

# UNESCO INTERNATIONAL MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER NOMINATION FORM

## Summary

The Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters comprises 1,600 posters created by Palestinian and international artists. This heritage resource covers a critical time period in Palestinian history, 1965—2000, when Palestinians were organizing themselves politically and socially under conditions of exile, war, and occupation. It comprises a near-encyclopedic, aesthetically presented record of the Palestinian nationalist struggle for self-determination and resistance. It is also a unique compendium of Palestinian visual art and modern graphic culture. The posters have become primary source documents on Palestinian political and social history, used by scholars and appreciated by the public worldwide.

These documents were brought together by the salvage anthropology efforts of Palestinians, international artists, and allies. The Collection contains those Palestine posters that could be located and salvaged at the time of their acquisition.

This nomination is for a closed and finite hard-copy subset (fonds) of the dynamically expanding Palestine Poster Project Archives, which at present holds 18,000-plus hard-copy and digital-only posters by some 3,100 artists from more than 100 countries. Inscription of the Liberation Graphics Collection is sought so that it can be conserved and prepared for acquisition by a Palestinian institution capable of maintaining them in perpetuity—ideally, in Palestine itself.

## 3.0 Nominator contact details

### 3.1 Name of nominator

Daniel J. Walsh, MAAS

### 3.2 Relationship to the nominated material

Owner of the Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters

### 3.6 Co-nominators(s), if any

Salim Tamari

Director Emeritus, The Institute for Palestine Studies, Ramallah  
Professor Emeritus, Birzeit University

Amer Shomali

General Director, The Palestinian Museum  
Museum Street  
Birzeit, Palestine

Rochelle Davis  
Sultanate of Oman Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology  
Director of Graduate Studies, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies  
Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

Catherine Baker, MEd  
Advisory Member, Palestine Poster Project Archives

#### **4.0 Declaration of Authority**

I certify that I have the authority to nominate the item, or items, described in this document to the Memory of the World Register.

Daniel J. Walsh, MAAS  
Owner, Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters

Nov. 15, 2023

#### **5.5 Legal status**

All 1,600 posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection are the private, personal property of Daniel J. Walsh, MAAS, and have been in his possession for some 40 years. He bears full administrative responsibility for the preservation of this documentary fonds. His intention has always been to preserve the Liberation Graphics Collection so that it could eventually be permanently established in Palestinian national space in an institution with the capacity to preserve the posters for posterity.

#### **5.6 Copyright status**

None of the 1,600 posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection bears a copyright symbol. Traditionally, all genres of modern political posters—propaganda—were noncommercial as they advocated a cause, promoted or commemorated an event, reacted to circumstances, or celebrated a heritage. Therefore, they never bear copyright because they are intended to be reproduced freely and distributed widely without generating any administrative or legal complications. No copyright issues have ever been raised. See Appendix G: Agreement Granting Non-Exclusive Rights.

#### **5.7 Accessibility (note any restrictions, including cultural restrictions)**

The entire Liberation Graphics Collection of 1,600 works on paper is housed in a private residence. It is viewable digitally at the [Palestine Poster Project Archives website](#), with a distinct landing page for the [Collection](#) itself. No registration or log-in is required and no fees are charged for access.

The Liberation Graphics Collection is filterable by year. In addition, using the curatorial tools of the Palestine Poster Project Archives, the posters in this fonds can be viewed comparatively with other like posters from the Archives collection of 18,000-plus digital images, using search functions for country, artist, publisher, iconography, wellspring (Arab/Muslim, International, Palestinian, Zionist and Israeli) and other descriptors.

All the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection have been digitized into high-resolution images (useful for reproduction in publications, for poster reprinting, or other material applications), and these images are shared via email upon request.

A contact form is provided at the Palestine Poster Project Archives website to facilitate communication with Mr. Walsh from individuals who would like more details about posters from the Collection or want to contribute information or new posters.

No cultural or technical restrictions hinder access to the Liberation Graphics Collection.

## **6.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage**

### **6.1 Name and identification details of the items/collection being nominated**

The Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters is nominated by Dan Walsh, owner. It comprises 1,600 hard-copy posters. It is a distinct fonds of the dynamically evolving Palestine Poster Project Archives, which as of this writing contain 18,000-plus digital images. The first four posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection were produced in 1965; they are the first posters published by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and are the works of the artists Ismail and Jamil Shammout. The nominated collection begins with these seminal works (see Appendix A: Images, Item 1) and continues chronologically to the year 2000.

In assembling the Liberation Graphics Collection, Mr. Walsh applied this curatorial definition of “Palestine poster”:

- Any poster with the word “Palestine” in it, in any language, from any source or time period;
- Any poster created or published by any artist or agency claiming Palestinian nationality or Palestinian participation;
- Any poster published in the geographical territory of historic Palestine, at any point in history, including contemporary Israel;
- Any poster published by any source which relates directly to the social, cultural, political, military or economic history of Palestine; and/or
- Any poster related to Zionism or anti-Zionism in any language, from any source, published after August 31, 1897.

### **6.2 Type of document**

All of the documents in the Liberation Graphics Collection are posters. These works on paper are primarily in portrait (vertical) orientation, but some are horizontal. There is no standard size; many are around 18” x 24.” The paper varies from cheap newsprint to fine coated stock. Some posters are black and white or two-color, but many are full color. Posters contain images and/or text that is in Arabic, English, or another language or combination of languages. The posters are wide-ranging in terms of the forms of media represented: abstract painting, calligraphy, maquette, collage, photography, portraiture, etc., plus a host of styles (e.g., naïve folkloric, surrealism, modernism). Each poster’s characteristics are determined by the purpose (e.g., for postering on a wall or side of a bus), the budget of the publisher, the technical resources available, the interests of the artist, time constraints, and other factors.

### **6.3 Catalogue or registration details**

Each poster is assigned a unique copy number, which is on a label affixed to its reverse side, and is stored in sequentially numbered museum-quality archival portfolios, for efficient retrieval. The storage space is depicted in Appendix A: Images, Item 2.

#### **6.4 Visual documentation (if available and appropriate)**

All 1,600 posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection may be viewed in chronological order (1965-2000) at the [Collection's landing page](#).

Each poster in the Collection has its own page (unique resource locator [URL]), at which a small-but-readable low-resolution image plus curatorial information is provided (artist, publisher, year, iconography, and other characteristics). On that page, the copy number and portfolio numbers are indicated. See Appendix A: Images, Item 3.

On each poster's webpage, the image can be selected to open up to a larger view. Images are presented in their original dimensions (that is, not cropped) and without watermarks.

#### **6.5 History/provenance**

This Collection was started almost by accident. From 1974–1976, Daniel J. Walsh served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Marrakech, Morocco. Incidental to his mandatory, in-service Arabic language studies, Mr. Walsh began collecting Palestine posters with Arabic captions. (A description of this early collecting is provided in his master's thesis: Walsh, 2011, pp. 1-2. See Appendix B: Bibliography.)

Posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection were acquired by Mr. Walsh in the following ways: direct acquisitions from artists or publishers; acquisitions at an event for which the poster was produced; gifts from individuals' personal collections; trades of duplicates; and purchases by Mr. Walsh directly from the artists or publishers or via auction houses or private gallery sales. Many of the posters feature the artist's signature and monograph as well as the logo of the publishing organization(s). Mr. Walsh has corresponded with artists and publishers of many of the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection to validate their provenance and to obtain bibliographic details. Characteristics such as typeface, ink, paper, size, colors, media, images, and language(s) of text(s) are among the elements studied to authenticate the posters. All known metadata for a poster is included on the website at its respective page.

In 1982, the American-Palestine Education Foundation (APEF), with the support of the late Edward Said, awarded Mr. Walsh a small grant to cover the costs of having approximately 300 Palestine posters professionally photographed for display in a portable slide show, which Mr. Walsh used in subsequent presentations. In 1983 Mr. Walsh founded a new business, Liberation Graphics, through which he assisted a wide range of nonprofit and activist groups in designing and printing posters and other graphic resources. In the process of running Liberation Graphics, he art-directed posters for Palestine solidarity groups and he continued to collect Palestine posters, display them, and speak to audiences about the story they told, nationally and internationally. As word of Mr. Walsh's activities spread, he began to receive Palestine posters unsolicited from artists and individuals who wanted the posters they owned to be preserved as part of a larger collection.

In 1999, the Ruth Mott Foundation recognized both the importance and fragility of the Palestine posters that Mr. Walsh had acquired since 1974 and provided a grant to underwrite the costs of

electronically conserving them. All the physical works in his possession at the time—some 2,000 posters (including duplicates) and related paper miscellanea such as brochures, flyers, calendars, and exhibit catalogs featuring Palestine posters—were then digitally scanned.

Low-resolution and high-resolution images of all the items were prepared and stored on archival-quality CDs. The posters themselves were subsequently numbered and organized into archival portfolios, and their texts (if not in English) were translated.

Through this process of scanning and storage, Mr. Walsh studied the materials as a whole for the first time. He selected out 1,600 pristine-to-fine-condition, unique posters definitively focused on and representative of Palestine, and stored them in portfolios separate from the remaining materials, which included the duplicates or inferior-condition posters plus the miscellanea. He named his grouping of selected posters “the Liberation Graphics Collection.” *It is only this closed and finite fonds that is proposed for inscription in the Memory of the World Register.*

In the years since the Liberation Graphics Collection was assembled and archivally organized, Mr. Walsh has continued to acquire Palestine posters. He has received assistance in this project from Palestinian artists, other artists from around the world, scholars, and collectors. While earning a Master of Arts in Arab Studies degree from Georgetown University’s Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Mr. Walsh launched the web-based Palestine Poster Project Archives as an unplanned product of an independent studies course. The site went live in 2011 and currently holds paper and/or digital images of 18,000-plus posters by more than 3,100 artists from more than 100 countries. New (almost exclusively digital-only) posters are added continuously.

Hundreds more paper posters and related materials obtained by the Palestine Poster Project Archives in the years since 2000, as well as many from the period 1965–present that have been discovered or acquired in the interim, remain uncatalogued, are randomly stored in archival portfolios, untranslated, uncontextualized, unnumbered, and not preserved in high-resolution images. Many are posted at the website using low-resolution images, but many remain to be photographed and uploaded to the site. These works on paper are not included in this nomination. Digitally produced posters also are not included in the nomination because they are not a threatened heritage. *To repeat, only the 1,600 posters in the original closed and finite Liberation Graphics Collection are proposed for inscription in the Memory of the World Register.*

## **6.6. Bibliography**

See Appendix B: Bibliography.

## **6.7 Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organisations with expert knowledge about values and provenance of the nominated material.**

Sorcha Amy MacGregor Thomson  
Ph.D. Fellow, Department of Social Sciences and Business  
Roskilde University, Denmark  
See Ms. MacGregor Thompson’s statement in Appendix C.

Bahia Shehab, PhD  
Professor of Practice in Design  
The American University in Cairo

Director, TypeLab@AUCt  
See Dr. Shehab’s statement in Appendix D.

Zeina Maasri, PhD  
Senior Lecturer in History of Art, Department of History of Art (Historical Studies)  
University of Bristol  
See Dr. Maasri’s statement in Appendix E.

Please see their works in Appendix B: Bibliography.

## **7.0 Assessment against the selection criteria**

### **7.1 Primary criteria - significant value to the world. Comment on one or more of the following significance criteria.**

#### **7.1.1 Historic significance**

The Liberation Graphics Collection is “an impressive and dogged bit of collecting, a comprehensive catalog of the iconography of Mideast politics, and a compendium of political art, some of it mediocre, some of it brilliant.” So said arts editor Philip Kennicott in a 2003 article published in The Washington Post (Kennicott, Philip, 2003. See Appendix B: Bibliography).

“Looking at these posters is like reading a diary of the Palestinian nationalist movement,” reporter Ori Nir wrote in an article published in 2003 in the Israeli daily, Ha’aretz (see Appendix B: Bibliography).

The posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection were created between 1965 and 2000, formative years in the Palestinian mobilization for self-determination and, concurrently, the development of the Palestine poster genre itself (see Appendix A: Images, Item 4).

All of the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection are pre-digital; that is, they were created prior to the advent of mass digital technology and the democratization of the Internet and were originally produced exclusively for printing and for circulation in hard copy.

The posters in this fonds are a representative subset, covering the second half of the twentieth century, of a larger Palestine poster genre that provides a visual record of Palestinian responses to invasion, war, displacement, diaspora, occupation, and imprisonment, as well as Palestinian self-assertion and resistance. The genre also conveys Palestinian expressions of culture and art. For example, many posters incorporate graphical representations of *tatreez*, or the art of embroidery, which was inscribed in 2021 on UNESCO’s [Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](#). See Appendix 1: Images, Item 5.

The posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection graphically record artists’ and publishers’ perspectives on key events, topics, people, and attitudes related to the Palestinian people in the second half of the twentieth century. Examples of topics include the following:

- Themes of return, Jerusalem, and homeland
- Celebration of theatre, film, music, literature, architecture, poetry, textiles, and ceramics

- Annual commemorations, such as the Nakba (May 15), Land Day (March 30), and the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (November 29)
- Military events such as the battle of Al Karameh, the Tel Azaatar massacre, and Black September
- Political events, such as the 1978 Camp David Accords, the declaration of the state of Palestine on November 15, 1988, and the First Intifada
- Cultural issues such as housing, domestic violence, nutrition, and literacy
- The experience of Palestinians living in refugee camps, in displacement, and under occupation
- Solidarity with revolutionary groups and liberation movements beyond the region of Palestine including such locations as Chile, Cuba, Vietnam, and the Western Sahara
- Particular groups of Palestinians such as agricultural workers, voters, freedom fighters, martyrs, women (as fighters, mothers, and workers), prisoners, children, and refugees
- Individuals including, among others, Palestinian leader and philosopher Majid Abu Sharar, PLO leader Yasser Arafat, and literary artists Mahmoud Darwish, Fawaz Turki, Abu Salma, and Tawfiq Ziad

The posters were published by a wide range of Palestinian institutions, for example:

- Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)
- Palestinian National Liberation Movement (FATAH)
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
- General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS)
- Palestine Liberation Army (PLA)
- Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS)
- Plastic Arts Section of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
- Solidarity Committee of the Palestinian Prisoners in the Occupied Land

A substantial portion were published by organizations outside of Palestine, for example:

- Communist Party of Italy (PCI)
- Dar Al-Fata Al-Arabi (Arab Children Publishing House, Egypt)
- Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL, Cuba)
- Palestine Human Rights Campaign (Washington, DC)
- The Arab League

A small number of Zionist posters by anti-occupation Israeli artists are also included; they are from an exhibit, [Down with the Occupation](#) (1987), and testify to the historical moment when joint endeavors between Israelis and Palestinians were attempted (pre-“anti-normalization” phase).

Speaking of the larger Palestine Poster Project Archives in which the Liberation Graphics Collection resides, Dr. Paul Thomas Chamberlin, a Middle East specialist and associate professor at Columbia University articulated its historical significance:

[It] is a unique and invaluable resource for scholars and educators alike. It provides the most comprehensive collection of visual documents on Palestine poster art that I know of. These pieces are at the same time historical documents and works of art and their

impact is striking, both for researchers like myself and for students seeking to learn more about the region. Taken together, they present a fascinating study of politics and art in Palestine over much of the last century (personal communications with Mr. Walsh, 2016).

Maureen Clare Murphy, reviewing a subset of posters from the Liberation Graphics Collection for a 2004 article in *The Electronic Intifada*, asserted

The posters ... present the [Palestine-Zionist] conflict in a way that no newspaper report or detailed history book can accomplish. They emphasize the human element of the conflict, the metaphysical as well as the practical aims and concerns of the people it most severely affects: the Palestinians (See Appendix B: Bibliography).

The Palestine poster genre, to which the Liberation Graphics Collection belongs, is unique among all oppositional poster genres (e.g., those of revolutionary Cuba, the USSR, the People's Republic of China, the African National Congress, all the Eastern European schools of political poster art such as those of Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany), in that:

- It is the only 20<sup>th</sup> century political art genre to transition to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and it continues to evolve exponentially, primarily via the internet.
- It is the only political poster genre, of any century, to transition to the internet.
- More Palestine posters are being produced today, originating from more different sources, than at any time for any political poster genre in history.
- It is more internationalist than any other political poster genre has ever been – more so than even than that of the Spanish Civil War, which is considered by many to be the gold standard of political graphic excellence.
- Unlike any other liberation movement, the Palestinian liberation movement has welcomed, and continues to welcome, any artists irrespective of ethnicity, national origin, language, etc. As a result, it is the first *translational* genre in history. To date, hundreds of artists, from more than 100 countries, collectives, schools, and traditions have created Palestine posters.

The Palestine poster genre is diasporic, like the people themselves. Palestinians interacted with the arts communities in the places where they took refuge, worked, or studied, and this influenced their output. Allies also contributed works from their disparate geographic and cultural locations and schools of art. Artists who have contributed works to the Palestine poster genre include some of the most celebrated and accomplished political poster artists of their time. See Appendix A: Images, Item 6.

In sum, the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection create a picture of Palestinian society that is about much more than armed struggle. In the words of Yasser Arafat, quoted in a 1982 poster, “This revolution is not merely a gun, but also a scalpel of a surgeon, a brush of an artist, a pen of a writer, a plough of a farmer, an axe of a worker.”

The historic significance of the Palestine poster genre is further attested to by several demonstrable facts:

- The growing number of [theses and dissertations](#) on the Palestine poster genre, especially on posters from the seminal period of 1965-2000 that is covered in the Liberation Graphics

Collection; several of these academic papers are posted at the Palestine Poster Project Archives, but there are certainly more

- The hundreds of [exhibits](#) over the years that have featured Palestine posters
- The expanding number of museums, galleries, libraries, universities, and national archives including Palestine posters in [their collections](#)
- The growing role of the Palestine Poster Project Archives in curricula; for example, graduate courses at Georgetown University's [Center for Contemporary Arab Studies](#), textbooks such as [The Politics of Teaching Palestine to Americans](#) and [curricular resources](#) created by the University of Oxford's Department of Politics and International Relations
- The increasing demand for Palestine posters among collectors, particularly for posters created in the seminal period covered in the Liberation Graphics Collection, as attested to by the auction houses that have included them in their [catalogs](#).

The inclusion of the Palestine Poster Project Archives as a resource within other digital libraries, such as that at the [Palestinian Museum](#) and the [Digital Library of the Middle East](#)

### 7.1.2 Form and style

In terms of form and style, the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection represent the most creative political poster genre to emerge in the second half of the twentieth century. It exceeds in terms of artistic breadth and global cultural relevance the [Russian posters of the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries](#), inscribed to the Memory of the World International Register in 1997.

The Palestine poster genre reflects an inclusive democratic philosophy and aesthetic range shared by no other genre of political poster art, in large part because Palestinian political leadership never sought to centrally control either the internal or international production of posters. While the PLO and the Palestine liberation movement organized poster production by Palestinians and, to some extent, other Arab artists, artists from around the world spontaneously contributed their localized expressions. Their creativity and national iconographies cross-fertilized with those of contemporary Palestine. Artists borrowed, fused, and remixed and in the process created the first truly transnational political iconography. Three examples may suffice:

- The PLO published a 1978 poster with the text “One Struggle: Solidarity Between the Palestinian & South African Peoples,” designed by Tanzanian architect, painter, and writer Nadir Therani.
- In a 1979 poster, Thomas Kruze employed a Danish woodblock style to incorporate Palestinian iconography of white horse, dove, embroidery, and flag.
- A 1988 poster published by the American arts collective Roots features a photograph taken in Palestine of a woman waving the Palestinian flag; that same year, Latino artist Rene Castro re-mixed the image as a silkscreen for a poster.

See images of these posters in Appendix A: Images, Item 7.

The interplay continues between early posters contained in the Liberation Graphics Collection and contemporary artistic output. As example, Palestinians assertively disseminated the 1995 reprinting, in Israel, of a 1936 Zionist tourism poster with the headline “Visit Palestine” to contest the mythology that “there never was a Palestine.” Artists continue to borrow its image to protest the occupation and to celebrate Palestinian culture. (Davis and Walsh, 2015. See Appendix B:

Bibliography). See the 1995 reprinting and remixes of “Visit Palestine” in Appendix A: Images, Item 8.

### 7.1.3 Social, community or spiritual significance

The 1,600 posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection comprise the seminal fonds of the Palestine poster genre as a whole, which encompasses a wide range of messages and ideas related to Palestine and artistically conveyed onto paper for public display and dissemination. In this regard, the Palestine poster genre has been a major transmitter of the Palestinian world view.

All of the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection are dedicated to a particular place—historic Palestine. Many of the posters feature map images of this land area. Many include elements of culture specific to the land of Palestine such as the people’s traditional dress and embroidery; agricultural products identified with the land such as olives and oranges; and icons of Palestinian statehood including the modern flag and the national colors. Because many Palestinians were displaced both within and outside Palestine by the 1948 Nakba (Catastrophe), ensuing wars, and the occupation, the places depicted in these posters include [major retrospective exhibit](#) refugee camps and diaspora settings—wherever in the world Palestinians continue to live and continue to express their Palestinian-ness and wherever the iconic struggle of Palestine resonates with other peoples.

Collectively, the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection create a rich and textured portrait of Palestinians, very different from the caustic and superficial stereotypes with which the Palestinian were burdened subsequent to the Nakba. Keys and kaffiyehs, horses and doves, poetry and embroidery, olive trees, the Islamic crescent and the Dome of the Rock—these and other symbols, icons, and traditions of Palestinian identity are celebrated, preserved and legitimated in the posters.

Palestinian consciousness, awareness, and pride in this art form have dramatically increased in recent decades, and new generations of Palestinians are embracing it, facilitated by advances in art and dissemination technologies that have helped to democratize the art production process. See examples of contemporary Palestine poster production in Appendix A: Images, Item 9.

Palestinians and their allies are now leveraging the Palestine poster genre in a highly visible contestation of the intellectual memoricide efforts to which Palestinian culture has been subjected. This memoricide has occurred not only through the destruction of Palestinian cities and villages but also through the erasure from public consciousness of Palestinian existence (Webster, 2021. See Appendix B: Bibliography) and the [suppression of Palestinian voices](#) in mainstream discourse. Examples of how people today are making use of posters from the Liberation Graphics Collection to preserve intellectual memory include the following:

- In 2020, the Palestinian Museum in Ramallah hosted a of Palestinian posters.
- [We Are Not Numbers](#), based in Gaza, frequently employs posters to accompany the essays it publishes on its website by emerging Palestinian writers.
- Contemporary authors make use of poster images to inform and illustrate their writing, such as in Sorcha Amy MacGregor Thompson’s essay, “Solidarity and the Summer Camp” (See Appendix B: Bibliography).
- The “Visit Palestine” poster has inspired an array of [merchandise](#) that is popular among Palestinians and the wider public

- Posters are incorporated as visual elements in book covers and articles and as promotional materials for lectures and presentations. For examples, see Appendix A: Images, Item 10.

Inscription in the Memory of the World Register will allow the Liberation Graphics Collection, and all posters in the wider Palestine poster genre, to be more widely appreciated by dispersed Palestinian communities, and the public at large, and to be acknowledged as the significant cultural resource they are for current and future generations of Palestinians. It will also go a long way towards combating the historical effort(s) to stigmatize and delegitimize the Palestine poster genre.

#### **7.1.4 Gender equality**

Women artists have produced a number of posters found in the Liberation Graphics Collection. These artists include, among others: Marie H. Delaby (Belgium), Cinzia Ghigliano (Italy), Diti Almog (Israel), Natasha Al Maani (Jordan), Latifa Tigani (Morocco), Lily Farhoud (Palestine), Suzanne (United States), and Lisa Kokin (United States). See Appendix A: Images, Item 11.

Women are depicted in the posters as essential, co-equal partners in the struggle, as workers of the land, and as contributors to society. See Appendix A: Images, Item 12. Posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection address issues of concern to women such as their liberation, International Women’s Day, and the plight of children. See Appendix A: Images, Item 13. Palestine is often depicted metaphorically as a woman. See Appendix A: Images, Item 14. For more on the representation of women in Palestine posters, see Basma, Guthrie (2012) in Appendix B: Bibliography.

Finally, women are well represented in the scholarship on Palestine posters. Women writers include, among others: Catherine Baker, Cathy Bergin, Francesca Burke, Rochelle Davis, Basma Guthrie, Zeina Maasri, Maureen Clare Murphy, Bahia Shehab, and Sorcha Amy MacGregor Thompson. See Appendix B: Bibliography for works by these women.

### **7.2 Comparative criteria. Comment on one or more of the following comparative criteria:**

#### **7.2.1 Rarity**

Posters are “graphic ephemera”—printed in small quantities, often on cheap paper, for immediate posting on walls or plastering on fences and buildings. The Palestine posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection were primarily published with public posting in mind—on the exterior walls of public buildings, hoardings, bus stop shelters, etc. These posters were intrinsically ephemeral, with most copies quickly destroyed after posting by rain, fading, vandalism, organized removal, or pasting over with other posters. Typically, only a few copies of any given poster would be preserved by publishers, artists, or the participants in the event that inspired their production.

Few of the Palestine posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection would now be accessible if Mr. Walsh had not obtained copies of them during the typically brief time period of their dissemination, sought out publishers and artists to obtain back copies, tracked down individuals rumored to be holding onto private collections, and built relationships with artists and organizations around the world who have helped him in his research. Through Mr. Walsh’s salvage anthropology effort, a unique cultural narrative told in a unique medium has been preserved.

Many of the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection are the only known existing copies of their particular run. The only other collection of Palestinian posters of comparable size and quality was assembled by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), during its time in exile in Beirut. However, this original PLO archives was allegedly destroyed (some sources claim looted) during the Israeli invasion of PLO headquarters in Beirut in 1982.

Other Palestine poster collections exist in major cultural institutions around the globe, but none are as comprehensive nor — thanks to the digitizing, categorizing, and tagging of this Collection and its placement within the Palestine Poster Project Archives with its curatorial tools for 18,000-plus images—as accessible for scholarship. In fact, many of the other collections, including those at the Library of Congress, Georgetown University, the International Institute of Social History, the Museum of Design Zurich, Columbia University, and the British Library contain duplicates of posters from the Liberation Graphics Collection gifted by Mr. Walsh.

### **7.2.2 Integrity, completeness, condition**

The 1,600 posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection present a graphic telling the history of the modern Palestine liberation movement, from its launching in 1964—and when Palestinians immediately embraced the poster as one of its communications devices—to 2000, when electronic communications began to substantially replace paper-based communication. This fonds does not contain every Palestine poster produced in that era—that would be impossible—but they do represent a range of Palestinian political life, culture, and social activities as they occurred during that time period and as Palestinians experienced them.

Most of the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection are in good condition and have not been damaged by rolling, folding, or improper storage. Most have never been posted publicly and are entirely intact. All of the posters are stored flat in archival-quality portfolios to maintain them in their original condition. These portfolios themselves are a stable environment (although the facility within which the portfolios are stored is not ideal).

Since they have not faded or deteriorated in any way, the posters present near-perfect records of the imagery, colors, texts, credits and styles employed by the original artists and publishers. So well-preserved are these posters that the critical lines of small type printed at the bottom or sides of the posters containing artists' credits, monographs, publishers' names, and logos are still plainly readable.

However, neither Mr. Walsh nor any of the volunteers who have helped with organizing the Liberation Graphics Collection or the Palestine Poster Project Archives website are professionally-trained librarians or information scientists. The presentation and organization of the Palestine posters reflect lessons learned by Mr. Walsh having taken a library science class at Catholic University, attending free workshops on salvage anthropology, and following library science trends at several specialized web sites on the internet. Much more needs to be done to refine and complete these initial, and imperfect, steps and accessing that professional knowledge is one of the reasons that Inscription is sought.

### **7.3 Statement of significance**

#### *Description of the documentary heritage*

The 1,600 posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection are a representative hard-copy subset, covering the years 1965-2000, of a larger Palestinian poster genre that constitutes a visual record of Palestinian responses to invasion, war, displacement, diaspora, occupation, and imprisonment, as well as of Palestinian self-assertion and resistance. The genre also conveys Palestinian expressions of culture and art.

Many of the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection are the only known existing copies of their particular run. These posters are ideal for scholarship and public appreciation not only because they are original source material conveying important historical information, but also because they are freely available for review and comparative analysis within the larger, web-based Palestine Poster Project Archives with its curatorial tools.

### *Authenticity*

Many of the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection were obtained by Mr. Walsh contemporaneously to their production directly from the artists, publishers, and others involved in their dissemination. He obtained other Palestine posters from individuals who had obtained copies at the time of production and wished to donate them for the sake of their preservation. Mr. Walsh was able to fill gaps and affirm authenticity through direct communications with artists, publishers, scholars, and individuals who had acquired the posters at the time they were produced.

### *Historic Significance*

Viewed collectively, the posters in this fonds create a narrative of the Palestinian experience, covering the second half of the twentieth century, as told primarily by the Palestinians themselves at a time when their voices and aspirations were being [distorted or suppressed](#) in mainstream discourse. Viewed in chronological sequence, the individual posters become the frames of an exceptionally detailed documentary film of Palestinian events, politics, and culture, narrated by Palestinians.

In the words of scholar Sorcha Amy MacGregor Thomson, who has agreed to referee this nomination:

The status of Palestine in the world today cannot be separated from the history of those years, in which Palestine and the Palestinian people became visible globally. This collection is the single largest and most significant collection of that Palestinian visibility known to this referee. When the record of this global and Palestinian history continues to struggle against the challenges of archival scattering, loss, theft and destruction, the preservation and continuation of this collection is of utmost of importance to the memory of the world.

See Appendix C: Statement of Sorcha Thompson).

The value of the Liberation Graphics Collection to world knowledge is attested to by the myriad ways that the posters are being leveraged into the Western canon today by academics, educators, exhibitors, student groups, publishers, websites, museums, galleries, universities, national archives, and even collectors.

Moreover, Palestinians are able to point to the posters in this Collection to contest the intellectual memocide by which Palestinian culture has been and continues to be systematically eradicated from modern memory. Yet value is found in these posters not only by people with a stake in Palestinian history and culture. They also are of significance to people interested in the international artists and

national liberation, arts, and cultural movements that cross-fertilized with the Palestinian experience during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Inscription in the Memory of the World International Register will allow the Liberation Graphics Collection, and all posters in the wider Palestine poster genre, to be more widely appreciated and to be acknowledged as the significant cultural resource they are for current and future generations.

## **8.0 Consultation with stakeholders**

### **8.1 Provide details of consultation with relevant stakeholders about this nomination**

Mr. Walsh is the owner of the hard-copy posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection. The Palestinian people own the cultural heritage. Over the years, Mr. Walsh has been in communication with hundreds of Palestinians and international artists, as well as with academics and representatives of libraries, museums, and other institutions. He has many messages of support for the preservation of the Palestine poster genre in general and the Liberation Graphics Collection specifically. One example is this unsolicited email received March 5, 2022, from a Palestinian researcher:

I love and appreciate this site! My MA thesis would have been impossible without it. And now the Palestinian Center for Israeli Studies is asking to publish my thesis as a book.

Also, while writing about posters, I realized that PPPA is referenced in every paper about Palestine posters. I believe that PPPA not only facilitates the research on Palestinian visual culture, but it created it! If it wasn't for PPPA such research would have been not possible.

Note: The identity of this researcher can be made known to reviewers of this nomination upon request.

See Appendix B: Bibliography for evidence of the wide array of scholars who have researched the Palestine poster heritage including the posters in the Liberation Graphics Collection.

## **9.0 Risk assessment**

### **9.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to the nominated material**

The works-on-paper in the Liberation Graphics Collection are stored in archival-quality portfolios in the basement of Mr. Walsh's house in Maryland. They are handled on an as-needed basis only. However, as works-on-paper they are vulnerable to a host of threats such as humidity, mold, and paper-to-ink chemistry. Due to limited resources, no mechanisms have been developed to protect the materials from damage by fire, smoke, flood, theft, or loss. The status of the Liberation Graphics Collection is dependent for its survival on its sole curator, who has limited resources.

Concern for the preservation and safety of the Liberation Graphics Collection is neither artificial nor overstated. It is a real and particularly poignant consideration given that the original PLO Beirut-

centered archives of Palestine posters was lost during military conflict and the subsequent archives, developed by the PLO during its time in Tunis, was lost in the post-Oslo move to Palestine.

Mr. Walsh has sought to protect the Liberation Graphics Collection by creating high-resolution images of each poster and by trading and gifting duplicates with major cultural institutions. However, these activities do not protect the Collection as a whole.

## **10.0 Preservation and access management plan**

### **10.1 Describe, or attach as a scanned document, any existing plans. If no plans exist, provide details about proposed conservation, storage and access strategies.**

As mentioned previously, all 1,600 posters have been scanned in low and high resolution, with the images preserved on archival-quality CDs. The posters themselves are conserved in archival portfolios. All posters in the Liberation Graphic Collections are freely viewable online via the Palestine Poster Project Archives.

Memory of the World inscription is sought so that the Liberation Graphics Collection can obtain practical assistance and linkage to resources that can help support the preservation of this Palestinian documentary heritage. Inscription would also facilitate the preservation of the hundreds of other Palestine posters that remain stored in random order in archival portfolios but are not yet catalogued, digitized, or in other ways accessible for scholarship.

Mr. Walsh has had conversations with a number of institutions to determine the best possible permanent home—ideally, in Palestinian national space—that can guarantee preservation and stewardship of the Liberation Graphics Collection. Inscription would galvanize the energy and resources needed to transition this cultural resource to a permanent home. Technical criteria for the successor are that they can manage and preserve the collection; they have capacity to fulfill scholarly requests (e.g., for high-resolution images or to study hard copies); and they will continue to provide public access to the posters (e.g., by maintaining the website and through exhibits and seminars).

Palestine posters have been banned, outlawed, confiscated, destroyed, and restricted in design and text by the British Palestine Mandate authorities, a number of Arab countries, and the Israeli government, and they are considered unacceptable or even illegal in a number of European countries. Owing to the reach and functionality of the internet and digitization, the Palestine poster may be the first repressed genre to be a candidate for near-complete re-building and conservation. Inscription would immeasurably help to advance this task.

### **11.0 Any other information that may support the nomination**

The Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters has been nominated twice before (during the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 rounds). Both times the Register Subcommittee recommended the nomination for inscription and both times it was blocked by UNESCO's then-director-general. The nominators expressly reject the reasons stated for rejection and are heartened that the nomination process no longer accommodates vetoes. Information on this history is summarized in the article by Scott Webster (see Appendix B: Bibliography) and in [articles](#) preserved at the Palestine Poster Project Archives.

### **11.1 Note below or attach scanned documents as appropriate.**

**12.0 Checklist. See Appendix F: Checklist.**