



www.olympiarafahmural.org;

www.breakthesilencearts.org

A Tale of Two Cities: Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project and RAFAH CROSSING PROJECT is an international, multi-disciplinary, multi-platform, public art and activism project that links and maps disparate locations and movements globally.

As part of project outreach, we are also exploring possible gallery venues for interactive exhibits that will reflect the complexity of this work while encouraging connection and relationship building. The project aims to raise the level of visibility for participating artists and of the issues of borders and their transgression.

A Tale of Two Cities's two sites are:

~**The Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project** is located in Olympia, WA. (almost completed) www.olympiarafahmural.org.

~**RAFAH CROSSING PROJECT** is located in Rafah, Gaza Strip, Palestine. (In development)

These two cities, Olympia and Rafah, are tied by the tragedy of Rachel Corrie, who was born and raised in Olympia WA and killed in Rafah, Gaza Strip, Palestine. Rachel was run over twice as she attempted to block an Israeli driven bulldozer from destroying the home of a Palestinian doctor. Rachel Corrie joined the thousands of Palestinians who have been killed under military occupation.

A Tale of Two Cities~Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project, shown below, is close to completion. It is a 4000 square foot mural and media project with over 150 participants from across the globe. It makes visible the connections across a wide range of social justice movements and geographical borders.

www.olympiarafahmural.org.



A Tale of Two Cities~The RAFAH CROSSING PROJECT, prospective wall is shown below, is located at the Rafah Crossing between the Gaza Strip, Palestine and Egypt. The Rafah Crossing authority has granted permission for the 24ft x 203 ft. wall.



The design for **A Tale of Two Cities~ RAFAH CROSSING PROJECT** interweaves themes of resilience, international solidarity, environmental justice, and hope. It is in memoriam for all who have been killed,¹ The project's international and collaborative scope embodies Rafah's ancient history as an important crossroads² and highlights its current position as a locked down, highly restricted and controlled border ³ between Gaza and the rest of the world.

The design leaves many areas for artists outside Gaza to contribute either in person or by sending images electronically that will be printed and attached to the wall; thus allowing for people to bypass the restrictions of time, money, and permission to cross the border. Incorporated into the **RAFAH CROSSING Project** will be a reproduction of **Olympia Rafah Solidarity Mural Project** in Olympia WA; which will directly reference that project and its 200 plus participants. The mural's international framing highlights global border issues, including that of the border between the USA and Mexico, which boasts a wall built by an Israeli company.

As with all aspects of "A Tale of Two Cities" **The RAFAH CROSSING** project will use site specific 2 dimensional public art projects as jumping off points for new media and technology including: social networking, geo caching, smart phone apps, blogs and websites. The projects literally move from the local

to the global; impacting environments from the streets of Gaza to the virtual highways and byways.

Among the goals of the project are to create a work that will be a catalyst for imaginative resistance to the occupation of Palestine, extending to occupations globally. The project will include concrete actions that can be taken to support justice on a large and everyday level.

For Example: BTS/MAP is designing an alternative mural tour which will show the viewer in San Francisco what they would see if they were walking down a Gaza Street, including the public art and murals.

Personnel (To Date)

Project Directors

- ~Susan Greene: Break the Silence Mural And Art Project
- ~Fayez El Hasani: Director of Roots Art Group
- ~Adnan Abu AL Sa'ud Co-founder Rachel Corrie Sports Initiative

Partners and Collaborators

- ~Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice
- ~Middle East Children's Alliance, USA
- ~Estria Foundation, USA
- ~Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Gaza
- ~Windows onto Gaza Gallery, Gaza
- ~Roots Art Group, Gaza
- ~Union of Palestinian Artists, Rafah Branch, Gaza
- ~Break the Silence Mural and Art Project, USA
- ~Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project, USA

New Media and Social Networking Components

- I. Of crucial importance to the project's success will be the gathering and disseminating of extensive documentation. Audio and video interviews with participants will become part of a global conversation about resources, water, solidarity, cross movement building and non-violent resistance to oppression. These will all be available on websites that will have interactive components and concrete actions that people can take to become involved and participate. In addition will be the following:
- II. Shooting Back
The process will be documented in large part by the youth and project participants in Gaza. In addition to documentation will be video and audio productions on a range of topics by the participants.

- III. **Alternate Tours and Mapping**
Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geocaching technologies will be used to layer distant locations upon each other and provide alternative walking tours. These tours will challenge the way great distances and borders are experienced and understood. The user will be able to choose from a range of experiences via smartphones, GPS devices, and other hand-held technologies including:
- Viewing parts of the world where international participants are from,
 - Viewing cross movement building projects such as the Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project and other environmental justice projects.
- IV. **Audio Program – The Murals Speak**
Distances are again mitigated by the mural's audio component whereby viewers can use a cell phone to call a local number and hear audio files associated with each image in the mural. Included in the audio files will be the history, mission, and goals of each participating artist or organization. Included may be poetry, interviews, prose and/or music to express their ideas and feelings. This will also be on the interactive website and phone apps.