

A photograph of a museum exhibit. In the foreground, a worn, dark brown leather gun holster lies diagonally across the frame. To its right is a white ceramic ashtray containing a lit cigarette. Below the ashtray is a small white cup filled with a dark liquid, possibly coffee or tea. A person's hand is visible on the right side of the image, reaching towards the cup. The background is a light-colored surface, possibly a table or display case.

Exhibition Leaflet

Everyday experiences of
conflict: the daily life,
legacies & textures of war



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Exhibition Brief:

This photography exhibition accompanies a symposium on conflict and daily life. The photographs selected complement the theme of the symposium, each capturing different ways in which the rhythms and rituals of daily life persist alongside conflict and its memory. Through photography, the exhibiting participants focus in on particular scenes that illustrate the different ways that conflict is experienced, offering moments through which textures of life during and after conflict can be glimpsed.

Charles Clewis captures the continuation of domestic rituals, brewing tea and drinking coffee, amid patrols during the Syrian Civil War. Adam Rouhana's contributions similarly show the persistence of the daily life despite ongoing violence against Palestinians. His photographs capture a childlike joy and relief in swimming on a hot day and eating a freshly picked watermelon. The watermelon also takes centre stage in Ema Gonçalves' work on Palestine, becoming an explicit symbol of resistance, home and hope. Gonçalves's second photograph of a Palestinian house, while literally representing a home (just like yours) becomes itself a practice of memorialisation as the house no longer exists.

The questions of how conflict is remembered and by who also anchor the contributions by David Haskell and Isabela Linares Uscher. Haskell and Linares Uscher capture symbolic and material practices of remembering individuals killed in conflict. Linares Uscher particularly draws attention to the relationship between memory and the role of landscape in the mountainous terrains of Guatemala.

The material legacies of conflict and its relationship with landscape and memory returns as a theme in Amelie Yizhou Lui and Andriana Lagoudes' photographs. Liu explores how humans shape the sub-terrain landscape in conflict. Her contributions capture tunnels systems that were once used in the Sino-Japanese War and are now sites of memory complete with 'mind your step' signage. The transition of military infrastructure to material legacies of conflict, sites of memory and heritage is also captured in Lagoudes' photographs of bunkers in Cyprus. Her work reflects the ways in which human and nonhuman life adapts and continues in landscapes marked by legacies of conflict. Florenza Deniz Incirli brings to the forefront that the legacy of conflict is not static but interrupts daily life, where a military base restricts access to a beach.

A landscape shaped by conflict and displacement provides a backdrop in Nicholas's photographs. He centres construction, capturing how land and buildings abandoned in conflict are 'threatened' by development for economic profit. Similarly, Nico Edwards's photograph taken at a major defence fair illustrates a world of profit and capital built on war. The Eurofighter Typhoon pictured is a foreboding indicator of a future where conflict continues to shape and impact the daily lives of many.

Curators: Ibrahim Ince & Rosanna O'Keeffe

Cover Photo: Charles Clewis



Palestinians take a dip in the Ain al-Auja spring on a late summer day. "Al-auja" translates roughly to "the meandering one." Jericho, Palestine, 2022

Adam Rouhana

These two images are from Rouhana's body of work *Before Freedom* (2022-ongoing). Shot in Jerusalem, Jericho, Haifa, Hebron, Bethlehem and across historic Palestine over the past three years, *Before Freedom* shows the full prism of life in a place so often talked about but rarely truly seen: children play, friends swim and families picnic, and time passes unremittingly.

By photographing the quotidian and affirming the social and the material reality of Palestinian life today, Rouhana's work forms a narrative gestalt that aims to denaturalize outdated representations that enable the ongoing violence against Palestinians.



A boy eats a watermelon he just picked from his farm in Beit Jala, Palestine, 2022



Road to Alagadi (diptych), Cyprus, 2025

Florenza Deniz Incirli

A winding two-lane road parallel to the Pentadaktylos / Beşparmak mountain range leads Kyrenians to Alagadi beach in northern Cyprus. Alagadi is the last remaining free beach, the others along the coastline charging for use of the sea. Along that brief journey through carved hills are new hotels; small kiosks selling snacks and beach floats, holiday homes, the main power plant in the occupied north; Teknecik, and multiple Turkish military bases.

Only those with specific Turkish military passes are permitted to enter Barış Plajı [Peace Beach], on the road to Alagadi. Until a few years ago, the family and friends of Turkish-Cypriots who served or passed during the conflict were also allowed to use the beach. The number of Turkish military bases and personnel on the island are unknown, and the estimates range between 17,000 - 100,000.



Road to Alagadi (diptych), Cyprus, 2025



Commemorating the 17,415 who disappeared, kidnapped in Lebanon's civil war, 2007

Copyright: Joy of Giving Lebanon

David Haskell

Lebanese volunteers illuminate photographs on empty chairs to commemorate 17,415 persons kidnapped in Lebanon's civil war. The banner on the National Museum façade calls 'to not repeat the conflict.' Joy of Giving, an award-winning volunteer network, gathers the entire family of Lebanon by serving with and for the Other, with respect, forgiveness, and love. David Haskell was stunned by a 1983 car bomb while teaching at the American University of Beirut. This catalysed David's lifelong pursuit of unity in diversity in Middle Eastern, Southeast Asian, and East African conflicts. A two-decade Joy of Giving volunteer, David's doctoral research now explores how symbolic actions and narratives, 'the pedagogy of parable', provokes thought, invites dialogue, and inspires voluntary change with the Other.



The damned of the dam, Guatemala

Isabela Linares Uscher

Julian stands tall at the memorial site of what was the mass grave of 107 children and 70 women. At the highest point of the mountain, it overlooks the large body of water that today makes the Chixoy hydroelectric dam – the biggest in Guatemala. However, underneath the water lies a history of violence and conflict, with entire communities disappeared. After surviving a massacre that killed many, Julian hid in the mountains to hide from the military and guerrilla forces that were killing them. Little did he know, his wife and child would end up murdered and buried in this very site. Today, those who are left in the community refuse to forget. Every year, they hike the mountain that these women and children had to walk before being killed. Their memory remains ingrained in the mountains.



phantom developments, Varosha-Maraş, Cyprus, 2025

Nicholas Zembashi

Developing the built environment bodes ruinous consequences in unresolved conflicts. In Cyprus, decades of division and stalled negotiations have enabled unfettered development in both the de facto Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). Shimon Aykut, CEO of Afik Group, whose “Ceasar Breeze” is one of many luxury projects in the TRNC, has been detained by the RoC for allegedly usurping Greek-Cypriot property; a dispute rooted in the mass displacements of all Cypriot communities throughout the 1960s–70s. Meanwhile, Varosha-Maraş, once a no man’s land, has been illegally reopened. From ghost town to tourists’ phantasmagoria-macabre it is threatened with redevelopment. Cyprus’ conflict permeates architecturally – though insidiously in its aesthetic impact on daily life – a topic largely overlooked.



we came, we saw, we sold, Kyrenia-Girne, Cyprus, 2025



Selfie with a war crime fighter, DSEI, London, UK, 2023

Nico Edwards

Arms fairs weave a complex web of beyond/human bodies and objects: mingling the agents of war with the technologies of violence, far removed from theatres of battle. People taking selfies with weapon prototypes, like BAE Systems' Eurofighter Typhoon, are a common sight. This fighter jet is central to the decade-long European-supplied Saudi war on Yemen marked by war crimes and civilian slaughter. The reverence for weapons systems, sold and celebrated out of sight from their end-use impacts, points to the larger tendency within military supply chains to privilege technological advancement and capital interests not only over human rights, but human life.



This is [was] a home just like yours, Masafer Yatta, Palestine, 2024

Ema Gonçalves

In the context of settler colonial and genocidal violence, these two analogue photographs capture moments of resistance in the West Bank during the Spring of 2024. Since then, in an escalation of ethnic cleansing, the Israeli army and settler attacks have destroyed most of the village of Khalet al Dabaa in Masafer Yatta and the house depicted here no longer exists. Yet the resistance and the sense of home, remain steadfast, ever so present in the praxis of community, care and solidarity. From a gathering of friends in a concrete patio near Bir Nabala, a town isolated by the colonial separation wall, to the entire world, watermelons will continue to grow, being tasted and shared - and so will hope.



Taste of Hope, Bir Nabala, Palestine, 2024



Tea Break on Patrol, Southern Syria

Charles Clewis

Throughout the Syrian Civil War, rebel forces and US troops continued to operate in the southern desert. The Syrian Free Army occupied a 55-kilometer region, surrounded by Assad's military and their Russian advisors. In 2022, the war felt to have reached a period of stillness, but was often interrupted by aerial drone attacks from Iranian proxies. Despite the protracted conflict, past rituals of daily life persisted. Patrols and austere desert outposts were rarely absent of glass tea sets, strong coffee, and carpeted makeshift structures. With the fall of Bashar al-Assad, many fighters and civilians have now safely returned to the remnants of their homes throughout Syria.



Still Life of War, al-Tanf, Syria



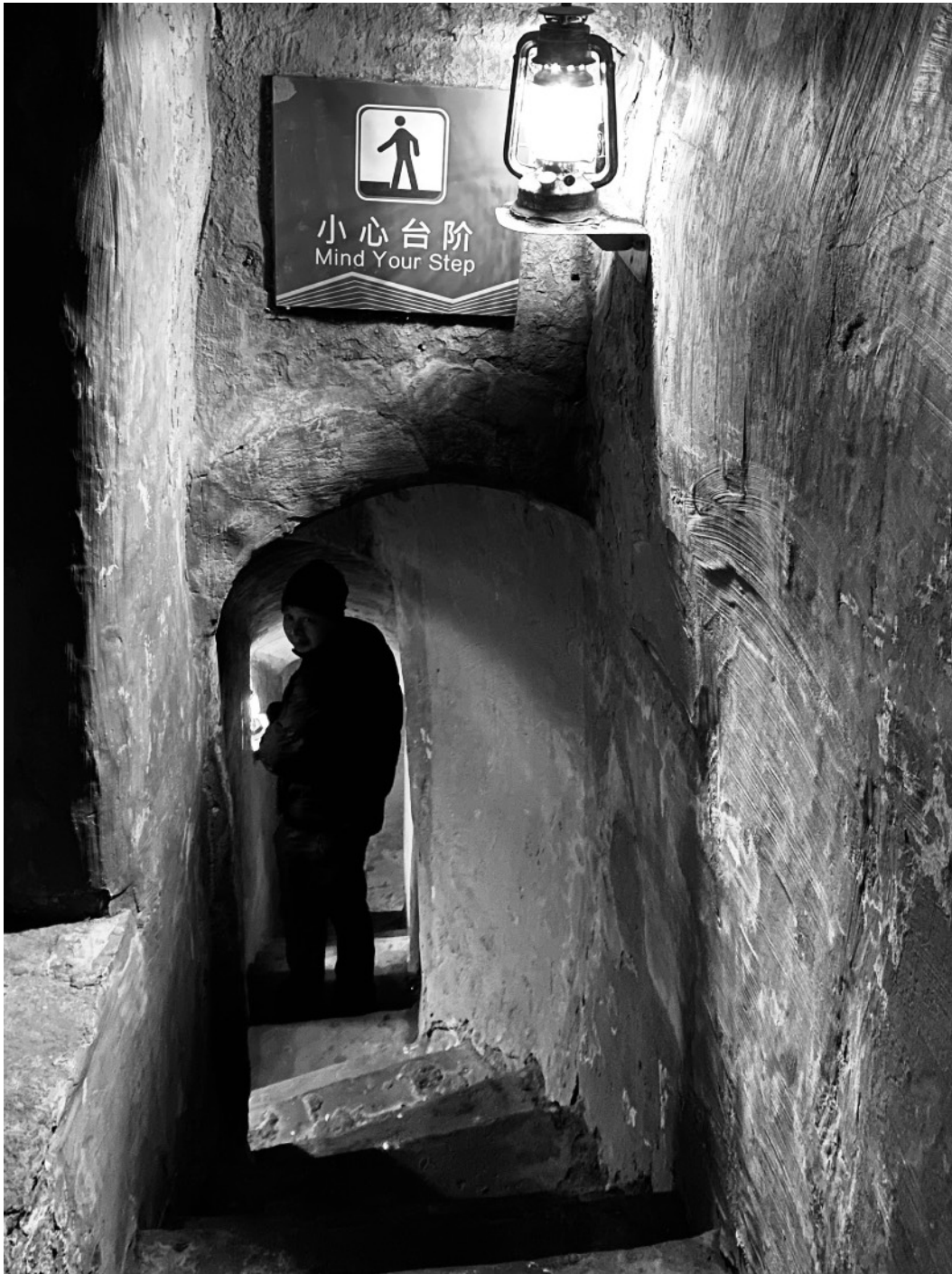
Conflict Temporalities in Famagusta, Bunkers of Cyprus, 2025

Andriana Lagoudes

These photographs form part of a topographical study of bunkers across the Republic of Cyprus, focusing here on those in Kapparis, Famagusta. The series contributes to a developing taxonomy of these military artefacts by examining their strategic placement, construction methods, and passive persistence within the post-conflict landscape. Through visual documentation, the project archives and analyses their materiality and post-use states, reading them as contemporary sites of distorted memory and gendered silence. The bunkers emerge as heterotopic spaces where multiple temporalities converge: the residue of past conflict, the adaptations of the present, and the anticipations of future insecurity, revealing how militarisation has been naturalised within the Cypriot environment and psyche.



Conflict Temporalities in Famagusta, Bunker Materialities, 2025



Person Walking Down Multi-Level Tunnel, China, 2023

Amelie Yizhou Liu

During the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), underground tunnel networks were constructed by Chinese civilians and soldiers on the Jizhong Plain, an area of great military importance but lacked natural geographical slopes. Tunnel warfare, combined with guerrilla warfare, were used to develop what is historically known as the Tunnel War. These tunnels formed a unique and, to this day, well-preserved architectural phenomenon – connecting individual households within villages and extending between neighbouring villages, with entrances discreetly concealed within each home. As the war progressed, tunnel designs evolved to meet the increasing complexities of conflict – forming multiple layers and parallel passages. Mirroring the village's structure aboveground, they included rooms for resting and storing food and supplies as well as human-controlled, weaponised traps.



1.2m-tall Tunnel Space Dug with Farming Tools, China, 2023

This project is financially supported by Grand Union Doctoral Training Partnership & St John's College, Oxford.

This exhibition has been curated independently by doctoral students at the University of Oxford. The views presented are solely those of the organisers and the exhibiting participants.



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