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Daphna Ben-Shaul

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Daphna Ben-Shaul

The Performative Return: Israeli and Palestinian Site-Specific Re-enactments

In this article Daphna Ben-Shaul explores politically engaged Israeli and Palestinian site-specific re-enactments that pursue what she terms a 'performative return'. This includes performed aesthetic and political re-enactments of real-life events, which bring about a re-conceptualization of reality. Three contemporary cases of return are discussed with regard to the historical precedent of Evreinov's 1920 *The Storming of the Winter Palace*. The first is an activist, unauthorized return to the village of Iqrit in northern Israel by a group of young Palestinians, whose families were required to leave their homes temporarily in the 1948 war, and have since not been allowed to return. The second is *Kibbutz*, a project by the Empty House Group, which involved an unauthorized temporary settlement on an abandoned site in Jerusalem. The third is *Civil Fast*, a twenty-four-hour action by Public Movement, which was hosted mainly on a central public square in Jerusalem, integrated into the urban flow. The article draws attention to the fine line these actions straddle between political activism and aesthetic order, and explores their critical and performative effectiveness. Daphna Ben-Shaul is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Tel Aviv University. Her current research on site-specific performance in Israel is funded by a grant from the Israeli Science Foundation. She is the editor of a book on the Israeli art and performance group Zik (Keter, 2005), and has published articles in major journals.

Key terms: re-enactment, right of return, political and social activism, Israeli theatre, Palestinian theatre.

IN RECENT YEARS, Israel has seen a great increase in the number of site-specific performances that combine both a creative, aesthetic outlook and civic and political commitment.[1] This article explores such contemporary civic actions, which take place in 'found spaces'.[2] According to Ann Birch and Joanne Tompkins, such actions 'are consciously reflexive about their places of performance and trade on the distinctive qualities of these places vis-à-vis other places'.[3] However, whereas this broad sense links the phenomenon to theatre and to the achievement of 'theatrical effect and affect', one would do better to perceive the theatricality of civic performances as an active element in the political shaping of how reality is perceived.[4]

The actions discussed here are a variant of re-enactment that I have called 'performative returns'.[5] In the discourse of art and performance, re-enactment refers both to a re-performance of artistic acts and to the staged performances of real-life events. 'Performative return' in this article refers to re-enactments of real-life events that are not merely staged performances, but aesthetic, cultural, and political reconstructions. In Rebecca Schneider's terms, this is a way to perform 'remains' whose relation to the past 'exists in a contested field of investment across something wildly divergent affiliated to the question of what constitutes fact'.[6]

As will be demonstrated, such re-enactments of real life are manifested in several common artistically encoded features. A performative return – to an event, historical situation, or to a mode of action – inherently involves a fusion of temporalities, manipulated in a found place. Through this fusion, along with spatial, material, and bodily practices, these re-enactments activate what Schneider describes as an 'equation between performance and disappearance'.[7] They revive the remains by giving visibility not to past events and behaviours, but to their

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irretrievable quality or status, or to their possible modes of existence. As an affective outcome, this performative mode aspires to bring about a change in one's conception of the event on which the re-enactment is modelled, and thus to re-conceptualize reality.

Three recent cases of performative return are the subject of my analysis. All took place early in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The first is the activist return of a group of young people from Iqrit, a Palestinian village in the northern region of Israel near the Israel–Lebanon border. Those taking part were second- and third-generation Palestinian refugees, the descendants of the village residents who were required to leave their homes temporarily in the 1948 war (Israel's 'War of Independence', for the Palestinians *Nakba*: that is, 'disaster') and who have not been allowed to return since.

The second case is one of the projects of the Empty House Group, which consists mainly of artists who started to collaborate during the summer protests of 2011: the practical, conceptual and unauthorized creation of *Kibbutz* – a kibbutz being one of the most paradigmatic socialist forms of settlement, mainly based on agriculture, in the history of pioneering Zionist collectives in Israel since the early 1920s. At the start of the twentieth century, the collective went under the name of 'Group'.[8] In the case of Empty House, the kibbutz became a collaborative temporary settlement, which evolved in an abandoned area in Jerusalem where there had been an agricultural Zionist farm.

The third case is *Civil Fast*, an action by Public Movement, a group founded in 2006, the year of the Second Lebanon War between Israel and the Hizballah, that explored public behaviour in Israel and around the world. This group addresses public choreographic and ritual patterns that reflect hegemonic, militant modes of actions. *Civil Fast* was concerned with civic activism, and took place mainly in a central public square in Jerusalem. Its core idea was to add a day of fasting, which was designated to commemorate the phenomenon of protest through self-sacrifice to the cycle of religious and national holidays held in the country.

All three cases present the performative return as both a direct activist statement (the Iqrit group) and artistically oriented and politically engaged acts (Empty House, Public Movement).

The Context of Site-Specific Performance

Site-specific performance developed in Israel after the 1960s, but grew to prominence from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Cultural awareness of the possibilities of action in public spaces and of the tightening bond between performance and civic action are part of the global proliferation of this phenomenon. Site-specific performance in Israel in the early 2000s was tied up with an acute existential experience; the public mood was affected by the gradual failure of the Oslo Accords (signed in 1993 by Israel and the PLO as part of the Israeli–Palestinian 'peace process'), and by the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in 1995.

This was followed by the elections that first brought Benyamin Netanyahu to power until 1999. Another Palestinian uprising known as the Second Intifada followed in the early 2000s, together with related terrorist attacks, which unleashed another escalation in the continuing state of emergency, exacerbating the economic situation. At the same time, social polarity and economic inequality deepened, their effect being clearly felt in the mass demonstrations of 2011.

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is not an abstract threat but a way of life both for Palestinian citizens of Israel and for Jewish Israelis. It is a state of being in which national identity and, therefore, also subjective and communal self-definition remain an open, negotiable issue subject to various historical and political narratives involving inequality. Life enduring these conditions is constantly under threat, as evidenced in the increasingly extreme wars in Gaza. The traumatic escalation of these conflagrations most commonly raises demands in Israel for national unity. It is also informed by deep crises of trust in the government, and brings to the surface the critical ideological polarity in Israeli society evident in every arena.

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Against this general backdrop, the actions discussed here are linked with distinct issues: the Palestinian refugees' right of return, which is practically non-existent in Israeli public discourse; insecurity over housing, which became a leading theme of the 2011 protest and of the re-examination of cooperative models; the frequent use of an individual's body for protest, whether in the form of self-immolation during the political and economic revolutions of the 'Arab spring', the hunger strikes by Palestinian prisoners protesting against the conditions of their incarceration in Israel, or self-harm as Jewish-Israeli political expression.

Yet performative return is not a direct representation of crisis events, nor does it offer a solution to regime inaction. It is active performance, moving between the tactics of focused change and the possibilities of options for action and for perceiving reality differently. Despite the obvious differences between the three performances discussed here – a return to a Palestinian village, a return to a cooperative model, and the conversion of a religious fast into a civic action – they all share a common feature: they react tactically to the socio-political reality of continuous crisis through creative and critical reconstruction of the political imagination, which is actualized through concrete performance, alternative scenographies, and embodiment in a real space.

These actions, enabled in a democratic and culturally integrated society, are a response to the neglect that also exists in the democratic sovereign structure itself. They channel the liberal-global system, where individuals look out for themselves, to create group co-creative action that looks out for itself and its art, as well as for the society within which it functions.

The Host and the Ghost

The Hebrew word for return (*shiva*) connotes the political notion of 'the right of return' and thus asserts the Palestinian refugees' right to return to the homes and territories they were forced to leave in the 1948 and 1967 wars.[9] My choice of this politically charged term pays homage to the claim of return; less naively, it stresses the need for people to recognize the complexities of issues regarding the Palestinian refugees. The term also refers to all acts of return, which, even when they do not claim ownership of a place, are an aesthetic-political display of the act of reclaiming itself. The actions examined here claim their place in public awareness because they are highly visible and prompt debate.

Reclaiming involves essentially different relations in each case between the specific site as a *host* and the action as a *ghost*. Following this distinction, Mike Pearson points out that '*host* and *ghost* might be functionally independent', and that a performative act (a situated *ghost*) is not necessarily "of" a place but finds temporary affordances there'.[10] Regarding my chosen case studies, the coexistence of *host* and *ghost* may be placed on the continuum that lies between necessary dependence and functional independence. A reconstruction of genuine belonging to a place, in the case of the Palestinian village of Iqrit, demonstrates congruency between site and action, or even a merger of the two. *Kibbutz* materializes the idea of a kibbutz, imbuing the chosen site with the physical quality of the performative act itself and temporarily destabilizing the status of the place (as a host). *Civil Fast* is an embedded action in a given public space.

While this article focuses on contemporary Israeli and Palestinian actions, the notion of performative return is initially examined in relation to Nikolai Evreinov's historical re-enactment of *The Storming of the Winter Palace* on 7 November 1920. The examination of this event enables us to identify the essential principle of performative returns on the one hand, and on the other the fundamental differences between the event's aesthetic and ideological position on the contemporary actions at issue.

As a preliminary site-specific model of performative return, Evreinov's *Storming of the Winter Palace* offers a combination of the three types of relation, since the spectacle was hosted in the original square, merged revolutionary action with a new social reality, and appropriated the original historical

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location through theatrical imagery while also using its symbolic charge.

The Return to the Winter Palace

As a performative return that is almost one hundred years old, *The Storming of the Winter Palace* is quite different from contemporary actions tied to Israeli local space. Directed by Nikolai Evreinov with Yuri Annenkov and Alexander Kugel as co-directors, it has come to be regarded as a generic re-enactment, and I will only point out here the event's key components. This was a mass spectacle lasting one hour and fifteen minutes performed to an audience of tens of thousands of spectators. It re-enacted the October Revolution in Russia three years after the event in the same location. The St Petersburg (then Petrograd) palace had initially served as the Tsars' winter palace and then became their permanent abode.

Its storming in the wake of the fall of the house of the Romanovs and the last Tsar, Nicholas II, was seen as destroying a key symbol both of imperialist Russia and of the temporary government headed by Alexander Kerensky, which was based in one of the corners of the palace. By the time of the re-enactment, the palace had already become an official part of the Hermitage Museum, and the art works and artefacts that had survived destruction and looting had been nationalized. In the re-enactment, the chaotic and improvised storming of the palace became a mass spectacle, orchestrated by Evreinov from a stage set at the centre of the square.[11]

Some of the participants in the spectacle on 7 November 1920 had participated in the original 1917 event. There were also hundreds of dancers, actors, circus performers, and a multitude of extras, including students. The huge audience gathered in two groups on Uritzki Square in front of two vast stages, a white ramp and a red one, connected by a large bridge behind which an orchestra was placed. At the heart of the event was the confrontation between the well-organized Whites and the Reds, who at first appeared as a wretched crowd. Gradually, the tables turned and the Reds became an active guard on the offensive (the origin of what was to become the Red Army), finally chasing Kerensky away. Dressed as a woman, the Kerensky figure performed a *salto mortale* from the stage and fled in a car, which drove through a passage separating the spectators.

The stages were built directly opposite the Winter Palace, which meant that during most of the peripheral action, which took place in several, alternately illuminated locations, the viewers stood with their backs to the dark palace.[12] This resulted in a significant moment, among many others, when the palace was stormed, the action meticulously choreographed on the stairs leading to the palace: tens of thousands of viewers turned their bodies at once to face the palace, whose lights showed additional fighters in silhouette through the windows. During the victory, to the sound of the Internationale, red banners were hung on the building's façade, red-star fireworks were set off, and shooting and cannonfire sounds were heard from the battleship *Aurora*, which had taken part in the storming three years earlier and was now docked on the Neva behind the palace. It was only at the end of the re-enactment that the audience joined the performers in a joint celebration of the revolution.

Some key aspects of this event allow one to explore – albeit by way of contrast – contemporary events of performative return. This was a site-specific performance in a public space, an aesthetic arrangement of an actual event. Claire Bishop, writing about participatory art and the politics of spectatorship, points out that this was not merely an arranged performance of history – with a score whose artistic performance was run like a military operation – but a transformation of the past into a living memory which, through the physical presence of people there, included them all in a new perception of identity.

This resulted, as Evreinov intended, in a 'theatralization of life'.[13] The mass spectacle fragmented memories of the past and projected a mythical memory for the future. This key strategy for offering a performative

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model of fusion between temporalities was put into action at a time of economic and social hardship, a liminal reality that needed the euphoria of revolutionary promise. As Erika Fischer-Lichte claims, this need resulted in a theological and teleological dramaturgy comprising a Christian iconography familiar from medieval morality plays, which juxtaposed the powers of darkness (Whites) and light (Reds) and led to salvation through revolution.[14]

Evreinov's programmatic aim to create a theatre of the future was evident in the overall conception of the event, which eliminated its singularity and made it part of a pattern that was to be repeated ritualistically.[15] In Rebecca Schneider's terms, this type of revision of the recent past is 'a visit available for return'.[16] The moment that fuses together all temporalities finds pithy expression in the physical about-turn, which the audience was required to make in order to face the Winter Palace – a metonymic embodiment of a collective conceptual turn.

The three contemporary performative returns I discuss have a common ground with the *Storming of the Winter Palace*. In each case, temporalities are fused together. Imaginary, utopian, place-less, symbolic and inclusive notions are embodied in a particular place, both physically and through symbolic representation, thereby becoming a present through which the memory of the past is shaped and rewritten. However, besides these similarities, there is an equally significant difference between the three performances and the 1920 spectacle. The latter historic re-enactment was conceived after the revolution had already taken place, inspired by its imagery and ideologically identified with its goals. The aesthetic energy was harnessed to the endeavour to transform an old power structure into a new one in order to ascribe identity to the hegemony in progress.

The performance validated the act of reclaiming the physical seat of power, encoding the depicted political orders as conflicting forces, one of which – the Whites – had already been defeated. While the contemporary performances here discussed also encode conflict between forces and present the position held by the authorities, they entail an alternative, which implicitly or explicitly counters the hegemonic order or 'major identity'. Validation of a minor identity is often achieved through the use of mechanisms identified with a major force (such as a military-like choreography), or through consensual public imagery, as will be shown below.

The Right of Return to Iqrit

Almost a century after the spectacle of return to the Winter Palace, we can recognize its opposite as well as common denominators in entirely different returns, which have also a possible revolutionary force. The activist return to Iqrit, for example, hoped to become rooted in public awareness, but was not a mass event. This action is still valid and has been ongoing since August 2012, when a commune of young people, third-generation refugees from the Arab village of Iqrit, began to live on the village grounds from which their families had been uprooted. That predominantly Orthodox-Catholic Palestinian population, mostly farmers, had been told to leave their homes when the village was taken by the Israeli army during the last battle over the country's northern border in the 1948 war. The military commander promised them that they would be absent for two weeks. To this day, however, the evacuees have not been allowed to return to their village.

The group of youths involved in the return is presently living in the church and a room adjacent to it, which remained standing after the rest of the village's houses were blasted in 1951 – just a few months after Israel's Supreme Court ruled that the uprooted residents must be allowed to return to the village. Since then, their legal struggle as Palestinian citizens of Israel has resulted in further rulings acknowledging their right to return. Nevertheless, Israeli governments have denied them this right, and the site has remained under military control.

The uprooted villagers' public protest, together with that of similarly uprooted villagers from the neighbouring village of

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Biram, has been in the Israeli public arena for many years, momentarily getting media coverage and gaining visibility. It has been ardently topical for a small minority, but has been relegated to the sidelines of current affairs, if noticed at all, by most Israelis.[17] The youths' return to the remains of the village is their most radical non-violent act so far, making eminently clear the lack of solution to the refugee problem resulting from the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The problem not only extends to those who fled their homes and live in refugee camps, or are exiled the world over, but also to the internally displaced who have Israeli citizenship but remain unable to return to their villages, which, for the most part, have been replaced by new, Jewish settlements or have become part of nature reserves and historic sites.

The choice to view this political act as a performative return and to regard it as part of the same context as artistically oriented projects is not self-evident. A legitimate ethical claim may be made that this constitutes a reduction of the political activist purpose. However, I maintain that nothing detracts from this action's intent and effectiveness by seeing it as a performance that transforms the space through presence and that both enacts and demonstrates the practical and aesthetic order of daily life. When seen in this way, the action magnifies the visibility of the village of Iqrit through several gazes at once: the gaze of the dispersed village population, that of the Jewish-Israeli public's outlook, that of the stratified Palestinian public, the attention of local and international media coverage, and, of course, the eye of the military and the authorities.

The Iqrit action claims *droit de cité* (right of citizenship, rightful place) in a destroyed village, quite literally and without authorization. According to Étienne Balibar, 'Such an effort is made out of desire to imagine – or give reference to – the state (perhaps the nation), which before all else would be a place of residency, in other words a space of residency-citizenship in an innovative sense which we have yet to invent.'[18] There is an abysm of difference between the return to the village and Evreinov's mass spectacle. Nonetheless, the principle of fusion between temporalities is something they both share. The validation of residency-citizenship in this particular place is fused with the wish to imagine the past in order to turn it into a future, into a civil state that, despite being acknowledged, has, de facto, remained unresolved.

RETURNING TO AN 'IMAGINED PLACE'

Seen in this light, a return that takes place is always a return to an imagined place. Since 1995, Iqrit refugees have established a summer camp for the villagers' descendants, where they learn the story of the place and thus their own story. The camp, too, fuses temporalities with its scenography of a temporary abode. The ongoing, continued temporariness of the refugees' lives is right there in their tents. Similarly, the ongoing return of the commune transforms an impotent acceptance of temporariness into a civic act of disobedience.[19]

The young community applies ethnographic practices in the space of Palestinian self-invention at Iqrit. The members of the group learn traditional village activities from the older generation and put them into use, planting fruit trees, raising vegetables, producing medicinal oil from laurel leaves, or building a traditional wood-fired clay oven (*tabun*). In this case, the action is not a mere ghost but a deciphering of ghosting, whereby footprints are set in the *host* site in order to re-define its own geography.

Following Marc Augé, this type of approach affirms the definition of the Iqrit action as a return to an 'anthropological place', whose reconstructed identity and historical shape is correspondent with its indigenous inhabitants. Augé contrasts such sites with the non-places of supermodernity, which void the sense of belonging; places that are given to similarity and unity, at times to liberating escapism, and are transitory states and temporary placements, such as airports and shopping centres.[20] Unlike Michel de Certeau, Augé prefers the term 'place' to 'space', which is a temporary construct of movement and relations. However, accord-

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The Iqrit action: the return to a ruined Palestinian village. Photos: Nemi Ashkar, Iqrit Community Association.

ing to Augé, the status of the anthropological place is dual, and is co-existent with non-place. Those who suffer the vicissitudes of their history must earn their organic social identity.

The need for taking up a position towards the place (which characterizes travellers) is also required by the anthropological place's referential function: 'We will reserve the term "anthropological place",' observes Augé, 'for this concrete and symbolic construction of space, which could not of itself allow for the vicissitudes and contradictions of social life, but which serves as a reference for all those it

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assigns to a position, however humble and modest.'[21]

The return to the ruined Palestinian village – which is defiantly not a supermodern non-place – is a performance that, through a concrete and symbolic reconstruction, is a display of belonging as well as a functional rehabilitation of life in the village. Walaa Sbait, a drama teacher in Haifa, a musician, whose music combines Dabke and Palestinian Dab, and a member of the Iqrit community, describes this act pithily: 'We are back, and we are imagining our home.'[22]

SHARED MEMORIES OF A COMMUNITY

Stories and anecdotes are embedded within this existential construction. Much like minor literature and language, as described by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the national awareness of the oppressed is necessarily channelled through their literature/narrative, and the individual's story turns political and gains collective value.[23] The refugees returning to their village continue to tell stories about the way the Israeli army was first greeted, about the village that could be traversed across the roofs, about returning a dead body to the village in the rain after the army prevented its burial, or about the blowing up of the village houses on Christmas Eve 1951 ('Ho-Ho-Ho, I have come to put TNT in your homes,' Sbait illustrates). The stories of the older generation are mixed together with the activist tales of their offspring, together forming the mental – even mythical – iconography that shapes the common memory of the community through this fusion of temporalities.

In Evreinov's 1920 reconstructive performance, the conflicting sides were juxtaposed. A conflict between 'stages' is also present in the political performance of Iqrit, but it refers, of course, to a quite different balance of power, in which the returning refugees are a minority group under the control of a majority one. Within the bounds of the political imagination activated in this situation, one can hardly avoid recognizing the ironic reverberation of Zionist or Jewish-Israeli nationalist models such as pioneer Zionist settlements, the kibbutz, or illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories.[24]

In reference to these Zionist models, the return begins with the identity of the others – the Palestinians – who claim the right to settle this land. It is realized through acts of minor reterritorialization.[25] The borrowed narratives of settlement are left outside the frame of current affairs but remain in the background, both as possible underlying structures and as inspiration demanding a critical or ironic outlook.

Sovereign presence related to actual military acts is also channelled through narrative representation. Any new building added next to the church is bound to be destroyed by the Israeli army. For the returning refugees, as Sbait points out, control and destruction become part of the burden they bear, which is constantly reiterated in their stories: the destruction of the chicken coop turned the chickens into 'refugees', and the donkey for which an 'evacuation order' was issued was not taken by the soldiers because they could not deal with the claim that there was no prohibition of pets. The village animals are thus co-conspirators in digging semantic tunnels in a dialect that bypasses the enforcer's language.[26] 'We were raised on the notion that we had a right to return home,' Sbait says, so 'we keep recycling our identity.'[27]

A Re-Vision of the Kibbutz

'Every single action of ours started with a hole in a fence,' says Elad Yaron of the Empty House Group, which comprises artists and creators from diverse fields.[28] The group's first actions were to occupy abandoned empty houses in Jerusalem, which they identified as urban 'blind spots', where they, together with their collaborators, set up temporary cultural centres. They first occupied a hotel that had stood empty for over twenty years and then a former fibre factory.[29] In the summer of 2012, they set up the project *Kibbutz* in eastern Jerusalem in the neighbourhood that housed the High Commissioner's Headquarters during the British Mandate. This was a collaborative, participatory, non-profit project

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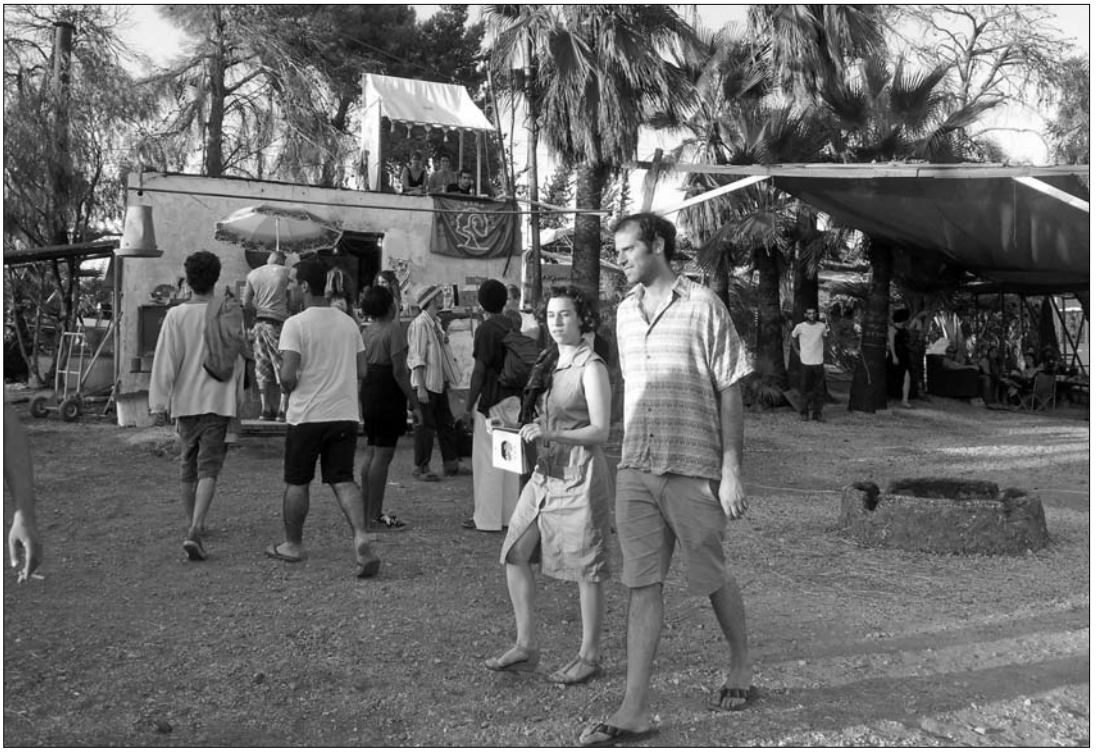
The *Kibbutz* project. Above: a general view. Below: the central square.



that consisted in setting up a temporary creative settlement modelled on a kibbutz, complete with functional pavilions and a central square.

The *Kibbutz* project took place on a demilitarized area of 175 square miles on the border known as the 'green line' between Israel and Jordan. From 1928 to the 1950s this was the site of the Educational Farm established by Zionist activist Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi, wife of Israel's second President, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. The farm provided young women, mostly immigrants, with agricultural training and prepared them for communal life on the kibbutz. It was later passed over to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which used it for botanical and zoological research. The grounds, owned by the Israel

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Land Administration since 1960, have been abandoned since the early 2000s and are currently earmarked for hotel development, a plan that has so far been blocked.

'building' the empty house

The group worked strenuously on *Kibbutz* for three months, an effort culminating in a cultural event titled *The Art Season* (connoting ironically a cultural event financially backed by donations and supported by the Jerusalem municipal authorities). For six days during the 2012 Sukkoth holiday, the group invited the public, including people from the adjacent neighbourhood, to 'activate' various elements they had built or renovated on site and to participate in art shows, performances, lectures, and radio broadcasts.[30]

Unlike in the simulated taking over of the government presented in the spectacular, meticulously planned performance of the *Storming of the Winter Palace*, the Empty House Group, like the Iqrit activists, are in search of an entirely different economy of power: one related to invention which uses tactics that the authorities may overlook as part of a temporary status quo. Also, like the Iqrit action, their initiative was born of a political, activist consciousness. It was first formulated during a meeting on the roof of an abandoned house in Jerusalem at the end of the biggest mass demonstration demanding social justice in the summer of 2011, in which the members of Empty House were actively involved. In hindsight, this protest demonstration, in which hundreds of thousands participated, marked the decline of such mass protests against the rising cost of living in Israel, particularly the cost of housing and the lack of dwellings.

The Empty House Group establishes and examines collective models of solidarity and ecological sensitivity that offer an experimental alternative, which is neither naive nor a post-Marxist cliché, to the alienated relationships between citizens and the authorities, citizens and their environment, and between the citizens themselves. Unlike the Iqrit dispossessed, who have returned to the place to which they belong, the Empty House Group returned to a lost vision: a model of life. It returned to a ruined place that had never housed a kibbutz – at a time when most kibbutzim had undergone a process of privatization and were no longer situated in a collaborative economy with co-operative living, but on differential private wages according to the type and profitability of work.[31]

The group's *Kibbutz*, 'making the wilderness bloom' (as the old Zionist slogan goes), resulted in a space of non-belonging and non-dependence on site. What enabled their 'right of return' to an area they have never actually owned was the independence and freedom of the artistic act as a ghost of a model and not of an actual place, starting with the freedom to settle and ending with the freedom to leave. The site was their choice, and, indeed, other sites could have served as hosts. Yet, from the moment it was chosen, it was specific, and no effort was spared in carrying out various actions on site: the whole area of many square miles (mainly neglected oat fields) was carefully cleaned up; footpaths were marked; old wooden sheds were refurbished; infrastructure implemented; a kitchen was set up; a vegetable patch and flower gardens were planted.

The very concreteness of this realization removed it from ownership; instead, it was part of an aesthetic act, subject to the communal and cultural attributes outlined by it. It was through material production and toil that the group's act realized Marcuse's claim that, 'The autonomy of art contains the categorical imperative: "things must change".'[32] Marcuse associates this autonomy with the transformation of consciousness that may be achieved through the interaction between praxis and art, as in the *Kibbutz* project.

creating a communal narrative

Kibbutz is what may be termed a 'para-site act', since it occupied a site that did not belong to it and made parasitic use of an existing model to create on and through the site. The remains of both the educational farm and the university research venue were fulfilled through imaginative invention,

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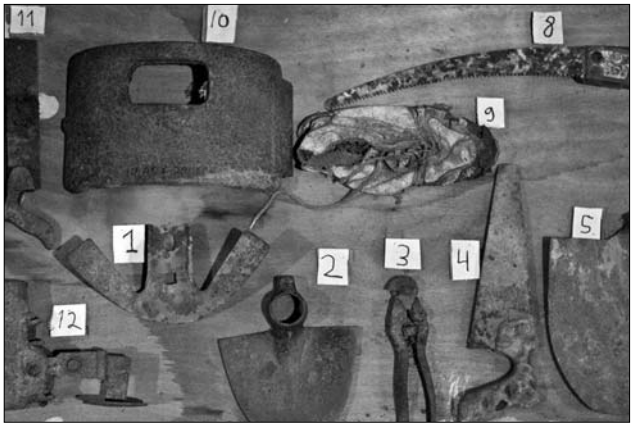

Above: from the exhibition in the Kibbutz Museum featuring on-site findings from different periods with explanatory captions.

Left: location map for the *Kibbutz* project.

which was, nevertheless, anchored in collective history and memory. This can be seen as a performative variation of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), to use Pierre Nora's concept, which makes a live evocative memorial of what the kibbutz used to be (or could have been).

However, in the main it articulates 'a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn'.[33] The performance on site cannot be considered to be a crystallized memory; it was an oscillation between a *lieu de mémoire* and a reconstruction of a *milieu de mémoire*, which is, according to Nora, no longer possible. It was a revival of the surroundings where memory is an organic communal accumulation of daily life. Within Augé's framework, the building of the kibbutz was an ethnological tactic of active involvement in the constitution of a communal narrative and in turning it into an actual present.[34] Moreover, the performance itself fulfilled the role of a narrator who transforms the components of collective memory.

The transformation finds expression in the idiosyncratic creativity with which the model was reconstructed. The group itself declares that this was not a reconstruction of a historical kibbutz. Rather, artists stayed on site and worked in reaction to it. The main square was designed in the style of typical kibbutz centres and surrounded by public buildings. However, at the centre of this humorous adaptation was a huge bonfire-like construction that resembled a huge ashtray. A huge iron container left on site from the time of the agricultural farm, which was originally used for storing grain, was transformed into a mechanical sculpture, which stirred a teaspoon turning in a cup. The main building, found in ruins on the site, was named Twin Tower due to its form, and became the subject of graffiti and sculpture.

In reference to children sleeping away from their parents in communal children's homes (a common practice in kibbutzim until the 1980s, much discussed and criticized), a colourful, miniature Children's Town was gradually constructed with the participation of children. To represent the laundry where all kibbutz members' clothes would be washed – some marked by their owners' names, others communal property – a 'laundry' was set up with women from the neighbourhood, who recycled, sewed and painted clothes with a yellowish mixture of condiments and imprinted them with the *Kibbutz* logo.

Nearly every element was redesigned in a way that demonstrated that realization is equal to the presentation of realization. A shed refurbished as the Kibbutz Museum was

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particularly interesting. The exhibition inside featured on-site findings from different periods with explanatory captions, including a tattered hat, a rusty barrel, and bent-work tools. Some exhibits had undergone creative manipulations, and all were presented within the semi-institutional, ecological antithesis of the museum as a contemporary shrine. This archival exhibition hall presented a reflexive expression of the *Kibbutz* performance, eminently aware of the metonymic value of the 'museum' as a mode of performing a live archive.[35]

THREE PARADIGMS OF SITE-SPECIFICITY

Miwon Kwon identifies three paradigms of site specificity in art, which overlap, to some extent, but present an overall dynamic of development, particularly from the 1960s to the present. The first is the phenomenological or experiential integration with the site's physical attributes and associations; the second is a critique of authority and its institutional frameworks; and the third is the discursive paradigm. The latter connects an event *in situ* to multidisciplinary discourses. The site is not understood literally as a given place prior to the artistic act, but as one created through the discursive framework that it generates.[36] Together with the physical attributes of the project and its counter-institutional stance, The Empty House Group experimented with a visionary notion by adapting it to a discursive framework and a body of research.

Among other acts, the group published three issues of a journal titled *Bita'on*, named after the journals of pioneering Israeli collectives.[37] These included historical research and newspaper clippings from various periods, as well as quotations from the diary of Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi. 'I am glad that the wilderness has been preserved,' she writes in 1919. 'Obviously, our land awaits us.' The journals document information about the site imparted to the group by such authorities as the Society for Preservation of Israel Heritage Sites and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. They also present documentation on the various stages in the making of *Kibbutz*, its initiatives and special events, including a surprise visit by the police, as well as a declaration of intent, a map of the site, and the *Art Season* event schedule, which included lectures at the Members' Club conducted as 'kibbutz meetings'.

As is evident from the description above, the rhetorical features of this discourse show awareness of the importance of naming. The second issue of the journal describes the stage that followed the finding of the site: 'After a long, heated night of debates and Hora dancing, it was unanimously decided to name the project (and the kibbutz) *Kibbutz*,' thus 'becoming' a kibbutz. As Nora observes, 'all *lieux de mémoire* are objects *mises en abîme*', or, in other words, reflect or contain each other recursively.[38] So, every link in this concatenation refers to the notion of 'kibbutz'.

Additionally, word plays became part of the return enacted in *Kibbutz*. For example, Hebrew words for the standard communal dining hall of kibbutzim were used, and the logo 'external child' was printed on some of the laundry clothes – an expression designating children sent to live on the kibbutz from elsewhere. All of this contributes to the reflexive play with the ghosting based on archival research.

The site, as Kwon points out, is not a mapping but an itinerary, a fragmentary sequence of events and actions through space that becomes a nomadic narrative.[39] In this, *Kibbutz* is similar to *Convoy*, another action by the Empty House Group that took place in the summer of 2013. Once again, the group gathered a community of dozens of artists, who travelled together around the streets of Jerusalem like a nomadic tribe or refugees carrying carts – sculptural objects in their own right – which operated like a mobile cultural centre, including a library with original hand-bound texts. Yet, in a more general sense, the *Kibbutz* plan of action is also the nomadic itinerary of a fragmentary discourse. Like the concrete actions of on-site construction, this discourse travels through the site, becoming a para-site, interpreting past practices and concepts. Thus discourse becomes a reconstituted form of knowledge

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of something that no longer exists – an idea rendered real in the transient present.

One is tempted, with some reason, to regard *Kibbutz* as a utopia, a no-place that is expressed performatively. However, the complementary aspect of utopia as a 'good-place' is not realized in *Kibbutz* in a literal manner. Rather, the social rehabilitation deeply connected to the action is crucial. Like the Iqrit action, *Kibbutz* does not erase abandonment and destruction. Traces of the past are evident in the skeletons of sheds and ruined buildings left behind, including a modest memorial for seven children killed by a landmine in 1950. Walking around the place, following lanes meandering through the shrubbery, one was directed towards a small building with its entrance marked by security tape. On the broken shelves and floor were many animal bones, probably left there since the days when a university laboratory stood there. It, too, contributed to the project's critical dimension, implying that it might become a non-place of hotels and shops, as had happened elsewhere.

When the six days of the *Kibbutz Art Season* were over, municipal bulldozers destroyed all the buildings on the site. Empty House's house became empty once more, having been destroyed by the authorities, who were 'restoring' the balance of power.

Civic Re-formation of the Fast

Civil Fast was an action by the Public Movement Group, initiated by Hagar Ophir and Saar Székely, which took place on 26 and 27 December 2012 at the Freedom or Davidka Square in Jerusalem.[40] Formed in 2006, Public Movement explores and produces public choreographies. Their first works investigated, simulated, and deconstructed public and especially military ceremonies, re-enacting emergency practices, generating variations on familiar patterns. In one action, for instance, the group re-enacted an accident between an official state car and a performer in a ceremonial, military set of movements. Another action performed by the group exposed points of friction between authoritative presence and life on the street.[41]

Civil Fast took place on the crossroads between Jerusalem's central market and the ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods; between the eastern (Arabic, Christian, and Jewish) side of Jerusalem and the city's high-traffic point of entry and exit. Ophir and Székely, together with group members Ma'ayan Horesh, Jad Kaadan, Meshi Olinky, and group leader Dana Yahalomi (appointed Action Supervisor), performed what they called a 'day of civil fasting' for twenty-four hours.[42] The action's score was published in a *Siddur* (Jewish prayer book, literally meaning 'arrangement'), which was handed out to participant viewers.

Civil Fast was enacted with the consent of the municipal authorities. It was not a matter of a political return to an anthropological place to which one belonged, as was the case for *Iqrit*. Nor did it reconstitute an abandoned site, like *Kibbutz*. Instead, it was based on a score adaptable to different urban centres, and their specific organizations and socio-political charge. The group arranged the public space for twenty-four hours, thereby marking its presence within the movement of the city: they set tables and put up Public Group flags, without transforming the landscape, as does *Kibbutz*.

Nevertheless, the site's qualities, as frequently discussed in site-specific theory and following Henri Lefebvre's ideas regarding the accumulative production of space, played a significant role.[43] The charged three-religion history of Jerusalem is especially prominent around the seam-line zones. The square where the action took place is a major junction for various populations and has become a space with marked Jewish national identity. These complex relations are not specifically expressed in *Civil Fast*, but are displayed in the intersection of religious ritual, political action, and the site's historical as well as current multi-culturalism.

Civil Fast was, first and foremost, a *modus operandi*. Although eventually postponed, the action was originally intended to take place on 12 December, the day on which, two years earlier, Mohamed Bouazizi had set himself on fire in Tunisia in protest against the confiscation of his wares and harassment

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by a municipal official. By imposing an aesthetic order on the event through its ceremonial form, the traumatic, radical act was revived. At the same time, the encounter with the reality of this act was neutralized through the removal of any specific cause for protest.

The re-conceptualization of the fast was accompanied by the group's declaration – articulated in a pamphlet and in the prayer book – that *Civil Fast* is a suggested ceremonial order that may be re-enacted time and again, becoming what Dana Yahalomi calls a 'pre-enactment' – that is, an action that transforms into a method public action connected to a particular event, time, and place. [44]

The opening ceremony included a choreography of emergency-rescue gestures, gestures of caretaking and purification, in the square's decorative pool, and of making a fire in a metal barrel. The participant viewers were invited to partake in a collaborative, ceremonial event called *Se'uda Mafseket* – in Jewish tradition the last meal before the fast. The performers served eggs, sage leaves, and vegetable stew, and everyone sang from the unique Siddur, which included songs such as Britney Spears's 'Baby One More Time' and a song in Arabic. After dining, the group members went on a fast that lasted until the action was over on the following day.

Following the meal, all present were invited to join the group in Jewish and Arabic folk dancing (Hora and Dabke, respectively), and the group members continued to dance until they were exhausted. They kept the light burning in the square throughout the night. On the next day, they performed repetitive acts of medical caretaking. At the same time, they conducted a 'hunger survey' among the viewers and passers by, which included questions regarding their readiness to go on a hunger strike for a cause, or to sacrifice themselves for others. The respondents were also asked about their partiality to fasting, risk and pain, and their familiarity with people who had set themselves on fire.

As the action score shows, the event juxtaposed different fields, particularly the religious fast and practices of protest, which together became a civic theology of sorts. In addition to the few dozen participant-spectators who came especially to the performance, the majority from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, passers-by spontaneously became part of the group's ceremonial mixture of codes.

'A LETTER FROM THE BUDDHA'

Naturally the people around Jerusalem's Freedom Square were from diverse backgrounds. Passers-by included people shopping (often at the market), Palestinians (some of whom joined the Dabke dance), tourists, and ultra-Orthodox Jews, a number of whom enquired about the meaning of the gathering. Although the group avoided stating the reason for their fast explicitly, the association with Judaism's familiar public fast meant that their replies were deemed satisfactory, for the most part. This was so because the public in question was familiar with the inherent mixture of religious and civic codes. Jewish tradition allows communal fasts to be added to the cycle of fasts when it is necessary to address topical issues relevant to all, such as a prolonged drought.

Likewise, a hunger strike – or any other act of self-harm for the sake of a cause – is connected to the religious ethos and its spiritual functions and sanctity. Political hunger strikes for protest by Palestinian prisoners are a current and acute issue, especially because a recent politically and ethically controversial bill was passed, allowing forced feeding of hunger-striking prisoners.[45] Public Movement's action took place while a Palestinian prisoner in Israel, Samer Issawi, was on a months-long hunger strike protesting his imprisonment (210 days beginning 1 August 2012), and just before he published a poignant letter to the Israeli public that gained wide publicity. Issawi's letter, a plea to Israelis, opens with the words:

> Israelis: I am Samer Issawi on a hunger strike for eight consecutive months, lying in one of your hospitals called Kaplan. On my body is a medical device connected to a surveillance room, operating twenty-four hours a day. My heartbeats are slow and quiet and may stop any minute, and everybody, doctors, officials and intelligence officers are waiting for my setback and the loss of my life. I chose to write to you: intellectuals, writers

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Civic Fast. Above: choreography for the event. Below: the press conference.

and journalists, and civil society activists. I invite you to visit me, to see a skeleton tied to his hospital bed, and around him three exhausted jailers. Sometimes they have their appetizing food and drinks around me.[46]

Public Movement members recount their search for a text such as this before it was written; and read it on its publication 'as if it were a letter from the Buddha'.[47] As with *Kibbutz*, the texts used in *Civil Fast* are part of the performative encoding that places the action in a discursive paradigm.

In many of Public Movement's actions, including the one in question, the members

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of the group wear white uniforms devoid of any identification, and the syntax of their movement recall the choreography of a military ceremony. This mode of action corresponded with the nationalist name of Freedom Square, at whose centre is a monument to the Israeli Canon Davidka, from the 1948 War of Independence. Frequently central town squares are identified by a unifying nationalist symbol, and continue to hold the potential for ongoing civic struggle. Cases in point include Tahrir (Liberation) Square in Cairo, Freedom Square in Tbilisi in Georgia, and Independence Square in Kiev. Public Movement followed this trend ambivalently in that it performed an arrangement of gestures in uniform, while associating them with protest against sovereign power.

WALKING IN THE CITY

The symbolic stand of a biopolitical civic body that is prepared to undergo self-harm for a cause was also explored, but away from the square. Before the opening ceremony, the performers took a tour of institutions around the city centre. They marched dressed in their white uniforms – a performative amalgam of a military organization and a self-appointed delegation – while mapping the itinerary of their tour in the Siddur booklet. The same pattern was repeated at each institution: they stood at the entrance and read an address, which began with an explanation of the new fast day to be added to the calendar, and continued with a supplication to the particular institution's public function.

The first stop, made on the doorstep of the Israeli Medical Association, included the text: 'Responsibility for the citizens' bodies lies in your hands. We want you to take care of us, so touch us, so help us realize our bodies as part of society.' The plea, spoken through a megaphone, ended with a call for the institutional body to join in the day of Civil Fast. After this, the text was either given to a guard or was taped to the wall or the institution's closed door. The same action was repeated at the entrances to the Ministry of Education, the Detention Centre, the Jerusalem Municipality, the American Consulate, the Prime Minister's residence, and the Great Synagogue, culminating in a plea addressed to the statue of a bronze horse in the former grounds of the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), where, in the summer of 2011, the first social-protest tent encampment in Jerusalem was set up.

While the group's central action was on Freedom Square, its preliminary practice of walking-in-the-city, which was carried out with hardly any audience aware of being an 'audience', served as a prologue on the duality of minority power. As noted, the physical turn-around of dozens of thousands of viewers towards the Winter Palace in 1920 validated the exchange of one sovereign power for another, while maintaining images of conflict between the Red and the White powers. Similarly, *Civil Fast*'s stand in front of public buildings endowed the buildings with authority, while also implying the potential for an interchange between them. This was conveyed by a small, almost unobserved group of people in white who crossed sparsely populated streets in the dark, facing a faceless institution after working hours and attaching supplicating notes on closed doors. In fact, a group facing an empty institution was part of a performance in which one empty body, the fasting body, confronted another, the institutional one.

The tension between the minority group's objectives and the institutional power is epitomized by the speech act of the supplicating text. Public Movement outlined a discursive territory in which a call is made for dialogic collaboration that is asymmetrical and evokes institutional responsibility. On the second day of the action, the participants walked in the early morning from the square to the Knesset where, facing the building, they performed a short ceremony that included a prayer of forgiveness to the Knesset for 'sinning against us'.[48]

The action ended with a press conference on the square. Journalists, who were mostly friendly and familiar with the group, were briefed beforehand as to what questions they might raise (although they could also ask about other issues). These included: why is it

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necessary to add a day of fast to the calendar? What do you mean by 'civil'? Is this a political event? What is real here, if this isn't, in fact, a self-sacrifice? What do you expect the press to do?

This part of the action was carried out according to a prearranged scenography – a speakers' podium with a microphone and, facing it, wooden benches. Group members in white uniform answered questions by turn. This added a familiar media format to the mixture of codes used throughout the action. The action concluded with an overt gesture of self-representation and potential critique. Following the round of questions, an outer circle of viewers was allowed to speak briefly, emphasizing the projective and interpretive aspects of the action (one woman, for instance, called for a protest against paedophilia). The discussion broke into fragmentary topics, which Public Movement members were unable or unwilling to answer satisfactorily.

The event gradually turned into a closing ceremony and concert played by a music group, until performers and spectators intermingled. This was another sign of a collectivity – informed by good spirits, unwinding together and marking the end of the fast.

Notes and References

1. I use the term 'civic' following Balibar's distinction between the civic entity that resists or poses an alternative to an existing state of affairs through a public initiative, and the term 'civil' as both a neutral description of citizens' life and rights and a sporadic resistance by individuals. See Étienne Balibar, 'On Civic Disobedience', trans. Alan Clayman, in Ariella Azoulay, ed., *HomeLessHome*, exhibition catalogue (Jerusalem: Museum on the Seam, 2010), p. 285–8. The article first appeared in French in *Le Monde* on 19 February 1997, under the title 'État d'urgence démocratique' ('Democratic state of emergency').

2. For the use of 'found space' to inclusively describe site-specific performance – which takes place in the real world and not in designated theatre locations – see, for instance, Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998), p. 337–8; Gay McAuley, 'Local Acts: Site-Specific Performance Practice, Introduction', *About Performance*, No. 7 (2007), p. 7–11; Mike Pearson, *Site-Specific Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 7–17.

3. Anna Birch and Joanne Tompkins, ed., *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 32.

4. Ibid.

5. This research is a further elaboration of the rationale underlying the panel discussion 'Re:Turn', curated and moderated by the author as part of the 2013 international conference *Performance O2: Re-enactments* at the School of Visual Arts in Jerusalem. Among the panel participants were some of the initiators of the actions explored in this article. A recording of the discussion (in Hebrew) is available at <http://youtu.be/-XeDdbvmIBM>. A different version of the current text was previously published in Hebrew in the online magazine *Maakaf*, No. 9 (2014), available at <http://maakaf.co.il/%D7%A2%D7%91/madorim/2013-06-30-05-57-44>.

6. Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains*: *Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 56.

7. Ibid., p. 98.

8. The Hebrew word *kibbutz* (literally, gathering or assembly) comes from the word denoting group, *kvutza*.

9. The Palestinian claim to the right of return is a key element in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The two sides disagree as to whether refugees exiled during those years and their descendants (currently over four million people) should be part of an overall solution offering compensation or *de facto* return (as most of the Arab settlements left behind have been demolished and turned into Israeli settlements and sites). In opposition to the 'right of return' one finds the Israeli 'law of return'. This law, passed by the Knesset in 1950, two years after the State of Israel was established, gives all Jews, as well as their spouses and descendents, the right to immigrate to Israel and become a citizen, with the exception of public health or security threats.

10. Mike Pearson, 'Haunted House: Staging *The Persians* with the British Army', in Birch and Tompkins, ed., *Performing Site-Specific Theatre*, p. 70.

11. See Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 97–121.

12. Ibid., p. 113. Also see an edited version of some fragments at <http://vimeo.com/18994916>.

13. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 49–66.

14. Fischer-Lichte stresses a significant moment in the spectacle during which spectators called out 'Lenin, Lenin' and a figure dressed in coat and hat appeared on a raised stage, bringing about the collective apotheosis, whose sense of spiritual elevation was connected to the formation of a narrative of revolutionary salvation. See Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual*, p. 116.

15. See, for instance, one of his programmatic texts: Nikolai Evreinov, *The Theatre in Life*, trans. A. I. Nazaroff (New York: Brentano's, 1927).

16. Schneider, *Performing Remains*, p. 20.

17. For a history of the village, its legal struggle and protests, see the website of the Iqrit Community Association, available at <www.iqrit.org/?LanguageId=3>. Following the return to Iqrit, a settlement was also established in the Biram area in August 2013.

18. Étienne Balibar, 'Droit de Cité', trans. Tal Haran, in Ariella Azoulay, ed., *HomeLessHome*, op. cit., p. 293–4.

19. See Balibar, 'On Civic Disobedience', p. 285-8.

20. See Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 1995).

21. Ibid., p. 51–2.

22. Walaa Sbait, in the panel discussion *Re:Turn*, the School of Visual Theatre, Jerusalem, 23 May 2013.

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23. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 6–27.

24. Other Palestinian political actions that corresponded with the Jewish model of illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories – and were, indeed, described as 'settlements' by the Israeli media – included, for instance, setting up a tent settlement between Jerusalem and the large settlement town Ma'ale Adumim and resettling there repeatedly after the tents were dismantled by the authorities.

25. According to Deleuze and Guattari, deterritorialization is removal and exile from language, while reterritorialization is a minor settlement within a major language. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 6-27.

26. See Frantz Fanon's well-known claim regarding the complexity of the use of the language of the cultural hegemony, specifically the adoption of a local dialect by the occupier: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London; Sydney: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 17–40. In the Iqrit case, it is the occupied people who exhibit familiarity with the terminology applied to them by the occupier, using it subversively.

27. Sbait, in the panel discussion *Re:Turn*, 23 May 2013.

28. Elad Yaron, in the panel discussion *Re:Turn*, 23 May 2013. The nucleus group of Empty House consists mainly of graduates of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and the School of Visual Theatre (SVT), both in Jerusalem, including Elad Yaron, Shavit Yaron, Neta Meisels, Itamar Hammerman, Moran Aviv, and more. The *Kibbutz* project included dozens of collaborators.

29. Empty House's project throughout 2014–2015 is *Carriage 322*, enacted in the grounds of Jerusalem's old train station. They have turned a train carriage from the British Mandate in Palestine into an art centre, this time with the authorities' financial backing and consent.

30. The Holiday of Sukkoth is manifested in constructing and staying in a Sukkha, a tabernacle associated with the temporary dwellings built in the desert during the Exodus.

31. *Kibbutzim* is the plural form of *kibbutz*. Out of approximately 280 *kibbutzim*, only 70 have remained strictly collaborative.

32. Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Towards a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics,* trans. Herbert Marcuse and Erika Sherover (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979), p. 13.

33. Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representation*, Spring 1989, p. 7.

34. See Augé, *Non-Places*, p. 7–18.

35. See Schneider's notion of 'performing the archive', in *Performing Remains*, p. 99–102.

36. Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002), p. 11–32.

37. The journal (in Hebrew) can be accessed at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v1-5b_iZrZ91AG11yR_9Ocx5eqxNFVx93mr9Fiod3R0/edit?pli=1>. This is the third issue, which also contains links to the first and second issues.

38. Nora, 'Between Memory and History', p. 20.

39. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, p. 27.

40. *Civil Fast*, as named by the creators, does not carry the semantic difference between 'civil' and 'civic' (cf. Note 1).

41. For an elaboration on Public Movement's works, see Daphna Ben-Shaul, 'Critically Civic: Public Movement's Performative Activism', in Atay Citron, Sharon Aronson Lehavi, and Davis Zerbiv, ed., *Performance Studies in Motion: International Perspectives and Practices in Twenty-First Century* (London; New Delhi; New York; Sydney: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014), p. 118–30.

42. The Hebrew name of the action was *Ta'anit* (fast). This is clearly a religious notion of fasting, as opposed to other reasons for avoiding food, which is related to six specific occasions in the Jewish calendar. One such *ta'anit* is Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), an act of purification whereby the individual atones for his sins by fasting and praying with the community. Fasting as a religious practice and way of penance is also pursued by Muslims at Ramadan and other religious occasions, and is also a familiar form of Christian purification, as in Lent (translated into Hebrew as *ta'anit*).

43. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. xvii–xviii, 36–53; Sophie Nield, 'Siting the People: Power, Protest, and Public Space', in Birch and Tompkins, *Performing Site-Specific Theatre*, p. 221–2.

44. Dana Yahalomi, in conversation with the author, Tel Aviv, 1 January 2014.

45. The 'force-feeding bill', called 'preventing hunger-strike damages', was approved by the Knesset plenum in July 2015. It legalizes force-feeding, as well as a procedure of medical treatment, in cases of imminent irreversible damage and life danger to the hunger-striker, who is not specifically defined as a Palestinian prisoner. The objections to the bill includes the refusal of physicians (representatives of the Israel Medical Organization and Physicians for Human Rights) to subject medical ethics to governmental dictates or to co-operate with a procedure recognized as torture in international law.

46. Samer Issawi's letter, written in Hebrew, was published on 9 April 2013 by all the media, including the internet, and human rights organizations. See an English translation at <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/04/issawis-speech-israelis.html>.

47. Saar Székely, in the panel discussion *Re:Turn*, 23 May 2013.

48. This was Public Movement's take on the line 'We have sinned against you, have mercy on us,' from an old liturgical poem sung in the weeks prior to Yom Kippur.

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