Paper / Proposal Title:
Education of Architecture as a Civilian Act of Producing Knowledge in Conflict Zones

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Abstract:
This paper presents the role adopted by Palestinian architecture students in rethinking the entangled relation between history, citizenship and the city in conflict zones through research-by-design (RbD) final thesis projects conducted in Israeli University. As a minority facing inequalities and ethnic discrimination, Palestinian students in a “pro-active architectural” studio in the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology (Haifa) claimed citizenship, ethical and national acts by means of past urban conditions, inequities of the present colonialism, and alternative space of intervention. As a representative example, I will focus in this talk on two main projects: El-Isawiyyah neighborhood in East Jerusalem and the Balata refugee camp in the district of Nablus city in the West bank. In both cases, the inhabitants were deprived of national citizenship rights by Israel, they retained the privileges and rights of urban citizenship. This was reflected by articulation of the contested history in the tension between the need-to-survive and the need-to-resist and by reshaping the encounters between the bottom-up tactics of developing the livable space under military violence. El-Isawiyyah project drew on the materiality of the architectural elements (such as, balconies, stairs, roofs, walls, courtyard) to develop a flexible architecture that provide the everyday missing public spaces and the security. The Balata’s project focused on the tension between the city and the camp as a way to discuss the national taboo of preserving the camp and limiting access to the city until the “right to return”. By requisitioning this relation, the project offered the refugees an
ownership in the abandoned and destroyed buildings in Nablus as a mean to preserve the threatened architecture heritage of the city. These RbD projects, reflect the ways studio becomes a laboratory of cultural production of critical Indigenous knowledge for rethinking architecture as a civil act.

• Author(s) Biography:
Fatina Abreek-Zubiedat is postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for History and Theory (gta), ETH, Zurich, a co-founder of Zubiedat Architects office, and an architectural historian and theorist. She earned her PhD from the Technion (2018) (1st Prize with outstanding distinctions). Her research and publications focus on architecture in conflict, Palestinian cultural historiography, urban transformations in contested cities, (Post-)colonial development discourse, refugee camps and urban citizenship. Her work and studies have been published/accepted for publication in major peer-reviewed article journal (e.g., Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, Citizenship Studies, Ethnic and Racial Studies), books (e.g., Making Home(s) in Displacement: Critical Reflections on a Spatial Practice; Camp Geographies: Contemporary spatialities of a modern political technology, Nihilism and the State of Israel), and accepted and presented in the most competitive international conferences (e.g., SAH, MESA, EAHN, Docomomo, UHA, Royal Geographical Society). Abreek-Zubiedat is the recipient of several prestigious recognitions, including the Rothschild Fellowship, the Neubauer Fellowship, Azrieli scholarship, and the Council for Higher Education Award.