Tatreez as Archive:

Spatializing the Palestinian Diaspora

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Despite the extensive research produced on the topic of Palestinian homes and mobility within the Occupied Territories, the experiences of Palestinians living in the Diaspora are greatly underrepresented. More specifically, accurate information in the form of published data on Palestinian immigrants in Canada is unavailable due to their stateless status and global dispersion. As a result, research to record diasporic knowledge of home for Palestinians living in exile is crucial to understand how local contexts and practices reflect embedded memories and past experiences.

This thesis will analyze how architecture and design work to enhance and augment existing Palestinian-led efforts in both a social and spatial sense. It explores the theme of collective memory and the spatial-temporal aspects of diasporic living by mapping the emergence of 'tatreez-making' spaces (Palestinian embroidery) in the Greater Toronto Area. The design proposal offers a collaborative approach that re-imagines the existing Palestine House in the city of Mississauga which acts as a living archive and an event space that celebrates tatreez and empowers its users.

Tatreez is a visual language that has been linked to the shifting social, economic, and political landscape. Historically, the landscape was a major source of inspiration for Palestinian women in designing the motifs. As such, each village carried its own expressions, patterns, and thread colours. Following the displacement, tatreez evolved from being a symbol of regional pride to a symbol of Palestinian nationalism, especially for the diaspora community.

Through tatreez as a guiding medium, the thesis proposes new ways of seeing, understanding, and constructing our visual and material environment in relation to textiles, design, and architecture. By analyzing existing Palestinian initiatives, my research aims to address the following question: How might re-imagined architecture facilitate the preservation of Palestinian culture, identity, and knowledge while maintaining connections to local contexts? The objective of the thesis is to push architects to consider diasporic populations in design research in order to record historical data on migration and employ diasporic knowledge within architectural discourse.

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Dedication

To the people of Gaza.

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Introduction

Tatreez as Care

Despite the extensive research produced on the topic of Palestinian homes and mobility within the Occupied Territories, the experiences of Palestinians living in the Diaspora are greatly underrepresented.[1] More specifically, accurate information in the form of published data on Palestinian immigrants in Canada is unavailable mostly due to their stateless status and global dispersion.[2] In 1991, the Canadian census reported a total of 4,050 Palestinians despite the population being closer to 30,000.[3] This considerable underestimation of the Palestinian Canadian community makes it nearly impossible to analyze their movement and practices over time. Similarly, the intersection of home and migration from an architectural and spatial perspective remains largely underexplored.[4] For Palestinians who have never lived in their homeland, their understanding of home is amplified through imagination and collective memory.[5]

This research references and builds upon the discussion around collective memory, which commonly refers to the acts of storytelling, creating, archiving, and migration. It questions how we might engage with existing efforts in Canada to create new connections, resurface overlooked conversations, and lay the foundation for future collaborations.

With the ongoing hostilities in Gaza since October 7 and the increased awareness of the erasure of a people, there has been a global surge in creative projects that aim to revive fading traditions as well as illuminate the Palestinian experience through the use of various mediums. As Edward Said notes, "culture is a way of fighting against extinction and obliteration".[6]

This thesis explores the theme of collective memory and the spatial-temporal aspects of diasporic living by mapping the emergence of 'tatreez-making' spaces (Palestinian embroidery) in the Greater Toronto Area. Tatreez workshops have emerged globally as a tool for reviving intergenerational storytelling and heritage reconnection. These workshops function beyond mere crafting sessions, they serve as platforms for community building and solidarity, honoring the spirit of the Palestinian people.

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[1] Julia Pitner, The Palestinian in Diaspora, *Mid-American Review of Sociology* 16, no. 1 (1992): 61–88.

[2] Esmat Zaidan, *Mobility and Transnationalism: Travel Patterns and Identity among Palestinian Canadians* (University of Waterloo, 2011).

[3] Muhammad Shuraydi, "The Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples/Palestinians," *Multicultural History Society of Ontario*, 2009, https://mhso.ca/wp/the-encyclopedia-of-canadas-peoples/..

[4] Luce Beeckmans, Alessandra Gola, Ashika Singh, and Hilde Heynen, eds., *Making Home(s) in Displacement: Critical Reflections on a Spatial Practice* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.11116/9789461664082.

[5] Lucine Serhan, *In-Between: An Autoethnographic Inquiry into the Notion of Home* (Concordia University, 2022).

[6] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 332.



Fig. 0.1 Tatreez session hosted in Norway by Canadian organization 'Furdose'

Photo credit: Tiffany Hill. Image provided courtesy of Furdose

Given the amplified urgency towards cultural preservation during this time, much of this work has been organized spontaneously and situated within contexts where the space to carry out such gatherings is not a given. The ongoing deterioration of cultural activities since 1948 has never evoked the current sense of international distress, despite the political condition of Palestine being in a prolonged state of isolation and obscurity.

In order to discover the narratives that these temporary gatherings carry and to introduce design agency alongside them, this research presents two sequential parts. Both parts centralize spatial transformation and material culture in relation to memory production. The first section acts as a visual 'Narrative' which is a mapped documentation of the fieldwork conducted to not only collect shared memories, but to locate the spaces that facilitate these shared experiences. In this case, Tatreez is centralized as the guiding vehicle for uncovering diasporic experiences. The 'Narrative' focuses on the cultural knowledge embedded within the physical space through the objects that define 'home' for migrants. It consists of spatial diagrams documenting the site visits, image collages, historical artifacts, and new tatreez patterns which illustrate yet another transformation phase for the craft.

The 'Narrative' and the women who have been at the forefront of this tatreez-revival movement have informed the design process and the development of spaces that act as a vehicle for consistent community solidarity and tatreez practice. By building on the existing efforts presented in the preceding 'Narrative' part, this section presents a proposal that restructures the existing Palestine House in the city of Mississauga to better serve the community. The design process addresses the ad hoc nature of the current tatreez workshops, as their continuity is often intermittent and uncertain, by articulating the centrality of care in shaping modes of agency.

The provocation examines the potential of traditional Palestinian crafts, with a focus on tatreez, as a tool for preserving memories in the diaspora and asks, "what role can architecture play in preserving them?". Using an existing Palestinian space as a site of exploration, the research suggests that architecture can enable material processes that will produce opportunities for social, cultural and economic activities.

As we bear witness the horrors that continue to unfold in Gaza, this thesis documents and builds upon existing cultural preservation efforts in the face of erasure and presents a framework that transforms individual memory into a public and collective effort. According to historian Maurice Halbwachs, "memories are collectively espoused. Only communally do we remember." He argues that individual memory is shaped by the social groups to which a person belongs.[7]

The questions raised in this thesis are influenced by a number of forces at play in Palestinian communities in Canada: the social and political frameworks that affect and regulate mobility,

[7] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 38.

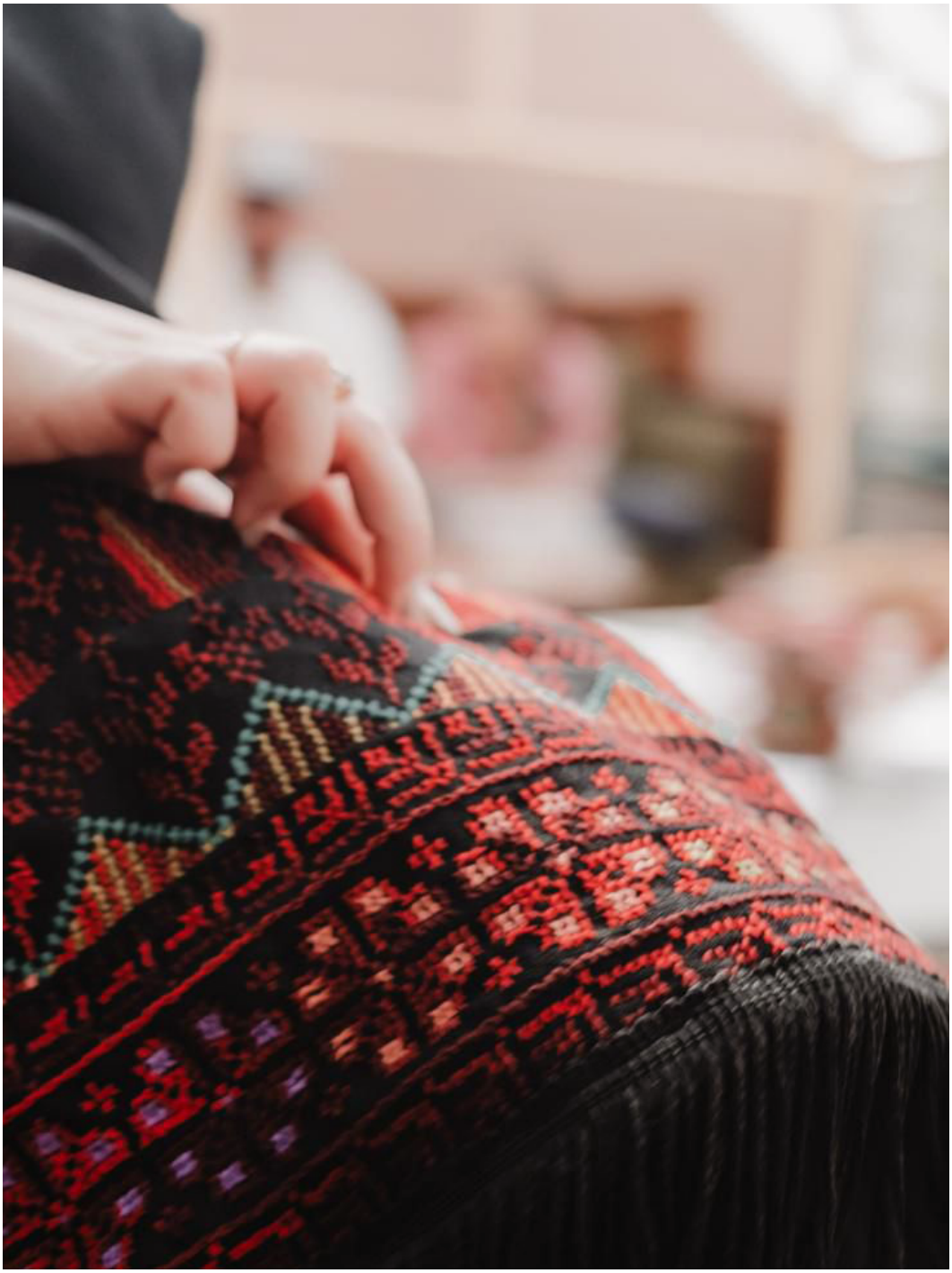


Fig. 0.2 Tatreez patterns

Photo credit: Tiffany Hill. Image provided courtesy of Furdose

the transnational methods used for remembering and constructing 'home', and the lifespan and degree of impact that the current structure of community efforts hold. Boano and Astolfo expand on the concept of 'inhabiting' "as a relational practice occurring in marginal and fragile environments, constituted by multiple incremental and transformative acts with the ultimate purpose to hold and resist marginalisation."[8] By building an archive that narrates the lives of Palestinians in Canada, this research examines the diaspora community and the stories they may carry as an act of care for the people, their tangible memories and their imagined aspirations.

Tatreez as Landscape

> To our Land,
> and it is the one far from the adjectives of nouns,
> the map of absence
>
> To our Land,
> and it is the one tiny as a sesame seed,
> a heavenly horizon ... and a hidden chasm
>
> **— *Mahmoud Darwish, 'To Our Land'***
> *[from Don't Apologize for What You've Done (2003)], in The Butterfly's Burden, translated from the Arabic by Fady Joudah (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2007), 203.*

Tatreez, is derived from the word *tarza* meaning stitch in Arabic. It is a form of Palestinian embroidery that is also at times referred to as *Fallahi* tatreez, named after the embroiderer and derived from the word '*Fallah'* meaning farmer or village worker. Before 1948, the motifs were passed down from mothers to daughters and were continuously evolving over centuries as they documented the surrounding environment, never remaining stagnant. It is a visual language that has been linked to the shifting social, economic, and political landscape. Historically, the landscape was a major source of inspiration for Palestinian women in designing the motifs. As such, each village carried its own expressions, patterns, and thread colours. For example, stitches depict cypress trees (*sarū*), palm trees (*nakhleh*), or the S-shaped leech (*ullayq*), along with fruits and vegetables native to the makers' villages. Each region had its distinct motifs due to the limited transportation and travel of earlier times which has resulted in highly localized designs that reflected daily life. [9]

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[8] Carmen Boano and Fabrizio Astolfo, *Inhabiting*, ed. Maristella Casciato (London: Routledge, 2021), 555.

[9] Mimi Droeshout, "The Art of Tatreez: Palestine's Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *Savoir Flair*, November 1, 2023, https://www.savoirflair.com/article/the-art-of-tatreez/e86c1d00-4cd6-4732-b647-190ad8a67e70.



Fig. 0.3 Workshop in Toronto: Introducing the physical steps of stitching in relation to the patterns' connection to land and water.

Photo credit: Sarah Hassanein. Image provided courtesy of Furdose

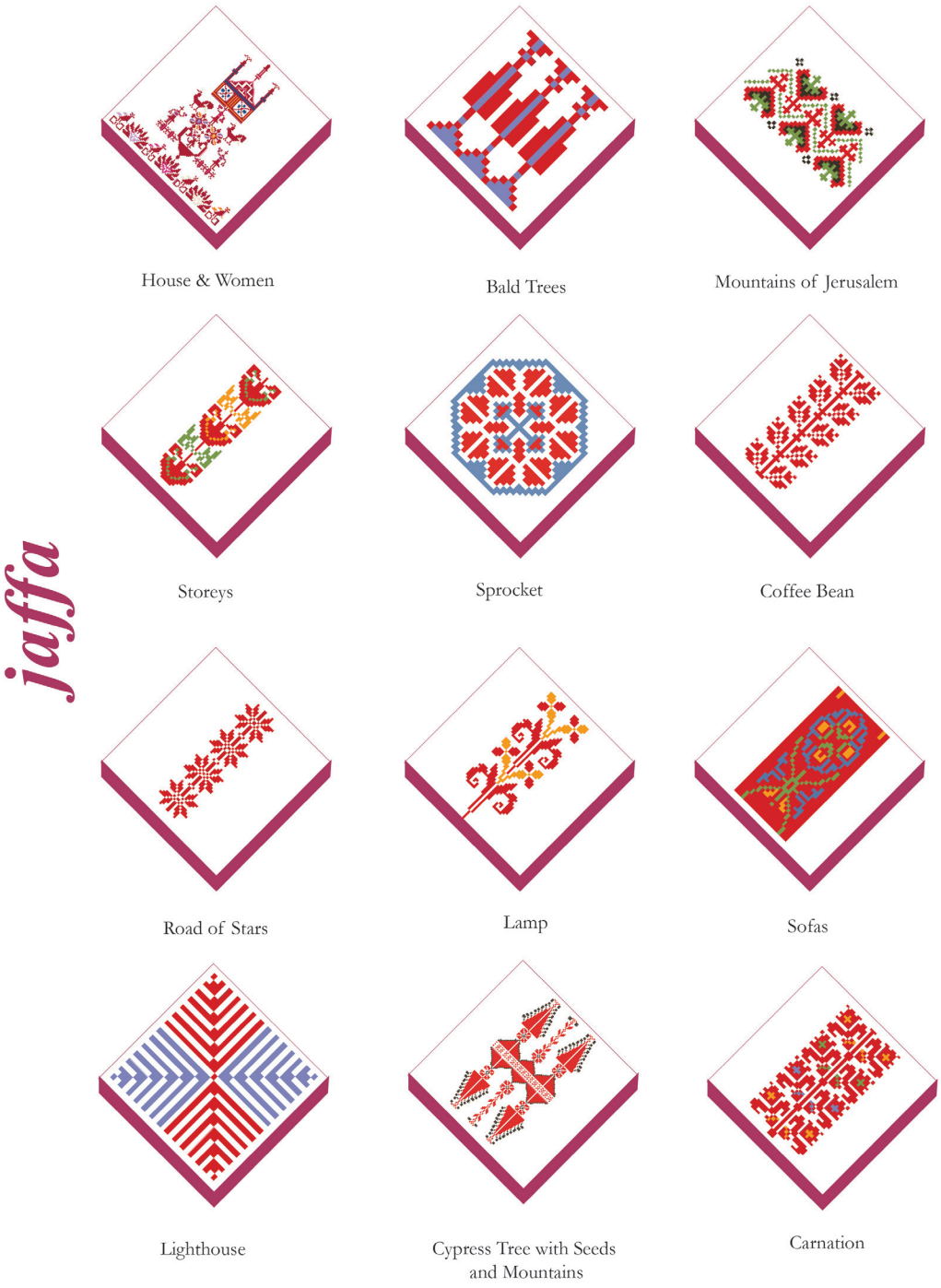


Fig. 0.4 Tatreez samples from the city of Jaffa, Palestine
Diagram by author in reference to Tirzain catalogue

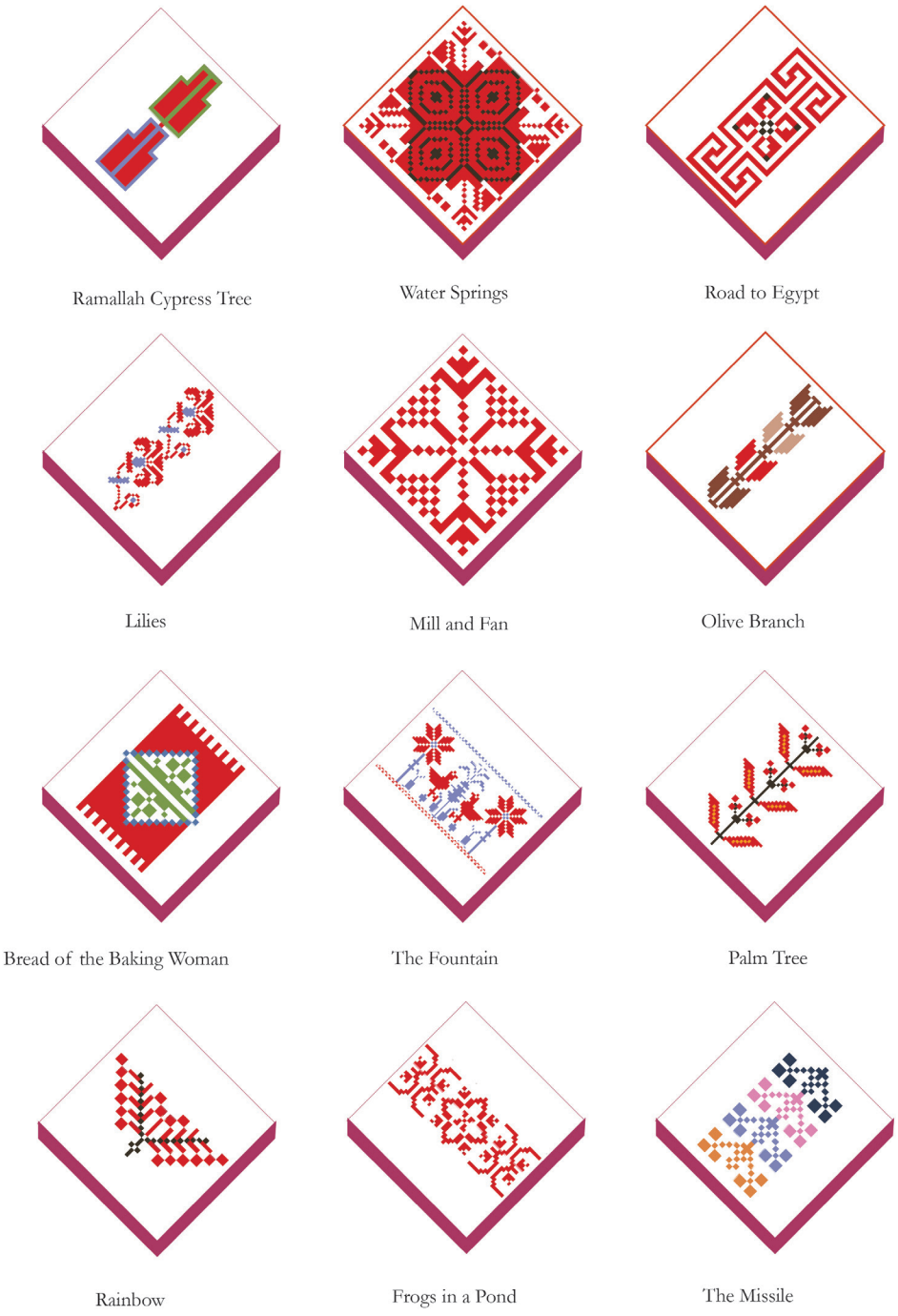


Fig. 0.5 Tatreez samples from the city of Ramallah, Palestine
Diagram by author in reference to Tirzain catalogue

Similarly, Patterns and motifs are influenced by architectural and environmental elements. For example, Bethlehem's embroidery often incorporates couching, reflecting the Byzantine influence in the area, while Bedouin women's use of amulets and triangle crescents was believed to ward off the evil eye. Bird motifs are prominent in coastal areas like Gaza and Haifa as a response to the migration patterns visible in these regions. Each design is not just a personal expression but a communal one as it is often adapted and shared among groups of women. [10]

Colors and patterns in tatreez also carry significant meaning as they indicate life stages and regional variances. A woman's village of origin and her status can be identified simply through the patterns and coloured threads she wears. In Hebron (Al-Khalil), young women traditionally wore green, while older women wore purple. The hues used in embroidery varied by region: vivid reds were common in Ramallah, while Al-Khalil women were identified by their more subdued brownish-red which is created using native plants like Indian madder and insects like kermes and cochineal.[11]

Tatreez was a significant part of daily life for village women as the sessions served as generational classrooms where grandmothers and mothers passed down wisdom, life stories, and embroidery skills to daughters who often started embroidering at as young as six years old. Despite the disruptions caused by displacement, these gatherings persisted in refugee camps and evolved into important spaces for women to discuss their identities and histories. The nakba transformed the meaning of tatreez as the distinction of patterns began to fade in the overcrowded camps. It evolved from being a symbol of regional pride to a symbol of global Palestinian nationalism, especially for the diaspora community. When practiced in groups, women typically sit closely together, often on the floor or around low tables and in circular arrangements or side-by-side in a line. This close proximity allows for easy conversations that flow naturally, as an exchange of personal and collective narratives. Tatreez is intensive, deliberate, and slow. The calculated and mentally pre-planned repetitive motion of puncturing the fabric and pulling the needle through it becomes meditative. As the hands are kept busy, it allows the mind to be free. It is through these intentional stitches that Palestinian embroidery becomes a quiet form of resistance.

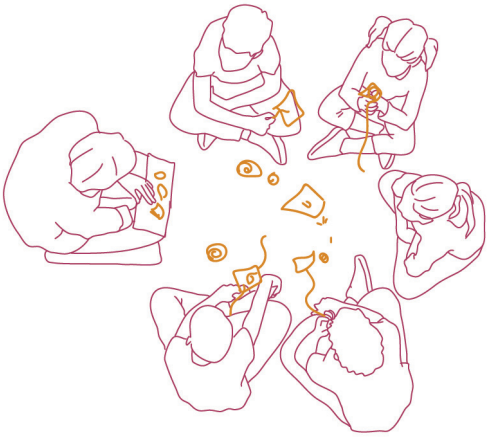
[10] Reem Farah, "Heritage is to Art as the Medium is to the Message: The Responsibility to Palestinian Tatreez," *Savoir Flair*, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.savoirflair.com/article/the-art-of-tatreez/e86c1d00-4cd6-4732-b647-190ad8a67e70.

[11] Mimi Droeshout, "The Art of Tatreez: Palestine's Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *Savoir Flair*, November 1, 2023, https://www.savoirflair.com/article/the-art-of-tatreez/e86c1d00-4cd6-4732-b647-190ad8a67e70.

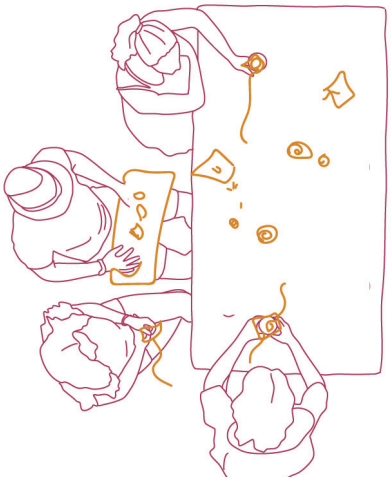


Fig. 0.6 Collage of various natural resources used for dying threads
Diagram by author

circular



around a table



side-by-side



Fig. 0.7 Tatreez seating arrangements

Diagram by author

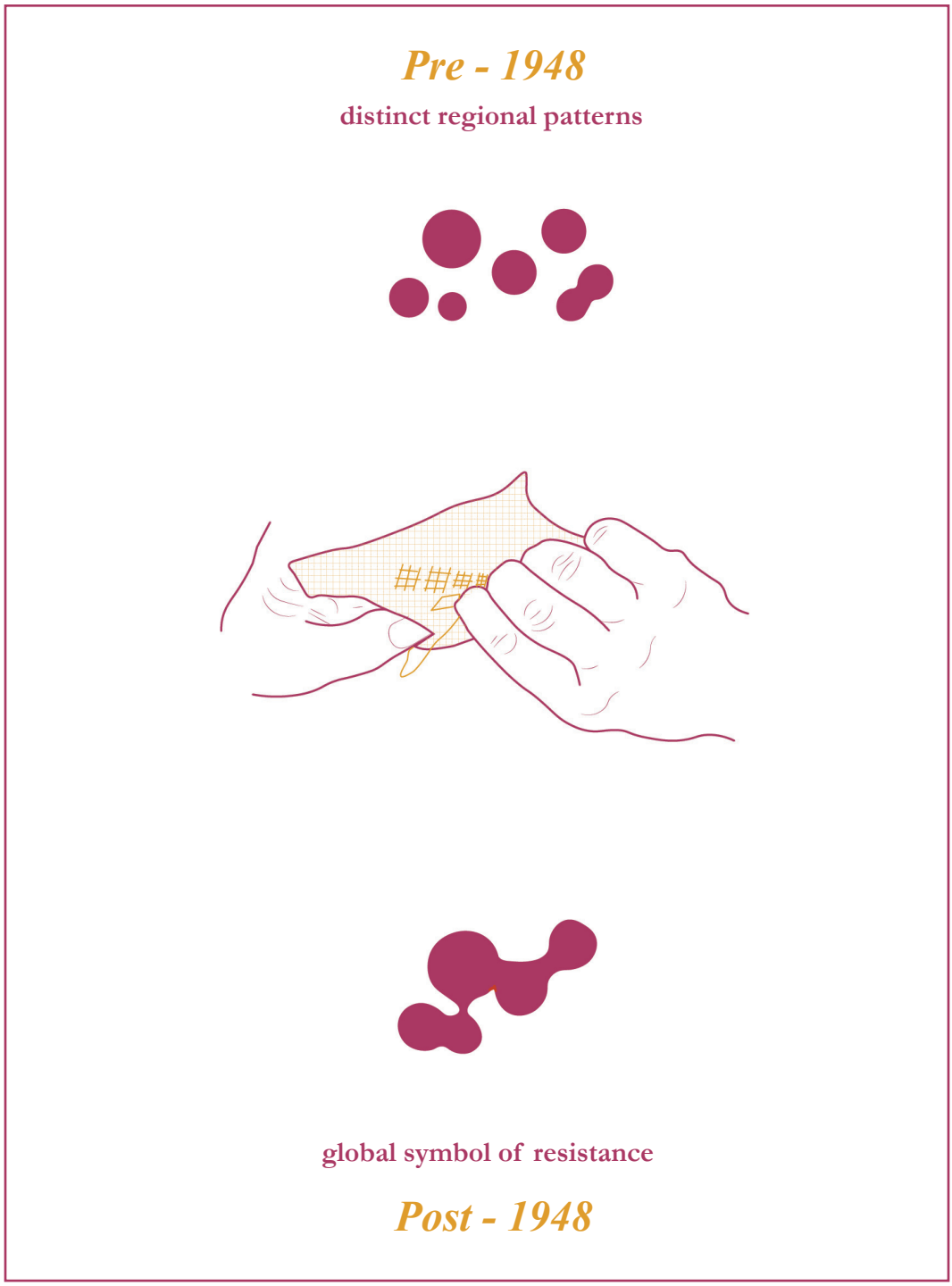


Fig. 0.8 Shift in the use of tatreez
Diagram by author

hebron

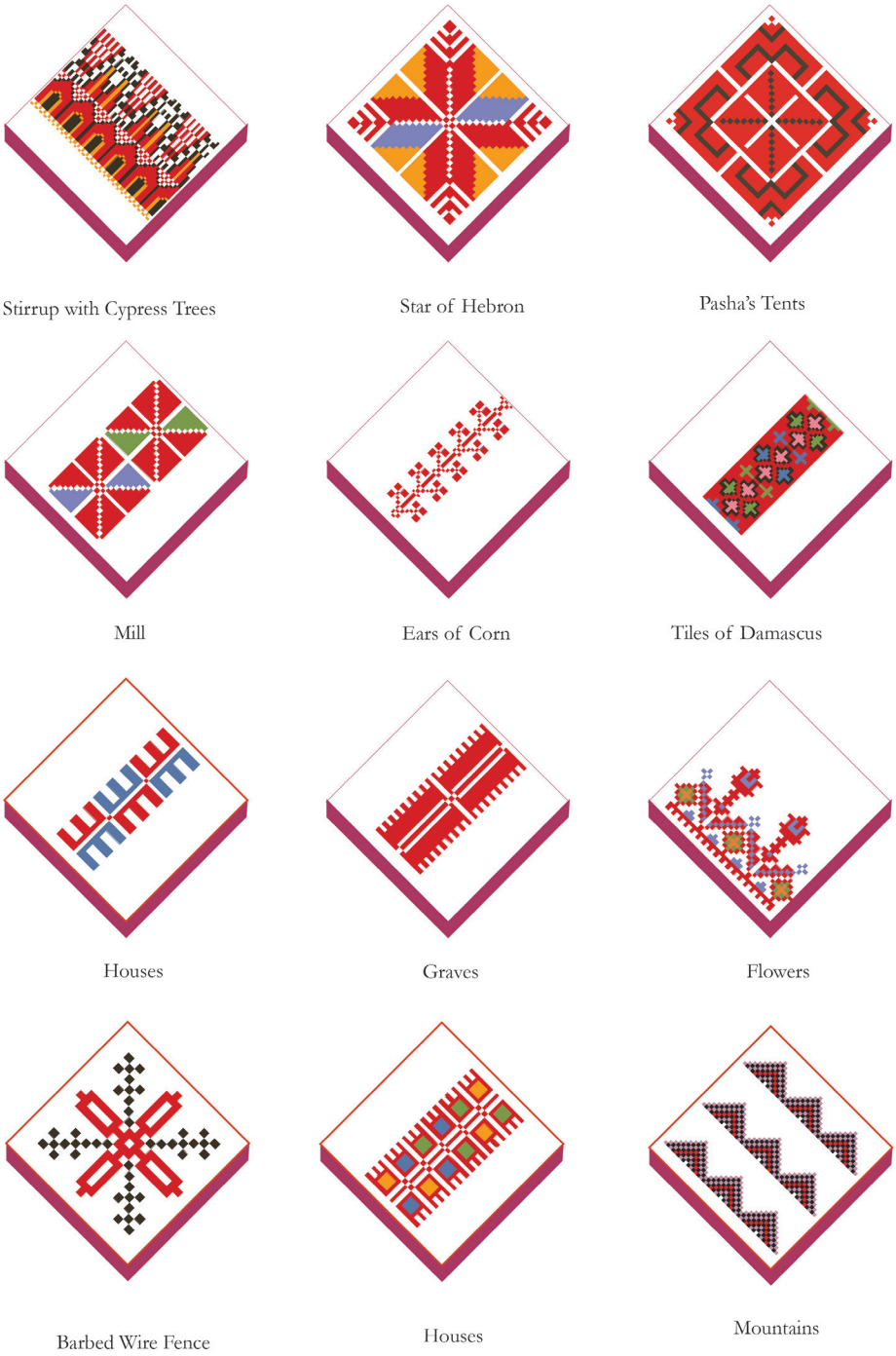


Fig. 0.9 Tatreez samples from the city of Hebron, Palestine
Diagram by author in reference to Tirzain catalogue

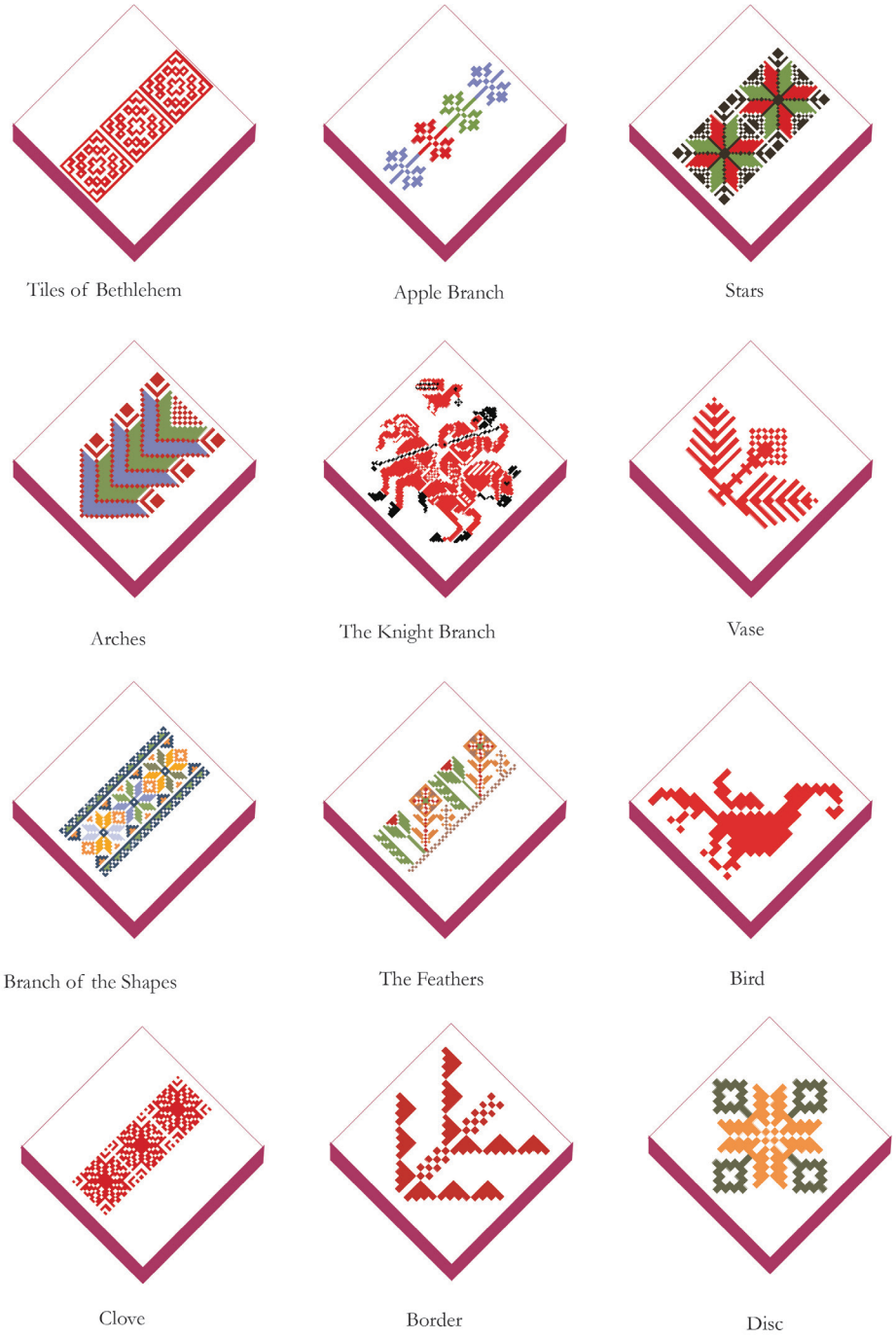


Fig. 0.10 Tatreez samples from the city of Bethlehem, Palestine
Diagram by author in reference to Tirzain catalogue

Methodological Reflections

The research methods of this thesis can be outlined in three sections: context research on NGOs in the GTA, fieldwork which consisted of participation in community gatherings and site analysis, and developing an archive by collecting materials otherwise deemed insignificant in the definition of existing formal archives.

This thesis builds on the works of scholars such as Sandi Hilal and Jens Haendeler in order to examine memory production in the diaspora. Haendeler's *Atlas al-Ain* has shaped this thesis's archival premise as it examines collective memory production as a performative tool that builds counter-narratives, challenging the often biased and incomplete state archives. It has also influenced the incorporation of an atlas as a process of documentation guided by members of the community. This material archive is focused on the natural water springs of al-Walaja, a village in Palestine facing the ongoing processes of erasure since the Nakba.[1] By giving its villagers the agency to narrate and reenact the histories around the water springs, the archive serves as a repository for preserving and commemorating elements of the past, similar to memorial books.[2] Situating the archive within the lived experiences of the community rather than external institutional narratives creates a democratic, performative and spatialized memory production process. Similarly, Sandi Hilal's *Permanent Temporariness* has guided the basis of this research as it translates the temporal experience of Palestinians into a spatial response through community based architectural interventions.[3]

Context

The background research on the current transnational networks and cultural practices was driven by a mixed methods approach which used both theoretical and empirical investigation.[4] Prior to conducting the fieldwork, existing Palestinian led spaces outlined by *The Canadian Justice and Peace in the Middle East Foundation* were mapped out to locate current activities. This included analyzing the type of community work and activity frequency of each organization through their digital platforms.

Focusing on the Greater Toronto Area as the study site shows that between 2012 and 2024, four Palestinian organizations with a physical location have been established, with two '*Palestine Houses*' in Mississauga still existing today. However, neither of the two remaining buildings

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[1] When the present-day Green Line was put in place through the Israeli act of state-formation in 1949, the two water springs of Al-Walaja were bisected across two territories.

[2] Jens Haendeler, "Atlas Al-'Aīn: The Performativity of 'Return' and Common Memory Production," *Parse Journal Intersections* 11 (2020).

[3] Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Maria Nadotti, *Permanent Temporariness*, ed. Nick Axel (Stockholm, Sweden: Art and Theory Publishing, 2018).

[4] Michael Pickering, *Research Methods for Cultural Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), [page number].



Fig. 0.11 The atlas al-ʿaīn workshop in al-Walaja, 2018
"Atlas al-ʿAīn," Parse Journal, accessed September 5, 2024. https://parsejournal.com/article/atlas-al-ain/.

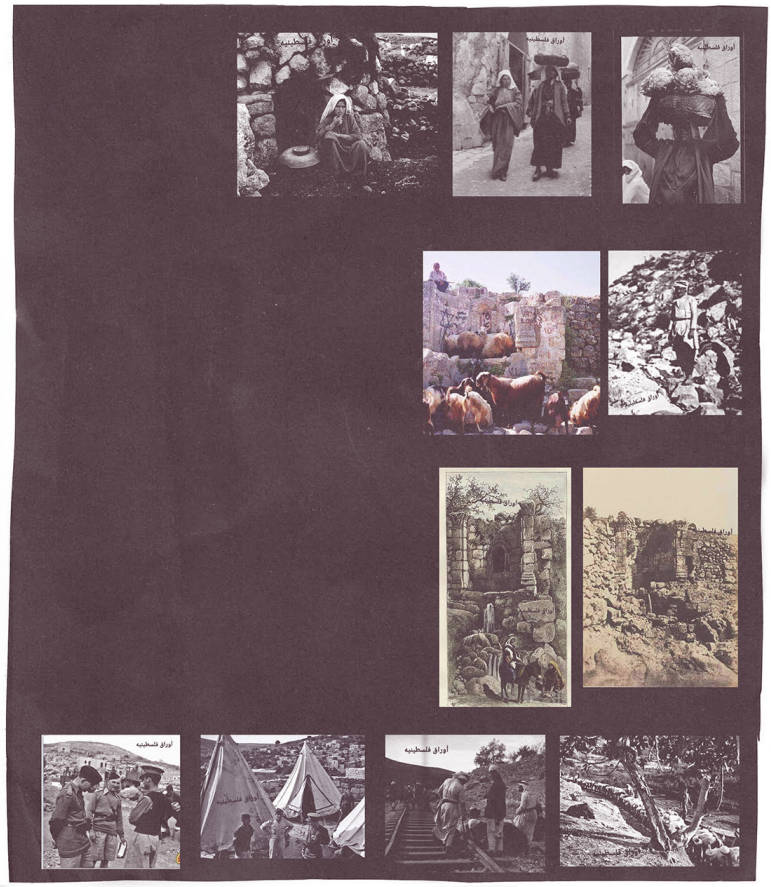


Fig. 0.12 Scan of album page of atlas al-ʿaīn, 2019
"Atlas al-ʿAīn," Parse Journal, accessed September 5, 2024. https://parsejournal.com/article/atlas-al-ain/.

use their spaces to build a consistent and reliable platform for the Palestinian community. A conversation with a former board member of *Palestine House 'B*'[5] revealed that the space is almost exclusively used as a rental facility. This is further proven through their inactive social media sites which have not been updated since July of 2023. Similarly, *Palestine House 'A'*, the chosen site for this proposal, is moderately active yet still does not operate in a consistent manner and operates within major spatial limitations that impact their outreach.

As articulated by political analyst Nadia Hijab, "perhaps the most serious problem facing Palestinian institutions in the diaspora is the absence of a vision and strategy for the Palestinian people articulated clearly and cogently by the leadership."[6] This lack of a clear strategy might be influenced by political division in the Palestinian homeland and lack of an overarching Palestinian Diaspora strategy abroad.[7]

These findings informed the design proposal which aims to generate community relevant public spaces and an intergenerational presence, formulating social networks that connect people to each other rather than connecting them with just the space itself. The research suggests that architecture can generate material processes that offer unified and collective opportunities for social and cultural activity by setting up a guided framework while still maintaining user agency and flexibility. The objective is to imagine how architecture can leverage memories and existing knowledge to produce sustainable interventions.

Fieldwork

I have visited 8 temporary initiatives that present tatreez in different ways through retail, exhibitions and workshops. These micro sites are invisibly situated in various typologies ranging from private domestic environments to public institutions. Gayatri Spivak asserts that researchers should learn to "speak to" as opposed to "speak for" the subaltern, with "speaking to" being an active gesture that involves a transaction between a speaker and a listener.[8] As such, during site visits, I position myself not as a formal researcher or observer but as an active participant within these community gatherings, engaging with the material, spaces and people.

The concept of the counterpublic is useful to imagine the relationship between diasporic spaces and the public sphere. Nancy Fraser, using Gayatri Spivak's "subaltern" and Rita Felski's "counterpublic", defines counterpublic space as alternative publics formed by marginalized groups often in ways that resist the dominant norms and discourses of the larger public

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5 For the purposes of this discussion, I am referring to the two buildings as Palestine House 'A' and 'B' for clarification.

6 Nadia Hijab, *The Role of Palestinian Diaspora Institutions in Mobilizing the International Community* (Zurich: ETH Zurich, 2006), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/19797/Palestine.pdf.

7 Helena Lindholm Schulz, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London: Routledge, 2003), [page number].

8 Rosalind C. Morris and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), [page number]..

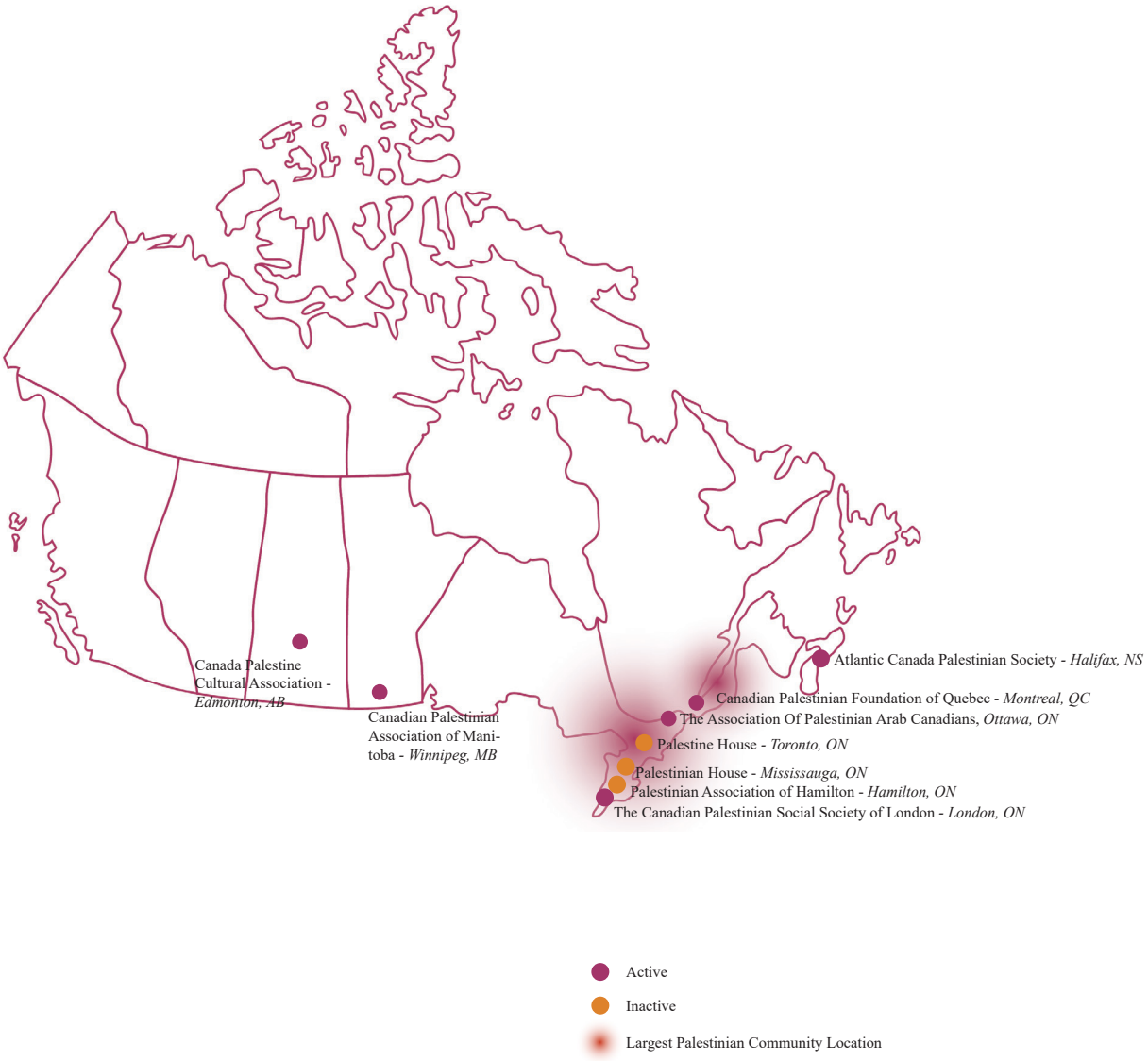


Fig. 0.13 Mapping the Palestinian organizations in Canada
Diagram by author

sphere.[9] Building on this notion, the research categorizes current transnational networks into "above ground (visible) counterpublics" such as demonstrations or encampments and "underground (invisible) counterpublics" such as these private workshops and micro sites, in which both categories embody solidarity and care [Fig. 0.4].

During the fieldwork phase, the engagement with these efforts has revealed a sense of shared obligation and duty towards organizing such gatherings, whether it is a major or minor use of space. Although the tatreez workshops do not create the same visual and spatial interruption of the cities' landscapes as large-scale protests do, they certainly carry equal weight towards resisting ethnic cleansing and calling for liberation. I argue that hosting tatreez and passing generational knowledge is an obligation, especially in the political context of today, and that the role of women as critical agents should be emphasized in their ongoing movements of resistance since 1948.

In this case, Palestinian women are the keepers of culture, making them the primary hosts in the re-invented Palestine House. Through their work with tatreez, they have created social and spatial networks to care for the human, the other than human, the more than human cite. Hilary Rose expands on the meaning of care from women's marginalized experiences by highlighting care not as a romantic notion, but a practical necessity for survival. She emphasizes that "hand, brain, and *heart*" must come together in the *present* moment, not just in an imagined utopian future.[10] My aim is to restructure the informal and short-term status of these counterpublics in the GTA to more visible platforms in order to facilitate broader community engagement and continuity in collective efforts.

Drawing

In addition to physical participation, the visual dissecting of spaces in Huda Tayob's *Subaltern Architecture* was used as a method for creating analytical drawings during the fieldwork phase. Her multiscalar approach analyzes structures through the inhabitants and their physical items.[11] I have adopted this method by positioning tatreez in relation to the body, the environment, the people and the urban and political context, which is translated through a series of drawings.

These strategies were implemented during my site visit where the spaces are analyzed through their surrounding context, community network, spatial arrangement, displayed items and the users' personal experiences. As personal encounters play a significant role in people's relationship with space, community members revealed stories of customs and traditions stemming from the material objects and antiques. In order to capture the depth of these observations, an experiential form of architectural drawing is employed to communicate

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9 Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," *Social Text* 8, no. 3 (1990): 56-80.

10 Heather Rose, "Hand, Brain, and Heart: A Feminist Epistemology for the Natural Sciences," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 9, no. 1 (1983): 73-90.

11 Huda Tayob, "Subaltern Architectures: Can Drawing 'Tell' a Different Story?" *Architecture and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 203–22, https://doi.org/10.1080/20507828.2017.1417071.



Fig. 0.14 Categorization of Nancy Fraser's definition of counterpublic space into visible and invisible.
Diagram by author

elements that are otherwise undepicted using traditional architectural orthographics. Architect and researcher Nishat Awan emphasizes the significance of involving non-architects in spatial processes. Awan argues that by acknowledging people's interpretations of their own histories, we equalize the intensity of the "expert-amateur dichotomy," bridging and minimizing the knowledge gap between architects and non-architects.[12] As such, the act of collective remembering becomes the guide for the spatial formation of the re-imagined Palestine House.

Archive

This research commenced in September 2023, roughly four weeks prior to the unfolding of events in Gaza and Israel on October 7th. The heaviness and unpredictability of this day were felt everywhere with the situation consistently worsening with time. Palestinian scholars and artists repeatedly emphasize the importance of memory and documentation in the preservation of Palestinian people's history, especially in the face of ethnic cleansing. Ali Abunimah, a Palestinian journalist, has explained that 'Palestine exists, because Palestinians have chosen to remember it'.[13] Implementing these observations, this work presents memory as a central site of creation and maintenance of national identity and as a site of resistance. As such, the material elements and memories of Palestinians are used to mobilize and reconfigure social structures in order to create platforms that facilitate the remembering, imagining, and preservation of home. The process of research has generated a physical and digital archive culminating into a collection of photographs, written pieces, relics, stories, and tatreez patterns.

To further build on Jens Haendeler's material collection process, the *Upward's Records Continuum Model* is implemented as a framework that presents records as an ongoing process rather than singular-use elements.[14] This concept illustrates four dimensions that are interconnected throughout the archive's entire lifecycle: *create, capture, pluralize, and organize*. These features support the social transmission of memory by overlapping various individuals' memories with the existing records in a flow of continuous interaction rather than isolation.[15]

In this case, collective memory is created and transmitted in these networks of 'archival performativity' which encompasses physical objects, performances, and human bodies. This process of collective remembering through intentional archival and sharing practice builds a community's collective identity.[16] The role of 'living archives', and specifically the living archive presented in this thesis, can be positioned here as an agent-driven and purposeful tool for the revival of culture and affirmation of identity. By applying the *Records Continuum Model*, the Palestine House functions not just as records storage facility. Rather, it presents

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12 Awan, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (2011).Top of Form

13 Ali Abunimah, "Dear NPR News . . ." *The Link* 31, no. 5 (1998): 4.Bottom of Form

14 Amalia G. Sabiescu, "Living Archives and the Social Transmission of Memory," *Curator* 63, no. 4 (2020): 497–510, https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12384.

15 E. Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 1, no. 2 (2001): 131–41.

16 Amalia G. Sabiescu, "Living Archives and the Social Transmission of Memory," Curator 63, no. 4 (2020): 497–510, https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12384.

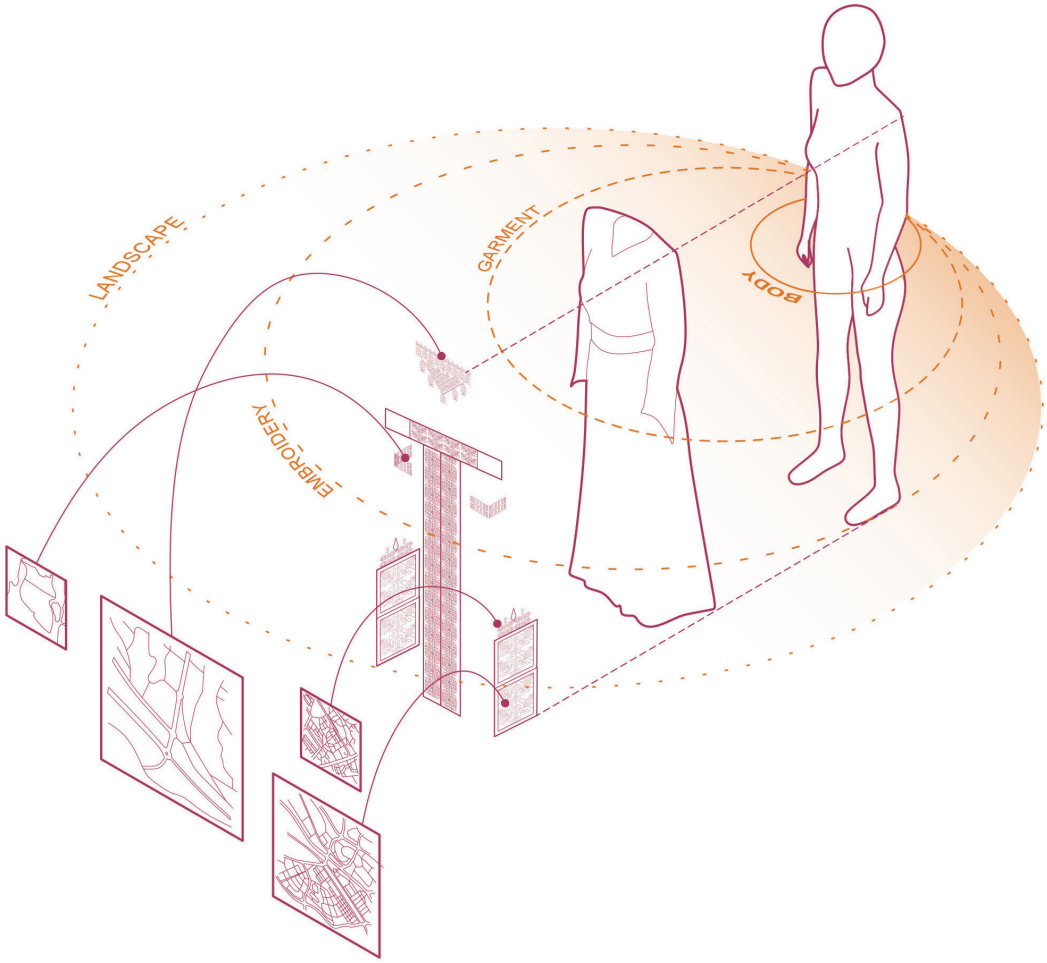


Fig. 0.15 Extracting tatreez patterns to show its relationship between landscape and body
Diagram by author

a living, breathing space where records are continuously created, captured, organized, and shared. This creates a dynamic archive and transnational network that celebrates the concept of 'permanent temporariness,' where the past, present, and future of Palestinian cultural practices are constantly intertwined and evolving.

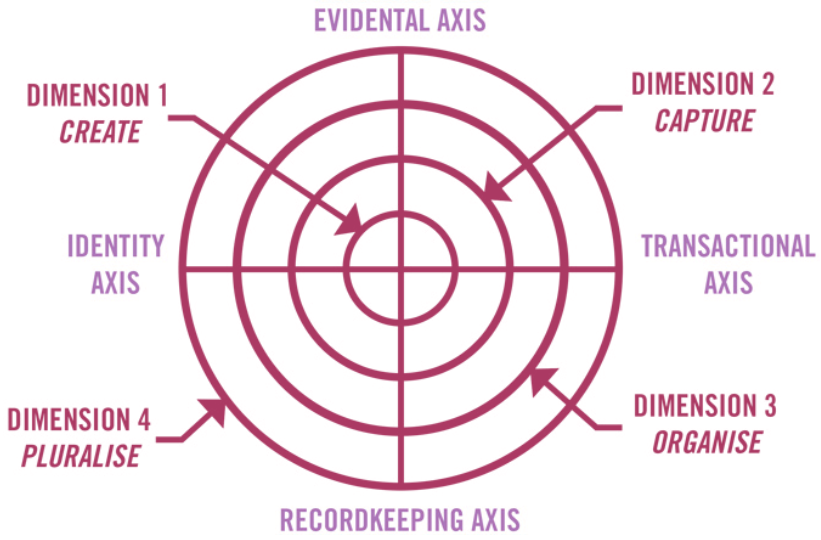


Fig. 0.16 Diagrammatic interpretation of the Records Continuum Model
Diagram by author

01
Historical Background

While the crisis of Palestinian displacement began in 1948, it can be traced back to the Zionist movement plan which was introduced in the late 1800s to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This movement occurred in central and eastern Europe as a form of national revival which, by the 20th century, became linked to the colonization of Palestine.[1] At this time, the immigration of Jewish Europeans to Palestine was heavily supported as the Zionist resources were primarily focused on purchasing land in Palestine.[2]

The way in which Palestinian land was purchased and later villages were raided was a progression that followed a Zionist calculated plan which included the formation of a detailed registry of all the Arab villages. Historian Ben-Zion Luria from Hebrew University initially proposed this idea of the inventory.[3] This was then put into action by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to formulate a database which supported the colonization of Palestine. The inventory consisted of detailed files of every Palestinian village. This included their topographic location, aerial photographs, watersprings, access roads, quality of land, the community ties with surrounding villages, the age of the male population (16 to 50 years old) and much more.[4]

> *We had to study the basic structure of the Arab village. This means the structure and best to attack it. In the military schools, I had been taught how to attack Modern European city, not a primitive village in the Near East. We could not compare it [an Arab village] to a Polish, or an Austrian one. The Arab village, unlike the European ones, was built topographically on hills. That meant we had to find out how best to approach the village from above or enter it from below. We had to train out 'Arabists' [the Orientalists who operated a network of collaborators] how best to work with informants."*[5]

This Zionist planning period which was ongoing during the early 20th century was discreet enough that it did not not generate attention from the local Palestinians. Although several Palestinian leaders pointed out the Zionist political movement of land purchasing, this was not addressed as an alarming issue as they did not envision a destructive outcome.[6] Many of the Zionist immigrants lived within the Palestinian neighborhoods, farming lands and working side by side with no ethnic divisions.

The Zionist agenda became clear during the 1917 Balfour Declaration. The British support for establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine was revealed in a letter exchange between

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[1] Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (London: Oneworld, 2015), 10.

[2] Reem Awad, *The Palestinian Refugee Camps: From Crisis to Cultural* (Hyrax, accessed September 25, 2023), https://repository.library.carleton.ca/concern/file_sets/js956g71n?locale=en.

[3] Ibid, 10

[4] Ibid, 17.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Awad, *The Palestinian Refugee Camps: From Crisis to Cultural.*

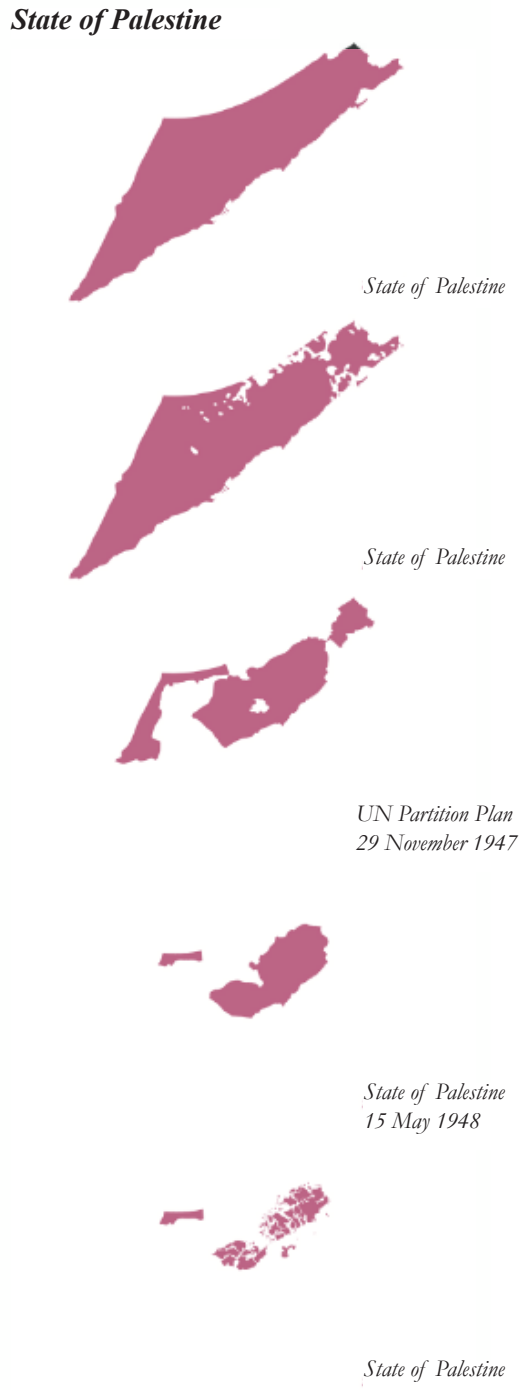


Fig. 1.1 Maps of the Disappearance of Palestine and the Birth of the State of Israel
Adapted with permission from Reem Thieb Awad, *The Palestinian Refugee Camps: From Crisis to Cultural*

the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour and Lord Rothschild. As this was a declaration made by a European entity addressing a non-European region in relation to another foreign community, it gave little value to the consequences it would have on the local indigenous people already residing in Palestine.[7]

By 1947, the Jewish community had ownership over 5.8% of Palestinian land, which was mostly bought from landlords living far from the region or even outside the country with no full knowledge of who the land was being sold to.[8] By the end of 1947, the UN recommended a two-state plan in Palestine in which indigenous Palestinians, making up the majority of the population, were allocated 43% of the land while the Zionist movement was given a state running through 56% of Palestine. Jerusalem was the remaining 1% and it would be administered by the UN under international ruling.

The Zionist movement leaders responded to this proposal by negotiating with the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) for an alternative map layout which would give them 80% of Palestine. This proposal was dismissed by the UNSCOP and they reiterated the initial 56% offer.

A month after the UN partition plan outlined above was proposed, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine began. In December of 1947, The raiding of Palestinian villages took place which pushed out a large number of Palestinians. In the six months following this, almost 800,000 were displaced with eleven neighborhoods fully vacated and 531 villages completely destroyed. cite

On 15 May 1948, the British withdrew from Palestine and the Zionists immediately declared Israel's establishment as an independent state over 77% of Palestine, including the larger part of Jerusalem. May 15 has become a day of dual meaning: a celebration of Independence Day for Israelis and a day of Mourning the catastrophe for Palestinians, which they refer to as "Al Nakba".[9]

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[7] Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 16.

[8] Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine,* 18.

[9] Arabic term for 'catastrophe'.

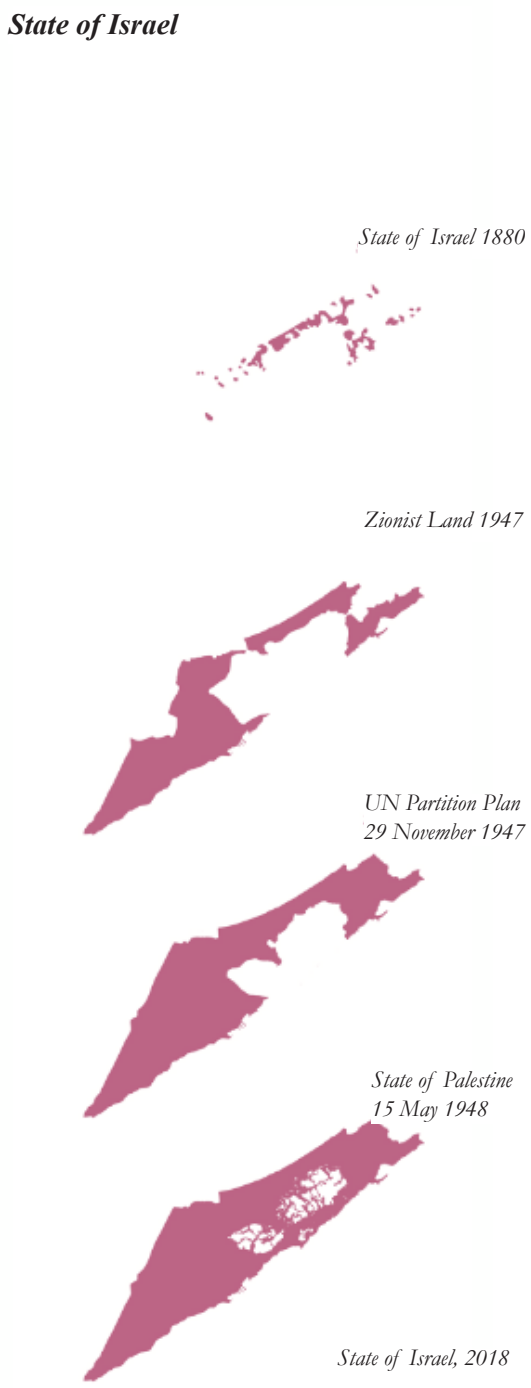


Fig. 1.2 Maps of the Disappearance of Palestine and the Birth ofthe State of Israel
Adapted with permission from Reem Thieb Awad, *The Palestinian Refugee Camps: From Crisis to Cultural*

02
Permanent Temporariness

2.1 In Displacement

In analyzing the experiential dimensions of 'home', the particularities and contingencies of individual and collective memories come into play, making the concept both complex and deeply personal, especially through the lens of statelessness. How can architects use design thinking to address the unique challenges of statelessness, particularly within diaspora communities? Additionally, how can architectural practices reinterpret traditional communal structures to support cultural preservation and identity?

The concept of permanent temporariness is deeply intertwined with the historical and political context of Palestinian displacement. This notion, which is embodied by those living within the Occupied Territories and the diaspora, can be traced back to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. During this period, many were forcibly displaced by the military (which eventually constituted the Israeli army), while others fled in fear of hostile military encounters. This war resulted in over 725,000 Arab residents of historical Palestine fleeing, leaving behind their homes, properties, and often their extended families.[1] These refugees were mostly distributed in neighboring countries: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt. Today, 80% of Palestinian refugees still live within a hundred miles of historic Palestine's borders.[2]

Still in a state of shock and confusion, they initially expected to return home once the war was over, especially given the seemingly temporary spatial organization of these tent camps. Arab host nations provided early assistance until the United Nations established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in 1949 to cater to the refugees' immediate needs. The agency is active in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza camps. UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as "persons whose normal residence was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict and took refuge in one of the countries or areas where UNRWA provides relief, and their descendants through the male line".[3]

Due to ongoing migration, ambiguity of the stay period, and often unstable conditions in host countries, a significant number of Palestinian refugees are not registered with UNRWA and consequently do not receive direct assistance; Some failed to register in time, some were able to find employment in host countries, some did not need economic support, and others refused to register for political reasons.[4]

The second Arab-Israeli war in 1967, also known as the naksa, resulted in the displacement of

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[1] Marie-Louise Weighill et al., *Palestinians in Lebanon*, Journal of Refugee Studies 10, no. 3 (1997): 15.

[2] Ibid.

[3] UNRWA, *Definition of Palestinian Refugees*, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/definition-palestinian-refugees.

[4] Helena Lindholm Schulz and Juliane Hammer, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London: Routledge, 2003).

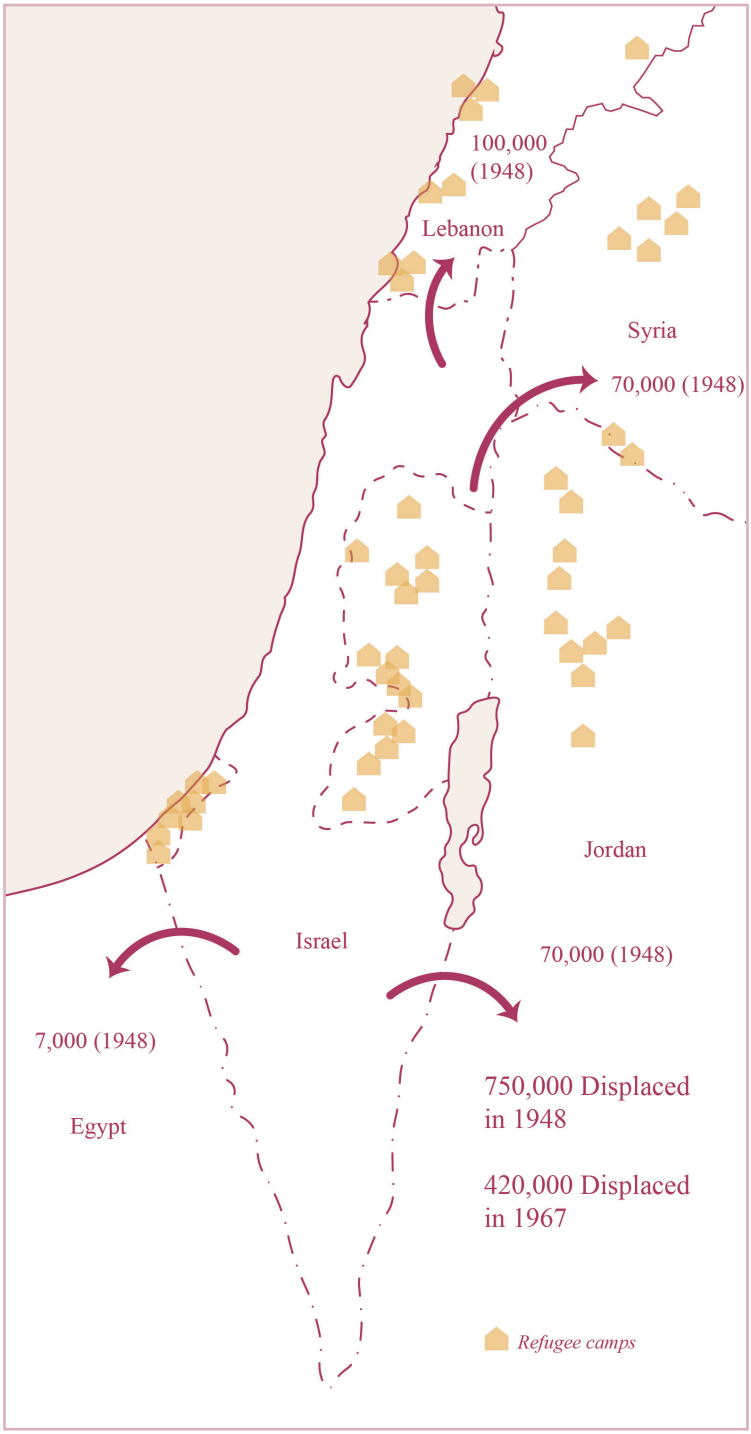


Fig. 2.1 Palestinian displacement map during 1948 (nakba) and 1967 (naksa)

Diagrammed by author based on data obtained from (Helena Lindholm Schulz and Juliane Hammer, 2003) and (Marie-Louise Weighill et al., 1997)

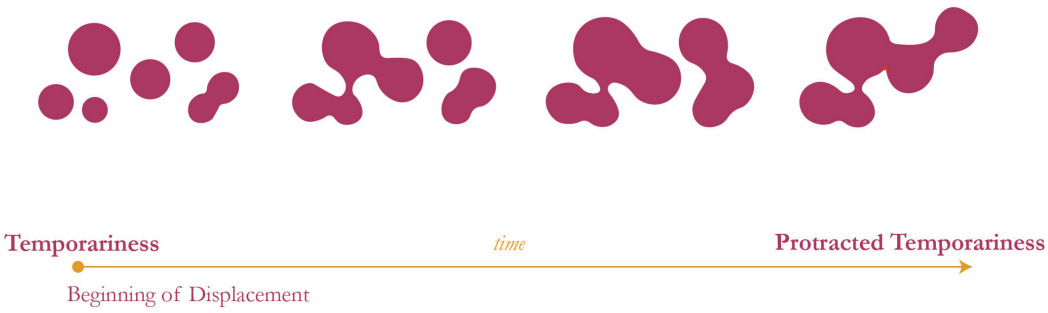


Fig. 2.2 Temporal reformation

The effect of 'protracted temporariness' or "non-temporary temporariness" is translated from the definitions of Amal Jamal in *Conflict Theory, Temporality, and Transformative Temporariness: Lessons from Israel and Palestine*

Diagram by author



Fig. 2.3 Factors that have influenced the Permanent Temporary Condition
Diagram by author

some 400,000 Palestinians. At this time, new refugees were classified as "displaced persons" and only those already recognized as refugees kept their status.[5] Similarly, those who left Palestine and unable to return due to expired Israeli-issued residency permits as well as those expelled for political reasons are also excluded from official refugee statistics and assistance.[6] By the end of 1967, the indigenous Palestinian population living outside their homeland had more than doubled, with nearly half of all Palestinians now residing in exile.[7]

Typically, refugee crises are resolved through repatriation, permanent settlement in the initial asylum country, or resettlement in a third country willing to accept the refugees.[8] However, in the case of Palestinians, Israel assumed that they would naturally assimilate into neighboring Arab countries due to shared cultural practices and language. This expectation has been unmet for several reasons, the primary one being the political reluctance of host governments to integrate Palestinians. This is rooted in Arab countries' insistence on enforcing UN Resolution 194, which was issued on December 11 1948 and resolves that:

> "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible." [9]

To this day Resolution 194 remains a paper exercise only despite Israel's admission to UN membership in 1949 being conditional on their implementation of UN resolutions, including 194. As such, the host countries argue that granting full resettlement and citizenship rights would undermine Palestinian political claims and affirm Israel's agenda.[10]

By analyzing both the political and material dimensions of the camp, a distinct disparity between them can be identified as each has uniquely impacted the urbanization of the camps. The spatial and structural evolution of these refugee camps, evelvolving from tents to concrete

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[5] Helena Lindholm Schulz and Juliane Hammer, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[6] Ibid.

[7] BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, *Bulletin 18: Palestinian Refugees and IDPs in International Law and Policy*, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.badil.org/phocad-ownloadpap/Badil_docs/bulletins-and-briefs/Bulletin-18.pdf.

[8] Tim Allen and Hubert Morsink, *When Refugees Go Home: African Experiences*, 1st American ed. (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1994).

[9] UN General Assembly, *Resolution 194 (III): Palestine Question*, December 11, 1948, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-194.

[10] Schulz and Hammer, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland.*



Fig. 2.4 A refugee camp in the Jordan Valley for displaced Palestinians in 1948.

Pictures From History / Universal. Accessed September 5, 2024. https://www.pictures-fromhistory.com/.



Fig. 2.5 Tents for Palestinians seeking refuge in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Mahmud Hams / AFP - Getty Images. Accessed September 5, 2024. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/palestinians-fear-leave-northern-gaza-may-never-able-return-rcna120950.

buildings, has been a response to the lack of space, activities and sense of home.[11] The primary issue with this expansion lies in the fact that the original construction base was never designed to support additional growth.

The initial structures built by the refugees were intended for short-term occupancy, and therefore lacked the necessary durability for long-term use or the addition of more concrete layers. These buildings were temporary solutions meant to last only a few years until the refugee crisis was resolved. However, as the crisis continued, further construction was added, without any consideration for the structural integrity required to support three or four additional floors. As a result, these buildings now pose a significant safety hazard to their inhabitants and the surrounding area.[12] The camps' governance system and their materiality have become powerful symbols of resistance and embody the quality of permanent temporariness. As architectural and communal structures, the camps represent a tangible expression of the ongoing struggle for identity and sovereignty. Their continued existence and the endurance of their inhabitants serve as a constant reminder of the unresolved crisis and the continuous hope for return, transforming them into sites of defiance and adaptation. The physical and social structures of these camps offer a deep representation of sumud (steadfastness) and a reflection of the Palestinian experience of displacement and the quest for permanence amidst temporariness.

2.2 In The Tent

Refugee camps were initially established as temporary spaces following the exodus of Palestinian refugees, but over time, tents transformed into more permanent concrete structures.[13] According to Mauriat, in many instances, Palestinian refugees constructed their new homes or more permanent dwellings directly on the sites where their original arrival tents had been located.[14]

Elisabeth Habib, through her interviews with camp elders and the documentation of their stories, notes that it was only six years after their arrival in Lebanon that Palestinian refugees began to lose hope of an imminent return to their homeland. Habib further explains how the harsh living conditions under the deteriorating tent fabric became increasingly difficult: "The tents, aimed at offering a provisional shelter were neither adapted to the winter, nor to the summer climates. Not trying anymore to survive while waiting an imminent return, the refugees wished now to settle in decent conditions, to build themselves a community."[15]

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[11] Yafa El Masri, *72 Years of Homemaking in Waiting Zones: Lebanon's 'Permanently Temporary' Palestinian Refugee Camps*, Frontiers in Sociology 5 (2020). https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2020.587063.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Pierre Mauriat, *Palestinian Refugees: Homes and Settlements*, PhD diss., University of Paris, 2001.

[15] Elisabeth Habib, *The Palestinian Refugee Experience: Stories from the Camps*, PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2012, 25.



Fig. 2.6 The Concrete Tent
Project conceived as a space for cultural activities, social gatherings, work, etc.

Concrete Tent, *Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency*, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.decolonizing.ps/site/concrete-tent/.

The tent has evolved into a global symbol for all Palestinians, deeply associated with the Nakba, carrying the narratives of displacement and hope for return. In 2023, the Sharjah Triennial displayed projects within the theme of *The Beauty of Impermanence: An Architecture of Adaptability*. This included a traveling *Concrete Tent*, which was situated in the Al Madam Ghost Town as an experimental preservation project. This project was first constructed in Gaza in 2015 and designed by DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency), a Palestinian and Swedish Studio. The concept of the tent explores the paradox of 'permanent temporariness' by presenting a hybridity between a mobile tent and a concrete house, temporariness and permanency, soft and hard, movement and stillness.[16] The project navigates the preservation of the tent's historical significance. Recreating a tent using concrete is an effort to maintain the cultural and symbolic relevance of this archetype in narrating the Nakba while simultaneously addressing the current political reality of exile.

The initial *Concrete Tent* installation in Gaza in 2015 formulated a grounded communal learning space, hosting cultural activities, a workspace, and an open area for social gatherings. This idea is translated from discussions with members of *Campus in Camps* who envisioned giving architectural form to the narratives of camps and refugees beyond the notions of poverty and victimization. After mapping the unbuilt spaces in the camp, the selected site is transformed as the tent has become a central point for youth, a place for wedding celebrations, and a venue for negotiators from the camp to hold peace resolution meetings.[17]

DAAR's philosophy in regard to 'permanent temporariness' is defined by displacement which often prevents people from experiencing the present. Reintroducing the concrete tent in Sharjah, UAE, emphasizes the ability of experimental reimagination of built environments to produce hubs of exchange and new community networks that bridge diasporic communities and host countries. The *Concrete Tent* traveled to Abu Dhabi in 2018, prompting conversations about guest workers in the Emirates, and also appeared at the Rabat Biennale in Morocco in 2019.[18] This project, however, with the ongoing destruction since October 7, carries a different meaning today; Much less symbolic, yet perfectly emulates what it means to live in a state that is permanently temporary. Palestinians have passed down stories of the Nakba from generation to generation. Seventy-five years later, the temporary tents which have become permanent cinder block homes are brought back. Historian Rashid Khalidi describes this as "a collective traumatic event in the minds of most Palestinians…back in 1948, the majority of the Arab population of Palestine was actually driven from their homes, and these are things that people remember hearing from their grandparents and their parents."

In *Architecture After Revolution*, a book presenting an insight into DAAR's architectural process, the notion of *Al-Masha* or the 'return to the common' is introduced as a running thread throughout. *Al-Masha* refers to land that is collectively owned by different farmers and only

[16] "Concrete Tent," *Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency*, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.decolonizing.ps/site/concrete-tent/.
[17] Ibid.
[18] "Concrete Tent," *Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency*



Day 1



Day 7



Day 14



Day 63

Fig. 2.7 Tents appeared as part of the pro-Palestine encampment at the Univerity of Toronto

Encampment lasted 63 days calling for the severance of institutional ties between UoftT and Israeli universities complicit in apartheid

Photo by Carlos Osorio for Reuters

exists where people agree to cultivate together.[19] The authors offer this concept of collective cultivation as a framework for re-imagining spaces and their original function to develop new propositions and re-activations of common spaces. Afterall, cultivation is about caring for life and ways of living. How can we use Al-Masha, not in the agricultural sense, but as a guide for other forms of human activity to generate new commons?

The *Occupy Movement* can be understood as a form of *Al-Masha*. It is a tactic for building a public space for protest and dialogue through people working together to imagine other possibilities.[20] The flimsy and fragile structures situated within the grand architecture of the academic institutions, capitalism and authority, publicly shame countries and individuals for their failures simply by their prolonged presence. Most recently, these tents have made an appearance globally as part of the pro-Palestine encampments. Some college presidents have demanded that protests be polite and convenient, or as the President of Princeton University suggests, adhering to "time, place and manner" regulations. It is an ironic statement when the very purpose of a protest is to challenge the status quo and introduce unusual activity. The tents are always reminding us of realities we don't want to accept. These humble structures house the people we don't want to see, from the tents of the activists, to the tents of the homeless. Tents represent many truths, and although often challenged and attacked, they continue to make an appearance because the problem is never the tent.

2.3 In The Madafah

The guest house, which is known in Arabic as the *Madafah* is a meeting place that was common in pre-1948 Palestinian villages. The word 'madafah' is derived from a root meaning "to serve a guest" or to be hospitable.[21] It served as an arena for activities that reinforced the kinship groups as social units by being a place that maintained internal relationships as well as the group's relations with the rest of the world.[22] The spatial quality of the *Madafah* was not only defined through its architectural presence; more importantly, is it shaped by the daily activities and ceremonies that it welcomed. Through these patterns, the *Madafah* came to have its own language as a social and architectural institution.

E. N. Haddad's description of the pre-1948 *Madafah* is listed in the 1920 *Palestine Oriental Society Journal* as a place of amusement, free lodging for guests, a village law court, a public meeting place, a coffee house, and a reading room.[23] In another description of the *Madafah* written in 1924, Omar Salih El-Barghuthi describes the alternative names that the *Madafah* receives as a *saha* (open courtyard), *Jami* (mosque), *qunaq* (residence of an official) and *majma* (meeting room). Ultimately, this is comparable to Sandi Hilal's notion of *Al Masha* described

[19] Alessandro Petti, *Architecture after Revolution* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013).
[20] House of Commons Library, *The Long History of Protest Camps*, July 29, 2022, https://commonslibrary.org/the-long-history-of-protest-camps/.
[21] Rami G. Khouri, *Room for Tradition*, AramcoWorld, accessed January 23, 2021, https://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/199303/room.for.tradition.htm.
[22] Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).
[23] E. N. Haddad, *Description of the Pre-1948 Madafah*, Palestine Oriental Society Journal, 1920.

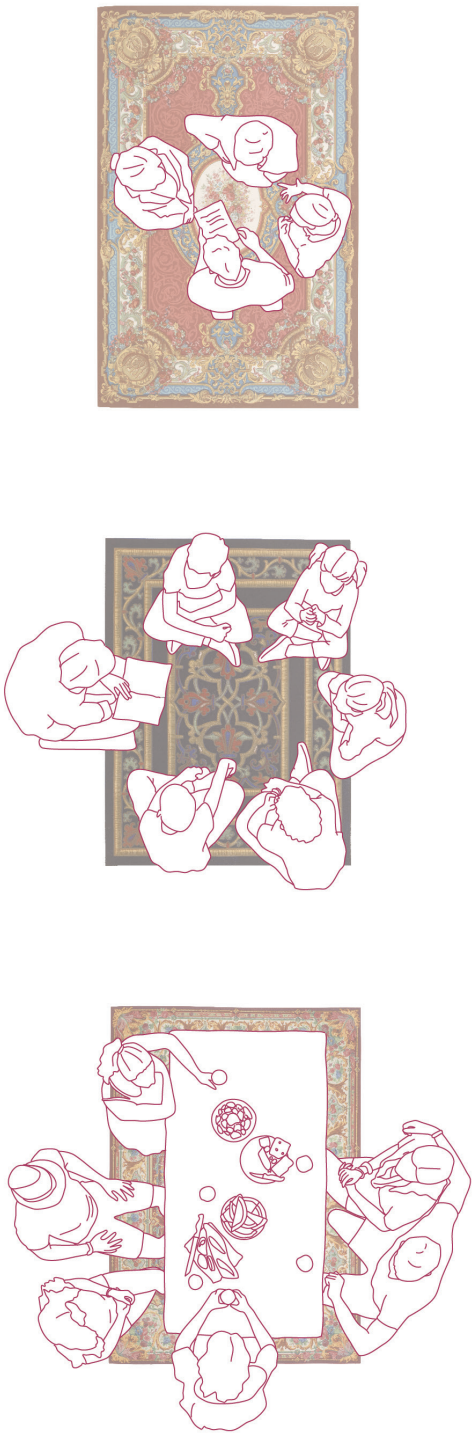


Fig. 2.8 Conceptual translation of madafah variations based on Haddad's description. Top to bottom: meeting space, storytelling space, and coffehouse.

Diagram by author based on Haddad's description (Haddad, 1920)

in the previous section as a shared area that is only activated through people's engagement, in comparison to public space which can exist without people. As such, in order for the *Madafah* to serve its purpose and stay true to its spirit, a relational effort is required by more than one individual at a time. This emphasizes the unique typology of the *madafah* as the ultimate point of reference when examining the notions of Palestinian hospitality and kinship ties. Historically, every Palestinian village would be supported by at least one madafah.[24] While interviewing Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Rosemary Sayigh quotes a memoir of a teacher who describes the operation of the guesthouse in his village of al-Sha'b as he revists his childhood:

> Any stranger passing through the village would also be the guest of the mukhtar (village headman), or anyone with a guest-house. This was a large room, with mattresses always there, and a charcoal brazier with coffee pots which should always be hot. This was so that whenever a guest came he would find coffee ready, and would say that this guesthouse is "living," its owner isn't so poor that he has to wait until the guest comes to make coffee. [25]

Sayigh's interviews present a consistent past where the guesthouse is one portion of a collective memory system that presents Palestinian architecture in relation to social networks. In Susan Slyomovic's exploration of the past Palestinian *Madafah*, she asks: how does a re-created, perhaps artificially reinvented, Palestinian guesthouse nurture social and gregarious groupings among diaspora Palestinians? When understanding the *Madafah's* principle as a grounding tool for one's internal group relations as well as their relation to the stranger, the madafah can still be articulated in the diaspora to strengthen community bonds through adaptable forms of hospitality.

Sandi Hilal explores the *madafah* as a typology that centralizes the relationship between the host and guest. In Hilal's translation, the social roles are subverted to challenge the notion of 'eternal hosts' or 'eternal guests', which she describes to be a form of colonialism. The *'Living Room'* situated in the Yellow House in Boden, one of five of hilal's global *Madafah* interventions, is led by a Syrian refugee couple and is used everyday by the public community. They have also developed a weekly program of hosting community cooking sessions in which a different person is assigned as the head chef each week, further reconfiguring the idea of the host. This adaptable and flexible form of spatial production shifts the boundaries of spatial agency by allowing the diasporic community to exercise their right to host. This thesis adopts a similar approach towards providing a spatial and intellectual platform that perpetuates hosting as a daily social practice. [26]

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[24] Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

[25] Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon* (London: Zed Books, 1994).

[26] "Hosting Is Power and by Having Power You Become Visible," ArkDes - Sweden's National Centre for Architecture and Design, September 18, 2020, https://arkdes.se/en/hosting-is-power-and-by-having-power-you-become-visible/.



Fig. 2.9 Madafah shown as the building on the right, Beitunia, 1984

Nabil Ghusein, *Huresh Guest House*, Palestine Remembered, accessed September 1, 2024, https://www.palestineremembered.com/GeoPoints/Beituniya_898/Picture_74541.html

03
Living Archive

3.1 Mobile Archives

It's crucial to acknowledge that the experiences of people of color and minorities are often missing from our formal records. In understanding that, how do we start to address these gaps and create a platform that facilitates a more inclusive and open construction of history?

These gaps offer alternative perspectives on the material and immaterial worlds around us. They are sources that can offer new tools and visions that respond to the complexities of our world. Huda Tayob emphasizes the importance of dialogue and the role of fiction in developing the architectural archive.[1] She stresses that "The world was changing around us and it was a very hopeful moment, however, within architecture school, especially at the time, there was very little change in terms of curriculum. It was very much a Eurocentric curriculum, particularly when it came to architectural history and theory—we learnt the European canon with a little bit of North America."[2] As such, ethnographic methods of research become central in uncovering hidden narratives and spatial practices. Tayob displays this approach through her research of *Architecture-by-migrants* in Cape Town, South Africa, which focuses on mixed-use urban markets that have been constructed by migrants from different parts of the African continent.[3] Through an infrastructural lens, Tayob highlights the centrality of these Somali markets for their users and their everyday livelihoods, and argues that they are much more than small-scale trades; researching at the scale of the individual shops and the goods they carry reveals that these spaces are crucial social and cultural infrastructures for new migrants. Similarly, the study points to the significance of thinking across different scales in order to capture various perspectives and spatial relationships rather than making assumptions based on surface-level observations.[4]

This multi-scalar approach can be illustrated through *The Travelling Kitchen*, constructed by researcher Vivien Sansour in collaboration with artist Ayed Arafah as an extension to her *Palestine Heirloom Seed Library* (PHSL). These two parts work hand in hand to safeguard and celebrate heritage seed varieties, traditional Palestinian farming techniques, and the cultural narratives tied to them.[5] Located in the village of Battir in Palestine, the PHSL also functions as a collaborative space for artists, poets, writers, journalists, and other community members to showcase their work. By collaborating with farmers, Sansour has identified seed varieties and food crops at risk of extinction. Her work has inspired local farmers and communities to actively protect their biocultural heritage and restore their local landscapes. The wooden portable kitchen is innovatively designed to fold and fit in her car. From the West Bank to

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[1] Huda Tayob, *Interlude Archive*, accessed September 5, 2024, http://www.interlude-archive.co/pages/hudatayob.html.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Huda Tayob, *Architecture-by-migrants: the porous infrastructures of Bellville* (Cape Town: Anthropology Southern Africa, 2019), 46–58.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Vivian Sansour, *Palestine Heirloom Seed Library*, accessed September 5, 2024, https://viviensansour.com/Palestine-Heirloom.

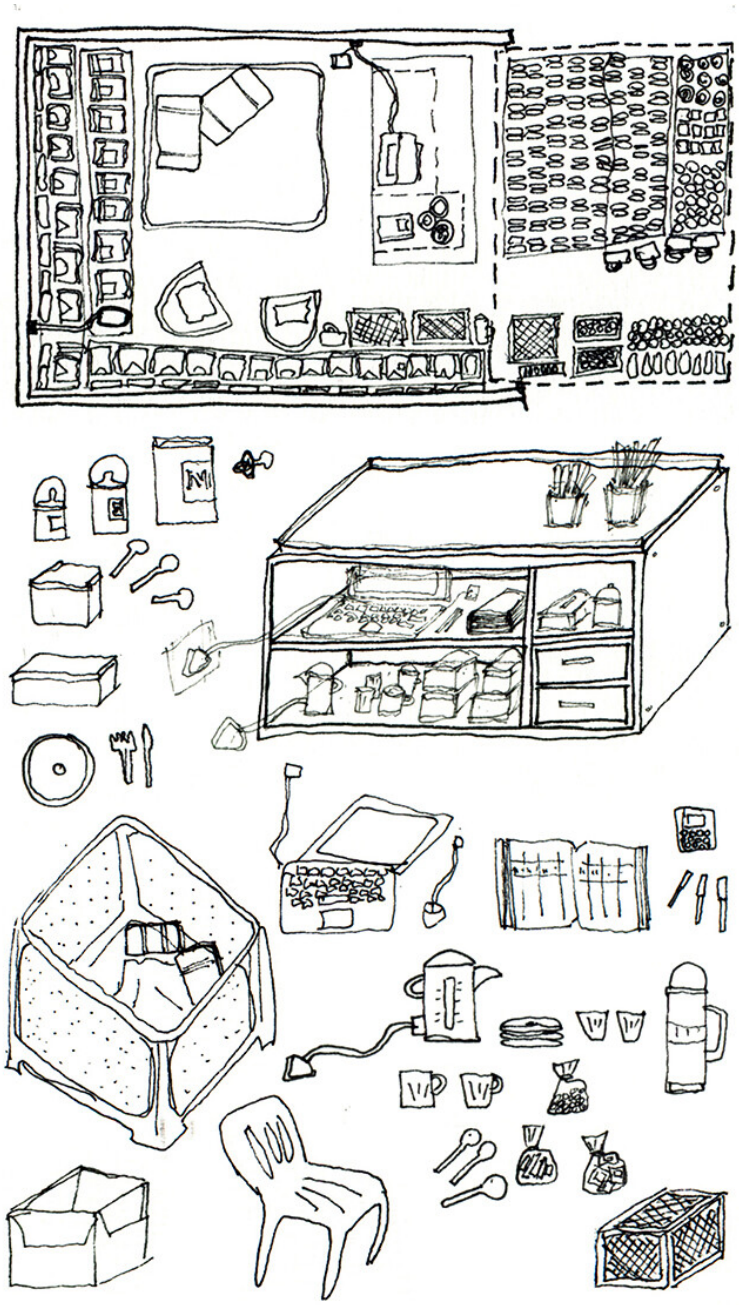


Fig. 3.1 Fatima's Shop, Bellstat Junction, Cape Town.
Drawing by Huda Tayob, 2014-2015.

London, Chicago, and New York, it serves as a mobile platform that sparks conversations with passersby about cultural conservation through food. In this case, the PHSL functions as a physical and tangible archive that centralizes the seeds, while the *Travelling Kitchen* works at the scale of the community, revealing the larger effect of heritage preservation.

"It's important that we take matters into our own hands and define what our future's going to look like. And that's the power of story…In one of the villages recently, a group of 18 women or so came from a nearby town. It was beautiful; they started cooking and other people arrived and brought more bread and then someone else brought over some beans and then everyone ate together. Usually, these people don't necessarily sit together at the same table, because there's a divide between the urban and the rural. When the women went back to their town, they started to order vegetables from the farmers. One of them called me and said: 'These women you brought here, they keep asking for more; I can't keep up with the demand!' Which is fantastic. It's what we want, right?"[6]

The urgency of the project is amplified during this current time given the ongoing bombings in Gaza, the "human-made" famine predicted by aid organizations, and last year being the warmest ever recorded.[7] Sansour highlights the seed library's role in light of these events as an opportunity to maintain a "living archive" not just for Palestine, but for our world that is undeniably in a hospice state.[8] This project demonstrates the effects of adopting a living archive as a fixed space that simultaneously operates as a nomadic structure that is temporarily injected into space to serve as a vessel of exchange.

In his examination of *Representing the Colonized*, Edward Said (1989) explores the potential for new narratives to emerge from crossing boundaries. In his reference to John Berger, Said expands his critique of academic methods, questioning the possibilities of alternative "ways of telling."[9] How do we begin to formulate an archive centered on physical artifacts and real-life experiences in communities that lack such an effort? During the summer of 1974, Judith Quinlan and Ellen Woodsworth embarked on a journey aboard a bright red school bus they had dubbed Cora. During their work for the feminist newspaper *The Other Woman,* and being loyal visitors of the newly-opened Toronto Women's Bookstore, Judith Quinlan and Ellen Woodsworth were inspired to spread the developments of the women's movement with communities outside the city. In 1974, they turned an old school bus into a bright red mobile

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6 Jennifer Higgie, "Writer and Activist Vivien Sansour on Food, Farming, Heritage and Healing," *Frieze*, August 19, 2019, https://www.frieze.com/article/writer-and-activist-vivien-sansour-food-farming-heritage-and-healing.

7 Whitney Bauck, "'They Kept Us Alive for Thousands of Years': Could Saving Palestinian Seeds Also Save the World?" *The Guardian*, March 29, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2024/mar/29/palestinian-seeds-conservation-climate-crisis.

8 Ibid.

9 Edward W. Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (1989): 205–225, https://racismandnationalconsciousnessresources.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/edward-w-said-representing-the-colonized-anthropologys-interlocutors.pdf.

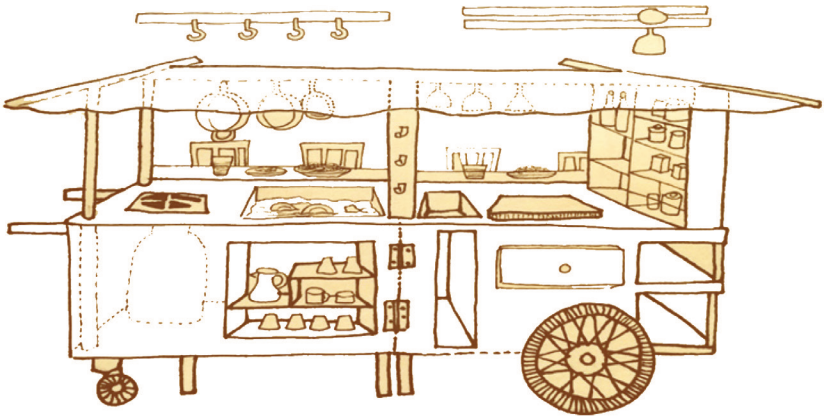


Fig. 3.2 The Mobile Kitchen

Vivien Sansour, The Palestine Heirloom Seed Library, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.cultivatingplace.com/post/the-palestine-heirloom-seed-library-vivien-sansour-best-of.



Fig. 3.3 Vivien Sansour at the Heirloom Seed Library

Vivien Sansour, The Palestine Heirloom Seed Library, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.cultivatingplace.com/post/the-palestine-heirloom-seed-library-vivien-sansour-best-of.

library named *Cora*. In this project, their archival collection welcomed tangible artifacts: Things like the slogan buttons, march banners and t-shirts, pamphlets, recordings of speeches, oral histories, videos and more. As such, the collection was designed to be constantly expanded.[10] Pat Leslie, editor of *The Other Woman,* expressed that "a document is something more than a sheet of paper…It is a very alive piece of herstory. Must we allow our daughters to suffer the same mistakes as ourselves because we neglected to provide a continuity of ideas? Keeping 'useless' pieces of paper is never a waste of time. Nothing, nothing which relates to our movement should be thrown away."[11]

In this thorough approach of collecting, what distinguishes the Canadian Women's Movement Archives is that it centralizes the communities whose records it was collecting. In 1980, Leslie explained that "We were debating the state of the world and plotting how to make change, and we were sewing…that challenges this way that people stereotype feminists, or at least did in that time, that we were militant and harsh and hard. And we could be those things, sure, but we could also sit around and have a quilting bee to make our banners. I like that it shows that; all the many sides of who we were, whether we held bake sales or marched on Parliament. We could do all those things."[12] The tactility of some of the archived pieces offers a sensorial opportunity that deepens one's reflections of some of these historical moments.

3.2 Tatreez as Archive

The Bookmobile's methodology acknowledges the lack of continuity in preserving history, and its emphasis on physical artifacts as being tools that can fill the gaps through the stories they tell. This follows a similar line to researcher Widad Kawar whose research on Tatreez (traditional Palestinian embroidery) presents the craft as an object worthy of study and documentation and one that deserves to be preserved and collected. In 1967, acknowledging the lack of documentation on tatreez due to the unexpected displacement, Kawar traveled across refugee camps to collect thobes and learn about their origins from their makers.

This centuries-old art form, the guiding tool of this research, is a craft passed through generations orally between mothers, daughters, and grandmothers, and is increasingly threatened. The ongoing displacement of Palestinians by Israeli forces and settlers has made the continuation of this art form difficult, causing handmade tatreez to become less common.

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10 University of Ottawa Library, "Grassroots Organizing and the Women's Liberation Movement," accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.uottawa.ca/library/news-all/grassroots-organizing-womens-liberation-movement.

11 Lisa Naccarato, "Expect Toronto's Newest Library Bus to Be Packed with Technology as Well as Books: The Latest Bookmobile Will Hit the Road in May," *CBC News*, February 21, 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-mobile-library-books-1.3991581.

12 Ibid.



Fig. 3.5 Exterior view of the CORA in Stratford

CORA in Stratford, accessed September 5, 2024, https://arcs-atom.uottawa.ca/index.php/womens-liberation-bookmobile-cora-in-stratford.



Fig. 3.4 Interior view of the CORA in Stratford

CORA in Stratford, accessed September 5, 2024, https://arcs-atom.uottawa.ca/index.php/womens-liberation-bookmobile-cora-in-stratford.

Mid 1800 - Early 1900s: The Thobe

Tatreez began in the mid 1800s and was typically practiced by village and farmer women called *Falaheen* as a collective creative outlet for people who cultivated and cared for the land for centuries. The *thobe* (or dress) served as a canvas for Palestinian women to express their history, memory, and ties to the land through colorful stitched motifs. Until the mid-20th century, these dresses reflected the identity of the wearer or their locality, such as a wife, mother, daughter, family, home, village, town, field, or market.[13] Through the intricate needlework techniques, thread selection, and colors, each *thobe* held the biographical details of its owner. Each woman's interpretation of traditional patterns was a way to tell her story through her embroidery.

Over time, Palestinians have preserved the remaining fragments of their past, including harvest baskets, woven fabrics, glass ewers, painted ceramics, and embroidered dresses, as a way to resist cultural erasure and honor the lives and legacies of the artisans. Thus, oral histories and Palestinian photographic archives have become the most crucial resources for understanding the art of embroidery and tatreez as an intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO placed the art of embroidery in Palestine, including the practices, skills, knowledge, and rituals, on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2021.

Yet, in many historical and recent accounts, Palestinians are often depicted as nameless and placeless.[14] *In After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, Edward Said explains that "Exile is a series of portraits without names, without contexts. Images that are largely unexplained, nameless, mute."[15] Photographs of Palestinians from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries rarely, if ever, reveal details about the subjects' identities or backgrounds. The travel photography of John Anthony and Maxime Du Camp, which often excluded human subjects, and the archives of the Library of Congress, containing images of anonymous individuals depicted as biblical figures, contributed to a view of Palestine as an ancient, biblical land. This portrayal often overlooked the fact that Palestine was a living, socially active place with Indigenous inhabitants.[16]

This disconnect is also seen in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Palestinian dress collection, which carried objects donated to the museum mainly prior to 1948. Although these objects are deeply connected to the hands and bodies of their creators, museum and collection records

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13 Widad Kamel Kawar, *Threads of Identity: Preserving Palestinian Costume and Heritage* (Cyprus: Rimal Books, 2011), 1.

14 Wafa Ghnaim, "Tatreez in Time: The Memory, Meaning, and Makers of Palestinian Embroidery," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, July 26, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/articles/2024/07/tatreez-in-time.

15 Edward Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

16 Issam Nassar, "'Biblification' in the Service of Colonialism," *Third Text* 20, no. 3–4 (2006): 317–326, https://doi.org/10.1080/09528820600853589.



Fig. 3.6 Ramallah women wearing the everyday style of the white thobe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Wafa Ghnaim, "Tatreez in Time: The Memory, Meaning, and Makers of Palestinian Embroidery," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, July 26, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/tatreez-in-time.



Fig. 3.7 Photographs of Jerusalem during the early twentieth century

Left: In the 1960s, a thriving and socially inhabited city of Jerusalem deserted and without any sign of human life. Right: An unnamed Palestinian man poses as a Biblical subject for an American photographer during the early twentieth century.

Issam Nassar, "'Biblification' in the Service of Colonialism," Third Text 20, no. 3–4 (2006): 317–326.

around the world still lack information about the artisans behind them.[17] In some ways, this absence is balanced as the stitches, materials and techniques used can at times attest to regional identity.

In the mid-1800s, designs were mostly geometric and abstract, drawing inspiration from agriculture, flora, and fauna. This included things like poppies, doves, palm trees, and grape leaves. However, by 1900, dresses started featuring tatreez patterns that were more realistic and curvilinear, showing swans, peacocks, winged lions, and non-native flowers.[18]

Nakba (1948)

During the Nakba, in the rush to escape with only the clothes on their backs, many families lost their heirlooms, including dresses which were looted from their homes. As mentioned previously, the records of donor acquisitions for Palestinian dresses are notably incomplete, however, many donations to museums coincided with times of war and mass displacements in Palestine. The impact of the Nakba and the displacement of Palestinians to neighboring villages and crowded camps in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria has led to changes in the once distinct and recognizable patterns.[19]

Very few traditional dresses were produced in the 1950s, as Palestinians "found themselves living and working under utterly different political exigencies, in transformed and difficult environments, with changed material realities." [20] The specific embroidery and dressmaking techniques tied to particular geographic regions were interrupted. Women who are now dispersed across refugee camps began exchanging patterns with one another. Many of them faced financial hardships, making it difficult to afford the materials traditionally needed for tatreez, such as silks, beads, and coins that were once integral to the thobe.[21] They also struggled to get traditional fabrics from the historic Gaza weaving center of al-Majdal. The inhabitants of al-Majdal who were displaced to the present-day Gaza Strip have constantly attempted to revive their weaving practices using the looms they managed to save. However, since October 7, these historic looms have been destroyed, and the fates of the few weavers guarding this art form remains mostly unknown. [22]

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[17] Ghnaim, "Tatreez in Time."

[18] Ibid.

[19] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, *Where We Work*, accessed June 6, 2024, https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work.

[20] Rachel Dedman, *At the Seams: A Political History of Palestinian Embroidery* (Birzeit: The Palestinian Museum, 2016), 44.

[21] Ghnaim, "Tatreez in Time."

[22] This information was provided directly to The Tatreez Institute by Husam Zaqout, a descendent of one of the main families of al-Majdal, who was located in Gaza at the time of the correspondence and witnessed the destruction by the Israeli occupation on November 28, 2023. Before October 7, 2023, Mr. Zaqout had a weaving business, making and selling the special Majdal fabrics on the historic looms, employing local weavers, and teaching the tradition of weaving at Atfaluna Society for Deaf



Fig. 3.8 First-Intifada Dress

Palestinian women protested home demolitions, extreme curfews, and banning of the Palestinian flag by embroidering recognizable national motifs onto their dresses using the flag's colors (green, red, black and white)

Source: Rachel Dedman, At the Seams: A Political History of Palestinian Embroidery (Birzeit: The Palestinian Museum, 2016)

Six Day War (1967) and First Intifada (1987-93)

During the first Intifada (uprising), women protested the home demolitions, extreme curfews, and banning of the Palestinian flag by embroidering recognizable national motifs onto their dresses using the flag's colors (green, red, black and white).[23] This period introduced new tatreez patterns that reflected the current political circumstances such as slinging rocks, men wearing the keffiyeh scarf, protest chants, and key architectural sites.[24] Such dresses were named the Intifada Dress.

The Thobe Today

In this context, one questions the significance of the thobe when it is removed from its land and its creator. If Palestine carries the collective memories of its Indigenous people, what does the thobe represent when it is separated from its place of origin? The thobe was, and continues to be, a crucial part of a Palestinian woman's life.

Following 1948, tatreez transformed from being a reflection of home into an act of resistance against Zionist claims of Palestinian non-existence. It also became an economic tool for those in the camps as it is commodified by NGOs who employ embroiderers and distribute their work in the diaspora. Since October 7th, there has been, once again, a transformation in the use of tatreez in the diaspora and an introduction of new tatreez patterns to commemorate the thousands killed in Gaza. It shifted from being a commodity to a process that is celebrated and acknowledged for its historical value. Tatreez workshops have emerged globally as a tool for reviving intergenerational storytelling and heritage reconnection. These workshops function beyond mere crafting sessions, they serve as platforms for community building and solidarity, honoring the spirit of Gaza's people.

Children to provide income-generating activities to the deaf Palestinian community in Gaza. His heroic efforts to protect Palestinian cultural heritage have continued in Cairo, where he is rebuilding his weaving center. http://www.thirdtext.org/farah-tatreez

[23] Rachel Dedman, At the Seams: A Political History of Palestinian Embroidery (Birzeit: The Palestinian Museum, 2016), 44.

[24] Ibid.

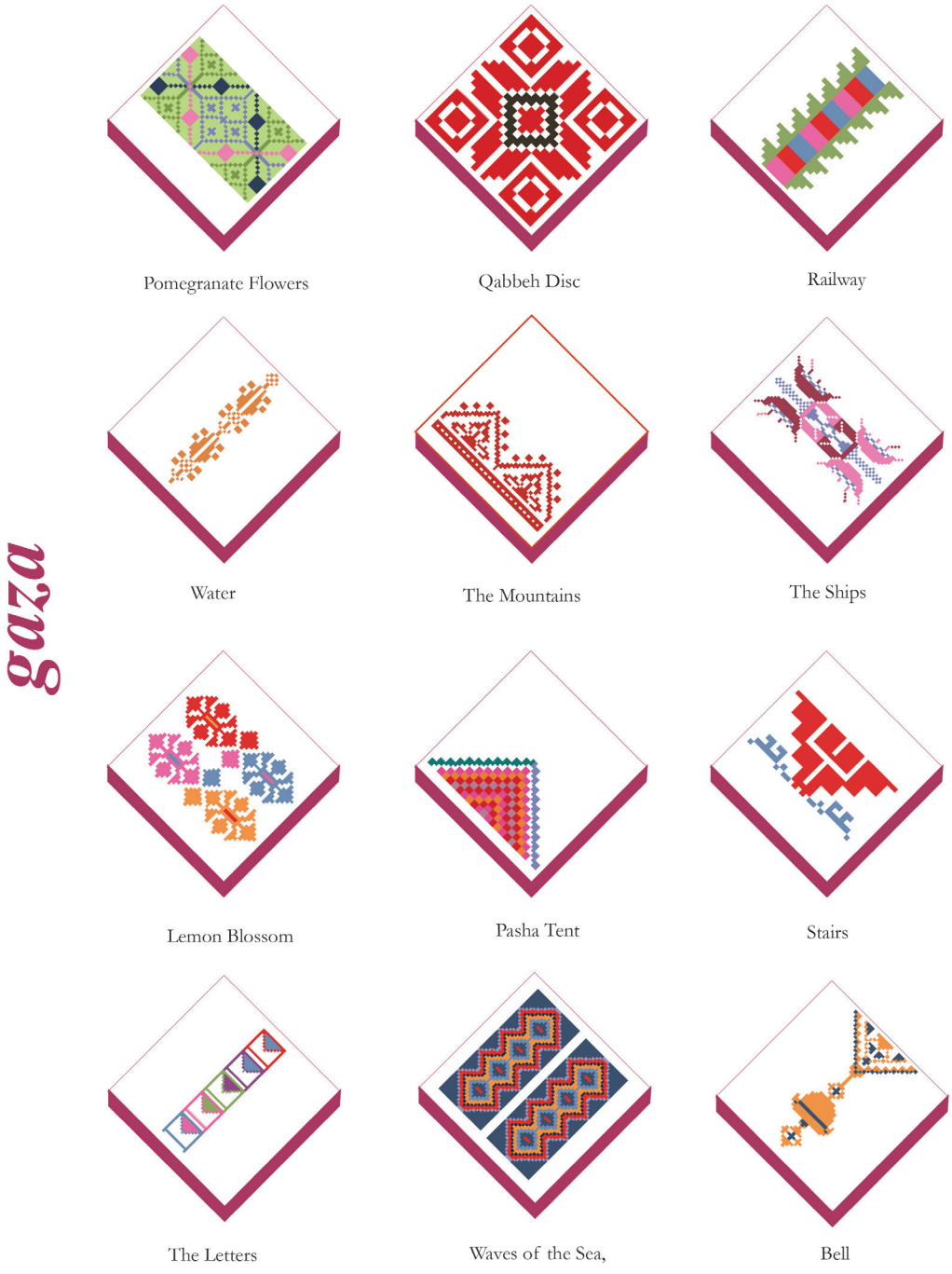


Fig. 3.9 Tatreez samples from the city of Hebron
Diagrammed by author in reference to Tirzain catalogue

Fig. 3.10 First-Intifada Dress

Source: Rachel Dedman, At the Seams: A Political History of Palestinian Embroidery (Birzeit: The Palestinian Museum, 2016)





Fig. 3.11 First-Intifada Dress

Source: Rachel Dedman, At the Seams: A Political History of Palestinian Embroidery (Birzeit: The Palestinian Museum, 2016)

04
Narratives

Memory and Home

Maurice Halbwachs argues that places maintain community connections, and that a group's existence in one place is an indication of its continuity across generations. In the case of Palestine, however, where the permanence of a "generational site" is disrupted, the group's connection to place carries a different process.[1] Such sites are defined by Historian Peter Read as "lost places" that have endured literal and metaphorical destruction but remain standing in the memories of their communities. [2] Much of Palestinian collective memory of home is traced back to events of mass loss, including the Nakba, the Six-Day War and the ongoing land dispossessions. The territorial losses and the dominating narratives that doubt Palestinian existence are perceived as threats to belonging, further emphasizing the significance of the homeland in Palestinian memories and narratives.[3] As such, positioning the homeland between memory and politics is expressed as "the shared sense of 'Palestinianness'" in the midst of fragmentation.[4] In understanding memory as a tool of belonging, publicizing it becomes a form of cultural and political resistance. Scholars Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod suggest that "Making memories public affirms identity, tames trauma, and asserts Palestinian moral and political claims to justice, redress, and the right to return."[5] As a result, Palestinians have presented a range of narratives shaped by diverse life experiences and geographical locations, constantly rewritten and adapted to new events. Said advocates for a unified Palestinian history while also preserving the diversity of these narratives, recognizing the essential differences in the identities of Palestinians across different communities and regions.[6]

Building on the conceptualization of memory as both an individual and collective site of home-making and identity building, this work examines how the ancestral homeland is remembered by Palestinians living in the diaspora, and how memories are carried on through generations. Given the Palestinian communities' reliance on oral history, this research treats the narratives that surfaced throughout the fieldwork stage as significant sites of memory production that have inspired the design process. While a "defiant memory" of Palestine is consistently at play in every observation and conversation, this thesis argues that

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[1] Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 186.

[2] Peter Read, *Returning to Nothing: The Meaning of Lost Places* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[3] Dominika Blachnicka-Ciacek, *Remembering Palestine: A Multi-Media Ethnography of Generational Memories among Diaspora Palestinians* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2018), 34.

[4] Rosemary Sayigh, "Palestinian Refugee Identity/ies: Generation, Region, Class," in *Palestinian Refugees: Different Generations, but One Identity*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Birzeit: Birzeit University Press, 2012), 13.

[5] Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, eds., *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 3.

[6] Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992).

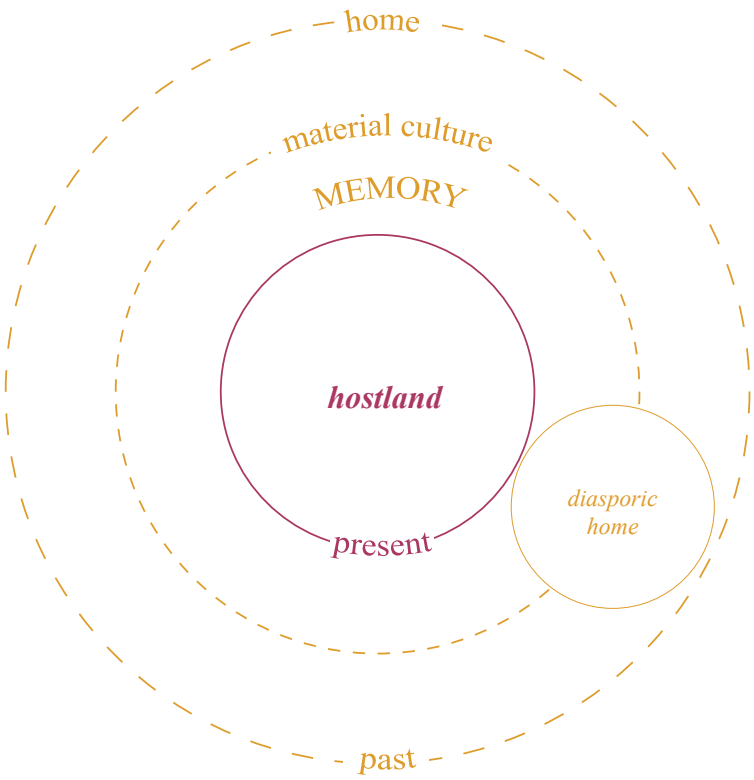


Fig. 4.1 Diasporic Home

Visual translation of concepts presented in Divya Tolia-Kelly's *Locating Processes of Identification: Studying the Precipitates of Re-Memory through Artefacts in the British Asian Home*

Diagram by author

there are distinct generational outlooks on the meaning of home. During site visits, the first generation often shared memories with accurate details relating to places and elements that reflect 'home'. On the other hand, the next generations expressed a more diffused yet diverse representation of Palestine, often in fictional forms, drawing from imagination, stories passed down through generations, media reports, and, occasionally, personal visits.

Since I was involved in the site visits as an active participant in the offered programs, I did not approach these conversations with a structured set of questions. Instead, I aimed for fluid, natural discussions rather than formal interviews, which might have felt overimposing, particularly given the sensitivity of the context and the recent events in Gaza. There were moments when I didn't have specific questions and left with only observations.

Some of the recorded conversations were conducted in Arabic and have later been translated. All names in this chapter are pseudonyms, except for workshop titles.

Fig. 4.2 Culture and Land

Collage by author



4.1 'Intifada Rose'

Site Visit 1

Frank McKechnie Community Centre
Mississauga ON

This workshop was established in February of 2024 by 2 school teachers who have had the knowledge of tatreez passed down to them through the women in their families. They operate in different locations across Mississauga and Guelph, and are one of the few initiatives that organize larger community classes. As the demand for these classes is high, the tickets sell out within the hour. I received an invite after reaching out to the instructors with background about my research.

This is an example that puts the uncertainty of the lifespan of such initiatives into perspective as one of the founding members has announced her departure due to relocation. This may have an impact on the ability to maintain the larger scale of classes and operate at the same consistent frequency.

4.1 ‘Learn Palestine’

Site Visit 1

Frank McKechnie Community Centre
Mississauga ON

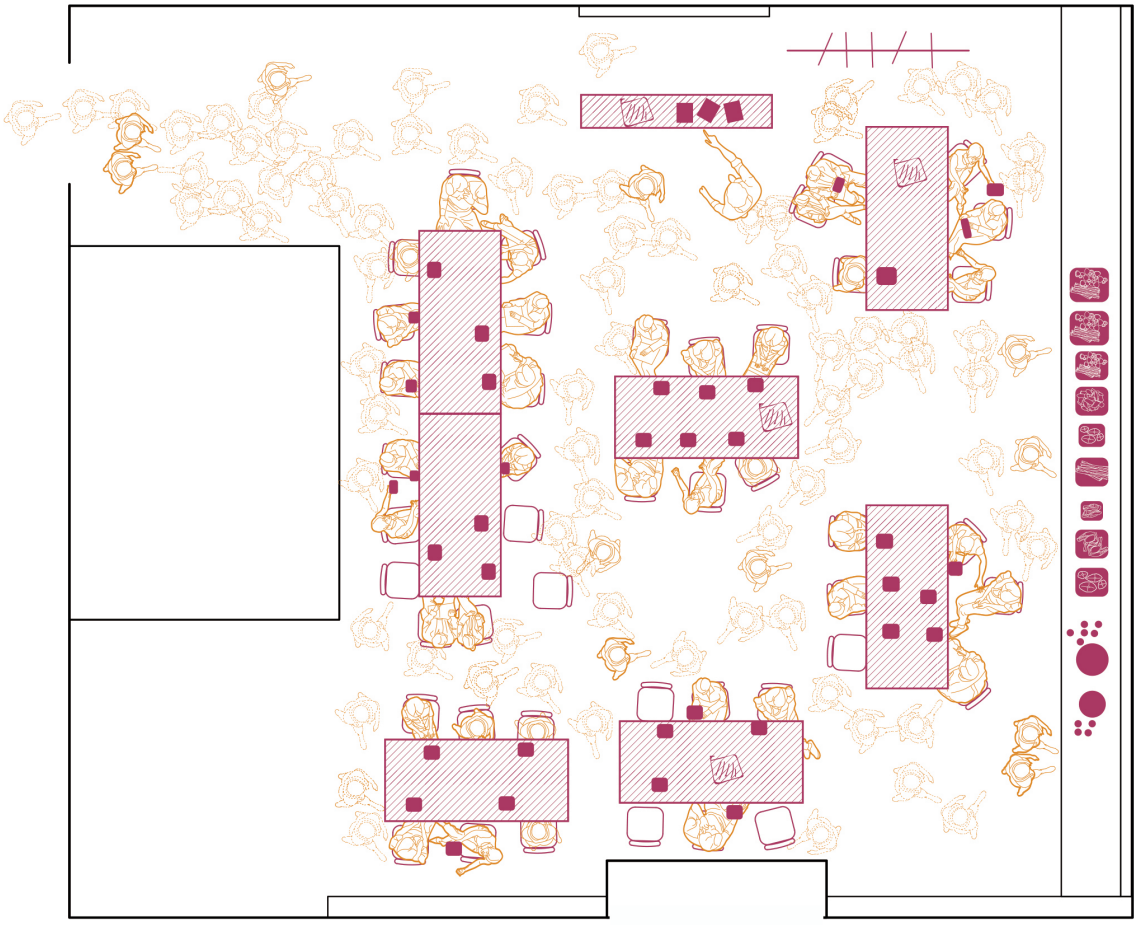
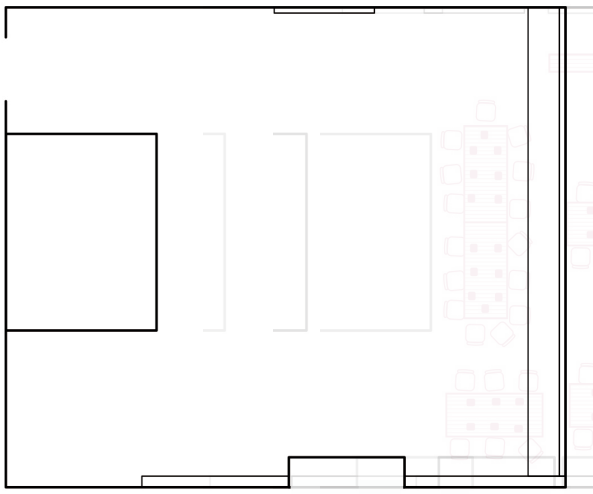
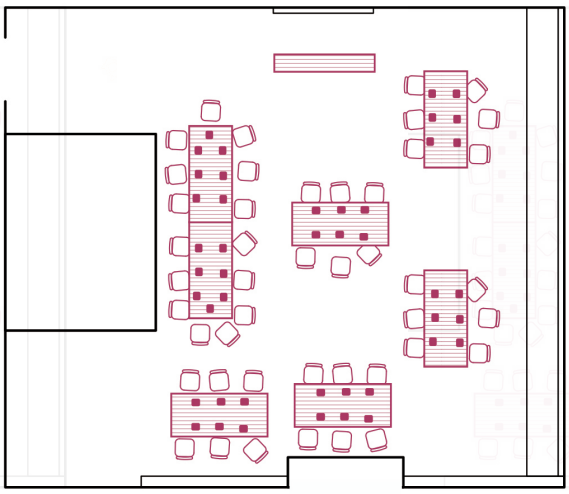


Fig. 4.3 Floor plan of a large scale tatreez session taking place in a program room at Frank McKechnie Community Centre
Diagram by author









The Plan

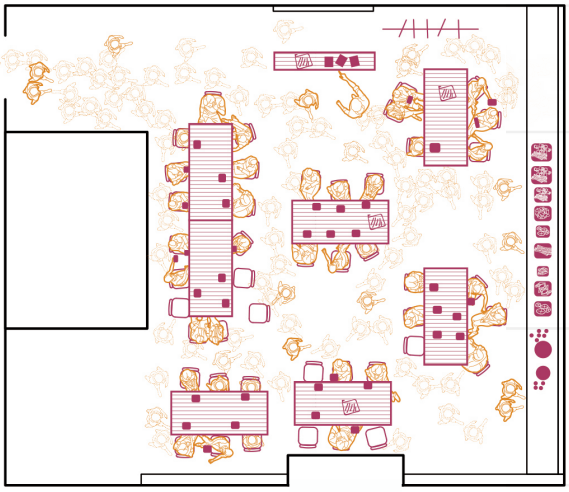
Re-organize

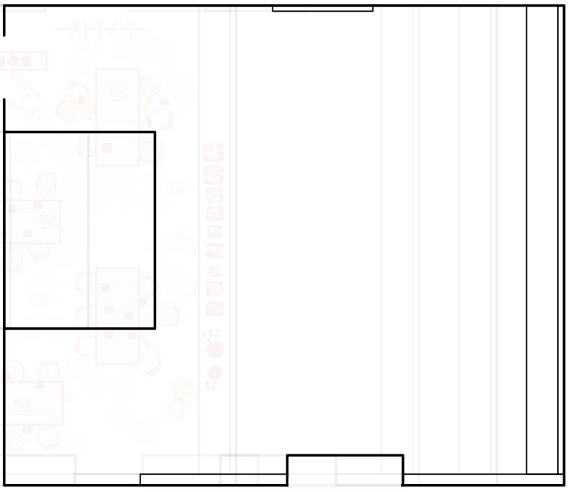
Fig. 4.4 Presenting tatreez workshops as an activity that momentarily injects space

Photo by author









Tatreez

The Plan

Badia, the instructor, started the class by introducing herself…

Badia

I have always had a strong connection to tatreez growing up. I moved to Canada years ago from Ramallah's village Al-Tira. That is where my grandparents ended up after being expelled from their villages in Al-Ramleh. My aunts and grandmother stitched thobes for a living, and I made my very first thobe at the age of 10.

It was a challenge to continue practicing after moving to Canada because there was no longer a community to do it with, which is what I was used to back home. After a few years without tatreez, I met tatreez instructors and mentors who played a big part in helping me build a space for tatreez. Currently, I am working on an original regional thobe from Ramallah, and my next project will be recreating a Ramleh thobe.



Fig. 4.5 Instructor's band-stitched thobes on display

Photo by author

This rose motif first appeared in the late eighties following the outbreak of the first Intifada. It was found embroidered on a dress from that period by either a mother, wife or sister of an imprisoned one. The base of the motif is the abundant cypress tree that protects all citrus orchids in Palestine. The insistence on including trees in cross-stitch respects the deep rooted love for trees which are being uprooted daily by the Israeli army. The top section of the pattern is the sower of Ramallah. Strangely, the inner rose petals have changed to prison bars. But despite all, the rose stays a rose; the hope for a future despite the loss and sorrow that prevails in occupied Palestine.

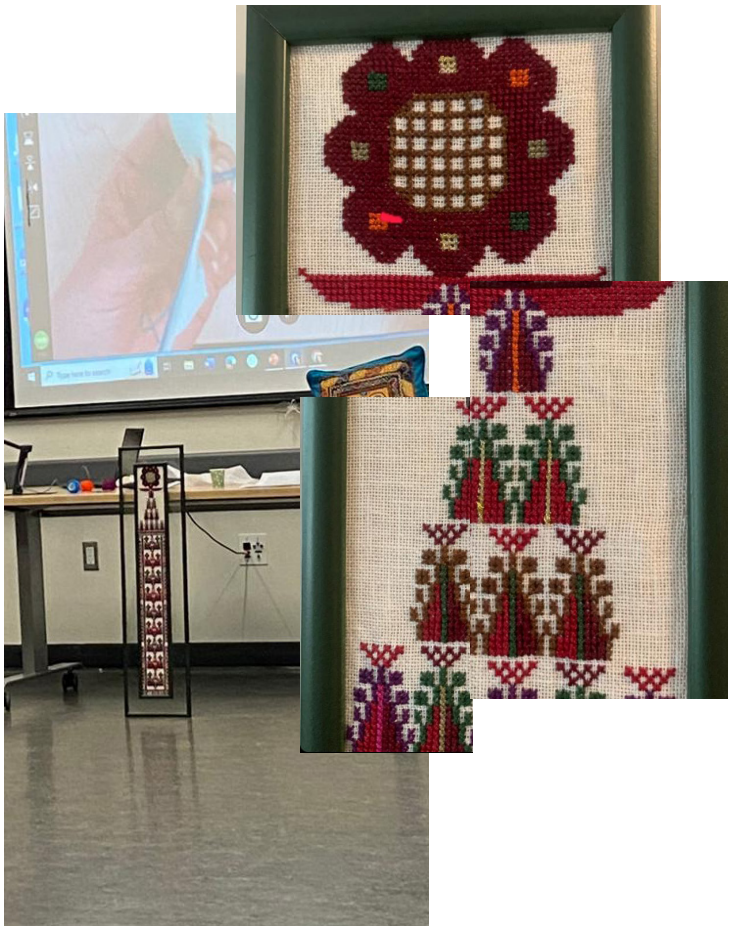


Fig. 4.6 The Intifada Rose

Photo by author

Tatreez-ing with our communities in Tkaronto has been a grounding practice.

Today, as we learn about Al-Majdal textiles, our hearts and prayers are with Gaza.

While we learn about Karam Al-Maloukh's embroidery in the Naqab prison using anything he can find, we advocate for the release of the Palestinians held captive in occupation prisons and torture camps.

As we learn about the patterns for plants, trees, grapes, and basil, we imagine a liberated homeland.

Learning tatreez is an act of returning to ourselves and our ancestors. Culture is resistance, and being here today is resistance.



Fig. 4.7 Interior Space: Tatreez in Community Centre

Photo by author

4.2 'Alijandro's'

Site Visit 2

Alijandros's Kitchen
Mississauga ON

After having gained insight on the history of tatreez as well as the physical techniques through Learn Palestine's workshop, I joined a tatreez 'circle', which is typically organized as a communal tatreez session for those who are already familiar with the craft and have their own supplies and projects. This was organized by recent interior design graduate, Laila, who was born and raised in Canada, and uses tatreez as a way of connecting with her heritage. Taking advantage of the the restaurant's temporary closure, Laila arranged her very first tatreez circle session to encourage community involvement among those with prior tatreez experience, who may find beginner-level workshops repetitive

Conversations between women during this session shed light on interracial marriage, experiences of visiting Palestine which were particularly interesting for those who have never been, the meanings of different historical patterns and the birth of new ones, and complications during recent protests.

Discussions between Badia, who was in attendance during this circle, and another tatreez instructor revolved around issues of space rentals and suggestions around future collaborations, specifically to host a community cooking class.

Badia emphasized the significance of such sessions as tatreez creates a safe space for women to share experiences about Palestine and beyond, that may be unacceptable in other places and in the context of today's political tensions.

4.2 ‘Alijandro’s’

Site Visit 2

Alijandros’s Kitchen
Mississauga ON

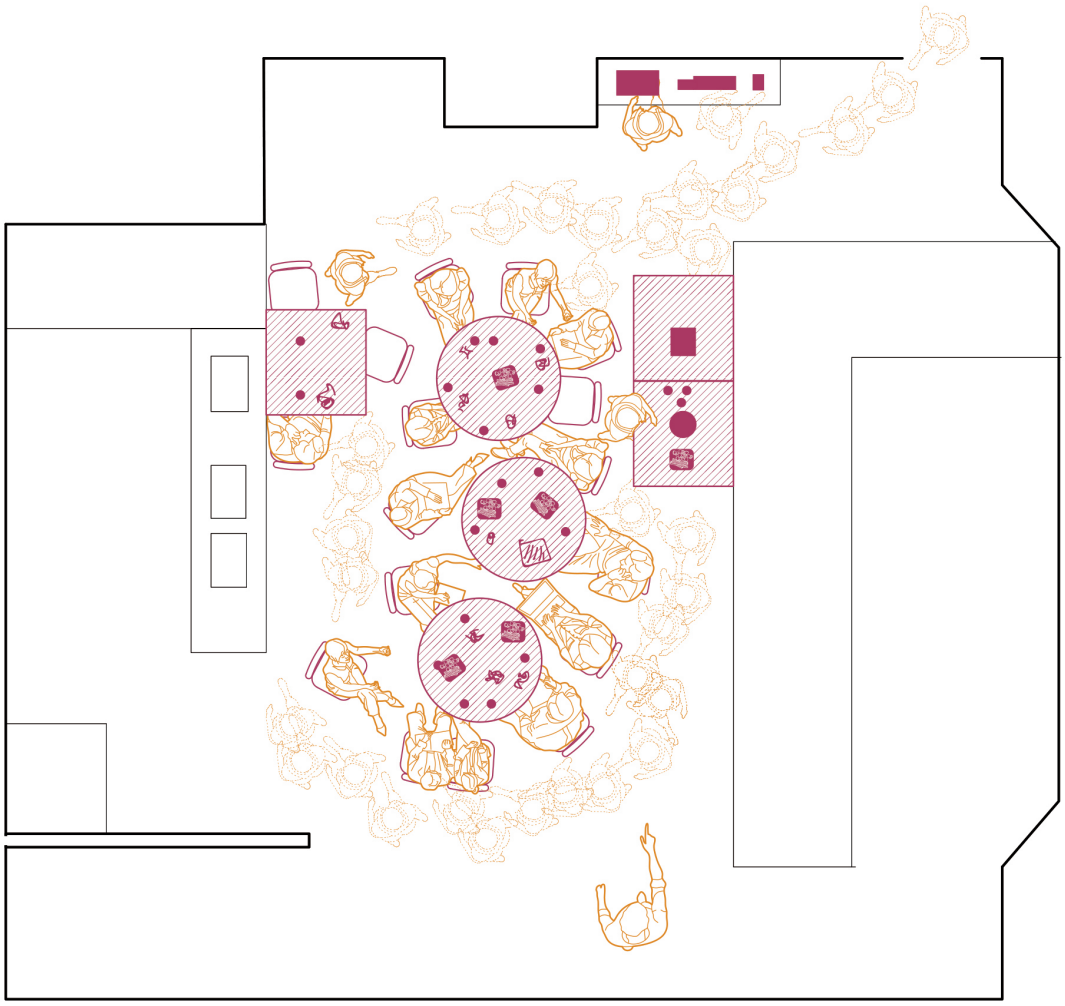
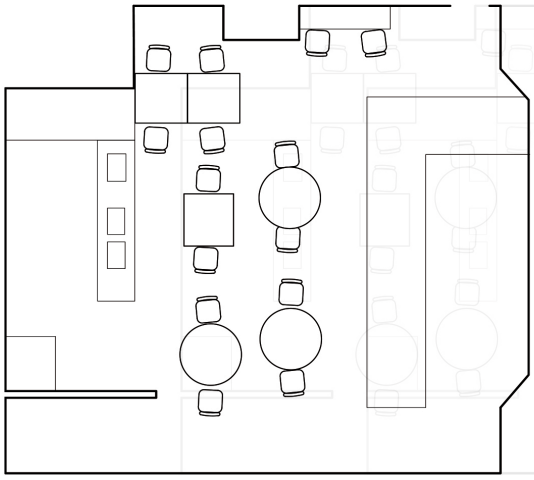


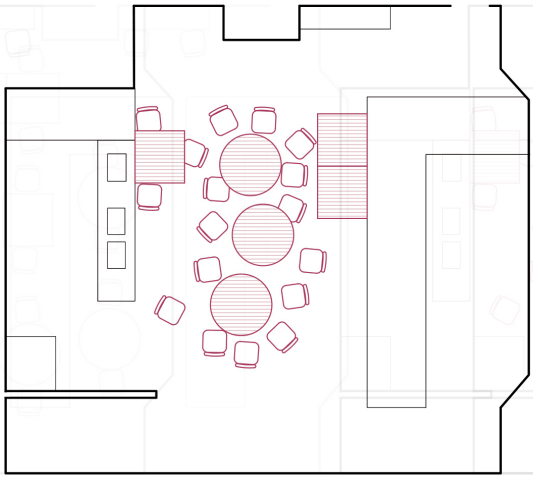
Fig. 4.8 Restaurant transformed temporarily to host tatreez circleCommunity Centre

Diagram by author









The Plan

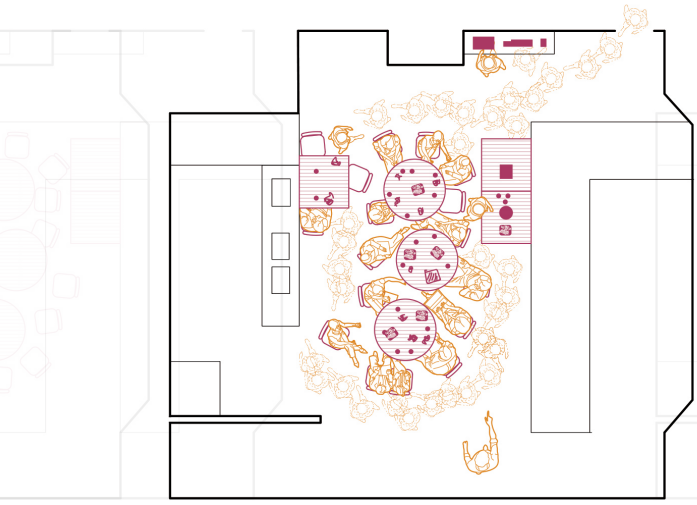
Re-organize

Fig. 4.9 Tatreez circle hosted at Alijandro's on a day the restaurant is closed to the public

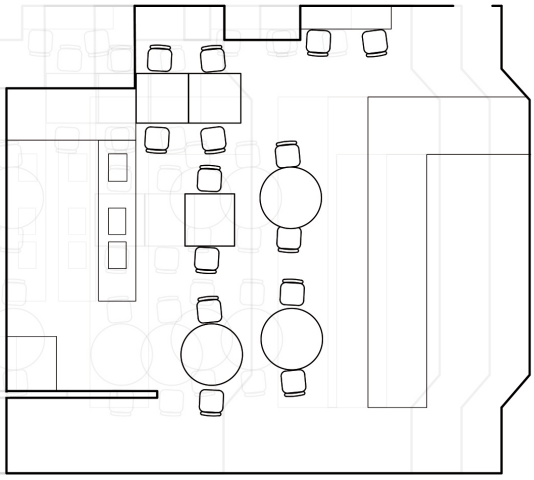
Photo by author







Tatreez



The Plan

Lara, one of the attendees, shared with the group some personal images from her recent trip to East Jerusalem.

Lara

This is the Church of All Nations, known as Church Gethsemane. It's a Catholic Church located on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. This is how it looked before but the site has changed a lot over the years with the settlements and road alterations. This is a picture I took from my Grandfather's album. I cannot remember the exact date.

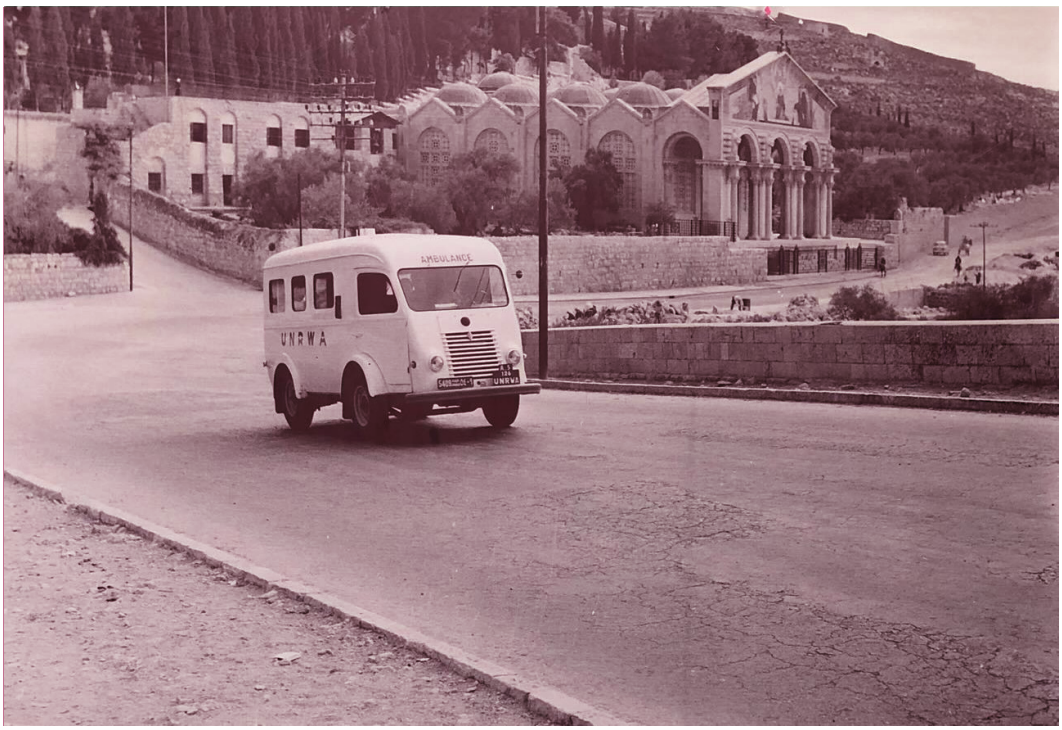


Fig. 4.10 Church of All Nations, Jerusalem
Photo courtesy of Lara

This is a picture I took from my trip last winter. It is the view of the opposite side of the church looking towards the Temple Mount. Bab il Rahma (Mercy Gate) is along the Eastern wall and under it is the Palestinian cemetery. And as you see there's a road in between. The other side is the Jewish cemetery and across from the church is the Catholic cemetery.



Fig. 4.11 Temple Mount, Jerusalem
Photo courtesy of Lara



Fig. 4.12 Interior view of the tatreez circle at Alijandro's
Tables repositioned to create an oval-like arrangement, allowing for equal interaction among all attendees

Photo by author



Fig. 4.13 Interior view of the tatreez circle

Photo by author

4.3 'Basement'

Site Visit 3
Mississauga ON

Samia owns a tatreez shop in her basement, with a collection and network that she has built over the last 10 years. She has never lived in Palestine and moved to Canada from Qatar 12 years ago. She presents this project as a means to share a small part of Palestinian heritage with Canadian communities.

I was greeted at the front door by Samia and immediately guided down the stairs which are conveniently located right across from the main entrance.

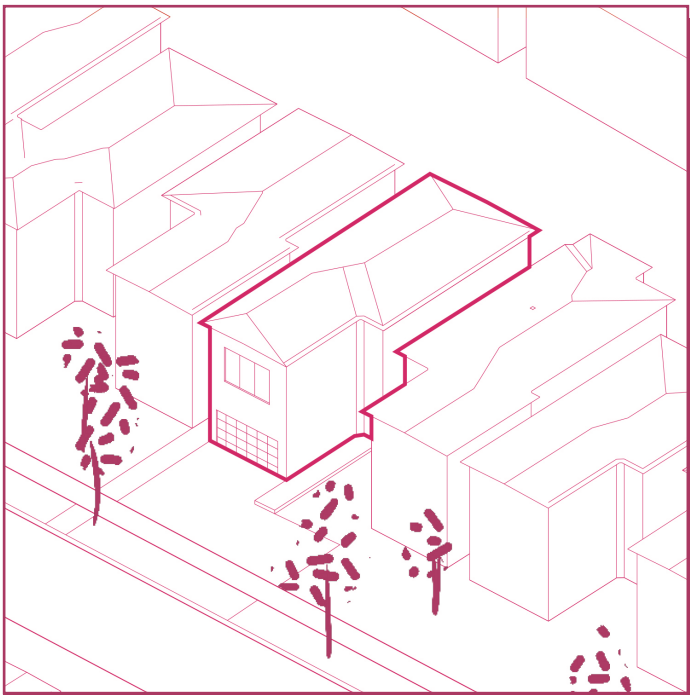


Fig. 4.14 Exterior axonometric of Inas's home
Photo by author

Batool

Why did you decide to start a business focused on all-things tatreez?

Samia

This was something I started about 10 years ago. I was at a large Palestinian event and it was for women mostly. I was seated at a table with a few other women and at some point the conversation shifted to us admiring all the beautiful thobes that the women in the room were wearing. Then, the group at the table started sharing where their dresses are from. Some from Palestine, some from Jordan and some from the Gulf countries. The one I was wearing I had brought with me from a bazaar in Qatar. But at that moment, I realized that we don't have much access to thobes here in Canada, or at least in this area. In the few weeks after that, I had a relative in Jordan ship a few thobes to me, just to test if there would be demand. Alhamdulilah (praise be to God) things went well and I started to order larger batches.



Fig. 4.15 Entrance from ground floor of Samia's home leading to the Tatreez Shop in the basement
Photo by author

Did you ever consider opening a shop and expanding outside of your home?

Yes, I have considered that many times. I just recently looked at a warehouse facility at Ridgeway Plaza here in Mississauga, but it is too expensive. In the last 10 years the home-sellers and online community of tatreez grew a lot, still, there is no shop that you can see and walk into from the street. Not just in Ontario. I think it would be good business, and a beautiful thing to have these dresses displayed in public, but would require a lot of investment.

I will be honest, I do like being where I am. I am mother to 5 children so it makes it easier to run a business with family responsibilities. I am always working, never in one place. I do a lot of volunteer work so I am always running around, I am in and out for customer appointments, I pick up the children from school. So maybe having a public shop is not the right time now.

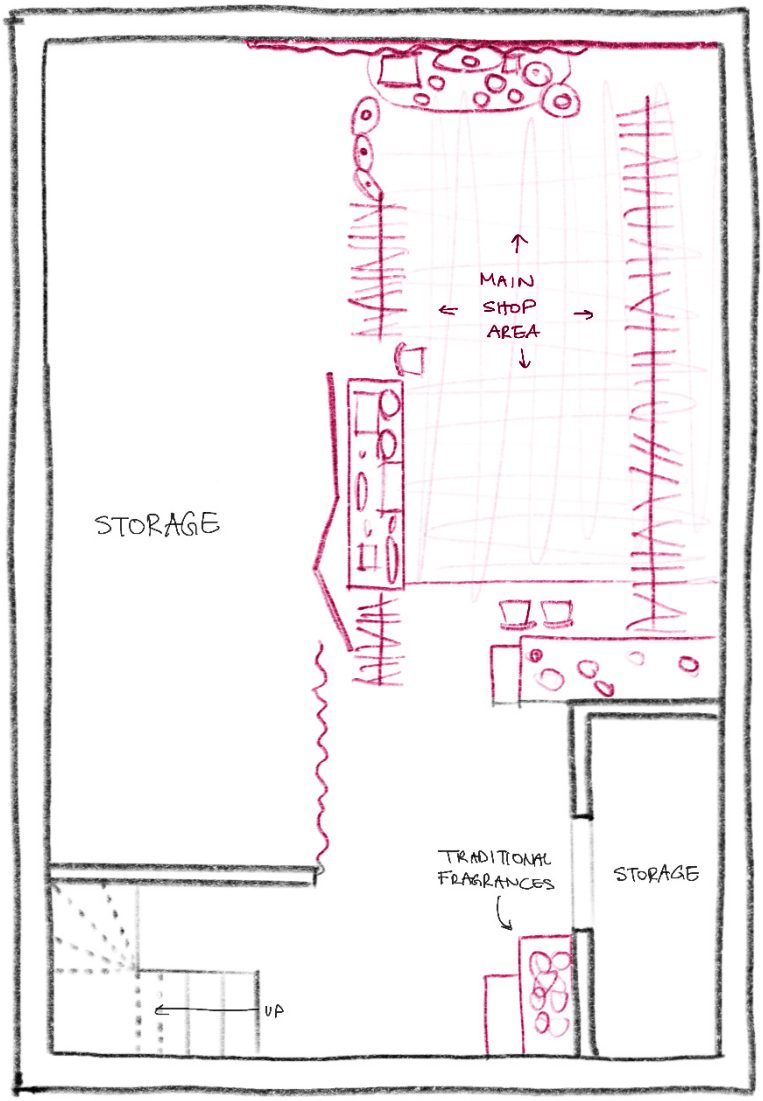


Fig. 4.16 Basement plan: Tatreez Shop

Diagram by author

My family is used to people coming in and out. The space is not an issue since it is very separate from the rest of the house. It is also good privacy for the women when they want to try on the dresses.

Your shop is quite popular despite it being quite hidden. How did people find you?

A lot of it is word of mouth and people referring each other to me. I have an online page as well. I also try to be involved in the local events that happen every year. I usually rent a booth at around 5 to 6 events. Not just the ones that are focused on Palestine. This is how I make these products public. There is actually demand from different cultures. They like the patterns and the embroidery, especially the South Asian community. It feels good to have conversations with different communities about tatreez and the meaning behind it. It is a good conversation starter and I learned a lot about different people.



Fig. 4.17 Interior view of Inas's shop

Photo by author

Do you mind if I take some pictures?

Yes, of course! Let me show you around. I have been planning to renovate here. I made a few changes in the last few months with upgrading the racks and display, but I want to have finished walls and ceiling.

Are any of these dresses hand-embroidered?

No, these are all machine-made. It would be too expensive to order and sell handmade. Usually people who want handmade items will connect with women that do this work abroad, like in Jordan. My friend recently got a handmade shawl from a lady in Jordan who she found online. It took her 3 or 4 months to embroider.

Palestinians also like to display these objects in their homes and during celebrations. They have different stories and uses, a nice way to remember the beautiful parts of Palestine.

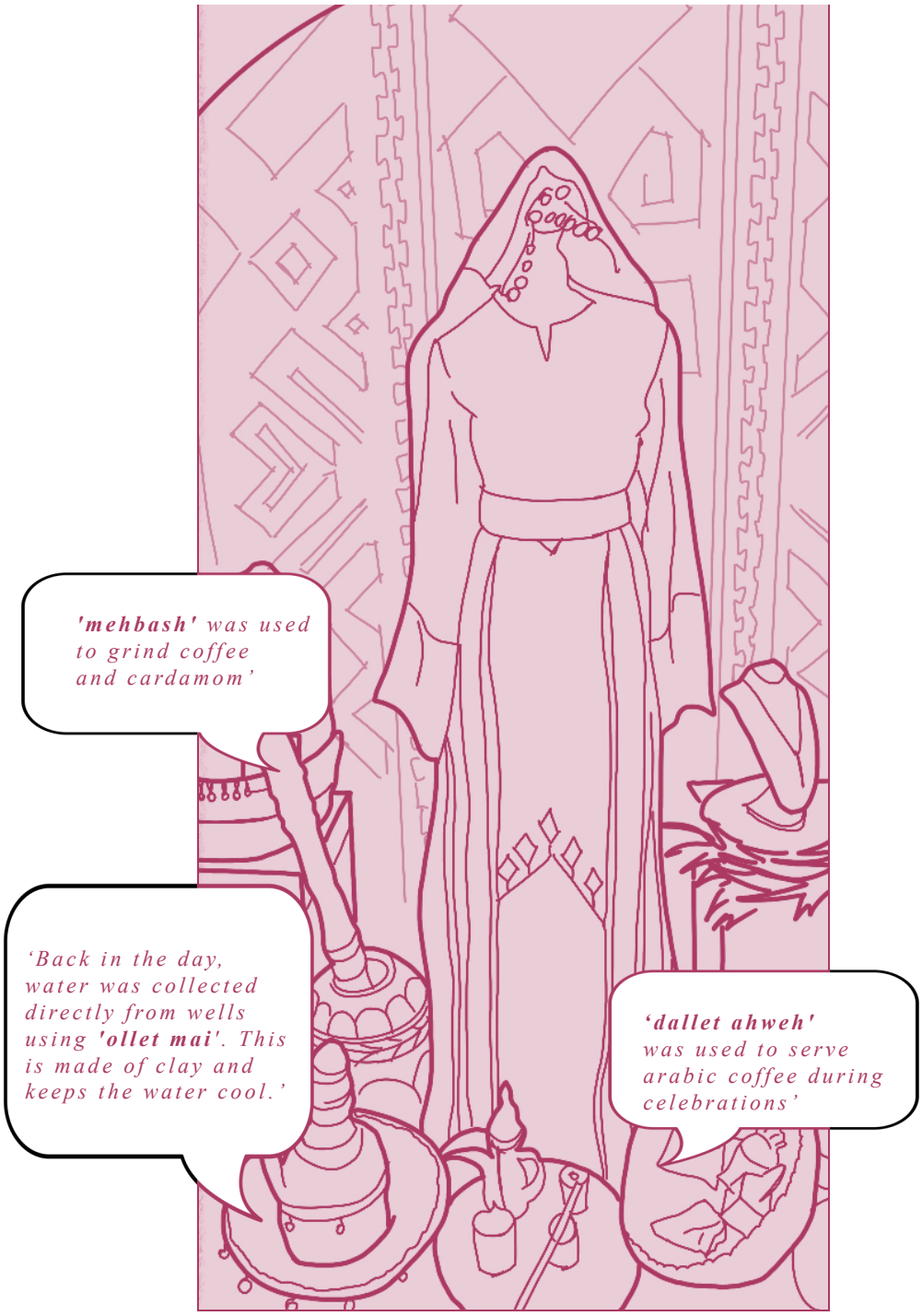


Fig. 4.18 Captions based on Samia's description of objects

Diagram by author

What do you think of the recent tatreez workshops?

I have seen them! My daughter has been to a few. She learned the technique and the patterns and ended up gifting me a button-up shirt with embroidery on the edges of the sleeves. I have considered incorporating that side of tatreez lessons myself. Probably not in this space, but maybe at the events I go to. We are all doing our best at trying to bring awareness to what is happening in Palestine. Just wearing a dress, like this one, in public or at a protest is a statement on its own. When I started this business it was my way of helping the Palestinian community be closer to culture, but with everything happening today it is really to help the world see part of Palestine.



Fig. 4.19 Image showing mehbash, ollet mai and dallet ahwe

Photo by author

4.4 'Hands'

Site Visit 4

The Central Library
Mississauga ON

As opposed to the other community workshops previously mentioned that welcome all ages, the small scale Tatreez Hub by Razan creates a distinction between age groups when hosting classes as she offers different teaching methods to accommodate the participants. Since she carries the classes in library rooms, the frequency of the sessions is heavily dependent on space availability.

She is a pharmacist back home, as a result, in the lecture portion of the workshop, she emphasizes proper posture and hand exercises to relieve soreness, especially for the older participants. As an advocate for the continuity of new pattern creation, she uses softwares to develop digitized motifs which she includes in her tatreez kits and shares beyond her live classes.

4.4 'Tatreez Hub'

Site Visit 4

The Central Library
Mississauga ON



Fig. 4.20 Tatreez workshop
Hosted in one of the rooms at The Central Library, Mississauga, ON, for a group of ages 9-14.

Photo by author

This is the first time I see the incorporation of health with tatreez!

I learned tatreez from Sitti (my grandmother) Maryam, and I saw how her relationship to tatreez changed with age. With time, she embroidered less and less and for shorter periods as her hands can no longer work the stitches like before. I actually have a framed piece that she worked on as a gift for me before moving to Turkey 7 years ago. It is 12 by 12 squares of the bethlehem star, that is where I am from. She pushed her limits to try completing it but her hands gave up. I have the piece, unfinished, only missing 3 more squares of the motif.



Fig. 4.21 Instructor providing assistance after a trtreez demonstration

Photo by author

I am sure you can complete it?

I can, but I decided to leave it and frame it as is. It is my way of honoring the hands that created it. Sitti Maryam rarely embroidered pieces for herself, so this piece to me feels like a huge responsibility that I have to honor and preserve. She has resilient hands that taught me so much, not just how to create tatreez, but how to value the history of the people that passed it on. This is why I do this. Especially with the younger generation, like this group today, it is important that they not only know the culture, but experience it in a meaningful way.



Fig. 4.22 Watermelon tatreez pattern digitized by instructor with personalized kits for each student

Photo by author

4.5 'Protest'

Site Visit 5

Downtown Toronto, ON

In attending a protest in Toronto, I met a member of the recently established advocacy group United Women for Palestine, who shared her perspective on ways to serve the Palestinian diaspora. As a retired civil engineer who had her own practice in Jordan before moving to Canada, our conversation led to reminiscing about a proposal she had worked for an enclosed village-like structure that depicts Palestinian heritage, culinary traditions, as well as the various civilizations that ruled different regions over time.

4.5 'Protest'

Site Visit 5

Downtown Toronto, ON



Fig. 4.23 Protest in Toronto for Palestine

Photo by author

Batool

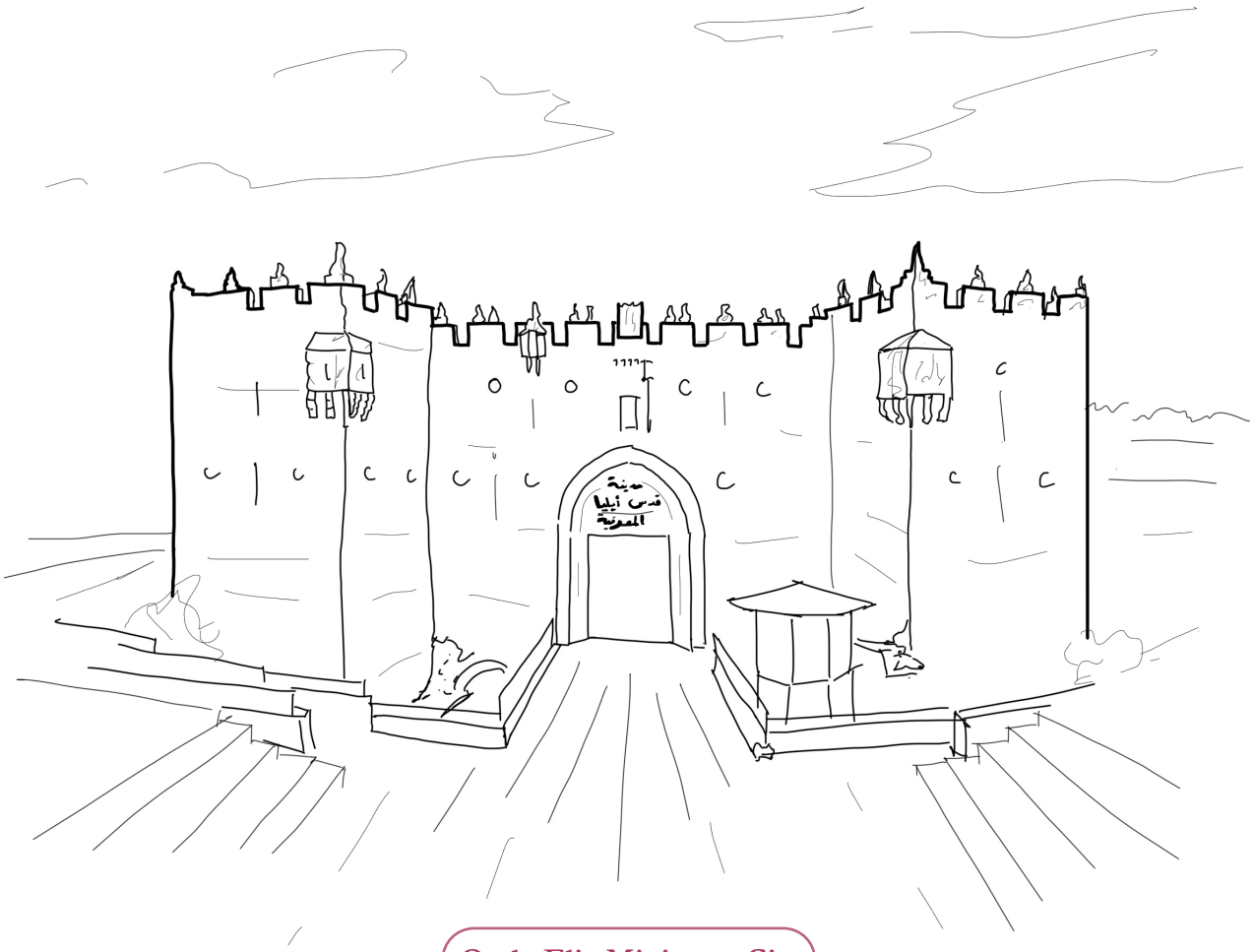
Can you tell me more about the project you mentioned?

Maha

The project is called "Quds-Elia Miniature City of Knowledge" which I worked on in the early 2000s with two Palestinian Architects in Jordan. This project is imaginary and unbuilt, but I still have hope that we can make it happen one day.

What inspired this proposal?

The idea was to give younger people and those who do not have access or know Palestine a glimpse of some of our traditions. Entertainment was a big part of the proposal, but we also wanted to create an educational experience that showed the changes that took place in different parts of Palestine.



Quds-Elia Miniature City of Knowledge

Fig. 4.24 Sketch of Quds-Elia Entrance

Entrance is a re-translation of Jerusalem's Old City Gates.
Sketch based on video rendering and Rana's description.
Diagram by author

Do you have any drawings?

I have a video! We wanted to divide the area into different villages and create a familiar experience, I guess like the one you would have walking down the Souks in Jerusalem. Sometimes you are able to see how things are made. You have the smell of fresh ka'ak (bread), dessert, and spices. Then there is the clothing, accessories, and fabrics. Also the stones and the walls. Handmade crafts, ceramics, coffee! We wanted to recreate that in some form. Like an open-air museum. I don't think it's unachievable. The rendering is just an idea and it is large in scale, but it does not need to be executed this way exactly, it is more about the experience.

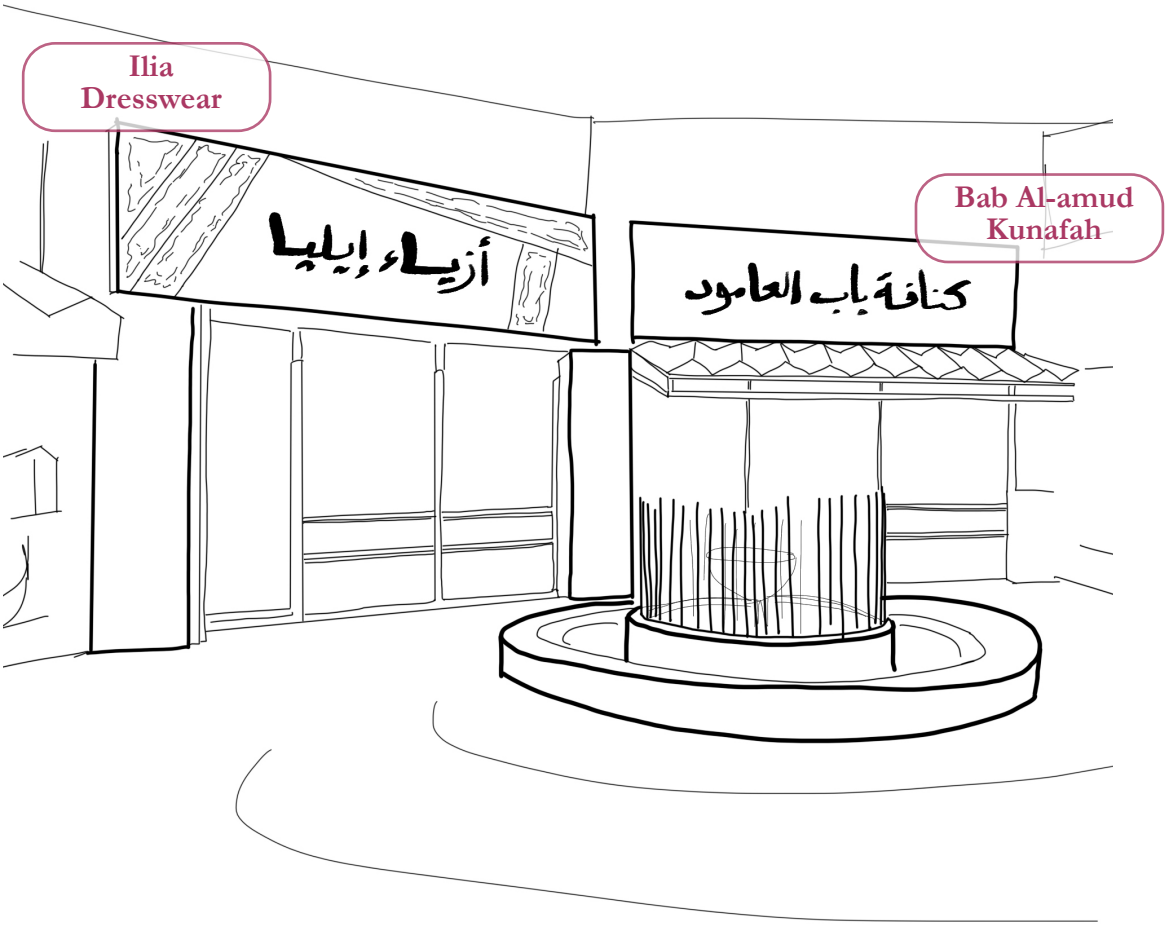


Fig. 4.25 Sketch of Quds-Elia Market

Market inspired by the Souk in Jerusalem.
Sketch based on video rendering and Rana's description.

Diagram by author

Where did you imagine this would be built?

In the video you will see we mentioned this as a global proposal. Of course when we started we were thinking of Jordan as the start, but in the long run we hoped it would expand. Like Chinatown for example. But of course there are different issues with this project because as much as we want it to happen we cannot forget that there will be a lot of difficulties for sure, even if it was in the Middle East, or even Jordan.

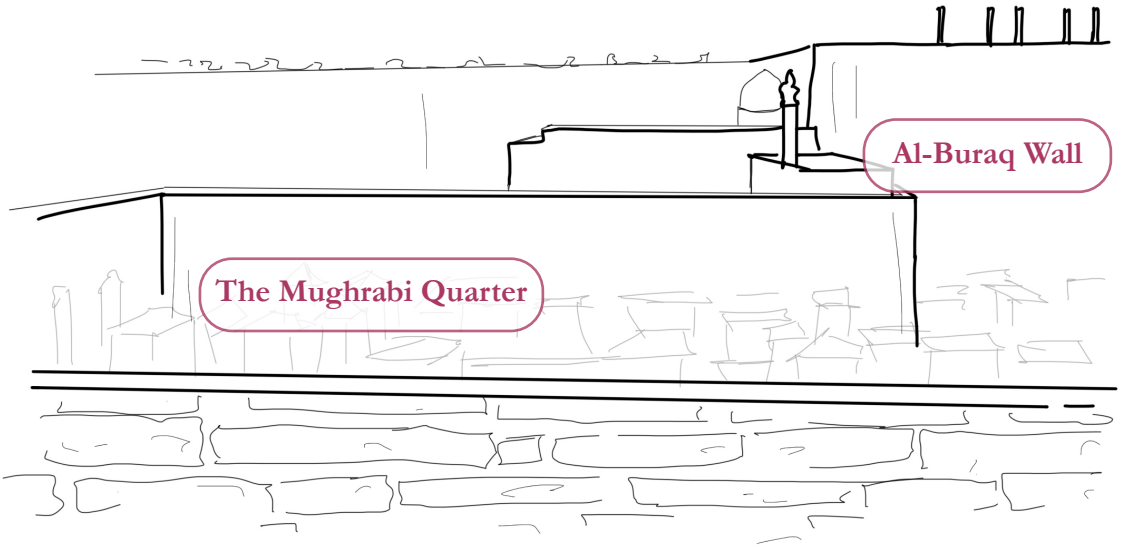


Fig. 4.26 Sketch of miniature replica of The Mughrabi Quarter in Quds-Elia

The Mughrabi Quarter is imagined in the project in its pre-1948 condition, before its destruction. Sketch based on video rendering and Rana's description.

Diagram by author

05
Design

5.1 Conceptual Framework

With the Palestinian House's current efforts to transform this building into a community hub, I introduce tatreez as the facilitating tool, functioning in the same way it currently does in the network of workshops where it is no longer an individual task, but a collective one.

The design seeks to address the evolving nature of tatreez and its cultural significance in the diaspora. Since October 7, there has been a renewed interest in tatreez which has transformed it from its status as a mere commodity to a symbol of cultural resistance in the diaspora. This resurgence has led to the formation of informal networks where women organize workshops in various locations, from libraries, to parks, to restaurants. However, the lifespan of these workshops is unpredictable as many are organized sporadically. There has been a noticeable pattern of organizations who have launched after October 7, and stopped operating after a varying number of sessions.

Additionally, due to the spatial limitations of these workshops resulting from lack of equipment and time-constraints, the instructors do not possess the facilities to move beyond the singular pattern-teaching setup. This isolated treatment of tatreez dismisses the traditional process of creating, which includes thread dying and thobe construction.

By proposing the Palestine House as a dedicated space for these activities, the design aims to provide a consistent platform that supports and perpetuates these efforts in order to empower women and preserve cultural practices.

The intent is to build tatreez ecosystems similar to the ones our elders participated in pre-1948 where tatreez is learned, stitched and discussed within community structures, as a process that encompasses one's context, the patterns and the full thobe assembly. My process is to generate a system of spatial organizations that is derived from the notion of 'home' which can be articulated through an inverted lens of the 'loss of home' within diasporic communities. Thus, the produced work is a retranslation of what is lost in relation to customs, practices and spatial elements that are linked to the place of origin.

The term 're-translation' is used deliberately here, acknowledging that the exact replication of historical social and spatial structures is neither possible nor the aim of this thesis. As the fieldwork has revealed that the traditional values of the community have remained consistent over time, the objective is to learn from these past structures to inform the design's functionality in a way that better serves the community.

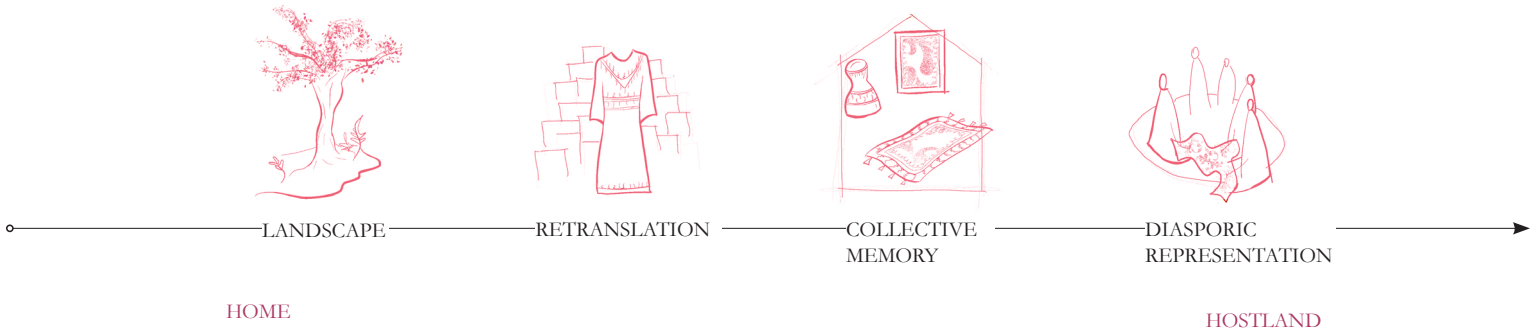


Fig. 5.1 Material culture: Home to hostland

Diagram by Author



Fig. 5.2 Tatreez Workshop in Norway

Photo credit: Tiffany Hill. Image provided courtesy of Furdose



Fig. 5.3 Toronto Tatreez Workshop: Collaboration between two organizations

Photo credit: Sarah Hassanein. Image provided courtesy of Furdose

Madafah

With "hospitality" being part of the organization's objective combined with the central open room being a multifunctional hosting space, this prompts the previously discussed typology of the *Madafah* as a symbol of hospitality and openness. The *madafah* acts as the middle ground between the private and the public, the intimate and the social. It is the place where you exercise both your duty and your right to host. In the Arab world, to host is to be an active member of society in which a shared obligation is generated.[1] I argue that hosting traditional practices and passing generational knowledge is an obligation, especially in the political context of today, and that the role of women as critical agents should be emphasized in their ongoing movements of resistance since 1948. In this case, Palestinian women are the keepers of culture, making them the primary hosts in the re-imagined Palestine House. Through their work with tatreez, they have created social and spatial networks to care for the human, the other than human, the more than human.[2] Hilary Rose expands on the meaning of care from women's marginalized experiences by articulating that caring is not a romantic endeavour or an affair of motherly love, but a matter of earthly survival where the "hand, brain, *and heart*" have to work together in the *immediate* context, not only in a future utopian world.[3]

[1] Alessandro Petti, Architecture after Revolution (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013).

[2] Donna Jeanne Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822373780.

[3] Hilary Rose, "Hand, Brain, and Heart: A Feminist Epistemology for the Natural Sciences," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 9, no. 1 (1983): 73–90, https://doi.org/10.1086/494025.

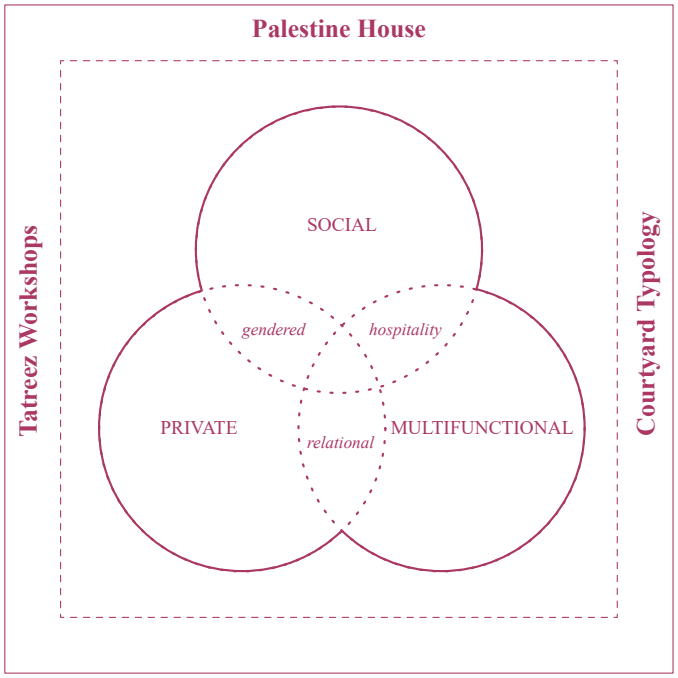


Fig. 5.4 Madafah as the 'common space' that embraces multifunctionality and flexibility

Diagram by author

Dar

The design of the proposed cultural center draws inspiration from the traditional Palestinian courtyard house as a model that balances communal and private spaces within a unified structure. In the traditional layout, a 'house within a house' dynamic is created where the exterior house boundary encloses individual '*dar*' (home) units, which are the private 'homes' for extended families living together. This creates a private yet interconnected domestic layout that values privacy and community relationships equally. This concept is translated into the spatial organization of the cultural center, where each thematic archive functions as a 'house' with its own narrative and identity. This idea of distinct archival space is reflected in Theaster Gate's Chicago project which is a network of buildings in the city that carry distinct functions: For example, The black Cinema House for film screening and The Archive House as a cultural hub.[4] As such, each archive within the proposed design is envisioned as a distinct 'house' with its own narrative, organized thematically as 'House of Tatreez,' 'House of Sound,' 'House of Taste' and a central courtyard which acts at the *Madafah*. The archives are thematically clustered to emphasize their unique character within the larger scope.

[4] Rebuild Foundation, "Rebuild Foundation | Black Archives | Stony Island Arts Bank, South Stony Island Avenue, Chicago, IL, USA," accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.rebuild-foundation.org/.



Fig. 5.5 Positioning of the 'dar' in plan

Top: First floor. Bottom: Second floor. Translating 'dar' into a modular unit that is configured according to program

Diagram by author

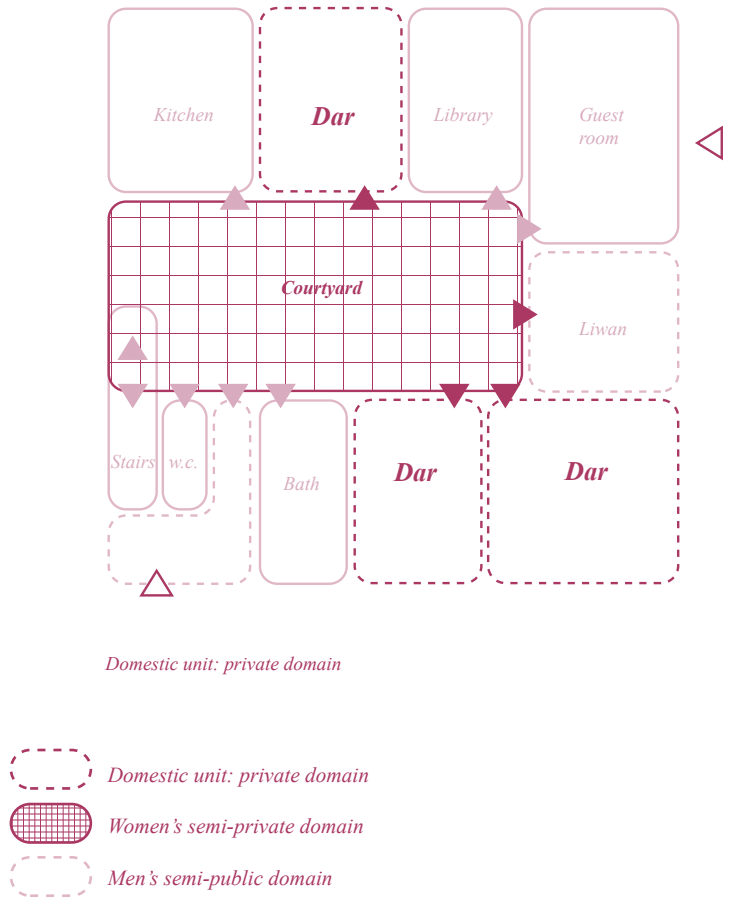


Fig. 5.6 Diagrammatic translation of a domestic courtyard house in a private domain: The Shawwa House, Gaza

Diagram by author

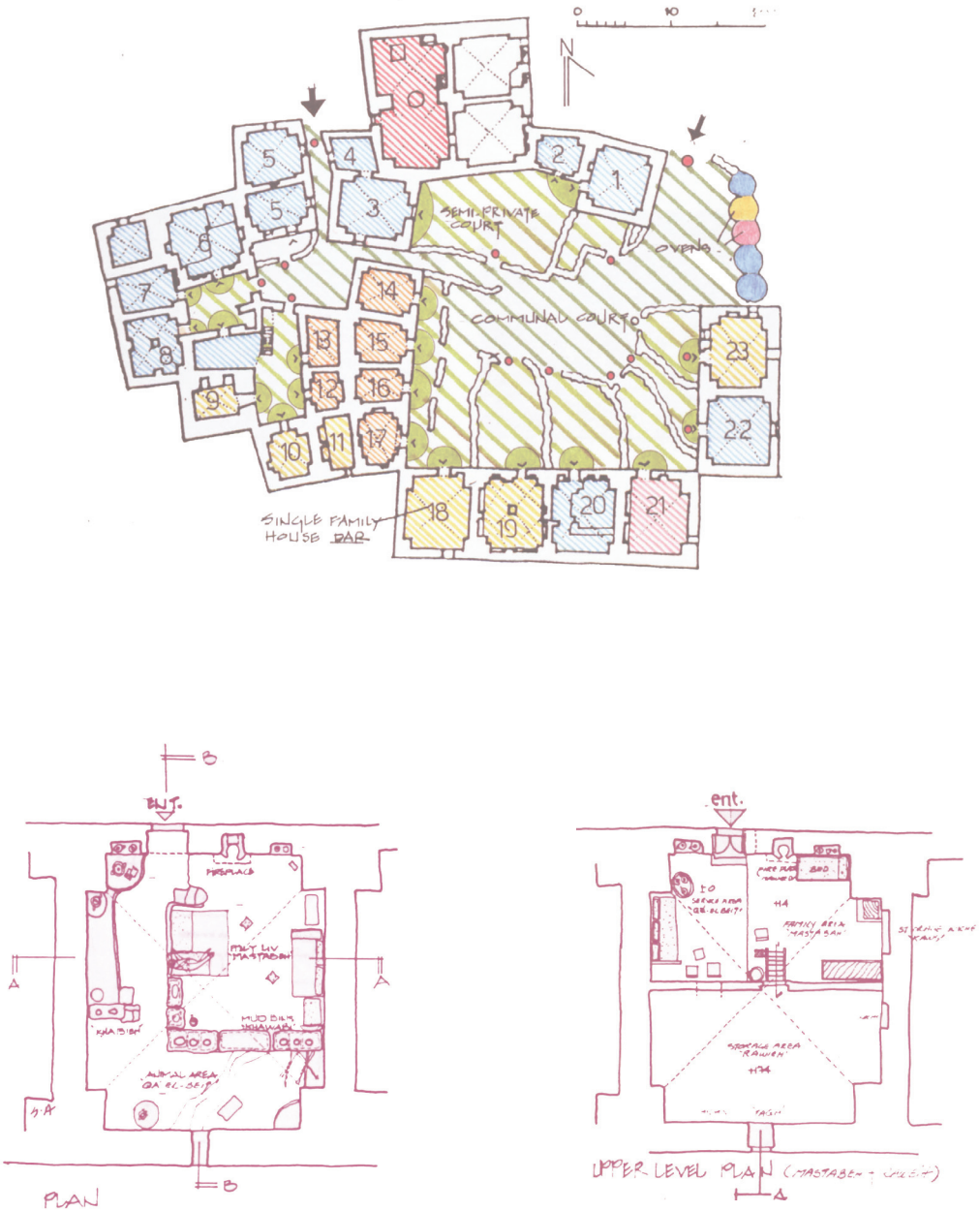
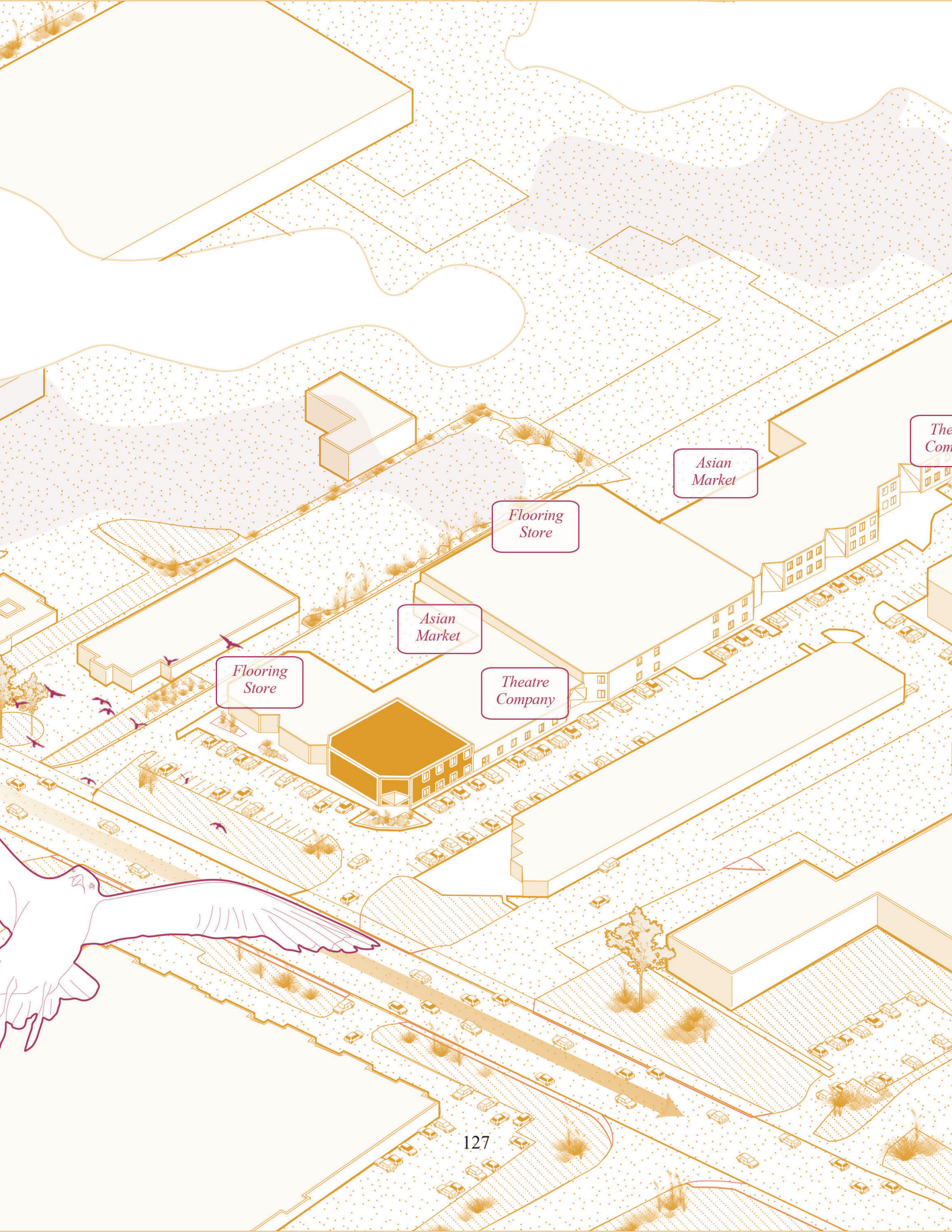


Fig. 5.7 The Shuaibi Quarter: Village-scale sub-clan courtyard(s)

A'Amiry, Suad. Space, Kinship And Gender:The Social Dimension Of Peasant Architecture In Palestine


Asian Market
Flooring Store
Asian Market
Flooring Store
Theatre Company

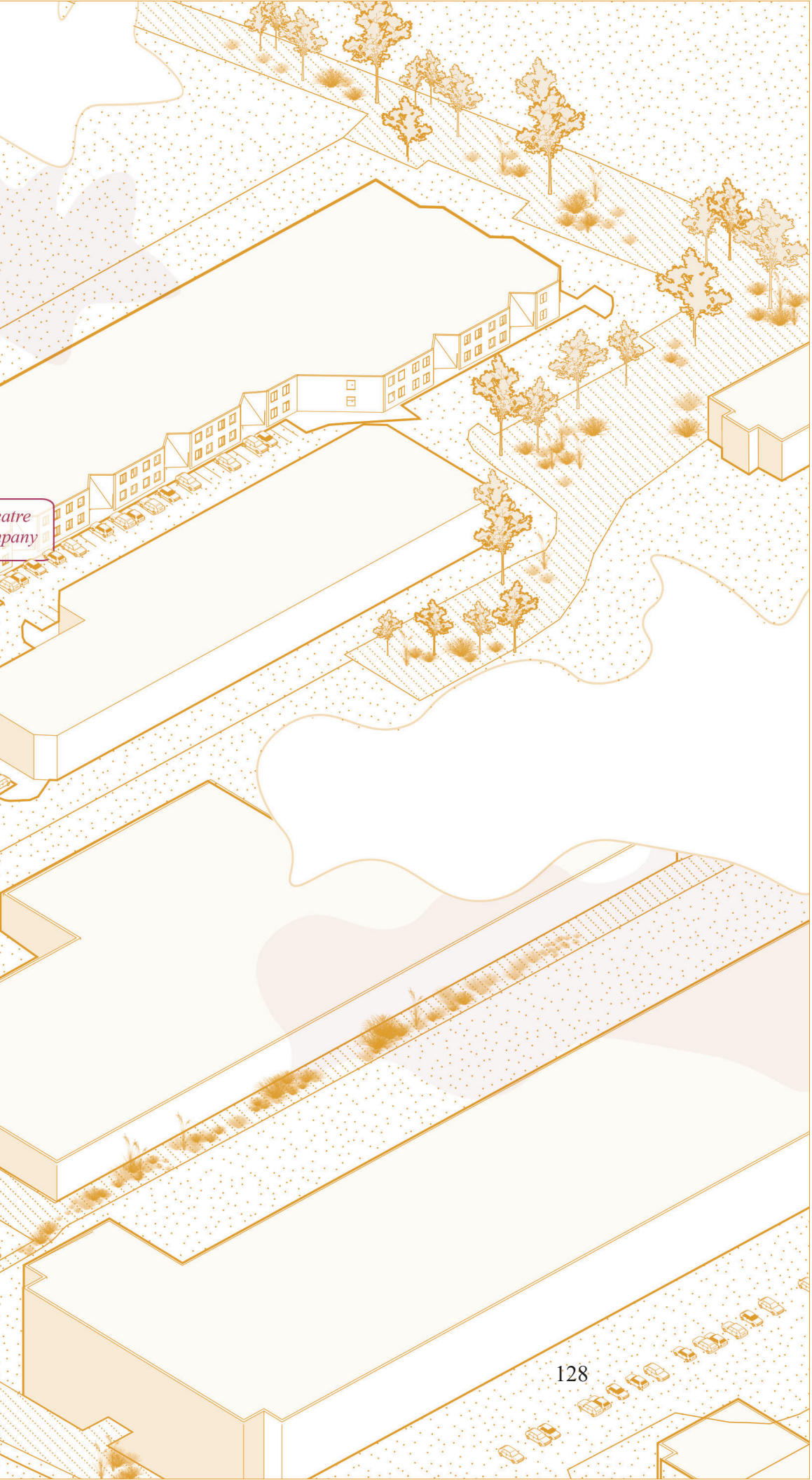


Fig. 5.8 Context axonometric

By author

My trip to the site was an invitation to an event Honoring Thandiwe Fadane, the Consul-General of South Africa in Toronto which was held in February after two months of vacancy. This gathering was organized as a response to South Africa's stance which advocated that the ICJ should declare Israel's ongoing military response in Gaza a genocide. Since then, the center has organized a number of community gatherings which included book signing events, children activities, dinners and more. Given this organization's recent efforts that work towards connecting the Palestinian community in the GTA more consistently, it has been selected as the primary site of investigation.

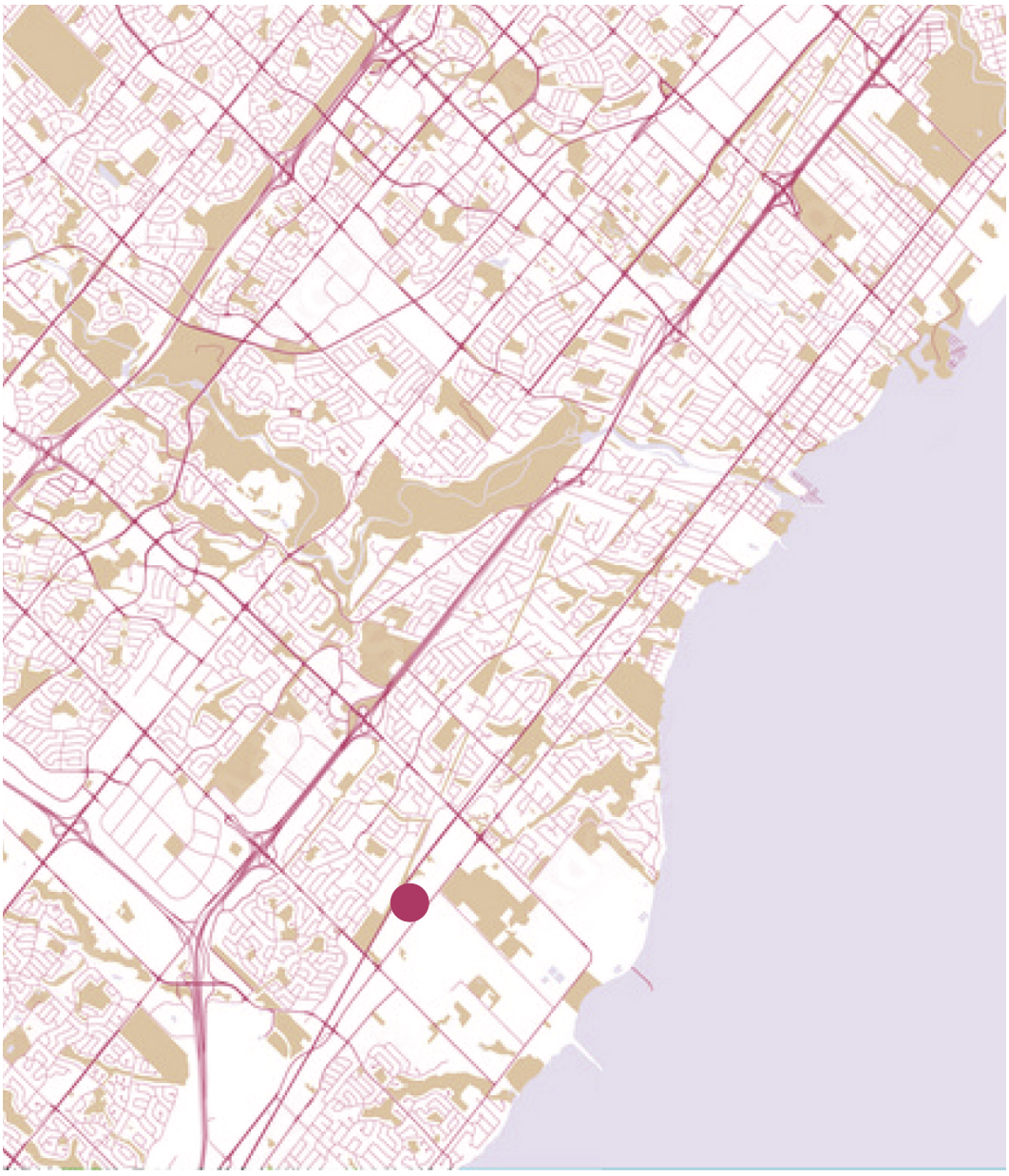


Fig. 5.9 City of Mississauga Map

By author through GIS

Assessing the existing building

The open and flexible spatial arrangement has a quality worth preserving

The façade of the building provides no visual connection to the activities that may be happening inside, nor a visible front entry. The existing double 'madafah' layout is beneficial as it offers a semi private space in comparison to the main 'madafah'.

The layout does not support organized movement through the space, which was proven especially inefficient in transitioning between programmed activities.

Due to the limited space, access to the space is restricted to those with private invitations in order to control the number of attendees. This contradicts the organization's inclusive mission. As the space is inadequate, the center is unable to host larger community activities.

The entrance opens directly into the main space which is disruptive during formal events since there is no buffer or transition area to manage incoming and outgoing traffic.

The kitchen's capacity and original function is further ignored due to the storage overflow which makes it less effective for integrating culinary programmes.

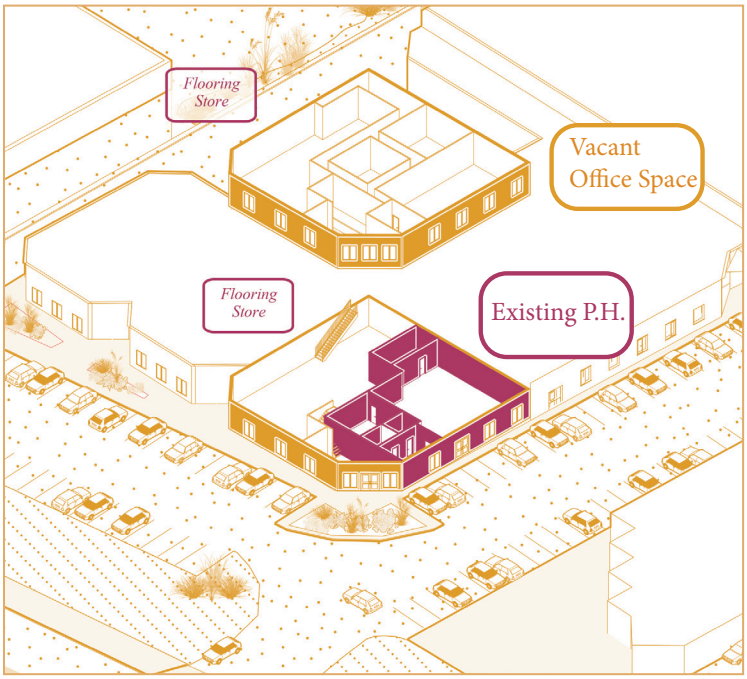


Fig. 5.10 Existing interior layout of Palestine House

Diagram by author

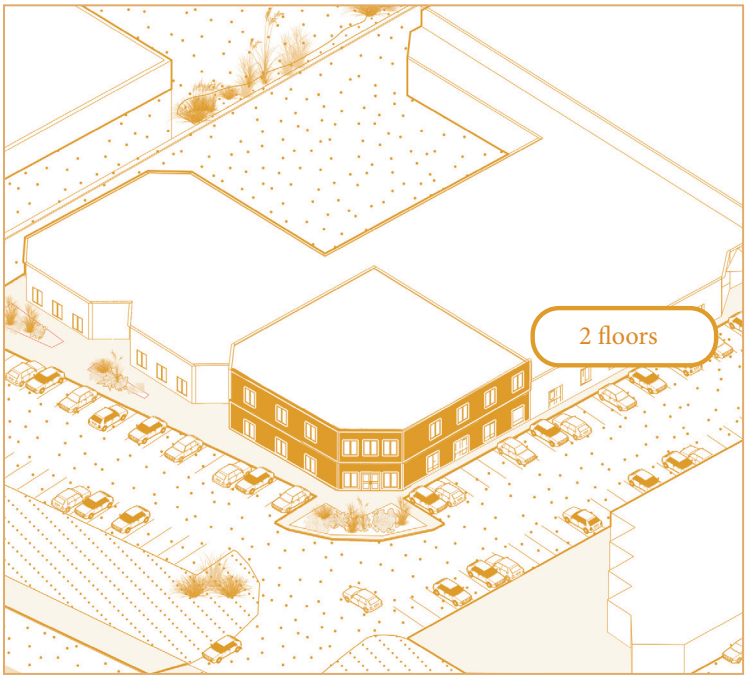


Fig. 5.11 Existing exterior layout of Palestine House

Diagram by author

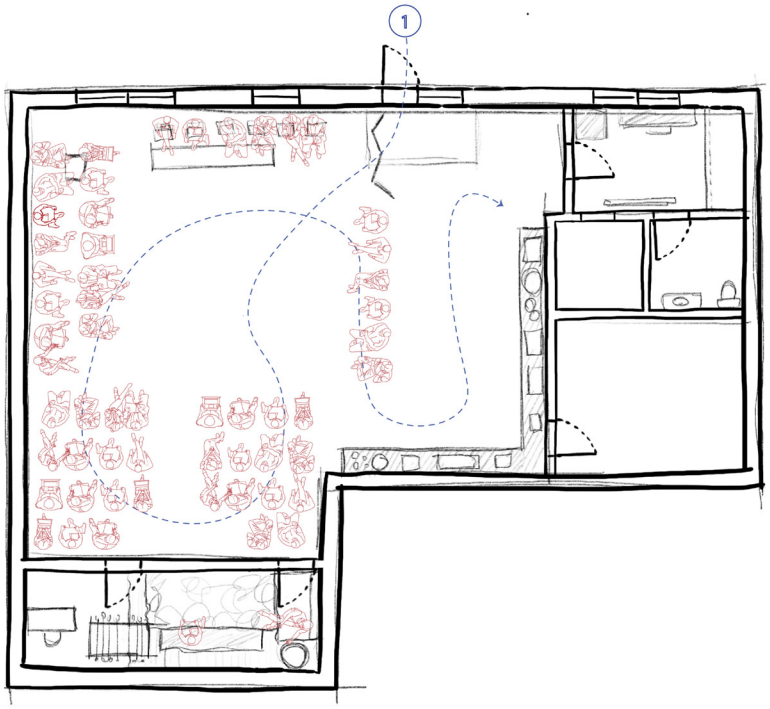


Fig. 5.12 Movement during acknowledgement ceremony

Diagram by author

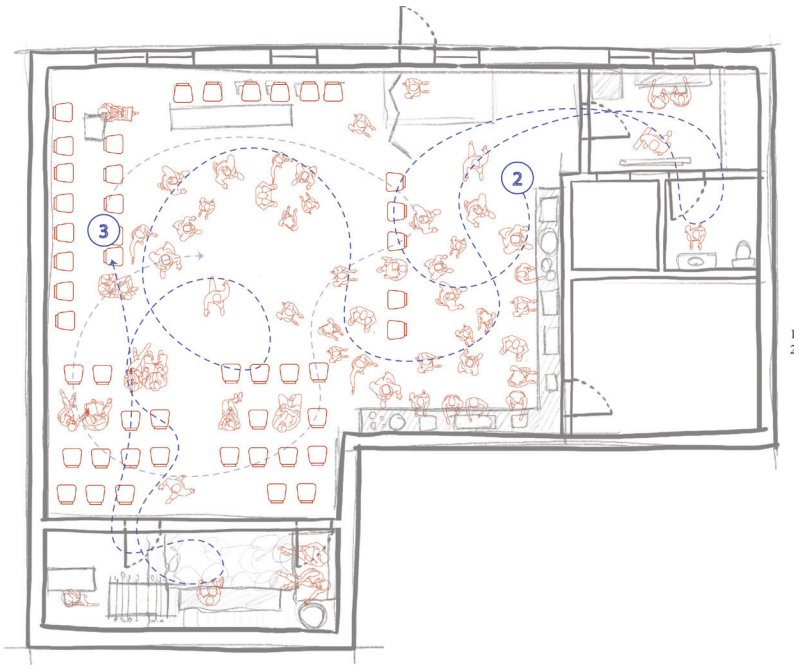


Fig. 5.13 Movement post acknowledgement ceremony - moving towards food station

Diagram by author



Fig. 5.14 Main space before acknowledgement Ceremony

Photo by author

Fig. 5.15 Space divider at entrance

Photo by author





Fig. 5.16 Home-cooked meals for the acknowledgement Ceremony

Photo by author

Fig. 5.17 Semi-private flexible room

Photo by author





Fig. 5.18 Kitchen as storage space

Photo by author

Fig. 5.19 Kitchen as storage space: Flags and boxes

Photo by author



Proposing a new layout

The building as a whole functions as a platform that welcomes and supports the work of existing organizations and nonprofits as an act of agency and care. It integrates the concept of permanent temporariness where archive spaces are permanent in function yet continue to grow through community input. This creates a slight contrast with the surrounding spaces which remain fluid and adaptable. The central courtyard serves as the main community space, with all other spaces accessed through it. Maintaining the facade's brick exterior that envelopes all the connected units on the site reinforces the idea of the courtyard house as a modest exterior with a vibrant and interconnected interior life. In this case, visibility is achieved within this context by reorienting the main entrance to the prominent diagonal corner on the southwest side as it faces the main road and vehicular entry point.

Proposed

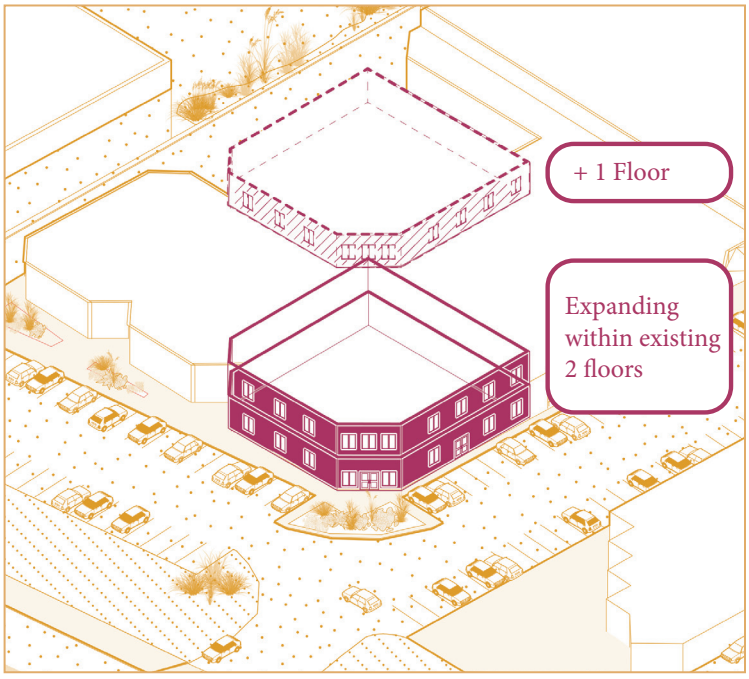


Fig. 5.20 Proposed expansion of building

Diagram by author

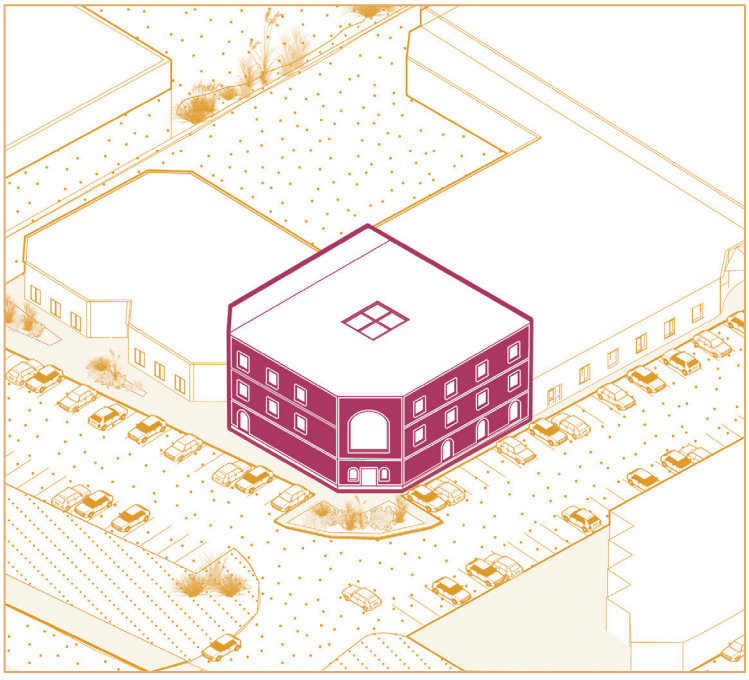


Fig. 5.21 Proposed building

Diagram by author

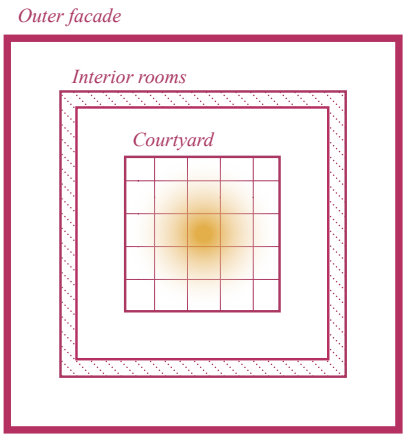


Fig. 5.22 Layering of spaces

Diagram by author

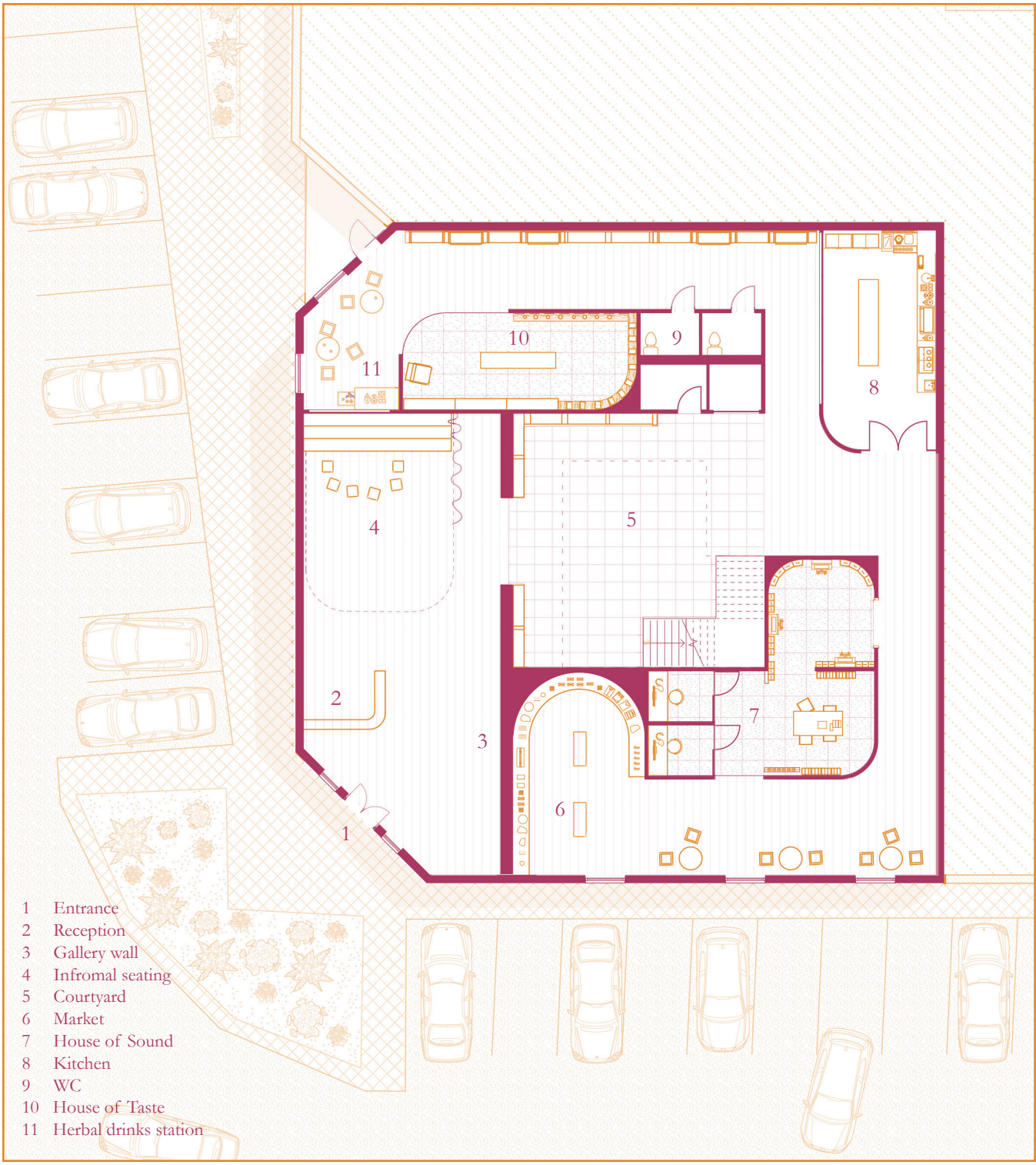


Fig. 5.23 Ground Floor plan

Diagram by author

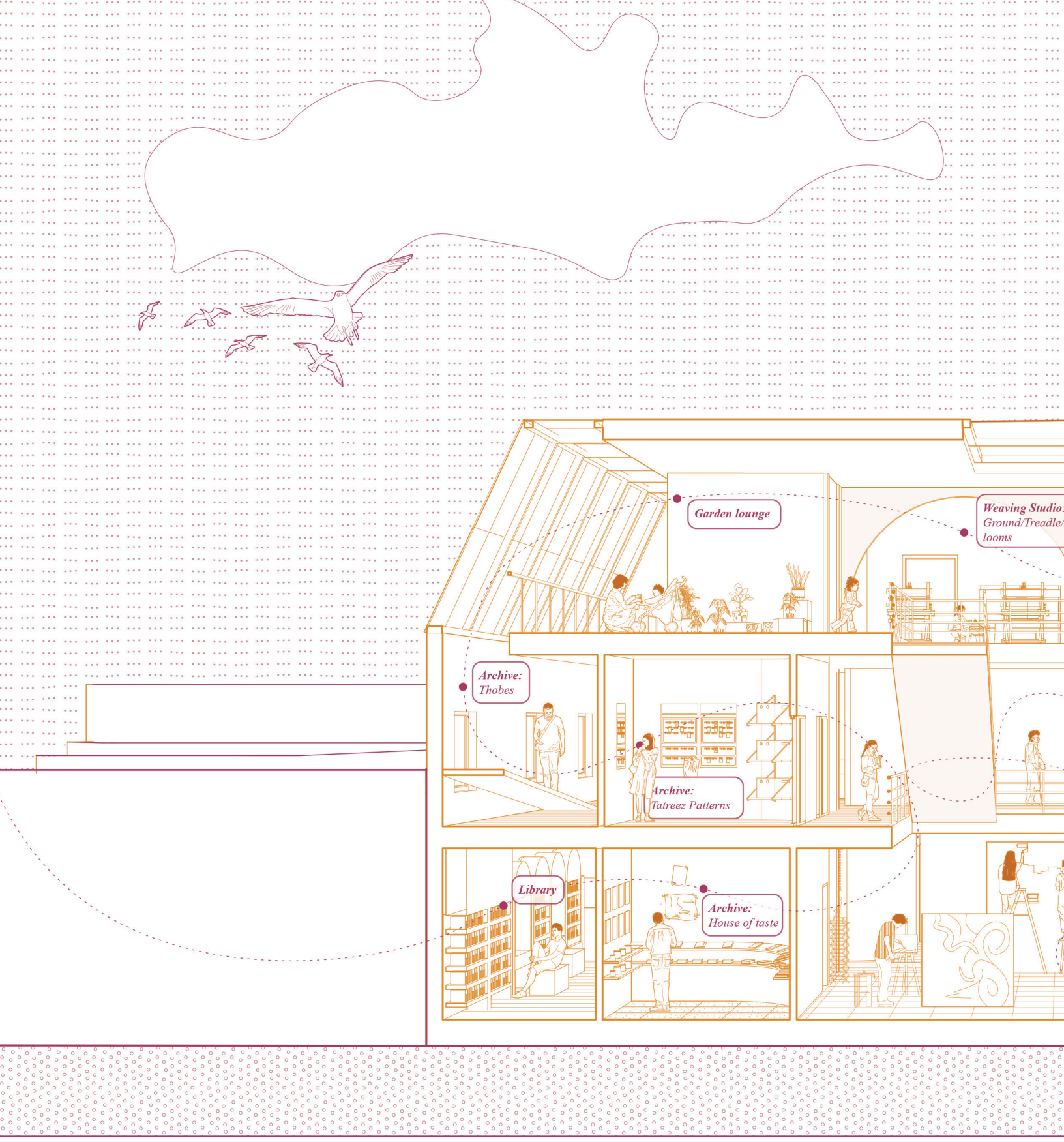
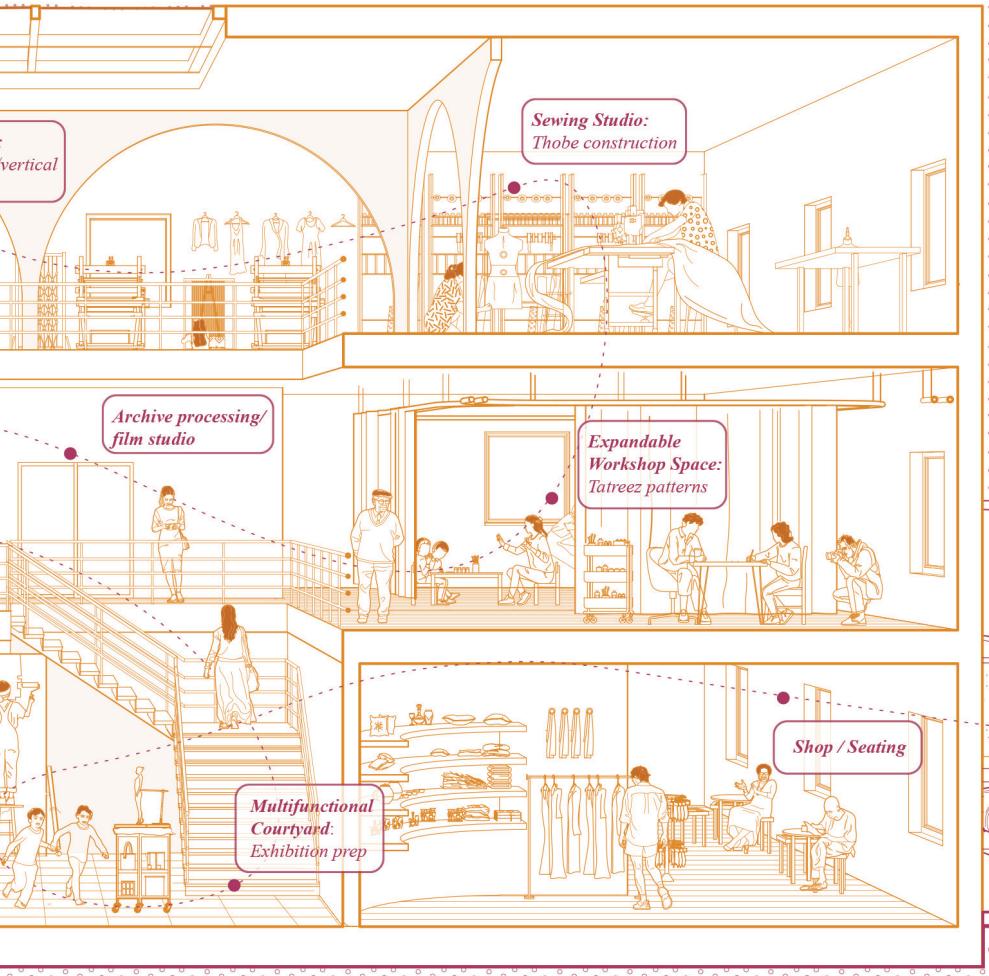


Fig. 5.24 Proposed building section

Diagram by author


vertical
Sewing Studio:
Thobe construction
Archive processing/
film studio
Expandable
Workshop Space:
Tatreez patterns
Shop / Seating
Multifunctional
Courtyard:
Exhibition prep

The wall

As visitors enter the building, they are initially greeted by a dimly lit space. They are guided by a thick, 'non-porous' gallery wall running perpendicular to the entrance, with a single opening to the courtyard that allows light to filter in. At the far end of this entrance space, a perforated wall provides a layered sense of visibility and offers a glimpse into the movement on the opposite side. This area serves as an exhibition space for various materials and archival collections. With the intentional lack of windows on one side the space creates a confrontational experience as it exhibits a range of materials and archival collections. This initial point acts as a precursor that guides the circulation into the contrasting and brightly lit courtyard or *Madafah* and, subsequently, the archive spaces.

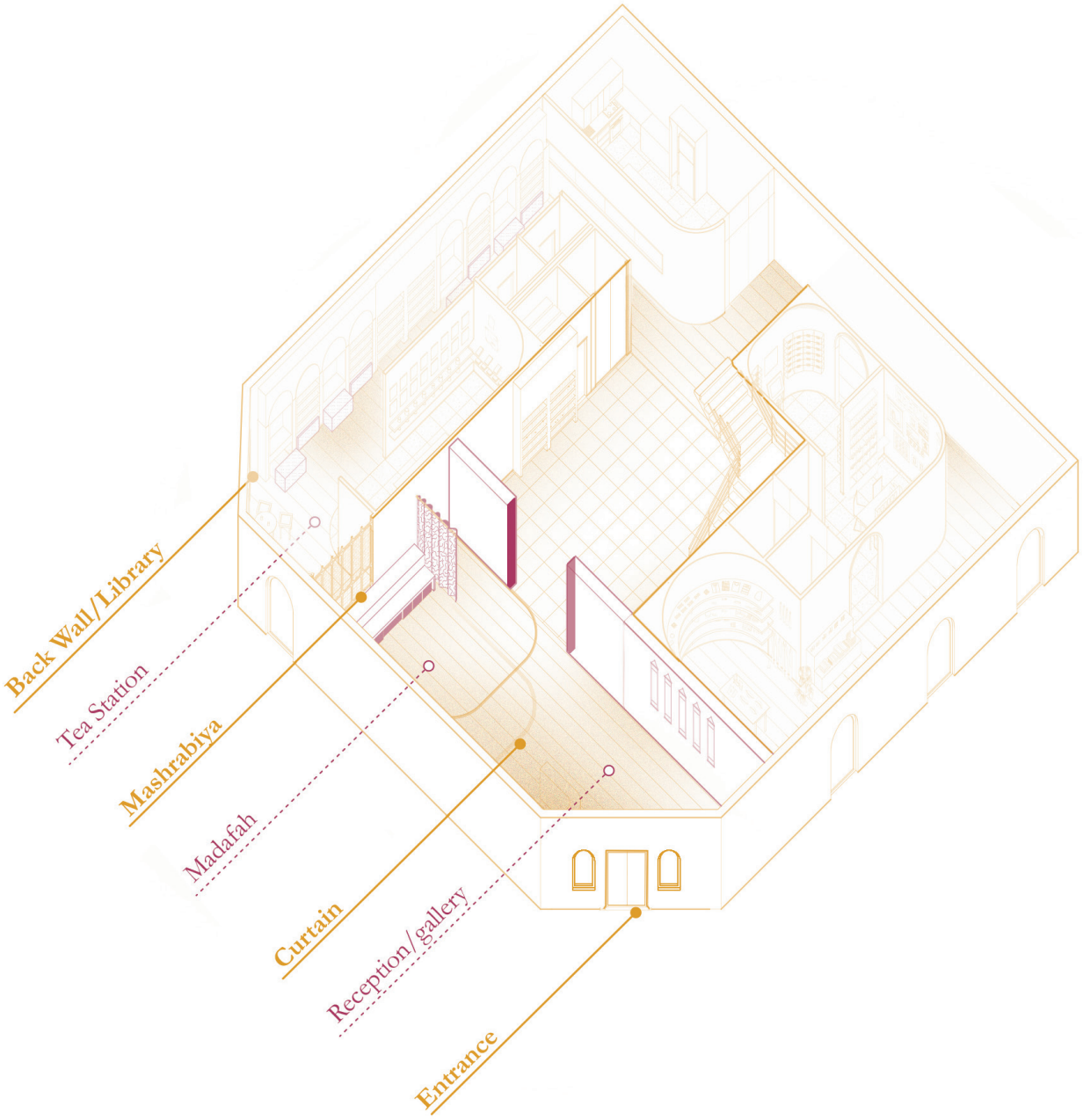


Fig. 5.25 Axonometric showing seperation points

Diagram by author





Fig. 5.26 Archives of original maps of Palestine

Part of Oqab's personal Map archive collections since the early 1800s.

Source: Oqab, the president of The Canadian Palestinian Professional Foundation in Mississauga, ON.


PALESTINE
1927
XF
Km #3
PALESTINE
1927

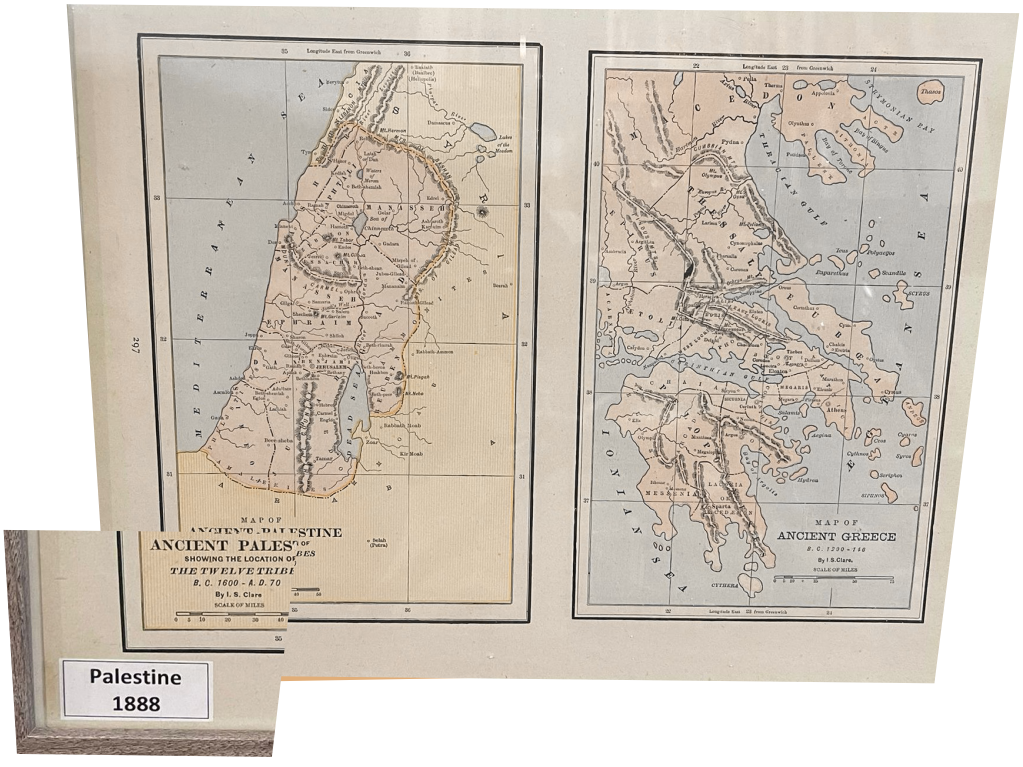

MAP OF
ANCIENT PALESTINE
SHOWING THE LOCATION OF
THE TWELVE TRIBES
B. C. 1600 - A. D. 70
By I. S. Clare
SCALE OF MILES
MAP OF
ANCIENT GREECE
By I. S. Clare.
SCALE OF MILES
Palestine
1888



Fig. 5.27 Archives of original Palestinian stamps

Stamps issued during the British Mandate and part of Oqab's personal stamp archive collections since the early 1900s.

Source: Oqab, the president of The Canadian Palestinian Professional Foundation in Mississauga, ON.







Post Stamps from Palestine

Issued during British Mandate between 1927-1948

T:Rachel's Tomb, Bethlehem. M.R: Dome of the Rock
M.L: Temple Mount. B: King David's Cetadel, Jerusalem.

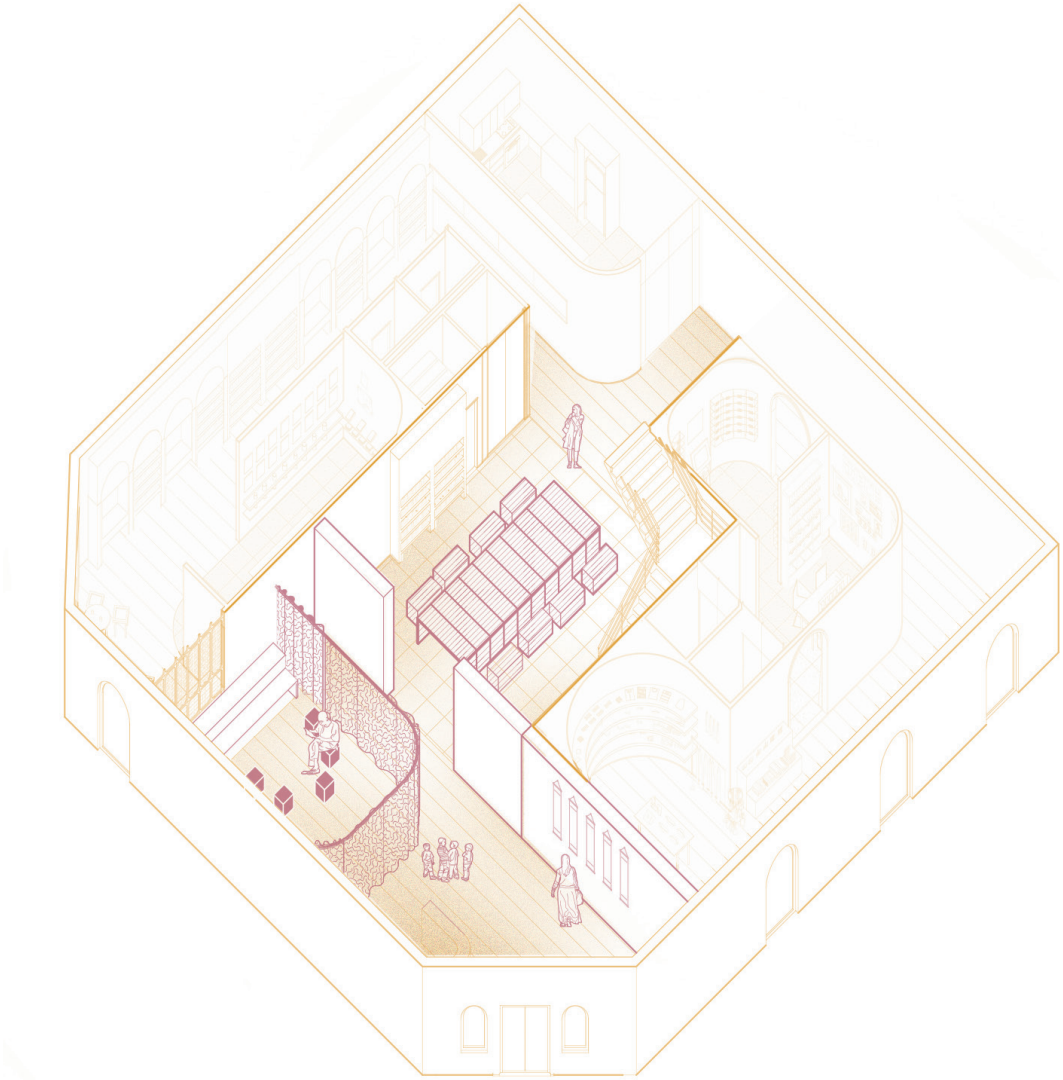


Fig. 5.28 'Closed condition': Smaller defined spaces

The two ends of the gallery wall that define the Madafah's entrance are movable, creating a larger uninterrupted span running east to west to serve bigger community events such as film screenings, artist exhibitions, lectures, etc.

Diagram by author

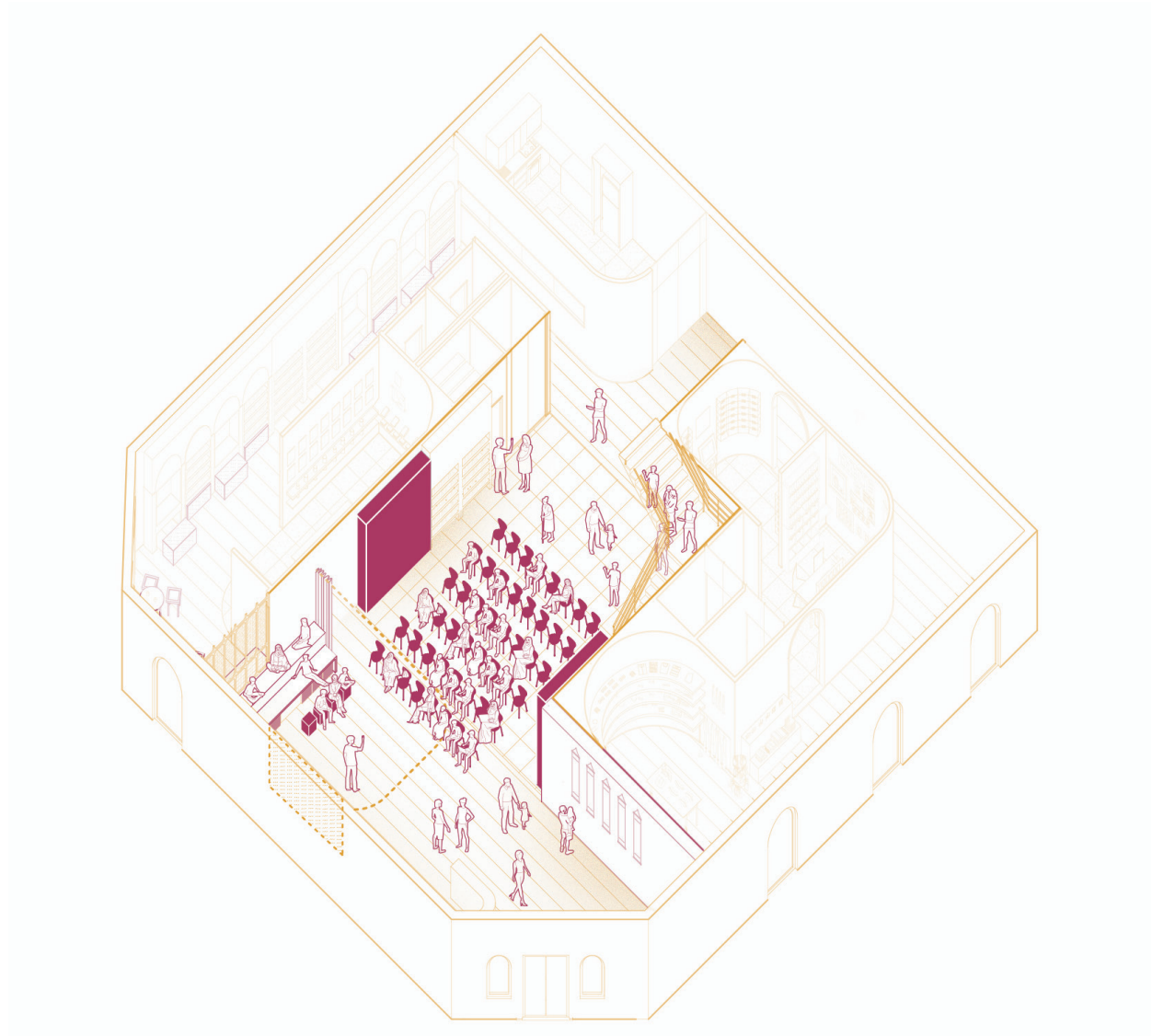
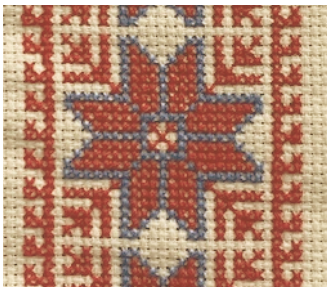


Fig. 5.29 'Open condition': Film viewing event

Diagram by author



Tahouneh aw Marwaha / Mill or Fan

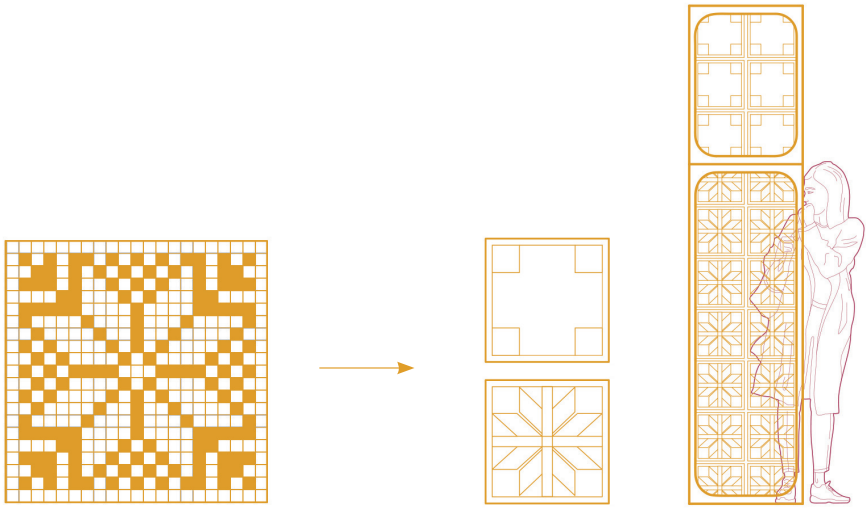


Fig. 5.30 Tatreez pattern mashrabiya: Perforated wall provides a layered sense of visibility

Diagram by author

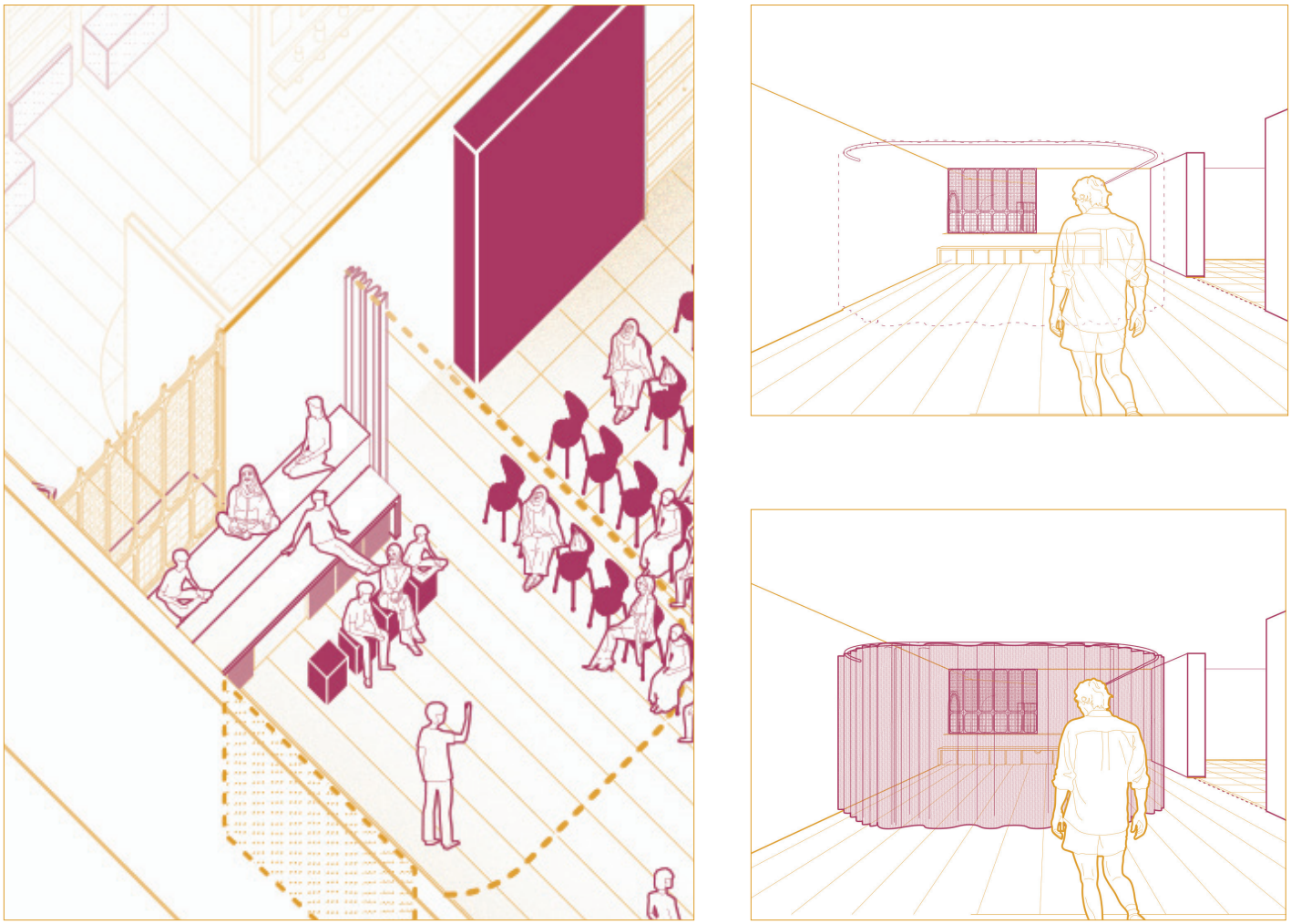


Fig. 5.31 Close-up of 'open condition': Film viewing event

Diagram by author

Courtyard as Madafah

The *Madafah* is the heart of the building. It is an open space that is both shared and collective. Just like the traditional *Madafah's* function which was discussed in the previous chapters, this central space is designed to be flexible and responsive to new scenarios. The interaction with the archive spaces on the ground floor is mediated through the *Madafah*. Although open for public use, a level of intimacy is maintained in the ground floor dars or rooms by controlling access points and visibility from the central space. The privacy inherent in this circulation system mimics the layering of traditional courtyard houses, where each "*dar*" functions in its own unique way shaped by its users, with a varying degree of privacy depending on its position in the house.

The verticality of the *Madafah* is achieved with its three-story height in order to reinforce the importance of this central communal area. The stairs within the courtyard act as a viewing platform in which the circulation is guided to constantly bring users back into the common area when transitioning from one floor to the next.

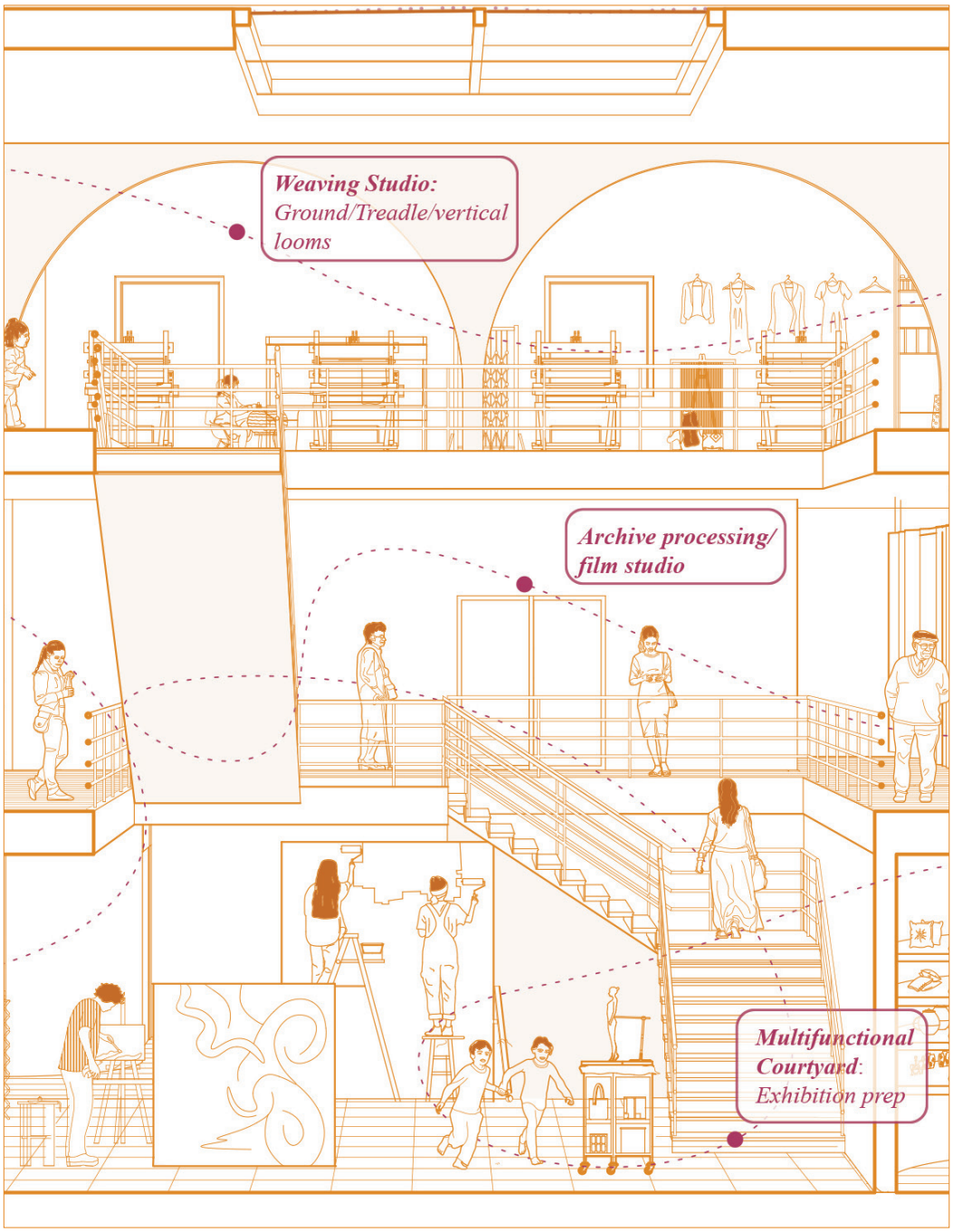


Fig. 5.32 Courtyard being used to prepare for artist exhibition

Diagram by author

House of Taste

The community kitchen is located in the northeast corner of the building and is adjacent to the "house of taste," which houses books on traditional Palestinian food and a growing community-led archive that welcomes recipes from users.

This space includes educational displays related to Palestinian agriculture while making connections to the Indigenous stewardship of the land on which this building stands. It includes a display of edible wildflowers, spices, and traditional kitchen tools. Relationship to food is also illustrated through Palestinian soap made from olive oil and lemon, common in the city of Nablus. The sensory experience of smell is integral to this space in order to further connect visitors to Palestinian foods, traditions and agricultural practices. Community cooking will be hosted in the kitchen space to enliven the physical components of the archive.

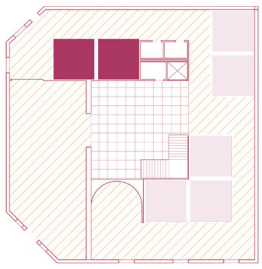


Fig. 5.33 Ground floor key plan: House of Taste
Diagram by author

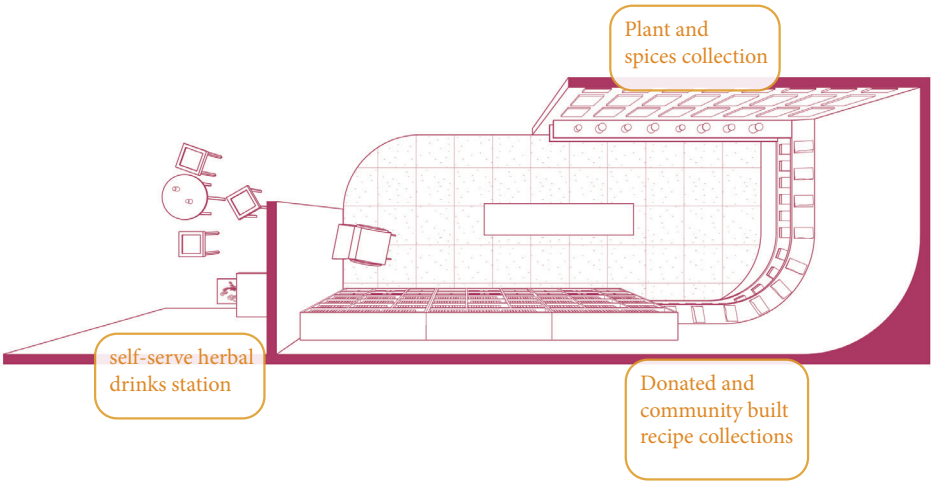


Fig. 5.34 Plan: House of Taste
Diagram by author

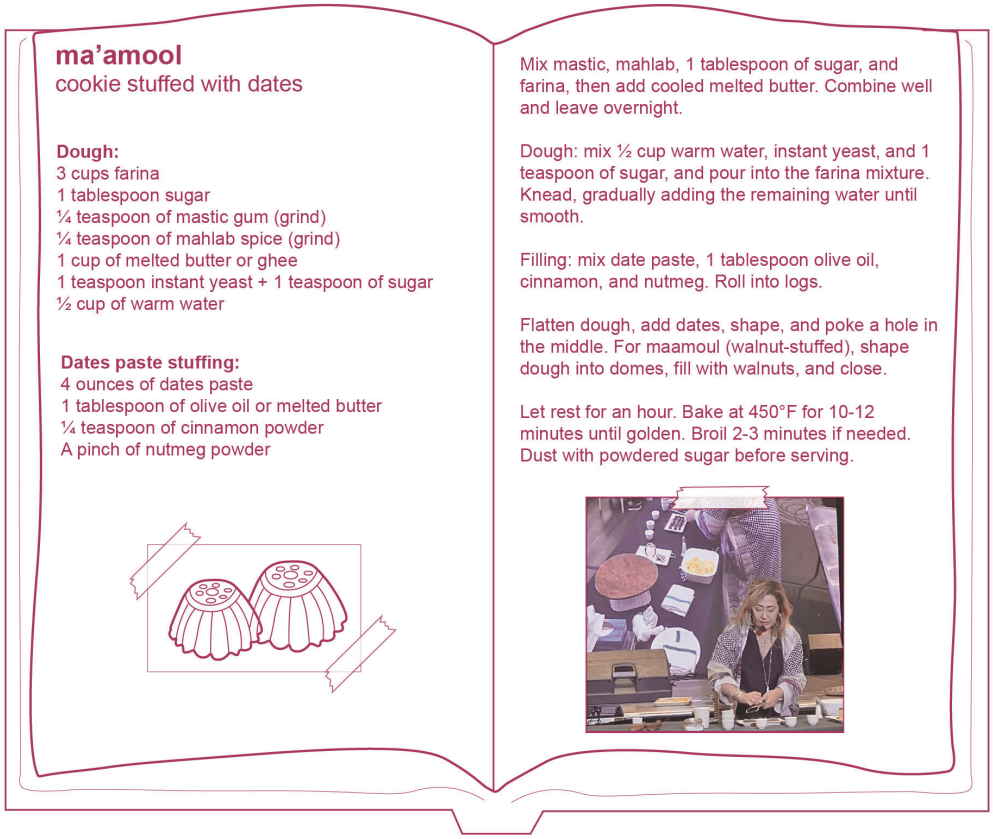


Fig. 5.35 Reccipe book: Ma'mool

Recipe from community cooking class hosted by Taste of the Middle East in Toronto

Diagram by author

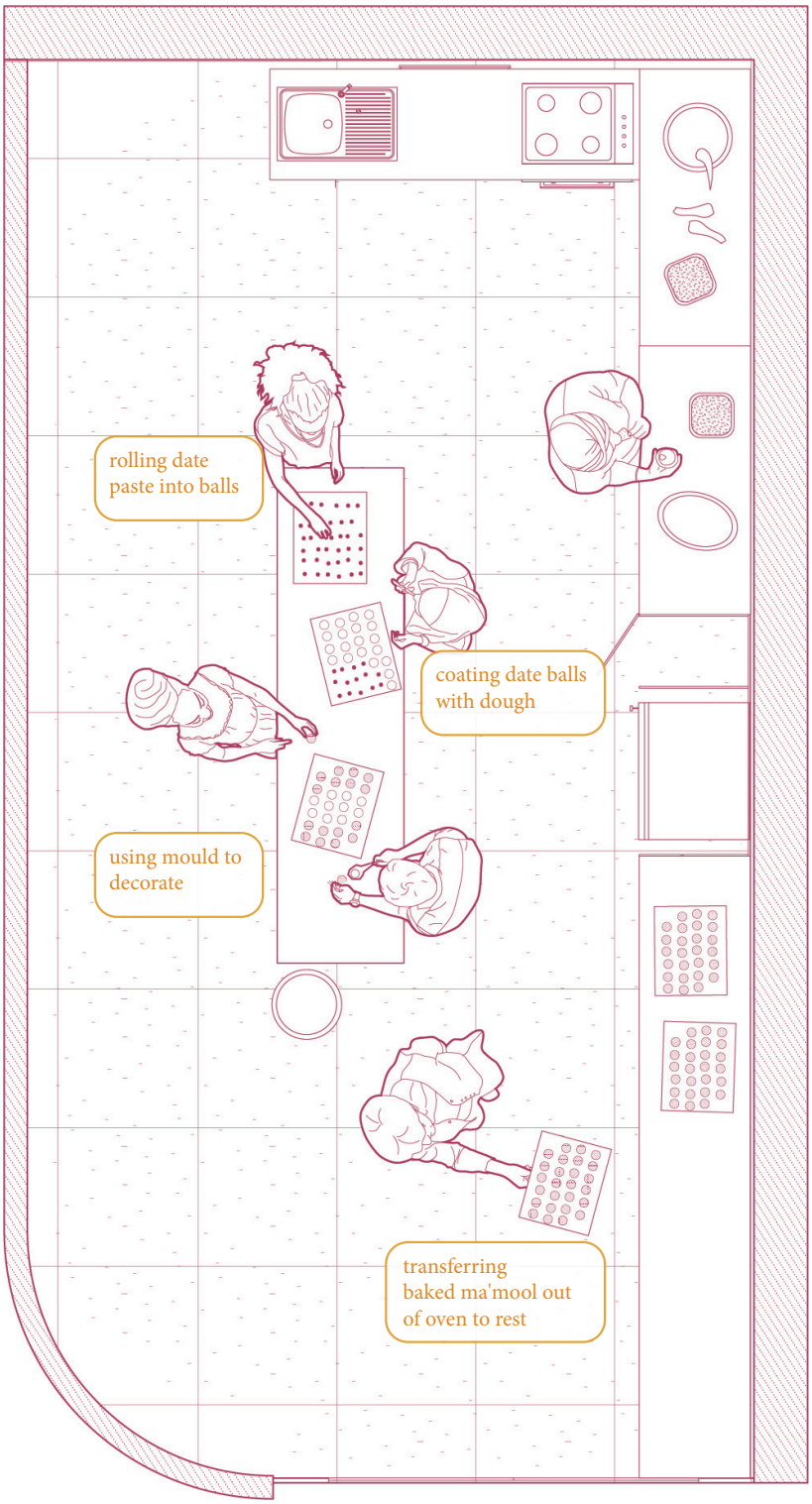


Fig. 5.37 Kitchen plan

Illustrating the use of community-built recipe collections in the kitchen

Diagram by author

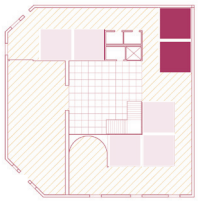


Fig. 5.36 Ground floor key plan: Kitchen
Diagram by author

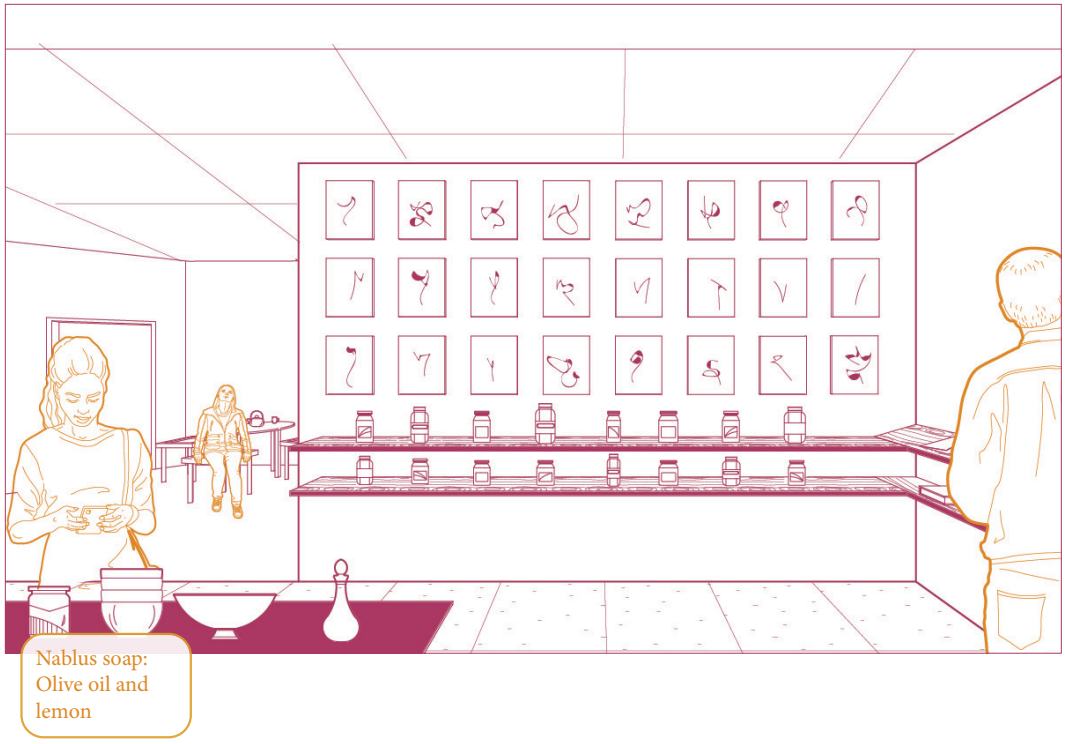


Fig. 5.38 Perspective: House of Taste

Diagram by author

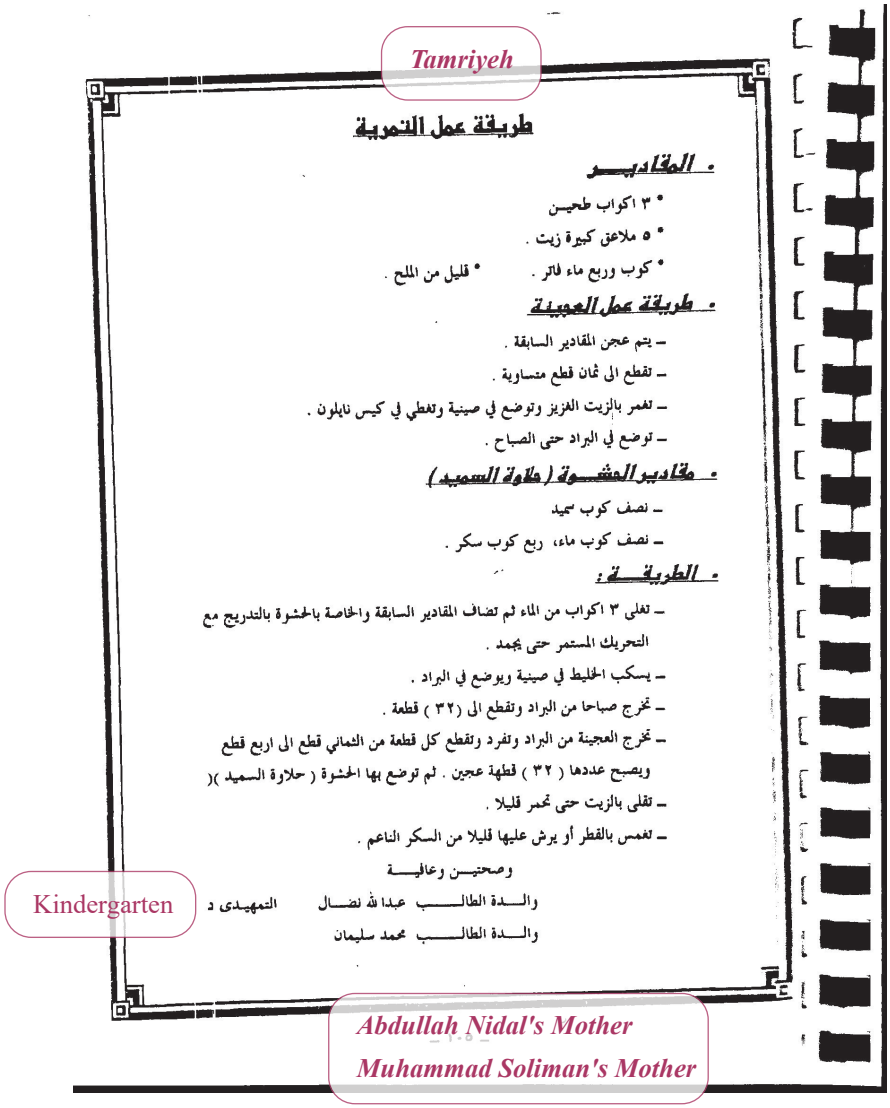
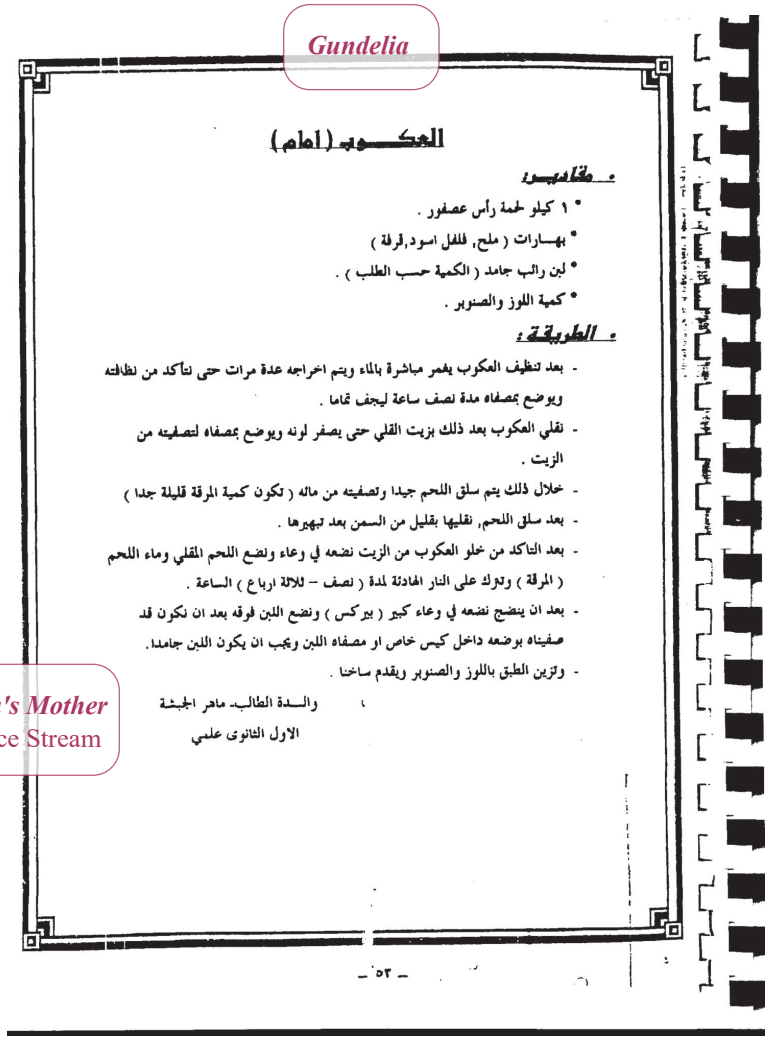


Fig. 5.39 Recipe of Tamriyeh dessert

Scans from 3 recipe books put together by a group of Palestinian school teachers and mothers living in Kuwait as an act of knowledge sharing through Palestinian Cuisine. Copies were scanned and distributed freely. JOR, 1995.

Scanned from my mother's recipe collection

Gundelia



العكـــوب (أعلم)

• مقاديـر :

• ١ كيلو لحمة رأس عصفور .
• بهـارات (ملح, فلفل اسود,قرفة)
• لبن رائب جامد (الكمية حسب الطلب) .
• كمية اللوز والصنوبر .

• الطريقة :

- بعد تنظيف العكوب يغمر مباشرة بالماء ويتم اخراجه عدة مرات حتى نتأكد من نظافته ويوضع بمصفاه مدة نصف ساعة ليجف تماما .
- نقلي العكوب بعد ذلك بزيت القلي حتى يصفر لونه ويوضع بمصفاه لتصفيته من الزيت .
- خلال ذلك يتم سلق اللحم جيدا وتصفيته من ماله (تكون كمية المرقة قليلة جدا)
- بعد سلق اللحم, نقليها بقليل من السمن بعد تبهيرها .
- بعد التأكد من خلو العكوب من الزيت نضعه في وعاء ونضع اللحم المقلي وماء اللحم (المرقة) وندرك على النار الهادئة لمدة (نصف – ثلاثة ارباع) الساعة .
- بعد ان ينضج نضعه في وعاء كبير (بيركس) ونضع اللبن فوقه بعد ان نكون قد صفيناه بوضعه داخل كيس خاص او مصفاه اللبن ويجب ان يكون اللبن جامدا.
- وتزين الطبق باللوز والصنوبر ويقدم ساخنا .

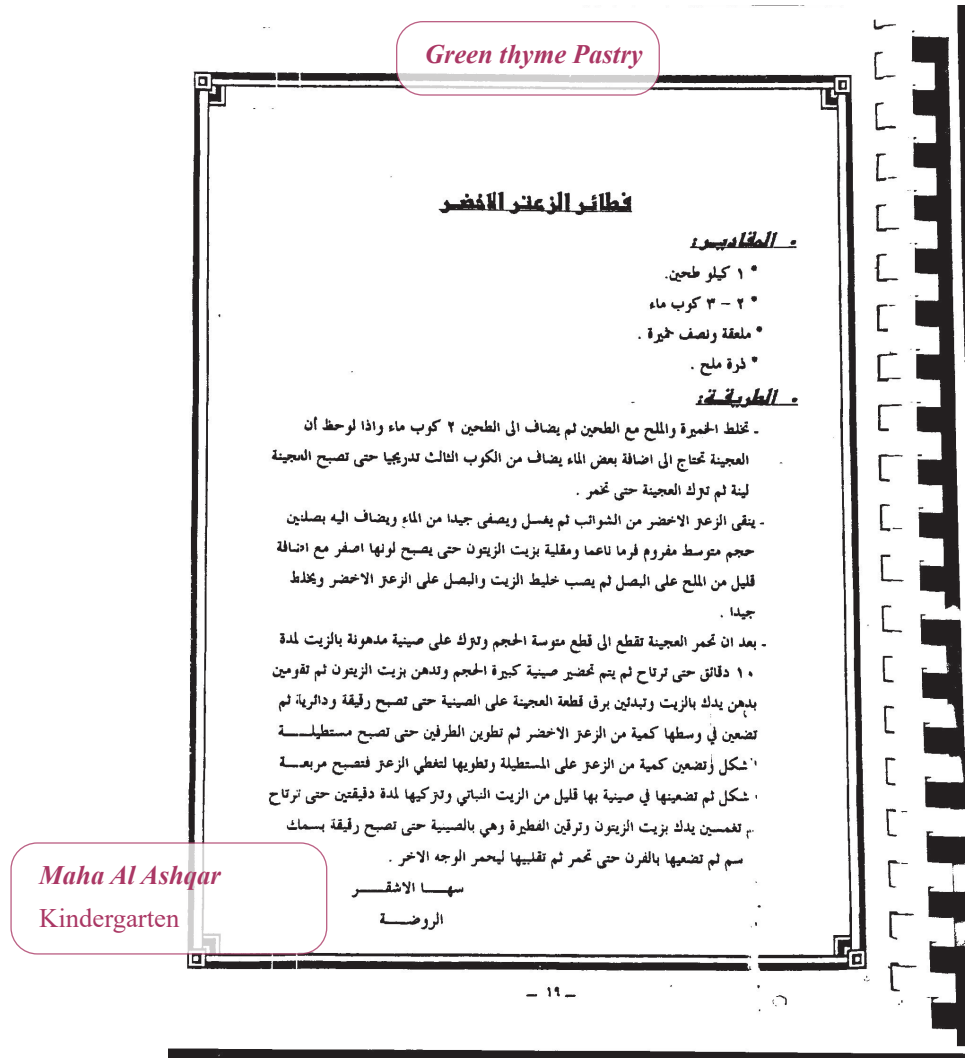
والـــدة الطالب ماهر الجبشة
الاول الثانوى علمي

- ٥٣ -

Maher Aljabtha's Mother
Grade 10, Science Stream

Fig. 5.40 Recipe of Gundelia

Scanned from my mother's recipe collection



Green thyme Pastry

فطائر الزعتر الاخضر

• المقادير :

• ١ كيلو طحين.
• ٢ – ٣ كوب ماء
• ملعقة ونصف خميرة .
• ذرة ملح .

• الطريقة :

- تخلط الخميرة والملح مع الطحين ثم يضاف الى الطحين ٢ كوب ماء واذا لوحظ أن العجينة تحتاج الى اضافة بعض الماء يضاف من الكوب الثالث تدريجيا حتى تصبح العجينة لينة ثم تترك العجينة حتى تخمر .
- ينقى الزعتر الاخضر من الشوائب ثم يغسل ويصفى جيدا من الماء ويضاف اليه بصلتين حجم متوسط مفروم فرما ناعما ومقلية بزيت الزيتون حتى يصبح لونها اصفر مع اضافة قليل من الملح على البصل ثم يصب خليط الزيت والبصل على الزعتر الاخضر ويخلط جيدا .
- بعد ان تخمر العجينة تقطع الى قطع متوسة الحجم وتترك على صينية مدهونة بالزيت لمدة ١٠ دقائق حتى ترتاح ثم يتم تحضير صينية كبيرة الحجم وتدهن بزيت الزيتون ثم تقومين بدهن يدك بالزيت وتبدئين برق قطعة العجينة على الصينة حتى تصبح رقيقة ودائرية ثم تضعين في وسطها كمية من الزعتر الاخضر ثم تطوين الطرفين حتى تصبح مستطيلة الشكل وتضعين كمية من الزعتر على المستطيلة وتطويها لتغطي الزعتر فتصبح مربعة الشكل ثم تضعينها في صينية بها قليل من الزيت النباتي وتتركيها لمدة دقيقتين حتى ترتاح ثم تغمسين يدك بزيت الزيتون وترقين الفطيرة وهي بالصينية حتى تصبح رقيقة بسمك سم ثم تضعيها بالفرن حتى تحمر ثم تقلبيها ليحمر الوجه الاخر .

سهـــا الاشقـــر
الروضـــة

Maha Al Ashqar
Kindergarten

– ١٩ –

Fig. 5.41 Recipe of Green thyme Pastry

Scanned from my mother's recipe collection

House of sound

The sound archive is made up of a three-dar cluster and offers a private, independent experience within the open space. It carries a collection of cassettes and an audio player for listening. This space connects to a collection of physical paper documents, photographs, posters, and tactile objects contributed by the community.

Although the narratives and oral stories are not necessarily directly connected to the relics room, the physicality of the objects complements the audio experience by offering multisensory engagement that brings the stories to life in a broader sense.

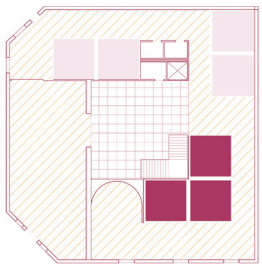


Fig. 5.42 Ground floor key plan: House of Sound
Diagram by author

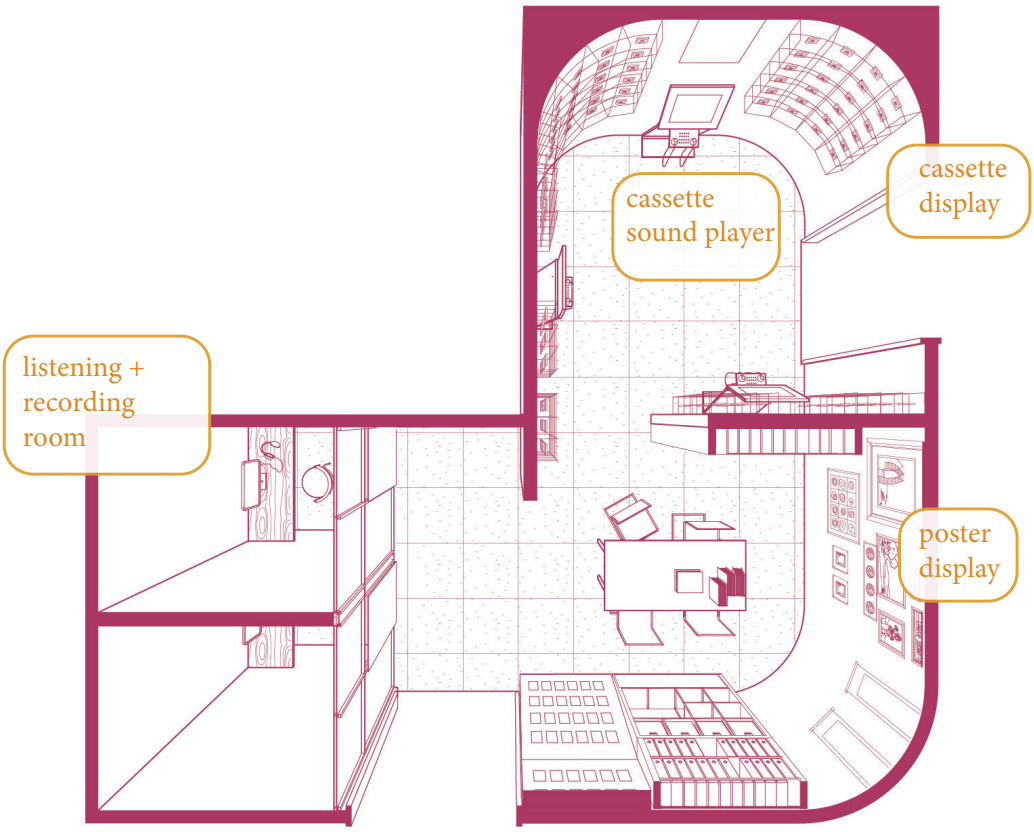


Fig. 5.43 Plan: House of Sound
Diagram by author

LISTEN

Through searching, rediscovery, and restoration, we invite you to explore the Palestinian Sound Archive—a tribute to music, spoken word, and album art. As a powerful act of reclaiming and resisting colonial erasure, the Archive represents Palestinian culture through the decades. These sounds connect generations through stories of joy, sorrow, love, resistance, and resilience. They have journeyed far to reach you, extending a hand across time.

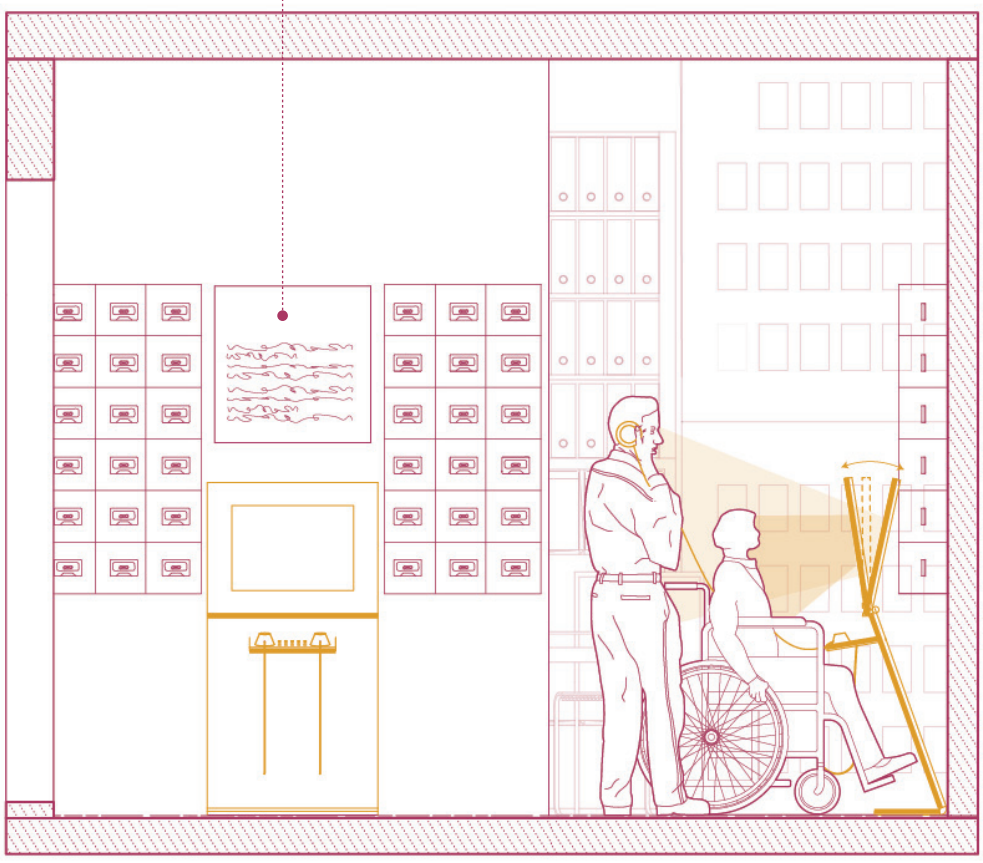


Fig. 5.44 Section of cassette room
Diagram by author

RECORD

The recording room is an integral part of the archive cluster since it creates a subtle distinction between connection and privacy through sound. Its design allows the user to remain visible within the larger cluster, yet the experience it provides is made private through the isolation of sound which naturally creates an intimate environment for listening and recording. This duality emphasizes the room's role as a space for personal reflection and storytelling. It allows the user to engage with oral histories or contribute their own, all while being visibly connected to the rest of the archive cluster. The room serves as a sanctuary for voices by creating an atmosphere of quiet introspection within the broader and more open layout of the building.

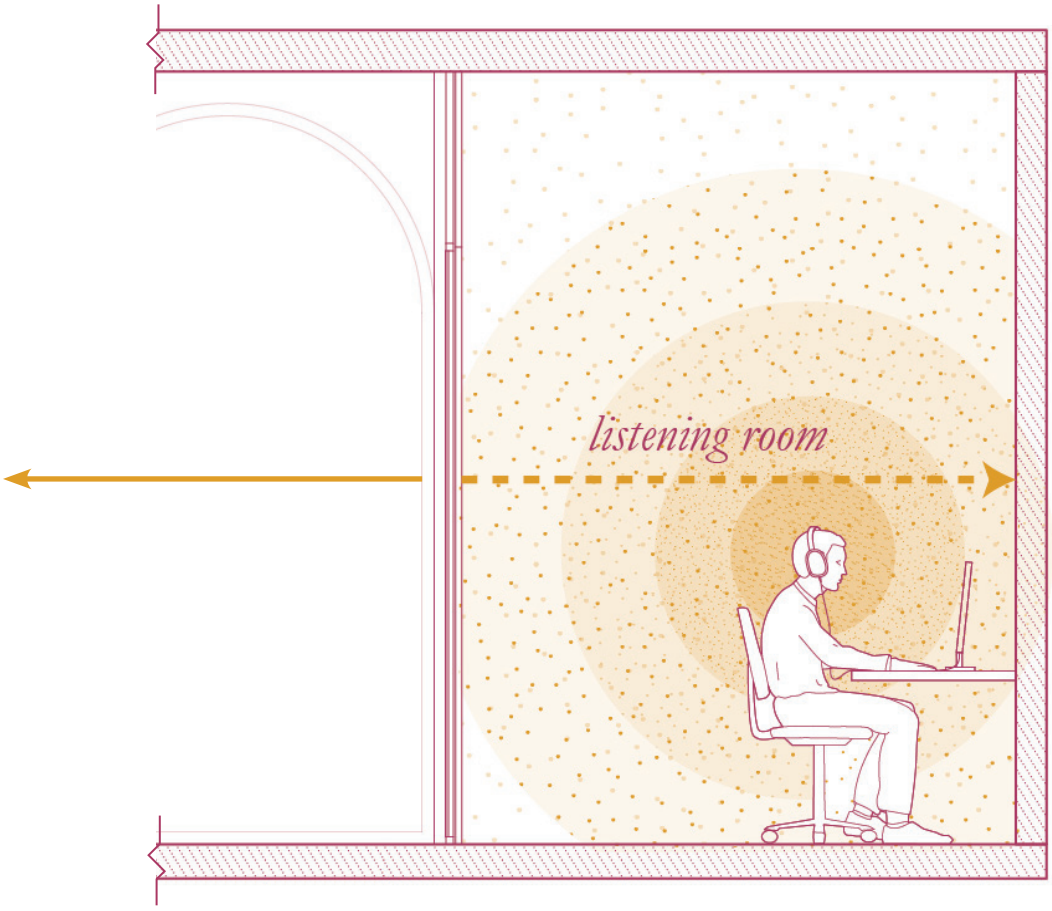


Fig. 5.45 Section of listening & recording room
Diagram by author



Fig. 5.46 Perspective: House of Sound

Diagram by author



Fig. 5.47 Cassette collection and family photographs

Cassettes and photos of home in Palestine courtsey of Tatreez instructor in chapter 4.2

Diagram collage by author

House of Tatreez

The 'House of Tatreez' will focus on the collection of emerging tatreez patterns, which is supported by workshop spaces and exhibitions that highlight its cultural significance. This thematic organization is inspired by existing archiving models like Khazaen in Palestine in which their collections are curated through community involvement and outreach creating a living repository of cultural heritage.

Similarly, the Tiraz Museum in Jordan is a precedent that offers consistent classes and presentations of tatreez, emphasizing the importance of regular, structured engagement with the craft. In this case, caring for tatreez is defined through consistency and through visibility as an act of knowledge perpetuation. This is translated through a spatially supportive environment for cultural practices, which informs the design of dedicated, functional spaces within the center.

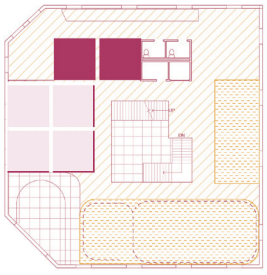


Fig. 5.48 Second floor key plan: House of Tatreez
Diagram by author

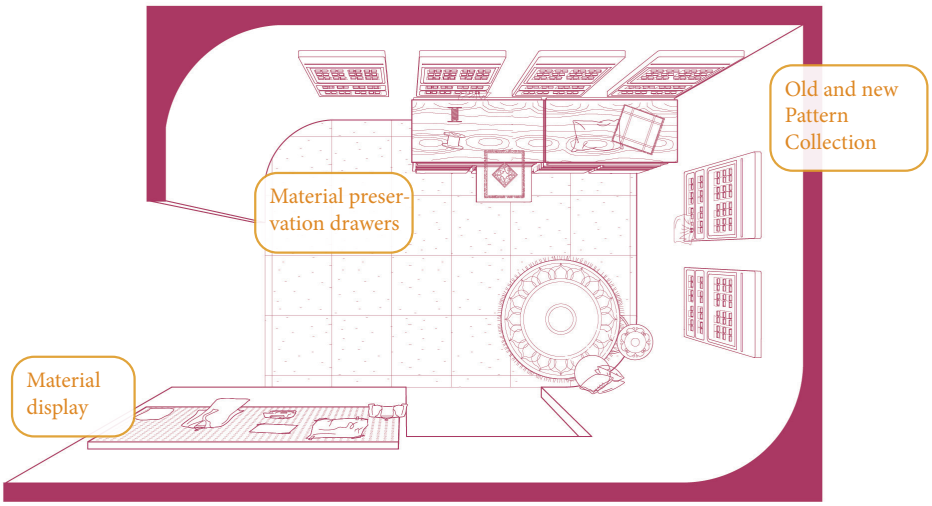


Fig. 5.49 Plan: House of Tatreez
Diagram by author

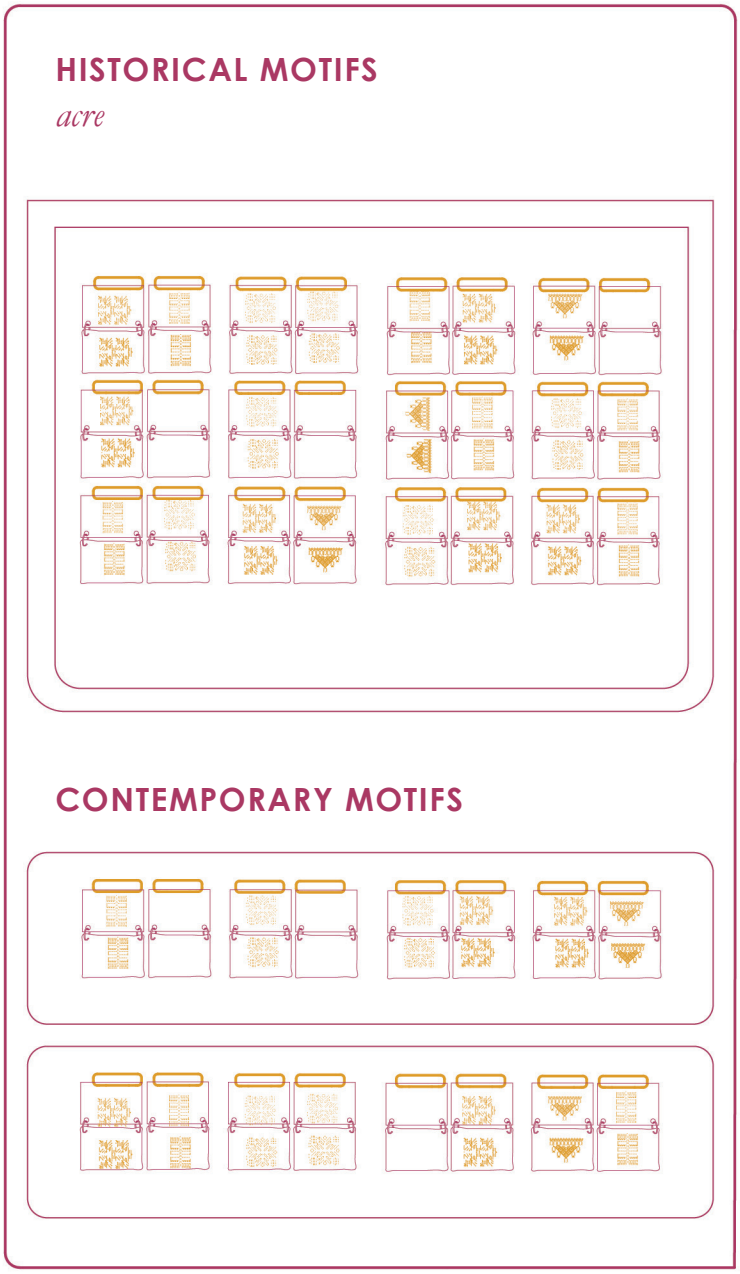
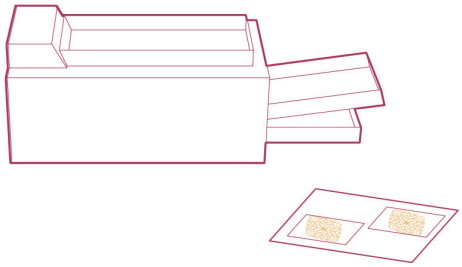
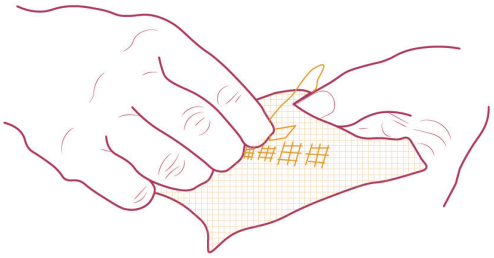


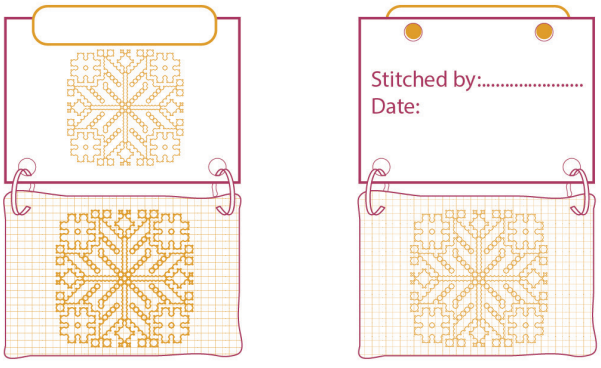
Fig. 5.50 Tatreez wall display
Diagram by author



Print digital motif



Stitch the pattern on 2'x2' canvas



front back

Attach digital and embroidered motifs and add to display wall based on historical region or contemporary category

Fig. 5.51 Tatreez wall display: Community building process
Diagram by author



Fig. 5.52 Perspective: House of Tatreez
Diagram by author



Fig. 5.53 Collection of post-October 7 patterns
Collage by author

Applying the Records Continuum Model

CREATE

When community members contribute personal stories, tatreez patterns, recipes, or other cultural artifacts, they are creating a trace of records. These records are not just static items but are created from ongoing cultural practices and interactions within the community.

CAPTURE

As these records are created, they are captured within the archive's system where they are manually collected, or digitally through self-upload features. For example, oral histories recorded in the house of sound solo room are then linked to specific themes in the archive, like "General Library" or "House of Tatreez." This ensures that the records are integrated into the broader narrative of the building's spatial organization and not just randomly stored.

ORGANIZE

The records are organized in a way that reflects their connections to other records and the community's needs. For example, this involves categorizing tatreez patterns by region/event or connecting recipes to stories told by community elders. The organization is not static as it evolves when new records are added, allowing the archive to grow and adapt over time.

PLURALIZE

The records in the archive are meant to be actively used and shared. For example, community members can access the tatreez patterns to teach others within and outside of the building, or the oral histories might be used in educational programs. The idea is that the records remain active and relevant which supports the ongoing cultural practices and the community's sense of identity.

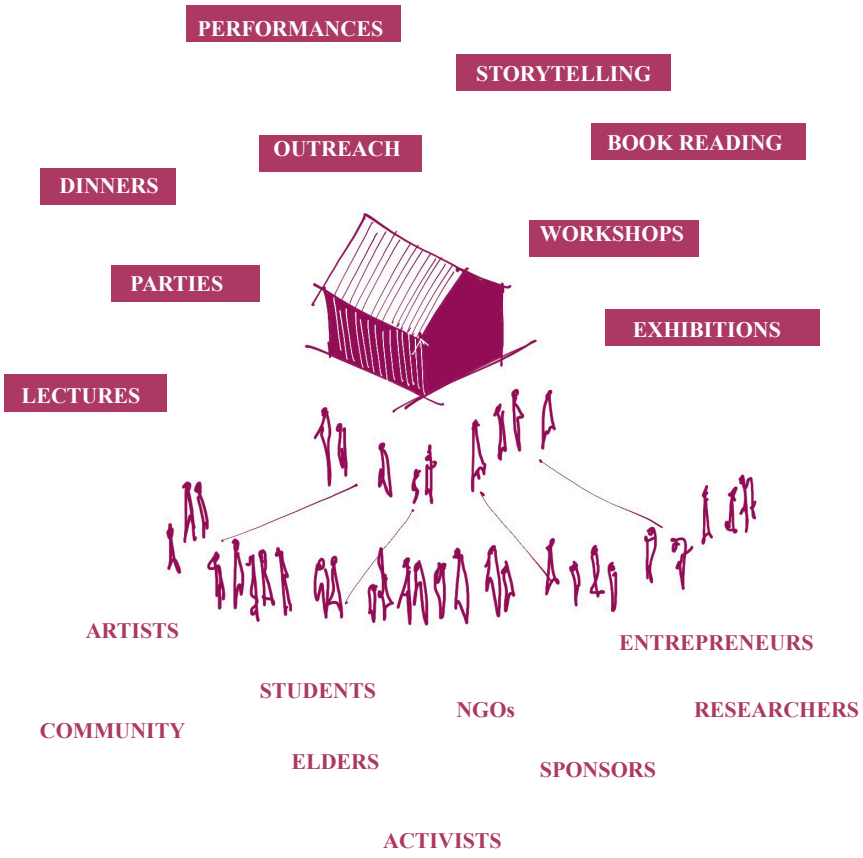


Fig. 5.54 Functions and users of the re-imagined Palestine House
Diagram by author

By applying the *Records Continuum Model*, the Palestine House functions not merely as a records storage facility. Rather, it presents a living, breathing space where records are continuously created, captured, organized, and shared. This creates a dynamic archive and transnational network that reflects the concept of 'permanent temporariness,' where the past, present, and future of Palestinian cultural practices are constantly intertwined and evolving.

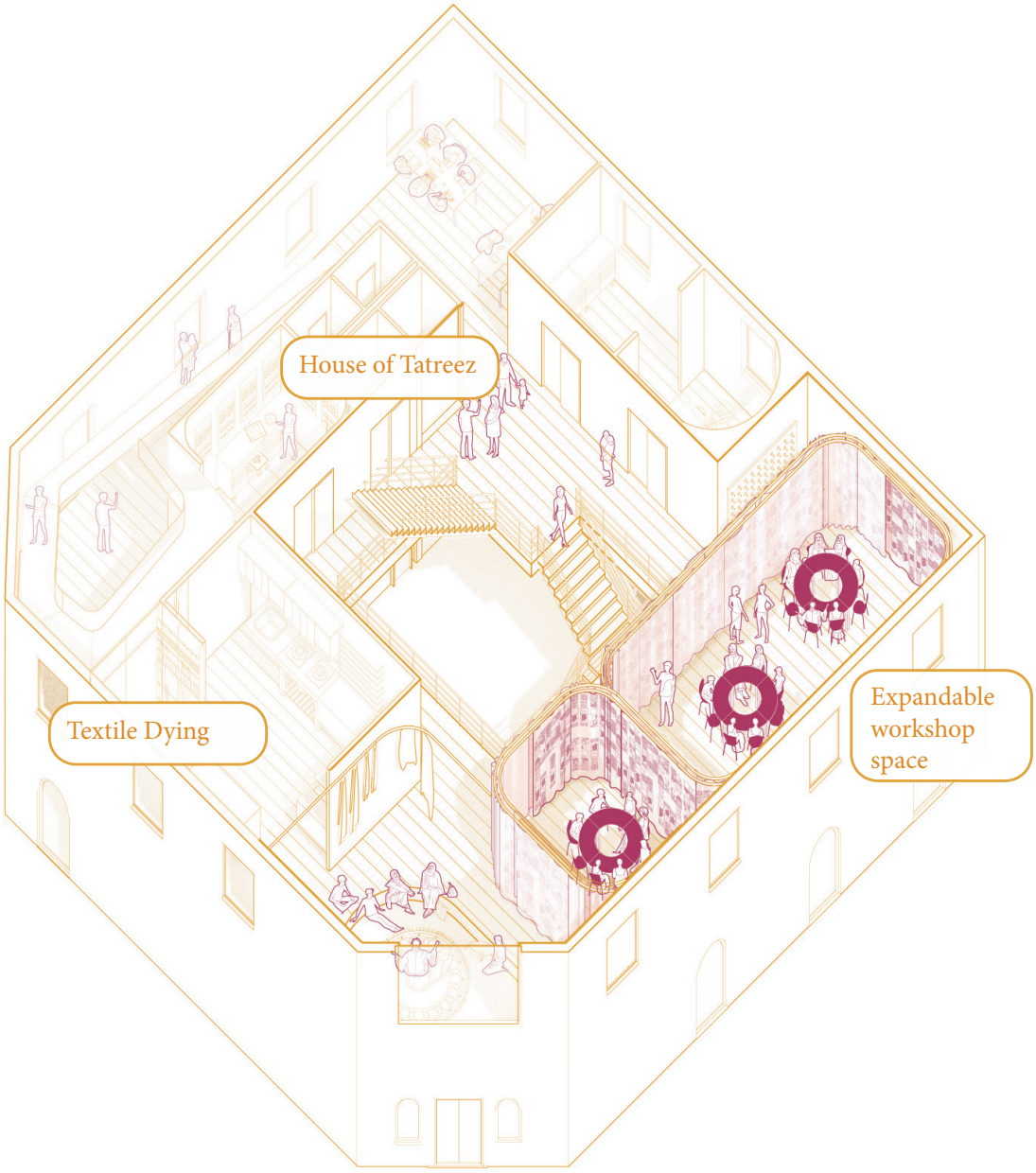


Fig. 5.55 Second floor axonometric
Diagram by author

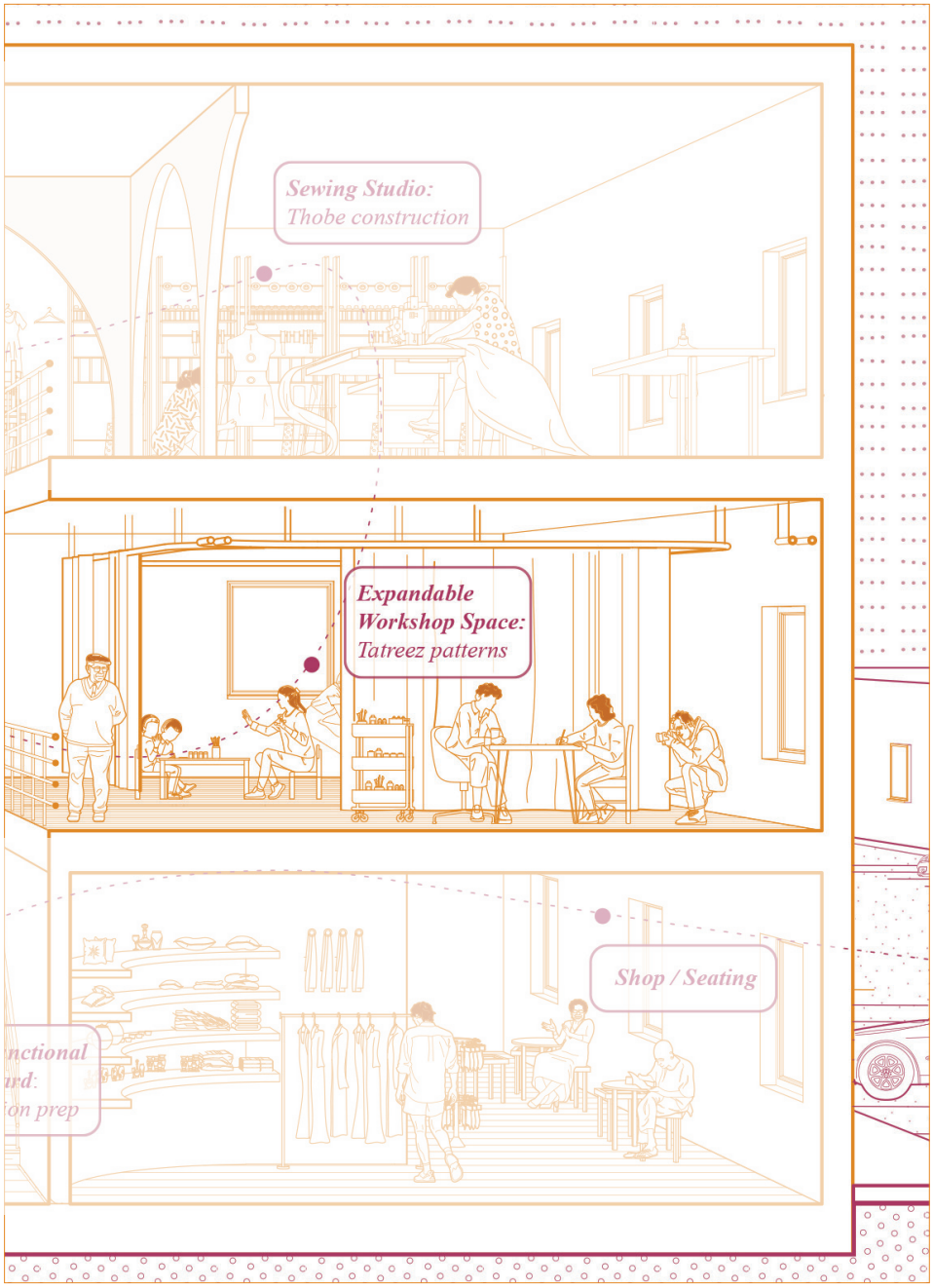


Fig. 5.56 Section of workshop space
Diagram by author

Curtains

2 layers

A double curtain system on the second floor is designed to introduce a gradient of transparency and opacity. The space can be configured in various ways: When both layers are fully closed, they create a secluded and private zone that isolates the workshop spaces from the rest of the program, providing a complete sense of enclosure and privacy. When the curtains are fully open, the space maintains a defined yet permeable boundary where the workshops blend with the adjacent areas and encourage interaction within the floor. When the two curtain layers are arranged sparingly and without necessarily overlapping, a range of exposure instances is achieved by creating partial selective privacy.

Room configuration

The curtain system is guided by an S-like loop rail that allows the space to be further divided into a small room, a medium room, or combined into a single large room when both curtains are shifted to open up the middle division. This adaptability enhances the flexibility of the space and allows it to cater to different needs and activities while maintaining a connection to the rest of the environment.

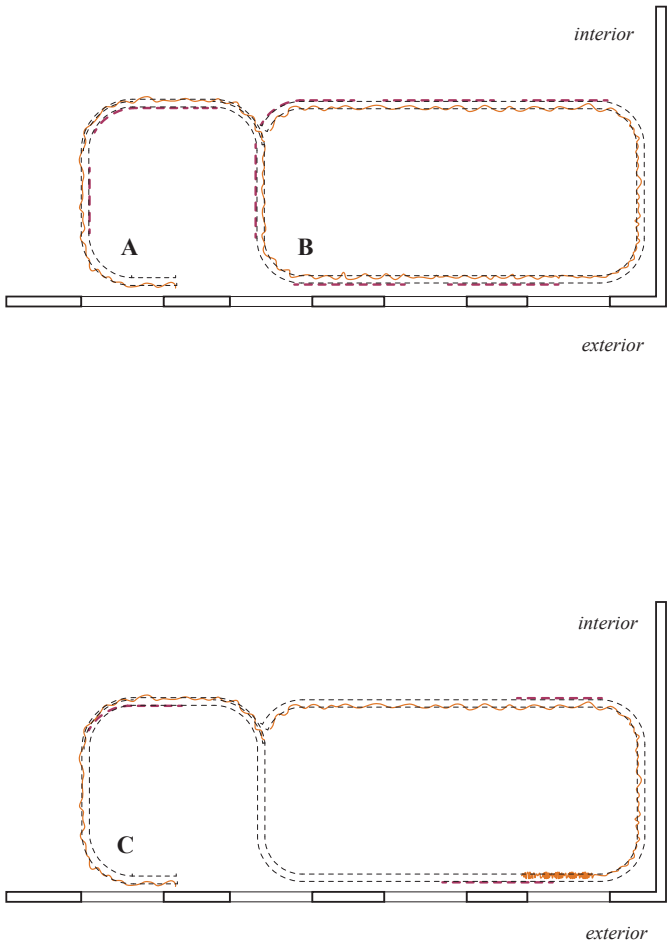


Fig. 5.57 Double curtain configuration layout
Diagram by author

Community agency

The second curtain is a communal effort that transforms the curtain into a living tapestry. It is composed of individual squares embroidered with tatreez patterns by community members where the density and effect draws inspiration from the traditional mashrabiya. The tatreez patterns are stitched onto lightweight fabric squares that are then assembled into the larger curtain. The traditional craft becomes a mobile unit that controls spatial privacy and visibility as the curtain is tucked away or drawn across the space.

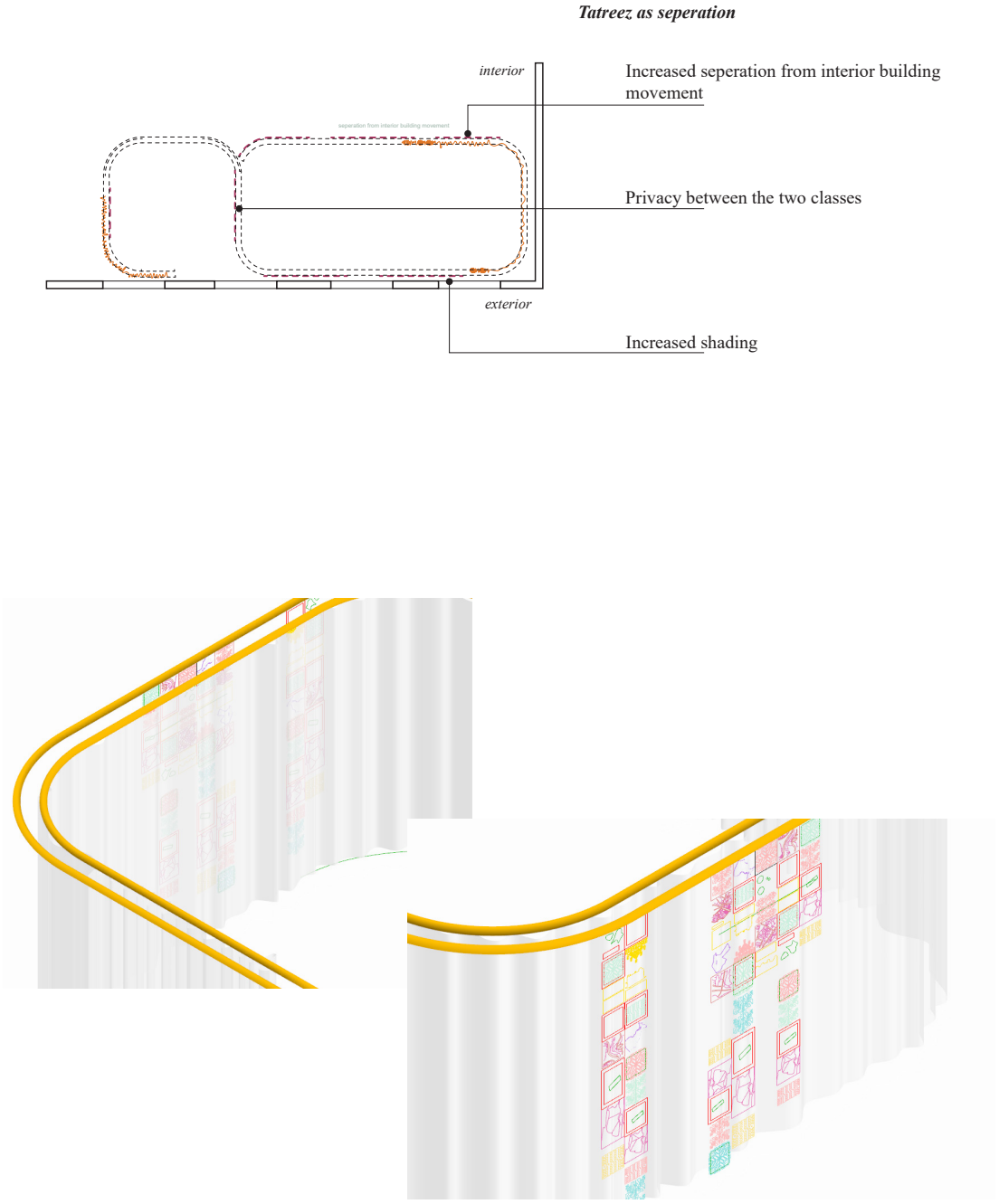


Fig. 5.58 Double curtain: controlling degree of privacy
Diagram by author

Conclusion

This thesis focuses on memory, particularly the shared narratives of multiple generations of Palestinian diasporas, within the larger context of the ongoing territorial and political displacement of Palestinians. Simon Schama reflects that, "landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock,", emphasizing that personal memory and physical landscape are unstable entities that are constantly created and redefined.[1] Examining Palestinian diasporic experiences through this lens means that there exists many 'Palestines' that are often based on one's spatial, temporal, and imagined connections to the material and immaterial elements of Palestine. As such, the Atlas presented in this thesis and visual ethnographies examine how Palestinians in the diaspora recall their ancestral homeland and the ways in which these stories are passed across generations. The central argument of this work stresses that, in the absence of national institutions that could have safeguarded Palestinian identity, memory becomes crucial in maintaining the continuity of the nation across its global diaspora.

Paul Connerton argues that writing "oppositional histories is not only a practice of documented historical reconstruction... but [a preservation of] the memory of social groups whose voice would otherwise have been silenced."[2] In this thesis, the emphasis is placed not only on reflecting "oppositional histories," as Connerton suggests, but also on the significance of "telling" these histories as a means of articulating and preserving memories. Considering the long-standing practice of oral history within Palestinian communities, both pre- and post-Nakba, the participants' narratives are viewed as critical spaces for the creation and sharing of memory. By applying a narrative approach, this work builds on literature (Chapters 2 and 3) that positions storytelling as a key site for generating meaning in the process of understanding (or sometimes misunderstanding) personal and collective memories, as well as broader political and intergenerational experiences. In this framework, oral history accounts are seen as moments where personal, communal, and inherited memories intersect to create a larger narrative.

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[1] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 6-7.

[2] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 14.

The research questions: 'How can storytelling, imagination, and artistic practices serve as a foundation for reclaiming both individual and collective identities within the diaspora?' As such, the design proposal is a response that adopts the concept of *Al Masha* (Chapter 2) in the process of building its archive collection by offering a sense of collective ownership. The Palestine House becomes a physical and spatial articulation of the idea that cultural identity is not fixed. It responds to this notion through its adaptability to new contexts, new people, and new boundaries. Through textiles, audio recordings, recipes, and shared artifacts, every user actively builds the narrative and experience of the archive, which also leaves impressions that can be experienced by others. This process transforms the building into a vessel of exchange and ensures that the material is not just a repository of past traditions but a living and responsive entity that is shaped by its participants.

The value of this research lies in its focus on the lived experiences of Palestinians within both design and theoretical frameworks. This work serves as an initial step toward future initiatives aimed at examining how diasporic knowledge can reshape dominant narratives of the past and influence visions of the future. As architects, it is essential to continuously interrogate the foundational beliefs and principles that shape our actions and methodologies, and to use storytelling as a research tool that inspires discussions around the notions of home, identity, and belonging. By positioning the Palestinian community within Canadian architectural discourse, I believe there is an opportunity to unite vastly different worlds within the spaces we share and call home.

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