

THE 7TH GWANGJU BIENNALE

제7회 광주비엔날레

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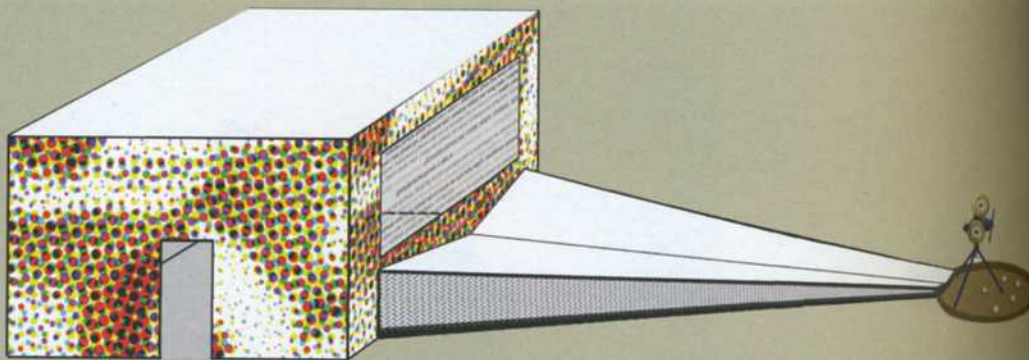
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Annual Report

MYDADA YONG SOON MIN / ALLAN deSOUZA / ABDELALI DAHROUCH Los Angeles

In late June and early July 2000, I made a personal family visit to Lebanon, where I also gave two public lectures. Like most Arabs, my family and I were very interested to visit South Lebanon to see the recently evacuated 'security zone' militarily occupied by Israel for twenty-two years, from which troops of the Jewish state were unceremoniously expelled by the Lebanese resistance. Our visit took place on July 3, during which daylong excursion we spent time in the notorious Khiam prison, built by the Israelis in 1987, in which eight thousand people were tortured and detained in dreadful, bestial conditions. Right after that we drove to the border post, also abandoned by Israeli troops, now a deserted area except for Lebanese visitors who come there in large numbers to throw stones of celebration across the still heavily fortified border. No Israelis, neither military, nor civilian, were in sight. During our ten-minute stop, I was photographed there without my knowledge pitching a tiny pebble in competition with some of the younger men present, none of whom, of course, had any particular target in sight. The area was empty for miles and miles. What happened later is pure irony, adding grist to the Zionist propaganda mill. Two days later my pictures appeared in newspapers in Israel and all over the West. I was described as a rock-throwing terrorist, a man of violence, and so on and so on, in the familiar chorus of defamation and falsehood known to anyone who has incurred the hostility of Zionist propaganda.

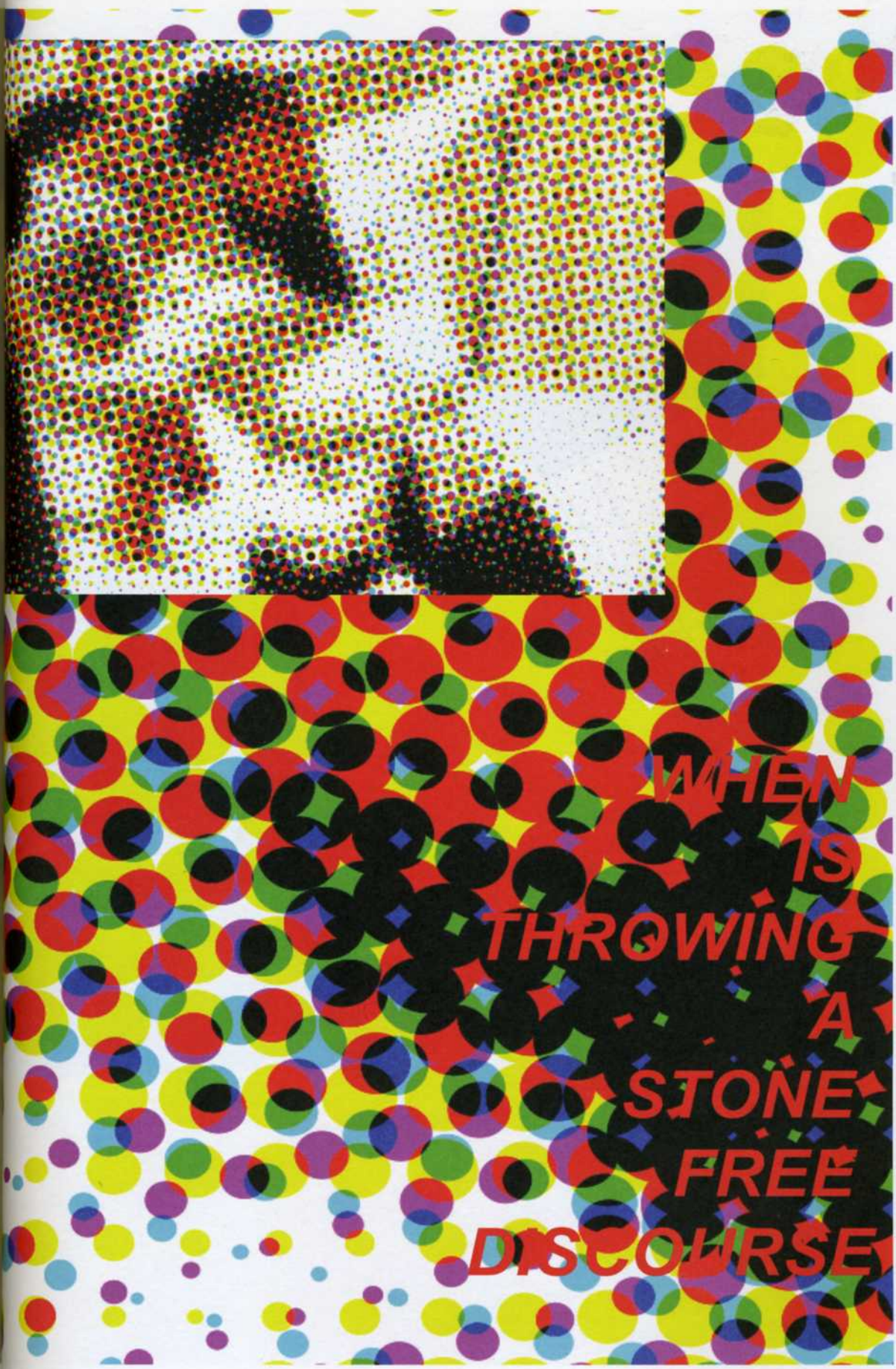


The two arenas of the Projectory are bridged and divided by a clear plastic screen; on one side is a throwing-machine that shoots projectiles against the screen, while a video is projected from the viewers' side. The video centers on the iconic photograph of Edward Said, in 2001, throwing a stone from Lebanon across the border into Israel. While not depicting the image itself, the video examines the discourse surrounding Said's act, the resulting controversy, and its implications for political thought and action.

The act of throwing—like processes of abstract thinking—involves a relatively complex sequential 'firing' of synapses. As early hominids chased prey and threw rocks at them, throwing became an act of survival. It is believed that the act of throwing was a precursor to finger pointing, directing an observer's attention towards an object and ushering the abstract notion of 'it,' of starting to differentiate between self and environment. In a sense, finger pointing was a new tool of survival, a tool of abstract communication. Some have argued that finger pointing led to the formation of the 'I,' and the identification of the individual in relation to both the collective and the Other. The point and the throw can be seen then as articulations and boundary markers of identity, community and territory.

This realization resembles Jacques Lacan's reading of the real versus reality. As the real (the undifferentiated whole) begins to recede in the background with the introduction of language, reality (the fantasy world) is nonetheless impacted by the primordial and often violent assertion of the real. "The real is the rock against which all of our artificial linguistic and social structures necessarily fail" as Lacan suggested.

How do we make sense of this act of throwing in relation to resistance in our contemporary moment and recent history? Clearly, there have been and continue to be other modes of resistance that propel societies toward and through meaningful change and reconciliation. However, it is the spectacular nature of the throw (as evidenced by the 1st Intifada, the war of the stones; as well as by the Gwangju uprising), and its symbolic equivalent of the clenched fist that explicitly informs the visual and seductive narratives of resistance.



WHEN
IS
THROWING
A
STONE
FREE
DISCOURSE

민영순, 알란 드수자, 암멜라이 다루치



마이하다