



Jericho—Beyond the Celestial and Terrestrial

This is the first publication from the *Cities Exhibition*, an art show meant to draw attention to a variety of relationships between people, places, and time, highlighting the cadences and uniqueness of each Palestinian city through the narrative of time. The fourth edition of the exhibition, *Jericho—Beyond the Celestial and Terrestrial*, is being produced by Birzeit University Museum and curated by Yazid Anani. The first component of the show is in the form of a notebook that documents the artistic research process and includes archival investigations, texts, ideas, stills, graphics, interviews, discussions, and interventions. It offers new insight into Jericho that goes beyond the stereotypical and explores the city and its landscape through the eyes of five artists.

The notebook is divided into five thematic chapters, which include space for personal notes and remarks by the user of this document. Each of the five themes is an attempt to explore the metaphoric nature of the landscape of Jericho in relationship with mythical cosmic affiliations. Through their

contributions, the artists seek cosmic alignment with nature and rituals that link humans back to the cosmos.

British artist Sarah Beddington uses the theme of bird migration in Palestine to explore the natural and cultural landscape around Jericho. Beddington is inspired by *The Birds*, an ancient Greek play by Aristophanes (414 BC), and *The Conference of the Birds*, a book of poems by Farid ud-Din Attar (1177 AD). Poetry becomes a lens through which she contemplates the relationship between earth, sky, time, and space, while drawing attention to endangered species and biodiversity in contemporary Jericho.

German artist Susanne Bosch adopted a different approach to examining Jericho's landscape. Together with a geomancer, someone who analyses the earth's energies, she examines the ebb and flow of energy throughout the landscape of Jericho, which influences health, wealth, home, garden, and office alike. Bosch traverses the landscape, exploring themes of migration and escape, water, political activism, and spirituality in relation to this location.

Jordan-based Samah Hijawi embraced a fictional and performance-based approach to investigating the geological possibility of a massive earthquake that will have its epicenter in Jericho. Samah playfully examines the aftermath of this fictitious earthquake in which the whole of Palestine is submerged under the Mediterranean Sea, transforming the geopolitical history into a relic for adventurous exploration and undersea archeological excavation. The trail focuses on questioning identity and the loss of territory and geography.

Palestinian artist Iyad Issa examines Jericho as divided islands (oases) in the form of utopias or heterotopias, wherein the regulations are substantially different, such as swimming pools, resorts, military and police camps, refugee camps, border points (*istiraha*), Israeli settlements, Al-Qamar City, religious sites, archeological

sites, Bedouin encampments, and other locations. Iyad's contribution deconstructs the representation of contemporary Jericho through the dichotomies between these oases.

Finally, Shuruq Harb's interest lies in myth and religion as potent mediums of storytelling built around characters and objects. Her project investigates the notion of performance through myth, theology, and religion in Jericho's landscape. Her contribution to the notebook will be built around a fictional character whose story is told via existing and made-up artifacts, objects, and personal accounts.

The notebook launch will be on September 29, with artists' walks in Jericho on October 2nd through 8th. A seminar and exhibit at Birzeit University Museum will be on January 12, 2013.