

Paper Abstract:

Politics of Visibility: Contemporary Landscape Photography in Israel and the Occupied Territories', *Politics of Photography*, [Contemphoto](#): International on Contemporary Photography, Nâzim Hikmit Cultural Centre, Istanbul, Turkey.

This paper will examine the role of contemporary landscape photography, specifically related to the politics of visibility, space and belonging in the Occupied Palestinian Territories during the Second Intifada and the formation of visual dead-spaces.

By examining the work of Gaston Ickowicz's landscape series *Settlement* (2003-2006) and Shai Kremer *Infected Landscapes* (1999-2004) I will outline how the Israeli photographers shift the paradigm of spectatorship away from the exemplary visual tropes of the occupation. Firstly, by focusing on what first seem like arbitrary spaces and topological scars including empty houses and car tracks, both photographers invite enquiry and contemplation specifically related to the politics of the space in frame. Through focusing on the indexical signs of human presence, the spectator is asked to consider the history and legitimacy of the mark left and who may have left them. While this will be considered in relation to the on-going occupation, the nationality of the photographers in relation to the authority of looking and seeing and their choice of framing, my overarching aim is to introduce my notion of a 'dead space'.

Secondly, through a comparative reading of Alan Cohen's seminal project 'On European Ground' (2001), I examine how both Israeli photographers record the historical and on-going struggle of the occupation expressly through the relationship between landscapes and the temporal presence upon it. As each photographer documents the landscape I will argue that the spectator begins to read the images through a gesture of identification that symbolises the emptiness as a direct relationship to the politics 'on the ground'.

Under the context of the Israeli occupation, the temporality associated with space, time and identity becomes identifiable through the specific function of the landscape in question. By producing new political visibilities, the shift in spectatorship produced by the critical photography can be understood as a dead-space: a space that functions as lost, contested or in permanent flux. By recording the overwhelming emptiness, absence, and silence within the frame the significance of a place becomes evident in the subtle detail.

