



Birzeit University Museum and the Contemporary Visual Art Program
Politics of Contemporary Art Practices and Cultural Production
Questions on structures, institutions and glocal dynamics
Curator: Rawan Sharaf

CONFERENCE
11.11.2017

Birzeit University Museum and the Contemporary Visual Art Program at Birzeit University are organising a one-day conference addressing the politics of contemporary art practices and cultural production in Palestine through examining their association with the changing local, regional and global socio-economic edifices and networks. The conference aims at probing cultural institutions as structures of agency and mediation playing key roles in the processes of production, presentation, circulation and consumption of art inasmuch as in directing and validating the language, tools and thematic content of art socially, intellectually and creatively.

Historically, art and cultural practices have been shaped in relation to the political and economic realities and the power dynamics that generate within and around their spatio-temporal contexts. In the colonial context in Palestine, cultural practices have been deeply linked to the political domain and its reiterations. This conference seeks to examine the politics of Palestinian art production through the socio-political structures and to raise questions around cultural institutions and the institutionalisation of culture. It also aims to probe art and cultural pedagogies, and the possibilities proposed through notions of independent practices, cultural autonomy and individual agency.

The main questions that the conference will be addressing are:

How can we read, understand and interpret the agency of cultural institution in relation to art and cultural practices? What are the connections between dominant political and economic structures, cultural institutions and independent cultural practitioners, and where do the issues of limitations of agency, autonomy and financing play a role?

Could contemporary art practices and pedagogies as well as interdisciplinary research in the domain of cultural production contribute to fostering a critical interpretation of histories and a re-writing of narratives while it is conducted under the patronage of the institutional establishment?

To address these questions, the conference brings together Palestinian and international scholars, academics and practitioners to present papers and engage in discussion reflecting the rapidly shifting regional and global structures and addressing aspects of institutional agency, socio-cultural structures, neo-liberal economies, colonial structures and the global cultural economy.

The conference is in collaboration with Birmingham City University and Erasmus +