

Fazal Sheikh: The Erasure Trilogy

Main description

The Erasure Trilogy explores the anguish caused by the loss of memory—by forgetting, amnesia or suppression—and the resulting human desire to preserve memory, all seen through the prism of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Memory Trace, the first book in the trilogy, depicts the ruins caused by the Arab-Israeli War of 1948: portraits of those traumatized by violence, devastated landscapes and fragments of buildings. This visual poem suggests the irreparable loss of a lingering past that augurs a painful and difficult future. Tracing the ironic consequences of David Ben-Gurion's dream of settling the Negev and making the "desert bloom," the aerial photographs in Sheikh's *Desert Bloom* reveal the myriad actions that have displaced and erased the Bedouins who have lived in the desert for generations. Here we see the extreme transformation of the landscape through erosion, mining, military training camps, the demolition of villages and afforestation. Through Sheikh's lens the desert becomes both an archive of violence and a record of human attempts to erase it.

Independence | Nakba consists of sixty-five diptychs — one for each year since 1948 — pairing people from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and of gradually increasing age. The double portraits query the relations between Israelis and Palestinians before the founding of the Israeli State (each image depicts either someone who lived in Palestine before the founding of the Israeli State, or someone whose ancestors did).

Desert Bloom Notes, the essential companion reader to *Desert Bloom*, explores the historical and contemporary clues along the shifting surface of the desert, and what lies hidden, sealed within Sheikh's aerial landscapes of the Negev.

Biography

Fazal Sheikh is the author of fifteen books, the majority published by Steidl. Sheikh's work has been widely exhibited at major institutions including Tate Modern, London; the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Sheikh was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2005 and a Guggenheim Fellow in 2012.

Bibliography

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The Erasure Trilogy

Text by Fazal Sheikh

Book design by Fazal Sheikh and Duncan Whyte

Vol. I: *Memory Trace*,

104 pages with 48 black-and-white photographs

Vol. II: *Independence | Nakba*,

136 pages with 130 black-and-white photographs

Vol. III: *Desert Bloom*,

166 pages with 83 color photographs

Vol. IV: *Desert Bloom Notes*,

32 pages with 85 color photographs

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