



المعرفة البريئة
Innocent
Knowledge
ידע תמים

Israeli and Palestinian Children's Drawings



On view January 25 – February 20, 2026

Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice at
Brown University, 94 Waterman Street, Providence, Rhode Island



Children's drawings from across a region shaped by conflict, difference, and resilience



Exhibition Overview

Innocent Knowledge presents drawings created by children ages five to fourteen between October 2024 and June 2025 in fifteen communities across Israel, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. The project was co-directed by Katharina Galor, Taher Vahanvaty, and Canaan Estes, reflecting a collaboration between researchers and students committed to public engagement.

The initiative invited children in diverse educational and social contexts to take part in an open-ended drawing activity responding to the prompt: “Draw anything—especially something related to family, home, or the past year.” Participation was voluntary and organized with the support of local educators.

The drawings are presented without interpretation or analysis. *Innocent Knowledge* offers children living across a region marked by conflict and profound inequality a platform to express themselves freely and to share their perspectives with a wider public.



Acting Director's Note

One of the first things I encountered as Acting Director of the Simmons Center was Katharina Galor's proposal for an exhibition of children's drawings from Palestine and Israel. The war in Gaza was approaching the end of its second year, and the idea seemed necessary and urgent to help reveal the perspectives of inhabitants in the region. Even more importantly, this was not just Katharina's effort, but a remarkable initiative, including Palestinian and Israeli students at Brown, who conceived this project and were determined to see it through. The outcome of this almost impossible endeavor, collecting the creative production of children on both sides of the war, is deeply painful but also invokes outlines of hope. See the falling bombs, the children running in fear; but also see the hearts in a row, the hands of young people clasped in solidarity, the sun rising, and the rainbow. The Center is proud to play a small role, bringing this profoundly important exhibition to Brown University and Providence, Rhode Island.



BRIAN MEEKS

*Acting Director of the Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice
July – December 2025*



Participation was voluntary and organized with the support of local educators



Project Context

Innocent Knowledge was developed as a collaborative research and documentation initiative engaging diverse communities across Israel-Palestine. The project involved partnerships with local educators working in a wide range of settings, including public and private schools, community centers, informal learning environments, and temporary shelters.

The drawings were collected in digital form, with originals retained within the communities at the time of production. No identifying information, such as children's names, schools, or precise locations, was recorded or disclosed. This approach protected the privacy of children and their families while allowing their drawings to be shared publicly and viewed with care and respect.

The project was carried out during a period of significant instability, when access to safe educational and recreational spaces was uneven and, in some locations, severely disrupted. Working within these conditions required ongoing communication and adaptation among coordinators, educators, and local partners.



The images speak for themselves



Thematic Organization

This exhibition includes sixty-two drawings selected from a total of three hundred ninety-three created across the participating communities. The works are grouped according to six recurring visual and conceptual categories from across the collection: Family and Home, Innocence and Knowledge, Violence and Loss, Hope and Resilience, Identity and Belonging, Butterflies and Dreams. These categories were developed for curatorial purposes only. They provide an organizing framework for display and do not imply interpretation, judgment, or analysis of individual drawings.

Rather than organizing the material by national, ethnic, or religious background, the curatorial approach brings together drawings from different communities within each category. This structure reflects visual affinities that become apparent across the material without attributing meaning or intent to the children who produced it.

Individual works are presented without labels to invite viewers to first meet the child through the drawing itself, free from fixed categories or assumptions. By omitting identifying information, the viewer is forced to encounter the humanity of the children's visual expression without pre-determined identity based assumptions.

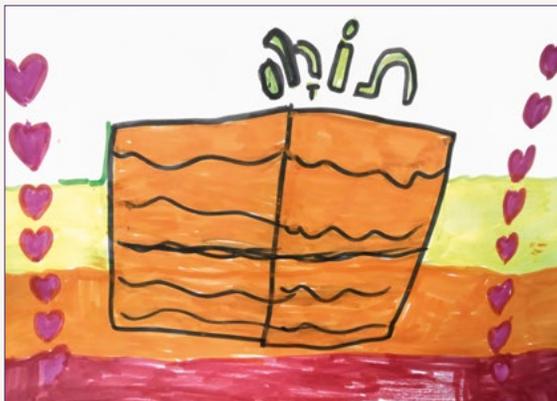
By juxtaposing drawings from multiple locations, the project invites viewers to consider the range and diversity of children's artistic representations across the region while maintaining the ethical principle that the images speak for themselves.

Participating Communities

The participating groups reflect the region's diversity of language, culture, and circumstance, bringing together varied ethnic and religious backgrounds from both urban and rural environments. This range also reflects profound inequalities in safety, mobility, and access to education, which the war has further intensified. Across the region, children continue to experience the effects of conflict in their daily lives, from disrupted schooling and displacement to the loss of security and routine.

Participation was not possible in every community. Some educators and families declined due to safety concerns, institutional restrictions, or fear of political repercussions. In other areas, particularly where communication and infrastructure were severely disrupted, contact could not be maintained.

Every image reflects a single child's work and is not intended to represent a particular group or community. Contextual summaries for all participating as well as non participating communities from across the region provide descriptions of each locality, its social composition, educational setting, and the drawing activity conducted there. These are available through the project website.



Participation spanned schools, community centers, and emergency shelters



Acknowledgments

We thank the children who shared their drawings and the educators and parents who helped facilitate this project. Their trust made *Innocent Knowledge* possible.

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We thank the broader team of students and research staff, including colleagues in Israel, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, and the Brown students whose dedication and diverse perspectives shaped the project. Most chose to remain unnamed, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions.

Exhibition and brochure design by Erin Wells. Mobile installation by Francesca Liuni (Rhode Island School of Design). Soundtrack by Layan Hawila (Berklee College of Music) and Yuval Gur (Rhode Island School of Design). Exhibition Installation by Ben Kaplan.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
innocentknowledge.com



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