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## VISIBILITY, PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE OCCUPATION

### The Case of the Activestills Collective

*Simon Faulkner*

This chapter takes as its subject the Israel/Palestine-based photographic collective Activestills, focusing on a series of street exhibitions organized by the collective between 2006 and 2014. These exhibitions consisted of sets of photographic images that pictured situations and events related to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank presented on walls and other urban surfaces, primarily in Tel Aviv. The exhibitions were intended to transport scenes of the occupation to an Israeli audience in the hope of affecting their opinion about the treatment of the Palestinians by the Israeli state. As such, they reflected a concern on the part of Activestills to utilize photography as a political tool. This use of photography can be linked to the longer-standing and broader relationship between photography and the political situation in Israel/Palestine, as exemplified by other chapters in this collection. For example, in Chapter 8, Gil Pasternak's discussion of photographs made by Israelis visiting the West Bank after the June War of 1967 shows how even personal photography can be infused with conditions of occupation and the power relations they involve. Huw Wahl's photo essay in Chapter 6, as another example, emphasizes how heavily visualized the occupation continues to be and how deeply saturated the resulting images are with political implications. Like these two chapters, the current discussion examines photography in Israel/Palestine in relation to political questions of visibility and seeing.

Although the Activestills exhibitions were readily observable by people who passed by on the street, it is generally not obvious how these displays were actually seen by Israeli spectators, except for instances where they responded to the exhibitions by tearing, writing on or obscuring the images. These responses can be interpreted as attempts to police the field of the visible and to reassert boundaries between the national Israeli *self* and the Palestinian *other*. Here the visibility of the exhibitions was something contested between the intentions of Activestills and the actions of spectators who opposed their viewpoint. The mere act of presenting images of the occupation in the street could not determine how these images were visible to those who saw them, meaning that the visibility Activestills sought to create for aspects of the occupation remained largely potential rather than actualized.

At a basic level, visibility is dependent on two factors: the availability of something to be observed and the way of seeing applied to it. The denial of visibility can occur when something is physically excluded from the field of vision, or when the spectator fails or refuses to see it in a way that involves some form of recognition. These two forms of denial often occur in conjunction with each other, meaning that within particular contexts people are to some degree hidden from view and at the same time refused recognition where they are observable. These forms of denial are also wrapped up with the way that seeing is shaped by power. This is why Andrea Brighenti comments that '[v]isibility lies at the intersection of the domains of aesthetics (relations of *perception*) and politics (relations of *power*)'.<sup>1</sup> This meeting of aesthetics and politics defines a field of struggle over whether or not something is available to be seen and over how it is seen. These points relate to both direct sight and the representation of things through visual images. Brighenti observes that '[v]isibility curdles into representations'.<sup>2</sup> This comment refers to the way that people and things that have social and political prominence tend to be repeatedly represented. Images are therefore a pictorial consequence of the visibility that power entails. But images also

contribute to the processes through which things become and remain visible. Images can be used to reinforce power, but they can also be produced with the aim of generating visibility for people who are socially and politically excluded. Practices of image production and distribution can therefore be understood as integral to contests over visibility and consequently to political struggles.

The preceding discussion is particularly relevant to the consideration of visibility and the role of images within the context of the Israeli occupation, which is part of the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Like other conflicts, this situation has partly been defined by a struggle over seeing and visibility. Different ways of seeing have related to the experiences and positions of different protagonists in this conflict. These ways of seeing have been underpinned by and have themselves generated particular framings of the visible. Thinking about what they call the 'Zionist Israeli Collective', Ruchama Martin and Dalit Baum suggest that there exists an 'active nonseeing mechanism' that has shaped the field of vision in the service of the political project to create and maintain a Jewish homeland in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> This active nonseeing has involved attempts to exclude the Palestinians from the Israeli field of vision, and at the same time involved the seeing of Palestinians in stereotypical ways. In relation to the latter effect, Edward Said has commented that: 'For years after 1948 the Palestinians are an absence, a desired and willed nonentity in Israeli discourse, on whom various images of absence have been heaped—the nomad, the terrorist, the fellah, the Arab, the fanatic, and so forth.'<sup>4</sup> In particular cases, attempts by Israelis to see the Palestinians as something other than the enemy have been interpreted as a kind of border crossing tantamount to betrayal. For example, in 2003 the Jewish-Israeli Tali Fahima stayed with and acted as a human shield for the Palestinian militant Zakariye Zbeide in the refugee camp in Jenin in the West Bank. She was subsequently arrested by the Israeli security services and accused of working with the militants. However, in her view, her real crime was 'seeing the Palestinians'.<sup>5</sup> Here 'seeing' does not just refer to literal interactions with Palestinians, but also to the act of breaking with the Zionist Israeli Collective's hegemonic framing of the visible that generally positions the Palestinians as people who should not really be seen, even when they are available to be observed.

Having stated all this, one should be cautious about oversimplifying the Israeli field of vision when it comes to the Palestinians and the occupation. As Liora Sion suggests, the anxieties generated in Israel by Fahima's boundary crossing indicate that Zionist ways of seeing are not all encompassing or completely secure.<sup>6</sup> Conditions of visibility can never be utterly controlled by the state and dominant media institutions. Consequently, the active nonseeing mechanism that Martin and Baum suggest is structural to Israeli vision in relation to the Palestinians is best understood as a set of effects that have to be continuously produced so that the field of vision can be made manageable for the Zionist political project. This nonseeing mechanism is therefore active not simply because it involves actions, but also because it requires constant reproduction and policing against attempts to contest its limitations.

### **Activestills**

The Activestills collective was formed in 2005 in response to the struggle against the construction of a section of the West Bank Barrier on the land of the Palestinian village of Bil'in, which is located just east of the Green Line in the vicinity of Ramallah. Since the 1980s, Bil'in has experienced land confiscation for the construction of parts of the nearby Modi'in Illit settlement bloc. In December 2004, Israeli authorities announced that it would construct part of the barrier across land owned by the village. In response, the villagers formed the Bil'in Committee of Popular Resistance Against the Wall and Settlements and began a series of demonstrations at and around the barrier construction site, which were joined by Israeli and international activists. These demonstrations were given a relatively

high degree of media attention, partly due to the use of creative activism, involving theatrical actions and symbolic props.<sup>7</sup> The four founding members of Activestills—Oren Ziv, Keren Manor, Yotam Ronen and Eduardo Sauteras—encountered each other in this context and decided that they wanted to do something together to publicize the demonstrations against the barrier to an Israeli audience. This initiative resulted in a street exhibition in Tel Aviv to mark the first anniversary of struggle in Bil'in in January 2006. The name Activestills was invented as a way for the exhibition organizers to remain anonymous, but was subsequently kept as a means of identifying their collective activity.<sup>8</sup> This exhibition was followed by a second exhibition displayed on the streets of Bil'in itself, to mark the second anniversary of struggle in February 2007. Activestills also provided the Committee of Popular Resistance with images of the demonstrations to use on the village website as well as distributing images of the demonstrations more widely. After 2007, members of the collective continued to photograph the resistance to the barrier in Bil'in, while extending their photographic work to other sites of protest against the barrier and settlement expansion, such as the villages of Nil'in and Nabi Saleh. The collective also photographed subjects such as the effects of the barrier in Bethlehem, the practice of house demolitions conducted by Israeli authorities in Jerusalem and the division of Hebron into areas H1 and H2. These subjects were represented in a set of street exhibitions organized in June 2007 in Tel Aviv and elsewhere to mark the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank.

Since its foundation, Activestills has accepted new members on three conditions: that they are professional photographers, or at least on their way to becoming professional photographers; that they have and are motivated by a political understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and that they are prepared to work collectively.<sup>9</sup> The latter condition has involved a willingness on the part of individual photographers to contribute to the Activestills archive, which constitutes a photographic record of different political events and struggles within Israel/Palestine since 2005. This archive existed first as a Flickr account, opened in July 2006, and then additionally as a searchable database as part of the redesigned Activestills website, which was launched in 2014.<sup>10</sup> Once uploaded to the archive, the property rights for photographs are shared between the individual photographers and the collective. Activestills can sell these images as a means of generating income to sustain collective work, but it is important to understand that the collective is not a business in the sense of being a photo agency or a wire service.<sup>11</sup> This also means that the collective does not constitute a source of income for its members, who have to undertake other kinds of photographic work to earn a living. For example, Yotam Ronen has worked for the Israeli news website *Walla!*, while Oren Ziv has worked for the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* as well as the wire service Agence France-Presse and the picture agency Getty Images.<sup>12</sup>

The non-profit nature of Activestills means that members of the collective have to commit a substantial amount of their labour as photographic workers to the collective without financial remuneration. What this situation provides in return is an organizational context within which members of the collective can focus on political rather than commercial concerns and in which their individual photographic activities can be combined with those of other members. This enables the development of group projects such as the street exhibitions and publications.<sup>13</sup> It has also enabled the development of ongoing working relationships with other organizations, such as the blog-based online magazine +972, to which Activestills is a regular contributor, and the Israeli human rights non-governmental organization (NGO) B'Tselem. Collective organization has also been essential when Activestills has wanted to cover events that are occurring simultaneously in different places. The cumulative effects of working collectively are also particularly evident when it comes to the online archive, where photographs taken of particular places at different times by different photographers have accumulated to create a greater picture of

the situation in these locations. This has been especially important where these locations have been the sites of political struggles that have continued over years.

The general political orientation of Activestills and its commitment to specific political struggles has also involved the development of a different perspective towards the dominant journalistic notions of disinterestedness and ‘balance’ that inform international reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to these notions, journalists working for international news networks and agencies are meant to keep their professional activity separate from whatever political view of the conflict they might have. Reporting the conflict is meant to involve seeing both sides from a supposedly objective perspective. Palestinian journalists in particular have been identified as lacking the necessary disinterestedness, because it is assumed that they cannot separate their work from their commitments to the Palestinian national struggle.<sup>14</sup> Contrary to such ideas of professional disinterestedness, Activestills is explicit about approaching the conflict and the occupation from a politically informed viewpoint and with political objectives in mind. This is why Oren Ziv has commented that the collective ‘try to tell the story from a certain perspective’, continuing that ‘we are not trying to be objective, we are not trying to show both sides are equal’.<sup>15</sup> This statement refers to what Activestills identifies as a tendency for international reportage to represent the conflict as one between antagonists who bear equal responsibility for the violence. This tendency does not take into account the inequity of power that exists between these antagonists. Contrary to such approaches to the reporting of the conflict, the position adopted by Activestills is premised on an understanding that the conflict is fundamentally an unequal one. This understanding of inequality is primarily informed by a view of the occupation as a relationship of domination between a powerful state and a stateless people. Responding to this perception of inequality has been the *raison d’être* for the work of the collective from the outset. The situation in Bil’in was understood to be one where a small and relatively isolated community confronted the power of the occupying state and its military. Rather than assuming that the professional journalistic notions of disinterestedness and balance should override other moral considerations, Activestills took a principled decision to side with the weaker party.

This strong understanding of the inequality of the conflict also means that the approach developed by Activestills has been informed by a different understanding of balance. Instead of defining representational balance as something that results from a disinterested relationship to the conflict, Activestills conceives balance as something that comes precisely from political engagement. This point is specific to the predominantly Israeli context within which the collective works. For Activestills, this context is defined by a stark imbalance between a dominant Zionist viewpoint that is understood to be generally anti-Palestinian and against marginal viewpoints that have sympathy for the Palestinians or involve forms of anti-Zionism. It adopted a political position in its representation of the conflict and the occupation as an attempt to contribute to the rebalancing of this situation. Hence Oren Ziv’s observation:

People say we are one-sided, but the situation in Israel is so one-sided, we try to show a bit of the other side. I won’t say it is the Palestinian side, because we are Israelis [...] we are trying to show the side of those who are oppressed. The situation is so unbalanced, we try to bring a bit of the side that is not seen.<sup>16</sup>

From this perspective, the only possible balance is one created through political struggle, in opposition to the dominant viewpoint.

This contestation of this dominant viewpoint occurs not only through the photographing of struggles in places such as Bil’in but also through the development of longer-term projects that involve the representation of larger issues. In these cases,

Activestills ‘plan[s] a project and follow[s] a subject for weeks, or maybe years’.<sup>17</sup> A key concern of this type has been with Israeli policies towards Palestinian residency in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. This has resulted in a particular focus in photographic work on evictions, house demolitions and the destruction of Palestinian property in these areas. One result of this work has been the publication in 2011 of a book with the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (ICAHD), entitled *We Never Finished 1948: The Continuing Campaign of Internal Displacement in Israel/Palestine*. This book addresses the displacement of Palestinians and Bedouin within Israel, Gaza and the West Bank between 2006 and 2011.<sup>18</sup> Nine specific locations were represented in the book: the Bedouin village of Al-Arakib in the Negev; the Jordan Valley; the South Hebron Hills; the Israeli cities of Lod and Ramle; the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan; the village Al-Wallejeh near Jerusalem; and Gaza. In each of these locations, non-Jewish populations have experienced displacement, whether through military violence in Gaza, village demolition in Al-Arakib, Jewish settlement in Silwan or evictions in Ramle. At a basic level, the intention of the project was to report on subjects generally not represented in the Israeli press, but at another level the concern was to identify links between what has happened within both the Green Line and the occupied territories. This linkage is manifested in the design of the book through the setting up of relationships between photographs taken within the Green Line and photographs taken in Gaza and the West Bank. For example, by placing a photograph of Jaffa just before some photographs of the Jordan Valley or placing a photograph of the demolished village of Dkeika in the South Hebron Hills on the opposite page to a photograph of the demolished village of Al-Arakib in the Negev.<sup>19</sup> This practice creates a set of transitions and visual analogies between locations to reinforce those made in the accompanying texts. The shift from the image of the demolished village of Dkeika to that of Al-Arakib not only takes the spectator/reader across the Green Line but also involves a transition from one very similar scene to another. In both we see a desert-like topography and people standing or sitting amongst the remains of habitations. Other visual analogies are spread throughout the book, as is the case with the multiple images of people living in tents in Gaza, Lod, Al-Walaja, the South Hebron Hills, the Jordan Valley and Sheikh Jarrah.<sup>20</sup>

The book also links Israel, Gaza and the West Bank in historical terms by relating the effects of the war of 1948 to those of the post-1967 occupation—hence the reference to 1948 in the title of the book. The slogan ‘We Never Finished 1948’ is attributed in the book to Yitzhak Rabin,<sup>21</sup> though it in fact derives from Moshe Dayan. It is a phrase that refers to the understanding that the war of 1948 left an unresolved problem for the Zionist project in the form of a large Palestinian population remaining within ‘the land of Israel’. Tanya Reinhardt suggests that this notion of the unfinished business of 1948 gained a new currency in Israel with the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000.<sup>22</sup> The general implication of this linkage between 1948 and the present is that the massive population transfer that coincided with the creation of the state of Israel has been continued through acts of internal displacement within the Green Line since 1948, and within Gaza and the West Bank since 1967. Activestills and ICAHD understand this continuity of internal displacement between 1948 and the present to be driven by the basic Zionist objective of taking over the greatest amount of Palestine with the fewest Palestinians left in it. Consequently, Jeff Halper, the director of ICAHD, states in the introduction to the book: ‘Policies of internal displacement [...] derive from an ongoing attempt to “judaize” Palestine that has continued unabated since 1948, on both sides of the Green Line.’<sup>23</sup> The aim of the book was to take what might appear to be a set of separate actions in quite different contexts and reframe them as manifestations of the same overarching objective to rid the land of Israel of its non-Jewish population.

This approach suggests a distinction between news reportage of the conflict and the occupation and the documentary approach developed by Activestills. The former is

concerned with the reporting of events as they happen, as if they are singular and separate occurrences. The latter approach is more concerned with relationships between events and, through this, with the greater structural nature of the application of state power in different places over time. In terms of visibility, this approach is not only concerned with the visual documentation of situations and events through individual photographs but also with the way in which something larger can become potentially visible through the bringing together of photographs in some form of archive. This is the case whether the archive is the database on the Activestills website, the *We Never Finished 1948* book or what could be defined as an archival display of the kind presented by Activestills in the context of the protest camp against the cost of housing established on Rothschild Boulevard in central Tel Aviv during the summer of 2011 (Fig. 7.1).

## FIGURE 7.1 NEAR HERE

### 7.1 Activestills display in protest camp on Rothschild Boulevard, Tel Aviv (August 2011). Photo: Simon Faulkner

This display presented images from the project on internal displacement, setting up connections between different events and locations and providing a sense of a larger spatial order of state violence that linked Al-Arakib to Jaffa, Silwan, Ramle and Gaza.

Thought about in these terms, the practices developed by Activestills involve different modes of potential visibility. The online archive is a context where images accumulate and can be searched according to place-names and thematic titles. The uploading of images by different members of the collective using the same names and titles allows for the searching of the archive in such a way that a struggle in a particular place, or a more general theme can become visible as something that is ongoing, or as something that involves links between different locations and events. The book *We Never Finished 1948* and the display in the Tel Aviv protest camp in 2011 both involved the selecting of images from the larger Activestills archive and their configuration in fixed forms, with the intention of making links between different instances of internal displacement visible. Other Activestills exhibitions have addressed situations and political struggles in singular locations or particular areas, functioning more like photographic essays in the form of a tabular display.

### Transporting appearances

All of the modes of potential visibility developed by Activestills rely on the fundamental capacity of photography to bring absent things into view, a capacity encapsulated by John Berger's observation that 'cameras are boxes for transporting appearances'.<sup>24</sup> The street exhibitions were particularly dependent upon this capacity, because their primary function was to translocate appearances related to the occupation to contexts where these things were not visible. To understand the particular significance of this use of one of photography's most basic capabilities, more needs to be understood about the spatial context within which it occurred. What was discussed earlier as the active nonseeing of the Palestinians and the occupation has in part been produced by the physical segregation of Israelis and Palestinians. This physical segregation has become more entrenched since the end of the first Intifada, through the restriction of Palestinian movement between the occupied territories and Israel.<sup>25</sup> The occupied Palestinian population is on the whole just not part of the physical reality of Israelis living within the Green Line, while at the same time, the spaces of occupation are separated from the civil space of Israel. Despite the spatial proximity of Tel Aviv and the West Bank, the relationship between these two areas involves a radical divergence of reality. Under such circumstances, photography can potentially function as a pictorial means of bridging the divide between one reality and

another. Photography cannot transport the reality itself, but a photograph can go some way towards showing how the segregated *other* lives and struggles under occupation. It is in these terms that Activestills conceived the role of photography in the context of its exhibitions, hence Keren Manor's observation that they 'wanted to bring this reality to Israeli cities—to present these views of the occupation to people who are mentally living at a great distance, despite their geographical proximity'.<sup>26</sup> This point has also been made by Oren Ziv, who states that through the street exhibitions 'you force them [the public] to see the reality they [the Israeli government] hide behind walls, behind separation plans'.<sup>27</sup> This use of photography to bring the appearance of the occupation to Tel Aviv can be linked to other activist practices that have symbolically relocated aspects of the occupation to within the Green Line. For example, in February 2007 activists blocked one side of Rothschild Boulevard with rolls of razor wire taken from the barrier in Bil'in in an attempt to replicate an experience of the blockage of movement that has been structural to the Palestinian experience of the occupation since at least the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>28</sup> It is also possible to suggest that such symbolic translocations of the occupation are responses to the particular moral pressures that arise from the experience of traversing the divide between Israel and the occupied West Bank on the part of Israeli activists. This experience has been described as one of stark inequalities that are emotionally difficult to deal with.<sup>29</sup> The difficulty of this experience is translated into a kind of moral witnessing that in the case of Activestills also involves an attempt to make other Israelis secondary witnesses to the occupation through the viewing of photographic images.

This witnessing involves attestation to a current reality, yet the appearances transported by photography are also always inextricably related to the past. Activist photography involves a desire to attest to what is currently happening and therefore possible to change, but in reality it always shows something that has already happened. The compromise position between these two temporal conditions is to find a way for photographs of the past to attest to something that continues to happen. In her book *The Civil Contract of Photography*, Ariella Azoulay argues for an ethical spectatorship of images of the occupation on the basis that the people pictured in these photographs 'are still present' at the moment of viewing.<sup>30</sup> Framed in this way, photographs show the spectator how the occupation appeared in the past but are also meant to show how the occupation continues to appear. This desire to use photographs of the recent past to stand in for current conditions has been central to the exhibitions organized by Activestills, starting with the exhibition about Bil'in in January 2006.

This exhibition was presented for one week in various locations in Tel Aviv. Activestills produced a flyer that described the exhibition and identified the places where it could be seen. This flyer was left in cafes and bars. The displays were checked every night for the duration of the exhibition and the images were replaced if they were damaged.<sup>31</sup> The displays that constituted the exhibition consisted of 16 captionless images printed on A3 paper, organized in groups of four, each representing the work of one of the four founder members of Activestills. The images presented a range of scenes related to the struggle against the barrier in Bil'in. For example, one photograph showed protestors climbing and standing on a large pile of stones that had been brought to the site to form the hardcore base for the barrier, while another photograph depicted a villager viewing settlement construction in Matiyahu East from the vantage provided by these stones. Other images were concerned with interactions between protestors and soldiers. A photograph—taken from a low angle through a roll of barbed wire—depicted three villagers showing a document to a soldier. Another image showed a line of soldiers facing a line of demonstrators, while yet another presented a close-up view of a young man from the village struggling against arrest. These images were intended as visual documents of the preceding year of struggle and, as such, showed the spectator things that were of the past. However, the accompanying text also made it clear that what was represented in the

photographs related to the ongoing situation in Bil'in. This was achieved by linking the images to a petition against the construction of the barrier on village land that was currently going through the Israeli High Court of Justice in Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> This part of the text was set out like a wanted ad, entailing four paragraphs, each with a heading that was prefixed with the word 'Wanted'. These headings were: 'Wanted: Initiative', 'Wanted: Open-mindedness', 'Wanted: Responsibility' and 'Wanted: A Courageous Decision'.<sup>33</sup> These 'wanted' characteristics were meant to apply to the High Court of Justice. Consequently, the images were presented as evidence of injustice and resistance that continued to require a solution. The struggle in Bil'in represented in the photographs was not simply a thing of the past, but also something that required both legal and political action in the present. In this sense, the exhibition addressed its potential spectators as people who could be informed of this continuing situation and who might take action in response to what they saw. Yet, returning to the discussion of the visibility of the exhibitions in the introduction to this chapter, such a response was merely a potential effect of the exhibition.

There is little available evidence of how spectators responded to the January 2006 exhibition. A photograph taken by Activestills shows two women walking past one version of the exhibition as if they have not noticed it. Another photograph shows a group of people standing to the right of a different version of the exhibition while another person looks at the images. One of the people to the right of the display is identifiable as the left-wing activist Nir Nadar,<sup>34</sup> suggesting that this photograph shows people who are already sympathetic to the intentions of Activestills. A third photograph shows a woman walking past and looking at the remains of a version of the exhibition that has been torn down, an act of vandalism that suggests strong opposition to the exhibition.<sup>35</sup> Although it is necessary to be careful when treating these photographs as evidence, they suggest that responses to the exhibition ranged from support to indifference and opposition. This range of responses to the January 2006 exhibition can be contrasted to the responses that appear to be shown by photographs of the Activestills exhibition presented in Bil'in in February 2007 to mark the end of the second year of struggle in the village. The latter photographs show spectators from the village looking at, pointing to, touching and taking photographs of the displays. It is reasonable to suppose from these photographs that the spectatorship of the exhibition in this context was predominantly sympathetic. This is an obvious point to make given that the role of the second exhibition in Bil'in was to represent the struggle back to its participants. In this context, the primary function of the images in the exhibition was to remember recent events that had occurred in locations very close to where they were shown. This exhibition was therefore primarily concerned with the transportation of appearances across time rather than space.

### **Contested visibility**

In the absence of evidence other than that provided by photographs taken by Activestills members themselves, it is difficult to write much more about how the 2006 and 2007 exhibitions dealing with the struggle in Bil'in were viewed by particular spectators. It is possible, however, to write more about the set of exhibitions that Activestills organized in June 2007 to mark the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of the occupation, simply because of the availability of more photographic evidence of how spectators responded negatively to these displays.<sup>36</sup> The four displays that constituted this exhibition were presented under the general title '40 to 67' and addressed subjects in Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza and Jerusalem. The exhibition was accompanied by texts explaining what each display was about.<sup>37</sup> The display dealing with Jerusalem was entitled 'Jerusalem—Expelled' and included 14 images. Amongst other things, these images represented the demolition of houses in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Silwan, A-Tur and Sur Baher. The

accompanying text described house demolitions and the difficulties facing Palestinians wanting to build homes in Jerusalem. The display on Bethlehem, entitled 'Bethlehem—Trapped', focused on the effects of the construction of the West Bank Barrier in this area, where it took the form of a nine metre-high concrete wall (Fig. 7.2).

## FIGURE 7.2 NEAR HERE

### 7.2 Activestills display, 'Bethlehem—Trapped', from June 2007, Tel Aviv (June 2010). Photo: Simon Faulkner

Amongst the nine images of the display were those that showed a checkpoint in the wall, a Palestinian home hemmed in on three sides by the same structure and views from houses in the Aida Refugee Camp that are located very close to the wall. The accompanying text emphasized the predicament of those having to travel through the wall to employment in Jerusalem and the general enclosure of Bethlehem.

One of the images in the display about Jerusalem depicts an area where the East Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev meets an area of Palestinian residence, probably the Shuafat refugee camp, or Anata. In the bottom half of this image is a traffic circle at the centre of which is a circular flowerbed and a lawn with an olive tree in the middle. Above this is an unfinished section of the wall that separates the settlement from the Palestinian residential area. This image appears to be a conscious attempt on the part of the photographer to represent the spatial divisions and disparities created by the occupation through a contrast between the pristine and colourful beauty of the traffic circle on one side of the barrier and the grey exclusion of Palestinian life under occupation on the other. This image might be compared to a description of the contrast between Pisgat Ze'ev and the Shuafat refugee camp written by Jeff Halper in 2001:

We walked through the crowded camp of some 25,000 people, finally coming out on the top of a hill overlooking the periphery of the camp and, across the wadi, the narrow valley, the Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev looming over Shuafat from the opposite hill. Juxtaposed in this way, the injustice virtually hits you in the face. Here was a crowded camp, layers of jerry-built concrete homes separated by the narrowest of alleyways [...] and then, just a couple of hundred meters away, the massive modern housing project of Pisgat Ze'ev [...] with its manicured lawns and trees [...] And, separating these two worlds [...] the 'security road' where the army patrols at night, guarding the residents of Pisgat Ze'ev from their neighbors.<sup>38</sup>

Although there is no causal connection between the image and Halper's words, and although the crowded setting described by Halper is not quite represented in the photograph, this description seems to provide us with an understanding of why the Activestills photographer chose and framed the scene in the way they did.

One version of the display about Jerusalem was pasted on a hoarding on Tarsat Boulevard in Tel Aviv. By late June 2007 this display was torn and written upon. Over the image of the traffic circle in Pisgat Zeev someone had written in Hebrew: 'How lovely! Here a suicide bomber will not pass' (Fig. 7.3).<sup>39</sup>

## FIGURE 7.3 NEAR HERE

### 7.3 Damaged Activestills display, 'Jerusalem—Expelled', Tel Aviv (June 2007). Photo: Simon Faulkner

This sentence redefines the intended meaning of the image in terms of a vernacular articulation of official Israeli ‘security’ discourse. As Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir observe: ‘According to the official Israeli conception, all Israeli mechanisms of violence active in the Occupied Territories are meant to fulfil “security needs”, namely, preventing direct Palestinian violence against Israeli citizens.’<sup>40</sup> According to this logic, the violence of the state is defined as ‘violence-preventing violence’ and, in this sense, is not really seen as violence. What this means is that the spectator/respondent to the Activestills image was probably not seeing the barrier as an artefact of the occupation at all. The respondent also refused to feel sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians living behind the wall. Instead they made it clear that what concerned them was the safety of Israeli Jews. For this spectator the image is visible in a way that counters the intentions of Activestills, rendering its visibility as an image of the occupation contested. This response therefore involves an active nonseeing of the kind discussed in the introduction. The image of the traffic circle is available for viewing, but the spectator has refused the implications of seeing it in a way that involves empathy or identification with the Palestinians.

A related response was made to one of the images in the display about Bethlehem that depicted a queue of Palestinian men packed between another section of the barrier and a small fence running parallel to it. Again, this subject appears to have been chosen and framed in an attempt to show something more general about of the occupation. What is represented is not just the barrier that fills much of the picture but also the effect the barrier has upon Palestinian mobility. The role of the barrier as an architectural form that divides space, blocks movement and encloses the occupied Palestinian population is literally denoted through the depicted scene and at the same time connoted through the way the Palestinian men are hemmed in between the barrier and the fence. The way that the barrier towers over the men also seems to symbolize the nature of the governing relationship between the Israeli state and the occupied population.<sup>41</sup>

When this image was displayed on Tarsat Boulevard, somebody—possibly the same respondent as to the image of Pisgat Ze’ev—wrote upon it: ‘Traitors, good luck’ (Fig. 7.4). This statement was obviously aimed at the members of Activestills themselves, or more precisely at the traitorous relationship they are perceived to have with the Palestinians depicted in this and other images in the display. This definition of Activestills as ‘traitors’ seems to have been articulated in relation to a normative understanding Israeliness defined in terms of a clear boundary between the Israeli *self* and the Palestinian *other*. As was discussed in the introduction in relation to Tali Fahima, such an understanding of Israeli identity involves the framing of Palestinians as people for whom there can be no sympathy and with whom there can be no identification. From this perspective, crossing the boundary between the ethno-national *self* and the *other* is tantamount to a form of betrayal. Israelis are either for the existing policies of the state, including the West Bank Barrier or they are against Israel and their fellow Jews. Here the barrier does not need to be explained and legitimized through linking it to security. Instead the very act of showing the barrier in the way that Activestills does is simply unacceptable and must be refused. The word ‘traitor’ is used as a slur that is meant to indicate that Activestills has stepped outside of what Amalia Ziv terms the ‘Jewish Israeli discursive community’. (It is relevant here that another respondent had written at the bottom of the image, ‘You’re not Jews’.) Labelling Activestills members traitors is also an attempt to silence them by discursively banishing them from the national collective and situating them ‘in a location from which it is impossible to speak legitimately’.<sup>42</sup> By writing on the image of the Palestinians alongside the wall, the respondent refuses to see the image as Activestills conceived it and refuses its legitimacy to speak within the Israeli public sphere. The image is seen by this particular spectator, but primarily as a traitorous act. Again, the visibility of the image is contested. But the need to silence Activestills on the part of the respondent also suggests that the apparently well-defined Jewish-Israeli identity that was being defended through this

response was not as secure as it appeared to be. Defensiveness suggests an inability to accept alternative viewpoints and a degree of vulnerability.<sup>45</sup>

#### FIGURE 7.4 NEAR HERE

##### 7.4 Detail of Activestills display, ‘Bethlehem—Trapped’, Tel Aviv (June 2007). Photo: Simon Faulkner

Street exhibitions organized by Activestills continued to be subject to negative responses after 2007. The presentation of an Activestill’s display within the protest camp on Rothschild Boulevard in the summer of 2011 has already been mentioned. This display was intended to introduce images of displaced Palestinians and Bedouin into a political space that was primarily defined by concerns about housing and economic issues on the part of Jewish-Israelis. Concerns for the situation of non-Jewish populations in Israel/Palestine and the occupation were on the whole not present in this space. This is why Activestills included the slogan ‘If Rothschild will not come to Mohammad then Mohammad will come to Rothschild’ on one of the boards of their display. It is not possible to know how most camp participants responded to this display; however, at one point a banner calling for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit from captivity in Gaza and bearing the slogan ‘Even Gilad Shalit Deserves a Home’ was placed over one of the boards of the display (Fig. 7.5).<sup>44</sup>

#### FIGURE 7.4 NEAR HERE

##### 7.5 Activestills display in protest camp on Rothschild Boulevard, Tel Aviv, covered with Gilad Shalit banner (September 2011). Photo: Simon Faulkner

Images of people excluded from the Jewish-Israeli collective were therefore obscured by an image of a representative of that collective. The presentation of the banner on Rothschild Boulevard was primarily about declaring support for Shalit, but placing it over the Activestills display also indicated a refusal to see images of the national *other*.

More recently, in 2013, a spectator responded to a street exhibition created by Activestills to mark Palestinian ‘Prisoner’s Day’ by writing on every one of the 12 images in the display.<sup>45</sup> These written responses suggest racist animosity towards the people shown in the images. One response to an image of someone holding a photograph of a Palestinian man with his mother, read: ‘What an ape.’<sup>46</sup> The responses also indicate a need on the part of the spectator to see Palestinians as people to whom violent things can and should be done. An image of soldiers detaining a Palestinian youth provoked the written response ‘That’s it, just catching him’, as if there were a need for a greater violence to be inflicted. Another response to an image of an injured Palestinian man in a hospital bed read ‘That’s it, just injured’, as if the man should have been killed. One way of understanding these suggestions of a need for greater violence towards Palestinians is to interpret them as not simply being driven by hatred but by an ingrained nationalistic sense of self-defence. The statements written on the images do not explicitly suggest self-defence; however, they might well be informed by a logic that asserts that violence should be done to those defined as the enemy so that the national collective can be protected. This logic works along the lines of Judith Butler’s discussion of wartime discourses that distinguish the lives of those who are members of the national collective from the lives of those who are defined as the enemy. The loss of the former is to be grieved, whereas the latter are not grievable because they are not really understood to be living and are, moreover, defined as those whose lives have to be lost to protect the lives of those who are truly alive.<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusion

The examples of responses to Activestills street exhibitions discussed in the preceding section point to the existence of a nationalized way of seeing, through which dominant Israeli discourses on national security and national struggle with the Palestinians are translated into spectatorship. As Rebecca L. Stein argues in relation to Israeli television images of the Gaza invasion in late 2008 and early 2009, this involves an extension of nationalist ideology into the field of vision that generates restrictions on what is actually visible to the national subject.<sup>48</sup> Ariella Azoulay has made similar points in her writing, suggesting that photographs that circulate in the Israeli public sphere have the potential to reveal a great deal about the reality of the occupation. She uses the phrase ‘everything could be seen’ to refer to this potentiality.<sup>49</sup> Yet the national context within which these images are viewed means that the appearances these photographs present are rarely seen in a way that makes them comprehensible *as an occupation*. Everything, or at least quite a lot, could be seen, but was not.

Is the apparent refusal on the part of particular spectators to comprehend the street exhibitions in the way that Activestills intended tantamount to the failure of the exhibitions as a form of political communication? In one sense the answer to this question is yes. Yet in another sense, the exhibitions were a success in that they provoked a defensive reaction on the part of particular spectators. The presence of the exhibitions in public spaces prompted these spectators to engage in actions to erase, counter and attempt to silence the meanings that Activestills was trying to communicate—action, that is, to re-establish a condition of nonseeing. The exhibitions could not win the contest over what could and should be seen of the Palestinians and the occupation in Israeli public space. Nevertheless, they created conditions of contestation. This is why members of Activestills comment that they are not upset if they find that their displays have been written on or torn down. For example, Oren Ziv has stated that after the collective has put up an exhibition, members ‘go and see what happens afterwards’ and ‘even if they rip down the photos we are happy’.<sup>50</sup> What the members of Activestills fear more than the destruction of their displays is an Israeli public sphere that conforms to Zionist ideological agendas, without dissent or political antagonism. This means that any provocations that the exhibitions generate are to be valued.

As a final example of responses to an Activestills exhibition, we can consider the display of photographic images created by the collective as part of the conference ‘Visual Culture Between Disobedience and Resistance’ held in March 2014 at the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design in Ramat Gan, just East of Tel Aviv. Activestills selected 70 images from its archive related to a range of different situations from Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. The display involved its now-established method of printing images on paper and arranging them next to each other in a grid on the front of a display case in the main entrance hall to the college. The immediate response to the display from some students at Shenkar, even before the conference had opened, was to pull the images down and throw them in the bin. The conference organizers then put the damaged images back on the wall, incorporating this act of vandalism into the display rather than printing new images. When the conference then opened, students gathered in the entrance hall. According to the account of this event by Shiraz Grinbaum of Activestills, these students were divided between those strongly opposed to the display and those who thought it should stay up, either on the grounds of free speech or because they defended the content of the images. The former group of students, who Grinbaum has identified as members of the right-wing Zionist organization Im Tirtzu (‘If you will it’),<sup>51</sup> denounced the exhibition for its ‘politicization’ of public space and the images as ‘Palestinian propaganda’ performed for the camera. Thus one declared: ‘Whenever [Palestinians] see a camera they become

miserable.<sup>52</sup> On the second day of the conference, the opponents of the exhibition taped printed images of weeping Israeli soldiers and Israeli army medics treating the victims of suicide bombings directly onto the Activestills display. The students also attached four Israeli flags to the exhibition. This response suggests that the students did see the Activestills images but that this seeing involved a refusal of their intended meanings. Images of the bodies of injured Israelis were used to assert Israeli victimhood as a counter to what the students perceived as a clichéd and manipulated Palestinian victimhood. This was not a matter of asserting Israeli victimhood as simply equal to that of the Palestinians. Rather, it was a matter of asserting that within Israel the well-being of Israeli Jews should be of absolute priority. Again, these responses positioned Activestills somewhere outside of the body of the nation. The designation of the images presented by Activestills as ‘Palestinian propaganda’ suggests that they were viewed as a means of transmitting a Palestinian point of view rather than being understood as representative of an anti-Zionist viewpoint held by Israeli Jews. The possibility that Jewish-Israelis could hold such a viewpoint was ruled out by the construction of Jewishness within Zionist ideology, meaning that any Israeli who took up an anti-Zionist position must, *ipso facto*, fail to be properly Jewish.

Despite the domination of responses to the exhibition by right-wing students, the responses of other students and staff at Shenkar in defending the display indicate that other forms of spectatorship for the Activestills images were possible. Thought about in this light, the example of the display at Shenkar College affirms the point, made at the outset of this chapter, that one should be careful about making assumptions about the nature of Israeli spectatorship when it comes to the occupation. Martin and Baum’s notion of an ‘active nonseeing mechanism’ is a useful starting point for thinking about the politics of vision in this context, but it is a relatively blunt analytical tool. Israeli spectators have responded to Activestills street exhibitions in different ways, ranging from ignoring them to being prompted to deface the images they entail. Most of these responses left no visible trace. This situation has inevitably resulted in a discussion that attends primarily to responses that involved the visible defacement of the exhibitions. The focus on these particular responses has resulted in a rich but rather partial understanding of how Israelis viewed the exhibitions. The partiality of this discussion points to the need for the identification of further examples that can be explored to elaborate upon existing understandings of how Israelis have seen or failed to see the occupation. Such explorations would probably need to utilize an ethnographic approach along the lines of that developed, for example, by Amahl A. Bishara in her work on Palestinian responses to the mediation of the occupation.<sup>53</sup>

Such research would also need to be sensitive to the ways that the visibility of the occupation for Israelis has been contingent upon the changing conditions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Members of Activestills have themselves identified recent changes within public responses to their work that they link to shifting Israeli attitudes towards the Palestinians. These changes have led them to be more careful about where they locate their street exhibitions. Speaking specifically of the ‘Prisoner’s Day’ exhibition in 2013, Oren Ziv has observed

we never put exhibitions on the main streets because then it gets off really quickly. We try to choose small streets that people pass, but it won’t get ripped off. I was more afraid to go on Rothschild and put pictures because I know if somebody passes and sees the pictures of the prisoners, you know, the public opinion is much worse against Palestinians.<sup>54</sup>

This statement suggests an intensification of intolerance on the part of Israeli spectators towards representations of Palestinians that depart from the dominant framing of them as

a threatening *other*. This development does not bode well for the prospects of Activestills future ability to affect Israeli public opinion through its work. Yet these adverse responses to the exhibitions continue to indicate their potential to create disruptions, however limited, within the Israeli field of vision related to the occupation. These disruptions are valuable, for they point to the contingency of vision itself and the possibility of the existence of more progressive ways of seeing under different circumstances. The images of the occupation produced by Activestills are documents that utilize the basic capacity of photography to transport appearances. At the same time, these images are models for a way of seeing that holds the potential to challenge the nonseeing that is structural to the Zionist imagination. It is this possibility of seeing things otherwise, that also involves thinking oneself otherwise, that must be denied and erased by those committed to the exclusivist vision of a Jewish state.

### Notes to Ch. 7

- <sup>1</sup> Andrea Brighenti, 'Visibility: a category for the social sciences', *Current Sociology* 55/3 (2007), pp. 323–42), p. 324; emphasis in the original.
- <sup>2</sup> Brighenti, 'Visibility', p. 333.
- <sup>3</sup> Ruchama Marton and Dalit Baum, 'Transparent wall, opaque gates', in Michael Sorkin (ed.), *Against the Wall: Israel's Barrier to Peace* (New York and London: The New Press, 2005), pp. 212–23, p. 214. See also Gil Z. Hochberg's discussion of concealment as the 'dominating principle shaping the Israeli field of vision', in Gil Z. Hochberg, *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), p. 21.
- <sup>4</sup> Edward W. Said, 'Afterword: the consequences of 1948', in Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds), *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 206–19, p. 214.
- <sup>5</sup> Conal Urquhart, 'My crime was seeing the Palestinians', *The Guardian*, 5 January 2007, p. 19.
- <sup>6</sup> Liora Sion, 'Boundaries crossing and blurring: the case of Tali Fahima', *Current Sociology* 62/3 (2014), pp. 431–48.
- <sup>7</sup> See Maia Carter Hallward, 'Creative responses to separation: Israeli and Palestinian joint activism in Bil'in', *Journal of Peace Research* 46/4 (2006), pp. 541–58; Rania Jawad, 'Staging violence in Bil'in: the performance of violence in a Palestinian village', *TDR: The Drama Review* 55/4 (2011), pp. 128–43.
- <sup>8</sup> Simon Faulkner, interview with Oren Ziv and Shiraz Grinbaum, Tel Aviv, 1 June 2014. See also Ben Ronen, 'I am a camera', *Programma* 3 (2010), pp. 92–9.
- <sup>9</sup> Simon Faulkner and David Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, Tel Aviv, 19 May 2013.
- <sup>10</sup> Activestills website, <<http://www.activestills.org>> (accessed 28 November 2018).
- <sup>11</sup> Oren Ziv has placed particular emphasis on Activestills not being a 'wire'. Simon Faulkner and David Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, Tel Aviv, 19 May 2013. One might, however, compare Activestills to photographic collectives that produced images in line with their political agenda to supply to the international media; for example, Afrapix in South Africa during the 1980s. See Heidi M. Saayman Haffingh and Rolf J. Gaede, 'Photographer autonomy and images of resistance: the case of South Africa during the 1980s', *Visual Communication* 10 (2011), pp. 499–525.
- <sup>12</sup> There is also a website that advertises the skills of these two photographers in areas such as food and wedding photography, <<http://orenziv1985.wix.com/phototeam#!about/c240r>> (accessed 27 July 2014).
- <sup>13</sup> The 2016 monograph *Activestills: Photography as Protest in Palestine/Israel* should also be seen as a project developed by the collective, in collaboration with other activists and writers (including the current author), as a means of extending their general political concern to make visible and publicize political struggles within Israel/Palestine. Vered Maimon and Shiraz Grinbaum (eds), *Activestills: Photography as Protest in Palestine/Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 2016).
- <sup>14</sup> For a discussion of this, see Amahl A. Bishara, *Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 106–35.
- <sup>15</sup> Simon Faulkner and David Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, Tel Aviv, 19 May 2013. Ziv also made this point in an earlier interview in 2010. Simon Faulkner and David Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, Tel Aviv, 17 June 2010.
- <sup>16</sup> Faulkner and Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, 17 June 2010.
- <sup>17</sup> Faulkner and Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, 17 June 2010.
- <sup>18</sup> See Activestills and Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, *We Never Finished 1948': The Continuing Campaign of Internal Displacement in Israel/Palestine* (Israel/Palestine: Activestills, 2011). For an

- online exhibition related to this project, see <[http://activestills.org/node.php?node=exhibition\\_294](http://activestills.org/node.php?node=exhibition_294)> (accessed 9 April 2014)
- 19 ActiveStills and Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, *We Never Finished 1948*, pp. 28–37.
- 20 ActiveStills and Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, *We Never Finished 1948*, pp. 38, 66, 69, 93, 103, 111, 125, 137, 145, 153.
- 21 ActiveStills and Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, *We Never Finished 1948*, p. 14.
- 22 See Tanya Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), pp. 106–11. Ilan Pappé has also made this point. See Ilan Pappé, *Out of the Frame: The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Israel* (London and New York: Pluto Press, 2010), pp. 66–7.
- 23 ActiveStills and Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, *We Never Finished 1948*, p. 15.
- 24 John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1982), p. 92.
- 25 Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir have discussed the closure of the occupied territories and the ‘encampment’ of the Palestinians in these areas as a structural element of the occupation since 1991. Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, ‘The monster’s tail’, in Sorkin (ed.), *Against the Wall*, pp. 2–27.
- 26 Ronen, ‘I am a camera’, p. 95.
- 27 Simon Faulkner and David Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, Tel Aviv, 17 June 2010.
- 28 See Yael Barnovsky, ‘Anarchists block Tel Aviv street’, *ynet*, 2 March 2007, <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3360417,00.html>> (accessed 4 May 2014).
- 29 For example, a member of the Israeli women’s organization Machsom Watch (Checkpoint Watch), has described her experience of this divide when returning from a shift at a checkpoint in the following terms: ‘You just came from such a harsh and miserable reality, and you cross the Green Line [...] the driver drops us off at a shopping mall at Kfar Saba, by the supermarket, and there are lots of shops there and you see the Israelis with their shopping carts [...] It’s five minutes away. Nobody cares that there is such a harsh reality’. Quoted in, Carmit Wiesslitz and Tamar Ashuri, ‘“Moral journalists”: the emergence of new intermediaries of news in an age of digital journalism’, *Journalism* 12/8 (2011), pp. 1035–51, p. 1047.
- 30 Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), p. 16.
- 31 After the initial display of the images in Tel Aviv, the exhibition was also displayed in the community center in Bil’in itself. Simon Faulkner, interview with Oren Ziv and Shiraz Grinbaum, Tel Aviv, 1 June 2014. Also see Ronen, ‘I am a camera’, p. 95.
- 32 Activists also held up images from the exhibition at a demonstration outside the High Court of Justice.
- 33 From an English translation of the exhibition text, provided to the author by Activestills, February 2014.
- 34 Nadar writes for the left-wing Israel/Palestine-based magazine *Challenge* and works for the Israeli Workers Advice Center.
- 35 Some of these photographs can be found in the Activestills’ Flickr photo-stream, <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/activestills/376132510/in/photostream/>> (accessed 6 August 2014).
- 36 The author took the photographs discussed in this section in Tel Aviv in 2007 and 2011.
- 37 The images and texts for these displays can be found on the Activestills website, <[http://activestills.org/node.php?node=exhibition\\_300](http://activestills.org/node.php?node=exhibition_300)> (accessed 5 August 2014).
- 38 Jeff Halper, ‘An Israeli in Palestine’, in Roane Carey and Jonathan Shainin (eds), *The Other Israel: Voices of Refusal and Dissent* (New York: The New Press, 2002), pp. 93–8, p. 95.
- 39 My thanks to David Reeb for translation here and in relation to other graffiti on Activestills’ images.
- 40 Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, ‘The order of violence’, in Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni and Sari Hanafi (eds), *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (New York: Zone Books, 2009), pp. 99–140, p. 120.
- 41 Other photographers have framed similar relationships between human figures and the concrete bulk of the barrier in their work. See for example, Miki Kratsman’s photograph *Abu Dis* (2003). For a discussion of this image, see my article: ‘The most photographed wall in the world’, *Photographies* 5/2 (2012), pp. 223–42. See also particular photographs in Kai Wiedenhöfer’s book, *Wall* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2007).
- 42 Amalia Ziv, ‘Performative politics in Israeli queer anti-occupation activism’, *GLQ* 16/4 (2010), pp. 537–56. For similar points made about the Israeli anti-occupation group Women in Black, see Sara Helman and Tamar Rapoport, ‘Women in black: challenging Israel’s gender and socio-political orders’, *The British Journal of Sociology* 48/4 (1997), pp. 68–700.
- 43 For a discussion of Tali Fahima along these lines, see Sion, ‘Boundaries crossing and blurring’.
- 44 Gazan militants held Shalit between June 2006 and October 2011.
- 45 Activestills photographed this particular display and presented this image alongside a printout of the original display at the Cinematheque in Tel Aviv in May 2013. See also Activestills, ‘Street exhibition confronts Israelis on Palestinian Prisoner’s Day’, *+972 Magazine*, 18 April 2013,

- <<http://972mag.com/photos-street-exhibition-confronts-israelis-on-palestinian-prisoners-day/69488/>> (accessed 6 August 2014).
- <sup>46</sup> My thanks to Daniel Reeb for translation here.
- <sup>47</sup> See Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), p. 31.
- <sup>48</sup> Rebecca L. Stein, 'Impossible witness: Israeli visibility, Palestinian testimony and the Gaza War', *Journal for Cultural Research* 16/2–3 (2012), pp. 135–53, p. 142.
- <sup>49</sup> Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, pp. 190–203; Ariella Azoulay, 'Everything could be seen', in Ariella Azoulay (ed.), *Everything Could Be Seen* (Um El Fahem, Israel: Um El Fahem Gallery, 2004), pp. 15–10.
- <sup>50</sup> Simon Faulkner and David Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, Tel Aviv, 17 June 2010. During my interview with Keren Manor in Tel Aviv on 25 June 2007 she also defined damage to the exhibitions as a kind of 'talk-back' and as a sign of relative success.
- <sup>51</sup> Discussion between Simon Faulkner, David Reeb, Oren Ziv and Shiraz Grinbaum, Tel Aviv, 2 June 2014.
- <sup>52</sup> Shiraz Grinbaum, 'Out of sight, out of mind: Right-wing students tear down Activestills photo exhibit', +972, 2 April 2014, <<https://972mag.com/out-of-sight-out-of-mind-ring-wing-students-vandalize-activestills-exhibit/89212/>> (accessed 3 April 2014)
- <sup>53</sup> See Bishara, *Back Stories*, chs 5 and 6.
- <sup>54</sup> Simon Faulkner and David Reeb, interview with Oren Ziv, Tel Aviv, 17 June 2010.