

## BACKGROUND

Both the past and the future can be constructed or destroyed – literally, through what we choose to build, protect and create in the physical world. No more so than in the Middle East, where the Israeli and Palestinian conflict is acted through the architecture and physical planning of the land. Behind the seemingly down-to-earth work of Israeli spatial planners lies a reality, which is actively re-shaping the land into a divided state. While for Israeli towns and villages the future is constructed, the so-called ‘unrecognized’ Palestinian villages<sup>1</sup> remain blank areas on planners’ drawings, or are literally wiped off the map. One Land Two Systems aims to make visible and counter this reality by using architecture, art and culture tools. The project consists of international architecture competition, public debates, exhibitions, art interventions and construction of a multidisciplinary community centre.

### Ein Hawd and Ein Hod

The story of Ein Hawd is the story of two villages Ein Hawd and Ein Hod. Ein Hod is the biggest artist’s village in Israel. It was established in the beginning of the 1950s by a group of Dadaist artists led by Marcel Janko. He had ‘found’ a Palestinian village with hundreds of years of history, a village that had been confiscated in 1948 by the Israeli military, its 900-old villagers made refugees in a single stroke. The Israelis renamed the place Ein Hod, the ‘place of beauty’.

While the new artists village was taking shape right on top of a confiscated one, the extended Palestinian family of Abu al Hayja fled from their homes in Ein Hawd to their own agriculture land in the mountains. Only 1.5km away from their village. The family eventually lost all hope of returning to their old homes and built new ones in their hiding place. They called the new village Ein Hawd, after the old one. The new Ein Hawd was an ‘unrecognized village’ (until February 2004), and its people classed as internal refugees. This meant that, for over 50 years, they lived without basic services like water, electricity, schools or medical care, struggling with the authorities day by day for their right to exist. Finally, in February 2004, after years of continuous struggle, the government recognized the village – or rather 80 dunams (80,000 square metres) of it, a very insufficient area for its present existence and its future development.

With this act of recognition, the Israeli government imposed a master plan on Ein Hawd for the development of the village. The plan gives the village a total amount of land of 80 dunams or 80,000 square metres (1 dunam = 1,000 square metres), an area it has already outgrown. Of this, 13 dunams (13,000 square metres) in the village centre is considered a ‘military area’. The master plan doesn’t take into consideration large parts of the village; it leaves no space for future expansion, demographic growth, economic development, or future sustainability. Through the switch from unrecognized to recognized, the imposed master plan pushes the village further into a straitjacket of destructive political planning.

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<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, more than 100,000 Palestinians (Beduins, Druze and Muslims) are living in over 80 unrecognized villages in side of Israel (not in the Occupied Territories). These people are living as internal refugees under constant displacement and demolition threats. They live with no access to basic infrastructure like water, electricity, schools, kindergartens, medical clinics etc.