

**Provisional English Title:** Acting Out: Voices from the Theatre in Palestine

**Description:** A book of texts and photographs presenting professional and semi-professional theatres in Palestine and Palestinian theatres in Israel. Texts based on interviews by Jonathan Daitch of 50 actors, directors, and others directly involved in each of 26 theatres and theatre groups will be accompanied by photographs by Daitch and others. This format gives Palestinians involved in the theatre a stage on which to talk about their theatres and their lives in the theatre, and to present in their own words Palestinian culture and theatre to a broad audience. They do this with very powerful and moving personal statements, thus achieving one of the major purposes of this book: to help people to see Palestinian theatre as a creative artistic phenomenon, not only as a militant one.

**Rational for the book:** In the face of the violent and dramatic images of the conflict in Israel/Palestine, Palestinian culture is so little understood that its very existence is often ignored. Yet, there is a thriving culture in Palestine and theatre is very much a part of it. There are many theatres in Palestine; they play an important role in Palestinian society, both as vehicles for expressing traditional values and ideals, and as forums for presenting new ideas and new human relationships. In the context of the Israeli occupation, theatre in Palestine also serves to limit cultural distortion and destruction; it provides a means of channelling the frustrations and anger of the Palestinian people, especially youth, into non-violent expressions of personal legitimacy.

To the author's knowledge (and that of his interviewees) this will be the only book that introduces contemporary Palestinian theatre to a broad audience: first by presenting a broad survey of Palestinian theatres; second by providing a forum for Palestinian actors and directors to express themselves about their art. They have unanimously and enthusiastically welcomed the project. Time and again interviewees commented that this was the first time they had been asked about their lives as actors by someone outside of Palestinian society, and that their experiences would be shared outside the very limited circle of their colleagues.

**Contents**

Foreword: Inspiration and development of the idea and object of the book, collaborative nature of the research data collection and content, participants, acknowledgements, and dedication

Map of Palestine and location of theatres.

Theatre development timeline (will require one or two fold-out pages).

Introduction: Attempts to describe Palestinian society and culture are fraught with danger. It is difficult for the reader to get a clear picture of Palestine, Palestinians and Palestinian culture in the context of the Israeli Occupation. The media reporting of the conflict is almost always biased and regularly contains one-dimensional stereotypic representations. As a photographer the author was constantly faced with the problem of how to present his images. For example, how would a photo of a beautiful house on

a peaceful road in the heart of Bethlehem, intended to show normal life in a society reputed to be violent and deprived, be seen? As proof that “things are not that bad in Palestine after all, so what’s all the complaining about?” Or as evidence that “Palestinians must be profiteers and crooks, so why waste our time with them?” These problems of interpretation exist regardless of the medium; that is, the presentation of a vibrant Palestinian culture is proof that things are not as bad as all that. As the author talked with interviewees and with Palestinians encountered as he moved about, three points regularly came up in conversations:

- Victimisation. “Our society is a victim of the Occupation, but I as an individual within that society do not define myself as a victim. I live and work as a full-fledged member of a functioning society, attempting to construct a future for myself, my family, and my society.”

- Surviving or living. “At the same time there is a difference between surviving and living a normal life. I spend a great deal of energy just surviving. I begin the process of constructing my work and my life each day only to see so much negated by the next morning. So, I begin again.” This leaves little for the “extras” like culture, personal growth, and just relaxing: thus, the image of a society that does not take care of itself.

- The role of violence in the image of Palestine and in our assumptions about Palestinians’ motives. “We Palestinians, especially our youth, are constantly presented as being violent unreasonable extremists, unwilling to negotiate. In addition, many Palestinians are unwilling to denounce violence and are thus seen as approving it, if not being actual accomplices. But very few of us engage in violence, or approve of it, even if we do not directly denounce it.”

The introduction will address these three “vectors of confusion” in an attempt to help the reader to avoid simplistic and prejudiced interpretations.

Presentation of the 26 Palestinian theatres in Palestine and Israel by Palestinian actors, directors and managers. Each theatre will have a two- to eight-page chapter. The first page will consist of a description including name, address, contact information, personnel, artists, and brief history. There will follow the personal testimonies of theatre personnel taken from the interviews, addressing one or more of the six themes which emerged from the interviews.

1. The original motivation/inspiration for being in theatre,
2. Being an artist who resists or a resister who uses theatre as a means of resistance,
3. The role of theatre in Palestine, in particular in the work with children,
4. The constraints to doing theatre in Palestine,
5. Theatre funding and financial problems, and
6. The future.

### **Format**

- 65,000 words
- 150 photos. About 100 will be small portraits.
- No 3rd party text except for possible foreword. Approximately 25 photos will have to be provided by theatres
- One map
- One timeline diagram requiring one- or more fold-out pages

**Contents**

Word count    Description

1700	<b>Foreword:</b> inspiration, personal and political motivation behind book
1500	<b>Acknowledgements</b>
	<b>Map</b> of Theatres & cities visited
2900	<b>Introduction:</b> method (collaboration, interviews, translation), logic of the book's organisation
	<b>Theatres</b>
1000	<u>Introduction:</u> what is a theatre in Palestine, classification (T = theatre, TG = theatre group, TP = theatre person)
900	Aljabri            TP
3900	Alrowwad        T
2200	ASHTAR        T
1700	Asseera        TP
900	BASMA        TP
1900	Diyar            T
4200	Freedom        T
2400	al-Harah        TG
2100	Inad            TG
1800	al-Jawwal       TG
1700	al-Kasaba       T
2600	al-Midan        T
3400	PNT/al-Hakawati    T
2000	PTSPA&T       T
1200	Qafial           TP
900	Quds Art        TP
1300	al-Ruwah       TG
1200	Safar            TP
700	Sanabil        TP
2100	Sandouq Elajab    TP
1800	al-Saraya       T
2100	Tantoura        TG
3300	Theatre Day Productions    T
2100	Theatre for Everybody    TP
2700	Yes            T
600	Youth & Childrens Dreams    TP
51900	TOTAL Theatres
	<b>Timeline</b>
??	<b>Index</b>
??	<b>List</b> of additional source material and websites
<b>+58000</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Potential readership:** Theatre professionals, historians and students of theatre, students of Middle Eastern society and culture, general readers interested in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. To the knowledge of the author, French publisher, and Palestinian theatre people, there are no similar books existing or planned.

**Theatres visited (7 September - 10 October 2015 & 13 October - 8 November 2016):**

Bethlehem:

- Alrowwad Cultural Center
- Aljabri, Osama
- Diyar Theatre
- Al-Harah Theatre
- Inad Theatre

Haifa

- Al-Midan Theatre

Hebron:

- Youth and Childrens Dreams Society Theatre
- Yes Theatre

Jaffa

- Al-Saraya Theatre

Jenin:

- Freedom Theatre

Jerusalem:

- Al Jawwal Theatre Group
- Palestinian National Theatre
- Al-Ruwah Theatre Group
- Qafilah Theatre
- Quds Art
- Sanabel Popular Theatre
- Theatre Day Productions

Maghar:

- Asseera Theatre

Ramallah:

- ASHTAR for Theatre Production
- Al-Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque
- Popular Theatre Society for Performing Arts and Training
- Safar Theatre
- Sandouq Elajab Theatre
- Tantoura Puppets Theatre

**Telephone/Skype interviews in Gaza:**

- ASHTAR Theatre in Gaza
- Basma Society for Culture and Arts
- Theatre Day Productions in Gaza
- Theatre For Everybody

**Jonathan Daitch**  
1 rue de la vallée d'Enfer  
22130 St Lormel  
+336.30.34.82.99  
[jd@daitchphoto.com](mailto:jd@daitchphoto.com)  
[www.daitchphoto.com](http://www.daitchphoto.com)

**Date of birth:** December 14, 1941

**Place:** Boston, Massachusetts

**Nationality:** US/French (permanent resident of France since 1984)

**Education:** BA Social Sciences, 1966; MA. Education, 1970; Doctorate Educational Administration, 1980

**Profession:** Teacher (elementary, junior high, high school & university levels) School Administrator

**Current Status:** Retired since January 2006

**Photographic Experience:** Amateur photographer since 1961. Informal sales of photos.

Individual and collective exhibits:

2002 Paris XI, Salon de la photographie (annual photo exhibition sponsored by the cultural department of the 11th Arrondissement of Paris)

2002 Paris, Galeries Artitude: "Regards sur Paris d'un American"

2003 Paris, Galerie Mamia Breteche: "Insolite Boston"

2003 Paris XI, Salon de la photographie

2004 Issy les Moulineaux: "Masks," with the mask-maker, Laura Schupack, black & white photographs of details of her masks

2004 Paris, Maison des Métallos: "Transmission de memoire," photographs of artisans

2004 Paris XI, Salon de la photographie

2007 St Aignnon-sur-Cher, Festival International de l'Harmonica: photographs of the previous year's festival

2008 St Cast, l'Association des Plaisanciers: photo-reportage of the construction of the marina of the port of St Cast

2008 St Aignnon-sur-Cher, Festival International de l'Harmonica: photographs of the previous year's festival

2008 Dinan, Theatre du Jacobins: photos of the previous year's season

2009 St Aignnon-sur-Cher, Festival International de l'Harmonica: photographs of the previous year's festival

2009 Dinan, Theatre du Jacobins: photos of the previous year's season

2012 Ruca, Festival des Ouies: photographs of the previous year's festival

2012 Plancoet, Communauté des communes de la Val de l'Arguenon: "Patrimoine des jardins"

2013 Plancoet, Office de tourisme: "Patrimoine musical"

2013 Dinan, Crêperie des Remparts: Festival des Remparts 2012

2014 St Lormel, Journées Européennes du Patrimoine, "Patrimoine musical"

**Work with Palestinian Theatres:**

Member of *Les Amis d'Alrowwad*, France since 2007

Member of *l'Association France Palestine Solidarité* since 2013

Two weeks in the Aida refugee Camp, Bethlehem, 2007 (set up a darkroom and give workshops on photography at the Alrowwad Cultural Centre)

June 2011: accompanied the Alrowwad Theatre troupe for two weeks on their tour of France (liaison with local host groups, bus driver)

November 2012: accompanied the Yes Theatre troupe for two weeks on their tour of France (liaison with local host groups, interpreter English - French, bus driver)

September 2014: accompanied the Yes Theatre troupe for two weeks on their tour of France (liaison with local host groups, interpreter English - French, bus driver)

September-October 2015 and October-November 2016: two 5 week-long trips to Palestine to visit theatres in Beit Jala, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, E. Jerusalem, Maghar, Nablus, Ramallah, Haifa, and Yaffa.