

Global Friday Presents



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Exile and the Burden of the Future: The Politics of Hope in Palestine

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Based on my book, my talk explores the intersection between displacement and the imagination as a politically mobilizing force. Bringing together traditional archival research, oral histories, literary and spatial analysis, I demonstrate a constant tension between forms of activism that Palestinians forge and the temporalities they imply. The return of the 1948 refugees has not happened yet, and Palestinians are still waiting for it to occur. This waiting, which by now has spun at least three generations, has produced a temporal break between what is perceived as a "golden past" in the homeland, cut abruptly by occupation and expulsion, and an undetermined point in the future that signals restoration of the homeland and a reversal of exile. These two temporal breaks are separated by an ever-expanding present marked by violence, struggle and shame. My research therefore focuses on displacement as historically- and geographically-specific, and how these differences reconfigure Palestinian understandings of temporality and forms of belonging. My analysis will therefore consider hope as the production of histories and temporalities that refuse elisions and appropriations. Hope, in this context, is recognizing the liberatory potential in assembling archives that are outside the reach of the colonizer and therefore cannot be classified; hope is the performance of submerged memories, staking claim to expropriated urban spaces through artistic and literary interventions. Sustaining hope through the production of history is not just a response to violence and despair. Rather, it is a liberatory project that re-articulates multi-generational Palestinian belongings, and offers potential paths to return and reclamation.

When: Friday, December 1 from 12pm to 1:30pm

Where: 7-152