MISSION
To create community public-art and media in resistance to militarism, environmental injustice and colonialism.

Goals include:
— Making visible forgotten histories
— Interrogate systems of knowledge and power
— Produce knowledge
— Youth development

DESCRIPTION
Founded in 2001, Art Forces works in partnership with grassroots organizations in locations that include: urban areas in the USA, and villages and refugee camps in Occupied Palestine’s West Bank and Gaza and Lebanon. Colonization, in particular of Palestine, is a crucial lens through which Art Forces responds to 21st century issues.

One of the frameworks that informs Art Forces is World Systems Theory, an approach to global history and social change that suggests a world economic system in which some countries reap benefits in the exploitation of others. (http://bit.ly/2kCBtAA)

Art Forces amplifies and activates site-specific murals to engage local and global audiences via websites, public events, multi media platforms, GPS Apps and social media. The aim is to harness the energy generated in the creation of the site-specific projects to build relationships and organize for social change action. (www.artforces.org)

The globe shrinks for those who own it; [but] for the displaced or the dispossessed, the migrant or refugee, no distance is more awesome than the few feet across borders or frontiers

—Homi Bhabha
“Art is necessary in order that man should be able to recognize and change the world. But art is also necessary by virtue of the magic inherent in it.”

—Ernst Fischer

PROJECTS 2018

THE WILL TO LIVE — ARAB LIBERATION MURAL
Clarion Alley, San Francisco
Art Forces, Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC),
Arab Youth Organizing (AYO!), with Clarion Alley Mural Project (CAMP);
Susan Greene, Director
Priya Handa
Chris Ghazala
Nidal El Khairy
Margaret Marie
Fred Alvarado

The mural expresses the resilience and resistance of the Bay Area community to attacks on freedom and liberties of Arab, Muslim, people of color, immigrants and refugees. Portraits of six courageous people who speak truth to power include; Rasmea Odeh, Mehdi Ben Barka, Naji Daifullah, Leila Khaled, Basel Al Araj, Yasser Murtaja.

The mural serves to inspire and educate with an audio program that the viewer can call to hear interviews and descriptions of each person portrayed in the mural as well as the meanings of the mural’s images. Lines from Tunisian poem “The Will to Live” are depicted in the sun rays.

The Will to Live (excerpt)
By Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi (1909–1934) Tunisia

If, one day, the people will to live
Then fate must obey
Darkness must dissipate
And must the chain give way
And he who is not embraced by life’s longing
Evaporates into its air and fades away

CHEEMAH UNITY MURAL
OAKLAND CA, 2018
@Bay Area Mural Festival / @Visit Oakland
Seawolf Public House
Susan Greene, Director
Margaret White
Max Martilla
Max Allbee
Francisco Franco

Image: Cheemah, by Osprey Orielle Lake
(used with permission); Photos by Billy Douglas
ACCOMPLISHMENTS (SELECTED) 2015–2017

MOURING AND ACTION
Public Art — Refugee Camps, Lebanon

HOPE FROM THE ASHES
Nahr El Bared Palestinian refugee camp, Lebanon; Summer, 2015

Palestine Team
Omar Abu Steiti, Ritta Taha, Hiba Seddiq, Mahmoud Laila, Ahmad Bader, Alaa Derawi, Aws Al Amer, Tania Naboulsi, of Naher Al Bared Camp, and Beddawi Camp (Palestinian Refugee Camps in North Lebanon near Tripoli), Samir Shabati of Bourj el Barajneh (Camp near Beirut).

U.S. Team
Fred Alvarado, Caitlin Manning, Dr. Susan Greene

Organizations
Al-Jana (www.al-jana.org)
Najdeh Nahr El Bared (www.association-najdeh.org/english)
Art Forces (www.artforces.org)

Hope From the Ashes was painted on buildings newly constructed by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the ‘Old Camp’ of Nahr El Bared Refugee Camp. Nahr El Bared ‘Old Camp’ was burned to the ground by Lebanese army in 2007. Residents of the camp lost all of their belongings along with their homes. Many refer to this time as another uprooting, another Nakba. Hope From the Ashes was designed with the community after meetings and interviews. The most important thing for the camp residents was to make visible their history.

Mourning and Action Brief Project History (2012 & 2013)
Art Forces painted the first two of the series in Shatila Refugee Camp and Bourj El Shamali Refugee Camp; both sites of massacres in 1982 by Israeli military. In collaboration with Al-Jana community center, Beirut Lebanon.

Mourning and Action asks: Who is grievable? How are memorials made and how do they impact communities?

top: Oakland / Palestine Solidarity Mural (2014). Organized by Art Forces, Estria Foundation, and NonCal Sabred. Artists: SPIE, Vyal One, Emory Douglas, Nidal El Khairy, RGT, Dena Makar, Erin Yoshi, Chris Khazaleh, Susan Greene, and Deadeyes. In 2014, with the completion of the mural Off the Wall (22 x 57 ft.) was launched. To date, 15 events have been held at Uptown Auto Body and Fender (auto body shop by day, event space by night/weekends).

bottom, left & right:
Hope From the Ashes
Nahr El Bared Palestinian refugee camp, Lebanon; Summer, 2015
OFF THE WALL—OAKLAND CALIFORNIA & OLYMPIA WASHINGTON

Oakland Palestine Solidarity Mural, Oakland CA
February 14, 2015 — Revolution is Love
In partnership with AROC and NorCal Friends of Sabeel, Art Forces celebrated struggle and we heard the powerful voices of Young Gifted & Black, Adhamh Roland, Chris Kazaleh, and Lubna Morrar. We danced in front of the Oakland Palestine Solidarity mural with Al-Juthoor Dabke Dance Troupe, Abrazo Queer Tango, and DJ Rumorosa.

April 17, 2015 — Revisions: Black and Brown Resisting State Violence Commemorating Palestinian Prisoner Day
In collaboration with AROC. Highlighted connections between community struggles and cultures of resistance that challenge state violence. Artwork from over a dozen movement organizations and photos from artists in Gaza, AROC, Eastside Arts Alliance, Critical Resistance, and Art Forces organized standing-room only roundtable discussion. (Transcript available at www.artforces.org)
**Off the Wall, Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project, Olympia WA**

April 2015 — Spring Arts Walk: Social Justice Bloc Party

Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project held a two-day Social Justice Bloc Party, as part of the city-wide Arts Walk events in collaboration with the Rachel Corrie Foundation. The event strengthened relationships with local participating mural organizations, engaged participatory art making, brought new audience to the mural and showcased a thematic visual art exhibition focused on the impacts of war and resistance to an increasingly militarized world.

**Highlights include:**

— Combat Paper: transforming military uniforms into paper. Paper pulp-making was powered by a bicycle
— Exhibition of portfolios by Just Seeds on themes of migration and militarism
— Theater of the Oppressed workshops
— Music, prose and poetry
— Expansion of “Call the Wall” Audio program


**June 19-21, 2015 — Outside the Frame: Queers for Palestine Film Festival, Brava Theater, San Francisco**

“Justice” Art Forces curated exhibition in theater lobby for Outside the Frame Film Festival, placing LGBTQ struggles in the context of international movements for justice. Art Forces commissioned a 9 x 28 ft. banner commemorating Rasmea Odeh’s struggle against the effort of the U.S. to deport her. Outside the Frame brought together cultural workers opposed to Israeli policies in Palestine and “pinkwashing” of the SFLGBT film festival, which accepted donations from the Israeli Consulate.

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**ROOM NUMBER 4:**

*Israeli Arrests of Palestinian children – Silwan, East Jerusalem*

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2015 – 7:30pm**

**Uptown Body & Fender**

401 26th Street, Oakland (5 blocks from 19th St. Bart)

Children and families in Silwan face constant violence—both physical and psychological. Illegal and armed settlers are taking over Palestinian homes and land. These settlers often harass and violently attack Palestinians on the street. Municipal bulldozers carry out “administrative demolitions” which leave many homeless and threaten thousands more. And hundreds of people each year—including children as young as six and many, many teenagers—are arrested, beaten, and tortured by Israeli police.

Event includes:

6 Room Number 4 photo exhibit about violations of Palestinian children’s rights, accompanied by written testimonies from the children themselves
6 Presentation by Sahar Abbasi Baidon – direct from Palestine! Sahar is Deputy Director of Madaa Silwan Creative Center where she works with children who have been arrested, runs the women’s program and more. She is also a mother of four.
6 Scratchboard drawings used to create the ceramic wedding mural just completed at Shoruq Cultural Center in Dheisheh Refugee Camp – plus photos of Palestinian students creating tiles for the mural.
6 Videos and photos of community murals painted in Silwan by US-based Art Forces & Madaa Silwan Creative Center in response to Israel’s violent evictions and confiscation of land, house by house.
6 Donation requested at the door, no one turned away. Benefit for the Madaa Silwan Creative Center, to raise funds for a staff psychologist to support the children and their families after the trauma of arrest, home demolitions and violence.

“This event is a collaboration between Madra East Children’s Alliance & Art Forces

Prepared by the Research & Reporting Team of the Center for Pedestrian Law and Art (CEPLA) and Friends of Rasmea, Inc. www.rasmeafoundation.org info@rasmea.org (513) 534-8074
October 2015 — Presentation by Sabar Addasi Baidon, Deputy Director Madaa Creative Center, East Jerusalem; Room #4 Presentation by Sahar Abbasi Baidon, Deputy Director Madaa Creative Center, East Jerusalem; Room #4 Photography, in collaboration with MECA

Visiting from Silwan, East Jerusalem, Sabar Addasi Baidon, deputy director of Madaa Creative Center, was given a standing ovation for her presentation on Israeli abuses against Palestinian children as young as 5 years.

The accompanying exhibition “Room #4,” is based on research Ms. Baidon conducted on the impact of incarceration on youth. The multimedia project includes written documentation by youth of their incarceration and poignantly staged photographs of the abuse using adult actors.

November 2015 — Wishab, Folkloric Dance Theater from Palestine

Presented in collaboration with AROC, MECA, and PAC. Wishab uses traditional debke dance to tell the contemporary story of Palestinian struggle and resilience, from the steadfastness of political prisoners to the joy of community celebrations. The occupation makes it extremely difficult for a dance troupe to travel from Palestine. Wishab’s visit to the Bay Area was a rare occasion to experience these world-class dancers.

December 2015 — Report Back from Art Forces

Experimental film screening, spoken word and presentation, and analysis of placemaking mural projects in Silwan East Jerusalem and Nahr Al Bared, Lebanon.

May 1-31, 2016 — George Jackson in the Sun of Palestine — Remembering the Nakba, formation of the Black Panther Party and Indigenous Resistance

— In collaboration with AROC

Exhibition: Curated by Greg Thomas with Susan Greene

Multimedia exhibition expressing the depth of solidarity between the struggles against colonization in Palestine and around the world, specifically in this instance Black prisoners in North America. The impetus and title for the exhibition stem from the inspiration Black Panther George Jackson received from Palestinian poet Samih al-Qasim’s poem “Enemy of the Sun.”

Featured artists include: Leonard Peltier (Native American activist), Pedro Alcantara-Herran (Colombia), Jonelle Davies (Miami, Florida), Emory Douglas (African-America, Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party), Antonio Frasconi (Uruguay), Inkworks Cooperative (Berkeley, CA), Ivan Lopez (San Francisco & Colombia), Malaquias Montoya (Mexico & Mexican-America), Rafael Morante (Cuba & OSPAAAL) and Hunger Strikers of the California Prison Movement, Priya Handa, Sharif Zakout; and Nidal El-Khairy.

Community event took place on May 15th commemorating al Nakba. Performances by Silk Road Debke; Al Juthoor Debke; Young, Gifted and Black; Blessing by Te’o Kali Mejica Dancers; and a panel discussion with curators and community leaders.
“All over the world, people love and dream, they work and they smile and they cry…and they dance”

—Mohammad Ata, Wishah, Founder, Director and Choreographer

IN THE WORKS AND UPCOMING 2017–2018

VIDEO AND MEDIA

Work-in-progress — Our Streets: My Home is Not a Suitcase
International community murals in Silwan, East Jerusalem. Using culture to resist colonization and occupation. The video examines how Israel is using archeology to justify occupation and dispossession.

Off the Wall — Oakland Palestine Solidarity Mural
— Video documentation of 3 years of Off the Wall programming at the Oakland Palestine Mural and Uptown Auto Body Shop
— Development of audio visual component-accessible by GPS Apps providing access to contextual, historical, and narrative information research and collection about mural creation and location

Photo History of Nakba — to present
FOSNA photo collection of NAKBA is being expanded to include events post 1993.

Mourning and Action

— Interview with Ellen Siegal, a registered nurse from US who was an eye witness to Shatila massacres in 1982
— Interview with a survivor of Shatila massacre who saw Israeli soldiers in the camp at time of massacre
— Interviews with participants and residents of camps.

MURALS AND PLACEMAKING

Maia Mural Brigade, Maia means Water in Arabic, with Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA), Multi-platform media project that will make visible connections to environmental racism globally and in the U.S. Included will be a re-edit of 2011 documentary to include 2013 MAIA Mural project at Al Azhar University* in Gaza City, and the current water situation in Gaza. Development of interactive web-based documentation. A collaboration with film collective in Gaza.

*Maia Mural #9 at Al Azhar University, Gaza City. (video available)

Brief History — MAIA Mural Brigade, Gaza Palestine
Projects in Rafah and Gaza City with Estria Foundation’s Water Writes project. Maia Mural Brigade began in 2011 with 8 murals painted in 8 days across Gaza at sites of water purification systems installed by MECA.
My Home is Not A Suitcase
and I Am No Traveler, 2015.
International community murals in Silwan, East Jerusalem. Using culture to resist colonization and occupation. The video examines how Israel is using archeology to justify occupation and dispossession. Art Forces is producing a video that examines how Israel is using archeology to justify occupation and dispossession. [http://bit.ly/2khwItu]

Fall 2018 —
Our Streets: My Home is Not a Suitcase
Silwan, East Jerusalem, Occupied Palestine, Building on pilot project of 2015, the town of Silwan will become an international interdisciplinary public art environment covering thousands of square feet. Murals & media will record stories that reinforce the enduring idea of ‘home’, samud (steadfast resistance) and joint struggle. With Wadi Hilweh Information Center, Madaa Creative Centre, and MECA.
Checking out Clarion Alley, San Francisco with Arab Youth Organizing, ARDC and Art Forces.

Nahr El Bared Refugee Camp, Lebanon.

MAIA Mural Project with Estria Foundation and MECA. “Maia” means water in Arabic.
WRITING, KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION, & EDUCATION (Selected)

Ramallah, Palestine Radical Geography Conference — July 26-30, 2015

Art Forces’ panel: “Decolonizing Public Space: Art, Desubjugation and Governmentality” investigated public art in refugee camps in Palestine, Oaxaca Commune, and Zapatista community in Mexico; and Palestine’s first seed library featuring native seeds and other activities around public ownership of seed and land.

Up Against the Wall: Aamer Family Mural


Analysis of mural, 2004–2011, with Aamer Family, located in Mas’ha West Bank. The Aamer family has lived surrounded by the wall on four sides for more than 10 years. The essay examines the role and meaning the mural had in the family’s ability to cope with and resist the pervasive circumstances of the occupation.

Project Anywhere

Project Anywhere is a global exhibition model in which the role of curator is replaced with the type of peer review process typically endorsed by a refereed journal. Significantly, Project Anywhere is not an online exhibition space, but rather a vehicle for pointing toward art located elsewhere in space and time. Art Forces is currently an archived project. Emphasizing artistic projects undertaken outside traditional exhibition circuits, Project Anywhere is dedicated to the evaluation and dissemination of art at the outermost limits of location-specificity.

(www.projectanywhere.net/archived-projects)

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Susan Greene PhD, is a social art practitioner, educator, and clinical psychologist. Greene uses multiple formats that include murals, video, and GPS Apps that aim to reveal, disrupt, and connect ideas to inspire new approaches of thinking. Greene’s work focuses on borders and migrations involving memory, decolonization and the relationships between creativity, trauma and resilience in the context of globalism. Greene has led or participated in more than 30 public art projects worldwide. Originally from New York City, Greene has been a resident of the Bay Area for over 35 years; and maintains a private psychotherapy practice in San Francisco and Oakland.

ENDORSEMENTS

Cindy and Craig Corrie, Directors, Rachel Corrie Foundation, Olympia WA

The Corrie’s daughter, Rachel, was killed by Israeli bulldozer in Gaza, March 2003.

(Excerpts from endorsement letter 2007)

With friends in both Olympia WA and Rafah, Palestine, Rachel was planting the seeds of an Olympia-Rafah sister city project and other links between our two communities. Her death has become a catalyst for significant connections that continue to evolve.

Rachel wrote from Gaza before her death, “I continue to believe that my home, Olympia, could gain a lot and offer a lot by deciding to make a commitment to Rafah in the form of a sister-community relationship... I am just beginning to learn, from what I expect to be a very intense tutelage, about the ability of people to organize against all odds, and to resist against all odds.”

Now, the work is carried on by all who remember Rachel…This is an important and hopeful story that the world should learn about, one about how friendships and commitments can occur across great distances and between unlikely constituencies and how from them hope and change evolve. Therefore, with great appreciation for the work already done by Susan Greene, we lend our hearty endorsement to her effort to document the story of these two communities connected through our daughter’s journey.

Dr. Ahmed Abu Twahina, Director General, Gaza Community Mental Health Project, Gaza Palestine

Art Forces’ work is a meaningful message of solidarity in our country. Art Forces’ activities contribute to fighting torture through art. Moreover, the joint work of art, concentrated on the marginalized groups in the areas of conflicts and disputes, including women and children, enhanced empowerment and support to be more resilient. We at the Gaza Community Mental Health Program are pleased and happy to work with Dr. Susan Greene as our experience with her has been very effective, constructive, and beneficial.
Courage is the primary ingredient in Susan Greene’s art, the crucial element that fortifies, dignifies and fuels her work. She believes and practices a living art that signals witness, memory and hope. Greene’s work may be catalogued as social sculpture or artist activism; her media is paint, plywood, digital recorder; powered by people, politics, resilience and justice; but the main impact is visibility and a reminder that change is possible. To paint images of possibilities on walls of oppression disrupts the prevailing perception of victimhood. A blank wall remaining at the site of a massacre can become a grove of fresh fruit — a path to a better future.

Greene’s practices break boundaries aggressively, challenge borders, ignorance, repressions and most of all silence and indifference. She is both a prominent artist and a practicing clinical psychotherapist, and conducts research on trauma and creativity. Indefatigable, she organizes numerous international cultural projects involving artists and communities to rally attention around social justice issues. Relational aesthetics inform her work, illustrated through each project, by the tactics of engaging communities in participation and transformation. She innovates with global participation in local community-based projects through cross-community collaboratives, and growing use of transmedia.

One cannot have a progressive social movement committed to human rights and justice without having a robust culture at its center. Art Forces is the embodiment of such sentiments, creating culture that reflects the human yearning of a more just world.

Annice Jacoby, Artist, Writer and Critic, San Francisco CA

Jeffrey Skoller, Filmmaker and Scholar, University of California, Berkeley

Art Forces projects realize Dr. Greene’s vision of urban space as a site for the establishment of creative communities of practice, whether this practice is the collective pursuit of expression, activism, education, connection, or participatory research that leads to best practices and change.

Claude Marks, Director, Freedom Archives, San Francisco CA

Uda Olabarria Walker, Activist and Organizer

(Excerpt from letter dated 2007)

[Susan Greene’s] mural work is a testament to the power of imagery to convey the beauty and steadfastness of the Palestinian struggle and the communities that she has been fortunate enough to be invited into. For years, I led fact finding delegations to Palestine and the work of Break the Silence (now Art Forces) graced the walls of many places we visited; popular art centers in large Palestinian cities, small youth centers in refugee camps and along the walls of community health centers in the far reaches of the Gaza Strip. Each of these murals came about through collaborations between Break the Silence (now Art Forces) and the Palestinian community including other artists, activists and children. These collaborative endeavors not only produce beautiful works art, but they forge lasting friendships and working alliances that strengthen the growing community that is fighting for an end to Israeli oppression and Apartheid.

Giovanna Tanzillo, Proprietor, Uptown Auto Body and Fender, Oakland CA

Chris Kazaleh, Educator, Artist, and Activist, Palestinian American

Art Forces is an important element in the world of art and in the world in general to help people understand crucial issues not represented in our media. Art Forces shows the strength of cross cultural solidarity the popularity of its events and public art projects. Personally, the work of Art Forces has impacted me for decades. As a youth I witnessed and grew up with one of their earliest projects in the Mission. It was a solidarity mural about Palestine called “Our Roots Are Still Alive — Everyone Has A Right to a Homeland.” The mural was covered up with plywood in 2001 because it was being constantly defaced in hate crimes. It will be uncovered when the world is able to tolerate human rights for all people.

Barbara Lubin, Executive Director, Middle East Children’s Alliance

MECA has worked with Dr. Susan Greene for 20 years, using culture as a way to raise awareness and organize support for Palestinian resistance to the occupation. The work of Art Forces continues to grow in interdisciplinary scope. We at MECA think the next phase of work will bring to fruition a powerful culmination of murals and technology.

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Event: George Jackson in the Sun of Palestine
Design for 9 foot sculpture of Leonard Peltier, incarcerated for 27 years
Rigo 23, in collaboration with American Indian Movement West

Art Forces is generously funded in part by: Left Tilt Foundation, Scott Handleman, Middle East Children's Alliance, Peace Development Fund, People's Life Fund, Al-Jana, Independent Arts and Media, and the Abraham Greenberg Foundation.