

Forensic Architecture

Architecture Practice

as detection of crimes and human rights abuses

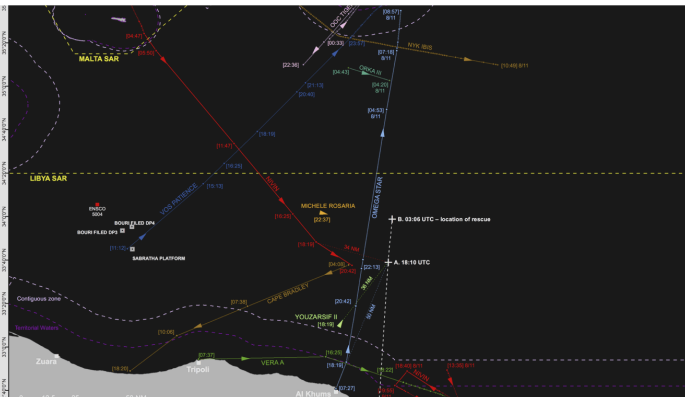


Investigate **Forensic Architecture** ABOUT

SEARCH

ALL by category → forensic oceanography BY METHODOLOGY BY LOCATION MAP

AIRSTRIKES AT SEA BORDERS CHEMICAL ATTACKS DETENTION DISAPPEARANCE ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLENCE FIRE Forensic Oceanography HERITAGE LAND RIGHTS MIGRATION POLICE VIOLENCE



DATE OF INCIDENT 11.2018	LOCATION Central Mediterranean	FORUMS Legal Process, United Nations
COMMISSIONED BY Self-Initiated	Five months after Italy began to close its ports to migrants rescued at sea, a vessel carrying 93 people was spotted in the southern Mediterranean. The Italian and Libyan Coast Guards enlisted a private merchant ship to rescue the migrants and forcefully return them to Libya. Using tracking data and testimonies, Forensic Oceanography exposed a new mode of privatised border security.	



DATE OF INCIDENT 06.11.2017	LOCATION Mediterranean Sea	FORUMS Legal Process, Exhibition
COMMISSIONED BY Self-Initiated	When the Libyan coastguard interrupted a rescue operation by the NGO Sea Watch, at least twenty migrants lost their lives, and more were 'pulled back' to inhumane detention in Libya. Forensic Oceanography shone a light on the practices of a coastguard funded and trained by the Italian government.	

Fig. 1: Extract Forensic Architecture Website: Counter Investigations structured by different categories, mythologies and locations show the comprehensive and precise practice.

About /Practice

Forensic Architecture (FA) is a research agency founded by Eyal Weizman in 2011, based at Goldsmith University in London. The aim is to use techniques from architecture and artistic practice to detect crimes and human right abuses committed by states, police forces, militaries, and corporations.

„Contemporary warfare is mainly urban“, which is why architects have the ability to understand what has happened within war.¹ By using satellite footage, metadata and images from social media and contextualizing them in space and time FA depict what happened on, in and around buildings. In forms of digital and physical models, 3D animations, virtual reality environments and cartographic platforms FA retell the story of an event in a coherent and understandable way, and thus provide legal evidence for crimes.

Works are internationally shown in exhibitions, which are considered by FA as as important forums to show that the aesthetic practices can be powerful in confronting state and government lies instead of „a license to ficitionalise“².

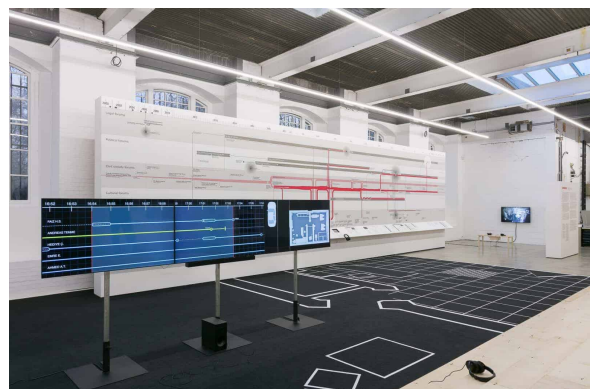


Fig. 2: Exhibition space Forensic Architecture with cross-media installations for Counter Investigations - Exhibition, first solo exhibition in UK @The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 7.032018-13.05.2018.

Practice in relation to the book of Sara Ahmed: *Complaint!*, 2021.

Both Forensic Architecture and Sara Ahmed use their practice to highlight problems in the structures that dominate human beings and are directed against their dignity. While Ahmed addresses the rebellion stifled by formalities in the institution of the university, FA brings to the surface what is happening underground through the reconstruction of events.

FA and Ahmed collect material produced by suppressed and invisible complainers, analyze and contextualize it, and make it accessible to a wider public. FA uses social media content taken from people in precarious situations, Ahmed filed cases of abused students. Both agencies give visibility to complainers and highlight their complain as part of something larger.



Fig. 3: Bookcover, Sara Ahmed: *Complaint!*, 2021.



Fig. 4: Eyal Weizman photographed by Justin Tallis/Agence France-Press - Getty Images, published in New York Times.

„Wenn jemand unter Lebensgefahr ein Video aufzeichnet und im Internet veröffentlicht, müssen wir dies wie eine Flaschenpost behandeln, einen Hilferuf, die so geworfen wird, das jemand sie auch sieht.“³ (Eyal Weizman)

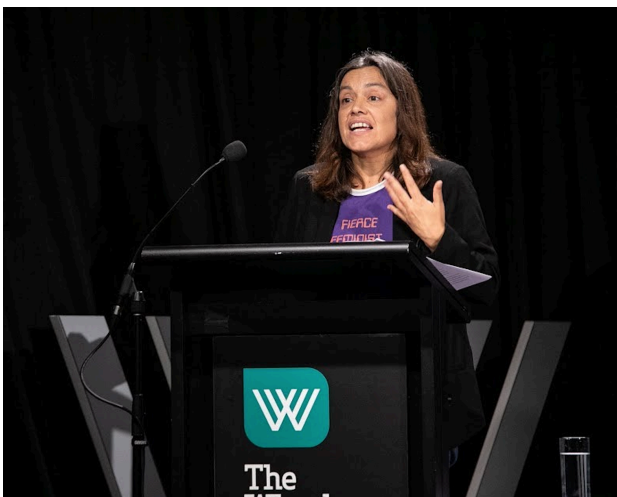


Fig. 5: Sara Ahmed during her Lecture *On Complaint*, 24.10.2018, Wheeler Center.

Through their practice, Forensic Architecture and Sara Ahmed advocate against the oppression of people and for a change in the system. It is also interesting that material - such as satellite images or filled-in forms - that systems develop to control people is used against them. FA as Ahmed expose power structures and put them up for discussion in forms of in exhibitions or book publications.

Ahmed as well as FA act as complainers, whereas FA can be attributed a greater distance to the complainer due to their data-based acting and the lack of personal participation.

Figures

Fig. 1: Screenshot taken from: <https://forensic-architecture.org/category/forensic-oceanography> (last access: 17.01.22).
Fig. 2: Taken from: <https://forensic-architecture.org/programme/exhibitions/counter-investigations> (last access: 17.01.22).
Fig. 3: Taken from: <https://www.dukeupress.edu/complaint> (last access: 17.01.22).
Fig. 4: Taken from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/arts/design/forensic-architecture-founder-says-us-denied-him-visa.html> (last access: 17.01.22).
Fig. 5: Cutout taken from: <https://www.wheelercentre.com/broadcasts/sara-ahmed-on-complaint> (last access: 17.01.22).

Literature

¹ Christina Varvia in: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yQ_UKsAQ (last access: 17.01.22), Min 0:53.
² Eyal Weizman in: ebd., Min 4:40.
³ Ebd. in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4smn1HMWwk> (last access: 17.01.22), Min 2:05, translated from English.