

*From the West End to the West Bank: Oppression, Racism and Resistance*

Cressman Center for Visual Arts, 100 E Main Street Louisville, KY 40202

Sept. 10-Oct. 8, 2021

Opening Reception: Sept. 17, 5-8 pm

The Hite Art Institute is pleased to present *From the West End to the West Bank: Oppression, Racism and Resistance*. Organized in conjunction with the 2021 Louisville Photo Biennial, *From the West End to the West Bank* seeks to highlight how both Louisville, KY, and Palestine have ongoing colonial and racist systems that actively benefit some over others. While sometimes it is an obvious act of violence, many times those systems are using legal and bureaucratic tools to discriminate against people. Featuring work from local Louisville photographers, historical images from the University of Louisville Photographic Archives and images from the Activestills Photography Collective this exhibition uses photography to show similarities between the West End of Louisville and the West Bank in Palestine. The images present recent and historical instances of oppression as well as the way these communities organized, resisted, and survived these violent realities.

Serving as a historical base for the exhibition, photographs from the UofL Photographic Archives are documentation of Louisville's systemic systems of displacement and oppression. Many images for example document issues of urban renewal demolition and displacement as well as the destruction of historically black neighborhoods to construct Louisville's highway system. Other images serve as reminders that social justice protests in Louisville are not new and in fact Louisville citizens have been fighting for equality and equity for decades.

These historical images are presented with the work of contemporary Louisville photographers who have been documenting the social justice movements that occurred throughout 2020, as well as photographs of boarded up homes which bear witness to the economic disparity of areas in Louisville.

Shown alongside these photographs are images from the photography collective Activestills. Based in Palestine/Israel, the Activestills collective is made up of Palestinian, Israeli, and international photographers who use their photographs as a tool for social change. As with the Louisville based images, the images chosen from Activestills act as witnesses to uprisings in Palestine as well as documentation of displacement of Palestinian citizens by the Israeli government.

Exhibiting these images together allows for the examination of the similarities between Louisville and Palestine and offers audiences a better understanding of how these oppressive systems operate in one's own country. This exhibition offers a voice to those committed to the resistance of these oppressive forces

whose everyday life is surviving these systems of oppression. This alone shows resilience and by itself is resistance against a system that tries to erase them.

This exhibition is curated by UofL MFA candidate Shachaf Polakow in partnership with Cassidy Meurer and the University of Louisville Photo Archives. From the West End to the West Bank features the work of Kenyatta Bosman, John Cherry, Brianna Harlan, Gerry Seavo James, Abdul Sharif, Sean Mcinnis, Eric Morris, Sawyer Roque, Emmanuel Roque Perez, Shachaf Polakow, and Alton Strupp; images from the Activestills Photography Collective as well as photographs from the University of Louisville Photo Archives.