not *intolerable*, and that if one were just wise enough, with a bit of cunning or patience, one ought to have been able to get away with it. At the same time everyone unknowingly becomes accustomed to the horror, which little by little is accepted by morality, and will quickly become part of the mental landscape of modern man; who, the next time, will be able to be surprised or irritated at that which will in effect

have ceased to be shocking?

It's here that one understands that the force of *Night and Fog* came less from records than from montage, from the art with which the brute, *real* facts (alas!) were offered to our gaze, in a restless movement that is precisely that of a lucid consciousness, somewhat impersonal, that is unable to accept or understand or admit this phenomenon. One could see more monstrous records elsewhere than those retained by Resnais; but what isn't man able to accustom himself to? Yet you cannot accustom yourself to *Night and Fog*; the point is that the filmmaker judges that which he shows, and is judged by the way in which he shows it.

Another thing: a phrase of Moullet's has been constantly cited, left and right, and usually foolishly enough: *morality is a matter of tracking shot* (or the Godard's version: *tracking shots are a matter of morality*); one has wanted to see in it the height of formalism, so that one could criticize its “terrorist” excess (to reclaim Paulhanien terminology).¹ Look, however, in *Kapo*, at the shot where Riva kills herself by throwing herself on an electric barbed-wire fence; the man who decides, at that moment, to have a dolly in to tilt up at the body, while taking care to precisely note the hand raised in the angle of its final framing—this man deserves nothing but the most profound contempt. For several months, people have been breaking our balls over false problems of form and content, of realism and fantasy, of script and *mise en scène*, of the free actor or the regulated actor, and other dichotomies; let us say that it is possible that all subjects are born free and equal by law; that which counts is tone, or emphasis, nuance, as one will call it—that is to say, the point of view of a man, the auteur, badly needed, and the attitude that this man takes in relation to that which he films, and

therefore in relation to the world and to everything; that which can be expressed by a choice in situations, in the construction of the storyline, in the dialogue, in the play of actors, or in the pure and simple technique, “indifferently but as much.”² There are things that should not be addressed except in the throes of fear and trembling; death is one of them, without a doubt; and how, at the moment of filming something so mysterious, could one not feel like an imposter? It would be better in any case to ask oneself the question, and to include the interrogation, in some way, in what is being filmed; but doubt is surely that which Pontecorvo and his ilk lack most.

To make a film is to show certain things, that is *at the same time*, and by the same mechanism, to show them with a certain bias; these two acts being thoroughly bound together. Just as one can't have absolute *mise en scène*, for there is no *mise en scène* in the absolute, cinema will never be a language: the relationship between sign and signifier has no recourse here, and only accomplishes the similarly sad heresies of the little *Zazie*. Every approach to the cinematographic act that proceeds by substituting addition in the place of synthesis, analysis in the place of unity, immediately sends us back to a rhetoric of images that has nothing more to do with the cinematographic act than industrial drawing has to do with painting; why does this rhetoric remain so dear to those who call themselves “critics of the left”?—maybe, after all, they are primarily hardcore pedagogues; but if we have always detested, for example, Pudovkin, de Sica, Wyler, Lizzani, and the ancient combatants of IDHEC,³ it's because the logical culmination of this formalism calls itself Pontecorvo. Whatever the daily journalists think, the history of cinema isn't revolutionary every day. For a mechanic like Losey, the New York avant-garde doesn't

disturb him any more than the waves on shore disturb the peace of the depths.⁴ Why? It's because some people don't ask themselves anything but formal questions, while others resolve them entirely in advance and will ask none afterwards. But what do those who actually make history say instead—those whom one also calls “men of art”? Resnais will avow that, if such a film of the week gets the audience interested in him, nevertheless he has the feeling of being nothing but an amateur before Antonioni; Truffaut would say the same, no doubt, about Renoir, Godard about Rossellini, Demy about Visconti; and as Cézanne, despite all the journalists and reviewers, was slowly imposed by the painters, so the filmmakers (les cinéastes) will impose into history Murnau or Mizoguchi . . .

NOTES

1
Jean Paulhan (1884–1968), resistance leader and man of letters.

2
From Stéphane Mallarmé's “One Toss of the Dice Never Will Abolish Chance”; the full phrasing reads, “IT WOULD BE/WORSE/no/more nor less/indifferently but as much chance.” (An alternate, freer translation could be “just as well, but only as much”—ed.)

3
L'Institut des hautes études cinématographiques, a French film school, restructured in 1985 and now known as La Femis.

4
Rivette can be seen, sitting against a wall listening to Shirley Clarke talk in a New York City loft, in the *Cinéastes de notre temps* program on Clarke, “Rome brûle: Portrait de Shirley Clarke,” co-directed by André S. Labarthe and Noël Burch. (DS)

Originally published as “De l'abjection” in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no 120 (June 1961): pp. 54–55. Translated by David Phelps with the assistance of Jeremi Szaniawski.

LOOK
(THE GULF
WAR)

Serge Daney

FROM VISUALS TO FACES

One of the first victims of this war was the old idea that we have entered into a “civilization of images.” If we judge from the sudden success of the expression “war without images,” there are many who have just discovered that true images are rare and that although the Western world produces many, it only produces one type, which is more like advertising. Granted, our eyes are constantly stimulated, but we don't really see anything: we view, we visualize, we verify, in short we are in a *visual world*. It's a world in which an image appears from time to time. Whether intentional or not, the image is an event which sometimes transpierces the visual. If we had been more careful with words, we would not have stupidly waited for a live war, all “in images.” It isn't the “meaningfulness of words and the shock of photos,” but “the shock of words and the unbearable lightness of visuals.”

One might ask what the difference is between an image and a visual. We could hazard a quick guess that a visual (which is the essence of television) is a show that one side presents of itself (which was the dawn of cinema) and which is produced by an encounter with another, even with the enemy. The response to *Here is one* of a visual is *Here is the other* of an image. It is not an issue of perfected technique: the simple image of a young man who stops tanks in Tiananmen Square is an image while the hyper-“sophisticated” shots from *Top Gun* are visuals. Since television has abandoned the very concept of documentary, it has

forgotten the obvious. Hence, the current unease in television, and ours as well.

A week ago, Michel Rocard asked the CSA and journalists to start thinking about the “opportunity” of broadcasting eventual images of French pilots who were captured, beaten and displayed by Iraqi authorities. Coming from a man who is increasingly reserved, his concern shows that in this war, the absence of certain images are more significant than so many others that have already been forgotten. The dreaded image has two facets: the faces of *our* pilots and the cadavers of *their* victims in the devastated city of Baghdad. We see that fear is not symmetrical. Alas, this war is not working so well because it is not symmetrical—which is probably inherent to wars between the North and South.

Why were the first images of this war the faces of Anglo-Saxon pilots? There are at least three reasons. First, because these faces and “altered” conversations bear witness, at the least, to the fact they are faced with “others.” Also, since they destroy the hopes of a lie about a surgical war where robots would only destroy robots. Finally, because they are, like all successful communication, the result of a true misunderstanding. From the transmitting side (Iraq), the belief that the exhibition of a few soldiers who have *lost face* would humiliate the entire western camp. On the other side (the Coalition), emotions were more or less revolted at the sight of soldiers deprived of their individual dignity and whose faces suddenly recalled humanity, purely and simply. Saddam Hussein, like a feudal lord, can divert the system to represent his enemy, but he does not understand it. Our answer to his “you have lost face” is “they have lost their humanity.”

It isn't very difficult to guess Saddam Hussein's intention. Didn't we have a feudal past in

Europe? And are we totally liberated from all tribal nostalgia? In a country (Iraq), or in this part of the (Arab) world where the only authorized image is that of the Leader—as are all leaders, after final analysis—is a warlord (and where any lost war is an additional victory), the image of the individual is always a collective image. On the other hand, it is more difficult to analyze things seen on “our side.” Because we have them right under our noses. Noses, not eyes.

Anyone who has followed the adventures of the image has, for ten, twenty or thirty years seen a strange “disappearance” of the human face. Blockbusters are decorative, legendary, ecological. Stars decline, plastic surgery (or rather, publicity) is on the rise, the body floats in an uncontrolled market of prosthetics and signs. The war is no longer a war in the trenches where a soldier discovers *on the face of the other* that he cannot kill him (I am thinking of the old film by Lubitsch: *The Man I Killed*): war becomes the triumph of the visual on a background of a twice lost face. Because although we are sure that Saddam Hussein’s world is well below that of humanity, it is possible that ours has already ventured well beyond it. Hence the success of both autonomous systems for visualization: video games here and Islam over there.

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THE TYRANNIES OF THE VISIBLE

Sylvie Lindeperg

I find a bit excessive current public aversion against all that is either called, or appears to be controversial. We seem to have forgotten that, thanks to opponents, light has been shed on many important questions and that men could not agree on something if they had not quarreled over it. “Quarrel,” is in fact the term used by decorum to stigmatize all discussion. And quarreling has become so inconvenient that we are less ashamed to slander or hate than to continue quarreling.

—Gotthold Ephraim Lessing¹

For almost two decades, I have observed that producers, filmmakers, and the (TV) audience have an indisputable interest in the Second World War. After each commemoration, I wrongly assume that the public and media will become bored with the subject; however, current events quickly revive the passions. And out of shadows and light, the big mouth starts its endless chatter again on cinema and television screens.

Over the past few years, I have been asked several times to give my point of view on the most mediatized productions—fictions such as *Downfall (Der Untergang)*, Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2005) and *The Round Up (La Rafle)*, Rose Bosch, 2010), the *Apocalypse* documentary series (Isabelle Clarke, Daniel Costelle, 2009), docufictions like *Auschwitz: the Nazis and the Final Solution (Auschwitz: les nazis et la solution finale)*, Martina Balažova,

Dominic Sutherland, 2005²), and *The Resistance (La Résistance)*, Christophe Nick, Félix Olivier, Patricia Bodet, 2007). I have found an increasing standardization in the ways of writing history in all genres and historiographical approaches which does not just concern the period of 1939–1954, far from it. I have summed it up into a few types: esthetic overflow and hyper-visibility, overlapping and hybridization of periods and regimes of the visible; image and sound immersion for a new approach to concepts of truth and reality; the shattering of lengths of time and the leveling of timeframes.

I have had persistent ambiguous feelings. Some of the criticisms have come from movie-goers, or inevitably elitist specialists in historical archives, who naturally prefer purism. I would like to defend the thesis here that matters of form are also fundamental questions, thus the debate over how history is staged extends beyond the horizon of esthetic criticism: it involves the ethical view, “distribution of the sensible,”³ a definition of the place that is held by the spectator and an understanding of an event with highly political overtones. If, as Jean-Louis Comolli points out, the spectator’s place as a critical subject is indivisible from that of a political subject, the negation of the first threatens to negate the second.⁴ The trial of “formalism” boils down to saying that the visible does not reflect reality while representations of the past within these cultural industries contribute, in their own way, to influence today’s history and to produce tomorrow’s.

The second point in this debate is the persistence of a moral diktat surrounding representations of the Holocaust. Expressing reservations about *The Round Up* encounters a form of “self-righteousness” that proclaims that the film cannot be criticized in the name of the supposed educational virtues and

the enlightenment of the “popular audience.” This authoritative, condescending argument, based on the antiphon of the “duty of memory,” bearing the “pedagogy” of tears and compassion to its utmost, causes persistent discomfort to me. That is why, after having highlighted the main figures in the staging of history, I will return to the flood of media coverage for *The Round Up*.

A NEW ECONOMY OF THE VISIBLE
During the 1970s and 1980s, media specialists had the habit of stating that in the era of televised news, an event without an image had little chance of being classified as news. This postulate now applies to past events that some consider threatened of being forgotten because of their invisibility.

The film, *The Round Up*, is the exemplary symptom of our “image-hungry” societies’ difficulty to admit that an event even took place or can remain in our memory without an image, considering that as being a major obstacle to its transmission. The round up at the Vel’ d’Hiv belongs to a category of historical events for which there is no footage or photographs. It is worth recalling how it was realized that the images were absent.

In 1983, Serge Klarsfeld proved that the famous photograph of the Vel’ d’Hiv, in which we see women seated or reclining on the stadium’s track, and which was reproduced in many works and several films, was not a photo of the Jews interned in the Vélodrome d’Hiver in July 1942. The absence of children, the way the women are gathered on the track and the men are placed further on the lawn enabled Klarsfeld to discover that these internees were people accused of collaboration during the liberation of Paris when they were assembled in the same place between August 28 and September 2, 1944.

Beginning in 1983, and over a period of seven years, there was no photograph found of the round up at the Vel’ d’Hiv. This discovery helped launch the search for the *absent* image from 1942, now declared *missing*. In 1990, Serge Klarsfeld found one in the Historical Library of the City of Paris, in the *France-Soir* photographic archives. This snapshot—showing buses and police cars that were used to transport Jewish families—was however not deemed satisfactory enough, because it had been taken outside of the building. Thus, Klarsfeld stated that it was crucial to find others, even essential because the need was based on a moral injunction and a question of memory: “thus, 13,000 Jews were captured in their homes in the city of Paris on July 16 and 17, 1942, during fair weather, without a single amateur photographer, or a single professional reporter feeling the necessity of making the effort to preserve on film the hunt for not only men or women, but also Jewish children.”⁵

If this missing photograph were finally found, it would primarily enable us to adjust the view on knowledge and to invest the photographer’s gesture with an ethical and redemptive function. Ten years later, still no new photo had been found, so logically, Serge Klarsfeld put his notoriety, his interpersonal skills and knowledge at the service of a film company that primarily targeted young audiences to reconstitute the round up and to rebuild the Vel’ d’Hiv walls that had been destroyed, in order to finally produce some images. In *Le Journal du dimanche* on March 7, 2010, Klarsfeld stated: “The cinema compensated for the absence of images in historical reality. That is why the film *The Round Up* is necessary.” The choice of Rose Bosch is a radical one since she adopts an esthetic overflow which consists of showing everything,

representing everything, saying everything, letting everything be heard. The long absence is filled by overexposure.

Beyond the increasingly porous boundary between genres, the meeting point between the above-mentioned productions lies in the trade developed with the images that it imperatively establishes in the act of making the event completely visible and postulates that this unlimited visibility would be the best access to the past. This social demand is consistent with the new audiovisual economy marked by the proliferation of channels, digital media, broadcast media of filmed images. The market for archive-based documentaries has significantly expanded with the risk of turning these fragile traces of the past into commodities.

NOTES

- 1
Comment les Anciens représentaient la mort (1769), in *Laocoon, ou Des frontières de la peinture et de la poésie* (Paris Hermann, 2002), p. 201.
 - 2
Written and produced by Laurence Rees.
 - 3
Jacques Rancière, *Le Partage du sensible. Esthétique et politique* (Paris, La Fabrique, 2000).
 - 4
Voir et Pouvoir. L’innocence perdue : cinéma, télévision, fiction, documentaires (Lagrasse, Verdier, 2004), p.15.
 - 5
Le Calendrier de la persécution des Juifs en France 1940–1944, Paris, Fayard, 2001 (1st éd.: 1993); 1941. *Les Juifs en France. Préludes à la Solution finale*, association Les fils et filles des déportés juifs de France, 1991.
- Chapter one (“Les Tyrannies du visible”) of Sylvie Lindeperg, *La Voie des images*, Paris: Verdier, 2013, pp. 17-22.

2015 VERA LIST CENTER PRIZE FOR ART AND POLITICS

The Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics honors an artist or a group of artists who engage political themes and take personal risks to advance social justice in profound and visionary ways. International in scope, the biennial prize is awarded for a particular project's long-term impact, boldness, and artistic excellence.

The prize was launched in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Vera List Center, named in honor of New School philanthropist Vera G. List (1908–2002). It reflects The New School's commitment to a vibrant university community whose members take the intellectual, political, and creative risks required to bring about positive change. This commitment goes back to the university's founding in 1918 as a forum for progressive American thinkers and the creation in 1933 of the University in Exile as a refuge for scholars persecuted in Nazi Germany.

Each prize cycle is a two-year initiative that unfolds across various educational, artistic and policy platforms. The prize serves as a catalyst for activities that include

an exhibition of the winning project, a conference, pedagogical programs and classes at The New School, as well as a publication on the prize project in the context of related developments internationally.

The inaugural Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics was awarded to Theaster Gates in 2013 for his ongoing work Dorchester Projects in Chicago, Illinois.

Founding Supporters

James-Keith Brown and
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The New School

The second Vera List Center Prize is awarded to Abounaddara for their emergency cinema, released weekly online.

Jury Citation (extract)

[...] “The jury for the Vera List Center award was moved not only by the possible political and ethical implications of the work; we were also stirred by the poetry of the individual videos. The one-on-one conversation between the narrator/subject and “us,” the “audience,” routinely refuses any heroic posturing on the part of the filmmakers. [...]

This open quality of the work largely stems from the intimate camera work and Abounaddara's construction of a Syrian landscape that is beset by tragedy and war but not defined by it. Rather than fixing its field of inquiry from the outset, Abounaddara enters it loosely, and, as a result, shows its dynamic, unfixed, changing, fluctuating nature. Via a combination of the temporality of journalism and the poetics of cinema, a mixture of documentary and aesthetic values, Abounaddara's work possesses a quality of multiplicity, making it at home equally on the Internet, in film theaters, and in art exhibitions. It is possible that, in the

age of the “selfie,” Abounaddara is at work on a new form of portraiture. It is for these reasons, at once ethical, political, and aesthetic, that the jury awards to Abounaddara the second Vera List Prize for Art and Politics.”

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Naeem Mohaiemen
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What How and For Whom

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OSAMA AL-HABALY

Since August 2012, photojournalist and nonviolent activist Osama al-Habaly has been held in custody by the Syrian regime, although no charges have been brought against him by the authorities. His family, friends, and colleagues have not heard a definitive word about him since then, and the regime refuses to release confirmation of his health, status, or location.

Al-Habaly learned to make films on his camera phone, which he used to document soldiers firing on peaceful demonstrators in his hometown Homs. He became an early member of the film collective. Al-Habaly stood in opposition to the mainstream media's emphasis on documenting armed responses to the Syrian uprising and worked to show alternative, nonviolent images. He was also a protagonist and cameraman for the award-winning documentary *Return to Homs*, in which he goes by the name Osama al-Homsi, Osama from Homs, to protect his identity.

On April 4, 2012, al-Habaly was hit by a mortar shell while driving in Homs, leaving him with shrapnel lodged in his head, neck, legs, and hands. He traveled to a hospital in Beirut to receive medical care and remained there for several months. By August 18 he had recovered enough to return to Homs, but was arrested

at the Syrian-Lebanese border. His computer was confiscated. No definitive information about his present location, status, or health is known.

A longstanding member of Abounaddara, al-Habaly has made a number of films for the collective. *Prayer in the Dark* captures protesters in a candlelight vigil; *Zeina* introduces a young girl recovering from injuries; and in *My School* dozens of regime soldiers break into and deface a school. In order to raise awareness about al-Habaly's detention, the collective resolved to reveal his name.

Since al-Habaly's disappearance, Abounaddara members have also made three videos about his detention: *The Truth about Osama; Detention;* and *Save the Citizen Osama*. They can be watched at vimeo.com/user6924378.

ARTISTS AT RISK: Efforts are under way to develop the tools to assist artists such as Osama al-Habaly. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is supporting two such initiatives. The Institute of International Education developed and launched the Artist Protection Fund, which will make life-saving fellowship grants to threatened artists from any field of artistic endeavor and place them at host universities and arts centers in countries where they can continue their work. PEN American Center has conducted a study examining the needs for and potential impact of enhanced efforts to support and assist individual artists through a range of services. Together they have initiated an Artists at Risk Consortium, gathering individuals and organizations including the Vera List Center for Art and Politics to seek collaborative solutions. For further information and to get involved, contact vlc@newschool.edu.

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