

Jorit Agoch decided to paint a mural on the Bethlehem side of Israel's Separation Barrier with the West Bank. Fearless and without any hesitation he depicted the Palestinian adolescent activist, Ahd Tamimi, who had become an iconic figure among Palestinians after slapping an Israel soldier in the face in the village of Nabi Salih. As a consequence, he was put into detention for three days. His work is still on that wall, proclaiming aloud the Israeli truth.

The story of this Neapolitan artist, whose real name is *Ciro Cerullo*, reflects a clear example of a mixture of talent and culture. His art has been compared to *Caravaggio*. He picks ordinary peoples' faces as well as famous ones as his subjects, and paints two long strips on both cheeks, marking a new symbolism. It is a recall of the old African magic rituals of the Scarification - where scars on the skin express the boundaries between the individual and society, between representation and experiences.

With his 'Human Tribe' project, he aims to portray the idea that regardless of the difference of peoples' cultural identity - they all belong to the same tribe: 'the human tribe.' Pursuing a precise and honourable responsibility: talking for the masses. Every place in the world has forgotten sounds which need to be shown, need to be coloured, need to be revealed.

As Jorit demonstrates, a single little voice can become the voice of the whole community.

Expressing the real situation that a population is experiencing. Hence, what are the social rights that he has been fighting for the most with his art? 'A job which is beneficial, safe and upstanding.' This seems to be according to him the keystone of the struggle in modern times. 'Unless you belong to the high and privileged class, the recognition of a citizen's persona is based on the type of the job that he or she does.'

He finds the way that the 'beau monde' lead society as the cause of the human malaise. A Government regulated by the irrationality of the market and the profit which transforms us, as humans, in mere consumers and producers, so that always defeated by the system in the end. Overwhelmed and repressed by the capital raising. For Jorit the bottom of line of the current reality is better defined by *Orwell's* consideration on a likely outcome in the coming up future: 'the totalitarian liberalism is here!'

He started to follow his passion when he was 13 years old in *Scampia*, *Secondigliano*, and *Ponticelli* in southern Italy. His work reached even small villages such as *Pande* in Africa, as well as big cities like *Buenos Aires*, *Cochabamba* in Bolivia, until *Shenzhen* in China.

Jorit's approach to art is not to escape from reality but to dive into it. 'It is an existential and psychological suffering no matter the city where a person lives, it is a situation rapidly expanding, and the worst aspect of it is that no efforts are being made in order to block it.'

This appears as a labyrinth with no exit. But, Jorit as a child born in a small village - who became a well-known artist thanks to his devotion - has a good suggestion for the youth and minorities to speak up and to denounce their discomfort.

Indeed, he wants them to no feel any fear at all. He wants them never to give up and try to express themselves fully. Following the motto 'the life that we have been given is just one; also, it is very short.' This creative performer points out to his audience two choices; 'either a person burns it, or it will burn you.' If someone decides to go with the first, he or she should know that they are the only master of it. 'They can even regulate the intensity of the flame,' Jorit says. Meaning that the speed is the same, but the intensity is their choice. It is extremely complicated to reach all the achievements that a person has set for his life. Nevertheless, fatigue and hard work always reward *ad vitam*.

Jorit had the chance to face distinct perspectives. Unfortunately, he did not find any meaning behind some of the modern street art performances that he encountered worldwide. 'There was not a story to tell.'

So far, in countries which seem to be the most civilised and enlightened, street art has become more tolerated. He sees this as a positive outcome, as the artist says 'the freedom of expression and the liberty of criticising are fading away.'

'Every place in the world has forgotten sounds which need to be shown, need to be coloured, need to be revealed'



Opposite: *Ilaria Cucchi* - Arenella district, Naples © *Salvatore Elefante* Above: *Ahd Tamimi* - Israeli West Bank barrier wall



Eat on the Street

Lahore's famous food street has plenty to tempt the taste buds, and food for the soul says, Muhammad Qasim.

Waqas Safdar sits in an open-air restaurant, an oasis of calm amid the jostling crowds and the sounds of a dozen sizzling frying pans. Smoke from barbecues and the pungent aromas of spices wafts through the air. 'I like three things here,' he says, 'the food, the ambience – and it's open 24 hours.'

Lahore's famous Food Street, located in Gawalmandi between Fort Road and Roshnai Gate of the Walled City, was established soon after the partition of India in 1947 which created Pakistan. Migrants from Amritsar to Lahore started to use their culinary skills to make money by setting up food stalls selling dishes like crispy fried fish, barbecued meat and faloda, a chilled milk dessert. It was closed in 2011 due to the traffic congestion it caused but reopened in 2013 with new parking areas and strict controls on food quality. It became more popular than ever.

'I have been living in this area since partition,' says Chachu Fiqa, owner of Feeqay ki Lassi which specializes in the yoghurt-based drink lassi. The favourite is pairay wali lassi, made with butter and khoya, a kind of dried milk. 'I started my business here by just selling milk. Today my shop is famous,' Fiqa says. 'People from all over Lahore and Pakistan specially came to try our lassi.'

Each stall and shop has its own unique story. 'The place you are standing here was once my home,' says Iqbal Hussain, owner of the restaurant Coco's Den. 'When I saw people getting attracted towards this place for food, I decided to utilize my building for business and didn't change the building much because

I want people to know the background of this area.' Paintings line the wall of the restaurant showing the lifestyles of the people who lived in the region. 'Through these paintings, I wish to preserve our cultural values,' Hussain says.

Desserts of all kinds are enormously popular. Stalls sell meetha (a bread pudding), jalebi (deep-fried fritters covered in sugar syrup) and the tiny gulab jaman (syrup-infused dough balls). In summer the children and adults love the gola ganda ice lollies which are made using red, orange, yellow and green syrup with khoya.

When the hubbub of the street becomes too much, those in the know head for the rooftops. From fourth and fifth floor restaurants, you get a beautiful view of Badshahi Mosque and can relax with slow live music and the wind drifting through your soul.

All the food here is very cheap, which makes it all the more mouth-watering. But once you've had your fill from the dazzling array of treats on offer, there's plenty more to see. Stalls sell jhumka earrings, bangles and rings. A fortune teller with a parrot sits on the floor: the parrot selects cards from a pack, and the fortune teller interprets them. It's all part of a unique atmosphere.

The old and colourful buildings here with antique windows and wonderfully carved wood interiors take us back to the olden times when the Mughal used to rule. The people here are hospitable and generous, and they make and serve food with love. This street is indeed a heaven for food lovers. 'I love visiting this place,' says Huma Rana, one of the diners at Coco's Den. 'It offers the best food and a beautiful cultural experience.'

'All the food here is very cheap, which makes it all the more mouth-watering'



Jalebi, crisp sweets in sugar syrup. Images: © Affan Maudoodi

DISHES TO TRY:



Chicken Malai Boti - a BBQ chicken dish



Masala Machchi - fried fish dish



Keema Matar - ground beef and peas curry



Aloo paratha - flatbread filled with spicy mashed potatoes



Zimbabwe's everchanging currency

Caught in between currencies, Molly Chidavanyika explores Zimbabwe's soaring recession as the Reserve Bank continues printing banknotes that are almost worthless.

Life in Zimbabwe could be really good if you could live in Borrowdale Brooks, says Jonathan Kuimba. 'With three top range cars parked on the drive, a braai [barbecue] in the back yard and a number of guests sipping ice-cold beverages. That is life.' But he is a peasant, despite having wads of money. 'I am a millionaire. I have a case full of trillion-dollar banknotes. I could be one of the richest people in the world, but I am not. I am exactly the opposite.'

From having one of the strongest currencies at independence, the country is currently one of the few in the world to not have a recognised currency of its own. Rhodesia, which became modern-day Zimbabwe, used the pound, which was on a one to one rate with the British pound. This was measured against the gold standard, meaning a certain weight in gold was worth so much in pounds. But the history of the changing currency does not start there. The dollar was introduced in 1970, and it proved to be a strong currency with the same value as the pound right up to independence in 1980 - when the Zimbabwean dollar replaced it. In this period, a significant player in the stability of the currency was the South African branch of BMW, which commissioned Zimbabwe and South Africa to produce BMW 1800SA cars, between 1968 and 1973.

'Zimbabwean economic problems originated politically almost at independence in 1980,' says Professor Joseph Madhimba, an economist at the Bank of Namibia. 'Prime minister Robert Mugabe deliberately turned a blind eye to corruption.' The Zimbabwean Dollar, the official currency of Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2009, suffered three major re-denominations to cushion high face value, valueless denominations brought by hyperinflation. 'The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, ESAP, was a neo-liberal market-driven measure adopted in the country as a prescriptive solution to

the economic crisis in the 1980s.' Professor Madhimba adds that this was accepted as a method in achieving sustained economic growth in certain African countries, but this structural adjustment program failed and crashed the dollar.

But the instability did not stop there. In April 2009, the dollar was officially suspended and Zimbabwe became the only country in the world that does not have and does not use real currency. Hyperinflation crippled the currency, so the governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe introduced Z\$100 million banknotes in the form of bearer notes. Also called Agro cheques, they circulated between 15 September 2003 and 31 December 2008.

This currency was meant to help the public with the burden of carrying large sums of almost worthless banknotes. But, as Professor Madhimba says: 'The bond cannot be measured against the gold standard because the country declared that there is no gold in the country, although the gold there is, is trading on the black markets.' However, the bearer cheques were a useless attempt to curb hyperinflation. The particularity of this currency lays in the fact that they were printed on plain paper - with no security features - when the country ran out of banknotes. Given the fuelling economic situation, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe issued the most banknotes and other types of currency notes in its history. Convertible currencies such as the British pound, Euro, South African rand, Botswana pula, and US dollar were used. In 2016 the Reserve Bank reintroduced the bond notes which were pegged to the United States dollar - circulating alongside eight other currencies. But just like the bearer cheques, the bond notes could not be used for foreign trade and reports said the International Monetary Fund was concerned that there were allegations of secret money printing by the central bank of Zimbabwe.



Zimbabwe's economic problems began under Robert Mugabe's premiership in 1980.

Soon after the inception of the bond, the Reserve Bank introduced the Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), an electronic currency used for bank transactions. It has the same value as the bond note but functions in the absence of physical currency, trading at roughly 1 to 40 to the US dollar. RTGS is supposed to work in conjunction with the bond dollars, together creating a two-currency system. But this system does not offer confidence to local business and foreign investors because it is open to manipulation.

Economist Victor Mhizha Murira says that the strength of an economy is based on its export market, and this is very low in Zimbabwe: 'Exporters cannot rely on Zimbabwe's forward exchange rate, because its currencies are not based on the gold standard. Zimbabwe, as an economy, cannot give assurance of how much its currencies will be worth in a six month trading period.'

This is a complicated and confusing matter, internally and externally. With an everchanging currency, instability is a sure thing. And yet some Zimbabweans are very happy with the volatility of currencies. Mr and Mrs Choto were paying a mortgage on their first home and had a car loan, and they were able to pay off loans signed for in hard currency when the Ministry of Finance ordered tender in Zimbabwean dollars. 'We paid off our mortgage and the loan on the car,' Mr Choto says. 'It was happy days.'

'Zimbabwe became the only country in the world that does not have real currency'

Opposite: Examples of bearer cheques printed by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

Right: The Trillion Dollar note released in 2009 - aimed at help with hyperinflation.
© The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe





Mumbai: where magic happens

Decoding the round-the-clock work culture of Mumbai, Rhea Bose asks the people of the city reasons about the city's relentless nature.