

Press Release

Control Anatomy by Mahmoud Alhaj at Zawyeh Gallery ***The exhibition explores colonial violence and domination in the past few years, particularly in Gaza, by employing digital media techniques.***

Ramallah — 22 July 2024: Under the title *Control Anatomy*, Zawyeh Gallery is hosting an exhibition by Palestinian artist Mahmoud Alhaj on Tuesday, 30 July 2024. Curated by Rana Anani, the exhibition explores colonial violence and the mechanisms of domination and control over Palestinian geography in the eyes of Alhaj who was born in Gaza. Through his artworks, Alhaj examines the oppressive tools used over the years, which have culminated in the ongoing genocide and atrocities committed in the Gaza Strip, where the instruments of violence and control have been amplified inconceivably.

Alhaj employs various digital media techniques, including collage, photography, and printing showcasing proficiency in using digital archives and attention to detail. The exhibition features a collection of projects, including: "Violence 24/7," "402 of Gray," and "Fragile." These projects relied on images that aimed "to keep pace with the crazy flow of violent events" around the artist. He selects "images that have lost their luster in the eyes of viewers and faded into the back doors of internet search engines," and images that have had repercussions on himself and those around him. He reintroduces these images within a contemporary artistic narrative.

Alhaj relies on "dissecting low-quality images of human rights abuses, violence, and colonial strategies, both visually and conceptually, then reconstructs them through an intensive digital process, creating new digital works that provide unexpected results open to diverse interpretations. This involves integrating them with images and materials from other sources, such as Google Maps, aerial reconnaissance shots, and empty medicine pills sheets."

Born in 1990, Mahmoud Alhaj holds a BA in journalism and has worked as an art teacher at the Palestinian Red Crescent Society since 2017. He has produced six projects using photography, digital art, and videos exhibited widely in Palestine, Europe, and the United States. In 2022, his short experimental film "The Right to See" was screened at the 35th Festival Les Instants Video in Marseille. In 2021, the film was screened at the Cairo Video Festival alongside a duo exhibition with Rob Voerman at Plaatsmaken studio in the Netherlands.

His first solo show titled "402 Of Gray" was held in Gaza, while his second solo show "Violence 24/7" was held at Uxval Gochez Gallery in Barcelona in 2024. He has participated in many collective exhibitions such as "Fenced Off" by ICRC in 2022, "ART NOW" at Gallery One in 2021, "Art in Isolation" at the Middle East Institute in Washington in 2020, "Contemplative Contrasts" by A.M. Qattan Foundation, and "Orient 2.0" at Pulchri Studio in the Netherlands in 2017. He was an artist in residence at the Royal Spanish Academy in Rome and the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague in 2021. He recently completed his residency at Cité International des Arts in Paris.

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