

Outside the West Bank City of Nablus lies the Balata Refugee Camp. Home to almost 25,000 residents living on less than one square kilometer, Balata is the most densely populated Refugee Camp within the West Bank. In recent years Balata has seen hundreds of deaths and arrests, dozens of home demolitions and the camp is subject to near nightly invasions by the Israeli Army. It is here the **Picture Balata** workshop was started to teach youth from the camp about photography.



photographers clockwise from top-left:  
Ala', Hadil, Do'a, Safaa, Tahreer, Sabreen, Taha, Fadi, Mohamed

**Picture Balata** puts the camera into the hands of the children born and raised inside the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestine. Participants ranging from ages 11 to 18 photograph their situation as they live it in Balata Refugee Camp.



## HOST THE PICTURE BALATA EXHIBITION IN SPRING 2007!

In March, 2007 four of the young **Picture Balata** photographers will be traveling to the US to tour with an exhibition of their photography. We are currently searching for venues across the US to host the exhibition. All proceeds from the tour will go to purchasing cameras, computers, and other necessary equipment for the photographers of Picture Balata to sustain and continue their work independently.

*(Please see the final page for more details)*

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## FADI, Age 18

I hope to show people the stories of Palestinian prisoners. I know that the entire world can name the name of the kidnapped Israeli soldier, but no one can even name one of the 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails. This is the problem, the media. They don't cover the conflict equally and that is why I like journalism and photography, so we can tell our own story.



## HADIL, Age 15

I chose to take pictures of the streets because it is an important part of how we live. I notice that when I photograph a child, maybe the child will smile or pose for the camera and that expression might not reflect how the child is really feeling. But the streets, they can't lie. They can't smile or pose for the camera because they are not human beings. This is the way it is.



## MOHAMED, Age 15

It's hard for people from the camp. We don't own anything. Our lands were taken, most don't own businesses, we are dependent on Israel for work. People outside don't understand the relationship between the Israeli occupation and us the Palestinians and how they control us.



## SABREEN, Age 17

I want to show women outside, especially Israeli women, how we, the Palestinian women are living. I want to show them how we are going to universities and working to build this society and taking care of our families and how we are struggling against occupation. And we will continue our struggle until the occupation ends.



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## TAHREER, Age 15

No one in the camp wants to die. We enjoy life like everyone else and we want to be free like everyone else. The Israelis don't want us to be free. I photograph martyrs and their families in the camp because they are our heroes and people should know what they have sacrificed.



## ALA, Age 14

I know about the lives of children outside from television mostly. I know that they have rights that we don't have. They have better lives. While we play football or hide and go seek in the streets the Army will come into the camp... I hope my photos can teach people outside something about our situation.



## SAFAA, Age 12

My project is taking portraits of the children in the camp. I want to show the impression of the face of the children who I take portraits of - their style of living, their background, their experience and how they suffer here from the occupation.



## DO'A, Age 11

I am not a terrorist I am a Palestinian. People think that we are doing bad things to the Israelis, but it is the opposite. They are controlling our lives, not the other way around. It's important for people outside Palestine to know about our situation here. They must know about the lives of the children.



## Taha, Age 16

It's important to talk about the taxi drivers because a lot of young people don't have work and they have to work as drivers. The future of these young people are dying, they are losing jobs. We have to show this problem to the outside world and to the people in Palestine.



## ...HOST THE EXHIBITION!

**PICTURE BALATA** photographers quickly proved their desire to learn photography as a means to express their situation to the world spending countless hours taking photos and reviewing each other's work while at first only sharing only one camera between them.

Along with the website [picturebalata.net](http://picturebalata.net), the touring exhibition will offer another platform for these young people to show the reality of life in Balata Refugee Camp.

The exhibition will feature around 100 (depending on space available) archival 11X14 prints accompanied with text from each photographer and audio recorded in Balata. **At least four of the young photographers will travel from Balata to the US to take part in the exhibition and talk about their work.**

With the exhibition we also hope to raise enough funds to provide each participant with a high-quality digital camera, new computer, internet and anything else they will need to do everything from take their own photographs, edit them and upload them to the internet to share with the world. With the necessary equipment and training the possibilities are truly endless.

Currently we are searching for venues willing to host this important exhibition in **March or early April of 2007**. If you are interested and would like to know more information about hosting **Picture Balata** in your city please contact Matthew Cassel.