

# *In Conversation with Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi*



Fig. 1. A provisions shop near Ifo camp where people first encounter settlement at Dadaab. Photograph taken by Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, 2011.

**Nicholas Frayne (NF):**

I want to begin with the theme that drives this issue of *Scroope*. The central idea of the issue is *disenclosure*, which, coming from postcolonial theory, opens up the intersection of justice and architecture, settlement, sedentarization, migration, and more. Your work on spatial violence, humanitarianism, and, most recently, on the spatial practice and politics of the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya resonates closely with the theme, given the spatial nature of what it means to enclose and to create this refugee space.

I am particularly interested in unpacking some of the core paradoxes of humanitarian spatiality you examine through Dadaab, a temporary camp that has been there since the 1990s, and which make it such a fertile space for exploring — among other things — enclosure, temporality, underdevelopment, land versus territory, and belonging.

**Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi (AIS):**

First, I am very grateful to be having this conversation about the book, and thank you for thinking with it. I am especially grateful to talk with you, as you do your own work in Kenya on fraught histories.

Maybe I will start with the paradox that Dadaab offers the problem of architectural ephemerality. I think that ephemerality is a form of representation. It is not necessarily ontologically what we find in Dadaab.

I opened the book very specifically saying that a refugee camp is not an object. It is a historical event. One of the ways in which that event gets spatialised is through its temporality. The event may be prolonged, and the architecture may in fact be more permanent, but the aesthetics of the architecture play out an ephemerality.

**NF:**

And how are some of the ways this ephemerality plays out at Dadaab?

**AIS:**

We see this in two big ways. Number one, a displaced person may not want to imagine that they are displaced forever. They may want to imagine that they're going back home. Number two, most governments, and even the communities that are local to an area where displaced people find themselves, face burdens when a large population suddenly appears, needing care. This happens whether that community itself is doing the caring through a form of mutual aid, or there's some top-down, international effort that carries its own agendas, as is the case all over Africa. Because Kenya has historically been ready to work with Western governments, it has made a space for the international community. It's made a space for the UN in ways that have enabled this architecture of Dadaab to concretise on its border with Somalia. But that architecture can't give the appearance of being permanent.

Those two issues create a drive to the ephemeral in the architecture of the camp. This is by way of saying that we shouldn't take ephemerality as a *de facto* condition. There are agentive forces that are making it so.

**NF:**

It strikes me that the architectural qualities and forms of Dadaab are highly specific, yet relate more generally to vernacular architectures in East Africa, indicating another temporal linkage.

**AIS:**

I find looking closely at architecture is a compelling way into these spatial politics. Traditional building forms in East Africa, particularly for pastoralist communities, offer a fascinating architectural iteration of this same ephemerality. These

architectures are permanent. It's just that they happen to move well. The *tuqul*, a house form developed over generations, is intended not to be a fixed architecture. It's supposed to be able to be picked up, put on the backs of camels, moved to other locations. The dwelling itself can be dismantled in different ways. It has a very strong frame. It is also paradoxical. This set of conditions that creates the camps demands an ephemeral architecture that sedentarises the *tuqul* architecture in the camps.

To me, that was already a bizarre paradox that demanded looking at migration from multiple viewpoints. There's the migratory lifeway of a pastoralist learning how to build this architectural object based on hereditary craft knowledge, and there are the migratory detention spaces of governments and international bodies. Ironically, these forces sit together and coinhabit the space. In that sense they work together toward more metaphysical ends.

All of this raises the question of 'What are these architectures?' Or rather, 'What are these architectural historical forces?'

## NF:

These points are beautifully illustrated in the book with the photographs you've taken of these architectural forces. The way you speak about this architecture is through a much longer history that precedes certainly the camp itself, but also stretches back across the British colonial presence in East Africa. This raises another tension between settlement and migration.

In Dadaab, the architectures have been arrested in a way; they've become sedentary. While the *tuqul* has the logics of a mobile migratory architecture, it fits within the logic of sedentarisation as well.

**AIS:**

You've used this colonial term 'arrested' and I think it's apropos. The architectures have been arrested, much like many people, and I think they have been sedentarised, again, much like many people. This is where one can look closely at a scene and understand the past; understanding what that architecture looks like in the present is the way into the past. I opened the book by asking, 'What do we learn when we look closely at a refugee camp?' I think through the architecture we can see these long histories of sudden coercion.

**NF:**

Coercion and carcerality bring up the wider idea of disenclosure, which invokes the adjacent ideas of enclosure, closure, and even foreclosure — all of which have architectural histories.

**AIS:**

I think these histories are tied to the tense relationship between architecture and land. They are tied to the practice of enclosure by the British government over hundreds of years and the ways those practices were brought into Kenya or were taken up by Kenyans. The iterative construction of territory, or the construction of property, is to me at the heart of this problem. I came to it methodologically because I was acting as an art historian, looking closely at architecture.

When we look closely at the relationship between the architecture of Dadaab refugee camps and the land that it's part of — that it sometimes grows right out of — we see the end results of what a UNHCR planner is drawing: a grid on a piece of paper. But people are growing that grid on their land. Of course, it is not legally their land.

**NF:**

Where did you begin with these tensions?

**AIS:**

It started with the central architectural paradox: when you see many, many tuquuls sitting right next to each other, it is striking because they would never sit that way in any 'natural' setting.

**NF:**

You also write about how the refugee camp is a partition. The spatial arrangements of these tuquuls reveals the emergence of partition, which is the creation of territory from land. This process produces an alien spatiality composed of tuquul architectures; partition produces particular spatialities that are strange.

I'm interested in thinking about what effects this partition space has on the people who live there. What are the sociopolitics of life in the camp? What is life like in the camp and how do people claim forms of agency amid what you call a colonial spatiality? Do they distort this 'humanitarian grid' when they grow it themselves, or what is that relationship within the camp itself between imposed colonial structures and the people themselves?

**AIS:**

The debate between structure and agency wasn't the debate that I took up. Rather, I was concerned with how to make use of master theories when aiming to really deal with quite urgent problems on the ground. I never felt like master theories actually resolved what I was seeing. (Although, later in the book, they helped me to theorise domesticity.)

My research was also predicated on dozens of interviews, mostly with mothers trying to forge a life for their families. Ultimately the whole book took up a more feminist approach, provincialising common Marxist arguments for reading provisional environments and prioritising lived and embodied experience when theorising.

I think people work with the spaces they are given in profoundly creative ways. While I don't presume to speak for refugees (I am not a refugee myself), I think that I witnessed profound experimentation, and not only on the level of life-saving or on the level of survival, but on the level of thought and material creation. This is not to blithely celebrate innovation in dire conditions. I truly believe in Dadaab people are living at the vanguard. At the limits of domesticity in the most extreme conditions, at the limits of sovereignty. I think that we're witnessing an avant-garde. That to me is a very important idea to hold on to because I think it speaks to what we ought to be aiming for in the ways that we think.

This vanguard no longer lies in the objects that we've trusted for so long. We really have to look to objects that we can't necessarily know, and we have to get comfortable with not necessarily knowing them. And we have to trust that what we're seeing is something that is at the leading edge of theory as much as practice.

Maybe that is too abstract, but I think that's what I saw.

Architecturally, I write in the book about partition thinking. That became a really important way for me to start understanding what I was seeing. The colonial practice of making a territory is very different from partition: partitioning occurs on the bodies of people.

The British imperial forces were particularly focused on dividing human beings and severing their social ties. They were skilled at working on the bodies of people and also their social structures. That entanglement is at the core of my question: 'What are we really seeing when we see a refugee camp?'

I believe what we're seeing is an afterlife of partitions. On the one hand, we're seeing a partition of land. Of course, a refugee camp is a border camp. It is situated on one side of a border. But that is only one piece of the story. What is set into motion is a partitioning principle that really is about the

partitioning of people, of individual lives. As Fanon analysed, partition creates a self-colonising mechanism.

Partition also lives on the level of societies as it reproduces itself over and over again, in the ways that people divide. There are many ways we can describe that. People reproduce partition spatially and socially. You're asking about the agency within a camp. While agency does not amount to something as simple as breaking the grid, there are ways in which people choose to reinforce the plan or to move outside it or do something else within it. For example, in this harsh, arid environment of the northeast of Kenya, one can effectively walk into a lush ecosystem. It was so unsettling and strange, so uncanny. These strange acts that do not fit expectations of refugee life are not quite a form of resistance, and yet how can we see them as anything but?

**NF:**

You framed the idea that you have this structure, this logic of partition, that is emplaced onto the land and people who not only work within the structure and reinforce it, but then they also distort it. This makes me think of some of the work that is coming out of the African Centre for Cities with Edgar Pieterse, and the work of AbdouMaliq Simone, who both write on different forms of experimentation and improvisation as agency.<sup>1</sup>

You can think of improvisation as a musical term where you have the metric, the beat and the rhythm, which you pick up and you play with. But you also play outside of it, you reframe it, you change the beat. These forms of agency in the camps are perhaps neither with a system nor against it, but trying to find a third way to carve out space that somebody can make into a home. Home, here, is meant as a place where one can start to build connections, forms of mobility, and new ways of surviving,

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1 See Edgar Pieterse and AbdouMaliq Simone, *New Urban Worlds: Inhabiting Dissonant Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017); AbdouMaliq Simone, *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).

ultimately.

The structures of partition — and whatever acts unfold in and beyond those structures — can also be understood temporally. You distinguish between the camp as an object and the camp as an event, and you also spoke earlier about ephemerality; it seems to me that time sits within this discussion on the architecture of migration, and its long historical relations.

There is this idea that colonisation is a fixing of time, of people's temporalities, and people's ability to relate to time.<sup>2</sup> For example, the British were obsessed with demarcating identities through fixing and compartmentalising people's histories — this is clear during the British response to the Mau Mau movement in the 1950s. The British created detainment camps as a method of territorial production, and partitioned space, partitioned land, and partitioned populations in the process. There seems to be a relationship between the temporalities of Dadaab and colonial temporalities, which were enacted spatially.

This of course raises complex questions about what temporalities are produced and reproduced over time, and what subjectivities are entangled with that production. The temporalities of the camp seem to exist in multiple historical times, whether it's deep time or the immediate time of emergency that is mobilised by humanitarian agencies to enact this logic of partition.

### **AIS:**

To think about this in a very basic way, life in Dadaab adheres to a curfew. The curfew is one of the readiest tools that was used during the colonial era to determine who could move where and at what time. The curfew is about mobility.

In most settings, the British set up territories of mobility, through curfews — not only in moments of emergency, but as a default. This leads one to think that all of colonial life was created

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2 Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), pp. 52–59

as emergency. In Dadaab, you have the hours when the aid workers were there, and then the night. Those times are very distinct.

This led me to think in larger expanses of time. The whole book is organised according to regimes of historicity, regimes of time, including large geologic spans of time that are important to think with.

Dadaab wouldn't have existed for its thirty years without the ancient aquifer underneath it. I think that we have to link those spans of time together. If we want to be able to talk about the thirty years, we have to acknowledge this other thing that made it possible for those thirty years to happen, because without it, you don't have a situation where half a million people arrive somewhere and exist there. Without the aquifer and its timespans, they just would die out.

That's the planetary scale on which we have to understand things.

**NF:**

And how does the architectural — which occupies a more human, if intergenerational, scale — fit into this planetary scale?

**AIS:**

It's really important to me that we be able to read architectures and built environments in order to understand history. This is also about how we use architectural history to unpack longer regimes of time.

You could of course also write a history limited to how this camp was planned, settled, inhabited, used — but to do so it is really important to unpack at least the seventy-five years or so of the UN humanitarian regime. Camps like this only become possible after World War II, after the UNHCR starts to take up a program of building.

You can also unpack a longer regime of a colonial history, or even of Europeans entering Africa with the introduction of missions — missions being a crucial precedent for refugee camps in every way. (Let us not think for a minute that the refugee camp isn't a Christian mission in Africa. It absolutely is.)

There are lots of ways that Dadaab opens up larger regimes of time. We can start in the moment in Lisbon in the eighteenth century, with the introduction of the humanitarian ideal into a built environment. This is the moment when responses to disaster start to look a little like they do today. People from across Europe were shipping shelters to the royalty in Portugal, revealing a response that echoes today's.

This response reveals a partition thinking. There's us and there's them; we have, they do not. Within that thinking, a racialisation occurs. Thinking with the material and social is crucial in this book, but partition thinking has also demanded thinking on Blackness. The work of W. E. B. DuBois, Walter Rodney, and Achille Mbembe have helped me think about Blackness.

### NF:

These partitions return us to enclosure, borderisation, compartmentalisation — quite definitive descriptors for conditions that can be seen in times of emergency.

### AIS:

This concept of enclosure and the questions that you're asking about the temporal tie to what Simone describes in *The Surrounds* (2022).<sup>3</sup> Thinking with the surrounds offers a permeable way of talking about enclosure. I think *disenclosure* mirrors arguments around structure and agency, in that we can imagine enclosure and its putative opposite, *disenclosure*.

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3 AbdouMaliq Simone, *The Surrounds: Urban Life within and beyond Capture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022).

Regardless, these ideas are incredibly fruitful for us to think with as we try to theorise how we move forward in a time when most of us are living with some level of precarity. There is no longer an illusion of any place beyond emergency territory.

If you think about the construction of a camp as an emergency space, then it becomes a form of permanent impermanence, or a continuously precarious space. The camp can never exceed precarity due to the temporality of emergency. Emergency is constructing the camp as a territory.

**NF:**

The camp is suspended. This emergency temporality raises the question of how the past is framed and related to.

**AIS:**

Emergency also implies there's no past. There's no future. There's only the present. This construction of time is ultimately a way of being able to rule, of ultimately being able to control, to manage, populations. We find these mechanisms to cordon people off and control their existences in most, if not all, emergency responses.

This is bound up with a moral economy. We are ultimately unable to partition. When people do partition, they feel such trauma and guilt. They can't reconcile the contradictions.

**NF:**

In line with emergency territory, we have carceral space. Spaces of imprisonment are also spaces of suspension. They are often also places of bodily violence. You mentioned lived embodied experiences and the ways in which time partitions and territorial claims are impressed upon bodies. That opens up to trauma and the ways in which trauma is embodied, and it refuses language in many cases. These spaces of emergency and carcerality carry similar temporal compressions, enacted on bodies, that are

flattening or fixing time.

When there's an emergency, there are spaces created that respond to this state. In 1982, there was a coup in Kenya. In response, Daniel Arap Moi imprisoned hundreds, if not thousands, committing murder and torture across the country. That is a historically different emergency and form of carcerality than in Dadaab; these different emergencies produce varying spaces of incarceration. But the forms of temporality remain similar. Under emergency, there is a fixed or suspended temporality. Under Moi, the threat of physical violence was all encompassing, foreclosing the future as always potentially directly violent.

I think this begs the question of 'How do you rehabilitate that sense of temporality?' And is there a way to think about architecture as a means by which you can begin rehabilitating the territory of emergency and carcerality that has been historically produced?

You mentioned that land is a medium for sedimenting forms of difference and you speak of it as a palette for thinking with carcerality at Dadaab. That struck me as a very powerful way to think about architecture as a discipline that has a positive dimension to it.

### **AIS:**

In this carceral context, I think disenclosure helps us theorise a way forward. To come to this, there is a practical need to understand the social and architectural history of imprisonment, the ways that the prison itself has been used as a tool.

As we talk, I keep returning to a larger environmental argument. There has to be a way of understanding carcerality on a larger scale than just the scale of one prison or one governmental unit. For me, entering this has involved understanding larger issues grounding Black consciousness. I have felt that the generous and generative frameworks of Black consciousness theory do a lot of this work, primarily because of the long

meditation on the racialisation of space, the racialisation of incarceration, and the imprisonment of Black bodies.

I think that that has forced an immediate thinking around disenclosure. That liberatory orientation has given us a framework of writings that have a lot to say about architecture.

### **NF:**

It strikes me that disenclosure, as a way of thinking, is helpful because it emphasises our ability to not only just oppose compartmentalisation or borderisation or enclosure, but it helps us to emphasise the relations that are key to defining our senses of self, our senses of community, and our relationships ultimately with the land and with our own histories.

To me, a liberatory framework has to be about mobilities and transgressions, emphasising passage and our ability to shift our relations — not just what relations are best for living a good life. I mean that it is what structures our potential for movement, rather than the destination, that's important. I find the concept of disenclosure most useful at dislodging sedimented ways of approaching theory due to its infrastructural focus on mobilities and transformation from one into another. With its focus on connective tissue, it enables new relationalities to form.

### **AIS:**

That's it. I think Nicole Fleetwood's work is really helpful on this. Her abolitionist work is not about just breaking out of the prison walls, but it really is about what you make in relation to others. Often, she looks at individual artists, but she also looks closely at collectivities, both inside prisons, and across the wall, making art through an inside-outside relation.

This is staunchly abolitionist work, and yet it isn't demanding that the walls come down. This isn't fussing with traditional problems of resistance and with power structures in the usual way. It's provincialising in that way, and yet it's very serious. She's thinking with her own family members who

have been on the inside, and so it's very personal for her, but she's also working with many artists who have been imprisoned for significant parts of their own lives.

I also want to move to another thing that I feel like you'll be uniquely positioned to discuss.

**NF:**

Yes, of course.

**AIS:**

One thing I have been struggling with is that so much of the literature that we can turn to that is abolitionist or that would even use that theoretical term to describe itself, is based in the US and it comes out of US-based critical race theory or Black studies. I personally find this very limiting. When you again turn to this chapter of Mbembe's on disenclosure, he talks about subaltern studies and Black Atlantic theory as a two-pronged movement in the academy. It's not an accident that they both arose because they have an Atlantic connection in many ways. It was the rise of a certain American academy that made the life of those discourses possible.

Yet I really struggle with this, particularly working in Africa. I think that there's a way in which I have tried in this book's citations to think around the world. I try and mobilise my citational practice as part of an effort to lift up a different discourse, but I really do struggle with how to work within this hegemony that privileges a worldview that is from the heart of US empire.

**NF:**

Ultimately, I think that's the biggest challenge of doing research, especially from major institutions that are historically tied to empire. For me, the way to work with this positionality is to build, as you do, from the ground. In your book you are building the story of Dadaab from people's experiences — with

those who are most embedded in the context. This idea of embeddedness and implication is key for me. While we are all implicated in large interconnected systems — capitalism, ecological crisis, imperialism — we are differentially embedded, and by engaging in these differences, new approaches to the large systems can emerge. The hegemony of imperial knowledge will not disappear overnight, and I find working directly against it to be a slow battle. Working around it is more fruitful.

Approaching the hegemony of imperial knowledge structurings requires a simple ambition: we need to try to go into an encounter openly and try to learn with the people who we're doing the research with.

For example, ideas of justice are central to my own work on the memory and materiality of sites of violence. With the question of justice, you end up with John Rawls and Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Iris Young, and the likes. You can go all the way back to Bentham and Smith. But when you're in a place and you're looking at a piece of architecture and a specific injustice, it is very clear that survivors have their own understandings of justice and injustice which diverge from the theory, even as they often use theory explicitly (especially Fanon, Freire, and Marx, at least in the Kenyan context). Going into the question of 'How am I to define justice in my own work?' requires thinking about the understandings of justice that exist beyond the academy, and asking 'How do those definitions produce a concept that is most applicable to that situation?' This concept then can be treated as one amongst many; brought into contact as an equal with Rawlsian theories, for example. The academy can be provincialised in this, no longer the only space from which theory is generated.

I find that it's all about trying to build knowledge from as localised a space as possible, and trusting that the transferable knowledge that you're hoping to create through the research will be there. Maybe this gets back to the idea of an unbordered

world that we all share: when you create very localised knowledge it will be applicable to other places because of the simple fact that we are all people in the world facing multiple forms of enclosure, carcerality, emergency, and the likes.

There is a risk in this highly localised approach, but, rather, there needs to be hope and trust that an idea will emerge that can be of use beyond that locality within which you're building knowledge. Doing research from these powerful institutions requires a hopeful leap, and setting up research as an effort to work beyond these hegemonic structures — if that is indeed possible. A third way, perhaps.

**AIS:**

This is why we set up our methodologies as we do. I believe in a rigorous approach to this as you've articulated, really structuring our sociality and also placing a demand on our own academic degree-granting programs, saying, 'If I'm going to do the work, it needs to be under conditions that serve all the places where I work.' One has to believe that doing the small act leads to the big change.

**NF:**

Absolutely.

**AIS:**

It's quite a thing that you can do a PhD like yours in an architecture department in 2024. It was not so long ago that yours wasn't a topic for a PhD, certainly not this drive toward uncovering roots of social justice. That was not what architecture was about!

That sea change is something worth acknowledging here. We're talking about enclosure and disenclosure; this is an act of disenclosure in a broad sense, operating in the academy and certainly in the field of architectural studies, which has had the most direct investment in the study enclosure, and its spatial

character. Although this field has also spent the most time ignoring it and yet reproducing it.

**NF:**

There are early roots to this idea, and I think about the work in the last century on ‘architecture’s public’<sup>4</sup> and ideas about the ethics of architectural praxis. What’s different today?

**AIS:**

Maybe in the 1960s, this was something that architects wanted to do, but they didn’t have the tools, and they certainly didn’t have the apparatus within the academy to put PhDs toward this. I’ve been reckoning with this trajectory in a lot of different ways, as many of us have, and I think we are seeing architectural history as a field coming into its own and being able to actually address its own objects.

There was a long period during which an architectural history in the academy could not centre something either as crass or as violent as a prison. The discipline was not refined enough. Now, we have the apparatus to be able to discuss the things that really require urgent action.

**NF:**

As architectural history matures as a field, I wonder also about methods. When we ask, ‘What are architectural methods?’, we realise that they’re really not codified. I think this looseness in architectural methodologies is enabling quite innovative ways of approaching the intersection of space, matter, people’s lives, politics and more. It’s providing a very fertile space in the discipline which makes me hopeful about architecture.

There’s a lot of hope within the discipline that we can begin to use our tools to powerfully investigate things that matter beyond the strict boundaries of the discipline. We have very

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4 Giancarlo De Carlo, ‘Architecture’s public’, in Peter Blundell Jones et al. eds., *Architecture and Participation* (Taylor and Francis eBooks, 2005), pp. 3–22.

real crises that architects are part of. I'm hopeful that the ways in which we go about practising architecture within the academy and beyond it could have quite powerful implications for imagining ways out of the crises — imagining that third way between the islands.

### **AIS:**

I think that in that sense, one lesson I learned from Dadaab was that the crisis is not only existential, but really a crisis of theory. You can do a very quick survey of critical humanitarian studies and you will find it has found its floor in Foucault's writings on the dispositive, or Agamben's very particular readings of extraterritoriality. In the latter instance, this political theorist is doing what a political theorist is supposed to do, but taking those theories and applying them directly to architecture can fall flat. I can see an exciting field of theory that also is very limited by its own floor.

When I came to Dadaab, there wasn't a way to come to it as an architectural object. I thought I would understand it as a localised, monumental architecture that would help me describe the global humanitarian system. Instead, I think I found African ways of knowing. I had to take a very grounded approach to learn from and with people in Dadaab, which brought me to much deeper theory.

Theory emerged from the ways that they thought (conditioned, of course, by how I came across their work), and the understanding that their interactions with architecture were as meaningful as a political theoretical analysis. Those things made me think differently about the capacities of architectural history. In this way, Dadaab could be a space of philosophy.

### **NF:**

Absolutely. Philosophy has always been of interest to architects, except perhaps today, in architectural practice under neoliberalism where we use our expertise rather uncritically (for

the most part) to help the wealthiest partition land and produce space as they wish.

**AIS:**

All the things we've talked about in this conversation really do leave me thinking, 'Well, how else would you study enclosure except through architecture?' What we have to think of is the nature of a bounded politics today, and architecture is heavily invested in boundary-making. I think we are uniquely equipped to investigate this.

**NF:**

Architects are also invested in alternatives. Imagining alternative spaces is fundamental to our discipline, which I think can help us to be more than just critical about present conditions. We are well-attuned to also thinking with the future.

**AIS:**

I think of Irit Katz, for example, who has done this very close work on the camp,<sup>5</sup> but her background is also as a poet. These are things that are really important to note. Forms of creative praxis are the way we come to architecture, and more of us are coming to architecture in these different ways than ever before. I think that this will give us the means to write about the material, structural, and symbolic forms that, at the end of the day, are the things we live with in the world. They aren't just the byproduct of politics, or the byproduct of societies. They carry meaning, and are in fact the traces that people leave behind.

**NF:**

The idea about living-with is fundamental to this, I think. We all live with each other in a shared world, with what has been inherited, and also with the future. This makes creative practices

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<sup>5</sup> See Irit Katz, *The Common Camp: Architecture of Power and Resistance in Israel–Palestine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022).

that are concerned with these temporal links between what was, is, and is yet to come profoundly important for finding new ways of living with each other.

It's a hopeful idea that we not only inherit, and not only have our capacities to act in the present, but also are creatively producing futures and alternate possibilities. I find that very fulfilling and hopeful — even as we live amid multiple crises.



Fig. 2. Women moving through the food distribution center, Ifo camp. Photograph taken by Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, 2011.