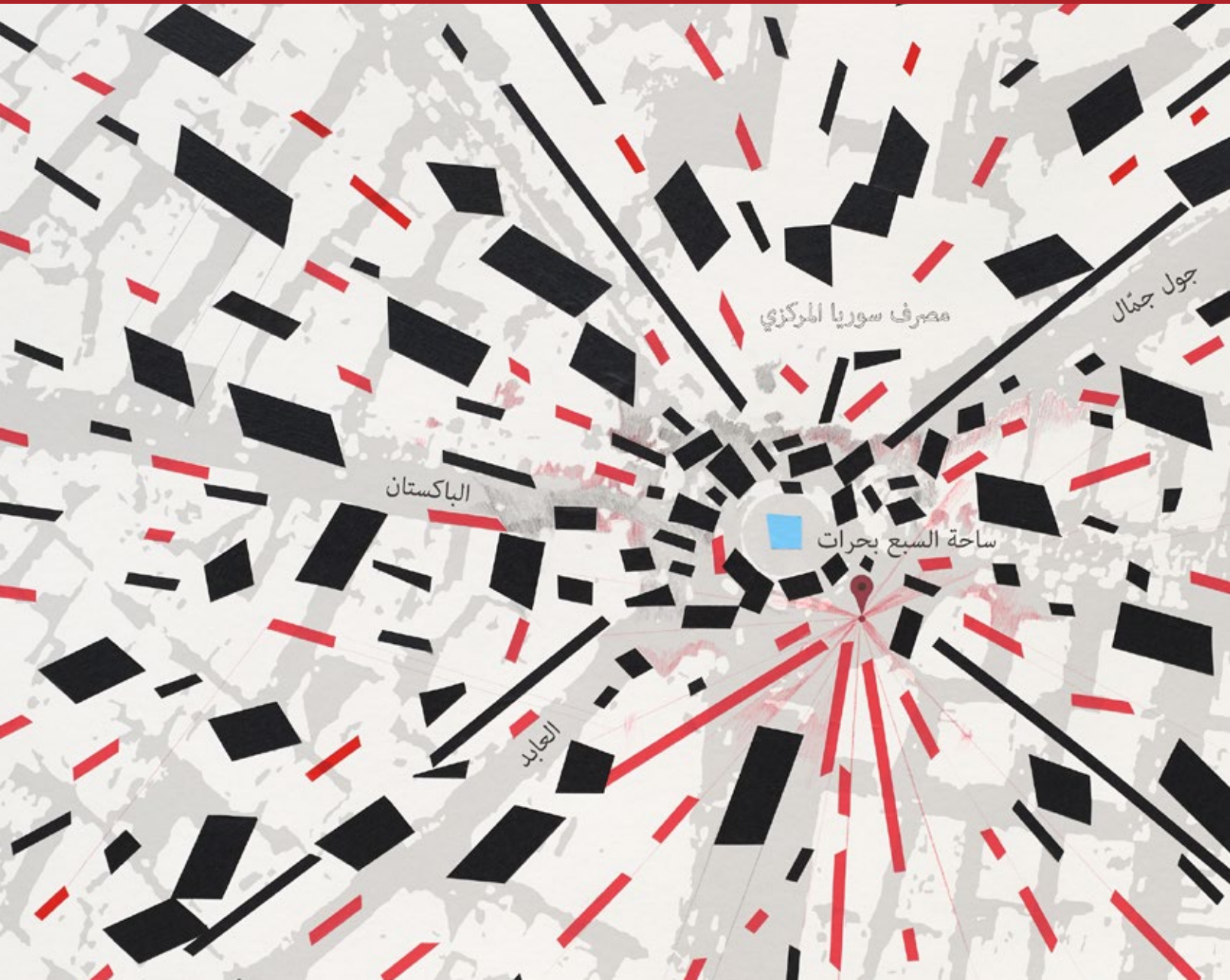


Syria

Unsettled



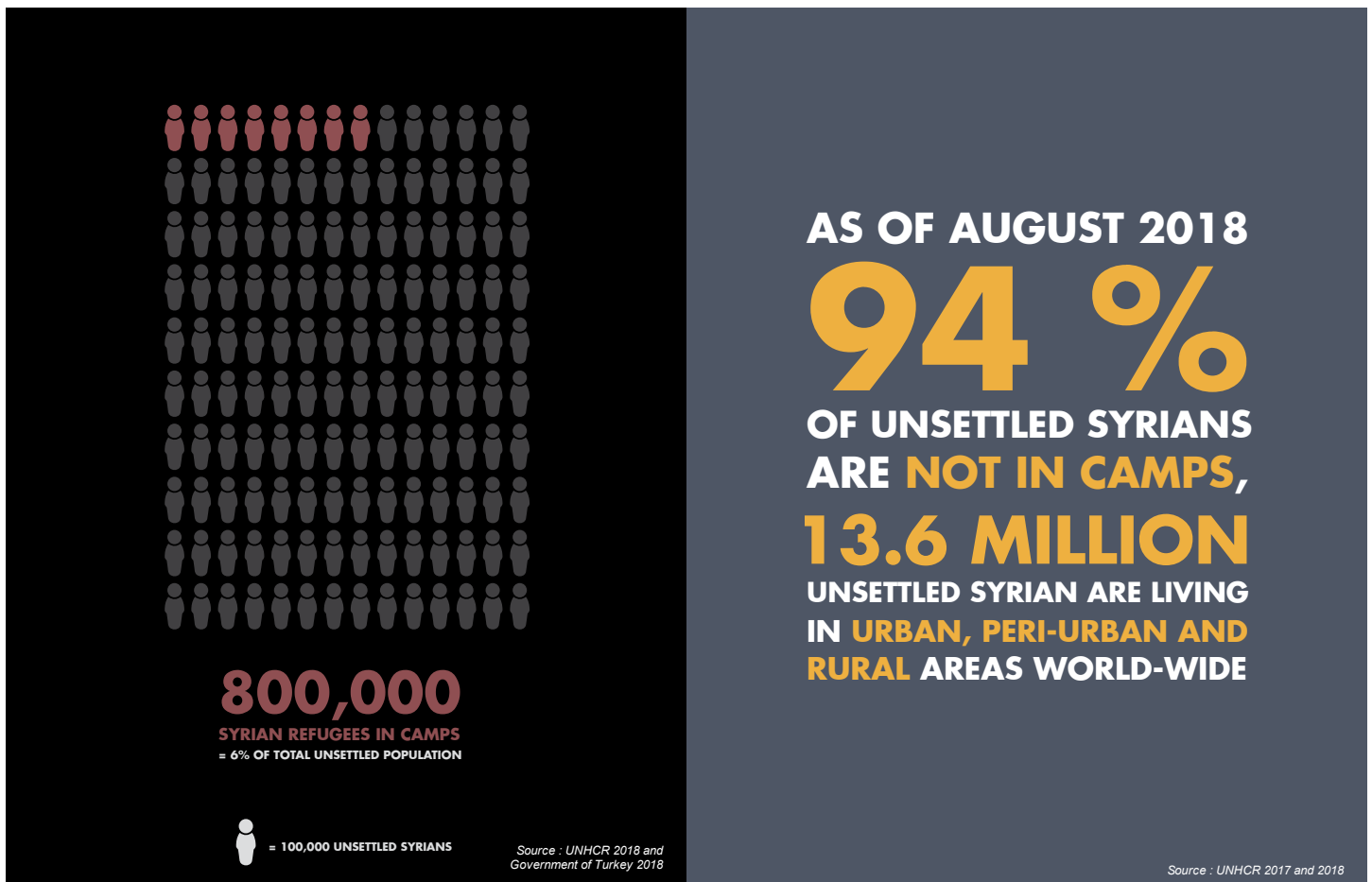
SYRIA UNSETTLED

Terreform, July 2019

Co-editors: Deen Sharp and Mert Peksen

The current cover includes “The Villa Rose” by Christine Gedeon. The piece is thread, fabric and paint of black canvas 56 x 42 in 142.2 x 16.7 cm. It represents the “Villa Rose” that was in front of her family house in Aleppo, next to the park Il Meshtel.

Graphics and design: Neta Nakash



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Syria Unsettled is a collaborative book project, with contributions from architects and social scientists, that examines the broad range of spatial strategies that have been pursued through the experiences of the world's largest displaced population beyond the narrow logic of the refugee camp.

The conflict in Syria has resulted in the devastation of entire cityscapes displacing millions from their homes and communities. Even for those Syrians that have not been displaced almost all have been unsettled to some extent. This great unsettlement has produced entire new geographies of survival. The scale and complex dynamics of Syrian 'unsettlement' has magnified the inadequacies of the aid mechanisms established to deal with forced displacement and refugees. The idea of the camp is tightly correlated to the figure of the refugee and the condition of displacement. The spatial mechanism of the refugee camp, however, does not satisfy the demands of Syrian unsettlement. Less than ten percent of Syrians are currently in camps, and many seeking refuge actively avoid them. The UN originally viewed the spatial isolation of camps as an effective means to deliver targeted aid and provide protection for short-term stays, but is now reacting to clear evidence that camps are insufficient, even harmful, to provide for refugees' wellbeing. Overwhelmingly, displaced persons and other stakeholders attempt to resolve their unsettlement through integration into the urban fabric. International relief agencies, such as UNHCR, struggle with questions of how to support settlement in urban areas, and how to shift their operations to accommodate a new spatial framework outside the boundaries of the camp.

Syria Unsettled considers the wide range of spatial strategies that have emerged to address Syrian unsettlement. This includes case studies engaging Syrians themselves but also receiving communities, national governments, national and international NGOs and international organizations, such as the UN. This volume analyzes, for instance, how Syrians have repurposed ancient caves and ruins in Aleppo and Idlib, the emergency informal settlements that have been formed in

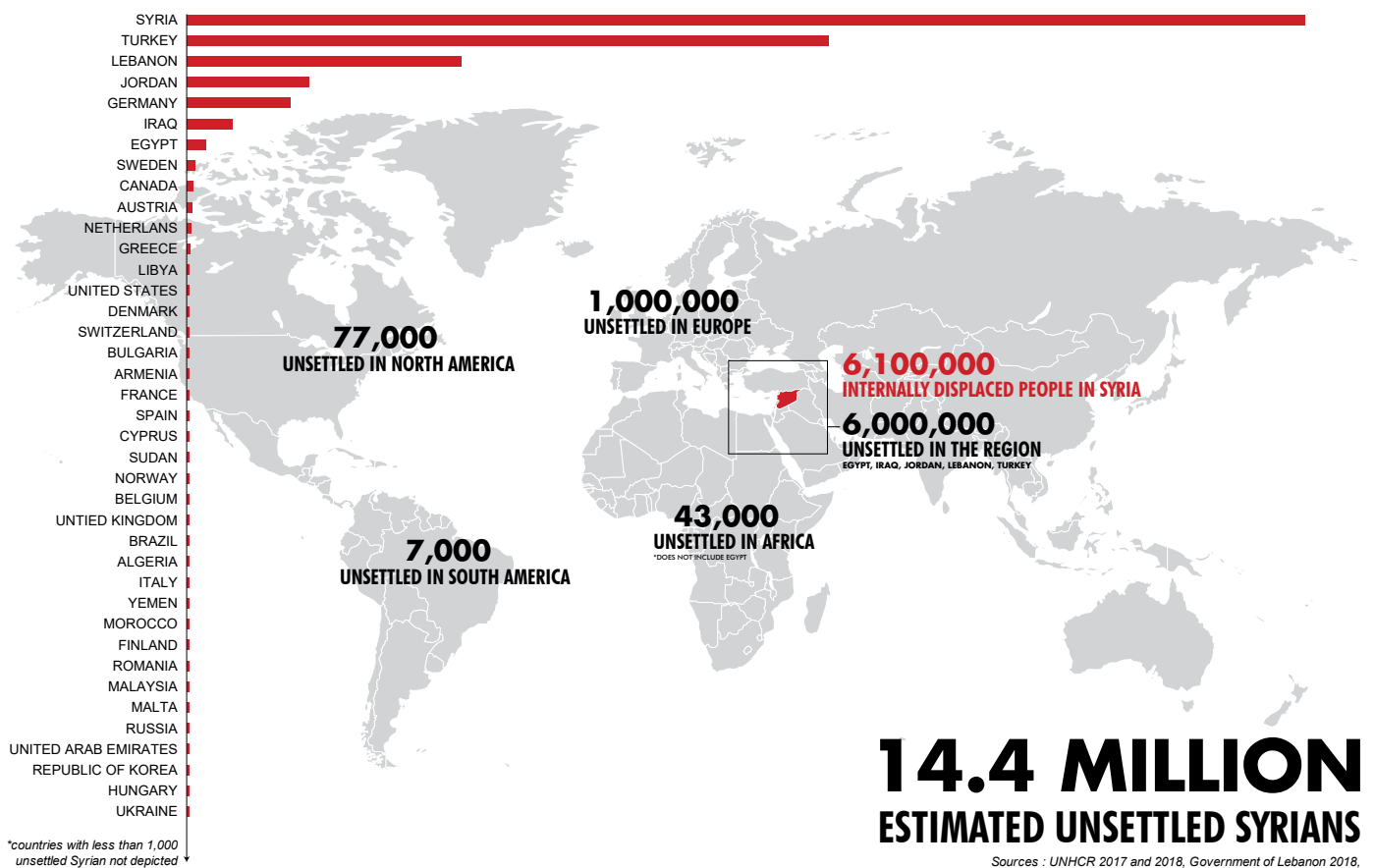
Lebanon and the various levels of urban integration that has been achieved in Turkey. We engage in the latest policy discussions in regard to what has worked and what innovations have emerged in Syrians insertion into urban fabrics around the world. Authors document the remarkable journeys that Syrians have undertaken, such as the 5,000 Syrians that made the perilous journey by bicycle along the Arctic route and settled in a Second World War subterranean shelter in the Norwegian border town of Kirkenes.

This volume also provides first-hand accounts from Syrians who have been unsettled, as well as those that have worked with Syrians to assist in helping resolve their unsettlement. These analyses consider how urban integration has been achieved in some instance and failed in others from grounded experience. Authors also consider why immensely wealthy countries such as Norway and the United States of America have provided refugees and asylum seekers with sub-standard living conditions and little in the way of sanctuary. As well as analyzing how communities have self-organized to welcome Syrians who have been unsettled.

A number of contributors analyze the complex negotiations of state bureaucracies and borders that Syrians have had to navigate to claim residency from Lebanon to Turkey and Norway. These authors are also attentive to how the practices of Syria's unsettled are not only subject to various spatial regimes but also reshape certain socio-political and economic geographies.

Syria Unsettled considers how the notable urban studies scholarship on informal settlements and how it could be placed in productive conversation with the needs and requirements of displaced populations, in particular in relation to questions of urban citizenship. Architects have also been particularly keen to engage in these policy debates and in this volume we provide a comprehensive critique of the often misguided attempts to resolve displacement that often marginalize unsettled populations further. Given the ongoing conflicts, especially in Northern Syria, *Syria*

Unsettled stresses that even as we transition into a seemingly post-conflict phase the prospect of further unsettlement continues to haunt the country. Many of the reconstruction plans that have begun to be implemented in Syria far from producing the conditions for the return of those unsettled are actively producing greater unsettlement through the violence of urban construction and reconstruction.



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00_ Introduction Unsettled | Terreform

In this book, we deploy the conceptual framework of unsettlement and focus on unsettled populations to better understand their socio-spatial practices, as well as their needs, wants and desires. Notably, the process of unsettlement and being unsettled expand the consideration of who is impacted by displacement. These concepts seek to add to existing understandings of forced displacement and refugee populations. The category of unsettled encompasses a far larger range of people than the legal figure of the refugee to also include, for example, ‘host’ populations. Unsettlement and the unsettled also disrupt the association between the refugee and the refugee camp. The UN originally viewed the spatial isolation of camps as an effective means to deliver targeted aid and provide protection for short-term stays, but is now reacting to clear evidence that camps are harmful for refugees’ wellbeing. But maybe more significantly, most cases of contemporary forced displacement are not resolved through the refugee camp. As we show in the context of Syrian ‘unsettlement’, most Syrians have not been unsettled to refugee camps but to urban contexts in neighboring countries and even as far away as the Arctic circle . The vast scale of Syrian unsettlement has illuminated the inadequacies of contemporary aid apparatuses, and specifically the spatial mechanism of the refugee camp, and the urgent need for new approaches and concepts. We document and analyze a broad range of “unsettled” sites through selected case studies, with an emphasis on Syrian unsettlement both within Syria and around the world. They include temporary strategies, such as the transitional UNHCR camp, Tempelhof, in Berlin, the Temporary Protection Center (TPCs) in Turkey and the “tent” cities along the Lebanese-Syrian border; more permanent interventions, such as the conversion of military housing into accommodation centers for refugees (Germany); and the revitalization attempts of de-industrialized towns and cities now welcoming through refugee absorption (Magdeburg, Germany; Boise, USA). Furthermore, we link discussions to unsettlement not only as a result of the destruction of the built environment but also its construction. We note how the reconstruction process in Syria is being weaponized and producing further unsettlement of civilians.

01_ Among the ruins: Historical built environments as spaces of displacement and protest | Allison Cuneo

The Syrian conflict has produced overlapping humanitarian and cultural heritage crises. In addition to the human toll of the conflict, thousands of ancient, religious, and cultural sites and repositories have been lost or damaged beyond repair. Syria's historic urban fabric, the conflict's center of gravity, has suffered most acutely, and the global reactions to this cultural destruction are profuse. All six of Syria's World Heritage Sites have been listed as endangered, and multiple state actors and non-governmental organizations have decried the wanton destruction perpetrated by all belligerents involved in the war. Whereas ISIS iconoclastic intentional destruction and cultural genocide has provoked the loudest reaction locally and internationally, within Syria the regime also has directed condemnation toward inhabiting archaeological sites. Internally displaced persons have fled urban areas and taken refuge in ancient caves and historic ruins, most notably the Dead Cities cultural landscape stretching across Aleppo and Idlib. New tenants adopted creative solutions to make these abandoned places temporarily habitable, some updating their antiquated surroundings with modern amenities to cope with extended displacement. In response, the Syrian Directorate of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), has painted these occupations as a direct existential threat to Syrian heritage on par with other forms of more destructive acts, like antiquities looting and collateral damage. Despite the historical significance and the regime's outward concern for protecting these historic treasures, airstrikes repeatedly have hit these areas. This paper will explore how contradictory heritage stewardship villainizes displacement and justifies attacks on cultural property.

02_ Cementing unsettlement | Deen Sharp

The unsettlement of civilian populations is not only produced through the destruction of the built environment. While the dramatic scenes of urban destruction in Syria have become familiar to people throughout the world, urban violence and conflict have also been unleashed through the construction and rebuilding of the built environment. Indeed, throughout the conflict in Syria the rates of urbanization have only decreased slightly and more recently – even in the context of ongoing conflict – increased. War has meant that various factions have attempted to provide their own basic urban services and build their own infrastructures, such as roads. This construction of the built environment has in part been through necessity but also as a means through which competing political factions attempt to control, dispose and/or dominate various populations. To understand contemporary urban conflict, I argue, we must look not only to the deliberate destruction of the built environment but also its construction and the broader urbanization process. This has important implications for also how we understand reconstruction and its supposed link to post-conflict periods. The prospect of reconstruction in Syria has already emerged as the next battlefield in Syria and yet another means through which the “unsettlement” of civilian populations is being produced. The stakes are vast. The United Nations Special Envoy has estimated the cost of rebuilding Syria to be at least \$250 billion and some estimates go as high as \$1 trillion. The Assad regime is actively transforming the country’s urban planning laws and using “reconstruction” to create new political and demographic realities that will consolidate its territorial gains. These new legal frameworks include the creation of private-public companies to build infrastructure, issue construction permits and manage urban assets and disposes certain groups of their property rights. Law No.10 of 2018, for instance, that allows for the creation of redevelopment zones anywhere in country designated for reconstruction means that everyone residing in these redevelopment zones must move out of their property, provide proof of ownership and are being given shares in private-public companies in exchange for their property rights. The reconstruction is being used as a weapon by the Assad regime and will shape the political and social trajectory of the country for years to come. The reconstruction in Syria, I argue in this paper, far from rebuilding a war torn country will be directed at further unsettling this devastated country.

03_ General insecurity in Lebanon | Lama Mourad

Syrian migrants and refugees in Lebanon are subject to manifold authorities, ambiguous policies, and often discriminatory discretion on a daily basis. Arguably no institution, however, is more significant in determining the spatial lives of Syrians - and other vulnerable non-citizens - than General Security ('amn 'aamm). A notably centralized and effective component of the state security apparatus, General Security offices are the sites where Syrians seek to regularize their status, claim residency, and even receive deportation orders. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews in and around the regional offices of the General Security from 2015-2016 in the South, Mount Lebanon, North, and Beqaa, I analyze the ways in which these spaces are constituted as sites of enormous discretionary state power. I shed light on how ambiguity of policy, lack of information, and ultimate discretion serve to strengthen the authority of the Lebanese state, and particularly its security apparatus, on Syrian migrants and refugees, and, in turn, limits their spatial mobility.

04_ Lebanon | Maureen Abi Ghanem

In the past eight years, the consequential forced movement of people due to the war in Syria has given rise to urban 'refugeeness' at a scale and complexity unseen before. Displaced persons tend to seek integration into the existing urban fabric, where economic opportunities are more abundant and a normal life seems attainable. Mass displacement due to conflict has not only been morphing the sociopolitical and economic scene of affected cities. It has also altered the morphology of affected landscapes with the proliferation of two contrasting architectural types of shelter: while the controversial refugee and migrant camp settings were created top-down in Jordan and Turkey, makeshift informal settlements of tents and self-made shelters have been formed bottom-up throughout the affected towns of Lebanon and along the migration routes of Europe. These contrasting spatial typologies resonate with different realities for the displaced and a strong disconnect has been observed between the homogenized international aid response to emergency housing and the actual shelter needs of the unsettled. The recent challenge of aid institutions and governments has been centered around the following question: How is the success of emergency urban shelter interventions measured with no similarly comparable precedents to learn from? Based on a deductive methodology from exploring the trend of how Syrian refugees in Lebanon have informally organized the spaces they live in, this research paper explores which transient and transformative informal settlement solutions have worked, and which haven't, and how can the support programmed by international organizations be better aligned with the needs of refugees as well as other communities affected by displacement and migration. Can policies for securing emergency shelter be less transient and more sustainable from the very beginning? Is it possible to formulate guidelines that are flexible and transformative enough to accommodate the spatial needs of the displaced into any urban landscape and at any physical and temporal scale? Or will new spatial guidelines need to be formulated for each and every crisis of urban unsettlement? While this paper focuses on three particular informal settlements in Lebanon, it offers observations and analytical strategies relevant to refugee housing spaces in other contexts and to refugee shelter studies more

05_ Geography of asylum in Turkey: Refugee protection, rights, and urban scale | Mert Peksen

With around 3.6 million Syrian refugees under temporary protection and around 400,000 asylum-seekers from other countries, Turkey is the country with the highest number of forced migrants in the world. Turkey still retains the geographical limitation clause on the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and does not provide Convention refugee status to non-European nationals such as Syrians, Iraqis, or Afghans. Instead, it manages these refugee arrivals with ad hoc solutions, constructs multiple tiers of protection statuses (temporary, conditional, secondary), and creates a highly differentiated and limited asylum regime. These protection statuses bring strict limitations on the mobility of refugees within and through Turkey. Moreover, refugees' access to humanitarian services and social benefits is limited to the city where they are registered. Most often, Syrian as well as non-Syrian refugees are deprived of their rights just because of residing in a city that is different from the one that they are initially registered at, and they are pushed to the edges of legality, even within the country where they are officially recognized as refugees. Based on ethnographic study of asylum in Turkey and an analysis of Turkish refugee protection framework, my paper focuses on the consequences of this multi-tiered asylum system for refugees, and explores how different refugee groups tackle with the limitations of Turkey's asylum system, and how refugees and civil society actors in Turkey negotiate the boundaries of social membership in Turkish cities.

06_ Unsettled climate in Istanbul | Nadine Rasheed

Climate Change events are projected to displace more than 20 million people by 2050, and experts predict that most of these people will relocate to cities. Meanwhile, currently 60 percent of refugees and 80 percent of internally displaced people live in urban areas. With this in mind, the chapter begins from the premise that the context of delivering aid has shifted from the controlled environment of refugee camps to the dynamic setting of urban areas. Although this contextual shift provides people with opportunities for independence and social and economic development, it challenges the processes of delivering humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations while amplifying existing urban struggles for local populations. The chapter will explore the responsibilities of and relationships between humanitarian aid organizations, city agencies, and informal networks when responding to forced displacement in urban settings. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in Istanbul, a city hosting over 560,000 Syrian refugees, the chapter will examine the formal and informal mechanisms implemented by national and international humanitarian organizations, government agencies, the private sector, and solidarity networks in order to identify practices, policies and initiatives that have facilitated the access of refugees to services and resources in the city. Based on these findings, the paper will conclude with initial guidelines for designing inclusive interdisciplinary processes that enable cities to preemptively plan for current and future forced displacement events.

07_ Tracing the “unsettled”: Mapping displacement dynamics in Istanbul | Elif Ensari and Can Sucuoglu

For the fifth consecutive year in 2018, Turkey hosted the largest number of displaced people in the world. 92% of this population is living in urban areas, side-by-side with local populations. Istanbul, already one of world’s largest metropolitan areas by population accommodates 560,000 registered Syrians, constituting 3.55% of its residents. Despite a generally well-planned and executed humanitarian response in Turkey, urban displacement has strained the capacity and resources of city administrations to their limits. Municipalities need to seek innovative solutions to respond to an increasingly unmanageable situation. Lacking a dedicated central information system and legislation, their ability to collect and analyze urban data lies at the heart of this issue. This chapter uses urban data to pinpoint the geographical distribution of the Syrian and other displaced populations in Istanbul. Using social media, open source maps, news resources and reports, it attempts to understand the urban transformation resulting from the unprecedented scale of mass influx. While investigating the questions of where and how the displaced live, work, recreate and socialize through mapping this data, we also look at the accessibility of public resources in areas where they seek to start new lives. By visualizing the physical, social, cultural and economic impact of this rapid transformation, we aim to reveal the opportunities and potentials that can guide policies to better integrate these populations. Our conclusions might help move towards better solutions, not only in Istanbul, but also in other cities receiving the displaced around the world.

08_ Syria unsettled in Athens | Rosamund Palmer

Due to European Union 'first entry' laws and Greece's containment policies, asylum-seekers that arrive on Greek islands must remain there. These island camps are severely overcrowded and many do not meet humanitarian standards. It is essential that municipalities in mainland Greece and other EU states expand their capacity to house these migrants. Eleonas camp in Athens presents potentially replicable successes in accommodation and services for refugees in cities. Eleonas is a hybrid of closed-camp accommodation, integrated urban living, and transit hub. It was the first camp in the country to be established by Greek authorities, it belongs to the municipality of Athens, and it is run by NGOs. The camp's inhabitants, who are largely asylum-seekers waiting to move on to other EU cities, are free to come and go, unlike at UNHCR-established camps where borders between refugees and citizens are enforced. This essay will examine Eleonas' relationship to Athens and what aspects of the camp could be replicated in other cities, beginning with these questions: how is Eleonas governed and what are the benefits and drawbacks of being run by NGOs? Does the camp decrease the strain on municipal services that illegal urban integration inflicts --how can that be measured? Are relations between citizens and asylum-seekers improved by having centralized accommodations for asylum-seekers?

09_ The Arctic route | Håvard Breivik and Morgan Alexander Ip

Rows of colourful, newly purchased, yet abandoned bicycles accumulated at the Storskog Arctic border station, Norway's only land entry point with Russia, in the snowy autumn of 2015. Russian law forbids border crossings by foot, and Norwegian legislation forbids drivers from bringing over people without documentation. The bikes could not be reused in Norway because they did not abide to its national standards, and they could not be sent back to Russia for reuse by other migrants without encroaching upon import/export issues. The discarded masses of bicycles were paralleled in the scattered orange life jackets and other detritus strewn along the beaches of Greece. They served as crude material evidence of the very human experiences of those in search of sanctuary and caught in an in-between liminal space. Unable or unwilling to operate in this space, the two neighbouring nations came to an understanding in November 2015, and the Arctic Route all but closed. 5,500 persons applied for asylum in Norway after passing through Storskog in 2015, while in 2016 there were none. The article tells the story of individuals who chose this unlikeliest of routes towards a perceived better life in Norway. It describes the local, yet international community that suddenly became the Arctic epicenter of the effects of a global disaster, and then experienced an equally abrupt stop in migration flows due to transnational agreements. Parts of the story are set in Fjellhallen ('The Mountain Hall') on the Norwegian side of the border, in Kirkenes. Fjellhallen was built during the Second World War as a subterranean shelter in what was near the frontline between German-controlled Finnmark and the Soviet Union. Later reconstituted as a community hall, it became part of the quotidian life of Kirkenes. It was used as a temporary resettlement center during the Kosovo crisis in 1999, when the government of Norway resettled refugees from the Balkan war. In 2015, it again became a place providing temporary shelter for refugees taking the Arctic Route from Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere, suiting of its original purpose.

10_ The Smart Club Model in Norway | Håvard Breivik

Why did two of the wealthiest countries in Europe choose to accommodate their asylum seekers in facilities with sub-standard living conditions? The Smart Club was a Norwegian retail chain that sold discount household goods from the 1990s until it went bankrupt in 2013. Two years later one of its abandoned warehouses, situated at the intersection of two highways in the outskirts of Oslo, was hastily converted into an arrival center for the thousands who applied for asylum in Norway in 2015. Earlier that year, Berlin's defunct Tempelhof Airport had been assigned a similar function: for the first time since sheltering refugees from East Berlin who had escaped to the "other side" during the Cold War, the airplane hangars were again accommodating people seeking sanctuary. From the moment a person applies for asylum, the host country is responsible for providing a standard of living "adequate for the health and well-being of himself or herself and of his or her family" (UNHCR, 2000). Reception standards vary due to different phases of asylum procedures, as well as differences between countries. Nonetheless accommodation standards reflect a nation's general asylum policies: "Modest, but adequate" is the guiding principle for living standards in reception centers in Norway. While "adequate" is in keeping with UNHCR recommendations, the "modest" part is meant to prevent Norwegian reception centers from becoming a "pull factor" for people seeking sanctuary (Brekke 2007). For instance, except for fire and ventilation regulations, all national building codes can be waived when establishing a reception center in Norway. Or, in other words, asylum seekers in Norway are accommodated in environments that would never have been approved for Norwegian citizens. Today, German authorities are working to close Tempelhof as an arrival center. Norwegian authorities, on the other hand, announced in October 2017 that the former Smart Club warehouse outside Oslo will be made a permanent solution. All asylum seekers entering Norway will from now on be gathered under one roof at that location. Situated in different surroundings, the Tempelhof hangars and the Smart Club warehouse are also similar: abandoned structures never intended for living with ad hoc interior solutions. The article compares the reception systems in Norway and Germany by examining the two arrival centers and by telling the stories of those who were there.

11_ Resettling Michigan: Dearborn, Troy and a possible future of Detroit | Hilary Huckins-Weidner and Ava Hess

Since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Michigan has accepted more Syrian refugees via the US government's Refugee Resettlement Program than any other state besides California. Citizen-driven initiatives and family reunification programs have also contributed significantly to the resettlement of displaced persons, with an earlier precedent set by the many Iraqis who moved to Michigan following the US invasion in 2003. Dearborn, a city in the greater Detroit area, is comprised by approximately 44% Arab-American residents and also home to the Arab American National Museum and the Islamic Center of America. The city has come to be seen as a symbolic center of Arab-American — and even Muslim-American — culture and identity, which, in addition to being a point of pride, has also held negative repercussions in, for example, the Dearborn community being called on to respond or provide answers for various acts of violent Islamist extremism since 9/11. In more recent years, the nearby city of Troy has replaced Dearborn in having the highest number of new Syrian refugees. Recently, Detroit proper has found itself in the spotlight of the global discussion on resettling displaced Syrians. After Detroit's economy fell with the expansion of the auto industry, the city's population dropped from 1,850,000 in 1950 to 672,795 in 2016. Approximately 1 in 3 of the city's houses have been foreclosed since 2005—that's almost 140,000 properties left unused. The idea to revitalize the suffering city with unsettled Syrians has even gained bipartisan support, in public remarks by former POTUS Bill Clinton (D) and Michigan's current governor, Rick Snyder (R). This chapter will consider two case studies from the greater Detroit area — the Iraqi refugee program in Dearborn and the 2005–2016 resettling in Troy — before imagining what it might mean for 'unsettled' peoples to make Detroit's inner city their home. From a speculative standpoint, practical challenges must be taken into concern alongside human-centered considerations. Will the city be able to supply 'modest, yet adequate' provisions for new residents, given its strained finances? And, what challenges might be expected by placing Syrians in or nearby a pre-existing community with a cultural or ethnic identity that has already, in many respects, been mapped out for them?

12_ Sanctuary unsettled: Excessed in Seattle | Nathaniel Sheets

The expansive power to police immigrant populations in the US has garnered critical attention in the course of Donald Trump's first year as president of the United States. The 'City' has emerged as crucial terrain in the struggle against Trump's mandate, where publicly declared support for immigrants and refugees is increasingly framed in terms of 'Sanctuary'. Proclamations of sanctuary in Seattle, Washington, prohibiting local agencies from cooperating with the roundup of undocumented populations, dovetail with the city's publicized commitment to resettle refugees from war-torn countries like Syria. Bolstered by similar measures from the county and state, Seattle is further host to an array of legal challenges to the federal government's targeting of immigrants and immigration from a narrow selection of countries. Seattle's enshrinement as a place of refuge is buttressed by its nationally emulated and pioneering criminal justice reforms. Heralded as a remedy to the war on drugs, Seattle is touted as a model for reformed drug policy and policing, an additional pillar in the platform of opposition to the Trump administration's aggressive targeting of cities offering sanctuary to immigrants and/or legalized cannabis. This curated and cultivated image belies Seattle's extensively segregated growth and development into the global headquarters for the two richest people on the planet and the richest person in history. Amid pronouncements of sanctuary from the shadows of an expanding crisis of housing and homelessness (Seattle has the third largest homeless population in the country), the luster of the emerald city appears markedly dimmed without the foil of Trump. This paper will consider the political terrain and terms of sanctuary in Seattle.

13_ Humanitarian leaps: Considering the future of urban citizenship in the light of Syrian unsettlement | Vyjayanthi Rao

There has been little overlap in scholarly discourse between urban environments created by mass urbanization without infrastructural support and the environments generated as a consequence of mass displacement due to war. This paper considers the nature and future of urban citizenship in the context of mass internal and international displacements, exploring the connections between different environments that are associated with displacements - both voluntary and involuntary. To do so, I propose to explore, through analogy, informal settlements and refugee environments. While the former may be considered through the lens of national citizenship and entitlement, the latter invariably raise the specter of global human entitlement. In each case material deprivations and propositions for goods and collective equipment that might ease the constraints imposed on citizen and refugee alike are similar in some ways but diverge in other ways. For example, the design of so-called humanitarian goods could be deployed to solve similar critical needs in informal settlements and yet these tend not to make an appearance in those contexts as possible solutions. Conversely, the infrastructure and equipment necessary for permanent settlement, including security of tenure is rarely considered as a viable solution to movements of populations displaced by intra- and international wars. The ongoing war in Syria has landed displaced Syrians in a variety of contexts where methods of delivering goods and services to these individuals overlap significantly with local struggles for these same goods and services. What can these points of convergence and divergence tell us about the nature and future of urban citizenship?

14_ Unsettling design | Sofia Butnaru

Architects have been drawn to the spatial problematics of the vast displacement of Syrian refugees and eager to design “solutions” to resolve Syrian unsettlement. This paper provides a broad overview of the multitude of proposals that architects have produced to address the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Three critiques of these architectural productions are offered: First, from creating refugee housing hanging off a cliff to shelters that dangle from a Parisian bridge above pedestrians, architects have too often sought to place an already highly vulnerable group on the spatial margins. These designs I argue could potentially place the architectural discipline as complicit in the extension of further violence against an already vulnerable and traumatized population. Second, even though architects recognize that the camp typology is unsuitable to address the needs of refugees, I contend that the spatial logics of the camp continue to frame their designs. Third, designers have come up with ingenious ways to create resilient and affordable housing within the context of creating homes in desperate situations; yet, they miss the potentials of their design. Self-powered houses or buildings that use local materials and traditional building methods to reduce the burden of construction and maintenance are solutions that touch on larger issues of resiliency and climate change. Yet, defined as “Refugee Housing,” these proposals are never considered a solution to issues with traditional housing. In almost all designs, it is the refugee as a person that is problematized instead of the systems and conditions that lead to the individual’s displacement. I conclude by asking: how could architecture engage with the broader issues of systematic unsettlement and what would this engagement look like?

15_ Forum

The forum section invites contributions by Syrian refugees and various actors who are directly engaged with the large-scale Syrian unsettlement, such as the workers of local and international NGOs, policy makers, political activists, civil society volunteers, local community members, urban planners, and immigration attorneys. It aims to provide them with a platform where, for instance, they can reflect on their personal experience of solidarity with refugees, discuss what works in practice and what does not, evaluate international or local government policies that matter urban refugee populations, or share their views regarding the future of urban space in the context of mass arrival of refugee populations.

The forum will enhance our conversation regarding unsettlement, urban space, social inclusion, urban citizenship, hospitality, solidarity, and the politics of forced migration. Moreover, it will provide a complementary perspective for the other sections of the book. We plan to reach more contributors, especially from Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, the countries that are the hotspots of Syrian unsettlement and whose cities host the majority of Syrian refugees. By bringing various contributors together from these countries, we hope to initiate and contribute to a transnational dialogue among them.

THE LIST OF CONFIRMED CONTRIBUTORS:

Kapılar, Izmir, Turkey

Kapılar is a freespace, community center and information point for the communities of Basmane, in central Izmir, Turkey. *Kapılar* works to be a welcoming and safe space for people to come together, to socialize, and to share useful information regarding life in Basmane and Izmir. It is a space for all, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability or age. *Kapılar* serves as a habitat that brings together different people and produce partnerships that bring locality-based alternatives to mainstream immigration policies.

Working Group on Urban Refugees, the Chamber of Urban Planners, Istanbul Branch, Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB)

The Working Group on Urban Refugees (Kent Mültecileri Çalışma Grubu) was founded in 2015 with an aim to respond to the challenges that refugees encounter in Turkish cities, to fill in the gaps left by the non-responsive local authorities, and to increase the engagement of urban planners. The Group is part of the Chamber of Urban Planners Istanbul, under the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB).

In this contribution, we present some of our work on designing the local-scale policies to promote harmonious living side-by-side in urban space, in a manner that is sustainable and strongly informed by the spatial perspective. We provide an analysis specific to the relationship between displacement and urban space in the context of Istanbul, and recommendations based on our backgrounds as urban planners.

Özge Açikkol, Pelin Asa, Soner Çalış, Kumru Çılgın, Bedel Esmâ Emre, Beril Sönmez | An attempt at a new form of relationship in the migrant neighborhoods

“Refugees, We are, Neighbors” (Mülteciyim Hemşerim Dayanışma Ağı) has been an experiment of solidarity with urban Syrian refugees in disadvantaged neighborhoods of Istanbul. The Solidarity Network emerged in different refugee hosting neighborhoods with the incentives of the residents and volunteers across Istanbul. In this text, the volunteers of the Solidarity Network will share their personal and collective reflections from their two-year experience of solidarity with Syrian refugees and local populations. We will touch upon the concepts of solidarity, volunteering, being neighbors, and living together. We reflect on how the Solidarity Network started, how we decided to join, what challenges we faced, and what we have achieved.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Özge Açıkkol is one of the members of Oda Projesi artist collective with Güneş Savaş and Seçil Yersel. From January 2000, Oda Projesi space in Galata/Istanbul functioned as a non-profit independent space, hosting projects, gatherings and acts up until 2005, when Oda Projesi has moved from their space due to the gentrification process. Since then Oda Projesi was no more space based but always carrying the idea of the creation of a third space, a space for socialization. While doing this, the project looked at how İstanbul as a city, is organized spatially by its inhabitants. Oda Projesi transferred these spatial and relational practices to different neighbourhoods both in Turkey and abroad. She's been working as an editor and translator for different publications always in parallel to her artistic work. She also worked as a volunteer especially for kids' workshops as part of different organizations.

Pelin Asa graduated from the civil engineering and architecture undergraduate program of Princeton University in 2016. She worked as a structural engineer and conducted voluntary work in different migrant solidarity organizations in Jordan and Turkey.

Håvard Breivik is an architect and member of the Norwegian Refugee Council's emergency standby roster, NORCAP. With over eight years of experience of crisis response, humanitarian relief, and development efforts, Håvard has been deployed to United Nations agencies in Haiti, Nepal, Macedonia, Hungary, and New York. Håvard is currently the Secretariat Coordinator of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises. He is also responsible for the master's course In Transit at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO), while also serving on the NORCAP roster. He has studied in Paris and Shanghai, as a part of his MA degree in Architecture from AHO's Institute of Urbanism and Landscape.

Sofia Butnaru is an interdisciplinary researcher based in Brooklyn, New York. She studies migration, urban political economy, and the spatial dimensions of race, gender, sexuality, and class within Latin America. She recently graduated from the

University of Chicago with a degree in Sociology and Architectural Studies. Her thesis investigated a socialist public housing program in Caracas, Venezuela and the ways in which its particular spatial logics transformed everyday life in the capital city. Currently, Sofia is also working on a multimedia project that investigates Miami's vernacular architecture and its relationship to global financial markets.

Soner Çalış has left his first bachelor program in chemistry and decided to continue his education in sociology. Now he is an undergraduate student in Eskişehir Anadolu University, Open Education Faculty. For the last 14 years, he has been working about migrant rights; child and youth studies; active citizenship; gender equality and human rights struggles in various NGOs, Human Rights Organizations, Community Centers and Municipalities in different cities as volunteer or consultant. Since 2017, Soner has been the chairman of the Ardıç Solidarity Association, which aims to collaborate with the vulnerable groups of society and to work on rights advocacy on mentioned issues.

Kumru Çilgin graduated from the Urban and Regional Planning (URP) undergraduate program of Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSFAU) in Istanbul, Turkey in 2008; and then had a master degree in 2010. She is currently studying for her PhD dissertation, which is focused on "neighborhood planning", in Istanbul Technical University. Since 2014, she has been working as a research assistant at MSFAU, Department of URP. Also she has been a board member of the Chamber of City Planners, Istanbul Branch for the last four terms. Kumru is still active in various NGOs, civic initiatives and solidarity collectives as volunteer. Her research interests: urban policies; large-scale urban projects and transformation; gecekondu and urban social defiance; participatory planning process; migration-space relationship; rural studies and city and art.

Allison Cuneo is an archaeologist specializing in critical heritage studies. Her current fieldwork centers on northern Iraq and her research concerns cultural

heritage destruction, international heritage management policy and practice, and community-based participatory research. She has conducted archaeological and ethnographic fieldwork in Greece, England, and Spain, and has managed capacity-building and monitoring, reporting, and fact-finding programs, including the University Linkage Program at Mosul University and the Cultural Heritage Initiatives at ASOR. Currently she is a post-doctoral fellow in the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT and a co-principal investigator for the Mosul Heritage Stabilization Program (MHSP), a multi-year U.S. Department of State cooperative agreement with her independent consulting firm, Cultural Property Consultants, and the University of Pennsylvania Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC).

Bedel Esma Emre graduated from Istanbul Technical University, Department of City and Regional Planning. She completed her master degree in the field of the planning process of multi-layered cities in Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Department of Conservation and Renewal. She has been active in civic initiatives and collectives as a volunteer. When she was in the master program, refugees in Turkey suddenly increased because of war. For this reason, she started to change her life with refugee friends. Her MSc study enabled her to be associated with archaeology and took part in excavations and surveys teams as a Geographic Information Systems Specialist. She is currently working on her PhD at Eurasia Earth Sciences Institute at Istanbul Technical University, focusing on the paleo-environmental studies of Aktopraklık Höyük (Aktopraklık Archeological Site).

Elif Ensari received her B.Arch from Middle East Technical University and her M.Arch from Southern California Institute of Architecture. She worked as a Building Information Modelling Consultant at Gehry Technologies in Los Angeles. In 2011 she co-founded architectural design office Iyiofis, and in 2016, analytical research and consultancy company Bits'n Bricks. She specializes in urban data research and assessment of built environment qualities. She worked as a part time instructor at

Istanbul Bilgi University between 2013-2018, teaching design studios and elective courses. She is an architecture Phd candidate at Istanbul Technical University and University of Lisbon, actively contributing in evidence-based urban design, planning and analysis projects.

Christine Gedeon was born in Aleppo, Syria, and currently lives and works in Berlin and New York. Her work explores mapping through works on canvas and paper, as well as site-specific installations using string and tape. Gedeon has shown internationally, and her most recent solo show was at Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, 2018. She has received grants from The Harpo Foundation, Dave Bown Projects, The Bronx Museum (AIM 30) program, 2011, and received a fellowship from A.I.R. Gallery, NY in 2015-6. Her work was written about in Art in America, Hyperallergic, The Dallas Morning News, and is featured in the book “You Are Here: NYC: Mapping the Soul of the City”, by Katharine Harmon.

Maureen Abi Ghanem is a PhD student in the Urban Planning program at Columbia GSAPP. As an architect and urban designer trained in a post-conflict city, Beirut, Lebanon, her research focuses on how planning can promote equitable, inclusive and socially-cohesive environments in cities affected by conflict. As a former shelter coordinator at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Lebanon at the height of the Syrian crisis between 2014 and 2016, she was part of a team devising policies and implementing projects to manage the urban challenges of refugees and vulnerable communities.

Ava Hess is an interdisciplinary researcher and curator born and raised in Los Angeles. She works with both historical and contemporary art collections, focusing on artists of West Asian and North African descent. With an academic background positioned between art history, anthropology and area studies, she is interested in how radical curatorial practice and intervention can help reshape the role played by museums in the 21st century, challenge traditional classification systems, and allow

for multivocality in place of singular narratives. Ava received her BA from Columbia University in Middle Eastern studies and an MSc from the University of Oxford in Visual, Material & Museum Anthropology. She currently works at the International Center of Photography in New York City.

Hilary Huckins-Weidner is an artist, writer, and researcher based in Brooklyn, New York. Her work explores the intersections of the body, gender, architecture, and art. She is a graduate of the California Institute of The Arts where her thesis investigated the ways in which art is displayed in public versus private institutions. Currently, she is the programs coordinator and an associate editor at Terreform Urban Research. She is also a contributing editor to the independent publishing house Unconscious In Translation.

Morgan Ip is an architect and a PhD candidate at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) Institute of Urbanism and Landscape in partnership with the University of Tromsø Barents Institute. His research focus is on ethnographic and participatory methods in Arctic cultural landscapes, and he has worked across the north in Canada and the borderlands of Norway, Russia, and Finland. Morgan currently teaches master's courses in urban design and landscape at AHO: Urban Design – Arctic Cities; and, Taste of a Territory: Envisioning Architectures of Water in the Oslo Region.

Lama Mourad is a pre-doctoral research fellow at the Belfer Center's Middle East Initiative. She is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto (expected January 2019). Her doctoral dissertation is focused on the role of municipalities in governing the Syrian refugee influx in Lebanon. She has received numerous grants and awards for her work, including the SSHRC-CGS Doctoral Fellowship, the International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) Doctoral Award, and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship. She has published in a number of academic and public outlets, including the Journal of Refugee Studies,

Middle East Law and Governance, Forced Migration Studies, as well as the Toronto Star, and Le Devoir.

Neta Nakash is a recent graduate from the Master of Architecture I program at UCLA, with a strong interest in disaster relief and community-based design. During her time at UCLA she worked with other students to form Talk/Act, a student group dedicated to providing space for conversations on the intersections between architecture and politics. Prior to attending UCLA Neta received a Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Studies and Mathematics from Connecticut College where she also minored in Studio Art with a concentration in ceramics. Before moving to Los Angeles, Neta worked as a Construction Crew Leader for Habitat for Humanity in Oakland, California during which she led an all women's crew on the framing of a house at a build-a-thon.

Rosamund (Roz) Palmer is a community-based urban planner working to make places that welcome social and ecological diversity. Her research in climate- and conflict-induced displacement occurs through direct work with communities. After Superstorm Sandy in New York City, Roz worked with architect Deborah Gans and a devastated coastal community to co-design their neighborhood-scale climate adaptation strategy that ensured they were embedded in and not displaced by the city's reconstruction efforts. Then she went to Athens because someone said there was a chance she could be useful there. She recently relocated to Sydney where she is a public placemaker for migrant-majority communities.

Mert Peksen is currently a PhD candidate at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Prior to beginning his doctoral studies at CUNY, he completed the Joint European Master's in International Migration and Social Cohesion (MISOCO) in the Netherlands, Spain and Germany. His research interests include borders, forced migration, spatial implications of changing migration control strategies, and legal and social inclusion/exclusion of urban refugee populations. His dissertation

research explores the dynamics of an emerging multi-scalar border regime in Turkey that regulates and restricts the mobility of refugees within and through the Turkish territory.

Nadine Rasheed is an urban strategist, and currently the Director of Product Development at the Center for Active Design (CfAD) where she leads the development of design strategies that target the impact of the built environment on public health. In addition to her work at CfAD, Nadine conducts research focusing on climate change, forced displacement and urban refugees. Nadine holds an MS in Urban Ecologies from Parson, The New School and has over a decade of experience working in the design and construction of residential, retail and hospitality projects across the Middle East and Europe. She is fluent in Arabic and has lived and worked in Lebanon, Dubai, Athens and NYC.

Vyjayanthi V. Rao, PhD, Co-director, is an anthropologist by training. Prior to joining Terreform, she held research and teaching positions at The New School for Social Research and at University of Chicago, where she also received her doctorate. From 2002 to 2004 she served as the Research Director of the Initiative on Cities and Globalization, Yale University, and as the Co-Director of Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research (PUKAR), an innovative urban laboratory in Mumbai, India. Her current work focuses on cities after globalization, specifically on intersections of urban planning, design, art, violence, and speculation. She authored many articles on these topics in noted journals, the co-editor of *Speculation, Now: Essays and Artwork* (Duke University Press, 2015) and is completing a manuscript on the spatial transformation of Mumbai.

Deen Sharp, PhD, Co-director, is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2018-2019). He is the co-editor of *Beyond the Square: Urbanism and the Arab Uprisings* (Urban Research, 2016). His doctoral dissertation entitled, "Corporate Urbanization:

Between the future and survival in Lebanon” focuses on the corporation and urban development in the Eastern Mediterranean. His work has been featured in a number of publications, including, Jadaliyya, Portal 9, Arab Studies Journal and the Guardian. Previously, he was a freelance journalist and consultant based in Lebanon and has worked for several UN agencies, including UNDP and UN-Habitat, governments and international NGOs.

Nathaniel Sheets is from Seattle, Washington, by way of California, where he obtained a B.A. in Geography from UC Berkeley in 2008. He subsequently worked in Los Angeles as a union organizer, while training and competing as an amateur athlete in Muay Thai, Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, and Mixed Martial Arts. He entered the Ph.D. Program in Earth and Environmental Sciences at The Graduate Center (CUNY) in 2012. His dissertation project charts the contested landscape and reform of police power in Seattle, Washington at a moment of unprecedented expansion fortified by the city’s progressive politics and culture.

Beril Sönmez has graduated from Boğaziçi University with a bachelor degree in psychological counseling and MA in Cultural Studies. She worked in İstanbul Bilgi University as a teaching assistant in Sociology Department for seven years. She was a freelance translator and editor for several culture institutions, international film festivals and art exhibitions. After working with local and international NGOs in protection, access to rights and advocacy, she currently is the project coordinator of “German-Turkish Initiative for Collaboration on Refugee Relief”, a collaborative project to create alternative pedagogies and art-based inclusive methods for children and youth. Beril has been active in civic initiatives and collectives as volunteer, among them was “Refugees -we are- Neighbors” Solidarity Network. Her PhD is focused on cross-cutting dynamics of displacement(s) and emplacement(s), with an emphasis on refugee and non-refugee actors’ informal solidarity practices in İstanbul.

Can Kadir Sucuoglu graduated from Yıldız Technical University and completed his M.Arch degree at Southern California Institute of Architecture (Sci-Arc). He worked at Jorge Pardo Sculpture in Los Angeles and at this time he specialized in digital design and manufacturing techniques. He continued his career as a design coordinator in Warsaw's 2. Metro Line in Poland and became a partner at İyiofis 2011. İyiofis has been providing design services to leading Turkish and worldwide institutions and brands and has exhibited work in various biennials and exhibitions. In 2016 he co-founded Bits 'n Bricks to focus on providing data-based design consultancy services. Among his projects are planning and design of historic visitor routes, designing of urban development codes and data mining research for urban municipalities.