

Ontario Association of Architects Exceptional Leadership Through Design Excellence: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and/or Truth & Reconciliation Award



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Beyond The Wall

I never expected my first exhibition at DAS to stir such intense emotion within the community. The responses were on two extremes: appreciation, sympathy, and hope on one side, and outrage, frustration, and confusion on the other. The reactions reflected a reality I quickly learned: justice demands not only bringing forth the truth but accepting that it is often uncomfortable, disruptive, and resisted by those who benefit from silence.

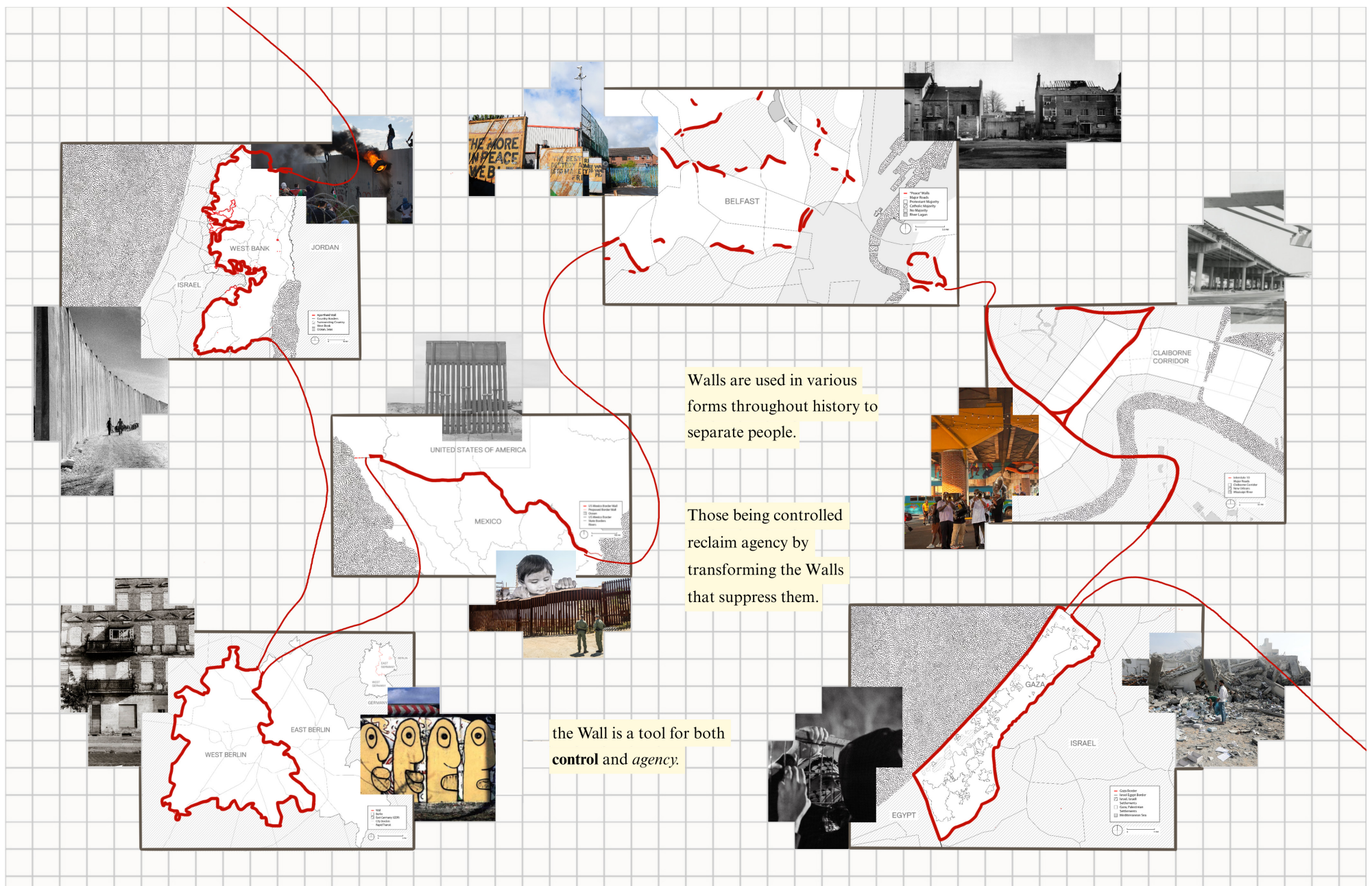
When I began shaping Beyond the Wall, I was determined to create more than an exhibition. I wanted to design a space that could amplify the voices of those silenced by the very systems that architecture students are taught about in school. To do this, I worked closely with a team of five students to define the exhibition’s central thesis: the

Wall as a tool for both control and agency.

My primary contribution was leading the content team, a task which involved months of researching archives and uncovering photographs, stories, and documents that brought diverse narratives to the exhibition. Selecting relevant stories and weaving them into the central theme required constant revision and revisiting of core ideas. I guided my subcommittee in shaping this material into an immersive narrative-photographs, maps, and captions that filled the exhibition’s “oppressive” and “intervention” sides of the gallery. Every alcove became a place of storytelling, every Wall a witness to the struggles and endurance of those subject to injustice. By humanizing these experiences, my goal was for students, faculty, and community members to feel the weight of their role as future designers.



Exhibition “intervention” side



Archival imagery and maps of selected case studies



Perspectives Beyond the Wall: A Panel Discussion



Construction of wall



Exhibition “oppressive” side

To extend the impact of the exhibition beyond its displays, I organized Perspectives Beyond the Wall: A Close-Out Panel. Drawing upon prominent figures within the community, I brought together voices from architecture, structural engineering, sociology, colonial studies, and urban justice. The panel was hosted within the “intervention” side of the gallery, a space framed with stories of resistance and empowerment. It was here that the exhibition evolved into an active forum, with industry professionals and academics engaging in conversations about how the built environment perpetuates oppression on the basis of race, religion, and politics.

Yet, I did not want this project to end at the gallery doors. To

extend the exhibition’s core message to a global audience, I co-wrote an academic paper with Lisa Landrum and Heba Al-Fayez for the Journal of Architectural Education’s special issue on Palestine, highlighting the core ideas and process of the exhibition. My goal was to carry the team’s work beyond the walls of TMU’s Department of Architectural Science and contribute to a broader, global discourse on justice in architecture.

In doing so, I ensured that Beyond the Wall was never just about walls. It was about designers removing the possibility of architecture as a system of division, exclusion, and injustice and instead celebrating it as a space of belonging and humanity.