

## counting years

work for radio, intervention in public space  
in collaboration with Fawzy Emrany

31 May 2007 — radio AmmanNet, public space Amman, JOR — No Condition is Permanent, a project on art in public space by Rayelle Niemann — Participants: Maram Atoum, inhabitants of the Palestinian camp — Duration of work for radio: 55 min. Duration of intervention in public space: 1 day

Background — For the first time in Amman, interventions are made in public space, a project with artists from Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, and Switzerland. During a one-month residency, Fawzy Emrany, Gaza, PAL, and Köppl/Začek work together. Seventy percent of the Jordanian population are of Palestinian descent. Many of them-by now in the third generation-live in 13 refugee camps, which have grown into rhizomatic cities. The members of the oldest generation retain a living memory of Palestine, which they pass on to the younger ones. The permanently unstable political situation makes long-range planning for the future impossible. Al Wahdat is one of four refugee camps that were built in Amman in 1948. Today, approximately 50,000 people live there. In 1968, the camp Al Baqa'a was formed 20 km outside of Amman. It now counts more than 100,000 residents.

Setting — AmmanNet, the first internet radio station in the Arab world, was founded in 2000. Since 2005 it can be received via satellite on 92.4 FM and is considered the first independent radio station in the Middle East.

Materials and Preparation — A microphone, headphones and a recorder. Residents of the refugee camps Al Baqa'a and Al Wahdat, of different ages and genders, are invited by X, Y, and Fawzy Emrany to count years, beginning with the year of their own birth and continuing as far into the future as they would like. Their voices are recorded and later sorted and edited into an increasing succession of years.

Procedure — The edited audiotape is broadcasted on AmmanNet. In a second version, X, Y, and Fawzy Emrany set the recording to the tune played by the vendors who drive through Amman selling bottled gas for cooking stoves. In the course of a day the recording can be heard from the loudspeakers of two pickup trucks as they make their rounds through Amman.

Preliminary Results — It is not possible for the artists to make direct contact with women. A teacher invites the artists to his home. There, X, Y, and Fawzy Emrany are able to record the voice of the teacher's sister, who remains hidden in another room. Through private connections, X, Y, and Fawzy Emrany make the acquaintance of an elderly woman in Al Wahdat who runs a small kiosk out of her home. The women whom Maram Atoum approaches on the street are only willing to come to the kiosk for recordings thanks to her authority.

