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## **Art as a Powerful Tool for Knowledge**

Most of us believe in the power of art, how story can change one's life, with stories we can connect with other, we reach others who we may never meet, words gathering to form sentences, to fabric stories, to form our history our culture our identity and our future, simply our life is a story. It's our way to share our experience with others, the ability to express our interests, to discuss our goals, and to reach positive change.

From here Emily Jacir began her fight and journey to tell her story or our story, to uncover facts and to convey the truth to the world. Emily Jacir "is Palestinian artist and filmmaker. Born in Bethlehem in 1970, Jacir attended the University of Dallas, Irving, the Memphis College of Art and the Whitney Independent Study Program and has been living and working between New York and the West Bank. It may be argued one of the main Palestinian artists working today, she has received a number of prominent awards. Jacir utilizes different kinds of media such as video, film, installation, sound, photography, performance, and writing in her work and has shown widely throughout Europe, United States and



the Middle East since 1994.”<sup>1</sup> Her style was different, through her artistic work, Jacir gives the narrative right to the Palestinian, and re-focuses on the details of the Palestinian life before Nakba.

She shows how pictures as one form of narrativity through narratological concepts is a powerful tool to reproduce meanings, in order to represent and retrieve history. Jacir started her battle within another authoritarian tool which is the mainstream media to show the importance of art to peoples who are still under occupation through two elements: by returning to primitive discourse and by focusing on long-term and exhaustive research in individual stories to form personal features of what appears to be a huge Palestine dying in history, and to show how she works hard in presenting the implications of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through her narrative form, through her art and projects for unearthing the Palestinian identity and giving life to history, her work has provided a culture which was torn by war and immigration.

In fact, I believe that pictures can take us very far away, it can enhance our imagination, we can travel through images to many places, we can create many stories through one picture, simply one picture could be enough to convey a lot as it has a strong power to express and convey lots of meanings. Ryan states that “compared to the language, pictures represent the spatial features of a narrative better than verbal narratives. Moreover, pictures can express feelings by showing facial expressions and body language” (Ryan 2015, 22).

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[https://www.academia.edu/5671123/Visions\\_of\\_Performance\\_in\\_Exile\\_The\\_Book\\_The\\_Exhibition\\_and\\_the\\_Digital\\_Archive](https://www.academia.edu/5671123/Visions_of_Performance_in_Exile_The_Book_The_Exhibition_and_the_Digital_Archive)



Actually, our present is already constructed by our past, and the power of nations embedded in preserving their history, narrating history is the main way to represent and retrieve it, it is essential to the existence of nations, for building their identity, history is our way to know about what happened in the past and by whom things happened and who are these people anyway. The act of telling, allows the individual to discover and establish his own historical identity in reference to a group, a community, a temporal world which presents itself as ordered and in which all the components of the narrative find their place in the duration.

What kinds of stories was Emily able and wanted to convey? Many of untold stories about Nakba remained hidden over the years, not only land and properties were taken but also tens of thousands of Palestinian books were stolen by Israeli army, Israel looted Palestinian homes and stole their cultural treasures, among them books, manuscripts, personal papers, photographs and works of art. These books are kept in Israeli national library catalogued under the code “AP” which stood for “Abandoned Property.” Jacir photographed these books with her cell phone during repeated visits to the library over two years; these photographs were for nearly in the range of thirty thousand books from Palestinian homes, libraries, and institutions that were looted by Israeli authorities in 1948. These photos were shown at the exhibition in New York city, these images create an emotional history of pieces and trace, so it’s not just our memory, history and national identity but also our right and our proof to be back, and to regard repatriation and restitution.



If we look at examples of Jacir's work, we can sketch the outlines of a critical discourse about history through a marginalized narrative that addresses racism with irony, it's a way for depicting the tragedy not with slogans but with small details, for example her exhibition *Made in Palestine*, "Memorial to 418 Palestinian Villages Which Were Destroyed, Depopulated and Occupied by Israel in 1948" (2001), consists of a United Nations refugee tent with the names of Palestinian villages lost during the Nakba sewn on to its exterior. This piece has various entrances to memory, from the painted names to the villages they denote, from individual shock to shared experience, from the stitches to the hands that stitched them, memory has found a place.

The designation was created through collective efforts of volunteers who offered their help to the artist with the decorated pieces. By imposing its presence, the memorial stands as a reminder of the attempted erasure of a people, while evoking the traditional art of embroidery which serves as an important aspect of local heritage and an assertion of Palestinian identity. In her words, "the displacement is not permanent". One can't help thinking too, of all the Palestinian refugees (in 1948 there were nearly 800,000, now there are nearly 4 million) who fled their homes uttering the same words, "this is only temporary". Through her art in many western cities, Jacir is uncovering the truth to people around the world, she is creating a new form of discourse, the one that competes the Israeli discourse, in which she reminds the world that we are here, and we are demanding our stolen rights.

When one's home is taken away, when one's culture and history are destroyed, in this case, retelling a life through fragments that retrieve the past by art is one efficient way to remind others of the stolen right.



Photographs capturing the Palestinians' memories as witnessed by Emily Jacir whose main interest is advocating our rights to maintain our national identity. People whose citizenship has been repealed, whose state and homes have been stolen; a piece of paper becomes their only form of identity. Palestinians, who must wait hours in a long series of checkpoints just to move from one town to another, this piece of paper becomes more than simply an identity, it becomes everything, it becomes their world.

