

Temporarily

This project attempts to deal with the results of the necessity situations summoned by the cruel war. The ones that made the Kuwaiti hospital, west of Rafah, use food refrigerators “temporarily” as mortuary refrigerators for the children’s bodies killed in one day in the 2014 war, until their bodies are identified. Duaa Qishta identifies the relationship of her project with the pictures taken for those children as a mean to deal with the element of shock. The artist is interested in the solutions developed by people in Gaza to overcome the scarcity of materials and the situations in an unusual manner.

Through her field research, the artist identified the names of those children and their family’s condition after the crisis. She held meetings with the director of Al Mezan center for human rights in Rafah city. In addition to the owner of the refrigerators, and asked him on how he dealt with the refrigerators after its temporary functional transition on that day. Qishta also spoke to the director of the Kuwaiti hospital and her fellow artists in workshops and interviews. She wrote summaries of her idea after she sketched her drawings and came out with photographs printing the image of the temporary children coffins on ice cream.

I do not believe that the ability to arouse sympathy or sadness or admiration is the grounds for dealing with an artistic work. But rather the distance in which we travel fast between restoring the first glimpse at such images and viewing it as a work of art. In other words, it is a transient moment when the viewer comprehends that the bright colored wax sculptures with graduated transparency that is engraved so carefully, displayed “temporarily” in an artistic space, is only a reflection of that harsh day when the hospitals could not accommodate the bodies of casualties.

Within this reclamation even if it’s for a split second, the research journey is conveyed through the artist’s repeated experimentation with the subject, its origin and the materials used. The artist chose wax as her medium, which is malleable but fragile as a final product and can lose its shape with heat or collision with any solid body. The artist resorted to this material after using digital sculpting in order to print the figures on a locally installed 3-D printer in Gaza. Paradoxically this printing technique would have transcended the scarcity of certain materials and technology. She then re-sculpted her figures manually to accommodate for the precision between the artistic shapes she produces manually and those limited by technology. Conceptual art emerged globally within the context of artistic reflections on the war machine. This work situates us in similar circumstances, requisitioning our use of the violent image in our artistic work; is it our image or the image of the other that we reside in? What are the spaces that expand within us and within the image if we rebuild it temporarily and artistically?

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