Utrecht University

What Images Can Do:

Face 2 Face

On the photography project Face 2 Face in Israel and Palestine by JR and Marco in 2007.

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Content

Preface

A photograph's first impression changes every time we look at it again. Seeing the portraits of Face 2 Face by the French photographer JR the first time, I did not understand them. What was the purpose of these black-and-white portrait murals? I remember dismissing them as stigmatizing images, as racial and religious stereotypes. Seven years later, I look at them with different eyes, wondering if my quick dismissal was justified. In the midst of conflict, art stands in an uneasy position between the need for a truthful representation and longing for change. Yet, an ambition to bring change might put a far-reaching demand on art. The load of history rests heavily on the outcome of the photograph. Not all photographs are historical or political in character. I feel my own reluctance to let go of this demand for photography to tell the truth and show what is there. Photography also does the opposite, showing what is absent. Images can turn the reality they represent, pushing the viewer to the limits of absurdity for the need to understand. Faces in photography may remain unforgettable; they erase barriers to draw us near, asking us to look at them closer. Faces intrigue us.

1. Introduction

In 2007 a large-scope photographic project called "Face 2 Face", was created in urban areas in both Israel and Palestine in the West Bank. Wall-covering portraits of inhabitants making faces were spread on walls in public spaces. A total of 41 photographs were pasted with wall-paper glue on walls in several cities in Israel and Palestine. The portraits were categorized and paired according to the subject's profession. They differed only in their place of origin: one person from Palestine, the other from Israel. Each set showed a portrait of an Israeli and a Palestinian; in addition, a set of three portraits showed a trio of religious clerics. The project was initiated by French photographer JR (assumed name) and writer/engineer Marco Berebbi.[1] The artists aspired to "contribute to a better understanding between Israelis and Palestinians" (Marco and JR 12). With this great ambition, the project intended to change the manner in which the inhabitants see each other.

In Face 2 Face, the subjects are posing for the camera, making 'funny' facial expressions. From a close-up of a few centimeters, we see details of each individual face. Their portraits are distorted by the choice of the 28 mm camera lens.[2] The result confronts the viewer with a portrait that is disproportional and deviant from a common face. The skewed facial expressions and awkward poses elicit strange impressions. Changing facial features could even result in a sense of estrangement. The artists wanted the spectator to react emphatically: "We want, at last, everyone to laugh and to think by seeing the portrait of the other and his own portrait" (Marco en JR 12). They want the onlookers to respond with laughter, to make the parties involved in the conflict "think". However, the photographs could have an effect that is completely different from what the artist intended. In providing meaning to a photograph, there is a negotiation between the spoken or written word and image, photographer and spectator, intention and interpretation.

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[1]The main initiators were JR and Marco, who used only their first names. The photographer calls himself "JR" in order to remain anonymous; possibly JR are his initials. Throughout my thesis I will refer to the artists by their artist names.
[2] The 28 mm lens allows the artist to emphasize certain areas in a portrait, while blurring others.

About JR and Contextualization Face 2 Face

JR started as a graffiti-artist, photographing other graffiti artists, after finding a cheap camera in a subway in

Paris. For lack of money, he photocopied the pictures and pasted them on walls in public spaces (Ekker). In 2001

he made his first outside photo exhibition "Expo 2 Rue", drawing a frame around the photographs (Fig. 1-1).

Face 2 Face is the second project of three major portrait series in the "28 mm project". The idea of Face 2 Face is

based on the first project entitled "Portrait of a Generation" (2004), which shows the faces of Parisian rioters.

The idea of this project was to confront the citizens from richer parts of the city with the people they fear; the

violent rioters of poorer neighborhoods. In an effort to undermine stereotypes, the portraits show funny facial

features or relate them as playful portraits so as to diminish their threatening identity. What appears to be at

first sight an automatic weapon turns out to be an old video camera on closer look (Fig. 1-2). In this photo, the

viewer is tricked into feeling threatened by the image, through the aggressive pose of the main figure and the

children in the background making gestures of a rapper. However, it is an imaginary danger: the only "shooting"

the main figure could do with his weapon, is film-shooting. In the background, we see the graffiti-sprayed on

decayed walls of a building, showing a poor neighborhood. The second photograph shows a young boy pulling a

funny face; he blows up his cheeks and raises his eyebrows joyfully (Fig. 1-3). His kind face evokes sympathy. The

scenery shows cafés, old ladies pass by, one man with a crash helmet and another wearing in a suit look at the

boy. Placing the photograph here undermines the seeming absence of poor people in an environment of wealth.

Fig. 1-1: JR. *Expo 2 Rue.* Photocopies on wall. 2001-2004. Paris, France. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Fig. 1-2: JR. *Portrait of a Generation*. Photograph. 2004. Paris, France. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. 18 Aug. 2014.

JR's third project "Women are Heroes," (2008) shows the faces of women who were victimized by sexual violence or war. In a documentary by the same name, the women tell their stories. The project is intended to "highlight the dignity of women who occupy crucial roles in societies, and find themselves victims of wartime, street crime, sexual assault as well as religious and political extremism" (JR 9). Focusing on the pain and victimhood of women as a common factor, the project illuminates their dignity by placing their portraits in public spaces. The portraits are sometimes pasted as a whole, while often only the print of their eyes are shown, creating a jarring gaze from the landscape (Fig. 1-4 and Fig. 1-5). Anonymous faces of victimized people confront the public eye. The landscape of slums changes radically, showing disembodied eyes and fractured faces. Similar to Face 2 Face, the formats are large, showing close details; while nonetheless in the latter project, the women do not make funny faces. They are portrayed soberly and their stare is tense. In the same project JR provided houses in slums in Kenya with a new roof, on which photographs of eyes and faces of the inhabitants were printed (Fig. 1-6).

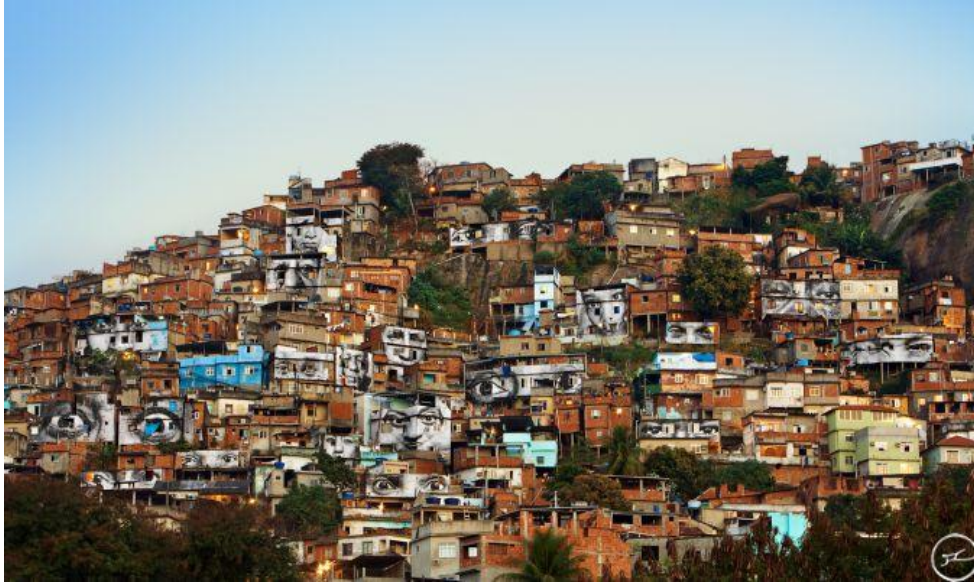Fig. 1-4: JR. *Action at Favela Morro da Providênci*. Posters in urban landscape. 2008. *Women are Heroes.* Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Fig. 1-5: JR. *Action in Favela Morro da Providência, Tree, Moon, Horizontal.* Posters in urban landscape. 2008. *Women are Heroes.* Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

JR's photographs have been sold for high prices in auctions. In 2011, JR gained international recognition winning the prestigious TED-prize of $10,000 for his work up to that point.[3] The speech he gave at the TED-event was viewed on YouTube more than 30,000 times (TED). In this speech, he talks about the up-front political messages he made using photographs made by other artists. For example, JR pasted a photograph of a minaret on a tall building in Switzerland, when construction of minarets had just become forbidden (Fig. 1-7). Another example is allocating a photograph of people with gas masks after the Chernobyl disaster, to a place in Italy where the mafia had buried toxic chemical waste in the ground (Fig. 1-8). These projects complement JR's speech at TED, where he poses the question whether art "can change the world" and he answers that art can "change the way we see the world" (TED). As a corollary, he calls for participatory actions to "turn the world inside out" (TED). In his

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[3] TED stands for "Technology, Entertainment and Design", which is a large-scope event where speakers give a short lecture about an innovative research or art project (www.ted.com).

currently running project entitled "InsideOut", he has people make their own portraits in a photo booth. The print is immediately given to the participants, who can place the photograph anywhere they like.

Fig. 1-7 : JR. *Unframed.* Poster on building. 2010. Vevey, Switzerland. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.
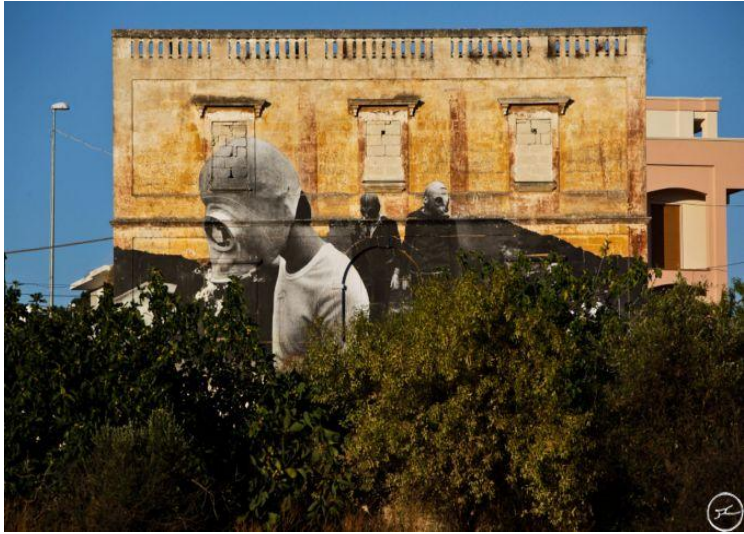

Fig. 1-8: JR. *Unframed.* Poster on building. 2009. Grottaglie, Italy. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

The Face 2 Face project was initiated in 2005, when JR and Marco travelled to the Middle East. They wanted to "figure out why Palestinians and Israelis couldn't find a way to get along together" (JR and Marco 12). Despite warnings from "experts", they relied on their French passports to ensure their safety (120). The process of the project lasted from October 2005 until June 2006 (Çetin 8).[4] Committed to producing about three portraits a day, they started shooting portraits in 2006 (Marco and JR 120). Inferentially, we can assume that it took them several weeks to gather their 41 portraits. Back in Paris, they printed the photographs in gigantic formats, using about 5 kilometers of poster paper. Finally, in March 2007, they pasted the portraits in public spaces in Israeli and Palestinian cities. In Israel, the project included Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and Mitzpe Ramon. In Palestine, the locations were Jericho, Ramallah, Hebron, Beit Sahour, Beit Jalla and Bethlehem. The Separation Wall was used to paste 15-20 portraits on both its Palestinian and Israeli sides (Fig. 1-9).[5] In 2008, the project was followed by a documentary called "Faces" directed by Gerard Maximin. The documentary shows the entire process of the project and includes interviews with the participants. In the division of tasks, JR shot photographs and Marco Berrebi helped conceptualize the idea of Face 2 Face, and wrote and edited the book *Face 2 Face* (2007).[6] The book assembles the portraits, showing how they appeared on the sites and provides an overview of the initiators' goals and short excerpts of interviews. The initiators' aim was to leave the photographs on site only

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[4] İdil Çetin wrote a thesis about Face 2 Face in 2009 at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. In her thesis, Çetin takes a philosophical approach to the project, going into the Bakhtinian concept of dialogue and collective memory. I will go into this shortly in my methodology and summarize the content in my chapter on the discourse of Face 2 Face.

[5] There are several names for the wall separating the Palestinian West Bank from Israel. The wall is controversial, Israeli government argue that it is a protective measurement, opposition state it is an oppressive object stealing land. It is called most commonly called "Security Fence," "Separation Barrier" or "Separation Wall". I will call it the last throughout my thesis, lacking a politically neutral word, I think the last most aptly describes the object.

[6] Marco Berrebi's role as a writer seems to have weakened in the aftermath as the project gained its momentum visually rather than textually. However he often appears together with JR in interviews and at festivals. The book was published in French, English, Hebrew and Arabic. It might have been intended to appeal to a large audience on a transcontinental scale. Nonetheless, the book is now out of print and hardly available in any other countries than France.

temporarily, stating: "Anyway, it's ephemeral. It will go away with the rain" (Marco and JR 213). In the Face 2 Face project, the public space functioned as a temporary museum.

The basic execution of JR's work remained unchanged since he started as a street artist. However, the range of his subjects has become broader, the prints larger and the geographical spread of his photographs wider. In Face 2 Face, the images were printed in black-and-white on thin sheets of paper as if they were simple photocopies. Wallpaper glue pasted them onto buildings in public spaces. The artists aimed to put the photographs in "unavoidable places" (Marco and JR 12). These places included billboards, marketplaces, theater buildings, walls of stores and private apartment buildings. At first, they pasted the portraits without permission. Following their arrest by the Israeli army, they employed spaces that "belong to nobody" (123). They used buildings in renovation, empty advertising spaces and shops that had folded. One can dispute whether these spaces do not, de facto, belong to anyone. Street art brings up the discussion of unused spaces, or abandoned and neglected sites of a city. The borders between public and private become disputable, as street art questions their domains.

Drawing on commonalities between Israelis and Palestinians, the similar appearance of the subjects photographed was central to Face 2 Face. JR and Marco stated that after travelling through Israel and Palestine they formulate a conclusion about the conflict:

> After a week, we had the exact same conclusion: these people look the same; they speak almost the same language, like twin brothers raised in different families. A farmer, a taxi driver, a teacher, has his twin brother in front of him. And he is endlessly fighting with him. It's obvious, but they don't see that. We must put them face to face. They will realize. (Marco and JR 12)

The initiators use here the metaphor of "twin brother" to emphasize that Israelis and Palestinians are fighting against their own family. However, according to the artists, they are unaware of it: "It's obvious, but they don't see that". JR and Marco then introduce their solution: "We must put them face to face. They will realize". The

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visual confrontation in the portraits of Face 2 Face should enhance a realization of sameness. However, in another statement the artists also acknowledge differences between Israelis and Palestinians. According to the initiators, the two peoples "are similar enough to be able to understand each other and different enough to allow for a real dialogue" (Marco and JR 16). In order to evoke such understanding, the intention of the project was to show the human aspects. The initiators state:

> With our project we wanted to show the face of "the other" to surprise and have people think about things they believed they knew, to reveal complexity, to show resemblance in those expressions. Sometimes we can see in their eyes worry, pain, tiredness, hope, joy but always some humanity. (Marco and JR 16)

The focus is to "reveal" a "complexity" to the viewer. Drawing on the above idea, the photographs show sentiments of "worry, pain, tiredness, hope, joy" and "some humanity" in the participants. The portraits intend to demonstrate the humanity of the "Other".[7] By choosing the conspicuous location of the Separation Wall and placing the portraits in both Palestinian and Israeli areas, the project raises questions regarding art in a situation of conflict. In their ambitions, the initiators of the project aimed to "change the world through art". What is art capable of doing in a situation of conflict? I intend to explore this question by investigating the portraits presented in the Face 2 Face project. This thesis discusses what can be done, changed and perceived through art.

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[7] The notion of the "Other" is drawn from Post-Colonial Studies, where the colonial subject is positioned in a hierarchically lower position than the colonialist "self". I will use it in a broader sense, as making another people "Other".

Fig. 1-9: JR and Marco. *Face 2 Face.* Posters pasted on Separation Wall. 2007. Bethlehem, Palestine. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

2. Theoretical framework

Methodology

My general approach comes from a background in Comparative Literary Studies. I aim consider how photographs can bring about discussions and how images convey certain messages. Methodologically, this entails working with different disciplines and theories, looking into processes of social change (Fairclough 452). Change as such is researched by identifying certain linguistic, semiotic and inter-discursive features of texts in the broad sense (453). Conceived as texts, images have the capacity to speak and reach out to the spectator. In my analysis of the portraits, I consider the messages that are inherent in the images, the reactions of the subject photographed, the ambitions of the artists and the criticism of multimedia articles. Determining the meaning of the photographs is a constant negotiation between these sources. The way in which discourse takes shape through online blogs, rebloggings, articles and quotes provides another context for the photographs. I aim to unravel academically what meanings the Face 2 Face portraits convey and how their discussion across different media shapes their perception. Whereas an "ordinary" viewer might see the portraits in a more straight-forwardly uncomplicated manner, I will approach the portraits inquisitively using different theoretical tools. Another thesis was already written about the Face 2 Face project by İdil Çetin, taking a philosophical approach to examine the concept of dialogue postulated by the initiators (Çetin). I will be taking a different approach by going into depth with the discourse of Face 2 Face and its portraits as artistic objects. Starting from Literary Studies, I discuss interpretation of images, intertextuality and remediation. I will relate also to political theory, visual art studies and scholarship on equality and representation of conflict. I aim to gain insight into the force of images in situations of conflict by examining in particular the critical power of the Face 2 Face photographs. My main question relates to this as follows:

When and under what circumstances do the Face 2 Face portraits have critical power?

I subdivide the above into the following questions:

1.   How do the portraits speak/perform?

2.   What do the portraits convey?

3.   How do they gain meaning; as portraits or street art, in public space, through reception?

4.   Do the portraits work politically?

To theorize the questions formulated above, I will structure my theoretical framework in the following manner. In the first section "Visual Rhetoric" I will go into how word and image work together to generate meaning and how images perform or speak. Going further with the idea of the performing image in "Theatre of Estrangement", I discuss how distorted facial features could have an estranging effect. In "Graffiti in Urban Space" I will discuss the public sphere as a forum for discussion and I go into graffiti in general. Embarking on power relations inherent to photography and conversely equality in "Common Humanity and Photographic Encounter" I go into the interaction between photographer, subject photographed and the audience. In "Activist Art" I elaborate on the philosophy and main characteristics of activist art. Setting forth the cultural context of Israel-Palestine, I will go into national narratives in "Representations of Conflict". In my final section "Discourse Face 2 Face", I will outline the ways in which the Face 2 Face project was discussed across news media and art catalogues. My general hypothesis is that the portraits in Face 2 Face have critical power as activist art, but that they lack certain relevant nuances to change the way people in conflict see one another. In my analysis, I will not research if the portraits have changed anything on the level of conflict politics, as this would require a far-reaching analysis and suggest a causal relation between these particular art works and political events. Instead, I will analyze the portraits of Face 2 Face, the contexts of reception with which they interact, and on this basis, assess their capacity to employ critique.

Visual Rhetoric

Looking at the odd faces in the Face 2 Face project, the question arises how to understand these images. To be able to uncover their possible inherent messages, necessitates a mode of reading pictorial elements. How do word and discourse stand in relation to images? Most of the Face 2 Face photographs remediated online, gaining different meanings. Widespread and easily accessible, the portraits meant to appeal to a broad audience. How does an image come to be understood? And how does language intervene in this process? Does an image also have the capacity to speak? These are the subjects of inquiry in this section.

In providing meaning to a photograph, word and image stand in a close relation to one another. In reading an image, the viewer needs "visual literacy", which refers to "understanding how people perceive objects, interpret what they see and what they learn from them" (Elkins 2). Drawing on this general definition as starting point, questions in what ways people perceive, interpret and learn from "objects" in this case photographic portraits. On the scope of perception, photographs often show an event and testify that something has happened. In this line of thought Eduardo Cadava argues in *Words of Light* (1997) that "the image is a principle of articulation between language and history" (Cadava 85). Wavering between language and history, an image becomes the middle ground between a verbal or written text and historical evidence. Conversely, image and word do converge, when a photograph receives a caption and even in the moment when the viewer interprets what he/she sees. Liz Kotz argues in *Words to Be Looked At* (2007), that text and image have been paired together in the early 20th century illustrated press, where photographs appeared with captions, surrounded by text or a dialogue (Kotz 217). Furthermore, Kotz quotes Victor Burgin as regards to the intervention of language when looking at an image:

> …although photography is a "visual medium" it is not a "purely visual" medium…even the uncaptioned
> "art photograph", framed and isolated on the gallery wall is invaded by language in the very moment it

is looked at: in memory, in association, snatches of words and images continually intermingle and

exchange one for the other. (Burgin qtd. in Kotz 217)

In Burgin's terms a photograph is never "only" a photograph, but a mixture of language and image. Words

intertwine with images at the moment of looking at a photograph. The pictorial content changes when

interpreted in different light, words interfere with images. The drawback in the argument is that this could apply

to any type of visual image; the claim is equally valid for a painting or an advertisement.

Images do not hang isolated in a gallery anymore, they are often remediated. Jay David Bolter suggests that

"remediation" is the representation of one medium in another and can be viewed as a defining characteristic of

digital media (Bolter 65). For example on a CNN news webpage, one could find a combination of text, graphics,

photography and video footage (65). Bolter argues that a sense of immediacy is created through

"hypermediacy", where various different media are used in one production to create "liveness" (64).

Incorporating one medium into another is not new in itself. Drawing on Marshall McLuhan, Bolter states that

"the content of any medium is always another medium", just as the content of writing is speech (65). However,

the digital new media gives rise to a radically different situation, where their originating source is not always

traceable. At times media are not even separately distinguishable anymore, but immerse into one form. At that

moment, the concept of intermediality might be more applicable as we see in the following. Approaching this

idea from a literary perspective, Irina O. Rajewsky argues that in a broad sense, intermediality describes

phenomena that take place between media (Rajewsky 46). In a narrower sense, Rajewsky discerns three

subcategories: medial transposition (e.g. film adaptations of novels), media combination (e.g. sound –art—

installations) and intermedial reference (e.g. references to a film in a literary text) (51,52). Intermediality is

described through concepts rooted in a debate on intertextuality, where questions of textual markers and

modes of reference are central to analysis (54). Applying this postulation to digital new media and the internet

brings another context to understanding the way a photograph can be transferred from one medium to another. A photograph gains a conglomerate of meanings through intertexts brought on by reactions and remediation.

Images that are widespread, recognizable and easily understood hold some retaining force on the viewer. Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites typify them as "iconic images" in their book *No Caption Needed* (2007). Iconic images are "undemanding images suited to mass-mediated collective memory" (Hariman and Lucaites 2). The undemanding nature of these images ensures that anyone who is part of a certain culture and time knows and recognizes such iconic images. Furthermore, they are spread through easily accessible media. Hariman and Lucaites state that the 'undemanding' nature of iconic images makes them understandable to all. Comprehensibility of such images does not simplify their artistic complexity. Hariman and Lucaites rather coin this complexity, the "artistic excellence of the icon" (3). They explain this excellence as the "transformation of the banal and the disruptive alike into moments of visual eloquence—that reproduces idealism essential for democratic continuity" (3). Hariman and Lucaites refer to the artistic ability of an icon to speak to the viewer; photographs gain "visual eloquence" and recreate values that are necessary for "democratic continuity". "Visual eloquence" refers to the way in which an image is able to speak to the viewer in a visually articulate manner. "Democratic continuity" refers to the freedom to do so. The power to communicate a certain message distinguishes icons from other 'less eloquent' images, in line with Hariman and Lucaites, this depends on their "rhetorical force" (29). Hariman and Lucaites only describe photographs that have already proven to be icons. Therefore, it might be difficult to determine what characteristics make some images iconic.

As regards to what people can learn from looking, different messages can be brought forth through images. In "The Rhetoric of the Image" (1998) Roland Barthes distinguishes three types of messages that an image conveys: the linguistic message, the coded iconic message and the non-coded iconic message (Barthes 72).The first is a language related reference as in the "written language" or the caption; the second, the coded iconic message, works on the symbolic order of meaning; and the last one, the non-coded iconic message, embodies the most

basic knowledge of an image and its pictorial content (Barthes 73). Knowledge of these different messages helps to unravel an image through different levels of signification. Yet, Barthes applied this theory specifically to advertisements, therefore it remains to be explored whether other kind of images hold these messages. A broader elaboration on photography by Barthes can be found in *Camera Lucida* (1980). Here he argues that there is a necessary connection between the subject photographed and the photograph: "A specific photograph, in effect, is never distinguished from its referent (from what it represents)…It is as if the photograph always carries its referent with itself" (Barthes 5). A photograph is inextricably bound to what it represents, according to Barthes, the referent is carried "within" the photograph. What the audience sees then is not the photograph, but the referent outside of it, he says: "... a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see" (6). In Barthes' definition the photograph is thus a type of window through which we look at the world. As Barthes argues later in the book, the only way in which the portrait gains meaning is by "assuming a mask," in which case the "mask is the meaning insofar as it is absolutely pure" (Barthes 34) . Examples of such purity are portraits by great photographers such as Nadar and Sander. However, the limitation of this mask is that it is critical enough to disturb the viewer, but too discreet to provide an effective social critique (36). A photograph would merely be able to stop the viewer and make him look, but not provide critique. Yet, later Barthes does say that photographs can be subversive: "Photography is not subversive when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is *pensive,* when it thinks" (38). In order to precipitate critique, photography should not provoke a reaction of shock, but should be "pensive"; it should "think". This would demand a photograph to contain a type of content akin to an essay.

What could make a photograph "pure", and when can it become "pensive" enough to project critique? A mask implies an appearance which is contrived or theatrical, rather than pure. This brings about a paradoxical state to a photograph in Barthian terms. Furthermore, on the one hand, Barthes describes the photograph as a type of window, necessarily referring to something other than itself; but on the other hand, he also asks the photograph

to "think". Furthermore, Barthes states that photographs that shock are not subversive, but perhaps this is too generalizing.

Many contemporary images show an incongruous referent; something which is only present in the photograph, but not in the real world. An example can be found in Susan Ash's discussion of "The Barnardo's Babies" (2006). Ash' main case studies are the photo advertisements for the English charity fund Barnardo's in 2001, where babies are figured with drug instruments such as syringes. The photographs convey the future fate of many children born into poverty that will likely push them into drugs later in their lives. The photo advertisements were intended to appeal to the audience for monetary help. One of the most famous advertisements of this series is the "Heroin baby" (Fig. 2-1). Here we see a baby tightening his arm with a chord, holding a syringe ready to shoot heroin. The caption states "John Donaldson | Age 23", signifying the possible future of this baby. Ash posits these photographs in line with Roland Barthes' idea that a photograph necessarily refers to a baby, the referent outside of the photograph. Yet, Ash moves away from Barthes' thought by saying that this connection does not need to bear exact resemblance: there can be both a connection and a disjunction (Ash 510). By standing between the familiar (and pleasant) and the strange, the photographs are shocking. This shock holds subversive force in daring the audience to think about what they see. Ash uses J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (1995) saying: "the dare has 'illocutionary force', not as meaning, but the act one wishes to accomplish by speaking" (513). The Barnardo's advertisement asks from the audience whether they can withdraw themselves from this image, if they can distance themselves from its sight. The other option is to be empathically involved about what the image shows and subsequently donate. Shock works here to awaken the viewer, to evoke contemplation and demand a certain action.

Reflecting on this section, an image gains meaning in the intersection and convergence of language with vision. Manifested through interpretations and messages inherent to an image, a photograph gains more complex meaning. Drawing on Hariman and Lucaites, I contend the rhetorical force of a photograph determines the extent to which an image becomes widely known. Contemporary images are most often remediated online, which hold a "liveness" or "hypermediacy", as outlined with Bolter. Intertextually, these media refer to one another or adapt one medium into the other, as Rajewsky argues. Furthermore, in line with Barthes the image holds different levels of signification. Barthes argues that a photograph is always connected to its outside referent, in itself a portrait can be 'pensive' and signify when assuming a mask. Conversely, Ash argues that a connection and disjunction with reality occur at times in one photographic frame. I will use Ash' position as a starting point for further exploration of disjunction, while also maintaining the three Barthian levels of signification to unravel images. The Face 2 Face portraits show a particularly distorted representation of the face. The disjunction touched upon in this section, will be further elaborated on in the following section.

Portrait of Estrangement

Theatrically silly roles are central to Face 2 Face. Through conscious distortions, the portraits create a strange human appearance. Related to theatre studies, photography is buttressed by the idea that a type of 'staging' occurs in the photograph, simulating a visual still play. How does distortion and estrangement work in art? And how could this apply to photography? In this section I will draw a line to our time from the idea of artistic distancing and estrangement laid out by the Russian formalists in the 20's. Elaborating on the development of early photography, I will go into the interplay between familiar and strange in August Sander's work. Drawing the strange into extremes, I will elaborate on monstrosity in Cindy Sherman's work. Estrangement as an artistic technique is the subject of inquiry in this section.

In art, estrangement serves to 'awaken' the audience from their daily grind, depart from the ordinary. Silvija Jestrovic argues in "Theatricality as Estrangement" (2002) that estrangement finds its basis with Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky, whose art theory advocated presenting the 'well-known' as something odd and unfamiliar, as if seen for the first time (Jestrovic 42). The audience undergoes a shock and sees reality in a different light, discovering an unknown side of the familiar. The primary source of this concept, *Theory of Prose* (1925) by Shklovsky elucidates the purpose of art in the following terms:

> The purpose of art, then, is to lead us to knowledge of a thing through the organ of sight, instead of recognition. By "estranging" objects and complicating form, artistic device makes perception long and "laborious"… Art is a means of experiencing the process of creativity. The artifact is quite unimportant. (Shklovsky 6)

Drawing from the above, art should lead to knowledge inferred from looking. Art has to break away from easy recognition, to enable perception which takes time and effort. The effort necessary to understand the complicated form stands central to estrangement. Naming it an "artistic device", implies that the artist

consciously employs the technique. The experience of art, is here a "process of creativity", asking from the viewer to take in an active role in understanding the art work. In the last sentence, Shklovsky states that any artifact can give this type of artistic experience. Any artifact could be estranging, if it is complicating and laborious. This opens the range of possibilities for other genres of art to be considered as estranging forms. Going further with this idea, I proceed to how portrait photography can be estranging art.

A portrait is a particular genre of photography that shows how an individual wants to be seen or how the photographer sees the person photographed. As such, the portrait represents a public or private version of a person. However, this representation could also be distorted by the lens. In *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and Identity* (1998), Celia Lury relates the emergence of portrait photography to journalistic caricature sketch as a "portrait-chargé" of the 19th century (Lury 42). Showing overt emphases on certain elements of the face, caricature provides an overemphasized representation of the self. Lury states (quoting Trachtenberg), that caricature is still important: "…the continuing influence of the caricature, these guides provided formulas for the imitation of inwardness, and resulted in stereotyped poses and in caricature, the underside of the bourgeois fetish of 'character'" (47). The content of such a fetish pose follows by showing the character (the inside that cannot be seen) of the lower social classes. The continuing influence of caricature is seen in the provision of stereotyped poses that imitate "inwardness". Examples can be seen in conventional portraits; the subjects smile to reflect internal happiness. As a case study, Lury goes into to a photo collection by German photographer August Sander of 1931 called "Face of Our Time": "each individual portrait is located in relation to a social order codified by the camera that is, a biological anatomy of the collective body is subordinated to a social anatomy…" (50). The photographer employs the camera as a tool to show people according to the social order of his time. The portraits are grouped by "significance, including for example The Farmer, The woman, The Professions, The Artist…" (51).The stereotyped representation, categorizes the images according to their different professions. The structure is rigidly sorted out in accordance to social ranks, yet the ways in which the subjects inhabit the

frame disrupts the authority of the social register according to Lury (51). When looking at the following two

examples below, we find that the persons are inappropriate to their social function. In the first image the

Bricklayer (Fig. 2-2), shows a man with a cap appear out of the piles of bricks stacked on a plank resting on his

shoulders. He carries his load without showing any strain or effort from the weight. Even though the Bricklayer

must be exerting his body, none is shown; he is completely self-composed. By positioning his right hand to his

waist, he takes on a gentleman-like pose. His eyes stare starkly out of the frame, appearing threatening, resilient

and angry, as if coming toward us in a revolutionary march. The Pastry Cook (Fig. 2-3) appears to be in the midst

of preparing something to bake. Expectations dictate a busy and vibrant atmosphere at the bakery. Yet, the way

he looks out of the frame to the viewer suggests contemplative stillness. Sander's pastry cook disrupts the

constructed idea of conviviality, through the Pastry Cook's gaze of a thinking philosopher.

Fig. 2-2: Sander, August. *Bricklayer.* **Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, 260 x 183 mm. 1928, printed 1990.** *Artist Rooms.* **Tate and National Galleries of Scotland. n.d.** *Tate.org.uk.* **Digital image. Web. August. 19. 2014.**

Fig. 2-3: Sander, August. *The Pastry Cook.* **Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, 260 x 173 mm. 1928, printed 1999.** *Artist Rooms.* **Tate and National Galleries of Scotland. n.d.** *Tate.org.uk.* **Digital image. Web. August. 19. 2014.**

Lury states that contemporary "art of estrangement" is a "continuation of the destabilization of the social inaugurated by Sander" (71,72). Even though the setting remains within the constraints of the social expectations, the subjects perform their roles in such a different way that it becomes disruptive, breaking away from preconceived notions. They venture beyond the social functions ascribed to them, by adopting an unexpected character that does not fit their occupation. However, destabilization is quite subtle in Sander´s frame; perhaps it does not work as estranging art, by shocking or reawakening the viewer. The "bourgeois fetish" remains unsatisfied through these images, as the photographs do not supply the expected social order. Phasing out classificatory distinctions of the characters establishes a horizontal linkage between them, as if showing a cross-section of mankind. Relating the emergence of photography to the genre of caricature sheds an interesting light on contemporary portraits. In the Sander images there is no clear caricature or overt emphasis to be found. Debatable in Lury's theory is that these stereotyped poses only apply to the lower social classes. Furthermore, it remains open for interpretation as to which poses are stereotypical. Therefore, the reader needs to take the connection of portrait photography to journalistic caricature as a given. However, the sense of estrangement and destabilization of the settled social order, brought forth in Sander's images is convincing. Lury's claim that contemporary art of estrangement is a continuation of Sander's tradition worth further exploration.

As a contemporary conceptual photographer, Cindy Sherman shows strange and ambiguous figures in her work. In her photographs, dolls are often used to create a jarring image and an ominous atmosphere. In "The Body as Crisis" (2007), Marta Zarzycka goes into depth with Cindy Sherman and the depiction of the female body. Zarzycka states: "That violent dismemberment and re-arrangement of limbs creates what is culturally regarded as unveiling the monster" (Zarzycka 127). The monstrosity lies in repositioning human body parts. Subsequently, Zarzycka argues that the monstrous image points to a failure of safeguarding corporeal boundaries (127).Whereas normally we know how a body is constructed, Sherman's images destabilize these expectations.

Expectations are met up to the point where the viewer sees a recognizable human being. Then these

expectations are betrayed and the image changes into something quite different. In "302" (Fig. 2-4) the

dismemberment of which Zarzycka speaks can be seen. A female doll stares straight at us blankly, with make-up

covering different parts of her face. Her legs seem to extend beyond her body and her arms are carelessly

attached together. The opening in her chest is the most jarring part of the image. We see inside her body

another head, which is similar to hers only with the eyes closed. The drapes in the background emphasize quite

literally the theme of "unveiling" monstrosity. The disturbing nature of stepping outside of the established order

is what we find threatening. Zarzycka says there is still recognition: "The monstrous other's disturbing familiarity

and near recognition make them not the absolute other, but rather a terrifying mirror of ourselves and our own

imperfect embodiment" (132,133). Representations of monstrosity then work in a mirroring manner. Such

representations terrify the viewer, exactly because of the recognition in the combination of familiar and strange.

Fig. 2-4: Sherman, Cindy. *#302.*
Photograph. 1993. *Sammlung Olbricht.*
June 19. 2007. *Artnet.com.* **Digital image.**
Web. Aug. 19. 2014.

In conclusion to this section, estrangement depends on the work demanding from the viewer to engage with effort to what he/she sees. In accordance with Russian Formalist Shklovsky, any artifact can be estranging, when demanding a creative process from the viewer. Relating this to Lury´s account of Sander's photography, one can find estrangement in the disruption of the social order. Continuing to this day with artists such as Cindy Sherman, there is still a practice of ambiguous and estranging form in photographic art. In line with Zarzycka, Sherman's work expands into monstrosity, where the body disfigures into an ominous shape deviating from the common norm. These concepts of estrangement and monstrosity, serve as points of inquiry in relation to the Face 2 Face portraits. Similar to the Sander exhibition discussed above, Face 2 Face categorized the portraits in accordance to different professions. In their main objectives, the initiators formulated a linkage between the portraits as showing "some humanity". Furthermore, by describing the participants as "twin brothers", the initiators proposed a kind of common humanity across political boundaries. In the following section I will further elaborate on conceptions of equality in relation to photography.

Common Humanity and Photographic Encounter

The initiators of Face 2 Face intended to make two politically opposing groups "see one another". As such they aimed to provide a connection between them through visual means. Face 2 Face employed the "twin brother" metaphor in their objectives, to convey the sameness of the 'Other'. Can photography establish such a connection? On the one hand, photography creates hierarchically unequal power relations. On the other, it could also create solidarity among those involved. In this section, I go into power positions between photographer and the photographed, the spectator and the image. Furthermore, I will go into the basis to acknowledge equality or common humanity in a stranger.

The moment of taking a photograph encapsulates a range of power relations between photographer, sitter and audience. A camera marks social status and practicing photography shows knowledge. In *On Photography* (1973) Susan Sontag argues that the focus of the camera says "look here" and this becomes "an event worth seeing"

(Sontag 7). As such taking a photograph indicates a certain authority in showing what is important. Sontag further elaborates that: "It [photography] is practiced as a social rite, a defense against anxiety, and a tool of power" (Sontag 14). The presence of a lens creates a distance to the photographable object, functioning as a protective shield. Stressing these elements of power, Sontag provides ground to consider photography in a critical manner. As a social rite, photography perpetuates certain hierarchical relations, which even hold a connection to colonial conquest. The verb of taking a photograph, "to capture" is indicative for this element of conquest. In *Death's Showcase* (2001), Ariella Azoulay elaborates on this power position, arguing the photographer is someone who came, saw, and left (Azoulay 102)*.* Referring to Caesar's victorious words "veni, vidi, vici", the photographer has the ability to move, frame what he/she see and then leave. Photography is then a tool of discovery of unknown worlds and photographable objects/people.

Conversely, photography could also enable relations of equality. In her more recent work, *The Civil Contract of Photograph* (2008) Azoulay argues, that with the invention of photography an encounter was created: "… the invention of photography was the creation of a new situation in which different people, in different places, can simultaneously use a black box to manufacture an image of their encounters: not an image of *them*, but of the encounter itself" (Azoulay 93). Simultaneous encounters take place by means of photography, and taking this further, Azoulay argues that these encounters create an open citizenship. She argues that photography creates "a framework of partnership and solidarity among those who are governed, a framework that is neither constituted nor circumscribed by the sovereign" (23). In Azoulay's theory, photography gains an independent role. Anyone can be part of this citizenship: "a stateless person… is nevertheless a citizen—a member in the citizenry of photography" (95). A radical distinction is made here between citizenship of the state and of photography. The commonality between citizenship and photography is that they are gained by "recognition" (25). Azoulay elaborates on the force of photography in the following citation:

… a civil contract regulates these encounters, reducing and most of the time eliminating the possibility

of direct violence. As long as the photograph exists, I will contend, we can see in them the way in which

such a contract also enables the injured parties to present their grievances, in person or through others,

now or in the future. (86)

In the above Azoulay postulates that through the "civil contract" inherent in photography, violence can be

reduced or even eliminated. The encounters between the photographer, the subject photographed and the

audience provide the presence of the watchful eye of the lens magnifying to the world what is happening. Being

photographed adjusts behavior, changes how a person acts and regulates relations between those involved in

the photographic encounter. This citizenship relates to three parties: those who take up the camera to direct it

at a relevant societal subject; those who are photographed and those who look at the result. Azoulay argues

that all parties involved in undertaking a photograph (photographer, photographed, audience) enter into a

"broad community" which is "borderless and open" (Azoulay 97). In this community, all are citizens of

photography and the invention of photography has changed the way people are governed ever since (89). The

idealism in this community in the face of conflict would be based on "equality of the governed" (88).

Yet, the equality among those involved in the civil contract is unstable. The interplay and reciprocation of

photographer, audience and person photographed could form "a framework of solidarity", but the upper

position of the one who holds the camera remains unmistakable. Furthermore, Azoulay analyzes photographs

that are explicitly political in content, showing injustice or marks of violence. The citizenship she speaks of is

based on disaster and the people involved are "citizens of disaster" (31). Her case-studies testify to violence and

injustice. Therefore, even though her theory speaks of all photography, it remains open whether her theory

could in fact apply to other genres. The trouble is also how to test that such a contract came about. It is

intriguing to imagine equality as the basis for photography, constituting a community with an open citizenship.

However, this only becomes conceivable, when we know the terms of existence for equality.

Definitions of equality fluctuate, being subjected to change in historical and cultural perceptions. In his extensive work *De Uitvinding van de Mensheid* (2009), Siep Stuurman tries to find answers to the questions how and under which historical circumstances 'others' can be considered as equals (Stuurman 9). [8] According to Stuurman, it was in Antiquity that the first notions of humanity developed, which were broad and open enough to transgress cultural boundaries (9). However, Stuurman departs from the view that these boundaries shape only distrust and enmity; he rather argues that regional borders provide preliminary conditions to see the stranger as kin (4). Encountering someone across the border needs the existence of such a demarcation. In Stuurman's view, borders are the foundations to travel away from the well-known, into discovering the unknown. Stuurman's research covers 2000 years of conceptions on humanity across the world. In his work, he finds that equality becomes conceivable in two ways: through common humanity and anthropological turns (479). The former transforms the stranger into a fellow man; the latter deconstructs the emotional semantics of both the self and the stranger (479). These two points describe to Stuurman the necessary conditions for the conception of ideas on equality. More specifically, the principle of common humanity is described in renowned documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In the discourse on common humanity recurrent themes resurface: basic corporeal needs and capabilities, language, autonomy, morality and rationality (280). The second point, anthropological turns, undermines the discourse of inequality, countering its "realism" grounded in empirically testable "facts" (481). The anthropological turn then incorporates acknowledging historically marginalized "others", as part of humanity and subverting the discursive grounds that have legitimized their ostensible inequality.

Recognizing others as akin depends also on the ability to empathize with another and identify with him/her. Yet, empathy is a complex sentiment. Cathleen Woodward describes empathy as: "a mode of understanding which includes both affect and cognition" (Woodward 64). Working on these two levels, connects an emotive reaction

[8] Free translation: "The invention of Humanity".

to thinking. This stands at the base of identification, which Woodward says is "basic to ethical human experience" (64). Identifying with another person, Woodward defines as "the foundational phenomenon for inter-subjectivity, which is *not* absorption by the other, but rather simply the relationship of self to other, individual to community" (64). In Woodward's terms, empathy incorporates the relational aspect of society working from an individual to the larger group. Yet, this is a rose-colored view delineating the way humans interact with one another. Furthermore, to assume that empathy has a universal claim to ethical human experience ignores the fact that ethics are strongly determined by culture, time and place. However, the reciprocity of "intersubjectivity", is appealing as a possible relation among individuals and the community.

Reflecting on this section, the relation between photographer, subject and audience is permeated by power. Authority of the photographer manifests itself in the position to decide what is worth seeing and to "capture" what he/she sees and move on to the next visual conquest. Yet, in line with Azoulay´s "civil contract of photography", the complete framework of photography could also enable solidarity and open citizenship. This only becomes palpable, when relating it to definite conceptions of equality constitutive of this framework. Drawing on Stuurman's work, conceptions of equality historically arise through acknowledgement of common humanity and an anthropological turn. Even though only two conditions seem reductive to cover such a large geographical and historical scope, applying them as general laws is useful. I therefore correlate Stuurman's historical study and Azoulay's theory on the civil contract, which means applying those necessary grounds for equality in the practice of photography. The content of the photographs should then convey common humanity or undermine the discursive grounds for inequality. Unlike Azoulay's case-studies, the initiators of Face 2 Face choose not to use historic or violent images; therefore it remains to be known whether the portraits constitute a civil contract or convey equality. One of the ambitions of the initiators was to instill mutual understanding between the two peoples engaged in conflict. In the following section I will go further into the activist underpinnings of such an aim.

Activist Art

In trying to make a statement on conflict through art, Face 2 Face draws on the tradition of activist art which targets equivalent goals. The ambition of Face 2 Face extended to a desire to make a change. How activist art materializes such change will be discussed in the present section. What does it mean for a project to work like activist art? In order to answer this question I will delve into the philosophy and the development of the movement in Europe and the manifestation of activist art in Israel-Palestine.

As its central idea, activist art attempts to achieve political goals through artistic means. In addition, its activity often takes the form of an event or performance involving the participation of the audience. However, the driving philosophy of activist art also relates to other aspects. In *Semblance and Event* (2011) Brian Massumi postulates that activist art is supported by "process philosophy" (Massumi 1). In such an event, the participation of the audience is essential for the success of the work. According to Massumi, activist philosophy encompasses: a participatory/relational aspect which is political; in addition, activist art entails a creative/qualitative aspect which is aesthetic (Massumi 12). The first aspect relates to involving the audience in the art work, which in Massumi's terms is political; the second aspect refers to the qualitative aspect of the work that brings out the artist's ideas. Activist art uses the audience in and during the process of creating the work, but also materializes the artist's vision. However, in critique of the above, participation does not say anything about the outcome being political in content. Furthermore, when the audience truly participates, these two aspects could intertwine and efface the underlying distinction. Lastly, defining art in terms of process philosophy makes it difficult to pin down where the art work starts and where it ends if it is conceived as an on-going process. Nonetheless, one could focus on the process itself, while the participation of the audience could be studied as an outcome. The importance of Massumi's study can be conceived in the tension between the participatory and creative aspects of activist art. This tension resides in the emphasis on the process itself and the assumption of political content.

The character and content of activist art then needs to be further looked into. In the 80s activist art was connected to site-specificity, as the desires of the Left activists for change converged with the idealistic desires of artists (Scholette 47,48). However, Scholette also criticizes activist art saying: "… activist art harbors its own unexamined idealism" (49). This unexamined idealism contains the use of media while assuming to criticize it: "…artists that operate within pop-culture are celebrated, their parasitism treated as subversive" (Scholette 49). Scholette argues that artists who do well now are taking advantage of the mass-mediated commerce, while their own use of this industry is seen as a critique. The demise of activist art has resulted from failing to make a clear distinction between the separate realms of art and industry (Scholette 61). Drawing on this statement, contemporary activist art has assumed a firm role in the commercial world, while keeping the pretense of being its critic. As the demarcation between the realms of mass production and art has diminished, activist art became similar to a commodity or easily digestible product. However, such a view is limited, as it excludes art found outside of the institutionalized constraints of a museum. Furthermore, being adopted by mass-media could also indicate a step towards making the art publicly known or accessible to all. Nonetheless, the above encourages to re-examine idealism in activist art and to look into its usage of mass-media as a tool for social critique.

Contemporary activist art still relies on early forms of site-specific and socially engaged performances, falling back onto performance artists of the 1960s like Joseph Beuys. In "Re-Animating Joseph Beuys' 'Social Sculpture'" (2013), Erik Biddle interlinks the 60s to current activism. Biddle sees Beuys' ideas on activist art as a desire to have aesthetics and social consciousness cast into the same mold. This generates a type of "social sculpture" that includes "a social organism as a work of art" (Biddle 26). Biddle further elaborates on this idea: "Beuys coined the term 'social sculpture' to describe his expanded conception of art as the extension of perception, what he described as 'the creation of a sensual apparatus'" (Biddle 28). Beuys' extended perception of art relates to the "sensual", implying a bodily experience. Looking into Beuys' primary art performance "How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare" exemplifies the sensual component of his art. Beuys covered his face with

honey and a gold leaf, moving around the gallery explaining the art pieces to the dead hare cradled in his arms. Beuys criticizes the "over-rationalized" approach of viewers to art works and calls for a purely sensual -visual experience (Casey 78). In such a pure experience, bodily senses play a more important role than thought. According to Beuys, the dead hare would be just as capable of understanding art works as any living human being, or even better than human beings who shut their senses to art. Explaining his performance, Beuys says: "A Hare comprehends more than many human beings with their stubborn rationalism […] I told him he needed only to scan the picture to understand what is really important about it" (Beuys qtd. in Casey 78). Due to their rationalistic approach to art, people become incapable of understanding what they see. What Beuys was telling the hare is as contradictory as it gets, because the hare was dead and therefore unable to "scan the picture". Deciding that the hare is able to understand "what is important about it", results in a ridiculous situation which serves the message. The performance alludes to a disconnection between the artist and the audience, the latter being incapable of understanding what the artist is trying to do, and the former frantically trying to explain art to a non-listening ear. Furthermore, Beuys defies conventional reception of art by demanding a more sense-based form of looking. By covering his face with honey and golden leaf, Beuys in addition draws on motifs of sanctity. The photograph below depicts Beuys' strange appearance, showing his haunting eye sockets set back within a shiny skin covered in gold (Fig. 2-5). However, it is difficult to trace from this performance the "social sculpture" Beuys speaks of, because such a sculpture would reside in the audience itself. Representing something allusive and imaginary by means of sensual performance, as Beuys did in his performance, does convey the level to which activist art relates. This level is characterized by sensuality, imagination and participation of the audience.
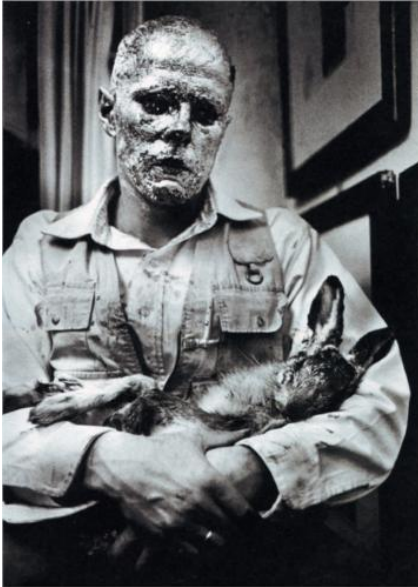
Particularly in the context of conflict in Israel-Palestine, activist art works by imagining a change of a situation. Chiara De Cesari elaborates on activist practices in "Anticipatory Representation" (2012). De Cesari shows how artistic events work towards establishing an idea of imagining a Palestinian State in the future. Quoting Bishop and Esche, she states that: "The art-work no longer functions as a 'discrete, portable, autonomous work of art that transcends its context….but rather as a constructed situation… and as a space for imagining things otherwise" (De Cesari 84). On the relational level, art works stand within instead of outside the social context. More radically, art creates a space of imagination, where things can change and be different. The objective of art has shifted according to De Cesari: "from *mimesis* to *poiesis*, from representing the world to changing the world—in other words, abolishing art's autonomy seems to be a core objective of contemporary avant-garde art" (85). This citation refers to a socially activist type of art, where "changing the world" is the objective instead of mimetically representing it. The poetic function of art then surpasses its representational purpose. Autonomy is lost, artistic works are forced to get 'involved' in the situation. In accordance with this conception, art

practices should represent an anticipation working on an imaginative level. De Cesari concludes that "...the

Palestinian museums and biennials as artistic performances have in fact contributed to the formation of national

cultural institutions by imagining and staging them *before* they actually exist" (97). De Cesari draws a direct line

from the artistic practice to the formation of an institution. Artistic performances would then work towards a

social change by imagining and staging anticipations. However, without materializing these anticipations, the

outcome will remain unaccomplished. What is interesting about De Cesari's study is that art works do not

necessarily "mirror", but can also show certain longings which simultaneously engage with and transcend

reality.

In this section, I have explored the social characteristics of activist art and conceptions of process philosophy. In

reflection of Massumi's "process philosophy," activist art works on both participative and aesthetic strata. This

means that in analyzing activist art, the audience should be taken into account as part of the work. Articulating a

critical viewpoint, Scholette contends that activist art has been devalued by commercialization and mass-

culture, while maintaining the semblance of being critical of them. While I agree with Scholette that the idealism

professed by activist art should be examined, I also think that even mass-culture may offer possibilities for

activist art to reach the wide public. Activist art tries to involve the audience, as in Joseph Beuys' case, so as to

make a "social sculpture" with their participation, which is central to activist art. Going into absurdity with his

performance, Beuys calls for a "sensual apparatus" to relate art to the audience. Notwithstanding its transitory

aspects, the relation of activist art to the imaginary provides possibilities to show what the artist longs for. In

this line of thought, De Cesari argues that imaginative anticipations in socially involved activist art, contribute to

the formation of socio-cultural institutions enhancing their forthcoming existence. This approach acknowledges

that activist art stages longings, rather than representing reality proper. However, these imagined anticipations

hold a connection to reality, because longing for change sprout from dissatisfaction on the present situation. In

formulating their objectives, Face 2 Face aimed to establish social change through participation of the local

inhabitants. It remains to be seen whether the project has succeeded in achieving its goal. In line with Scholette,

Fac2Face project may have its own "unexamined idealism" or adapting De Cesari's conception, Face 2 Face could

"stage imagined anticipations". The form which Face 2 Face has chosen is therefore crucial for my further

discussion. Employing street art its means, Face 2 Face exhibited outside using the public sphere in cities as a

setting. In the following section I will discuss street art and urban space.

Graffiti in Urban Space

As an open space art project executed without permission by a (former) graffiti artist, Face 2 Face relates to the

domain of street art.[9] To determine whether the project belongs in this field, the graffiti movement needs

elaboration. Spread across continents and cultures, street art lacks coherence or leadership to be called one

proper movement. What is characteristic of graffiti or street art? Graffiti is typically set in urban and public

space, where it becomes an open declaration of the artist's thoughts. Yet, the symbols of this declaration may

not be understandable to everyone, or perhaps understood differently than intended. Tension arises between

internationally renowned graffiti artists and local inhabitants. Between public and private, the basic interaction

between graffiti and its setting will be subjects of elaboration to this section.

Graffiti imprints its message onto the structures of a city and affects conscious changes in public spaces. We can

find the accumulation of tags, drawings and posters on any public wall in a large city. Even though many of these

writings can be regarded textually as nonsense or an incomprehensible mess, a part of the outcome articulates

clear messages. The question therefore to discuss is the relations between public space and graffiti art as a

message carrier. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jürgen Habermas traces the

characteristics of the public sphere back in their Greek origin saying: "The public sphere was constituted in

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[9] The difference between "graffiti" and "street art," relies on the appreciation of the work, where the latter is generally more respected than the first. While there is no strict distinction between the two, the first incorporates mostly an accumulation of text only readable to those part of the graffiti-community, the second uses a wider array of artistic practices to reach a large audience (McAuliffe 190).

discussion (*lexis)*" (Habermas 3). He continues in the same line of thought saying: "Only in the light of the public

sphere did that which existed become revealed, did everything become visible to all. In the discussion among

citizens, issues were made topical and took on shape" (4). Originally, the public sphere was formed by a free

discourse among Greek citizens. Thereby it became possible to reveal the existence of issues, make them visible

and let them take shape. Yet, Habermas argues that the public sphere has been meanwhile transformed into a

space controlled by public authority, placing private people hierarchically in a lower position (18). The tension

between public regulations and private initiatives constitutes an ambivalent relation between authorities and

individuals (24). In contemporary urban spaces, public authority regulates a private person's movements and

determines which representations may or may not be given a place in public places. Advertisements of large

scope corporations claim a strong and permanent position in public space. Conversely, art is encapsulated into

the institutionalized space of museums and galleries, mostly visited by a privileged layer of society. Moving art

to the public sphere, as street art attempts to do, brings public discussion to an outside forum as in Greek times.

Yet, as a setting, the city is not just any public space. In "The Voids of Berlin" Andreas Huyssen discusses "the

notion of the city as a sign and text" (Huyssen 57). Huyssen argues that the city is a cultural sign, or even a

"conglomeration of signs", representing a national identity and historical memory. In this sense the spaces that

people live in and walk through create meaning, showing what the content of a certain identity and memory is

(or should be). Huyssen specifically refers to Berlin: "This city-text has been written, erased and rewritten

throughout this violent century, and its legibility relies as much on visible markers of built space as on images

and memories repressed and ruptured by traumatic events" (59-60). The idea of "visible markers" relates the

inscribed narrative of rupture and trauma to the city's history, which turns a city into something close to a text.

In nearly all cases, graffiti is conceived as an illegal act. The more unattainable the place is, the more

appreciation the inscription gains, significant of its underground resistance sphere. Graffiti arose as a hip-hop

movement in the 60's and 70's in New York and Philadelphia (McAuliffe 192). However, with artists such as Keith

Haring in the 80's, graffiti became more appreciated as a broad artistic practice using stencils, free-hand painting, photos and poster paste-ups (Rafferty 78). Since then, graffiti has developed, involving more youth and simultaneously engaging artists in a serious manner. In *Trespass* (2010) Schiller and Schiller explain the central focal points graffiti world-wide. In their introduction to *Trespass* entitled "City New", the two editors describe street art as: "An interplay between the urban environment and the artist who sees the city as one giant canvas that captivates the imagination" (Schiller and Schiller 10). In this citation, the editors present walls as canvases that offer a free space to write and draw on. Street artists use the city as a space to express their thoughts and vision. As a young movement that often takes place in subway stations, urban environment appears as an indispensable place for graffiti. Schiller and Schiller emphasize the function of graffiti to "beautify" neglected sites of the city (11). However, this is not necessarily true for all graffiti. The artistic quality depends on the insight and talent of an artist. Schiller and Schiller proceed with the same optimistic tone concerning graffiti artists. They state that characteristic of those involved in the movement is their "belief that small acts can make a difference" (11). This alludes to an idealistic notion of making a difference, although it is unclear what this difference may be. Yet, in fact graffiti is more driven from a need to express oneself. In the essay "Public Memory/Private Secrets*"* in *Trespass* the authors state: "…it [graffiti] became a symbol of urban decay, this most ephemeral of art forms is often driven deeply by our cultural need to memorialize" (McCormick, Schiller and Schiller 82) . They argue that graffiti touches a basic "cultural need" to leave a trace, while knowing that it will also fade away. Short-lived and transitory, graffiti provides a soundboard for anyone who wishes to use it: "Mass-mediated, declaratory, crowded and in your face, the city may be the best place to keep the kinds of secrets that need to be shared" (85). This supports viewing graffiti as a means of expression, where private "secrets" become part of public memory by displaying them outside. Whereas the city employs mass media with extensive commercials covering empty spaces, graffiti plays with the same elements. Similar to mass-media which permeates the city, graffiti works in an intrusive declaratory manner. Where people crowd in cities,

graffiti fills up every possible blank space. Yet, the actual content of these street declarations is not always understandable to all, and therefore still needs exploration.

Being provocative is a characteristic trademark of graffiti. Transgressive in nature, graffiti changes spaces beyond boundaries of (political) constraints. As such, graffiti and street art has the possibility to contribute to public discussions. An example of a street artist who consciously does so is Banksy, internationally renowned for his provocative and humorous images in stencil black contours. On the Separation Wall on the Palestinian side, he painted a wall breach opening to an image of paradise and a girl being lifted by balloons rising up in the air (Rokem 336). His paintings project longing for the other side and reflect hope for the removal of the wall. Below the hole we see two children playing with beach toys, but the beach is beyond their reach, located on the other side of the wall (Fig. 2-6). These images project the inequality between the wealth in Israeli cities and the generally poor Palestinian ones. Hinting to cities like Tel Aviv, long stretched beaches and palm trees create an impression of a paradisiacal vacationing area. The image refers to an imagined place on the other side of the West Bank Wall, drawing a stark contrast with the dire situation many Palestinians live in. Depicting the two playing children with beach-toys expresses this gap, as the beach is beyond the reach of most Palestinian children. Banksy's painting makes a political statement, wishing to subvert the Wall. Yet, his art misrepresented what some locals actually feel. In an interview with *The Guardian* (August 5, 2005) Banksy relates that while he was painting, a local Palestinian man shouted at him, saying: "We don't want it to be beautiful, we hate this wall. Go home" (Jones). The result is that even when a site is beautified, it may not correspond to the actual wishes of some locals. An outsider's artistic aestheticism, clashes here with an insider's demand to leave the wall bare and ugly. While Banksy is well appreciated as an artist internationally, his political statement misses its target because it is incongruous with local sentiments.

Discussing graffiti in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, then needs a view on what was produced from

local hands. Julie Peteet argues in "The Writing on the Walls" that during the Intifada, Palestinian graffiti-

sprayings were used as "print weapons" (Peteet 139).[10] Peteet states that: "The Palestinian community thought

out loud in graffiti" (141). This citation suggests that graffiti functioned as public statements for a political

protest movement. Further on Peteet argues that graffiti can intervene in power relations, she says: "It was in

the spaces where these competing, yet highly unbalanced, systems of power interfaced that meaning was

constructed" (155). Peteet's argument is interesting, considering that graffiti articulates protest that unsettles

systems of power. As an underground movement practiced mostly by young people, however, graffiti is unlikely

to articulate what the entire "Palestinian community" thinks. This would not take into account those involved in

other political or civilian activities. Furthermore, Peteet's claim itself cannot be confirmed or refuted, because it

is too general. The tension lies here again in the gap between the insider's perspective and the outsider's

interpretation. As a scholar, Peteet approaches the subject from an outside position in search of definition for

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[10] "Intifada" is Arabic for "uprising".

the collective thought of the Palestinian community during the Intifada. In Peteet's definition, the outside space is where "systems of power" have competed and "meaning was constructed". It remains open to discern which systems of power we are speaking of and what the content of this meaning is. Finally, Peteet makes an intriguing, but ambitious claim: "Graffiti were the silent narrative accompanying acts of resistance yet were themselves an act of resistance" (Peteet 143). The logic of the last citation is perhaps somewhat oversimplified: spraying graffiti is illegal; therefore the act of spraying graffiti represents disobedience and uprising. This statement negates the context of the graffiti, being applicable to any place. To consider Palestinian graffiti as a platform for public and political discussions, more detail on their placement is required. However, the notion of graffiti as "silent narratives" and as undermining structures of power is worth further exploring.

In conclusion to this section, graffiti employs public space as a canvas. Drawing on Habermas' theory of the public sphere, graffiti can be placed within the context of free discourse among citizens. However, this necessitates for the graffiti declarations to be clear and understandable. In line with Huyssen, graffiti writes and rewrites the cityscape, but the way the signs are read differs. Street artists hold an optimistic vision of a world that can be changed and express themselves in an ephemeral way in the urban environment. Tension arises when international graffiti artist Banksy articulates his view on the Separation Wall, which is incongruous to local sentiments. Peteet shifts the focus to local graffiti, which she entitles the "silent narratives" of protest during the Intifada. More specificity on the content and location of graffiti could improve the hiatus between outsider interpretation and local discussion. Similar to Banksy's art, the portraits of Face 2 Face entered public space trying to make a statement, yet the portraits could also be working outside the cultural context of Israel and Palestine. In order to gain more knowledge on this, I will elaborate on Israeli-Palestinian cultural representation in the following section.

Representations of Conflict

One of the starting points of Face 2 Face was that Israelis and Palestinians usually see one another through political representations of war and conflict. The initiators' solution was to create an art project that goes beyond boundaries and shows a non-violent side of people. By using portraits that are disconnected from conflict, the artists take a distance from politicized imagery. Nonetheless, their aim undergirds a political goal, as they aspire to enhance understanding between two peoples in conflict. In order to situate the Face 2 Face project within its cultural context and narrative discourse, I will elaborate on the various representations of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. How does Israeli and Palestinian art and literature work with the themes of war and hope for peace? In this section I will discuss national narratives in Israeli-Palestinian literature and visual arts.

In earlier sections I have already discussed the idea that a photograph gains its meaning through social practices. In Israel – Palestine, these meanings have increasing relevance by determining who is permitted to narrate their version of the conflict. I have argued elsewhere, that Israeli and Palestinian national claims are constructed through narrative forms, that is in accordance with respectively Zionism and Nakbah (Godfried). The discursive area is charged with ideological tensions where different narratives of conflict are told. In *Narrating Conflict in the Middle East* (2013), essays of various authors give an elaborate account of the different discourses on the conflict. In the chapter, "Battle of Victimhood", Kirkland Newman Smulders suggests that both Israeli and Palestinian conflict narratives base their claims on victimhood (Smulders 164). Summarily, the Israeli narrative is based on Jewish homelessness and tragic historical events "starting with the Jewish Masada in the first century AD to the Pogroms in the nineteenth century and culminating in the Holocaust in the twentieth century" (165). Smulders considers these events to be crucial to Israeli nation's constitution, arguing that both politicians and historians draw a historical line from anti-Semitism to the establishment of the State (165). Jewish suffering from long lasting hostility and violence is made to underpin the Zionist claim to a Jewish homeland. Smulders

argues that concurrently an important Israeli national narrative is that of innocence, whereby all conflicts with

the Arab neighbors are spoken of as "wars of no choice" (165). Continuously evoking appearance of innocence

persists in legitimizing war, but also reflects on the roles Israel takes on in their international appeal for support.

Stakes are raised as Palestinian narratives claim similar motifs of victimhood and innocence. The latter is

reinforced by "accounts of daily hardship, tragedy and hopelessness, as well as loss of freedom, rights and land"

(166). These narratives find ground in personal accounts of Palestinians living in poor conditions in areas such

like the West Bank and Gaza. They legitimize use of violence by narratives of resistance to oppression and their

own victimhood. Without deciding who has the stronger recourse to claim legitimate victimhood, we can

distinguish suffering here as a crucial aspect of discursive narrative, a common motif to both respective

identities in conflict. However, emphasizing only characteristics of suffering, innocence and victimhood would be

too limited. There is much more to these identities, and additional aspects to the conflict to be considered e.g.

longing for peace, resistance, memory, trauma, dislocation, recuperation and reconciliation. Notwithstanding

the above, highlighting aspects of suffering is relevant for the debate on national identities. In the following I will

bring a few examples of both visual and discursive representations of Israeli and Palestinian narratives.

An example of an artistic representation relating to a wider range of the themes discussed above is the

animation film *Waltz with Bashir* (2008). In this movie we see the internalized thoughts of traumatized Israeli

soldiers who fought in the first Lebanon war in 1982. In an article entitled "War Fantasies" Raz Yosef discusses

the ethical discussion between the characters and the movie´s position between different media. The animation

movie is based on documentary video footage of conversations between friends and journalists who took part in

the war and with psychologists specialized in post-traumatic stress disorder who treated soldiers (Yosef 311). As

such, the movie takes an ambiguous position between factual accounts of the war and a fictional medium of

animation. The viewer constantly needs to determine whether this is a true account or an artistic animation.

However, the ambitions of *Waltz with Bashir* may not have been to show the history of the war, but rather to

represent the "private and subjective experiences and memories of the soldiers who fought in it" (314).

However these memories are "dismembered" and fragmentary in nature (318). By conveying them in animation

instead of documentary form, the trauma memory becomes perhaps more palpable. Yet, an ethical issue arises,

as the main characters witnessed the massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila by the

Christian militia of Bashir Jumail (September, 1982). The Israelis hold the ambiguous position of a hurt and

traumatized party that is nonetheless part of the extreme violence of that war. Furthermore, as Yosef argues in

his article, the movie represents the narrative of Palestinian victimhood in that massacre through Holocaust

narratives (323). Ethically, only letting their victimhood be understood through the Holocaust is objectionable,

because this doesn't grant Palestinians their own narrative of atrocity. However, naming the similarities

between their sufferings and reviewing their different memories, can also provide meaningful starting points for

debate.

An example of a visual project that has facilitated such a political debate is *Zoom In* (2011) by the Institute for

Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) in The Hague. The IHJR compiled photo collections and scholarly

essays and research on the conflict. The Institute presented students with Israeli, Palestinian and Dutch roots

with photographs of both Palestinian refugees in 1948 and Jewish settlers. The photographs were first shown

without and then with caption. The different reactions of the students to the photographs were recorded. The

Institute stated that the objective of the project was to create mutual understanding between Israelis and

Palestinians:

> It is our hope that this project will provide useful insights into misperceptions of the 'other' and help to
>
> develop a more balanced view on the common history. The album represents in any event an open and
>
> shared space for both young Israelis and Palestinians. (Institute for Historical Justice and Reconcilliation
>
> 9)

As we can read in the above, the joint effort of scholars and students from different backgrounds was aimed to reflect on and develop a view on their communal history. By mapping a historical moment through photographs without labeling them, conceptions of wandering, expulsion and search for home have been related to both Jewish dislocated immigrants and Palestinian refugees. Even though the main focus was on the latter, distinguishing between the two groups became difficult without the caption. Students participating in the research were asked to describe what they saw in the photograph or how they felt towards it. Often they were unable to say who was who, but nonetheless they emphatically engaged with what they saw. Without its caption, the first photograph (Fig. 2-7) was perceived to relate to Palestinian expulsion in 1948, the Holocaust as well as to new Jewish immigrants (73). The last is the factual situation of the photograph; however the reactions indicate how the various groups differ in their interpretations to that particular moment in time and place Similarly, the second photograph (Fig. 2-8) was both conceived as a Jewish immigrant camp ("Ma'abara") as well as a Palestinian refugee camp (130). The third photograph (Fig. 2-8) shows a jarring image of two poor people walking with swollen feet. This photograph captured a moment of two Palestinian refugees fleeing the Independence War, but one viewer conceived it as Jewish people emigrating from Ethiopia to Israel wandering on foot. The *Zoom In* project shows that the students applied their own political background to what they saw. With the descriptions added to the photos, the perception of the scene changed. On viewing a photograph without text, different images were observed in one photograph, because the pictorial elements aroused several meanings. Revealing what the actual situation of the photos was, false assumptions were undercut, and reflections on historical commonalities arose. By showing that distinctions between the two peoples are not always noticeable, their separate histories seemed to be brought together, and their different narratives collided into the same image. Visual representation works here to unsettle perceptions of exclusivity and provide common ground in a situation of conflict.

Fig. 2-7: IHJR. *Jewish Woman Sitting on Luggage Before Climbing Mount Canaan*. 1948. Photograph, nr. 14. *Zoom In.* Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2011. E-book.

Fig. 2-8: IHJR. *Palestinians Living in Tents in Qaber Essit, Emergency Camp*. 1969. Photograph, nr. 31. *Zoom In.* Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2011. E-book.

Fig. 2-9: IHJR. *Palestinian Exodus*. 1948. Photograph, nr. 20. *Zoom In.* Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2011. E-book.

I will now refer to another discursive medium, poetry, to look into how conflict is represented in this cultural

realm. One of the most prominent Palestinian poets, Mahmud Darwish (1941-2008), engages with notions of

belonging and separation in his poetry, of which the following serves as an example:

A ready scenario

Let us now suppose that we fell,

I and the enemy,

fell from the sky

in a hole

so, what will happen?

(Darwish qtd. in Ghanim 76)

What we read in the poem above is the poet's scenario; he imagines his "enemy" and himself falling into a

"hole" from the sky that denotes a metaphor for an open space wide enough to have room for both. However,

the hole they fell into is a narrowing space, symbolizing Palestine. Throughout the poem, the disparity between

the sky and the hole is conceived between being entangled together and remaining isolated the world

throughout the conflict, struggling in the hole that they have fallen into together. Their entanglement signifies

the connectedness of two peoples on the same land, contrasted with the conflict that separates them. Honaida

Ghanim discusses Darwish in relation to politics in his article "The Urgency of a New Beginning" (Ghanim).

Employing Darwish' "A ready scenario" as a case study, Ghanim postulates that the poem infers that any

solution and relationships confined within the constraints of the "hole" could never work (Ghanim 90).

Furthermore, Ghanim suggests that "any resolution must not be grounded on what exists as this is structurally

unworkable, but on a "new beginning" that is beyond the framework of the idea of exclusivity" (90). Even

though I do not see that the poem in itself propagates "new beginnings" the demand to think beyond exclusivity

is important so as to come closer to a resolution to conflict. Ghanim relates a new beginning to remembering the past as an idyllic place of multiplicity and plurality, then the present Darwishian "hole" can break open (91). Yet, this past refers to an undefined historical time (and place), when different peoples of multiple origins lived together on the same land in peace. Unstable as this historical indistinctness may be, the idea of placing plurality centrally does give rise to hopeful thought.

In conclusion to this section, I suggest that literature and photography could work to re-define national narratives and demarcate communities. In line with Smulders, both Israeli and Palestinian national narratives are based on legitimating victimhood and innocence. Although I agree that this is a part of Israeli and Palestinian narratives, other issues such as dislocation, trauma and recuperation also play an important part in the discursive and visual representations of peoples in conflict. Visual representation of such wider themes of the conflict became apparent in the film *Waltz with Bashir*. Furthermore, the *Zoom In* project managed to show different sides of the 1948 events through historic photographs, which destabilized preconceived distinctions between Jewish immigrants and Palestinian refugees. Darwish' poem "A Ready Scenario" represents a narrative of conflict in the metaphoric image of a communal hole. In line with Ghanim, thinking beyond the constraints of the "hole" described in this poem, enables imagining possibilities outside of the framework of exclusivity. Returning to the Face 2 Face project, several questions arise in the light of the theoretical issues described in this section. Do the photographs engage with the themes which are important in representations of the conflict? If the Face 2 Face portraits do not engage with any of these themes, could they still relate to the conflict? Similar to *Zoom In,* Face 2 Face employ visual representation, intending to unsettle the idea that one could distinguish between an Israeli and a Palestinian. In order to gain more knowledge about the way the photographs were perceived, in the following section I will elaborate on the news media discussion that Face 2 Face aroused.

Discourse Face 2 Face

The reception of Face 2 Face provides the discursive context to understand the project. The title of the project already carries an implicit message; the idiom "face-to-face" implies a direct confrontation and likewise the French "tête-à-tête" (which means an intimate meeting). By replacing the word "to" with the number "2", the title gains a popular connotation that resonates with digital media language, where words are abbreviated into numbers and symbols. Media representations of Face 2 Face narrate how the project was perceived, indicating the issues that arose from the initiative. In this section, I will discuss some relevant reactions from the newspapers, online articles, press releases and blogs. I will present different themes of discussion in order to outline the general discourse in various countries. Furthermore, I will elaborate on the way the documentary entitled *Faces,* shows the project. Lastly, I will go into an academic contribution on the project. In this section I will discuss the reception of Face 2 Face, examining the portrayal of the project.

Activist Art

In media exposure JR and Marco described themselves as activist artists or were described as such. In March 2007, *San Francisco Chronicle* published an article under the title "A Troubled Region Shows Its Funny Face / Giant Portraits' Goal to Erode Israeli-Palestinian Stereotypes" (Kalman). The title critically positions the project in the midst of the conflict, by calling it a "troubled region" and the project showing a "funny face". Marco and JR are referred to as "self-styled 'artivists' "Kalman reflects on them having made the compound of "activist" and "artist" themselves, but later in the article, he uses same word without further complicating it (Kalman). The word "artivist" is reproduced and given legitimacy, materializing that this combination reflects the nature of JR and Marco's work. Kalman says: "Marco, the other French artivist behind the project, said the two of them were trying to reflect a complexity not always obvious to people abroad" (Kalman). Marco reflects here on the "complexity" that other travelers often overlook. Marco elaborates on this theme: "We saw people that within five minutes were in favor of war, in favor of peace, on both sides. It's very complex. People sometimes are good

and bad at the same time. It's very ambivalent" (Marco qtd. in Kalman). What is expressed here is not

"complexity". In fact, Marco simplifies the conflict to either being in favor of war or peace, creating a moral

dichotomy of evil and good. People changing their minds within five minutes suggests fluid opinions, rather than

the complexity of the conflict itself. The only complexity Marco expresses is that people can be both good and

bad at the same time, which is neither specific to the Israeli -Palestinian conflict nor has much to do with Face 2

Face.

In 2007, the German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* wrote about the exhibition of Face 2 Face in Berlin, entitling it:

"The Stranger in the Mirror" (Rückerl). The paradox between "stranger" and "mirror" stands centrally as a

metaphor for identifying the stranger in oneself. Rückerl refers to JR as "a performance artist", although an

explanation for this designation is lacking, he merely that "Israelis and Palestinians of the same occupation are

confronted, face to face with their unknown neighbor as their mirror-image" (Rückerl). The mirror-image

metaphor is employed again to emphasize the similarities between Israelis and Palestinians. Furthermore, he

expounds on his metaphor saying that the people portrayed "show self-mockery, they make faces that render

them anonymous" (Rückerl). However, anonymity indicates that the mirror-image distorts and makes all equally

unrecognizable. The confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians with their "unknown neighbor" is then not

mediated through a normal mirror, but one that disfigures the onlooker into anonymity. The description of a

visual confrontation and the reference to JR as a performance artist attribute activist elements to the project. In

another press-release about the exhibition at Gallery Raum 210 in Berlin, describes the project as "a socially

involved art performance, which engages with the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, without

choosing a side" (Reinkin Projekte). The press-release does not elaborate on how the art is socially involved. Yet,

by positioning the exhibition as such, the press-release invites the viewers to see the works in this particular

light.

After JR won the TED-award in 2011, *CNN* published an article "15 Reasons for Wonder", summarizing the speeches given during the award ceremony for all the winning projects.[11] The article starts with a series of questions: "Can something be in two places at once? Can you make a hamburger without harming a cow? Can one man conduct a chorus of 2000 voices scattered over dozens of countries around the world? And can art change the world?" (Galant). The next paragraph states: "the answer to all four questions is yes..." (Galant). The first three questions relate to other projects whose initiators gave a speech: a scientist who researched a phenomenon in quantum mechanics, where microscopic particles can be present in two places at the same instance; a chef who made a hamburger of beets, barley and corn; and a composer and conductor who blended voices of 2000 people into one song (Galant). Galant contextualizes the last question in a sequence with other projects that have observable outcomes, making the fourth project appear as if it is of the same nature. However, in his TED-speech JR does not answer this question affirmatively, but adapts it. During the talk he says: "In some ways, art can change the world. Art is not supposed to change the world, to change practical things, but to change perceptions. Art can change the way we see the world" (TED). In this citation, JR brings the theme of changing "the world" to a higher meta-level conceived in "the way we see the world". Transformation may not materialize in changing the world but in changing "perceptions". Yet, my critical point here is that an artist ought to state whose perceptions are concerned, regarding the place and topics specifically. Otherwise, the outcome can never be known. By diverting from a large claim into a seemingly more specific one, from changing the "world" to changing "perceptions", the latter seems more feasible to obtain. In conclusion to the above, the discussion is focused on "change" through socially involved art, yet fails to specify convincingly the content of the art or the expected outcome.

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[11] See footnote 3 for explanation of TED.

An awkward collaboration between underground art working for political change and travel marketing arises from some of the news items on Face 2 Face. French travel agency Voyageurs du Monde collaborated on a brochure with JR and Marco in 2011. In a press release, the agency defines JR as an "activist artist", saying he "promotes peace through art or tourism" (Voyageurs du Monde). Entitling the announcement of the brochure "Peace through Tourism", the agency promotes the idea that tourists can travel to both Israel and Palestine and thereby "enter into dialogue with Israelis and Palestinians" (Voyageurs du Monde). The travel agency relates the Face 2 Face project to promotion of peace and to a journey that the reader tourist can undertake. In the brochure they state, the goal is the following: "A better understanding of the other, to see that they are not terrorists nor colonizers but human beings who live in families and have cultural codes comparable to ours, and who only wish for peace, is what tourism can offer. Just like the artistic projects of Marco and JR" (Voyageurs du Monde 19). In trying to convince the reader that tourism can solve conflicts, the agency speaks to a potential market of politically engaged travelers. However, a critical point is that the agency annihilates the cultural difference between European tourists and the Israeli and Palestinian citizens. Furthermore, the agency creates a peaceful environment to reassure the worried traveler. Extending this concept to Face 2 Face, a holiday is expected to bring a similar understanding of locals in the same way that the Face 2 Face project should do. Political activism is seemingly cast in one mold with commerce, to convince the traveler that he/she could improve a situation of conflict. Yet, the gain is only on the side of the traveler, because they are shown that Israelis and Palestinians are like them. The credo of "peace through tourism" becomes a thinly disguised commercial slogan for the travel agency and Face 2 Face.

Political Art

In 2010 the distinction "guerrilla" appeared when *The New York Times* published the article "Award to Artist Who Gives Slums a Human Face". Referring to JR as a "Robin Hood like-hero" who calls himself "photograffeur

("*graffeur*" being French for graffiti-artist), his art is called "guerrilla art", because he rejects any corporate funding (Kennedy). The word "guerrilla" has a political connotation of a resistance movement that cannot be seen. Positioning JR as a man of the people who employs his art to resist assistance from established corporations or proclaim political ideas, has awarded him an image of a heroic artist. A year later in 2011, *The New Yorker* called JR's art, "guerrilla photo installations" (Khatchadourian). Invoking on an underground artist imago, the effect of these installations is anything but underground: "By working on such a scale, JR has captured the attention of dealers and museums, including the Tate Modern and the Centre Pompidou, and he sells photos of his work for tens of thousands of dollars" (Khatchadourian). JR is still connected with a "guerrilla" underground movement of graffiti, even when his art has become more institutionalized.

French research center The Observatory for Religious Phenomena writes that Face 2 Face: "shows that art can intervene in massive conflicts, when respecting certain conditions" (Jamois). Jamois doesn't say how art intervenes in these conflicts and which conditions need to be respected, which weakens his argument. According to Jamois, what makes JR's approach different from other artists, such as Banksy, is that he talked to people asking their permission to take their picture (Jamois). However, this may be true for any portrait photography, where a person willfully poses for the photographer. According to Jamois, participation and politics go together in JR's art:

> This new *participative art* implies enhancing communication between artist and public. In JR's approach
> the public is itself the art. We reckon that reducing the gap between the artist's status (superior, active,
> deciding what art will be*)* and the status of the public (inferior, passive) is one of the fundamental
> elements in the successful development of political art in a sensitive situation. The 'active-public-
> paradigm' should be the new strategy in enhancing the effectiveness of art. (Jamois)

Jamois presents "participative art" as a new phenomenon, where the dialogue between artist and audience is enhanced, and the audience becomes the art work itself. In the light of art of the 60's and 70's discussed earlier, "participative art" is by no means new. Furthermore, Jamois brings the participative aspect in relation with "successful development of political art". Art could even create an "active-public-paradigm" which enhances art's "effectiveness". The word "paradigm" refers here to a certain artistic "strategy" of approaching the audience as active agents, which would be essential for "political art" to be effective. Yet, the effect that art is meant to achieve is unclear. By calling participative art "new" and relating it to "political art", Jamois entitles JR's work as innovative and politically engaged.

In August 2013, *The Palestinian News Network* wrote "Remaining Positive Amidst Apartheid", which places Face 2 Face in a political context of violence and struggle. Contextualizing JR among other graffiti artists such as Banksy who "have left their personal mark on the wall," the *PNN* concludes that: "The street art on the wall proves to be a powerful beacon of hope for the Palestinian people – a reminder that the atrocities committed by the Israeli government will never be forgotten" (PNN). The *PNN* brings street art in relation to hope of Palestinian people, voicing memory of atrocity. In describing it so, the article meets the goals of Face 2 Face as politically engaged art. This article too fails to define how street art relates to remembering atrocity and why graffiti demonstrates hope. Approaching graffiti from this angle, the article however invites the reader to see the work of JR and other street artists in the light of political art. Reflecting on the discussions above, Face 2 Face is named political, yet an explanation as to why or how the works are thus, is continuously absent.

Promoting Similarity across Cultures

 In 2011, *The Palestine-Israel Journal* reflects on the ways in which the Separation Wall is employed for different artistic purposes (Leuenberger). Christine Leuenberger postulates that "Palestinian graffiti artists tend to draw attention to the daily struggles of Palestinians living in its shadow" (Leuenberger). International artists work in a

different manner: "International graffiti artists, on the other hand, use the wall to show solidarity, to raise

awareness about human suffering and to bridge cultures" (Leuenberger). Relating this hiatus specifically to the

Face 2 Face project she says: "For artists from the project Face 2 Face …, oversize images of Palestinians and

Israelis pasted onto the Bethlehem walls are meant to show their similarity. Despite their best intentions, the

images have been shredded and defaced" (Leuenberger). While emphasizing the importance of similarity,

Leuenberger interprets the wreckage of these posters as a sign of subversion towards the artists' intentions.

Incongruence between international appreciation of JR's art and local reception arises here. The works of Face 2

Face are internationally well received, but locally rejected by those who destroyed it.

Announcing an exhibition of Face 2 Face at Museum Frieder Burda (Baden-Baden, Germany) in 2014, the

curators focused on the portraits' similarities. The curators write: "The message is obvious: the hostile groups

cannot be distinguished on the basis of their facial expressions" (Drago). Being indistinguishable is a message

inherent in conceiving the subjects making faces changing their commonly recognized features. What is also

interesting about this statement is that it assumes that the portraits are representative of "the hostile groups",

even though the starting point was to show the non-violent side of people. The collection of portraits functions

as a sample section of Israeli and Palestinian populations. Nonetheless, the distorted facial features of the

subjects make them indistinguishable from one another. This is a paradox; the portraits represent the two

groups, but they are also indistinguishable from one another. In these discussions, the similarities in appearance

provide the base to convey that Israelis and Palestinians are alike to one another.

Street Art/Graffiti

In a few articles Face 2 Face was described as street art or graffiti, making changes into space in a disruptive

way. Online American real-estate magazine *Curbed* named JR's art "storied buildings" (Lamm). Attributing the

words "storied buildings" to JR's projects grants an underlying meaning to the art works, implying that they

narrate a story to the viewer in a visual form with the aid of buildings. A blog of the *Guardian* makes a similar observation saying JR "attempted to change a street or a cityscape" (Cadwalladr). Furthermore, Cadwalladr says "JR's work has been deliberately disruptive and provocative" (Cadwalladr). The description of Face 2 Face resurfaces in this article as an elaboration of disruptiveness. Cadwalladr sums up that Face 2 Face " involved taking portraits of Israelis and Palestinians who did the same jobs and then posted them up side by side in both Israel and the West Bank and the wall that divides the two" (Cadwalladr). In the reasoning above, placing portraits in a politically tense location makes a provocative statement.

The peace organization Euphrates Institute contextualizes JR's work as "Art of the Separation Barrier" (Tibbitts). Tibbitts argues: "As soon as the wall was constructed, it became a canvas for many artists on both the Palestine and Israel sides of the wall and much graffiti include protests against the wall itself" (Tibbitts). In discussing the various artists who have "shown their disapproval of the wall", Tibbitts sums up Face 2 Face as "giant portrait photography of Israelis and Palestinians side by side" (Tibbitts). Face 2 Face gains a position amongst other artistic expressions of street artists globally. In conclusion, Tibbitts writes: "… since the images on the wall constantly change as new artists add their work, the wall is a unique way to see a consistently updated depiction of peoples thoughts and opinions" (Tibbitts). The Separation Wall is brought forward as a canvas or a forum, where artists can express themselves.

In March 2007 Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* described the initiative as "Peace Group Plasters Separation Fence with Faces" (The Associated Press). The word "plaster", has a negative connotation, undermining the project. Furthermore, in the rest of the piece, the effect of the project is said to have "led to a bus of Scottish tourists to stop and inspect it", however "local Palestinians are skeptical" (The Associated Press). In raising such opposition, the attention focuses on the outsider's perspective of the Face 2 Face initiators and the local skepticism. The piece concludes that: "the participants declined to give their last names because the project is technically illegal" (The Associated Press). Later in 2007, *Haaretz* wrote about Face 2 Face, when the pictures were pasted in Paris

at the Centre de Pompidou. Entitling the article "It Is Black and White", a more positive light is shed on the

pictures, saying they are "difficult to ignore" due to the "great formats and funny faces and in short "the works

work" (Tadar). Interestingly, only when JR received his international acclaim did *Haaretz* appreciate his work.

Recognition from the international art community, contributed to a more serious reception of JR's work in Israel.

Three years later in 2010, *Haaretz* newspaper positions JR as "one of the most appraised street artist in the last

few years, mostly because of the political aspects in his art" (Bankir). Referring to the Face 2 Face project, Bankir

however merely states that "JR photographed Israelis and Palestinians and pasted huge photographs on the

Security Fence and on private houses" (Bankir). On the one hand, not delving into the content of any these

political aspects is significant, assuming it to be obvious. On the other hand, leaving out problematic politics and

moving on to JR pasting photographs, emphasizes the works as street art.

Documentary

 One of the main visual representations about the complete project, was the documentary *Faces* directed by

Gerard Maximin*.* On 21 February 2008, *Faces* was released in France and the Netherlands, produced by Dutch

and French companies Pieter Van Huystee Film and Television Festivals. Following its release, *Faces* was

*s*creened in festivals, winning numerous prizes: Amsterdam (Netherlands), Geneva (Switzerland), Turnhout

(Belgium), Montréal (Canada), Marseille and Paris (France), Kazan (Russia) (JR 54). The documentary provides

background information about the people photographed, the initiators and the whole process of Face 2 Face.

The documentary shows how JR shoots photographs, talks to local inhabitants and how he and his team paste

the portraits in different locations. The initiators, participants and local inhabitants speak about Face 2 Face and

general issues concerning the conflict, providing background information of the project.

The documentary opens with a shot of the grey Separation Wall on the side of the West Bank, with inauspicious

background music. We see images of television news presenters with a look of intense weariness; they blink

their eyes slowly without saying a word. The shot changes and the music gets a beat, two hands are playing a drum. We look through the contours of the drum to a poster of Che Guevera on the wall, after which shots of the Separation Wall appear with graffiti murals (0:20-0:58). The set-up of *Faces* resembles a road-trip, as the initiators travel in a minibus through a country foreign to them. We see the tires of a car running on the highway as the sun sets, expansive landscapes and fast shots of people along the road. A boy points a silver toy gun at the camera, a soldier is waiting for something to happen with his rifle hanging on his shoulder, a girl is waving a large golden toy gun out of a car window and a man is waiting in traffic at a checkpoint. We get the general impression that the country is filled with aggression. JR's voice-over relates what this project is about: showing to Israelis and Palestinians the face of one another. The film frame then shows people making funny faces in front of JR's camera lens (02:47-04:10).

The documentary opens with this general atmosphere of revolutionary heroism interlinked with the spirit of Che Guevera. JR and his team travel from one spot to another to paste the portraits. Film strips with the different portraits fill up the frame and a white line divides it, tearing it into two parts drawn like the West Bank border, vaguely resembling a map of Israel and Palestine. Red crosses are drawn to indicate different cities on both sides of the white line. A small square zooms into one of the crosses and bring the viewer close to that location. A continuous tension builds up to give the impression that something will have surely gone wrong: passing through check-points is given a mysterious and dangerous soundtrack in the background. Eventually, in two instances something does go wrong. In the first instance JR is arrested, which is extensively elaborated on, even though soon enough, it becomes clear that the arrest would not hinder the artists (13:00-18:00). The second instance is in fact far more serious. As the initiators are pasting portraits on the Separation Wall on the Israeli side, a Palestinian man tries to climb over and breaks his leg falling (51:50). As the artists are still pasting a portrait, the man starts to cry out in pain. After some discussion, they stop for a while. While giving some attention to this moment, the documentary shows the initiators quickly moving on to a more euphoric mood

pasting the last photograph. This shows the incongruity between the happy artists convinced in their project's success and the harsh reality of the injured Palestinian man. This incongruity is diverted to the reflections of the three religious clerics, followed by a long camera shot of the sun and the sky. All the portraits are sequentially shown as the documentary ends. The purpose of the documentary seems to be to convince the viewer that this was a great initiative and is in that sense an uncritical representation of the project. Conversely, *Faces* does show the spirit of the initiators and provides insight into the motivations of the people photographed.

Attempt at Dialogue

In 2009 a substantial academic contribution to the discourse on Face 2 Face was provided by İdil Çetin in her master thesis for the University of Ankara (Çetin). Going into the philosophical notion of dialogue and confrontation, Çetin assesses the ability of Face 2 Face to generate conversation between two conflicting peoples. Çetin provides a compelling theoretical discussion of the "self" in Bakhtinian theory and collective memory in Israel and Palestine, in relation to the Face 2 Face project. In her abstract she states that: "The photographic project *Face 2 Face* is discussed all throughout the thesis in terms of its failure to spot the crucial dimensions in Israeli-Palestinian context, no matter how well intended it was" (Çetin V). Çetin goes into the historical development of Israel and Palestine and the different constructions of local identity, to show the failure of relating to relevant concepts of the "self". One of her observations is the following:

> As it [Face 2 Face] does not pay attention to the collective memories of the two communities and as it neglects issues such as diaspora, nostalgia and home which are significant dimensions of these communities' self-definition as well as of the reasons of the enmity between them, the project misses the history of the enmity between the two communities. (Çetin 110)

The central point that Çetin makes here, is that Face 2 Face did not engage with any of the issues that are important in the collective memory, underlying to the conflict between the two communities. Here resides a

failure in the project, according to Çetin, in not relating to relevant dimensions of self-definition. Placing the emphasis on a certain lack in the project, Çetin provides a critical point of consideration in Face 2 Face. Her study goes into depth with the historical context of Israel and Palestine, in order to show that Face 2 Face did not relate to this context. By focusing on this quintessential aspect of lack, Çetin however does not go into great depth as to what the Face 2 Face photographs do show.

Conclusion

Summarizing the media representations described in this section, Face 2 Face was perceived and received in various ways. Perceived as activist art, reception emphasized the participative aspect of Face 2 Face. In this context, the artists' prestige rose by calling themselves "artivists" and by being referred to as such. Furthermore, being described as a "performance artist," JR has been specifically placed in line with the tradition of the activist art of the 60's and 70's. Social involvement stands centrally in activist art, here referred to as engagement with conflict. However, most of the media discussions on Face 2 Face described above have remained superficial. Merely stating that Face 2 Face is activist, critics do not venture any deeper and generally refrain from analyzing the content of the project in detail. However, the artists had a part in undermining their own work. Making use of commercial media, Face 2 Face collaborated with a travel agency. While maintaining the semblance of being critically involved as activism, working towards social change was brought together with European tourism. While holding up to the image of working without financial support as a "guerrilla artist", "Robin Hood" and "photograffeur", JR's art has become part of large cultural institutions as well as a commercial enterprise, contradicting his own declared ideology.

A similar reflection arises when looking into the political aspects ascribed to the project. While naming the project "a politically charged art" and "provocative and disruptive", there is a hiatus of explanations as to why or how such a political character has been established. One of the reasons for defining JR's art as political was his asking people´s permission to take their picture. Yet, this is true for almost any portrait photography. The

portraits pasted on the Separation Wall, relate Face 2 Face to other street art by employing this object as a

canvas. Descriptions of this action, however only scratch the surface of critical debate, by evading the reasons

which make these portraits specifically political. Expanding on the content of the portraits, the similarity of

appearance between the photographs of Israelis and Palestinians was an important feature. The attempt of the

artists to promote solidarity raises awareness, but was also critiqued by local media. As street art, Face 2 Face

significantly gained more appreciation in Israel, after being acknowledged by European institutions.

The documentary *Faces* is set up like a road-trip, giving an impression of an outsider´s visit and a European view

of the conflict. Great emphasis is put on pasting the portraits in different locations in Israeli and Palestinian

areas. There is little to no critical reflection on the project itself, but rather throughout the documentary the

initiators try to convince the audience, that the initiative promotes a peaceful coexistence. The artists show

blindness to actual suffering, when they are faced with it from close-by in the instance of a man falling from the

height of the Separation Wall. In the academic work of Çetin, a critical reflection is provided on the lack of

awareness on the artists' part, concerning the historical and political context. Çetin shows that Face 2 Face failed

to acknowledge important issues of the self in Israeli and Palestinian identities, such as nostalgia, home and

diaspora. These news, documentary and academic reflections on Face 2 Face, raise the overarching question of

what these images are capable of doing in a situation of conflict. I will further examine this in the following

analysis.

3. Analysis

Introduction

In this part of my research I analyze the Face 2 Face portraits in the light of the four questions posed in the methodology section; How do the portraits speak/perform? What do they convey? How they gain meaning? Do they work politically? Looking at the Face 2 Face portraits, I aim to focus on their facial features and highlight the meaning they bring forth. In the first place, I approach them as 'raw' material, intending to uncover the innate features of their photographs, to have their descriptions stand in their own right. My aiding material has been the book *Face 2 Face,* where person's name and occupation were put at the edge bottom of each portrait, while their origin was printed on a separate sheet (Marco and JR). On the posters displayed in public spaces, captions to the portraits stated the entire participant's data: name, occupation, and origin, alongside JR's signature. In analyzing the portraits I caption them with their name, occupation and origin, considering that this is equally important information to understanding of the structure and purpose of the project.[12] I observe how the people photographed complement or contrast one another. I therefore added separate descriptions for each portrait, followed by a comparison between the portraits coupled together. My pivotal four questions stated above will construe the structure of my analysis. I will "read" the images and appropriate the documentary as a background material so as to analyze interviews with the people photographed. I relate the portraits to the guiding questions arbitrarily, while providing an overview of the complete portrait series. My analysis will be construed accordingly:

a) How do the portraits speak/perform?

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[12] All the portraits (besides one pair) are scans from the book on the exhibition: Marco and JR. *Face 2 Face*. Paris: Editions Alternatives. 2007. In the captions, I will refer to the complete source the first time, and thereafter only state the page numbers to avoid redundancy.

In this section I will argue that elements within the portraits inherently have a message. I aim to unravel this message and question whether portraits pose a "dare" to the viewer or speak out with rhetorical force. Furthermore, the portraits could bring about a sense of estrangement by visual distortion. I will analyze facial features to show how a theatrical performance comes to bear in the photographs. Do distortions work to create effects of estrangement? To answer this question I discuss the following portraits: Holy Triptych, Gas Pump Attendants, NGO-employees, Musicians, Cabdrivers and Guides.

b) What do the portraits convey?

The main point of the project was to show that without reading the caption, one cannot distinguish between an Israeli and a Palestinian. Showing pairs with the same occupation, the initiators tried to make people across the boundaries of conflict meet on a common ground. Drawing on the idea of sameness, I will discuss whether the portraits convey equality and common humanity. Drawing on Azoulay's theory, the question arises whether such non-violent images can also constitute a civil contract of photography or a framework of solidarity. I will relate this discussion to the portraits of Teachers, Children, Security Guards and Farmers.

c) How do the portraits meaning?

By showing how the portraits appeared in different forms, their intermedial journey sheds a new light on them. I will approach the photographs as portraits, as street art in public space and through their remediation online. Here I categorize the different types of environments where the portraits appeared. Furthermore, I trace the different meanings attributed to them by various online media. By placing the portraits in different contexts, I expect to see how they functioned in various settings. In this section, I discuss the portraits of Cooks, Boxer and Soccer-Player, Sculptors, Peace Activists, Lawyers and Hairdressers.

d) Do the portraits work politically?

Being associated with activist art possibly places the Face 2 Face project in the political realm. The specific

cultural context that Face 2 Face was set in carries national narratives. However, the artists of Face 2 Face

distance the portraits from history and violent occurrences. Can there still be political components in these

works if they are distant from the political narratives? For this section I will use the portraits of Storekeepers,

Actors, Grocers and Students.

How do the portraits speak/perform?

In my chapters "Visual Rhetoric" and "Theatre of Estrangement", I have discussed theories on reading images

and how images perform. In regards to reading images, I will apply Barthes' *Rhetoric of the Image* to distinguish

the three messages; the linguistic message, the coded message and the uncoded one (Barthes 72). In Barthes'

Camera Lucida discussed earlier*,* photographs gain meaning through a "mask" (Barthes 34). What mask can we

see in the Face 2 Face portraits? Furthermore, according to Barthes photos need to be "pensive" to utter

critique (38). Whether an image is able to subvert, relies on its ability to speak out to the audience and articulate

a message. In line with Hariman and Lucaites, being able to turn recognizable imagery into moments of visual

eloquence, is what makes some photographs "iconic" (Hariman and Lucaites 3). Do the Face 2 Face portraits

utter critique or speak out with visual eloquence? Furthermore, as I have outlined in the discussion on Ash,

visual depictions can have a performative force, making the audience act (Ash 513). In Ash's theory this is

conveyed by a "dare" and an incongruent shocking referent in the image, as exemplified by the Barnardo's

advertisements (510). Do the portraits bring out a dare like the Barnardo's advertisements? The incongruous

relation between the caption and image is an important consideration in looking at the portraits of Face 2 Face.

On the note of how the images perform, I will look into features in line with Marta Zarzycka's theory on

monstrosity, which includes "dismemberment" and "unveiling the monster" (Zarzycka 127). Distortions in the

portraits could reveal an image of monstrosity. However, the "monstrous other" disturbs through familiarity and

recognition (132,133). Combining the strange and the familiar relates to concepts of estrangement, as I have

outlined in the discussion on Viktor Shklovsky. Do the portraits achieve an effect of estrangement? In line with

Celia Lury, the development of the photographic portraits can be related to journalistic caricature, which

presents an over-emphasized portrait (42). Lury argued that photographic representations that make the

familiar strange, were first shown by August Sander in the first half of the 20th century (Lury 71,72). In the photo

series of Sander, portraits are grouped according profession (50). Do the portraits of Face 2 Face stage a

caricature or unfold a social order akin to the Sander exhibition? I will go into these issues in the following

section.

The Holy Triptych

The most well-known of the portraits from the Face 2 Face project are three clerics. Within the project, these

are the only photographs which show three portraits instead of two. In the documentary *Faces* these three

portraits are called "The Holy Triptych", which refers to Christian art triptychs showing biblical stories. Sheikh

Abdul-Aziz, Brother Jack and rabbi Eliyahu represent the three predominant religions in the region: Islam,

Christianity and Judaism. Still, we do not know which religious currents they are part of and what their exact

clerical function is.[13] The photos capture theatrical facial expressions conveying a kind of *joie de vivre*. It breaks

down the dichotomous idea that the conflict would take place between Jews and Muslims only. Like in Hariman

and Lucaites' theory on iconic images, we see here three images which anyone who is part of the Western world

can recognize, showing people who are part of the three major religions. They are "undemanding" as such,

because the viewer does not need to think deeply to know who belongs to which religion. Set apart, they would

lose the contrast between them, which seems most important in representing the three dominant religions in

the region. Their religiosity is portrayed through "signifiers", as discussed earlier using Barthes' *Rhetoric of the*

---

[13] The exact religious positions of the sheikh, rabbi and brother are not elaborated on in the documentary or in the book. A sheikh is not necessarily religious, a Jewish man in religious attire can be orthodox and a white collar doesn't indicate religious brotherhood. Sheikh Abdul Aziz and rabbi Eliyahu are part of the "World Congress for Imams and Rabbi's for peace" (www.imamsetrabbins.org). Presumably, Sheikh Abdul Aziz´ is a religious sheikh and Eliyahu is a rabbi, we need to assume that Brother Jack is part of a monastery.

Image, these signifiers can be distinguished on three levels: linguistic, coded, and uncoded (Barthes 72). On the linguistic level the three clerics are referred to as "cheikh Abdul Aziz" ("sheikh" is misspelled), "Reb Eliyahu" (Yiddish for rabbi) and Brother Jack (Marco and JR 18-20). The portraits, however already transmit signifiers that point to their appropriate identities. On the un-coded level, certain elements in their appearance signify their religion. Rabbi Eliyahu has corkscrew side curls and a beard and wears a striped shirt; Sheikh Abdul Aziz has a beard too, wears a turban and a decorated jacket; Brother Jack wears a stiff white collar with a black jacket and is clean shaven. All these signifying elements make sense in relation to their religious identity. Yet, in combination with the clerics' clownish facial expressions, the features of conventionally religious identity change character. The rabbi's photo turns the side curls around his face into curtains for his two rolling eyes, and his beard emphasizes grinning teeth. The Sheikh's turban draws the attention to his two bright popping eyes; and the priest's collar turns into an outlined costume for a Pierrot. The coded message of these portraits is conceived in their facial expressions, they are all pulling a silly face despite their serious functions. They do show a stereotypical representation of orthodox religious people from the three dominant religions in the region. This entails that "a Jew" has corkscrew curls, "a Muslim" wears a turban and "a Christian" has a white collar and a black robe. The mask that we see here is a combination of silliness and religiosity.

In *Faces* we see that Sheikh Abdul-Aziz and rabbi Eliyahu meet one another and are interviewed together. Their conversation is cheerful: "There is a religious Jew, I grew up in a Zionist movement and a Palestinian Muslim sheikh, and here we are" (Maximin 31:22). In these few classifications, rabbi Eliyahu articulates the basic oppositional features between them. The one is "a religious Jew" and part of the "Zionist movement". The other is "Palestinian" and "a Muslim sheikh". Pairing these identities establishes a significant difference between the two sitters. Rabbi Eliyahu presents himself as part of a movement and a religious Jew; Abdul Aziz as being part of a Palestinian nation and a Muslim sheikh. The final words "and here we are" suggests that it is an absurd situation. They seem to congratulate each other that it did work out against all odds.

For no apparent reason, Brother Jack is interviewed separately in *Faces*; he is left out of the encounter with the other two. This separates Brother Jack from his triptych company. We see him at the moment when his portrait is pasted unto the Wall at the West Bank. A passing car suddenly pulls up and the passengers start a conversation with Brother Jack:

> Driver: "Since the photos are very funny, the wall is sad, so what does fun, how can fun be linked to the sad event of the wall? I don't understand."
>
> Brother Jack: "Yes, this is ridiculous, these faces are ridiculous, but you know what? The wall is ridiculous too. The wall is not solving any problems. The wall is making more problems, it does not move us forward, and it moves us backward." (Maximin 30:17)

The question is sharp enough. Brother Jack, however, answers it with a parallel reasoning. The wall is ridiculous, and similarly the photographs are ridiculous too. The comparison fails here, because the first definition of "ridiculous" is different from the second. Whereas the first refers to silliness and making a funny face, the second refers to an aggravating situation. Brother Jack goes on to state what he thinks about the wall, even though this was not the question. The question about the relation between the funny portraits and their location remains unanswered. Furthermore, the complete situation seems quite contrived, because the front-seat passenger is in fact Muna, one of the participants who was photographed, who pretends to have never heard of the project asking: "What is this?" (29:59). The situation seems to arise spontaneously, even though their conversations have been likely staged by the director. Other reactions from (actual) passers-by are indifferent; they are not shocked or outraged in any way, they simply stare with some awe and then proceed (54:26-54:34). They are not challenged by the image to act, laugh or cry out, they just stare at large images.

Reflecting on the above, the clerics take on "the mask" of showing their capability to be silly. On the one hand their identity remains fixed by their religious attire, but on the other hand it is disrupted by their facial expressions. Their identity is connected to religion, rather than country of origin. It remains unclear what these

portraits ask from the viewer, no "dare" is brought forth as Ash describes (513). They do not seem very

"pensive" in the Barthian sense (38). These portraits are more up-front. What they say is akin to rabbi Eliyahu's

words: "here we are" (Maximin 31:22). Furthermore, the triptych does not make the familiar strange or achieve

a sense of estrangement, it rather makes religious faces amusing to look at. As such the representation

reiterates features of religiosity in a stereotypical manner, but also undermines these features through

outspoken silliness.

Fig. 3-1: *Sheikh Abdul Aziz.* 2005.
Face 2 Face. Marco and JR.
Paris: Editions Alternatives, 2007.
18. Print.

Fig. 3-2: *Brother Jack.* 18.

Fig. 3-3: *Reb Eliyahu.* 19

Gas Pump Attendants

Fig. 3-5: JR. *Lithal, Gas Pump Attendant*. Israeli. 106.
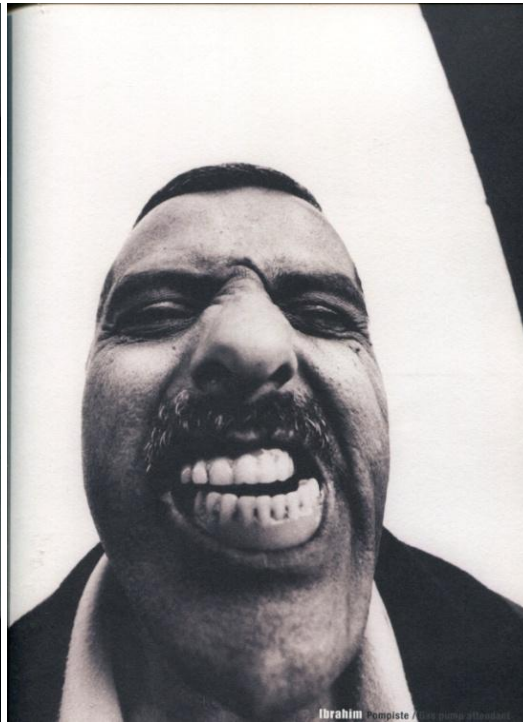
Fig. 3-4: JR. *Ibrahim, Gas Pump Attendant.* Palestinian. 107.

Above are portraits of a female and a male gas pump attendants, Lithal and Ibrahim respectively. Overall there is

nothing other than the captions to indicate their professions. The angle in the case of Lithal comes from the

lower left, with Ibrahim it is from the lower right. In both portraits their heads are slightly positioned to the

right. Lithal's pierced tongue sticks out and she holds the piercing between her lips. Her eyes are set out of their

sockets in a ghostly manner. We cannot see her pupils; and thus from anywhere we stand as spectators, she is

staring at us glaringly. Similar to Cindy Sherman's photograph of the doll (Fig. 2-4), the blank stare has a

daunting quality. As if she were playing a part in a "freak-show", she displays that she can handle pain and

shows a unique oddness. Sticking out her pierced tongue signifies indifference to what anyone thinks of her. In

the background we see sloping black rail directly above her head. Her face is set against a white wall and

appears emphasized further out of the black collar of her turtle-neck sweater. These features emphasize her

head, similar to theater curtains that reveal what is happening on the stage. Her hair divides in two different

colors. The dual division of the frame comes back in the stick piercing, anchored in the middle by her tongue. In line with Zarzycka's argument on monstrosity, these aspects emphasize an "imperfect embodiment" (Zarzycka 132,133).

Fig. 3-6: Detail of fig 3-4 [ed.].

Looking at the other portrait, we find that Ibrahim´s facial expression is quite different. His jaw is protruding toward the left in a seemingly anguished positioning. We can see all of the flesh on the gums of his lower teeth, and the dark spaces between the teeth are visible. It looks as though the lower jaw stands completely separate from the rest of his mouth. The disfigurement imposes a fragmentary look on his face. His eyes are screwed up into two small lines, as if in pain. The nose is pulled upward into the wrinkles between the eyes and his eyebrows are slightly frowned bolstering the uncomfortable expression. The distorted facial features also grant him oddity; the disfigurement of his mouth gives him an animalistic or monster-like appearance. In contrast to his porous and visually deformed face, he wears a simple white collared shirt with a black sweater over it. We see similar plain colors in the background, although we cannot discern the objects in the background. Upon comparison, the portraits convey significantly different messages. Whereas Lithal embraces pain as part of her identity in the form of a piercing, Ibrahim shows anguish. Lithal's piercing and Ibrahim's strange jaw make them appear deviant from convention. The portraits possess a quality of monstrosity, which reconfirms Zarzycka's

theory, where a face may embody seemingly violent dismemberment (Zarzycka 127). The pierced tongue fails to

maintain corporeal boundaries. Sticking out the pierced tongue performs a type of "unveiling the monster"

(127). Similarly, the jaw of Ibrahim reaches beyond its expected limit, granting his portrait monstrous qualities.

NGO-employees

Fig. 3-7: JR. *Ishtar, NGO-employee*. Palestinian. *Gilles, NGO-employee*. Israeli. n.d. *Thirdparadigm.org.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

We see here two NGO-employees, Ishtar and Gilles, although their occupation cannot be seen from their

portraits. Whereas Ishtar shows a frantic and disturbed character, Gilles appears more quiet and amazed. Their

pictures are taken from a lower front angle and their heads are opposed in positioning. Ishtar's forehead is tilted

forward, whereas Gilles forehead turns slightly backward. Looking closely, we find how their character-play

comes about. Ishtar's fists are clenched together, pushed against her forehead. Her hair spreads wildly over her

left hand. The sharp fingernail of her index finger pushes slightly into her palm. Her eyebrows frown and her

eyes squint together. Her mouth forms a growl and she appears to be grinding her teeth. Sharp lines shadow her

cheeks. The lines on her turtle neck sweater emphasize her head. On the whole, she appears as someone in

frustration. The fists against her head make her seem angry at herself, making a self-blaming movement. Her portrait is theatrical, showing angry bewilderment.

Gilles' chin and lower jaw is set to the left exaggeratedly. This part of his face is covered with a stubbly beard. His lower lip moves separately from his upper lip in the same direction. His eyes are enlarged in amazement. His facial expression shows wonderment about something. His eyebrows form almost one line, to show a similar sentiment of curiosity. The neatly ironed collar is open, signifying his relaxed character. His face shows clumsiness as if he doesn't really know what is going on. The two portraits express contradicting sentiments. Ishtar shows a state of frustration, whereas Gilles shows wonderment. Ishtar enacts a moment of realization of a horrid happening; the movement of her clenched fists gives the impression of self-accusation. Gilles observes something going wrong, but does not realize what it is exactly. What they evoke in the audience is perhaps the question: What is wrong? A dialogue arises then between the portraits and the audience. The portraits activate the audience into thinking about what is going on inside of the artwork. As such the Victor Shklovsky's idea of "belaboring" art could apply, asking from the viewer an active part in the creative process of perception (Shklovsky 6). These portraits ask from the viewer to draw away from easy recognition and ask from the viewer to determine the narrative content of the images.
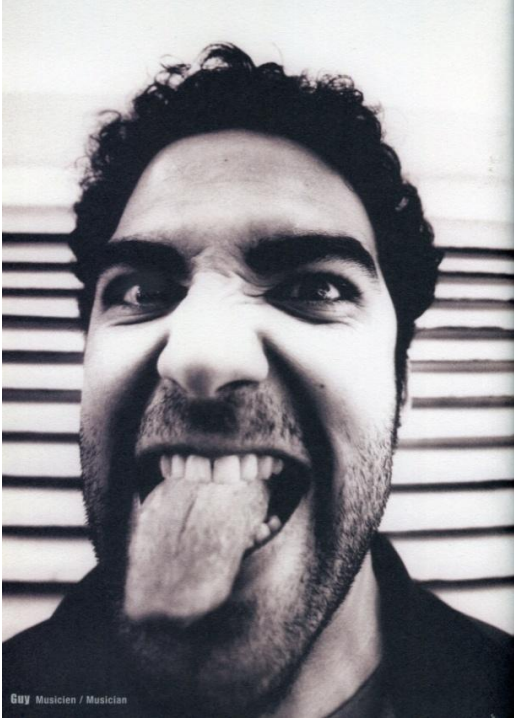
Musicians

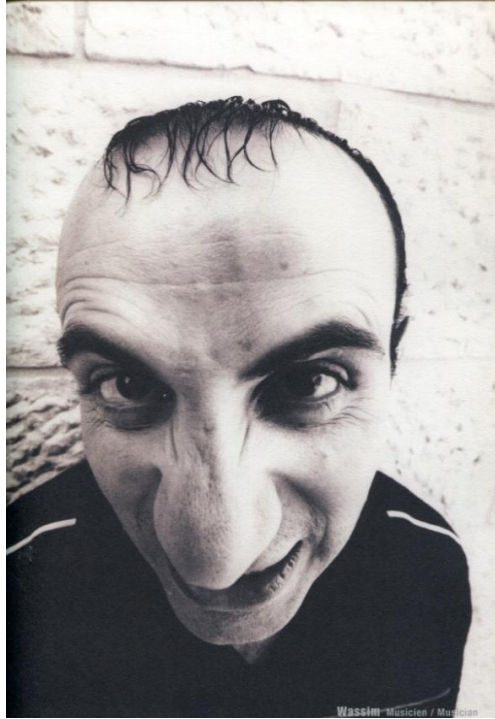
Fig. 3-8: JR. *Guy, Musician*. Israeli. 56.   Fig. 3-9: JR. *Wassim, Musician.* Palestinian. 57.

These two musicians, Guy and Wassim, radiate utter lunacy. Their profession cannot be deduced from the

elements in the photograph. In both portraits the angle is from front to left. Their heads are opposed in their

positioning and their appearance seems quite different. Guy's tongue sticks far out of his mouth, as though the

tongue is reaching farther than the frame of the portrait. He clenches the meaty part of his tongue between his

teeth. The angle of the photograph overemphasizes the length of the tongue. His tongue-tip is placed directly

before the lens, yet is out of focus. The tip extends upward into a curve. His facial expression playfully supports

the show he makes of his tongue. His nose wrinkles up. His eyebrows frown and his eyes become slightly cross-

eyed. A gleam in his eyes shows that Guy has guts; that he has enough sting to stick out his tongue at anyone.

Guts emanates from his appearance.

Wassim's forehead and nose take up a large part of his portrait. Sparse hairs spread on the bold skin of his upper

head. They wiggle down his head like small snakes or worms. His eyebrows turn upward with a pointy triangular

shape from the middle. The wrinkles caused by his eyebrows continue to his forehead like arches. On his forehead three spots show. His nose takes up a grotesquely large part of his face. The tip of his nose overreaches his upper lip and half of his mouth. We see only the left half of his grim smile. Wassim stares at the audience as if he is the one taking a closer look at them. His facial features appear completely out of proportion. Monstrosity characterizes his strange and close grimace. The portraits show their heads are positioned oppositely; Guy pulls his head backward and Wassim puts his forward. The sentiments they convey emphasize their differences even further. Whereas Guy plays a flamboyant role sticking out his tongue and putting on a show, Wassim looks back at the audience creepily. Wassim holds some elements of monstrosity, through his greatly enlarged nose seemingly reaching beyond the frame. Yet, this does not happen to such an extent that his nose seems violently dismembered, as Zarzycka describes (127).

Cabdrivers

Fig. 3-10: JR. *Jimy, Taxi.* Palestinian. 100.   Fig. 3-11: JR. *Asher, Taxi.* Israeli. 101.

These two portraits of cabdrivers, Jimy and Asher, make a similar impression at first glance. Nothing in particular indicates their profession, besides their caption which is only stated in French ("taxi" is French for cab driver).

They are both photographed from the same slightly lower angle. Furthermore, they look cheerful as if they had

just heard a funny anecdote. Jimy's face is turned downward. His nose is extensively accentuated, as the lens

focuses on it. The nose is directed downward like the prong of an animal, and his forehead pushes to the front

like the antlers of a stag. Jimy's cheeks turn sharply toward his nose, like two pointed wings. His forehead is

tilted forward and his chin is tucked in toward his neck. The forehead seems especially large and accentuated.

His eyes almost disappear under the shadow of his eyelashes, but the dark irises stare forward. Because the

pupils remain invisible, we cannot see the direction Jimy is actually looking. Wherever the spectator may stand

in relation to the portrait, Jimy's eyes are always looking at him/her. The collar of his striped shirt is not ironed

and makes a dingy impression. The collar arches down around his white t-shirt; the grayish tints contrast the

plain white. His neck disappears, which makes his head appear all the more confronting. His face acquires a

looming quality, as if he is scheming. In the background there are roughly stacked bricks, adding to the

atmosphere of disarray.

Fig. 3-12: Detail of fig. 3-10 [ed.].

Looking at the other portrait, the first thing that we notice about Asher's face is its egg-shaped head. His chin is

pushed slightly forward and his forehead is set backward. His nose is lifted up sinking into the laughing wrinkles

between his eyes. His eyes nearly disappear between the folds of his eyelids and shadowed eyebrows. His

projecting lower lip reveals only a small part of his teeth that glisten in his mouth. The mouth is shaped as if he is

about to say something sweet to another person, animal or thing he finds adorable. This look of innocence and joy is emphasized by his white T-shirt. As a whole, he looks like a pleasant Buddha-figure. In the background, we see neatly assembled stone wall; they add to a comforting atmosphere.

Sharpness speaks from Jimy's portrait with his nose pointing downwards and his eyes looking acute. In contrast, softness is projected in Asher's portrait with his rounded face and his eyes disappearing in the smiling folds of his eyelids. The tension between the two portraits lies in the opposition between their different facial expressions, which brings about either an atmosphere of eeriness and discomfort (in the case of Jimy) or one of convenience and pleasure (in the case of Asher). Through interplay between strangeness and familiarity, between the two frames, one could argue that these portraits project a sense of estrangement between them. In line Shklovsky, the estranging object makes perception laborious (Shklovsky 6). The human face is presented in an unfamiliar way and in order to unravel their expressions, thorough perception is necessary.

Guides
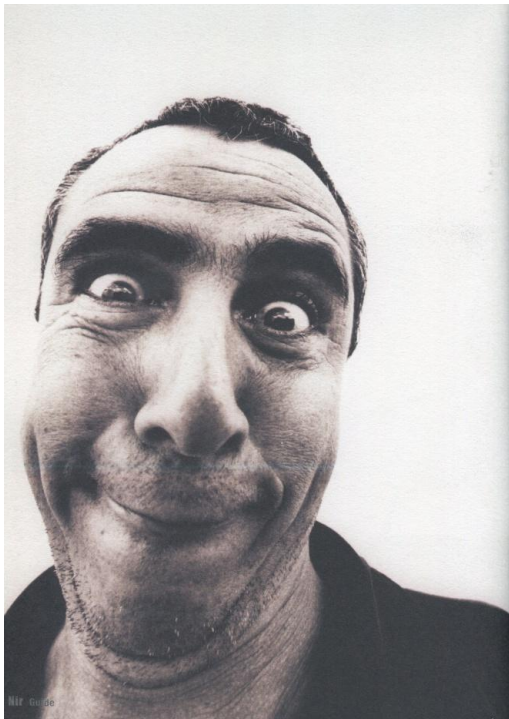
Fig. 3-13: JR. *Nir, Guide.* Israeli. 76.   Fig. 3-14: Mars, guide, Palestinian. 77.
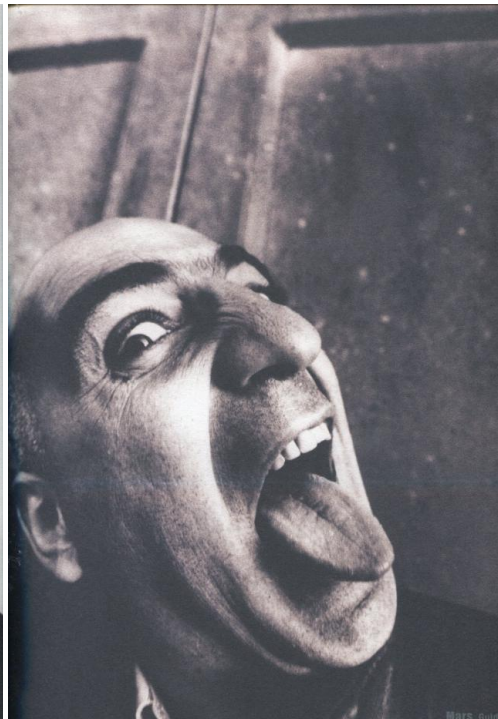
This duo of guides, Nir and Mars, deliberately pull funny faces and play with the camera's gaze pointed at them. Nir's head is slightly turned toward the left, where the camera stands. The direction of Mars' head strongly turns to the right, sideways towards the lens. The angle of the camera is from below in both cases. Nir's face radiates silliness. He looks cross-eyed and his eye-brows almost connect. His cheeks bulge out theatrically as his lips press together. From his playful smile vertical curves slide sideways. His chin is pushed into his neck, resulting in a double chin. The lines of his double chin are prolonged to create a rippling sliding into his chest. Lines spread crisscross horizontally on his forehead. The nose elongates into a kind of snout, appearing like an animal's trunk. The shadows and wrinkles around the side of his nose assume the appearance of whiskers. He flattens his entire face so as to look straight into the camera. Nir plays out a ridiculous role as if trying to make a small child laugh. In line with Lury, this portrait is like a caricature or a "portrait-chargé" (Lury 42). Accentuating certain parts of the face (eyes and nose) his portrait shows an over-emphasized representation of a joyous self.

Mars stares at us with one glaring eye from aside. His tongue sticks out of his open mouth with its flat point. The lower lip disappears underneath his tongue. His nose is curled slightly up, wrinkling it. A small vein pops out close to his eye, making his stare all the more fearful. He barely has hair, except for wild bushy eyebrows and the white short hair on the side of his head. Perhaps the most confronting aspect of this portrait is his profile revealed sideways, with only one eye directed at us. We feel as though he might turn any moment and the other part of his strange face will show up. His head is photographed from a lower angle and seems to move upward, like a serpent. The threat of his grimace seems to be hidden in the other half of his profile, which he has not yet revealed. His face deviates from the common norm. Yet, he still projects humanly recognizable familiarity. Akin to Zarzycka's theory on monstrosity, the combination of near recognition and disturbance is terrifying in this portrait (132,133).

Comparing the portraits, the two guides play out opposing roles. Whereas Nir shows a kind and funny role, Mars plays a seemingly evil one. Nir appears like a caricature of showing silliness. Mars' face holds a threatening

appearance in the anticipation of revealing the other side of his face. Nir's playfulness alleviates the threatening

quality played out by Mars. Conversely, Mars' looming face emphasizes Nir's joyous facial expression. The

contrast between Nir and Mars displays theatrical roles of evil and innocence. Relating this to the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict, would bring about a stereotypical representation of enmity in dichotomous relations of

good and bad. Yet, these portraits do not reflect reality as such. In line with Ash' argument on the Barnardo's

advertisements, these portraits hold a connection and a disjunction with reality (Ash 510). In this sense, the

portraits show a theatrical play which is not there.

Conclusion

The portraits of the Holy Triptych evoke biblical representations in art, and being the only portraits named thus, it adds a message of religiosity. Their clothes and head attires signify their religious identity as "a Jew," "a Muslim" and "a Christian". Their caption states the religious function, their images already show. By using these stereotypical appearances of religious persons, the outcome is undemanding and recognizable for the Western viewer. They bring forth a message of silliness across religions, which underplays the expectation that orthodox people are serious. However, the triptych neither poses a dare to the viewer nor does it evoke a sense of estrangement.

The portraits show a cross-section of the two societies, conceived through professions. Similar to the Sander exhibition "Face of Our Time" discussed earlier, this series takes a wide scope of professions and chooses a few people as their representatives. In the social register of Face 2 Face, women are relatively absent, perpetuating the marginalized position of women in the professional sphere. Furthermore, all the portraits examined in this section besides the Holy Triptych, have no pictorial connection to profession and country of origin. The captions are incongruous to the images. However, this incongruity doesn't unsettle a clear expectation or sentiment, nor does it pose a "dare" to the viewer. Disruptions are shown in their facial features. The portraits speak to the viewer through facial expressions, showing an over-emphasized or caricatured self. The portraits have animalistic features and at times even monstrosity. The portraits play theatrical roles, mostly showing a combination of the familiar and the strange. Daunting and glaring looks, intertwined with joyful and playful expressions bring about oppositions between the portraits. They stare out of the frame or let their eyes disappear; stick out a tongue, show strange teeth in a protruding jaw or having a wide daunting laugh. I have argued that some of them work in an estranging manner, as they combine aspects of the familiar and strange, asking for a laborious perception to unravel the different facial expressions. In combination of pairs, the portraits show theatrical play, which did not take place in reality.

What do the portraits convey?

Aiming to convey the sameness of the "Other", has been one of the main objectives of Face 2 Face in order to create a connection among the subjects photographed. In my chapter "Common Humanity and Photographic Encounter," I have discussed the common grounds necessary for acknowledgment of equality. I also treated the problematic power relation inherent in photography between the photographer and the subject photographed. Photography can also constitute solidarity among the involved parties, as Azoulay outlines in *The Civil Contract of Photography.* According to Azoulay, in photography we see an "encounter" between the photographer and the person photographed, and subsequently the audience (Azoulay 93). Through this encounter the photograph construes an open citizenship as a framework of solidarity (23). Azoulay's theory applies to photographs that show the impact of injustice or violence, bearing witness to grievances (86). Could the Face 2 Face portraits also bring about such a community of solidarity, equality and encounter? I have outlined the basic conditions to seeing the other as equal using Stuurman's historical study. Stuurman distinguishes two conditions necessary for equality: common humanity and an anthropological turn (Stuurman 479). Acknowledgment of such values necessitates identifying and empathizing with another person. As a corollary, Cathleen Woodward argues that empathy with another person works as a perceptive mode of understanding (Woodward 64). This understanding is founded on "intersubjectivity" that according to Woodward enables different people to connect with one another (64). In the following, I will be asking whether the portraits of Face 2 Face can precipitate that type of empathic engagement and whether such "intersubjectivity" is generated in the portraits. Furthermore, I will discuss the possible values inhering in the portraits of Face 2 Face, focusing on equality and common humanity.

Teachers

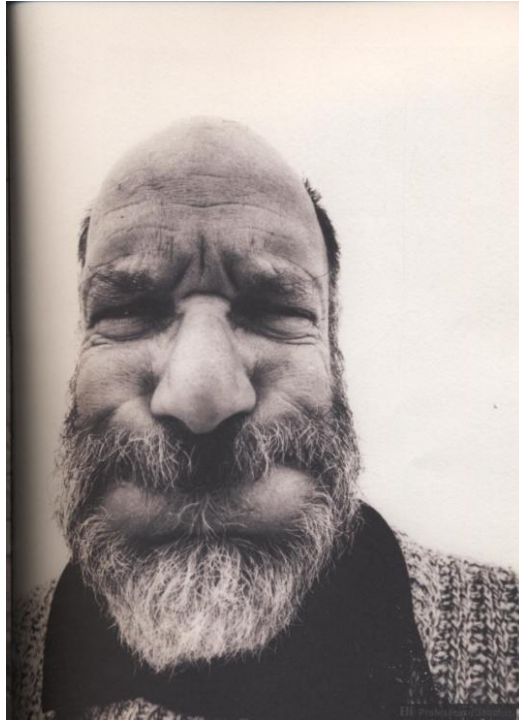**Fig. 3-15: JR. *Muna, Teacher.* Palestinian. 110.**   **Fig. 3-16: JR. *Eli, Teacher.* Israeli. 111.**

These portraits show a pair of teachers, Muna and Eli. Their photographs are shot from a lower middle to left

angle. Both their facial expressions are playful, but in every aspect opposed. Muna's most striking features are

her eyes. They almost pop out of their sockets, drawing her eye-brows upwards. The white part of her eyeballs is

emphasized by dark lines surrounding her eye-lids. Her eyebrows are turned upward as if in surprise. Her pencil-

drawn eyebrows, lipstick painted lips and the birthmark on her cheek give a theatrically clownish appearance to

her face. Her black shirt with its collar highlights her head. On the whole, her face expresses a kind of silly

amazement. Eli has the same silly grotesque features akin to Muna. However his portrait is displayed in a

different manner. Eli puffs his cheeks and exposes the space underneath his lips. His lips are pursed together

and his eyebrows are frowned. There is a contrast between his blown up balloon-like face and his frowning

eyebrows. This contrast conveys a comical impression. However, his squinting eyes, pursed lips and blown

cheeks find no release. In the static moment of the photograph, his face is fixed in exertion. Eli wears a plaid

jacket being perhaps somewhat typical for a teacher, although it is not strongly indicative of his function.

Comparing the two portraits, we find that they differ in their facial expressions. Whereas Muna's eyebrows are drawn upwards, Eli's are frowned; Muna's eyes pop out and Eli's eyes are squinting; Muna's lips are emphasized, Eli's lips fold into his mouth. Muna's face is straight and smooth, Eli's face is contracted. Looking at these portraits with thoughts in motion, contraction and release, it is as though Muna is releasing the tension of Eli's face. Simultaneously it could also work the other way around, Eli is blowing up his cheeks searches for a release from Muna's smooth face. In combination, these two work together, one pulling a funny face the other releasing it. Through this reciprocity, the two portraits convey a kind of "intersubjectivity" of which Woodward speaks of (64). The reciprocal connection between the two people is only present in their representation and takes place in the visual arena of the photographs, on this particular imaginary level.
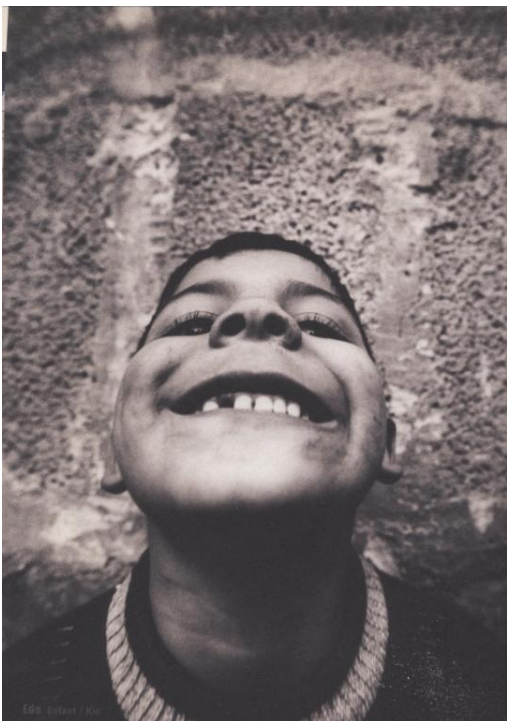
Children

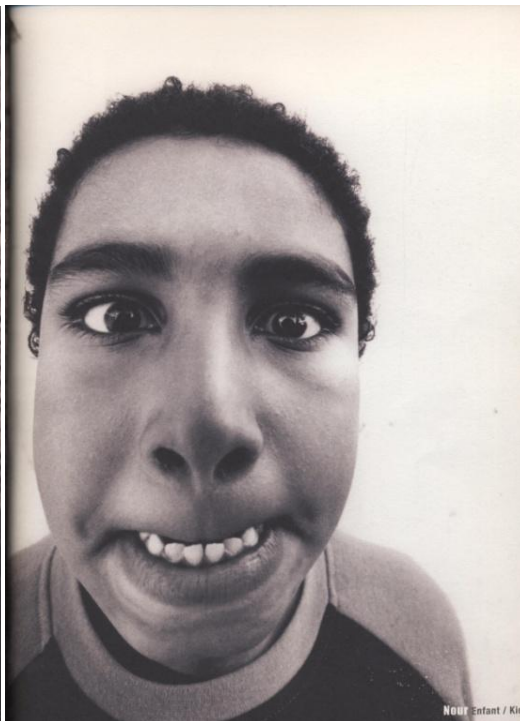Fig. 3-17: JR. *Nour, Kid.* Palestinian. 114. Fig. 3-18: JR. *Edo, Kid.* Israeli. 115.

Even though childhood is not a profession, these two children Nour and Edo, are part of the series.[14] They seem to be the only representatives of this age-group. They differ from the other portraits in this aspect as they are not paired according to what they do, but by their age. Perhaps, their portraits are simply meant to evoke sympathy in the viewer. The photographer´s angle is from the front in both cases and from the same height. Nour draws his head backward, showing his chin and wide smiling mouth, missing a milk tooth. His smile is genuine and playful, full of joy. The viewer looks straight into his nostrils, which raised up give him the look of a cute piglet. We get a glimpse of his joyous eyes between his full black eyelashes. We see here facial expressions of a child having fun. Nour is not exactly posing, but shows the natural expression of a laughing child. In the reflection of his eyes, we also see the contours of the photographers. In line with Azoulay, the viewer sees a pleasant encounter between the photographers and this child.
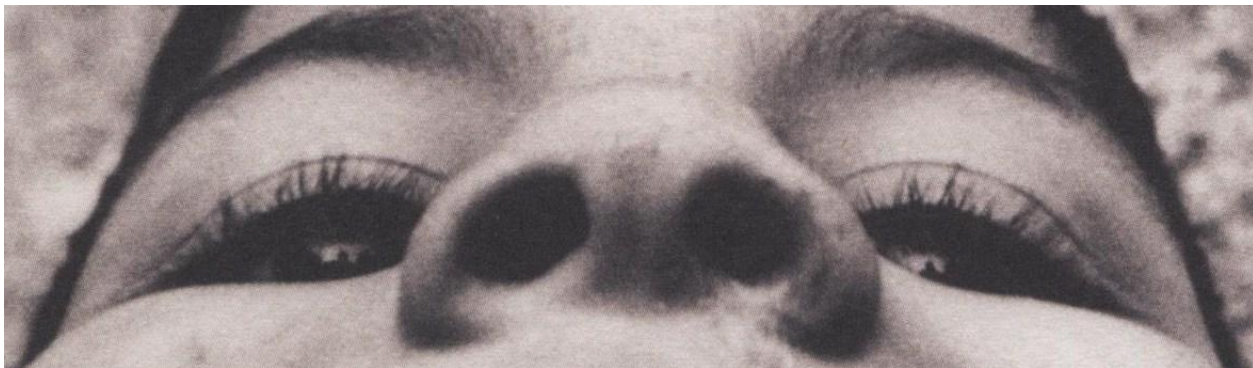

Fig. 3-19: Detail of fig. 18 [ed.].

Edo's head is tipped forwards toward the viewer. He is pulling a funny face so as to show what he is capable of doing. His most conspicuous features are his mouth and nose. He hides his upper row of teeth and upper lip inside his mouth, showing only his lower row of teeth. This gives the impression of a small cute dog or animal exposing his teeth. His nose seems prolonged by pulling the skin of his drawn upper lip into his mouth. His eyes are slightly turned inwardly, as if they were attracted towards the direction of the camera. The position of his

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[14] In the book, the names and origin of the children are (probably accidentally) switched, drawing from the documentary (Maximin 12:04). I use the actual names of the children in my analysis.

torso shows him pulling one shoulder a little to the back and pushing his head forward, to suggest confrontation. He is not afraid to show what he can do, and has enough "spunk" to face the photographers. The photographic encounter destabilizes the power relations imposed by the photographer, because the person photographed bends the outcome to his own will.

The pair of children is portrayed in such a way that they oppose one another. Their facial features and movements contrast; whereas Nour draws his head backwardly which seems to shorten his nose, Edo elongates his nose and turns slightly forward; whereas Nour pulls backward away from the photographers, Edo consciously confronts them. Nour and Edo represent different sentiments, the first is joyful, and the second takes his role play more seriously. With the semblance of innocence attached to childhood, these portraits arouse empathy. Their youth becomes a common denominator: no distinction is made between them as regards social class or personal preferences. Their age makes them equals. Their portraits challenge the viewer in asking whether a child should be defined by his/her ethnicity. The children evoke an empathic mode of looking, because almost anyone can feel connected to a child. In line with Stuurman's work, the portraits undermine "anthropological" distinctions of being able to see who is Israeli and who Palestinian is. Stuurman also argued that the discursive base for unequal treatment needs to be undermined, so as to subvert inequality (481). In these portraits we do not find such a subversion of the discursive base for inequality.
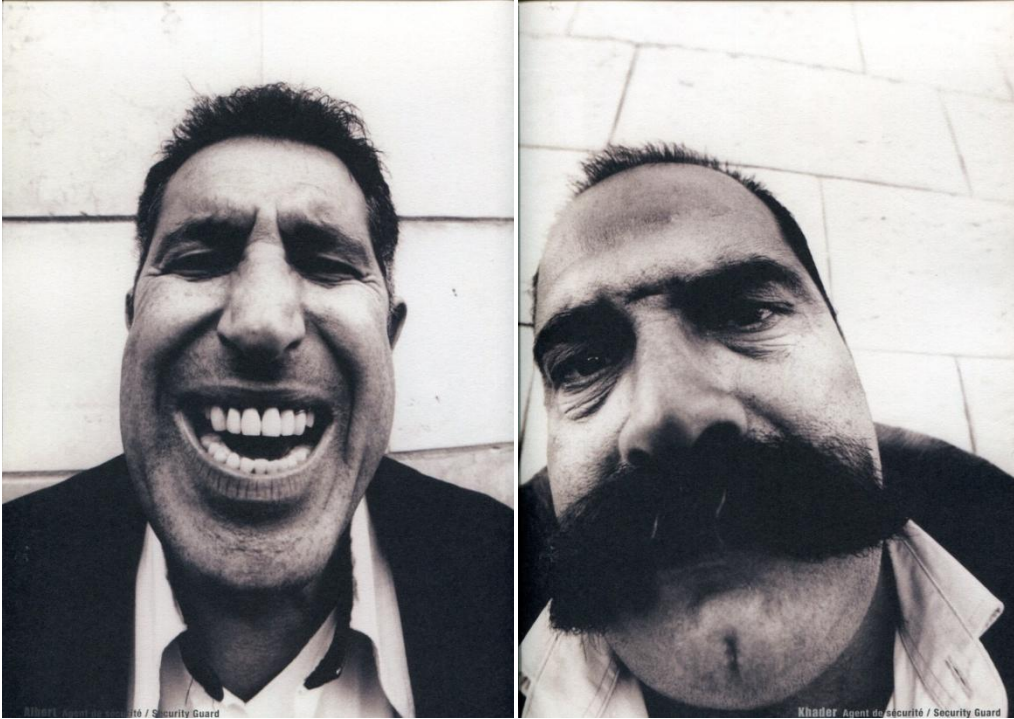
Security Guards

Fig. 3-20: *Albert, Security Guard.* **Israeli. 32.**   **Fig. 3-21 JR.** *Khader, Security Guard.* **Palestinian. 33.**

The two security guards, Albert and Khader, are photographed in similar settings; they are both placed against a

light wall and dressed in similar clothes. Their light blouses and dark jackets make them appear in uniform. At

first, their facial expressions show a mixture of seriousness and playfulness. Albert's eyelids are almost closed,

narrowing into a frown. It is as if he is squinting against the light. His eyes disappear completely and the sockets

seem empty. His expression seems pained, reflected by the tension in his face. His mouth opens into something

close to laughter, but it is not a cheerful laugh. The edges of his mouth are not turned upward, but sideways and

slightly down. In this light, his laughter almost seems like a painful scream. His lips are pulled sideways so tightly

that small vertical cracks appear in his lower lip. The gums in his mouth seems to disappear, his white teeth look

as if they are floating, revealing two teeth braced in a crown. The most emphasized part of his face is his jaw,

appearing large and round. On the whole, Albert's face shows grimness and the pained expression of someone

trying to laugh under difficult circumstances. The other guard, Khader gives us a different impression. His

moustache stands out as the most conspicuous feature in his portrait, entirely covering his mouth. The full width of the moustache is emphasized by his slightly lifted chin, setting his forehead back and turning his head to the right. The moustache becomes a thick slanting line. His nose seems enlarged, turning down toward his moustache. His cleft chin appears exposed in the light of his full moustache above it and doubles into his neck. The lower part of his face becomes completely round, almost making his jaw disappear. The eyebrows form a straight and sober line. He stares at the audience with an inquisitive glance, as if he is inspecting what is in front of him. As such, the portrait inverts the function of the photographer as well as his relation to the audience. Normally, the person photographed is the one who is being looked at by the camera and by the audience; here Khader is the one who looks at them. Between the soft hanging and wrinkled eyelids, his eyes however show tiredness or weariness.
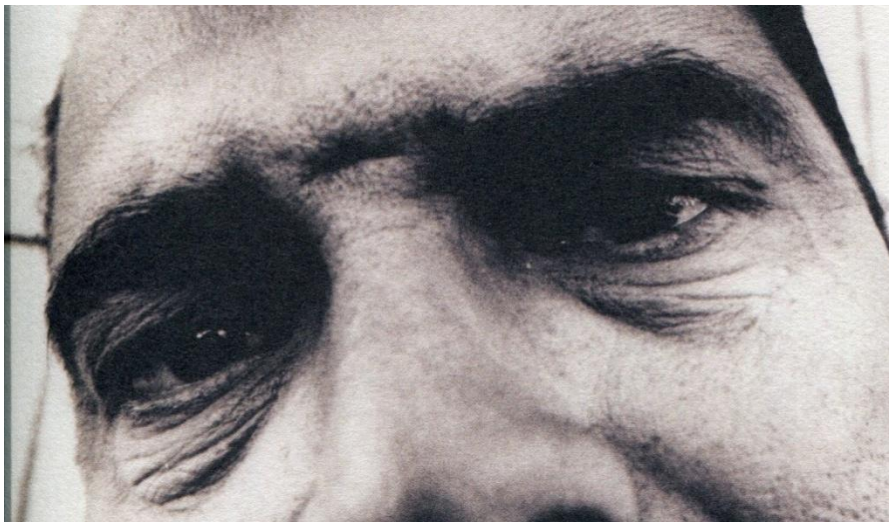

Fig. 3-22: Detail of fig. 3-21[ed.].

In comparison, the differences between the two portraits seem greater than expected at first. Albert's mouth and teeth are fully shown, while Khader completely hides both underneath his moustache. Albert looks pained and his face is tensed, while Khader is looking forward as if trying to inspect something. The position of Albert's nose upward is opposed with Khader's nose pointing downward. Whereas Albert's eyes seem to disappear, Khader's eyes show fatigue. Whereas Albert's stare is grim, projecting emptiness, Khader is researching us in the

same manner we might inspect him. The two figures deem to project different worldviews; whereas the first

draws away painfully, the second continues to inspect his surroundings, even though tiredness may be the

consequence. These emotive states may be a presentation of grievance, like Azoulay suggests in the *Civil

Contract of Photography* (Azoulay 86). Yet, the content of this grievance is too unknown to be attributed to

them. Being able to connect to these emotive states of mind, asks empathy as a mode of understanding

(Woodward 64). Through the intricate details described above, these portraits can be argued to evoke such

emotion.

Farmers

Fig. 3-23: JR. *Loya, Farmer.* Israeli. 70.   Fig. 3-24 *Fathi, Farmer.* Palestinian. 71.

These two farmers, Loya and Fathi, look quite different from one another. Their heads are turned toward each

other as if meeting in the middle line between them. The angle of both photographs is from the center. The first

one is taken from the right and the second from the left. They both look at the viewer with amazement, yet the

way they do so differs. Loya looks at us with a silly and theatrical astonishment. His head is turned to left as if he

is staring at something curious from another vantage point. His eyes pop out, showing small veins running through them. The white of his eyeballs stands out starkly from the black shadows surrounding his eye-lids. The skin on his cheeks is pulled tight by his raised eyebrows and pouted lips. His nose pulls sideways to the right turning his nostrils into pointy leaf-like shapes. Pointy ears flatten down on the sides of his head. White, gray and black facial hair mixes together in his rough short beard. On the whole, Loya's face shows a comical clownish expression. This impression is supported by his striped T-shirt, buttoned to the top. The uneven thick stripes give him a playful look; while high buttoning attributes him the doltishness of someone "doing his very best" to look decent.

The lens focuses on Fathi's laughter, which enlarges his mouth sideways and to the front. White teeth stick out forward. His face is curled up into thick skin ripples by laughing and frowning at the same time. His nostrils turn up in laughter and his eyes squint together. Fathi looks out of the frame in a pleased and curious amazement; like someone encountering a new person. His skin and eyes partly reflect the light that shows it to be porous and wrinkly. He wears a light hat with rough edges and a white jacket with a black collar. The colors of the light emphasize the tint of his dark skin. From the documentary, we understand he lives in Jericho. The part featuring Fathi is quite short. We only see how his children laugh, when being showed their father's portrait and then Fathi says: "Of course, it is for a good cause. God willing, it may have positive consequences. If the message is conveyed and people feel something" (Maximin 24:33 - 25:05). Fathi articulates here the hope for a "positive" outcome, which would be established through Face 2 Face. The connection that Fathi envisions is based on conveying an emotion or a message to the viewer. However, what the content of the message is left for interpretation. Nonetheless, mere empathizing could be a message inherent in this photograph. Applying Azoulay's idea of the "civil contract" here provides a connection between the people photographed, the photographer and the onlookers (Azoulay 97). However, even though Fathi calls upon such a connection, we

only see the photographer and the people photographed in the documentary, but know nothing about how the audience reacted to this particular photograph.

In comparison, the contrast in the facial expressions of these portraits lies between Loya is pulling his skin tight to the length and Fathi wrinkling it down. Loya's eyes pop outwardly, whereas Fathi's eyes squint. Furthermore, Loya's pouted lips contrast with Fathi's wide laughing mouth. They differ also in their clothing: Loya appears somewhat doltish by "overdoing" the buttoning of his shirt, while Fathi wears several unmatched layers. They express similar comical amazement at something outside the framed photographs. However, Loya theatrically overdoes it, while Fathi seems more genuinely interested and amazed. In showing this optimistic emotive state, these portraits convey a cheerful state of mind to which a large audience should be able to relate.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the present section, I have found a few points to indicate that the portraits convey equality or common humanity, or constitute a framework of solidarity. Looking into their facial expressions in details, the portraits show difference, rather than similarities. The portraits of the Teachers and their relation to each other show reciprocity of "intersubjectivity", in line with Woodward (Woodward 64). The Children show what Azoulay describes as an encounter through photography (Azoulay 93). Their equality across their origin, being either Israeli or Palestinian, is also brought forward here. Perhaps more urgently than the other portraits, this pair asks us whether a child is already marked by ethnicity, whether the caption "Palestinian" or "Israeli", already applies to them. Yet, in order for this to be truly unsettling and create an anthropological turn, the discursive grounds for this distinction need to be undermined, which cannot be drawn from these portraits.

Nevertheless, through their innocent appearance, the Children do evoke an empathic engagement which could affect the audience. The Security Guards convey pained and weary expressions, showing a certain grievance to the audience, although the content of the grievance remains obscure. As regards the Farmers, they both show a sentiment of amazement. They do convey a certain emotive state, varying from weariness to cheerfulness, asking from the audience an understanding of these sentiments. As such the portraits convey a certain common humanity crossing country of origin and established by emotions. Whether the portraits constituted a framework of solidarity or a civil contract, is only knowable when we take in the reception of the audience to these specific portraits.

How do the portraits gain meaning?

Situating the photographs of Face 2 Face in public space still needs elaboration. First I will go into some of the portraits descriptively, to see how they gain meaning in their own right. Then I will look into their appearance in Israel and Palestine to tracing their locations in public spaces. As I have outlined in "Graffiti in Urban Space", several issues concern such outside street expressions. What kind of places did the portraits cover? And how did the environment frame these portraits? Drawing on Habermas, the public sphere was constituted as a place where discussion arises (Habermas 3). Do the portraits give rise to such discussion? To examine the way a city specifically functions as a site for graffiti, I also invoke Huyssen's conception of the city as a text (Huyssen 57). As a corollary, I expound on ideas of Schiller and Schiller that graffiti comments on urban decay and concurrently expresses a cultural desire to beautify neglected sites of the city. The outcome is declaratory, mass-mediated and transgressive in nature. Graffiti can speak out in the environment or, conversely, fail to make the intended statement of the artist in city sites. In addition, the remediation of Face 2 Face online across websites and blogs has also provided locations for the portraits. Drawing on theories of remediation and intertextuality outlined in my chapter "Visual Rhetoric" I will trace the outcome of Face 2 Face across different media. This entails looking into the "liveness" and "hypermediacy" of the remediation, in line with Bolter (Bolter 64). Furthermore, I will approach the connections between the online media with Rajewsky's ideas on intermediality (51,52). In the following, I will trace the development of meaning, from portraits to urban art to online reception.

Lawyers

Fig. 3-25: JR. *Jad, Lawyer.* Palestinian. 86.   Fig. 3-26: JR. *Dagi, Lawyer.* Israeli. 87.

These portraits present two lawyers, Jad and Dagi. The angle of Jad's portrait is taken from the lower right;

Dagi's portrait is photograph from the lower left side corner. They both pull a strange face, but in distinctly

different manners. Jad uses both hands to alter the shape of his face. His fingers stretch the skin of his cheeks

and eye-lids widely. His middle fingers push his eye-brows upward. The ring fingers stretch his face in opposite

directions to make his nose appear crooked. His left small finger pushes itself almost into his nostril. His facial

the expression hints at confusion and amazement, brought about by his raised eye-brows, enlarged eyes and

pouting mouth. Yet, it is also clear that the expression is artificially formed by his hands, as if shaped by clay.

Dagi´s face is distorted both in length and in width. Her chin stretches beyond the portrait´s frame and her

laughing mouth is exceptionally wide. Her laughter becomes daunting on the background of large white teeth

standing out of a dark mouth. Comparing these two portraits, we see that they display different expressions. Jad

shows a kind of a confused amazement or even panic, whereas Dagi looks down onto the viewer with a large grin.
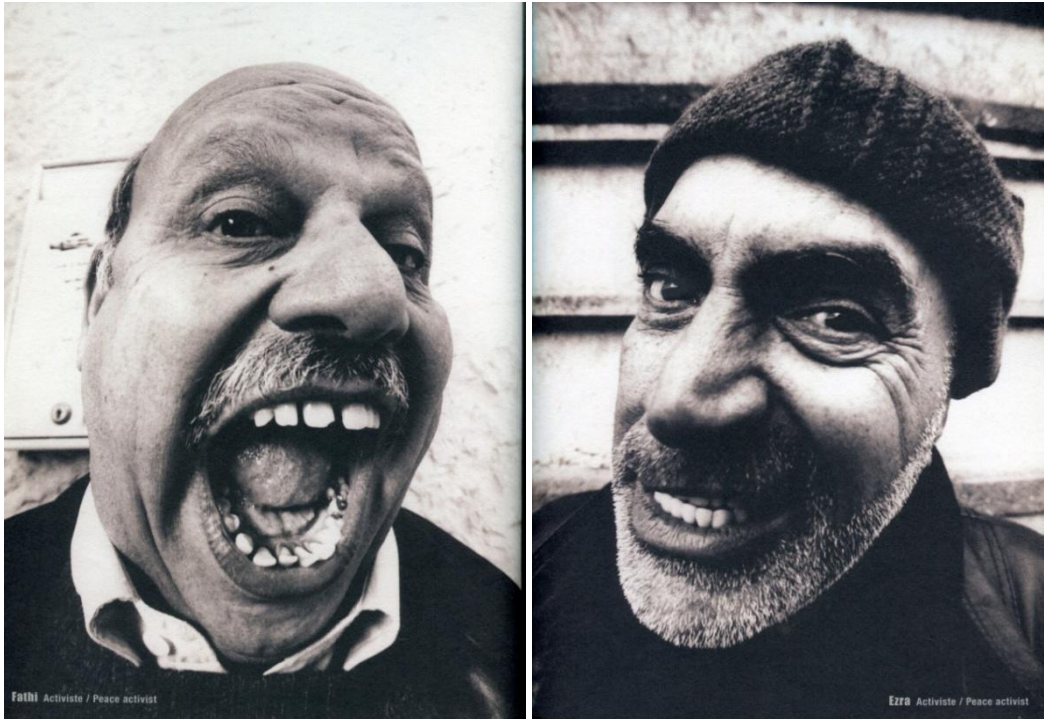
Peace Activists

Fig. 3-27: JR. *Fathi, Peace Activist.* Palestinian. 46.   Fig. 3-28: JR. *Ezra, Peace Activist*. Israeli. 47.

These two peace activists, Fathi and Ezra, have turned their heads inwardly, almost facing one another. The first portrait is taken from the right angle and the second is taken from the left; the effect achieved is that the two portraits are facing one another. Fathi wears a white collared blouse underneath a cardigan as a signifier of his office work. Fathi's wide-open mouth is the most conspicuous part of his face. He seems to open his mouth expecting the viewer to look inside. The viewer sees the black fillings of his molars, and the gaps between his front teeth. His left eyebrow is raised expectantly and there is a lively glimmer in his eye. He beckons the spectators to have a look inside his mouth to see how big it is, and how his jaws reach out. His head is slightly turned forward, as if he is about to snap at something. Perhaps the invitation also holds an implicit threat to the viewer, as open jaws eventually always close.

Ezra holds his teeth tightly clenched. A determined grin spreads over his face. He seems to send a message that whatever may happen, he will keep his teeth clenched. His eyes are sharply alert; they look out of the frame with a piercing gaze. His dark eyebrows are raised pointedly as if he is criticizing something or somebody. Surrounding his eyes, deep wrinkles arch down to his cheeks. The white of his stubbly beard stands out against his black shirt and leather jacket. A woolen hat gives him a typical appearance of an activist about to join a demonstration. In the background we see rough wooden planks or roof tiles, signifying a rural area. On comparison, the two portraits of peace activists both show determination. The contrast between them speaks from their facial features. Fathi's determination is shown through the look in his eye and by showing off his teeth, whereas Ezra clenches his teeth into a forceful growl. The pictorial elements in the portraits, together with the caption, convey that these two work for a peace. Fathi may handle things administratively, while Ezra works on the field.

Cooks

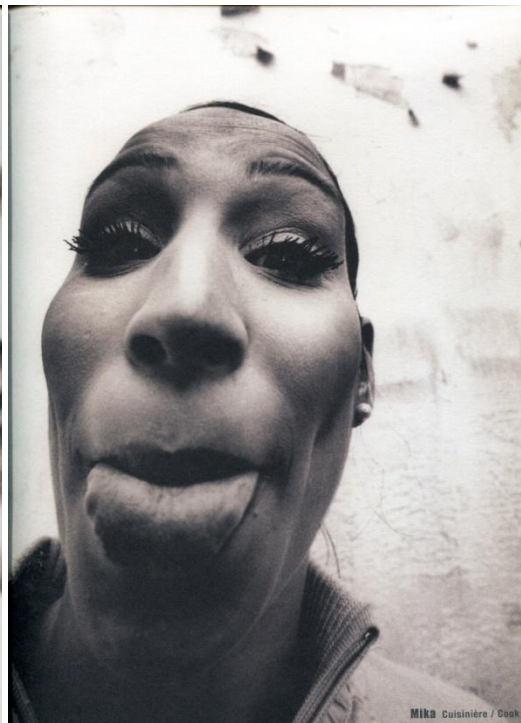Fig. 3-29: JR. *Mahlouza, Cook.* Palestinian. 26.   Fig. 3-30: JR. *Mika, Cook.* Israeli. 27.

This frame presents the portraits of two female cooks, Mahlouza and Mika. Their photographs are both taken from a left front angle. Mahlouza looks straight at the viewer in a frank manner, with a sense of expectancy as if she is waiting for the audience to reciprocate. Her cheeks and eyes are strongly emphasized, they stand out sideways and her eyes are large. Her headscarf highlights the outlines of her face. Moreover, it serves as a signifier of her religious belief as a Muslim. Her face is appealing, drawing our attention to her gentle stare. Closely observing her irises, we see reflecting rays scattering outwardly, evoking the (cliché) image of a rising sun in her eyes. Even though it is unclear how this effect is brought about, it does bring brightness to her portrait.
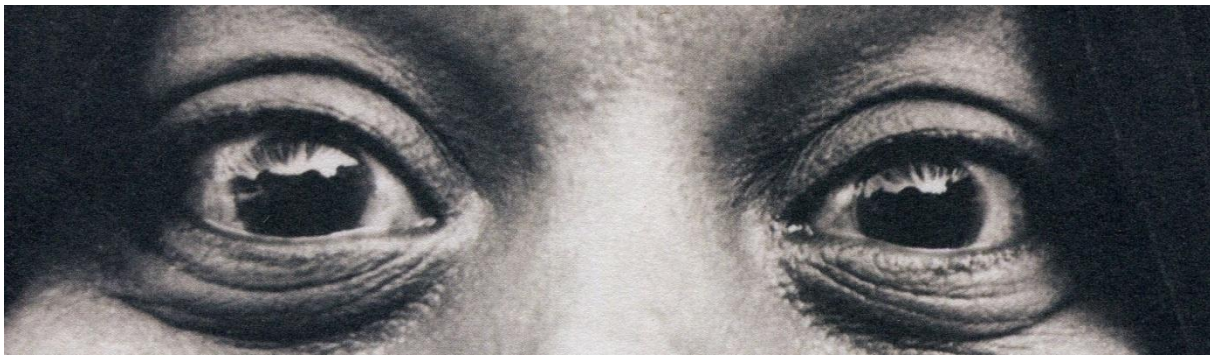

Fig. 3-31: Detail of fig. 29 [ed.].

Mika's portrait makes quite a different impression. She is consciously changing her facial expression before the camera in a playful manner. Bending her forehead backward gives her face a strange shape. This makes the top of her head look disproportionately small in relation to her seemingly large cheeks and chin. Her tongue covers her lower lip completely. Her eyelashes stand out sharply and broadly, as if she were performing in a show. Between her eyelashes, we see a small glitter in her otherwise dark eyes. Her groomed eyebrows are raised, rendering her forehead even smaller. Underneath the cheekbones, her cheeks sink inwards. In its entirety, her face is elongated. Her nose seems askew due to a falling shadow. Her facial expressions put on a show, flamboyant and burlesque in performance. Comparing the two portraits, the connection between them seems arbitrary or even non-existent. However, looking at the shapes of their faces, we observe some contrasts.

Mahlouza's face appears broadening within the frame, whereas Mika's face is stretched to the length. Their portraits simulate distorted mirrors in a fun-house, one turning broad the other thin.

Boxer and Soccer Player

Fig. 3-32*: JR. Mehrav, Boxer. Israeli. 42.*   **Fig. 3-33***: Areej, Soccer Player. Palestinian. 43*

We see here the portraits of a male boxer Mehrav and female soccer player Areej. Both players turn their heads to the left, and both are pulling their faces askew. In these portraits the angle is identical, photographed from the front to the left. Mehrav's most conspicuous feature is his left cheek, being puffed up like a balloon. His mouth becomes smaller and his nose turns to the right with his cheek moving sideways. The front of his cap surrounds his fore-head like a round black frame. He enlarges his left eye and raises his eyebrow above it. The eye projects a playful look of threat to the viewer. The threat resides in his puffed cheek, which will blow out its air shortly. Yet, he is only play-pretending. He seems to hold a ball in his cheek or pretends to take a blow from the left, which befits him as a boxer. This is only the onset of a silly face game, where a person blows up his cheek before releasing it. However, Mehrav remains frozen in the moment before the release.

Areej's head seems to come out of the folds of her scarf. Her most accentuated facial feature is also her mouth. Like Mehrav her mouth is half-open and turned to the left. On the right side of her mouth, the lips cover part of her teeth and gums. On the farthest left we see gums, casings of teeth and her inside lip. Areej's lower jaw is pushed forward, surpassing her upper jaw. Sharp canine teeth stand out in the lower jaw. The mouth simulates the growl of a dog or some other animal. Her nose is pulled to the left and upward into a cross-eyed look. Her right eye stares straight forward, and her left eye is drawn sideways together with the movement of her mouth. However, looking closely, her eyes appear soft and harmless (Fig. 3-34). Comparing these two portraits, a temporal relation can be made between them. Mehrav starts by blowing his cheeks, which are released in Areej's portrait. In the first portrait, the viewer anticipates to see something happening with the blown-up cheek. The answer is given by the second portrait in the form of a growl.
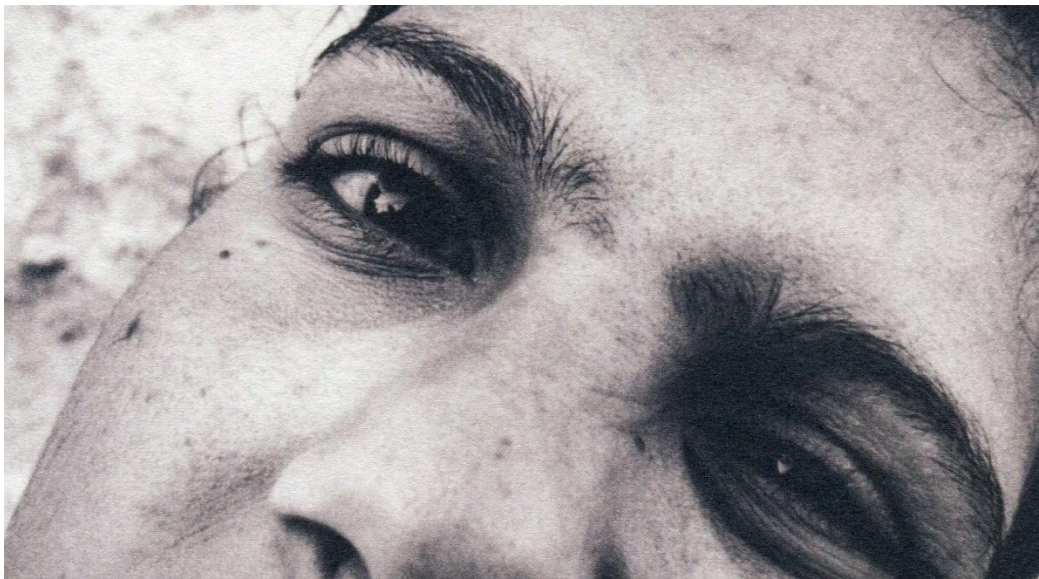

Fig. 3-34: Detail of fig. 3-33 [ed.].

Sculptors

Fig. 3-35: JR. *Anton, Sculptor.* Palestinian. 96.   Fig. 3-36: JR. *Drora, Sculptor*. Israeli. 97.

These portraits show two sculptors, Anton and Drora. Anton seems older than most of the other participants, while Drora's age can not quite be determined, as her skin is stretched out. Both sculptors are photographed from a frontal low angle, which makes their noses seem large and grotesque. Their facial expressions imply that they are crying out something towards the audience. However the emotion attached to their "cry" differs. Anton is serious; his eye-brows are frowned forming worrying lines in the middle of his forehead. His lower lip is curled downward and outward. The downturn of the corners of his mouth conveys a sad facial expression. His eyes are almost entirely hidden behind the reflection of his glasses. Further looking at the reflection in the glasses, we find a strange landscape with trees or crosses, and houses to the left. In the left part of the glasses, we see a man wearing a hat. In the right eye-glass we see large buildings and a mysterious man with a hat. The wall to the

left looms up and the houses rise with seemingly empty black square holes as windows.

Fig. 3-37: Detail of fig. 3-35 [ed].

Looking at Drora, we see a contrasting facial expression. Her eyebrows are turned upward expressing surprise and her eyes convey joy. Her mouth is turned upward and opening as if she is laughing or letting out an enthusiastic cry. She shows teeth and a glistened tongue. Her head is tipped forward, which makes the mouth come close to the viewer. Watching the large open mouth with its teeth coming at us arouses predatory associations. Comparing the two portraits, we find that Anton and Drora show contrary sentiments. Anton is fearful and cries out a warning, against what we do not know. Perhaps even against Drora's enthusiastic cry. They play different roles within the frame; Drora could be imagined as embracing that which Anton fears.

Hairdressers

Fig. 3-38: JR. *Avi, Hairdresser*. Israeli. 90.   Fig. 3-39: JR. *Monir, Hairdresser*. Palestinian. 91.

The faces of both these two hairdressers Monir and Avi appear skewed. Their heads are symmetrically turned

sideways. Avi's head is turned to the left, while his mouth and nose turn right. His right eye disappears in the

shadow of the photograph's contrast. The absence of his right eye in the photograph makes his left eye all the

more glaring. A few teeth from his under-jaw show in the small opening of his mouth, shifted to the left in an

animalistic growl. His protruding forehead is tipped forward and his frowning bushy eyebrows emphasize the

posture of a threat which "comes at you". Monir on the other hand has his head turned to the right and his

mouth half shifted to the left. Both his eyes are visible, they express emotional fright and look upward as if

something outside the photograph's frame is approaching. His forehead is tipped backward as if he is about to

duck. His bald head accentuates the round egg-formed shape of his skull, which gives him a fragile appearance.

Comparing the placement of their heads within the frames of the portraits, we notice that Avi is positioned

higher than Monir. Furthermore, while Avi's head and torso take up almost the entire frame, Monir only fills up

three quarters of it. This makes Avi appear larger than Monir. Difference in their clothing is also conspicuous. Avi

is wearing a black T-shirt and Monir a striped blouse. Avi's T-shirt seems to have been pulled up to his chin, as

we can see from the round button under his jaw. Letting his neck disappear into his black T-shirt results in a

threatening effect as if his head is approaching us. Monir displays the opposite: his light blouse has a starched

collar of which the edges are turned slightly upward. Because the collar is lifted slightly off his shoulders, the

pointy and side turning collar gives rise to the association of two small wings, adding a sense of innocence to his

general appearance. The comparison between the two portraits brings forth a theatrical opposition, between a

bad character and a good one, staging a confrontation between good and evil.

Meaning

Drawing from the above portraits, the photographs gain meaning through the oppositional role play depicted in

their facial expressions. The contrasts between them show interplay of contraction and release, opposed

emotions and contrasting facial features. In the following section I will elaborate on the way the above portraits

appeared in public spaces in Israel and Palestine.

In Public Spaces: Israel and Palestine

In using outside spaces as exhibition floors, the Face 2 Face project re-opened the discussion on the role of outside art. Where did these photographs initially appear? Howbeit that later on, many of the portraits were remediated online, which also provided manifold locations, in their first design the artists aimed to cover walls in "unavoidable places" in Israel and Palestine (Marco and JR 12). Observing the character of these settings, I distinguish the following types of public places where the photographs appeared:

- In commercial areas: shop doors, bill boards and in market places;

- Near roads or highways: roadblocks, (on the back of) and road signs;

- On buildings: private houses and public buildings, inhabited or deserted;

- On politically charged objects: the Separation Wall and a military watch-tower.

These categories are indicative of the way the photographs were viewed and by whom. In following I will go into these categories providing examples of outside placements of the portraits discussed in this section.

Commercial areas

Commercial areas seem to be frequently used as exhibition floors in Face 2 Face. These portraits are strategically situated in a conspicuous place, where many people pass by; being a central point where roads meet and walking paths converge. Accordingly, the Face 2 Face project made use of settings of such a category in Tel-Aviv and Ramallah for the portraits. The first picture shows two portraits pasted onto illuminated billboards; the second appears on the walls of a shop (Fig. 3-40 and Fig. 3-41). The first pair works particularly well to stand out in its setting due to its height, but also remains viewable in the dark being illuminated. Due to its thin paper, the bill board light shines partly through the portraits, bringing them out fully. Furthermore, being set in Neve Tsedek, the portraits take in a particular position. As one of Tel Aviv's first neighborhoods, Neve Tsedek has

become the start of the secularized new city as opposed to the old religious Jerusalem (Bar-Gal 22). Currently

Neve Tsedek is an expensive tourist neighborhood, with its restaurants, cafés and hotels. The portraits

complement the environment by adapting the bill-board style to their advantage, while also breaking away from

the commercial patterns, clearly not selling a product proper. However, the purpose of the project becomes

unclear here, hindered by the very same commercial setting. The captions are hardly viewable, which renders

these posters the appearance of simple poster portraits, irrespective of their origin or profession. Significant of

Neve Tsedek's development, the portraits fit in with the secularized and commercialized environment. Applying

Huyssen's theory of the city as a text, the commercial setting shows the development of this neighborhood.

(Huyssen 57). The two portraits add to and change the city text of commercial advertising. However, they defeat

their objective, failing to show the signifiers related to the goals of Face 2 Face, such as conveying similarities

across boundaries of origins. The commercial setting overshadows the activist message of the project.

 The second picture (Fig. 3-41) shows the Face 2 Face portraits pasted in large formats on the window of a busy

shop in central Ramallah. Some passers-by gather around to see what is happening. The two red-tiled sunshades

and the lighted arch entrance to the shop, emphasize the positions of the posters. They stand out, being oddly

different from the rest of the commercial setting, but they also fit exactly into this particular place. Their sizes

are appropriate to the location and the contours of the shop outline their shape. Being set in Ramallah grants

these portraits a large Palestinian audience. As one of the largest Palestinian cities, Ramallah is the undisputed

cultural and political center of the West Bank (Taraki 6).Therefore, placing the portraits in this particular setting,

could be a starting point for discussion among citizens. Drawing on Habermas' notion of the public sphere as a

place for discussion, these portraits provide a convergence point for debate (Habermas 3). Placed in a central

district in the heart of a cultural and political center, the portraits are made public in a declaratory manner.

Dichotomous issues of public and private, become topical by showing faces of individuals in a crowded public

space. The individual portraits reclaim a position in the public sphere in this particular setting.

Fig. 3-40: JR and Marco. *Mika and Mahlouza.* 2006. *Face 2 Face.* Poster on billboard. Neve Tsedek, Tel Aviv, Israel. 2007. 19. Print.

Fig. 3-41: JR and Marco. *Drora and Anton.* 2006. Poster on wall. *Face 2 Face.* Ramallah, Palestine. 2007. 98. Print.

Near Roads and Highways

Considering large roads and highways as a location for the Face 2 Face portraits, gives an impression of fleetingness. We see in the first picture (Fig. 3-42), that the portraits being passed by a car in high speed. A large number of people pass by this location as well, but they merely get a brief impression of the work. As one of the largest main roads in Jerusalem, placing the photographs at King George Street positions the project in a central place of attention in the city. Nonetheless, in the tumult of the surroundings, between roads and against the background of neon-lighted shops, these portraits do not stand out much. Moreover, the commercial tools are not employed to highlight the portraits and eventually the purpose of these portraits remains unclear to the viewer. The Face 2 Face project consequentially uses tools of graffiti art. The notion of ephemeral street art outlined earlier, can be observed in this site. The fleetingness and transitory nature of graffiti are appropriated to the photographs, set in the middle of a city center. Not only is the work transitory in its impending disappearance, but it is also viewed as such by the audience. The qualities of the portraits and their setting become mutually dependent.

The second picture (Fig. 3-43) shows the portraits at the back of a road sign seemingly an old unused one, which is employed as a canvas for the two portraits. The pair covers a large part of the grey road sign, which emphasizes their white and black features. In the background, a barren landscape of sandy hills stretches against the sky. Even though the caption states that this is Jericho, the city is out of sight. The landscape does indicate that this is near to Jericho, and in the Dead Sea area, but the location could in fact be anywhere in the West Bank. Lacking specificity and set nearby a deserted highway, the visibility of these portraits becomes questionable. These portraits will be viewed by people in passing cars, who might register them shortly, but are not likely to take the time to take a closer look.

Fig. 3-42: JR and Marco. *Fathi and Ezra.* 2006. *Face 2 Face.* Poster on road blocks. King George Str., Jerusalem, Israel. 2007. 48. Print.

Fig. 3-43: JR and Marco. *Areej and Mehrav.* 2006. *Face 2 Face.* Poster on road sign. Jericho, Palestine. 2007. 45. Print.

On Buildings

Pasting the portraits on public buildings or private houses brings the project close to peoples' homes. The works could be found on their familiar walls, or on the building they go in every day for work. As such, this setting brings a kind of closeness, entering into peoples' personal and direct public lives. In the first picture (Fig. 3-44), the two portraits are pasted on the turquoise wall of an apartment building. The black and white photographs stand out against the colored wall. Schiller and Schiller's idea of using the city as a space for artistic expression of imagination materializes here (Schiller and Schiller 10). Aesthetically, the location is well chosen to provide color contrast and depth to the portraits. Also typical to graffiti, the location provides a challenge to the artists, due to the height of the wall. During the time of the photograph, the project initiators were still in the middle of putting up the posters themselves. The artists eventually had to climb on the rooftop to find a way to reach the top of one of the posters so as to paste it. The building is set in an urban part of Jericho, which is a prehistoric city, with archaeologically relevant sites (De Cesari 306). However, in the picture about the project we see none of this. A tractor passes by with a man in Muslim headdress who does not notice what is happening. This adds to the setting of the action a sense of daily activities of local rural inhabitants, while also underplaying the impact of this moment.

In the second picture (Fig. 3-45) several portraits are pasted unto the back of a building in Neve Tsedek, Tel Aviv, in a part of the neighborhood which seems to have fallen into decay. Close to a parking lot and scattered with blue plastic bags of waste, this seems a small back alley of Neve Tsedek. The posters are not greatly enlarged, but instead, three pairs are stacked up together. The intention of setting an Israeli and a Palestinian with the same occupation face to face is weakened by such staging, because the project seems like a random group of portraits. Furthermore, an audience would have to be present in this particular location by accident or make a conscious effort to come to see these portraits. In fact this location is easily avoidable and the portraits are likely

to be overlooked. However, the idea that graffiti expresses urban decay substantializes here (McCormick, Schiller and Schiller 82).

Fig. 3-44: JR and Marco. *Avi and Monir.* **2006.** *Face 2 Face.* **Poster on wall. Jericho, Palestine. 2007. 98. Print.**

Fig. 3-45: JR and Marco. *Albert and Khader; Mehrav and Areej; Avi and Monir.* **2006. Poster on wall. Neve Tsedek, Tel Aviv, Israel. 2007. 93. Print.**

Politically Charged Objects

Placing the portraits in politically charged places, perhaps works most effectively in bringing out the content of a political clove between two peoples. The initiators tackle it on a large scale, when pasting their portraits onto the Separation Wall. Blown-up to gigantic formats, in a gallery type of placement, the portraits nearly cover the entire Wall in height. Against the grey concrete wall, the portraits stand out, framed by the barbed wire above their heads.

Abu Dis where the Separation Wall stands, is part of East Jerusalem and has turned into a center of an ambiguous controversy as regards the border between Israel and Palestine, since both authorities claim to have recourse to the this very same area (Hanauer 303). The artists used this location to put the posters on "the Israeli side" (www.jr-art.net). Using this politically charged space for the portraits signifies a type of artistic appropriation, employing the Separation Wall as a large canvas for artistic thought. As a corollary, in Bethlehem, the politically charged barrier between the two peoples is visualized by pasting identical project portraits on both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides of the same Separation Wall (Fig. 3-46 and Fig. 3-47). In the latter, the fully veiled women passing by emphasize the local culture of the scenery. Appropriating the Wall as a canvas reverberates with a simple message and meaning: that there should be no wall separating the people portrayed. Using the Wall as a canvas to convey this message raises a paradox. The Separation Wall is used as an object for the benefit of art, while the photographs that appropriate it as an object of art protest against the very existence and political purposes of that Wall. In this particular place, the portraits gained meaning as activist art.

The third image, the portraits are placed on a watch-tower at the Separation Wall in Bethlehem (Fig. 3-48). In this setting, a subversive connotation arises. The watch-tower signifies military control functioning as a central surveillance point. Whereas a watch-tower purports obedience to the law, the very fact that these photographs were pasted on the tower wall upfront attests to its failure to do so. The artists needed to take some risks to get

to the location of the tower; climbing over the barbed wire and making sure that they would not be noticed. The tower presumably has a blind-spot, because the guards in the watch-tower, who are expected to be able to oversee everything around them, failed to watch the tower itself. The function of that watch-tower has been destabilized.

Fig. 3-46: JR and Marco. *Face 2 Face.* **Posters pasted on Separation Wall. 2007.** Abu Dis. East-Jerusalem, Israel. Digital image. n.d. *JR-art.net*. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Fig. 3-47: JR and Marco. *Face 2 Face.* **Posters pasted on Separation Wall. 2007. Bethlehem, Palestine. n.d.** *JR-art.net.* **Digital image. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.**

Fig. 3-48: JR and Marco. *Jad and Dagi.* **2006.** *Face 2 Face.* **Bethlehem, Palestine. 2007. 89. Print.**

Reflecting on the above sections, the appearances portraits showed the initiators' ambition to create public art

that would not be ignored. In this endeavor setting played a crucial role. In commercial areas, the portraits by

adjusted to the medium of advertising, which resulted in both standing out and disappearing in the setting. Near

roads, a fleeting effect was created, because the portraits were hardly visible for passing cars. Similarly, when

the posters were attached to a road-sign in a desert area, it was unsure whether people would see it. In the

more inhabited areas, the portraits pasted on buildings demonstrated either an aesthetic insight or hinted to

urban decay. In the politically charged space of the Separation Wall, the statement became a protest against the

very wall that the artists appropriated as a canvas. The pasted portraits under the watch-tower made an ironic

statement undermining the function of the object. After being placed in these locations, the portraits were

remediated to online sources on websites and blogs, which I will outline in the following section.

Online Reception

A large number of websites and blogs incorporated links to the portraits and their impact on public spaces. The

photographs were blogged and re-blogged and reactions were given to articles, which provided an afterlife to

the photographs on both small and simultaneously broad scale. The location of the portraits moved from the

public space to the cyberspace. Within the scope of the present study it is not possible to give a complete

overview of all remediation; however, I will provide a cross-section on the emergence of works about the Face 2

Face project online. Below I provide an overview of such remediation starting from the artist's web-pages, and

working my way up to blogs and online magazines.

JR's web-pages

JR's web page (jr-art.net) provides an overview of the project itself, depicting the different portraits, immediate

responses to it from the audience and the description of the manner the portraits were placed in their

environment (JR). The trailer of the documentary entitled *Faces* was also added to the artist´s page. As outlined

earlier, the complete picture of the artist´s page entitles it with a sense of "liveness" and "hypermediacy" (Bolter

64). The viewer of the artist's web page is given the impression of he/she is concurrently present at the time and

the place of the action as the title suggests "Face 2 Face / Israel & Palestine / 2007" (www.jr-art.net). The place

most strongly emphasized in this overview is the Separation Wall. Among its portraits, the Holy Triptych takes up

the most prominent place among the frames in the web-page. The Holy Triptych is the most shared portrait

series of Face 2 Face online, appearing in different alterations: showing all three, only the sheikh and the rabbi,

or a photograph of the artists busy pasting their portraits on the Separation Wall. JR's Facebook page posted an

album dedicated to the project and a few photographs are also posted on his Timeline.[15] The web album of Face

2 Face shows a collection of different photographs selected from the project (Fig. 3-49). One of these

photographs shows Brother Jack's poster being pasted up by nuns, arousing one comment: "This is up there on

the favorites. Really shows the diversity, and it's just such a happy one" (Judes). One would not expect from

them to paste a portrait on The Separation Wall together with the artists, which makes the image especially

appealing. The nuns are photographed from a lower angle, as their white skirts get blown up by the wind in a

Marilyn Monroe style, hinting at their non-conformity.[16]

In March 2014 posting the same photograph online again, gained more responses mostly evoking simple and

positive comments about the artistic quality (Fig. 3-52). A few comments are politically charged, one the first

comments bluntly states "Fuck Israel I'm muslim" (Milano). Most other comments simply ignored this outcry,

only one comment seemed to engage with this: "I guess you get a bit more support if you don't fire katyushas

(supplied by Russia) at neighboring civilians across the border" (Rawluk). Even though these comments shows

some superficial political response sparked, the comments are nonetheless unrelated to what the photograph

shows or anything the project actually did. One of the more relevant comments states: "Congratulations for

your great Human job. Your politics and historical support has another signification on the world thanks to your

art…" (Idé). This statement is vague and all-encompassing, yet telling of how the art works were interpreted to

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[15] A Timeline on Facebook shows different events from a person's online life, incorporating posted photographs, functioning like a cyber-journal.
[16] The famous white-skirt photographs of Marilyn Monroe are screen shots from the movie "Seven Year Itch", 1955, directed by Billy Wilder (Unknown, White Dress of Marilyn Monroe).

fit a wide scope of meanings. The only comment that has direct connection to the scene sounds as follows: "With Face 2 Face, I realized that one single human being can change the world, and YOU are one of them-thanks" (Rischau). This statement fits the speech JR gave at his TED-talk, relating that art could "change the world" or actually "change the way we see the world" (TED). The short "thanks" at the end of this comment seems disproportional to its reference (and almost ironic), if JR had indeed already succeeded to change the world. This fits to the spirit of the graffiti, conceiving that small changes make a difference (Schiller and Schiller 11). The eventual disappearance of the art work from public spaces did not change this spirit. In another of JR's photograph, he cheerfully shows how the Holy Triptych looks six years after being pasted on the Separation Wall (Fig. 3-53). The original portraits have been meanwhile torn, sprayed black or covered by another painted message saying: "Merry Christmas from Bethlehem Ghetto". Being painted over the three religious clerics, this message has a strong undermining voice. Materializing graffiti art in overwriting a work raises an element of protest against these portraits. Yet, this did not stop the initial photographs of Face 2 Face from reappearing across blogs, into different online contexts.

Fig. 3-50: JR. *Face 2 Face / Israel & Palestine / 2007*. N.d. *Jr-art.net*. Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Fig. 3-49: JR. *Face 2 Face Project*. May 2011. *Facebook*. Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Fig. 3-51: JR. *Face 2 Face Project*. May 5 2011. *Facebook.com* Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

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Fig. 3-52: JR. *Face 2 Face Project*. March. 7. 2014. *Facebook.com.* Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Fig. 3-53: JR. Face 2 Face Project. Dec. 29. 2012. Facebook.com. Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Blogs

The intertextual journey of Face 2 Face can be read in the remediation in blogs. Most of the photographs and texts originate from JR's website and the blogs refer to this source for further information. Differing in viewpoint as to the importance of the project, these remediation pick up the same images. In the following, I will outline the development of the Face 2 Face photographs online, both as portraits and as posters pasted in public.

In 2007 one of the very few Israeli blogs remediated the Face 2 Face photographs into images of his/her own making and applied his/her own writing to describe the original project. In the blog *Jewschool* ("w" written as a menorah symbol), Face 2 Face appears under the blog entry "All Up In Your face" (Fig. 3-54). The photographs show posters of one of the Sculptors and the two Peace Activists in Jerusalem. The author of the blog captioned lower photograph of the Peace Activists: "Face 2 Face in front of my place" (Mobius). The earlier referred to Peace Activists (Fig. 3-27 and Fig. 3-42), gain meaning as an action happening close-by to one's home. The blog message fits the original initiators' goals to bring their portraits to unavoidable places, as the blog describes the photos to be "peering down from all imaginable corners" (Mobius). The project is described in the blog as "a massive street art campaign to humanize Israelis and Palestinians in the one another's eyes" (Mobius). Nonetheless, this blog description does not specify whether its author believes that the project has succeeded in meeting this objective. Even though this blog shows involvement on a personal level from an inside perspective, its reach was limited, which is shown in the very few comments and not being shared to other websites.

Fig. 3-54: Mobius. *All Up In Your Face.* March. 15. 2007. *Jewschool.com.* Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

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Later on in March 2007 the French blog *Artskills* also posted a report on the project (Fig. 3-55). With a

readership of 10.000, the website is likely to draw a large Francophone audience. In its blog photograph, only

two of the religious clerics are shown, Brother Jack is omitted from the scene. A triangle symbol is incorporated

into the image, appearing to be a screenshot from a movie-player. In line with Rajewsky, there is an intermedial

transposition going from film to still image here (11). Under the anonymous name "Monsieur Qui"(Mister Who),

the author provides information about JR's projects, asking whether these "sympathetic and perspective

providing portraits ridicule the conflict that doesn't stop escalating" (Qui). Even though no answer is given in any

of the reactions from the readership, the blog does give us the incentive to think about these portraits in as

engaging in the conflict. In the French blog *Daniel Gillet*, the emphasis is placed on the "Perspective on the

Other" appearing in 2007 (Fig. 3-56). The subtitle states "Brothers in enmity, face to face", fitting the initiators'

ideas that Israelis and Palestinians are like family-members fighting. The contrast between the religious clerics is

employed to convey this familial conception, highlighting the artists' photographs on the background of the Wall

with the portraits of their project. JR's photograph is used here, showing the pasted portraits on the Separation

Wall in Bethlehem, Palestine (Fig. 3-47). Conceiving this image as a text, the incorporation of the photograph is

an "intermedial reference" (Rajewsky 54). The photograph shows portraits in urban space, which is taken into

the artist's website and then into the blog. Intertextually, the art work travels from photographic portraits, to

print poster street art, to digital image, to online image, to re-used online image.

 In 2009 the website of the World Congress Imams and Rabbis for Peace, incorporated this triple photograph

from the same angle facing the wall, but showing the portraits already vandalized (Fig. 3-57). Interestingly, this

did not hinder the website from using the image as a symbol for working towards peace. The site quotes Sheikh

Abdul Aziz in his cross-religious appeal for non- violent actions for peace: "In a funny way, this is a way we can

reach some of the people who are willing to express their thoughts in non-violent acts" (World Congress for

Imams and Rabbis for Peace). This message conveys the spirit of the Face 2 Face project, employing humorously

intended expressions for its objective. The demolition of the portraits is ignored, even though it has conveyed a

sense of disruption. The project is given a meaning as an initiative to promote peace. A sense of "hypermediacy"

is conveyed here also (Bolter 64). This shows in the combination of the trailer of *Faces*, a photograph of the

action six years later and the Holy Triptych as portraits.

In February 2011 the online version of *The New York Times Magazine*, posted an album of several photographs

of JR's art, including one of JR's photographs of the completed action at the Separation Wall (Fig. 3-58). Taken at

the same spot in Bethlehem like other remediated photographs, this the photo shows the scene at night with a

slow shutter speed (Fig. 3-47). Artistically framing the scene with light stripes of passing cars brings an aesthetic

quality to the photograph. Entitling the album, "All the World's a Canvas", the article attributes the works the

character of street art. Later in July 2011, Israeli website of a large entertainment channel *Tapuz* (Orange in

Hebrew), reblogged an entry on JR's work from a small blog *Magic Mountain* (Fig. 3-59 and Fig. 3-60).[17]

Intertextually, the one source reblogs another for its content, while clear references are lacking in their online

texts.[18] Emphasizing that the photographs of JR are seen across the world in unexpected places, the unknown

author of the *Tapuz* blog states that JR succeeded in "erasing the boundaries between being a guerrilla artist

and an artist who is appreciated by established art world" (Street Art - JR). Whereas in the original source of

Magic Mountain, no comments were posted, the reblogged version in *Tapuz* gave rise to a forum discussion

counting 81 comments. These reactions varied widely in content: "Thank you for introducing me, I am

completely into JR's street art ever since I was infected by its bacteria "; "Simple people have always wanted

peace"; "I find it hard to believe that there will ever be peace" (Unknown, Street Art - JR). These forum reactions

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[17] These two entries appeared on the same day, with identical text and images. Viewing the sources of the *Tapuz* page, I deduced that the originating source is *Magic Mountain.* In my bibliography I will provide both sources for reference.

[18] "Reblogging" is a type of copy-pasting through links.

show that Face 2 Face was generally interpreted as a project promoting peace through street art, fitting to what the online audiences desired the project to be.

Presently in 2014, blogs and websites are still writing about JR and Face 2 Face. Online art magazine *Widewalls* counting more than 40.000 followers reported on Face 2 Face in May this year. Again the magazine remediated the photograph of the Separation Wall to represent the Face 2 Face project, describing it as: "one of the biggest illegal art exhibitions ever" (Braun). The project gains artistic and revolutionary qualities by the words, "illegal" and "art exhibition". No reference is made to individual portraits, but rather this description is representative of the entire photo series. Drawing from the above online sources, we can say that remediation online centered on the Holy Triptych and the photograph of portraits pasted on the Separation Wall. Throughout most of these online appearances, only a few Face 2 Face images were selected to represent the entire project. As shown in the examples, JR's photographs of the Separation Wall at Bethlehem are most often remediated. Little attention seems to be attributed to the other portraits, as the remediation of a few photographs became representative of the rest.

Fig. 3-55: Monsieur Qui. *Face 2 Face*. March 23th, 2007. *Artskills*. Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 18. 2014.

Fig. 3-56: Daniel Gillet. *Les frères ennemis, face à face.* June. 25. 2007. *Daniel-Gillet.com.* Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 19. 2014.

Fig. 3-57: Unknown. *Face 2 Face*. Feb. 19. 2008. *Imamsetrabbins.org*. Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 19. 2014.
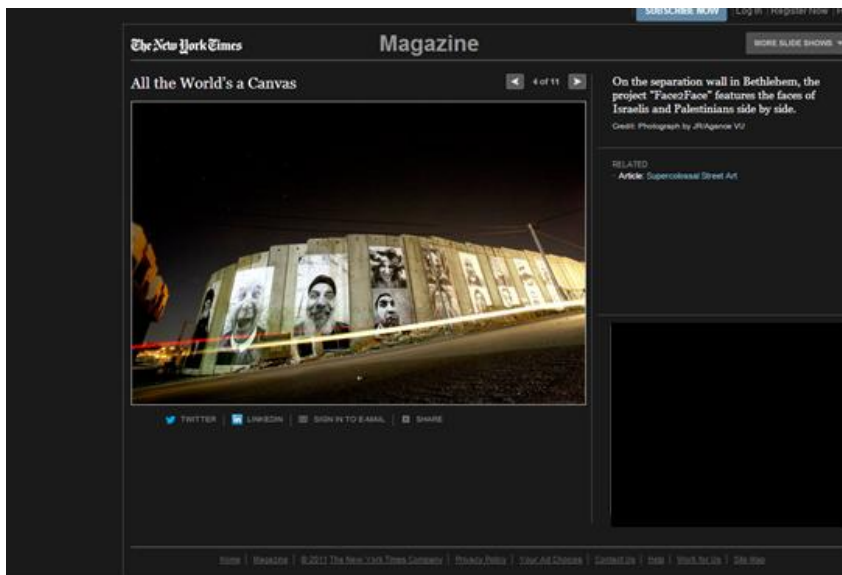

Fig. 3-58: Wood, Gaby. *All the World's a Canvas*. Feb. 24. 2011. *Newyorktimes.com*. Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 19. 2014.
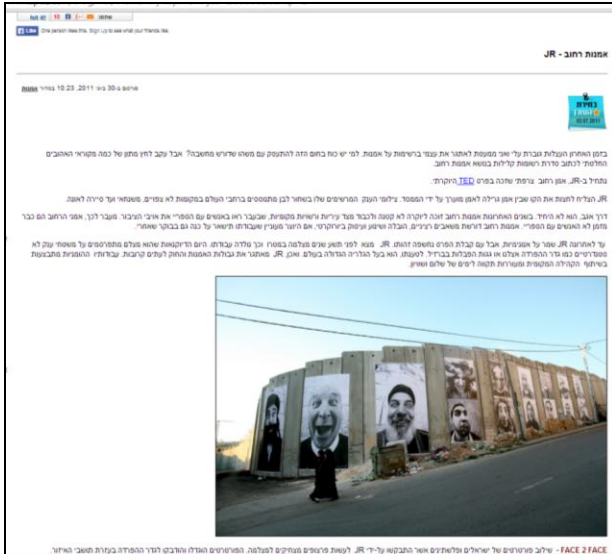
Fig. 3-59: Unknown. *Street Art – JR.* **June. 30. 2011** *Tapuz.* **Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 17. 2014.**

Fig. 3-60: Unknown. *Street Art – JR.* **June. 30. 2011.** *Magic1Mountain.blogspot.com* **Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 17. 2014.**
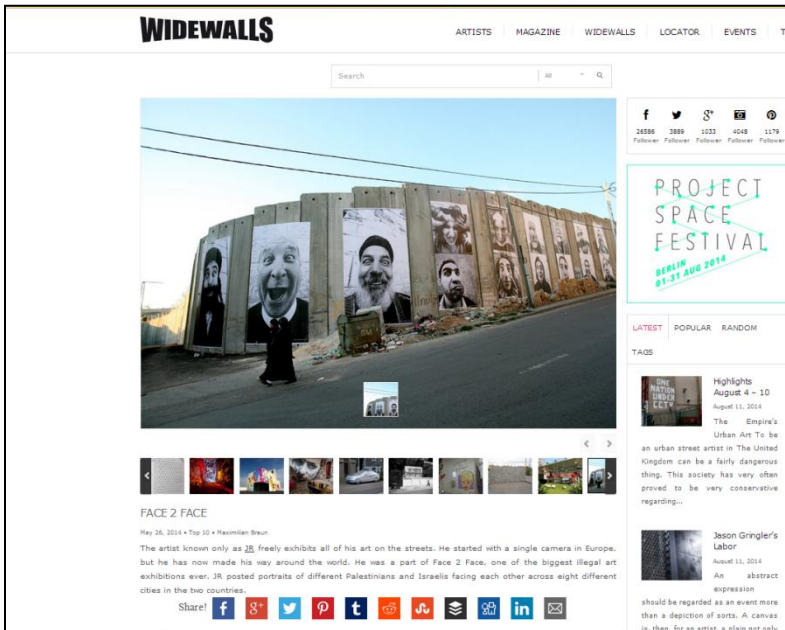

Fig. 3-61: Braun, Maximilian. *Face 2 Face.* **May. 26. 2014.** *Widewalls.ch.* **Author's screenshot. Web. Aug. 19. 2014.**

Conclusion

As portraits in their own right, the Face 2 Face photographs gain meaning by contrasting oppositions between the photographed participants. In the case of the Lawyers, their combination gives an impression of confusion and a daunting grin. The Cooks' distorted faces become akin to mirrors in a fun house. Similarly, the Boxer and Soccer players one blowing up a cheek and another releasing it, provides the contrasting relations between them. The roles played by the Sculptors also show a narrative of two different outcries in warning, fear or enthusiasm.

Incorporated into the various public spaces, the portraits stood out as well as blended in. In commercial areas, the portraits emulated advertisements emphasized by neon-lights, while also disappearing in the tumult of the city. Approaching these portraits as city-texts shows them to complement the development of Jerusalem becoming more secularized and commercialized. Yet, in this location the portraits show little to nothing of the goal of the project to show similarity across country of origin. In the cultural city center of Ramallah, the portraits seemed to have gathered an audience, evoking a discussion in public sphere to take shape. When set near roads, the outcome was fleeting and almost unnoticeable, yet this too met with the transitory nature of graffiti. On buildings in cities, the portraits gained their meaning as artistic expressions employing their urban environment as a canvas. Nonetheless, the portraits were also pasted in seedy parts of the city, where they expressed urban decay. The most prominent setting for several portraits was on the Separation Wall, covering both the Israeli and Palestinian sides. As a political statement, the artists both appropriated and protested against the presence of the Wall. The meaning of the portraits here is that there should be no separation between the people portrayed. Subversive connotations arise, looking at how the portraits were pasted on the wall of the Watch-Tower, signifying a blind-spot of military control.

The online remediation of the portraits, put a strong emphasis on one particular photograph; the Separation Wall at Bethlehem, Palestine (Fig. 3-47). Even though some of the other portraits did appear on the websites of

the artist, the Holy Triptych became representative of the project in blogs. Little attention was paid to the individual portraits, but they were provided with meaning within the larger scope of the project. The act of pasting the portraits in public space was described as street art in a social quest to humanize Israelis and Palestinians. On a political note the portraits were drawn into the conflict, as symbolic representatives of action for peace. Furthermore, the portraits were used to articulate other thoughts, unrelated to the project. These blogs were most often European source, the project spread widely in French online media. Some attention was given to the project in local blogs in Israel, but not on the same large scope as in European remediation. As time progressed, the online descriptions became more focused on the institutionalized side to JR's art, wavering between his image as an underground artist to an established one.

Do the portraits work politically?

Drawing from the discourse on Face 2 Face, the project was often framed as activist art. Drawing on Brian Massumi, I have described activist art as incorporating aesthetic and participative features (Massumi 12). Furthermore, in line with Scholette's critique on the commercialization of activist art, contemporary activist art might have become a commercial product in contrast to its idealistic objectives (Scholette 61). A contrary view to this tendency evokes the continuation of Joseph Beuys' activist art. He promoted a "sensual apparatus" in viewing, where a type of "social sculpture" is created through the art work (Biddle 28). Should Face 2 Face be viewed as activist art? De Cesari argues that activist art creates a space for the imagination to conceive a different reality by creating an "anticipatory representation" (De Cesari 82). What do the portraits in Face 2 Face anticipate? After being placed in Israel and Palestine, the portraits were brought to Europe. How were the Face 2 Face portraits given a place in the institutionalized art-world? Adorning urban outside walls of art institutions and placed in metropolitan cities also readjusted the statements the photographs made.

In the context of Israel and Palestine, narratives of national identity provide a framework of political meaning to art. Drawing on Smulders, the Israeli narrative is based on tragic occurrences in a historical line with anti-Semitism; the Palestinian narrative appeals to both daily hardship and a political tragedy (Smulders 164-166). In respect to these narratives, I have contended that other aspects should also be considered alongside the respective identities of the two peoples; e.g. trauma, dislocation and reconciliation. As an example of conflict representation I discussed *Waltz with Bashir*, which shows art unsettling dualistic notions of perpetrator and victim, and deals with trauma. Similarly, political debates were mediated through the *Zoom In* project, using historical photography to establish a common ground between Israelis and Palestinians. *Zoom In* provides a point of convergence in the perceptions of the historical 1948 events, by showing that Zionist migration and Palestinian Nakbah, come together in one and the same photograph. Face 2 Face had a goal similar to *Zoom-In,* aspiring to change perceptions of the Other, but used artistic portraits rather than historic photographs. Does

Face 2 Face engage with any of the themes relevant in Israel and Palestine? On the literary level, I have discussed Darwish and issues of inclusion- and exclusion in his poetry. In the following section I will examine the extent to which Face 2 Face relates to political and activist discourses. I will relate this to the photos as portraits in their own right and discuss the way in which they appeared in Europe art festivals.
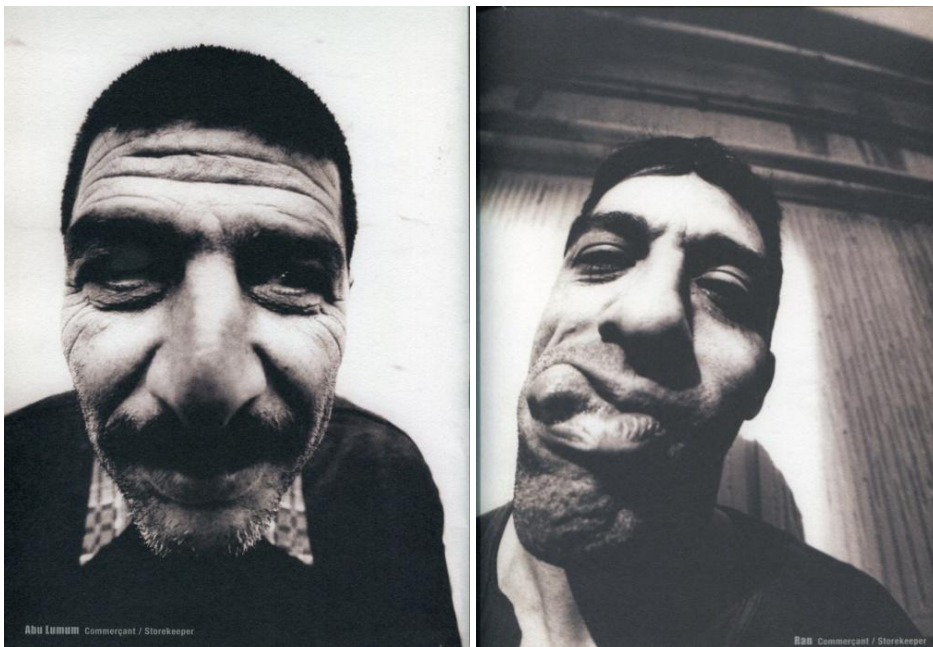
Storekeepers

Fig. 3-62: JR. *Abu Lumum, Storekeeper*. Palestinian. 36.   Fig. 3-63: JR. *Ran, Storekeeper.* Israeli. 37.

These two shopkeepers, Abu Lumum and Ran, appear in a grimmer light than the other portraits. One portrait is taken from an upper angle and the other from a lower one. The angle creates the first difference between them. Abu Lumum does not make a funny face for this photograph. He is simply posing as he would do for any other portrait. He smiles and looks straight into the camera with a certain curiosity. However, the lens plays a trick on him and distorts his face. His head is stands so close to the camera, that his face seems broadened. His nose enlarges in distortion and its tip blurs a little out of focus. His eyes and forehead are overstretched sideways. This shows us the deeply engraved wrinkles on his skin. A pitch-black moustache covers his upper lip. On his

chin, thick white hairs grow out of his stubbly beard. His neck disappears completely underneath his chin; it is as though his head floats separately above his body. Abu Lumum seems to be coming at the viewer like a haunting ghost.

In Ran's portrait his twisted tongue stands central. It sticks out and has a strange rounded shape. His eyelids overshadow his eyes, visibly showing the dark lines underneath. His nose casts a shadow sideways, giving it an additional outline. His eyebrows are slightly frowned, probably caused by the effort to twist his tongue. His left cheek is pressed upward in half a smile. His head turns to the right and casts a large shadow on his neck and on the wall behind him. The wall shows lines moving up and a strong light source. Above Ran's head we see horizontal rails. However, it is completely unclear where Ran is standing. We find no fixed point in the portrait, which results in a sense of disorientation. The photo projects a twisted world like Ran's tongue. On comparison, we notice that the portraits not only differ in their angle, they differ also in the shape of their heads and what they convey to the viewer. Abu Lumum's head is broadened, standing centrally in front of the camera. Conversely, Ran's head is elongated and turns sideways. Whereas Abu Lumum stares at the viewer, Ran diverts the gaze of the audience rendering it askew. They both show strange features, which might confuse and disorient the viewer. The wrinkly engraved and haunting face of Abu Lumum indicates a tougher life than the playful face of Ran. The difference in their portraits indicates a disparity in living conditions. Yet, merely from the photographs themselves this conclusion cannot be drawn, and it is through the interview in the documentary that the portrait gains this political meaning.

In *Faces,* interview with Abu Lumum shows the interplay of power between photographer and sitter. In fact, Abu Lumum is quite unhappy with his depiction. He says: "I want to be depicted with some human pride, not like road kill. I feel robbed of my humanity" (Maximin 10:43-10:45). Probably feeling that this reflects badly on the project, the interviewer turns the sentiment towards the conflict saying: "But that's what reality does as well, right?" (10:47). The interviewer clearly does not wish to get into the aesthetic aspects of the portrait. As such

Abu Lumum does not get a chance to object to his own portrait. When the topic is diverted into his life in relation to the political conflict, Abu Lumum easily agrees: "That is true. If I am locked here, as is the case, for over seven years, if my right to work has been taken from me, then I am robbed of my humanity, as you said" (10:50-11:10). Drawing from the interview above, a connection is made between the dehumanization in the portrait and the daily dehumanization resulting from the political conflict. None of the daily struggles can be seen in the portrait itself. However, the connection the interviewer makes reiterates Abu Lumum's suffering. Abu Lumum would be robbed again of his humanity, only now through the photograph in representing him as "road kill". In line with Brian Massumi's work, activist art relates to participative and aesthetic aspects (Massumi 12). The participation of the person photographed is narrowed down to him speaking his mind, but then the project initiators letting their own view rule over Abu Lumum's objections.
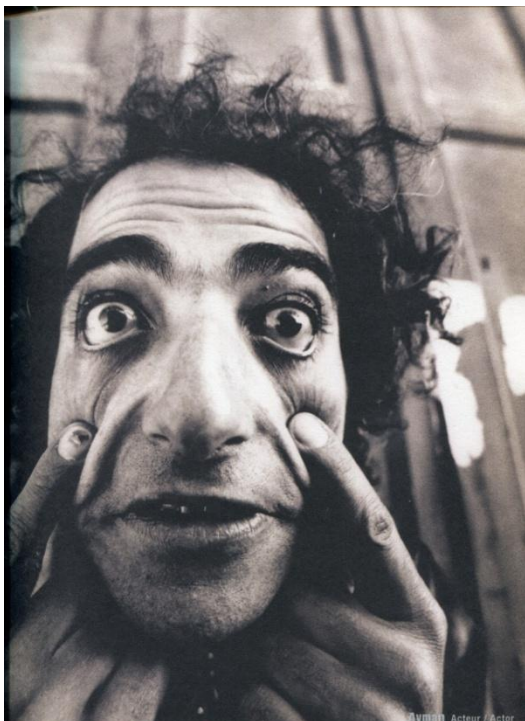
Actors

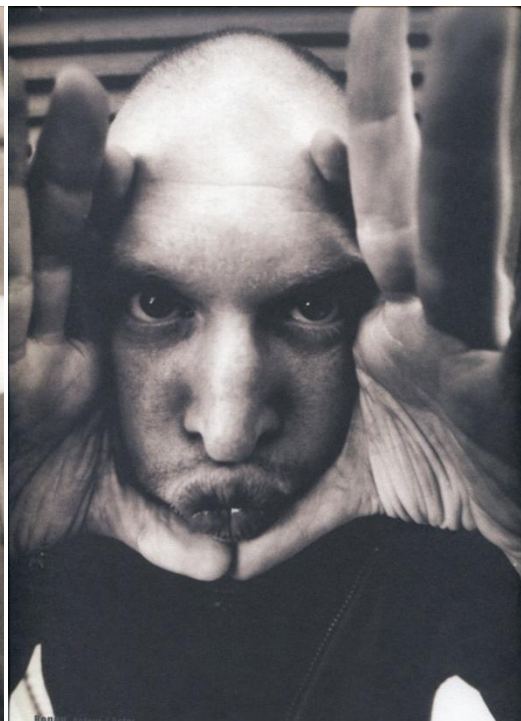Fig. 3-64: JR. *Ayman, Actor.* Palestinian. 22.   Fig. 3-65: JR. *Ronen, Actor.* Israeli. 23.

Looking at this duo, the actors, Ayman and Ronen, seem to know how to employ their faces as a tool of expression. The angle of the camera is from the lower front. Both actors use their hands to bring out a certain expression to their faces. Ayman's most conspicuous facial features are his eyes and cheeks. He draws the skin from his cheeks downwardly and pulls his eyebrows upward to emphasize his protruding eyes. His gaze is diverted away from the frame, as if something is flying toward him from the sky. His expression is perplexed as if he has just been overwhelmed by something. His upper lip is slightly turned up and sideways, conveying an expression of amazement. His cheeks are drooping, stretched by his fingers. His right fingernail has a black speck, a sign of bruising. His hands support his head to bring it to the fore. The lines in the background are leading up; they further emphasize the feeling that something is going to happen in the sky.

Ronen frames his face between his thumbs and index fingers and closes the view towards anything else with the other part of his hands. His eyes appear threatening under the shadows of his eyebrows. His eyebrows are somewhat pointed toward his nose, giving his eyes a look of direct assertiveness, perhaps even with a hint of aggression. However, his lips are pursed together into a kiss nearly touching his nose. He could have been humming through his lips. An element of playfulness arises from his face. His hands form wings alongside his cheeks, which makes him look like a fly, searching for a place to explore.

Relating these two portraits to one another brings out something interesting. Whereas Ayman's gaze is diverted toward the air, Ronen's gaze is directly pointed downward. Their hands are opposed in their positioning as well as in the way they frame their faces. On following the train of thought described above, it is as if Ayman is looking upward to see the buzzing and flying Ronen coming at him. In line with Joseph Beuys' ideals of activist art, looking at these photographs as a purely visual experience with open senses would be enough to understand them (Biddle 28). This leads to an imaginative deduction taking place on that particular level. However, drawing on De Cesari's body of thought, activist art has shifted its purpose from "mimesis" to

"poiesis", from mirroring society to staging unaccomplished longings (De Cesari 85). As such these portraits portray imagining a playful connection between Israelis and Palestinians.

Grocers

Fig. 3-66: JR. *Muhammad, Grocer.* Palestinian. 36.   Fig. 3-67: JR. *Yosef, Grocer.* Israeli. 37.

The two grocers Muhammad and Yosef differ in age. Whereas Muhammad is elderly, Yosef is middle aged. They are both photographed from a left front lower angle. Both portraits emphasize the eyes. Muhammad's forehead is tipped forward. Deep wrinkles are drawn onto his skin like trenches. His skin is dry and white like a desert landscape. His nose stands out like a large calabash. His right eye is glaring and the left one is slightly closed. Complementing the position of his eyes, the right eyebrow pulls upward while the left one drops down. White hairs stick out pointedly and wildly from his moustache and small beard. Scattered on his cheeks we see some dark spots. Two patches of hair stick out on the sides of his head. What appears grotesque and clown-like in this portrait is the contrast between the arched lines on his forehead, and his bushy eyebrows and side patches. This is further emphasized by his slightly cross-eyed look above his large nose. The lack of a wide laughing mouth,

however, gives the portrait the grim impression of a sad clown. In the background, we see a cracked and porous wall, which supports the barren appearance of Muhammad's face.

Yosef's chin is lifted toward us and his forehead descends backward. There are some thin lines on his forehead and around his eyes, but his skin seems nurtured, shiny and healthy. His eyes are slightly enlarged and the irises seem to turn inward. His nose sticks out like a large lump. His chin and cheeks are covered with a stubbly beard. The corners of his mouth are slightly turned upward in a strange half-smile. The hair on the sides of his head has receded, leaving only a patch in the middle. The general expression on his face is playful and amazed. It seems as though something strange and funny was just happening. On the whole he gives the impression of a strong and healthy person, without too many worries. In the background, a smooth new wall towers upward. It shows Hebrew letters and an arrow sideways. These letters reveal the country of origin of the subject photographed: Israel. In comparison, the two portraits contrast. Muhammad's face is dry and appears somewhat grim; Yosef's face is nurtured, healthy and playful. Muhammad's face expresses the ravages of time traced in his skin, while Yosef's face shows a few thin lines in an otherwise shiny skin. Muhammad's portrait projects a haunting quality.

Interlinking the two portraits, Yosef could be looking amazed at the strange haunting face of Muhammad. Due to the indication of Josef's origin, the moment of revealing who is Israeli and who is Palestinian, would not work, because the portraits already give away the clue. However, their faces themselves do not indicate who Palestinian is and who is Israeli. Even on revealing their respective countries of origin, it is questionable which relevant frame of thought should be undermined. Differing from the *Zoom In* project, these portraits do not relate strongly to conceptions of history or relevant aspects of identity. After the actual situation was revealed in *Zoom In,* an earlier expectation was unsettled and the elements in the image shifted in meaning. These portraits simply show the appearance of two grocers from a different origin and after revealing which origin they have, their pictorial narrative remains the same.
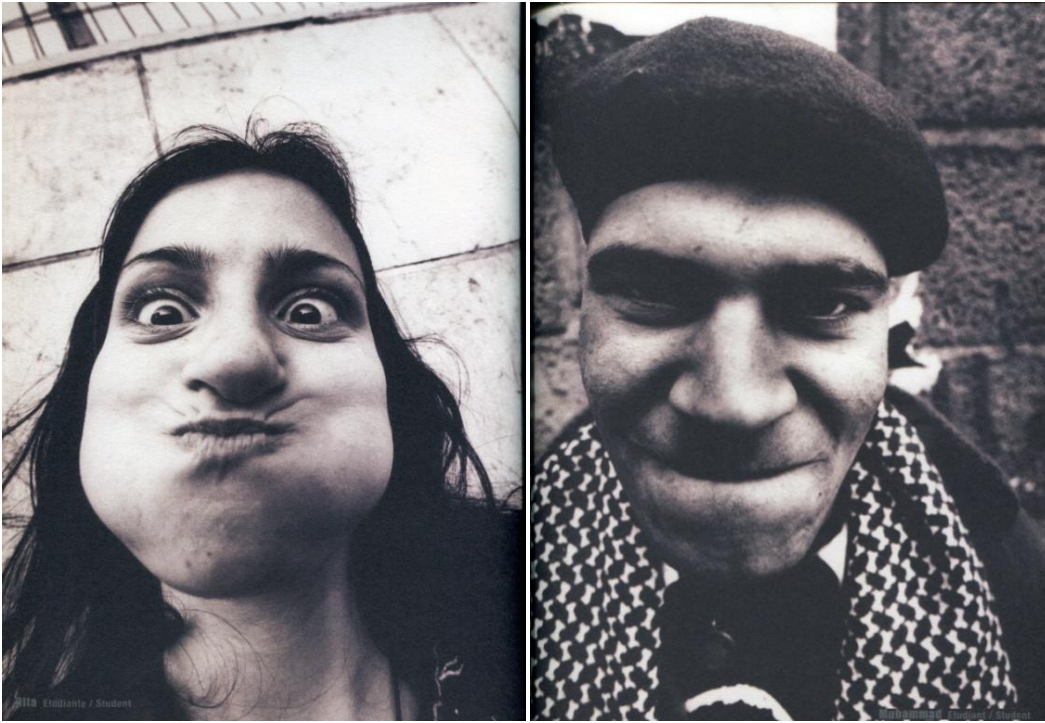
Students

Fig. 3-68: JR. *Rita, Student.* Israeli. 80.

Fig. 3-69: JR. *Muhammad, Student*. Palestinian. 81.

The two students, Rita and Muhammad, project a vibrant energy. Both of them are photographed from a frontal lower angle. Their faces however form contrasting expressions and so is their framing in the photographs. Rita's puffed cheeks stand out, large and round, on both sides. The shape of her head resembles a butternut squash as she blows air into her cheeks, extending the lower part of her face. Her mouth is small and wrinkled from the pressure. Turning her nose slightly askew to the left, it touches the skin above her lips. Her eyes turn inward and enlarge as if they are also blown up. Her black hair stands out in contrast with her light skin tone and the white color of the wall behind her. Her hair has a few round curls giving the impression of moving. The slanting lines on the wall in the background support this dynamic impression. The portrait shows the state of silly inflated cheeks, before they release their air.

Muhammad gives the opposite impression. His lips disappear into his mouth, tightly pursed together into one line, slightly turning upward into a smile. His eyes project a determined and excited look, as if he has just made

an important decision. However, what the content of this decision might be is kept a secret between his tight lips. Dark shadows fall on his eyes from his strongly protruding forehead. This makes his eyes appear somewhat mysterious. He looks straight at the audience, with a forceful gaze. Another appealing aspect about Muhammad's portrait is the way he is dressed. He wears a black barrette, a checkered scarf and a black woolen coat with a collar standing up straight. The barrette signifies an educated taste, referring to French culture or a longing for Europe. The scarf seems like an "Arafat-scarf", showing sympathy for the Palestinian liberation movement. However, when we look closer at the scarf, we can recognize playful shapes of dog bones or bow ties. The scarf is likely a popularized version of the original type. Muhammad's playful energy speaks for itself from the portrait. Yet, the content of this energy is confined to him alone.

We can draw a comparative line between the two portraits. The inflated extension of Rita's cheeks contrasts with Muhammad's inward facial expression. Perhaps Muhammad is inwardly laughing at Rita's puffed face. Muhammad's scarf indicates his identity as a Palestinian, yet it is only one small aspect in his portrait. Nothing else in his or Rita's portrait shows their particular identity as either Israeli or Palestinian, they could have been European for that matter too. Relating to the *Zoom In* project, there is no real misperception about their identity that can be undermined through the portraits. Their portraits give away little indication that should lead to undermine misperceptions about their identities. Revealing that the one is Israeli and the other Palestinian merely undermines the idea that one could distinguish between the two peoples on account of appearance. However, this is not enough to break with any frames of thought relating to mutual exclusivity or narratives of victimhood and resistance.

Reflection

Drawing from the above portraits, the content relates to an imaginative scope, rather than to any relevant

political aspects of the Israeli and Palestinian cultural context. In line with De Cesari, these portraits show

anticipative statements with a poetic function rather than a mimetic purpose. Yet, this statement comes from a

European outsider perspective, merely reflecting on the appearances of the people involved. The Western eye in

the portraits emerges even stronger as the project migrated to Europe in its aftermath in 2007. Exhibiting in

different cities across Europe also changed the statement the project has generated. I will further elaborate on

this postulation in the following section.

European Outcome

Even though the Face 2 Face project started as an illegal graffiti project, the photographs were later exhibited in

galleries and museums alongside outside spaces across Europe. In bringing the photographs to a different

audience and setting, the adjustments have necessarily changed certain features of the project. Most exhibitions

took place in 2007, directly following the launching of the project in Israel and Palestine. The first exhibition in

Europe was part of the ArtCurial festival in Paris (Fig. 3-70). Due to the exact cut-out of the Separation Wall, the

European building where the photograph is pasted on, gains an illusory depth and roundness. It is "as if" the

Parisian audience find themselves in the initial place of the exhibition. In the second image (

Fig. 3-71) of the same ArtCurial Festival, the portraits are pasted in a similar way to how they were initially

presented in Israel and Palestine. The portraits are cut out exactly to fit into the arches of the European building.

However, the subjects are not paired in accordance with their identical professions and different origins. Only

the eyes and part of Brother Jack's nose appear in the middle, and he is unaccompanied by the other two

portraits of the original Holy Triptych. The Security Guards are presented as a pair on each side of Brother Jack,

but next to them we see the Actor and the Soccer Players are paired irrespective of their profession or country

of origin. Neglecting to pair Israelis and Palestinians according to the same occupation retracts the basis of the project, leaving the audience with portraits of arbitrary people making funny faces.

The same year in Berlin, a photograph of the watch-tower was pasted near to where Checkpoint Charley had been situated between Western Germany and the DDR during the Cold War (Fig. 3-72). It is not clear where the building ends and the photograph starts; the represented setting of Face 2 Face and the actual setting merge in its new location. Underneath the original photograph of Face 2 Face project, there is a smaller photo presentation, which provides information on the Berlin wall. Creating a line across time and place makes a statement of analogous comparison between the Berlin Wall and the one still standing in the West Bank. Even though this leaves out nuance about the political contexts, it represents the artists' perspectives as regards to the role of the Separation Wall.

In Amsterdam the Foam Photography Museum dedicated an exhibition to Face 2 Face, presented in galleries inside and covering external walls outside throughout the city in 2007. However, the only portraits that were presented in public spaces were those of the Holy Triptych. On the Athenaeum Book Store Sheikh Abdul Aziz is coupled with Rabbi Eliyahu (Fig. 3-73). Brother Jack is represented in the photo showing the nuns pasting his portrait on the Separation Wall (Fig. 3-74). The three clerics are presented together on the windows of the Foam Museum itself (Fig. 3-75). Showing only these three portraits (and sometimes only two) indicates an excessive focus on religious contrast, rather than an attempt to relate to the political context of Israel and Palestine. In addition, the portraits were turned into buyable commercial and artistic artifacts. The portraits were reprinted and reproduced into small painted canvases, on jackets and other forms of prints (Fig. 3-76, Fig. 3-77, Fig. 3-78). In the case of the small canvases, the portraits are emptied of their initial purpose to show resemblances between Israelis and Palestinians. The jacket plays with displaying and joining the portraits of Sheikh Abdul Aziz and Rabbi Eliyahu, on opening and closing the jacket. In line with Gregory Scholette's critique of activist art, the above shows the conversion of art into manufactured products (Scholette 61).

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When the photographs were presented in European cities, they highlighted the project in its moments of action in Israel and Palestine in 2007. The images merged with the environment, simply presenting the portraits to the audience or showing the completed action. In the first case in Europe, the portraits were not always coupled according to their profession anymore. In the second case, the initiators tried to recreate the moment of the action in a new setting. Drawing from the above, the European representations of the project tried to involve the audience by arousing their interest in the initial action, mostly using the portraits of The Holy Triptych showing silly faces in religious contrasts.

Fig. 3-70: JR and Marco. *Untitled.* **2007. Place Igor Stravinsky, Paris, France. ArtCurial Festival. n.d.** *JR-art.net.* **Digital image. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.**

Fig. 3-71: JR and Marco. *Untitled.* **Rue de Rivoli, Hôtel de Ville, Paris, France. 2007. ArtCurial Festival. n.d.** *JR-art.net.* **Digital image. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.**

Fig. 3-72: JR and Marco. *Untitled.* **Near Checkpoint Charley, Berlin, Germany. 2007. Artitud. n.d.** *JR-art.net.* **Digital image. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.**

Fig. 3-73: JR and Marco. *Untitled.* **Athenaeum Book Store, Amsterdam, Netherlands. 2007. Foam exhibition. n.d.** *JR-art.net.* **Digital image. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.**

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Fig. 3-74: JR and Marco. *Untitled.* Amsterdam, Netherlands. 2007. Foam exhibition. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.

Fig. 3-75: JR and Marco. *Untitled.* 2007. Amsterdam, Netherlands. Foam exhibition. n.d. *JR-art.net.* Digital image. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.

Fig. 3-76: Unknown. *Veste Homecore Face 2 Face par JR.* **n.d.** *CraKedz*.com. **Author´s screenshot. Web. Aug. 19. 2014.**

Fig. 3-77: Unknown. *Face 2 Face.* **RAUM 210, Berlin. 2007. n.d.** *Reinkinprojekte.com.* **Author´s screenshot. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.**
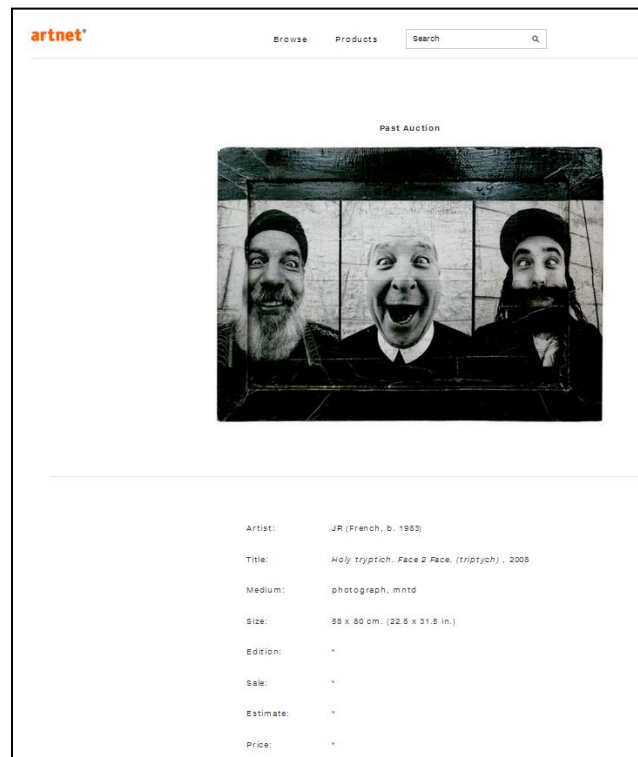

Fig. 3-78: Unknown. *Past Auction. The Holy Triptych, Face 2 Face.* **2008. n.d.** *artnet.com* **Author´s screenshot. Web. Aug. 16. 2014.**

Conclusion

 The portraits on their own neither relate to narratives of victimhood nor refer to the tension between

exclusivity and inclusivity. Differences between the subjects themselves are striking. Despite that the starting

point was to convey that Israelis and Palestinians are indistinguishable or truly the "same", the final result

nonetheless mostly shows the differences between them. Yet, these differences are not connected to their

country of origin, but to their facial expressions. Comparing Face 2 Face to the *Zoom In* project, the former is

focused on appearances, rather than relevant political issues as the latter does. Revealing their "true" identity in

Face 2 Face does not hold the same subversive force as it does in *Zoom In,* because no expectations seem to be

unsettled. Evocative and appealing as these portraits may be, they do not relate to the important issues of

representing trauma, dislocation or victimhood –or in fact any other issues relevant to the conflict. In regards to

the question whether the portraits work politically, this cannot be fully understood from the portraits

themselves, because they work on an imaginative level, which is in this case, unrelated to politics. What they do

show is individual vibrancy and playfulness, which is not political, but relates the artists' perspective and

intention. In line with De Cesari, we see an "anticipatory representation" (De Cesari 82). Even though the

photographs were claimed to be political in media discussions — this claim leads to a dead end. In the absence

of a clear relation to local political issues, the portraits become disconnected from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In European festivals and exhibitions, the artists tried to create something new or to reanimate the initial project

in a different setting. In all these representations, the portraits show an imaginative statement of visual

confrontation through contrast, conceived from the initial launching of the project and further developed in

accordance with a European perspective. Beuys' notion of the "social sculpture" can be applied here (Biddle

28). This would include their various forms of appearance, from portraits asking a sense-based viewing, to

creating a European audience and reshaping the photographs into art products. As such the activist purpose of

the portraits was shaped in their European aftermath.

4. Conclusion

Undertaking the intentions of the initiators of Face 2 Face as points of inquiry, cross-examining those in relation to the portraits and their contexts of reception, I have attempted to critically engage with their project. I have provided an in-depth theoretical framework for a wide array of academic subjects relating to photography, art and to Face 2 Face in particular. In my analysis, I have related the portraits of Face 2 Face to four questions. In regards to these questions and my main question I formulate the following conclusions.

How do the portraits speak/perform?

Through playful oppositions and theatrical facial expressions, the portraits portray silliness. The Holy Triptych holds a particular position in being marked specifically as representatives of the three major religions in the region. Signifiers of clothes, hair attire and names reveal the identity of the portrayed person. Being undemanding to the Western viewer, the triptych does not work in an estranging manner, but rather presents stereotypical appearances in an amusing form. In regards to the other portraits examined in this section, their professions can only be known from the captions, as there is nothing indicative in the portraits on their own. Through distortions in the face and daunting looks, these portraits do show a certain monstrosity, akin to Zarzycka's theory. However, these distortions at times work in an estranging manner creating a laborious perception, as in Shklovsky's body of thought. In line with Lury's ideas, the portraits present the human face as a caricature or an over-emphasized portrait, reflecting certain internal characteristics. Through oppositions and emphasized facial features, the portraits speak out and could interact with the audience. However, they lack the potentiality to make these viewers act, because the portraits do not ask for anything in particular.

What do the portraits convey?

Even though the artists meant to convey "sameness", all the portraits examined here conveyed contrast. These differences are established through opposed positioning and differing facial expressions, rather than country of

origin. The caption refers to an origin, which cannot be seen in the portraits. Yet, in order to subvert the inequality which ensues from this difference in origin, the discursive grounds justifying the inequality need to be destabilized. Being based on the idea that they are indistinguishable in appearance, does not subvert such a discourse. In bringing forth empathizing features of innocence, intersubjectivity, pain and weariness, there is a certain common humanity which arises from these portraits. Moreover, in relation to Azoulay, the encounter between photographer and person photographed is shown in some of the portraits. The absence of an encounter between the people photographed, however, lays also a critique of their separation.

How do the portraits gain meaning?

Relating to the photographs of Face 2 Face, I found that like in the artists' original design, the portraits gain their meaning when put side by side. Together they bring forth relations of confusion and daunting danger, playful contraction and release or two distorting mirrors in a fun house. Being placed in different public spaces, the portraits were adjusted to their environment, which emphasized them or made them disappear in the tumult of it all. As graffiti or street art, the portraits expressed their own transitory nature and emphasized the decay of the urban location they were set in. In line with Huyssen's idea of city-texts, the portraits gained meaning in and through their settings; in commercial areas, in the center of cultural city hearts, on private/public buildings, near roads and on political objects. Their online remediation became most widespread in European blogs and websites. Local response was limited to a few individual blogs and forum reactions. In their reception across these different online sources, the Holy Triptych was used as a representative for the whole project. The meanings attributed to the project variegated from political art intervening in conflict, to street art displaying an outside art appropriating urban settings as a canvas.

Do the portraits work politically?

By drawing away from the narratives that are most prevalent and dire in Israeli and Palestinian societies, the project distances itself from the cultural context in which the local inhabitants find themselves. Revealing that

Israelis and Palestinians humanly look the same, does not subvert more complex notions of inclusion and exclusion. The portraits made the clearest political statement, when they were pasted on the Separation Wall. This statement reshaped according to the allocation of the project as the photographs travelled to Europe. Pasting the photograph of the Separation Wall with portraits in Berlin near Checkpoint Charley for example, became a statement about the (historical) repetition of cities divided by separating walls. Without transgressing political boundaries as the project did in its initial form, the photographs merely presented strange faces or made a completely different statement. They show a playful and vibrant side of local inhabitants and work as declaratory imaginative statements. In line with De Cesari's ideas, the portraits showed a certain anticipated representation of the artists to create an imaginative space for visual encounter between two peoples in conflict. Yet, due to a lack of involvement with relevant issues in representation of the conflict, this remained on that particular imaginative level. The final remediation of the portraits were commercial art products, rather than pertaining to anything political, which shows the unexamined idealism of Face 2 Face.

Main question

Street art strives to function as a forum for thought, discussion and interaction between citizens. However, the discrepancy between local needs and outside input creates a tension, and eventually locals may object the outsider's intervention. In trying "to make a change", idealism is one of the pillars of activist art. This has brought to survey the potentials inherent in the Face 2 Face portraits:

When and under what circumstances do the Face 2 Face portraits have critical power?

Coming back to my main postulation, I contended in my methodology that the portraits have critical power as activist art, but also lack relevant nuances to enhance understanding among Israelis and Palestinians. As site-specific installations, the photographs reflected foreign conceptions of the artists. In the case of the wider discourse about the Face 2 Face project, media exposure shows that the characteristics of the Face 2 Face project were received in divergent ways. Conceptions about the works were adjusted to fit the anticipated

results, reflected across countries and news channels. Face 2 Face was described as a project capable of bridging two conflicting peoples together; as politically provocative; holding no connection to politics and being purely artistic; being capable of changing perceptions of 'the Other'; as street art; as activist art; as a touristic enterprise working for peace. These descriptions remain surfaced, without going into depth as to why the project should be considered thus. As such a certain opportunism ensues from the discourse and the way in which the initiators defined the project to suit any kind of purpose. As the initiators formulated their goals in such a broad way, purporting no specifically detailed goals in vision, the actual effects became ambiguous. As a process-bound project, there was no clear indication as to when an end result had been reached.

As large format posters, the portraits were able to impress the viewer and stand out in public spaces. Accordingly, their critical effect was crucially dependent on their positioning in public spaces. Face 2 Face became most articulated covering politically charged objects such as the Separation Wall in the West Bank, consciously changing the structure of the wall from gray concrete to a canvas for artistic purposes. Remediated in European countries, particularly in Berlin near Check Point Charley, the statement further articulated. However, such re-interpretation pertained to the German context, rather than the Israeli-Palestinian one. As caricatures the portraits of Face 2 Face related to Western tradition, rather than to local culture. The circumstances, which enabled the Face 2 Face project to have critical power took shape in the international context. Remediated to a large European audience and declaratory outside in public space, the portraits were accessible and reproducible across different social media. Placing the photographs in the realm of institutionalized art, neutralized the initial sense of illegality of the Face 2 Face project as an underground street art. The objective to instill understanding among Israelis and Palestinians shifted to changing European conceptions about the conflict in the aftermath. Mass-mediated and declaratory, the Holy Triptych in particular came to serve as a vehicle to articulate solidarity across religions. As such, these three portraits were generalized as representing the Face 2 Face project. The contract Azoulay speaks of, therefore did not ensue

from the dual portraits that quintessentially lacked response, but more so through the Holy Triptych in relation

to its active audience in Europe. However, this contract did not relate meaningfully to the Israeli-Palestinian

context of conflict, nor to a different type of citizenship.

Participation was asked from local inhabitants to the extent of posing for the camera, making a funny face and

stating what they thought about the conflict or the project. Local discussion stayed on the surface and was

limited to a small amount of people. As a result, the onlookers related mostly to the artists' aesthetic views. This

shows the interplay of power, between photographer and subject photographed, because the artists had the

unanimous final say in the outcome. Furthermore, what the portraits in fact show, contrary to the artists'

intentions, is difference and contrast. The similarities are mostly constituted through the angle of the lens, the

black-and-white print and their equally distorted faces. Once the portraits were pasted in a public space, the

only demand put to the viewers, was to be able to distinguish between the different origins. Revealing the

actual identity was possible by depicting the participants' names or some religious signifiers, which were visible

upon closer inspection. Yet, revealing their identity does not hold enough force to break from national

narratives of exclusion and inclusion. Acknowledging that two peoples cannot be distinguished by their

appearance, lacks relevant critical content, so as to enhance a change leading towards a better understanding of

one another.

Aiming to put two conflicting peoples "face to face" in portraiture holds the potential of visual encounter, but

also shows the lack of an actual encounter in life. In the absence of real encounter, the artists position the

separation of two societies by placing people with the same occupations side by side. Emphasized by the

participants inhabiting separated photo frames, constitutes the part of the portraits' critical power. This aspect

also constitutes the limitation of the project, because the visual encounter takes place on an imaginary level,

conceived by the initiators, rather than pertaining to any actual context the participants partake in. As activist

art, Face 2 Face did not represent reality proper, but worked on a poetic level showing a European desire for

social change. In line with Beuys, Face 2 Face created a type of "social sculpture," across photographic portraits, urban space and different media, becoming an imaginative European artistic expression. The portraits on their own did not hold critical power to change a situation of conflict, but came to be defined as capable of doing so in their intermedial reception. Meaning accumulated in the afterlife of the portraits in urban spaces in European cities, remediation online and the project's discourse. This shows how images can change words and how words radically determine the way we perceive images.

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