

POLITICALITY OF PERFORMANCE / PERFORMATIVITY OF POLITICS

DANCE FLOOR

**MICRO MAGAZINE
OF PERFORMING ARTS.**

FREE PALESTINE

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EDITORS NOTE



AP Photo/Maya Hitij

I have decided to devote this issue entirely to the Palestinian cause with the knowledge that it also concerns other countries and ethnic groups - and not only those under Israeli occupation, experiencing years of violence by successive Israeli governments, such as - especially recently - Lebanon, Yemen and Syria, but all others living under occupation, such as the indigenous peoples of North America, the Kanak people of New Caledonia, the Hawaiians, the Uighurs in China, the Yakuts in Russia or the Rohingya people in Myanmar.

It is impossible to write about all of them. I decided that this edition would be dedicated to the performing artists of Palestine. With this symbolic gesture I wanted to express my solidarity with Palestine with the hope that the eyes of the reading public will also turn to other regions devastated by wars and occupations like Sudan, Congo or Ukraine.

In the issue you will find descriptions of individuals and art groups working inside and outside the state of Palestine, but always with a strong connection to the Palestinian land and the struggle for its freedom. It's hard to think about art and artists during devastating conflicts, but these people are, it's their work and passion, and the art they create brings solace not only to themselves, but to the entire communities in which they operate.

At the end you will find a list of organizations and initiatives in Poland and abroad that you can turn to in order to help others. If only you want to.

On the cover there is a photo of Mo Tomaszewska's Flag from 24h solidarity performance "Intifada" (2024).

No one is free until we are all free!

FREE PALESTINE!

Lukas Wojcicki



FARAH SALEH

Balfour Reparations (2024-2044) © Lucas Chih Peng Cho

Farah Saleh is a Palestinian dancer, choreographer and scholar based in Scotland. She has studied linguistic and cultural mediation in Italy and in parallel continued her studies in contemporary dance. Since 2010 she took part in local and international projects with Sareyyet Ramallah Dance Company (Palestine), the Royal Flemish Theatre and Les Ballets C de la B (Belgium), Mancopy Dance Company (Denmark/Lebanon), Siljehom/Christophersen (Norway) and Candoco Dance Company (UK). Saleh has also been teaching dance, coordinating and curating artistic projects, including the Sareyyet Ramallah Summer Dance School, which she co-founded in 2016. In 2014 she won the third prize of the Young Artist of the Year Award (YAYA) organized by A.M. Qattan Foundation in Palestine for her installation “A Fidayee Son” in Moscow and in 2016 she won the dance prize of Palest’In and Out Festival in Paris for the duet La Môme. She was an Associate Artist at Dance Base in Edinburgh 2017-2021 and in 2023 she earned her practice-based PhD from Edinburgh College of Art. In 2024, Saleh started a lectureship in Global Majority Performance at Theatre Studies Department at Glasgow University.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU, TO BE
A PALESTINIAN ARTIST IN THE CONTEXT OF ~~ISRAELI~~
~~OCCUPATION~~ AND ONGOING WAR IN GAZA?

Dance is a big part of Palestinian daily life. We celebrate birthdays and weddings with Palestinian traditional dance, Dabkeh, in our homes and on the streets. We also dance Dabkeh in demonstrations against the Israeli occupation and on the rubble of our homes during a genocide. Dabkeh is all about the relationship between the body, the land and the collective. Dabkeh is all about resilience.

Palestinians dance artists have also become interested in different forms of dance, such as hip hop, break and contemporary dance, but rehearsing, meeting other dancers and performing has always been made difficult by the ~~Israeli Apartheid~~ regime that separates us from each other through checkpoints and blockades. Many dance artists have also been killed, wounded or arrested by Israel just for being Palestinian or for speaking up for Palestinian rights through performing arts.

Palestinian dance artists call on Polish and international dancers to actively mobilize for an apartheid free dance. No one can dance,
until we all can dance!



SAMAA WAKIM

Can you still hear the bombs? I can hear them.

Growing up in a war zone means living and breathing politics. The Palestinian choreographer and performer Samaa Wakim asks herself how these experiences impact her identity in a solo performance – “Losing It” – which explores how the trauma of previous generations manifests in her own body through movement and sound.

In a journey towards the moment she began to fear for her freedom, the piece dives into her memories of growing up under occupation, exploring the various realities she lives in, and the fantasies she’s created out of fear and hope in order to survive. As fear overtakes her, her world begins to disintegrate: the floor becomes unstable, and the sounds begin to warp, creating a world where reality and fantasy blur.

“Losing it” was created in conversation with a live score by Samar Haddad King (Artistic Director, Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre), the soundscape features field recordings taken throughout Palestine since 2010. Accompanied by Wakim’s vocals, the sounds that once caused fear and the sounds that once provided solace become woven together to the point where past and present cloud the future.

SAMAA WAKIM

Samaa Wakim (Co-Creator/Performer), is a performer, choreographer and cultural manager based in Palestine. Graduated from the acting department of Haifa University. Performance credits include: I am Yusuf and This is My Brother (Shibir Hur and Young Vic Theater, London 2009); The Beloved, (Shibir Hur and Bush Theater, London, 2012); Exit & Ble Ble Bel (Khashabi Theatre, Palestine, 2011); Badke (A.M. Qattan foundation, KVS Theater, and Les ballets C de la B, Brussels 2012-2017); bound (Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre and Sareyyet Ramallah, Ramallah, 2014); Against a Hard Surface (Yaa Samar! Dance Theater Hamburg 2017); Modern Curses, co-directed and choreographed by Bashar Murkus and Wakim (Khashabi Theater, Haifa 2018); Last Ward (Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre, Paris, 2018); The Cabaret (Khashabi Theatre, Haifa, 2018); The Father (Al Jawal Theater, Haifa, 2021); Losing It, co-created with Samar Haddad King (Festival Theaterformen, Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre, Khashabi Theatre, Hannover, 2021). She is a production manager of Haifa Independent Film Festival 2019 & 2023 and member of Yaa Samar! Dance Theater (since 2014) and Khashabi Theatre (since 2008).



camps breakerz CREW

Camps Breakerz is a dance team that was established back in 2004 to represent the Palestinian people and their continuous struggle.

CB Crew has been showing the uniqueness of dance and art to the people of Gaza through performing and teaching and eventually globally representing and speaking. CB Crew reached multiple dreams starting with waking people on dancing and its importance to establishing the first dance school in Nusierat refugee camp through a campaign in the middle of Gaza strip. CB Crew school has been initialing generation after another. Not only a place for dancing and emotion expressing, but also supporting the children with external needs such as clothing and educational needs. CB Crew itself went through multiple dramatic wars starting with 2009 where their dancing place was bombed. In 2014 we danced on piles of Northern town where it was entirely removed with its hopes forced people to evict and live somewhere else. CB crew believes art can make change realizing that dancing and moving with the children can help healing traumas. By moving the children along with the rhythm they will gain the feeling of existence and belonging.



foto @Atlas of the Future 2021

CB Crew had participated in a rehabilitation program in 2009 that lasted three months where buses dropped children over to dance and spend time with the crew. Unfortunately, another war in 2014. We traveled to UN schools where people were evicted to and shared some dancing with the children and built new hopes during the war. It became a routine and purpose of CB school to keep on dancing with the community. The crew spent the last days before the present war with Israel dancing in public and cheering children for expressing themselves. Sadly, Gaza is getting heavy loads of hits at this moment where all kind of bombing being used, so we stopped for safety reasons. Now, there are thousands of bombed places and evicted families. The crew got to know places where people evicted. Those people left their homes beautiful memories behind and ran for safety and a new hope of life. Most of them returned to no home and searched for favorite toys or school items from under the pile. Camps Breakerz crew go to those shelters and introduce itself to gather the children in a circle. From that connection to actual dance moves on the dancing floor where everyone is welcome to participate. CB crew had been supported by individuals. The Crew has been self-managing and planning since 2004 and always comes with great outcomes. Our children deserve equal life as any child in the world. They deserve to smile laugh and hold on a superhero. CB Crew has named the dance series Our Children Deserve, and plan on keeping dancing with those evicted children and hoping them they can come to our school and dance on daily base. CB Crew need your hand to promote launching more series of dancing in the shelters and public by donating funds that will be spent on buying clothes, shoes, and school items. Please reach out and deliver your support to those individuals. You can help and save humanity.

If you are interested in donating, please contact CB on either Instagram or email them on campsbreakers@gmail.com

AL-Harrah Theater

This time the war is a genocide against the Gaza Strip.

Al-Harrah Theater was established in 2005 and registered as a nonprofit organization registration (#BL-455-C). Al Harrah Theater strives to produce highly artistic, yet accessible theater productions and present them to audiences throughout Palestine, the Arab world and abroad. Believing that theater can change the lives of those who make it and those who watch it, Al Harrah theater has a lot of experience in using drama and theater in helping children and youth to overcome their trauma caused directly by the war or the challenging conditions in Palestine that these children have been living under

Marina Barham
General Director

Al Harrah Theater has always collaborated with international theaters including: Royal Court Theater, Grid Iron & Tenterhooks in Scotland, Indra Collective at HOME in Manchester, Unga Klara, City Theater, Stockholm, Riksteatern, Ogenblinkteatern, Backa Theater in Sweden, Teatro Dell Argine, Teatro Due Monde, Piccolo Teatro and other theaters in Italy, many theaters in the Arab world and also in other countries. We have friends in Aubervillie, Bergish Gladbach, and other places in the world.

Since the 7th of Oct the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has been disastrous. Most of those who have been affected by the hostilities of war are children. The genocide on Gaza is still ongoing. Over 52000 people have been killed in Gaza, over 20,000 have been children and 17 000 have been women. Over 93000 people injured and over 2 million displaced.

Everything did not start from the beginning of October but it has been going on for more than 55 years at least, and even since before 1948. We passed through several wars in 1967, in 1987, in 1992, in 2000 and it continued all through the years with oppression of the Israeli Occupation, more confiscation of lands, building of settlements and the Separation Wall, restrictions on movement and travelling, imprisonment of people, daily invasions, and deprivation of basic rights of the Palestinian people. The Gaza Strip has been under siege for 17 years. People

in Gaza have experienced and lived 4 wars. Some teenagers lived through all of these wars. This time the war is a genocide against the Gaza Strip.

In 2019, just before Covid started we faced a new challenge with the EU parliament adding a new political condition on their funding to Palestinian organization where they consider seven Palestinian Political Factions Terrorists. By accepting this condition, we accept incriminating our people and rejection of our work in the Palestinian community. So, as a result, Palestinian Civil Society organizations refused to accept this condition rejecting conditional funding that resulted in losing main sources of funding including the EU, Swedish Development Agency and the German funds.

Since the beginning of the war on Gaza, all entrances and exits of Palestinian cities have been blocked. Schools in the West Bank have not been operating regularly, and now as they commenced schools once again, children are suffering from fear and trauma from all the news they are hearing about war, hostilities, aggression on Palestinian cities, Israeli settler's violence against entire communities, and the like.

Over 9000 people have been arrested in the West Bank and more than 900 people killed. Heads of cultural organizations like the Freedom theater, Ibdaa Cultural Center, artists from the Palestinian Circus School have been arrested and sentenced to 6 months administrative detention which means that they do not have evidence against them.

Violence from Israeli settlers and the Israeli Military have increased tremendously on different areas like Jenin, Tulkarm, Hebron and Bethlehem.

As a result of all of this violence, there has been an increasing demand from the local schools in the Bethlehem area towards psychological interventions with the children. Some of them reached out to Al Harah Theater to provide psycho - social drama activities for children, in order to help them express their feelings and learn how to cope with the traumas they have endured.

Al Harah Theater has decided to change some of its programs in order to support children in the schools of Bethlehem area, to overcome their trauma through psychodrama activities for groups of 30-40 students 8-12 years old.

We also started to adapt and record stories from Gaza as storytelling to show that these people who were killed are not only numbers. It was a podcast with subtitles



foto ©Al-Harah Theater

in English that we shared on our social media.

DANCEFLOOR#9

We have been also updating friends around the world on a daily basis on what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank. We were able to send money to 12 artists in Gaza who are struggling for food and basic needs. This year we have a huge deficit as we lost a lot of our funding. We are trying to set up some individual fundraising for the target groups we work with; Children, youth, women and people with disability.

As a result of the continues genocide on Gaza and also the escalation of violence against people in the West Bank, a cultural movement started to discuss the value of culture and arts and its principles when funding is accepted from the governments who support Israel with weapons and continue to oppress their students and universities. Today we do not accept political conditional funding or funding from governments who are supporting arms to Israel.

As a result, Al Harah Theater will not be able to sustain itself next year and is struggling to continue its services to the community especially children and women. So, we are calling friends in the world to support Al Harah Theater financially through individual or organizational support to be able to continue existing.

We would like big Theaters or organizations in the world who respect human rights to adopt our theater in Palestine, as a way of showing solidarity.

Al-Harah Theater aims to continue working with the Palestinian community sustaining its own programs, and putting more focus on supporting artists in Gaza when the situation allows.

We thank all the people of the world for what they are doing for Palestine. Please continue talking, educating others and demanding justice for Palestine. First step is to stop the war on Gaza and then demanding an end of the Israeli Occupation.



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The Freedom Theater

We are freedom fighters

Photo © The Freedom Theater

What we do in the theatre is not trying to be a substitute or an alternative to the Palestinian resistance in the struggle for liberation, just the opposite. This must be clear. [...] We join, by all means, the Palestinian struggle for liberation, which is our liberation struggle. We are not healers. We are not good Christians. We are freedom fighters.

JULIANO MER KHAMIS
co-founder

The Freedom Theatre is a theatre and cultural centre in Jenin refugee camp, occupied Palestine. We stage professional theatre productions, hold theatre workshops in the refugee camp, Jenin town and villages, offer training in acting, pedagogy and photography, and publish books, exhibitions and short films.

Since we opened our doors in 2006, we have made theatre and visual art available to every young person in Jenin refugee camp. Our work has made Jenin refugee camp known in Palestine and internationally for innovative, thought-provoking theatre and media productions. We have created a generation of artists and leaders, who one day will be at the forefront of the Palestinian liberation movement.

The Freedom Theater

Although The Freedom Theatre's focus is on theatre and visual arts, **we do not take a neutral position on the issue of Israeli apartheid,** colonisation and military occupation. Nor do we turn a blind eye to the internal violations of human rights, in particular the rights of women and children.

For the oppressed, the arts have always been a powerful tool for liberation. For us Palestinians, artistic expression is an integrated part of our **quest for justice, equality and freedom.**

The Freedom Theatre's vision is **a cultural resistance movement** at the core of a free and critical Palestinian society. Through cultural resistance, The Freedom Theatre aims to raise a new generation that is able to challenge all forms of oppression.

So what is cultural resistance? It starts with play. Play is not reserved for children; it is the basic desire to experiment and test reality, which is a prerequisite for creativity and imagination. Everything we do in The Freedom Theatre contains an element of play. Through play, we can **deconstruct an oppressive reality and make it comprehensible,** which is the first step towards changing it. Just as we cannot imagine more colours than what our eyes have seen, we cannot imagine a reality beyond our own experiences and frames of reference. Then, we can dream and create change together.

[Thefreedomtheatre.org](http://thefreedomtheatre.org)



The Palestinian Circus School

VISION

A free Palestine in which Palestinians engage in a dynamic cultural and artistic life that embraces creativity, freedom of expression and diversity as the main pillars for a just and inclusive society.



By teaching, creating, performing and programming circus arts, the Palestinian Circus School strengthens the creative, social and physical potential of Palestinians, seeking to engage and empower them to become constructive actors in society and raises local and international awareness about the positive Palestinian potential and its different challenges.

MISSION



ircus? In Palestine? Is that really what Palestine needs? – That was the most common question the founders of the Palestinian Circus School faced in the beginning. By now, those familiar with the work of PCS are convinced: Yes! A circus in Palestine!

The effect of the Israeli military occupation has been very difficult for young Palestinians, particularly since the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000. They witness their homes being unlawfully demolished, experience personal humiliation at checkpoints, suffer physical abuse and arbitrary detention and many carry the grief of having loved ones killed by the Israeli military. Moreover, they face the harsh reality of mounting responsibility in a tough economy with growing unemployment rates. Too many young people end up in the streets, where they struggle to make a few shekels by selling sweets, recycling rubbish or cleaning the windows of cars waiting at the checkpoints.

Through the different components of circus education, they wanted to respond to the above-mentioned challenges. The substance of the circus pedagogy is to stimulate and develop the physical, mental, artistic, sensitive, social and cognitive abilities. They were convinced that circus would bring many youths a brighter future.

In 2006, after three weeks of intensive training with a group of eight young people, the first performance of the school, "Circus Behind the Wall", was presented in August 2006 at Ashtar Theatre in Ramallah. More than 250 people attended the first show and really enjoyed it! More than simply a sign of encouragement, it was a sign that the dream of the Palestinian circus group was very much alive.

Excerpts from the article "A dance-off with occupation: Women, power and resistance" by Nadia Khan for [Goldenthreads.uk](https://goldenthreads.uk)

Hawiyya Dabke is an all-female Palestinian dance group based in the UK, who are breaking boundaries and creatively bringing the realities of Palestinian suffering under occupation onto the dance floor and directly to grass roots communities.

HAWIYYA dabke

HAWIYYA DANCE COMPANY

"We use our performances to promote social justice for Palestinians and other oppressed people, and to celebrate our culture which has been suppressed for decades. Israel has long tried to appropriate the indigenous traditions and arrest, harass and restrict dabke dancers and other artists. We will not allow our culture to be appropriated and defaced by our oppressors!"

**Shahd Abusalama, one of the founders
of the Hawiyya Dance Company**

FEEL POWER WHEN I DANCE THE DABKE

Dabke is the traditional folk dance from the Levant region. It is one of the main dance forms in Palestine, and it is the living history of the people and their culture. Since 1948, the dance has become the voice of the voiceless, and a resounding statement of Palestinian identity, existence and resistance.

From the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish settlers started arriving in Palestine. With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, settlements increased drastically and continue to expand to this day. Many of these settlements are deemed illegal by international law. Yet, Palestinians are still being forcibly removed from their homes. The forced evictions in occupied Jerusalem neighbourhoods, Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan last May, sparked widespread condemnation, and put the spotlight on a crisis that has been going on for decades.

Since 1948, a large number of Palestinians have become refugees scattered across the world, and are not allowed to return to their homeland while Jews from anywhere can claim citizenship under the Law of Return. The Palestinians who remain are basically prisoners in this land with no rights or freedom.

In Arabic, Hawiyya means identity; a name befitting this group of women who are fighting for the survival and freedom of the Palestinian people. This dance collective are first and foremost social activists, who use dance, performance and poetry to raise awareness of a brutal occupation.



Being a women-only dance troupe gives Hawiyya the scope to reach spaces and audiences where mixed-sex groups cannot reach, and this results in their message spreading to a wider crowd.

The dabke empowers women participants to express themselves freely; especially those who have suffered from trauma or abuse. They connect to the message of the dance, and can use it to release their own suffering.

Nadia Sibany is a Hawiyya collective member and dancer who grew up in Nablus, and came to the UK when she was just seven years-old. She joined the group in 2018 after searching for a way to connect more closely with her Palestinian heritage. Nadia has been dancing from a young age, but was not trained in dabke. However, with the worsening of the situation in Palestine over many years, and a sense of isolation from her people, she wanted to be part of the fight for justice.

When asked what supporters of Palestine can do to show solidarity, Shahd says: "We all have a role to play in helping the Palestinians, and it starts with our own circles. Everyone has the power of change in their own hands. Sadly, the mainstream media is manipulating people and fuelling hate. However, we all have a responsibility to find out the truth."

Hawiyya's solution for the future is the implementation of the right of return for all refugees, which is already recognised by international law. They also call for the freedom for all people in Palestine, and for everyone to have equality and dignity.



YAA SAMAR!

dance theater



Photo: Samar Haddad King

Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre (YSDT)'s mission is to create invigorating performance and education programs that expand access to - and promote understanding through - the arts.

yaa | ya (y+AH): to call or attract; often said before calling someone's name to get their attention.

samar ('sum' + 'are'): evening conversation, sleepless night, night of entertainment

MISSION

VISION

YSDT believes art should be liberating, transformative, and accessible to all. The company operates out of the United States and Arab World and is committed to uniting diverse artists and audiences in the creative process.

"Samar Haddad King deftly melds styles from hip-hop and ballet to social dance and acrobatics."

- Hedy Weiss, Chicago Sun Times

Since 2005, YSDT has taught and performed in 15 countries across four continents, and fostered the careers of over 50 emerging artists, with a repertoire of more than 30 original performances including solos, small ensemble and group works. New York City area performances have included venues and festivals such as: Baryshnikov Arts Center, Downtown Dance Festival, Jacob's Pillow, Joyce SoHo, Harlem Stage, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Queens Museum of Art, Teatro LATEA, and Whitewave Festival. Following eight years of NYC programming, YSDT established a secondary base in Palestine in 2012. The company has since developed groundbreaking methods of working across cultural and geographic borders which have been covered in Dance Magazine, The Huffington Post, and Hyperallergic, among others. Abroad, the company has taught and performed at international universities and festivals, museums, UN refugee schools, and site-specific locations throughout Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, Jordan, Palestine, South Korea, and Tunisia.

more info: ysdt.org

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY INITIATIVES



Poland

[Viva Palestyna](#)
[Kolektyw Kefija](#)
[Inicjatywa Kaktus](#)
[UW z Palestyna](#)
[SolidarnościówkaWro](#)
[Trójmiasto dla Palestyny](#)
[Akademia dla Palestyny](#)
[SJP in Poznań](#)
[Bielskobiała z Palestyńczykami](#)

International organisations supporting BDS movement

Boycott Divestment and Sanctions

[France-Palestine Solidarité Association](#)
[BDS France](#)
[BDS Italia](#)
[The European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine](#)
[Friends of Al-Aqsa \(UK\)](#)
[Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign](#)
[War on Want](#)
[American Friends Service Committee](#)
[The Palestine Committee of Norway](#)
[Palestine Solidarity Association of Sweden](#)
[Palestine Solidarity Campaign](#)
[American Muslims for Palestine](#)
[Code Pink – Women for Peace](#)
[Jewish Voice for Peace](#)
[National Students for Justice in Palestine](#)
[US Campaign for Palestinian Rights](#)
[BDS Chile](#)
[South Africa BDS Coalition](#)
[BDS National Committee](#)

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Autumn/Winter 2024

HYDROFEMINISM