

in the 'real world,' nothing is neutral: design schools, conflict, and the question of palestine

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abstract This article explores the recent surge of pro-Palestinian activism within European design and architecture universities, focusing on student-led initiatives at ETH Zurich, IUAV Venice, and KABK The Hague. Sparked by Israel's military actions in Gaza and inspired by similar protests in the United States, students have increasingly challenged their institutions' political neutrality and complicity in global injustices. From cancelled lectures and censored events to sustained sit-ins and successful policy changes, the piece traces how student movements have exposed tensions between academic freedom, political risk management, and the ethical responsibilities of higher education. Through interviews with students and activists, the article highlights the growing disillusionment with how 'decolonization' is framed within design education – as a theoretical gesture rather than a commitment to material change. The text critiques universities' reluctance to address settler colonialism in Palestine, illustrating how institutions often retreat into 'neutrality' that effectively silences dissent. Ultimately, it positions design schools as crucial sites for confronting power, fostering critical discourse, and re-imagining what education can be in times of conflict.

April and May 2024 saw a wave of fervent activism across numerous European universities. Following Israel's ongoing actions of ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people, many universities organized demonstrations in support of Palestine, drawing inspiration from American institutions like Columbia University in New York. Among those advocating for change were several design schools, which, beyond calling for the suspension of exchange programs with Israeli partner universities and the recognition of the current genocide, began to critically examine both the educational approaches within their own institutions and the political neutrality often maintained by university governance.

At ETH Zurich, a scheduled lecture by architect and editor Léopold Lambert was canceled in April 2024 amid controversy. Lambert had been invited by Unmasking Space, a student-led course in the Department of Architecture whose aim is 'to reflect critically on the current knowledge production in architecture education and bring attention to learning forms, voices, and methods that are currently under-acknowledged in the institution.'¹ The lecture was part of the Spring 2024 didactic program organized by Unmasking Space, comprising ten seminars and three public lectures. The aim of this specific lecture was to discuss how architecture can serve as an instrument of violence within the context of settler colonialism, particularly focusing on the Palestinian territories. ETH Zurich's administration ultimately decided to cancel the lecture, citing concerns that Lambert had not 'credibly and explicitly' distanced himself from violence.² In response to the cancellation, Lambert held an online version of his talk at the originally scheduled time, which was attended by over 400 people. In addition to this event, between May and June 2024, the group Students for Palestine Zurich, primarily composed of students from ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich (UZH), and Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), organized various activities in support of the Palestinian people. These included a peaceful sit-in on May 7 to draw attention to ETHZ's collaborations with Israeli institutions connected to the war in Gaza. On that day, within two hours, ETHZ exercised its national authority and had the police disperse the protest,

and twenty-eight people were removed from the building and charged with trespassing.³

A similar incident occurred at IUAV University of Venice, where the Student Senate organized a conference titled *No Universities Left* featuring DAAR – Decolonizing Architecture Art Research, led by Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti. The event was set to include a professor from IUAV who was teaching a course on the 'reconstruction of Gaza,'⁴ and to bring together diverse design perspectives on Palestinian territory while raising a fundamental question: How could a course on 'rebuilding Gaza' proceed without the university adopting a clear position on the ongoing conflict? Furthermore, how could students be taught to 'reconstruct Gaza' when the course was led exclusively by Western, white men, and the required reading list published on the IUAV website consisted solely of their own publication? Just one day before the event, the university administration announced that the reserved room would no longer be available, and the IUAV professor scheduled to participate withdrew. Despite these obstacles, students managed to secure a new location at the last minute, and the event went forward with DAAR's involvement, attracting an audience of over 200 people. Following the discussion, many students organized a peaceful march to the IUAV library, where they set up tents and makeshift sleeping arrangements, establishing what became known as the Permanent Assembly for Free Palestine. This group, still active today, remained in a small section of the library for nearly two months between May and June, hosting debates, self-organized learning sessions, and engaging in ongoing dialogue with the university administration – all without disrupting daily academic activities. In the Netherlands, the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK) became one of the first Art and Design schools in Europe to sever ties with Israeli institutions, thanks to the determined work of its Student Union. Officially recognized as a 'para institution' in September 2023, the Union was immediately faced with the grave events of October 7th, when Hamas attacks and subsequent Israeli actions in Gaza ignited global attention. Since then, the Union has been actively disseminating information, organizing discussions and film screenings, and engaging

the KABK community of students and faculty in broader conversations around art and design's relationship to colonialism. By December, they raised concerns over KABK's ongoing collaboration with Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, citing the school's role in an initiative where 'over 400 fashion designers, design students, Shenkar lecturers and graduates and one fashion journalist have been signing up for four- and five-hour shifts each day, designing, cutting, sewing and stitching the myriad pockets, tabs and straps that get attached to the ceramic bulletproof vests worn by combat soldiers.'⁵ As reported by the Student Union, 'this is just one symbolic initiative among many that Bezalel has been supporting, many of which glorify the IDF, the same army that has been carrying out a genocidal offensive on the civilian population in Gaza.'⁶ In light of this news, the Student Union initiated a petition demanding the school to end its collaboration with Bezalel. The petition quickly circulated beyond KABK, catalyzing debates that reached other European design schools. Despite initial hesitation from the KABK administration, the Student Union successfully pushed through a motion to end the partnership, positioning KABK as a prominent example for other institutions now calling on their administrations to follow suit. Through a series of interviews conducted with activists and student organizations involved in these protests, this article addresses the events that occurred at ETH Zurich, IUAV and KABK to discuss the broader landscape of protest within design education. Each of the three, in different ways, involved conflict. And, over the following months, each event uncovered issues far deeper than the individual circumstances that sparked the protests, prompting critical reflections on essential themes such as education, neutrality, and conflict in the context of design schools.

university politics and censorship One of the main requests from the IUAV Permanent Assembly was for the rector to open a debate on the topic of 'reconstruction' in the Gaza strip area and its ethical and design implications. However, instead of facilitating this discussion, the rector not only blocked the event where this conversation was supposed to happen, but is

also engaged in a project in partnership with UNDP aimed at 'rebuilding Gaza' without addressing the actions of Israel after October 7th. The rector's refusal to address the rising number of civilian victims in Gaza or hold the Netanyahu government accountable has raised concerns among students. In particular, the Permanent Assembly has questioned whether his silence reflects a need to maintain relationships with UNDP, as the Gaza project is also embedded within IUAV's academic activities. In fact, this project involves some researchers who have previously worked on conflict-related urban studies, extending into coursework and thesis projects supervised by the rector – which in the past involved other geographical areas such as Syria and Iraq. IUAV students have voiced increasing concern over this administrative silence, and especially about the rector's refusal to engage the academic community in meaningful dialogue about the UNDP project's intentions and execution, stating that

The Palestinian cause is inevitably political, and the pursuit of a supposed 'neutrality' has often caused immense harm to the Palestinian people. Moreover, in light of the evidence that has emerged over the past year and the horrendous number of Palestinian civilian casualties, we must ask whether those governing our universities realize that their silence makes them complicit, and that what is going on is more important than the rector's personal business.⁷

Meanwhile, in Switzerland, the government is currently guided by a coalition of parties supporting Israeli policies which have contributed to an environment where pro-Palestinian voices struggle to find space, particularly in academic institutions. For ETH Zurich, it's quite evident how the executive board of ETH to cancel Leopold Lambert's event was largely influenced by media pressure, where Lambert was branded as a ' Hamas supporter'⁸ and students involved in the event were labeled as 'Israel-haters.'⁵ This portrayal created a public outcry, which seems to have weighed heavily in the university's final decision to cancel the lecture, despite students' intentions to address broader themes related to architecture, conflict, and ethics within the academic setting. Claire Louise Blaser, Damian Moosbrugger and Lukas Rathjen, doctoral candidates at ETH Zurich, observe that 'ETHZ only

ever takes a political stance when there is a clear line from Bern or an overwhelming consensus in the Swiss majority society that can be followed.' 'This is why,' according to them, 'there is a statement of solidarity with Ukraine on the ETHZ website, one of solidarity with people from Iran from 2022/23 and one of solidarity with people in the Middle East, in which the Palestinian population is not even mentioned by name.'¹⁰ In this regard, the students of Unmasking Space add 'we don't believe the cancellation of our event was directly influenced by the political opinions of ETH's administration.' Instead, 'it seemed more like a "risk management" decision, driven by concerns that hosting the event could bring negative consequences to the university, given Switzerland's current political climate.' 'In this sense,' conclude the students, 'we feel that our school has been indirectly influenced by the government's stance on geopolitical issues – acting in a safe and passive manner and finding ways to excuse themselves from troubles.'¹¹

the issue of (de)coloniality In the past 60 years, decolonial theory has emerged as a critical lens in disciplines across the humanities and social sciences, calling for the dismantling of colonial power structures in everything from literature to history and, increasingly, design and architecture. The work of thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and more recently, design and architecture theorists like Lesley Lokko, Huda Tayob, V. Mitch McEwen, Forensic Architecture and DAAR – just to name a few – has urged scholars to critically assess how colonialism continues to shape our built environment and the ways we understand space, territory, and design. Despite the widespread recognition of these ideas, universities across Europe have responded to discussions about Palestinian architecture – an inherently decolonial topic – by avoiding taking a stance in the ongoing 'conflict,' suggesting that for many institutions, the call to decolonization remains only a theoretical exercise, divorced from practice. In a field as deeply tied to land and power as architecture and design, discussions about Palestine are not abstract – they reflect

the very material realities of colonization, occupation, and the ongoing struggle for liberation. And yet, the way decolonization is addressed (or not addressed at all, in some cases) in design and architecture schools signals a troubling resistance to decolonization in practice, despite its rise as a critical theoretical framework. As Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang assert in their seminal article 'Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,'¹² true decolonization requires the material return of land, and must not remain an intellectual exercise. Yet, the growing reluctance of design universities to address the Palestinian issue indicates that these institutions are complicit in ensuring that decolonization remains a mere metaphor. And censorship, as we see in the cancellations of the Palestinian-focused events at ETH and IUAV, becomes a contemporary tool of colonial control, protecting settler-colonial narratives from being disrupted. This complicity hinders any meaningful engagement with the political and material consequences of colonization, ultimately silencing the voices of those most affected and perpetuating a status quo that avoids confronting the realities of oppression and inequality. According to Tuck and Yang, colonialism is not merely a historical phenomenon – it persists through the regulation of both land and discourse. In this sense, the refusal to engage with Palestinian realities within academic spaces might be read as a tool to uphold the very structures of settler-colonial power that decolonization seeks to dismantle. This is also reflected in the words of the students of Unmasking Space, who state clearly 'We feel that the term "decolonization" has been heavily depoliticized within our institutions.' Specifically, they argue that

'Decolonization has become a "safe" word to use, largely because discussions around the critical issue behind all colonial endeavors – violence – are often avoided. Educational and cultural institutions tend to frame colonization as something from the past, rarely connecting it to present-day geopolitics. The Palestinian case is particularly problematic because it isn't just a historical issue. Our professors seem comfortable engaging in historical discussions, but when we highlight how these issues are still very much alive today, they often appear threatened. This reflects one of the biggest problems in Western academia: only "safe" topics can be addressed to avoid risking one's position within a system that may dismiss those deemed "too political".' However, when addressing colonization, one cannot separate

themselves from the present by using history as a protective shield. Colonization is not 'safe,' nor is it confined to the past. It's an uncomfortable reality that continues today, just a few miles away from our universities.¹³

Yet, decolonization extends beyond geopolitics; it enters classrooms, shaping how design, architecture and other disciplines are taught and discussed. Students from Unmasking Space highlight that true decolonization requires confronting the ongoing effects of colonialism in our own institutions. By failing to connect classroom discussions with present-day realities, universities risk treating decolonization as a superficial trend rather than a call to actively dismantle colonial frameworks within their own walls. As students argue, the comfort of historical engagement is, ironically, part of the colonial legacy itself, evading the present-day accountability required to genuinely reshape both education and the disciplines it fosters. This aspect is also highlighted by the artist, KABK alumna and activist Alina Lupu, who poignantly states

For me, decolonizing art and design education also means restructuring the way in which the school evaluates things, the way teaching is conducted, the amount of space that is offered to students to self-organize, and facilitate a structure in which you feel comfortable in reaching out to the school's management and have a conversation about the current state of the school.¹⁴

avoiding conflict The lack of events that critically assess Israel's actions in Palestine does more than stifle discussions; it reinforces the global silence surrounding the Palestinian struggle for land and freedom. This silence not only marginalizes the voices advocating for justice but also perpetuates a narrative that ignores the complexities and realities of the ongoing conflict, thereby limiting opportunities for meaningful dialogue and engagement on the issues at hand. Just as Lorde famously warns against the dangers of remaining silent in the face of oppression, the forced silence imposed by these universities preserves the very structures of colonialism that these discussions aimed to challenge. Audre Lorde's assertion speaks directly to the reluctance of academic institutions to host discussions about Palestine. This silence

does not protect the vulnerable – it protects those in power, allowing colonial narratives to persist unchallenged. As a doctoral student from IUAV's Permanent Assembly states:

Taking a stance inevitably leads to forms of conflict – whether more or less agreeable – that are challenging both on a community and a personal level. This process is fundamentally at odds with the prevailing university model, which is seen as a knowledge-production system driven by quantitative accumulation. In this context, it may often seem like there is neither time nor heart nor soul to dedicate to profoundly human activities, such as taking the responsibility to be a voice for a population currently being killed under bombardments. [...] However, we believe that efforts to build a sense of school, community, and dialogue are incredibly important and vital, as they allow a university to be more than just a capitalist knowledge-production system.¹⁵

On this topic, for example, scholars Markus Miessen and Carl DiSalvo¹⁶ largely discussed the importance of discursive spaces and civic engagement in academic environments. Miessen's concept of 'agonistic space'¹⁷ posits that true democratic engagement requires sites where conflict and differing viewpoints can openly coexist. This is crucial within academic institutions where, ideally, students and faculty can challenge prevailing narratives without fear of institutional reprisal. Miessen also argues that discomfort is a fundamental element of productive dialogue; without it, universities risk becoming echo chambers that reinforce existing power structures rather than dismantling them. Similarly, DiSalvo's concept of 'adversarial design' aligns with this idea by emphasizing that design and education should be actively engaged in creating spaces that invite resistance and critical engagement. DiSalvo sees design as a tool for fostering democratic discourse, particularly around issues often marginalized by mainstream institutions. In the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, adversarial design could manifest in spaces where students and faculty are encouraged to address colonial legacies and their modern manifestations within academia itself. Both scholars argue that by fostering environments where political engagement is not only allowed but encouraged, academic institutions can transcend neutrality, allowing students to grapple with urgent global issues as part of their learning.

In some cases, students have managed to create a breach in the educational system by making their positions public. This is the case of the Student Union at KABK, where Alina Lupu reports: 'We aimed to bring attention to Bezalel's involvement with the IDF through its sewing support center, effectively participating in the ongoing violence. Making this petition public generated a range of reactions from Bezalel students – some hostile, others supportive – highlighting a sensitive issue that deserved wider visibility and debate.' However, these examples are often rare, and in many cases adversarial practices struggle to find a place within the university – remaining confined to protest spaces at the margins of institutional settings. As Lupu reports from her experience with the Student Union at KABK,

I feel that all the achievements we obtained last year were reached because we used the "tools of the master" to dismantle the institution. Everything we did, we did in a language that was understandable by the institution – i.e. meetings with management, meeting notes, turning notes public, creating petitions, organizing general assemblies etc. – that stood for the whole time next to our own language of resistance as students. Personally, I feel like my learning experience really took place as I was part of the encampment in Amsterdam, which showed me an organic way of coming together and organizing education otherwise, where I feel like I've learned how to embed education into real life situations.¹⁸

Lupu's reference to Audre Lorde's famous lines 'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'¹⁹ challenges us to consider how systems of power resist meaningful change from within. In the context of this essay, Lorde's insight speaks directly to universities' reluctance to confront the present-day impacts of colonialism. Even as campuses promote 'decolonization,' they often employ superficial reforms that leave the deeper structures of colonial thought and influence intact. However true decolonization, as students and activists argue, demands confronting power beyond the comfortable frameworks provided by these institutions. Lastly, what emerged strongly from the interviews is that decolonization efforts in universities often seem spearheaded by students and researchers in precarious positions – temporary, adjunct, or early-career academics who lack job security or institutional power. As Unmasking Space states,

We feel like the topic of decolonization on campus is largely confined to a few individuals who have taken on the 'burden' of addressing these issues through their teaching and community work. Interestingly, most of the people involved in this movement – including students – are in precarious positions within the broader ETH academic structure.²⁰

This precarity shapes their activism, as they often risk professional marginalization or career stagnation. Meanwhile, those with more stable positions within academia may avoid openly supporting decolonization initiatives to maintain the status quo, ultimately reinforcing institutional inertia. On this matter, Unmasking Space argues that the establishment of a professorship/chair of decolonial studies within the department would be the ideal step forward, so that this issue can encompass the whole faculty and not exist only as a proposal put forth by the most precarious individuals of the faculty.

schools vs the 'real world' These events, together with insights from interviews with students and activists from the three universities examined, brought me back to an insight shared by Silvio Lorusso during *In Great Tempest*, a symposium I co-organized with Pierfrancesco Califano in June 2022 at IUAV. In his talk, Lorusso illustrated how the academic design world has gradually separated the school – 'conceived as a space protected from the disorienting brutality of the world' – from the 'real world' – 'that dimension that follows, in theory, the period of study.'²¹ However, this system of diversification between 'school' and the 'real world' has, in my view, two main consequences. First, the school assumes the right to direct that essential process of 'world building' which, given the space and time available in academic settings, should ideally be driven by the students themselves. This means that, through a series of choices concerning funding allocations, partnerships, and faculty recruitment, the administration effectively dampens the imaginative power of the students. On the other hand, this system builds a sort of 'rubber shield' that keeps reality from penetrating the walls of the schools. Topics associated with the so-called 'future of the profession' are carefully selected based

on economic convenience and the personal advancement of individual professors or research groups rather than on urgent design needs. This often leads universities to 'distort' the perception of what actually lies 'out there,' addressing social and political issues only superficially and peripherally.

In this context, protests constitute moments of fracture that disrupt this convenient dichotomy, and the response to such events reflects an institution's willingness to accept conflict and transform it into productive dialogue. Historically, universities have long served as arenas for intellectual struggle, where ideas are built and dismantled through protest. Yet today, the ability of universities to 'receive' dissent feels weaker, as this disrupts the carefully crafted image of pristine education projected by university websites, open-day slogans, and promotional materials, all curated to appeal to the public. In these three protests, it felt as if the 'real world' forcefully entered a previously untouched, immaculate space, unprepared for the urgency of anger and calls for change. In today's corporatized universities, where knowledge is increasingly commodified and success is measured by course credits, prestigious awards, and professional recognition – even before students graduate – protest represents a disruption that schools seem to scarcely tolerate.

As I write this essay in October 2024, the number 365 reverberates with profound meaning. It mirrors the number of days after the Hamas-led attack on Israel, as well as the 365 square kilometers of Gaza, a land whose history and architecture remain central to conversations about colonialism and occupation. Over this past year, more than 40,000 Palestinian lives have been lost, and Netanyahu's war has expanded into Lebanon, deepening the region's devastation. Yet, the silencing of these realities extends beyond the battlefield, reaching into the halls of academia. While theories on decolonization and postcolonialism have advanced rapidly in recent decades, influencing fields from literature to urban studies, many design and architecture schools still seem reluctant to apply these frameworks. In the case of Palestinian architecture, the very spaces that we study in theory – spaces

marked by occupation, destruction, and resilience – are often the same ones denied visibility in academic discourse. The gap between theory and practice in academia remains stark, and until this divide is addressed, universities will continue to fall short of the intellectual and moral courage that decolonial thought demands.

To this day, both the land and the discourse surrounding Palestine remain occupied. Yet, as the students remind us, the speed at which decolonial ideas are advancing and the events that are unfolding before us should remind schools that silence or 'neutrality' are simply not sustainable. In these 365 square kilometers that compose the Gaza strip, there are stories of resilience and loss that must be heard – stories that, despite academic censorship, will continue to demand space in the global conversation. It is time for academia to match the momentum of decolonial theory with real action, opening its doors to the difficult, necessary conversations about Palestine that remain long overdue – not with political ploys but with simple and utter emotional involvement. As reminded by DAAR member Sandi Hilal in her speech at the censored event at IUAV on May 17th, 'When we talk about decolonization, we don't need critical distance. We need, instead, emotional closeness.'

KABK break ties with Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem - petition initiated by the KABK Student Union

We are told there's nothing that our institutions can do. But this is a lie.

It was brought to our attention, at the Student Union, that the **Royal Academy of Art, The Hague**, alongside all other major art academies in the Netherlands, has active ties with Israel through an exchange partnership with the **Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem**.

At the moment **Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem** lists on its website collaborations for exchange with:

ArtEz University of the Arts, Arnhem; Design Academy Eindhoven; Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam; University of the Arts, Utrecht; Royal Academy of Art, the Hague; Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam.

On the 16th of October Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem, announced that it set up The Bezalel Emergency Sewing Center with the explicit aim of repairing uniforms and military equipment for soldiers and reservists from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Link to notice of collaboration with IDF on the Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem:

<https://www.bezalel.ac.il/en/news/655093>

Link to Instagram screenshots from Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem, of students patching IDF uniforms:

<https://shorturl.at/nGH49>

Students are tasked with fixing uniforms for the Israeli military, the same military that goes into Gaza to enact genocide. Students are tasked to sew into every fixed uniform a tag that says 'with love from Bezalel'. The very thought of this sounds obscene.

Meanwhile, there's a genocide unfolding in our pockets. We have been scrolling through it for two months now. We go to protests. We go to screenings. We fundraise. We grieve collectively. We boycott individually. We ask for statements from the institutions that are supposed to care for us and human rights.

While rumors have been going around academies about this collaboration for weeks now, no academy seems to have stepped forth to break ties

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home open call 2024 2023 network about

public lecture #1 - 10.04.2024 (online)

Weaponized Architecture: Settler Colonialism and the Built Environment in Palestine

If architecture is necessarily violent in one way or another and if it has the propensity to serve the political regimes of settler colonialism, structural racism, heteropatriarchy, and ableism, how can we possibly engage with it without being complicit?

Architecture is settler colonialism's best friend. Without it, settler colonialism could still exist but settlers would never sleep, and would never leave their weapons while occupying the land they invaded and settled on. Architecture allows the crystallization of colonialism in materializing borders, checkpoints, colonies, and prisons. While the workshop we will do together will attempt to examine architecture's various forms of complicities in its function of organizing bodies in space, the lecture will focus more particularly on the ways through which architecture materializes settler colonialism in Palestine. While the public attention is slowly leaving the methodical annihilation of Gaza's architecture by the Israeli occupying forces, it is crucial to look at the way colonial violence unfolds in a less dramatic, yet as implacable way throughout Palestine.

The lecture was unfortunately censored by the ETH executive board and take place online instead. More details:

>> link to the statement

>> link to the online lecture

2

1 KABK Student Union, 'KABK break ties with Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem – Petition initiated by the KABK Student Union'.

2 Unmasking Space, 2024 Lecture Program.

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Università Iuav di Venezia

DIPARTIMENTO DI
CULTURE DEL PROGETTO

SENATO DEGLI STUDENTI



NO UNIVERSITIES LEFT

**Assemblea sulla questione
israelo-palestinese**

Sandi Hilal e Alessandro Petti
DAAR Decolonizing Architecture Art Research
~~Jacopo Galli~~ Università Iuav di Venezia

presenta ~~Amina Chouairi~~ dottoranda in Urbanistica

~~16.5.2024
Tolentini
aula Magna
ore 17~~



3

3 Poster for the event 'No Universities Left' modified after censorship by the IUAV governance.

in the 'real world,' nothing is neutral: design
schools, conflict, and the question of palestine



4

4 Banner in front of the entrance to the IUAV library.

notes

¹ *Unmasking Space* <<https://unmasking.space/about>> [accessed 29 October 2024].

² Executive Board of ETH Zurich, 'Statement of the Executive Board of ETH Zurich,' *ETH Zurich* (2024) <<https://arch.ethz.ch/en/news-und-veranstaltungen/news-kanal/2024/04/statement-der-schulleitung-der-eth-zuerich.html>> [accessed 29 October 2024].

³ Claire Louise Blaser, Lukas Rathjen, and Damian Moosbrugger, 'Wieso die ETH Zürich politisch ist,' *traverse: Zeitschrift für Geschichte / Revue d'Histoire* (2024) <<https://revue-traverse.ch/wieso-die-eth-zuerich-politisch-ist/>> [accessed 20 October 2024].

⁴ The course is part of a broader agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under which the University, in a strictly 'neutral' and institutional role, will provide expertise in creating a strategic plan for Gaza. This agreement covers a wide array of topics, including regional planning and urban design, reflecting the University's role as an advisor on both territorial and urban issues within this unique collaboration.

⁵ Jessica Steinberg, 'Designers Sew for Combat Soldiers, Pivoting from Fashion to Function,' *The Times of Israel* (2023) <<https://www.timesofisrael.com/designers-sew-for-combat-soldiers-pivoting-from-fashion-to-function/>> [accessed 7 November 2024].

⁶ KABK Student Union, 'KABK break ties with Bezalel Academy of the Arts and Design, Jerusalem: Petition initiated by the KABK Student Union,' *Google Docs* <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEqxuNsoMRsxQWeZi-A6GwihKKu_H1jyK03W3RZQE5CyNdGw/viewform> [accessed 7 November 2024].

⁷ Assembleia Permanente per la Palestina Libera, interview by Noemi Biasetton, 10 October 2024.

⁸ Lucien Scherrer, 'ETH cancelt Vortrag von Hamas-Unterstützer Léopold Lambert,' *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, section Feuilleton (10 April 2024) <<https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/eth-cancelt-vortrag-von-leopold-lambert-funambulist-antisemitismus-israel-palaestina-hamas-ld.1825377>> [accessed 29 October 2024]; Stephan Trüby, 'Israelhasser an der ETH Zürich,' *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, section Feuilleton (19 March 2024) <<https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/hamas-israel-eth-architekten-propaganda-aktivismus-ld.1822584>> [accessed 29 October 2024].

⁹ Lucien Scherrer, 'Israelhasser im Architekturdepartement der ETH: Nun soll ein Hamas-Unterstützer auftreten,' *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, section Feuilleton (28 March 2024) <<https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/eth-israel-hamas-terror-leopold-lambert-funambulist-ld.1823994>> [accessed 29 October 2024].

¹⁰ Blaser, Rathjen, and Moosbrugger.

¹¹ Unmasking Space, interview by Noemi Biasetton, 26 September 2024.

¹² Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,' *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1.1 (2012) <<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>> [accessed 31 October 2024].

¹³ Unmasking Space.

¹⁴ Alina Lupu, interview by Noemi Biasetton, 18 September 2024.

¹⁵ Assembleia Permanente per la Palestina Libera.

¹⁶ Carl Disalvo, *Adversarial Design* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation: Crossbench Praxis as A Mode of Criticality* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011); Markus Miessen, ed., *Agonistic Assemblies: On the Spatial Politics of Horizontality* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2024).

¹⁸ Alina Lupu.

¹⁹ Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House,' *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), pp. 94-101.

²⁰ Unmasking Space.

²¹ The talk has been further developed and published in: Silvio Lorusso, 'Expectations as Reality,' *The New Design Congress* (2022) <<https://newdesigncongress.org/en/pub/expectations-as-reality/#the-school-is-the-real-world>>.