

Conflict

Steven Tabor
2018 (c)

Conflict

This is a series about conflict and the range of emotions that conflicts unleash. While conflict results in incalculable human damage and loss, it also leaves in its wake an inexorable array of pain and sorrow.

From internet and the media, we are bombarded with scenes of conflict---conflict between politicians, combatants, races, religions, social and ethnic groups, between man and the forces of nature, and between men and women. Conflict seems to have become the norm in many societies, so much so that its easy to forget that alternatives to unrelenting conflict do exist.

This series has three main sources of inspiration. The first is Thomas Ruff's *Nudes*, which had images appropriated from the internet and modified in ways that cloud their clarity to create visual innuendos. The second source of inspiration was from a visit to the Robert Capa Contemporary Photography Center in Budapest. Viewing a selection of Capa's images, I was awe-struck by the way in which he was able to shoot from the trenches to document war while also revealing the emotions of those trapped in conflict. The third source of inspiration has to do with my own work in the Middle East. While working in Palestine in the 1990s, I was struck by the fact that Israel is so very small geographically---i.e. just two-thirds of the size of Maryland, where I am from. One would think that such a small territory could settle its differences and put its affairs in order. Still, the Israeli-Palestine conflict seems to repel solutions while inflicting incalculable damage on innocent bystanders worldwide.

For this series, images are appropriated from the internet of porn stars from Israel and the Middle East. These are combined with everyday photos of gardens, flowers, buildings and fields. In their films, porn stars play the role of victims to male aggression. In this series, their images are blurred, distorted and combined with everyday settings to document an imaginary conflict dreamscape.

It is difficult to portray conflict without resorting to judgments about what is right and wrong. But in fact, conflict is layered in ambiguity and differences in perspective. An example of this would be the ambiguity that arises between the rights of women to use their bodies as they see fit, with the understanding that pornography does inspire harmful attitudes and social behaviour. Through multiple layers of abstraction, transposition and juxtaposition, this series depicts the harsh and, at the same time, ambiguous emotional landscape of conflict.















Bloom



Delay







Fountain of youth









Pride



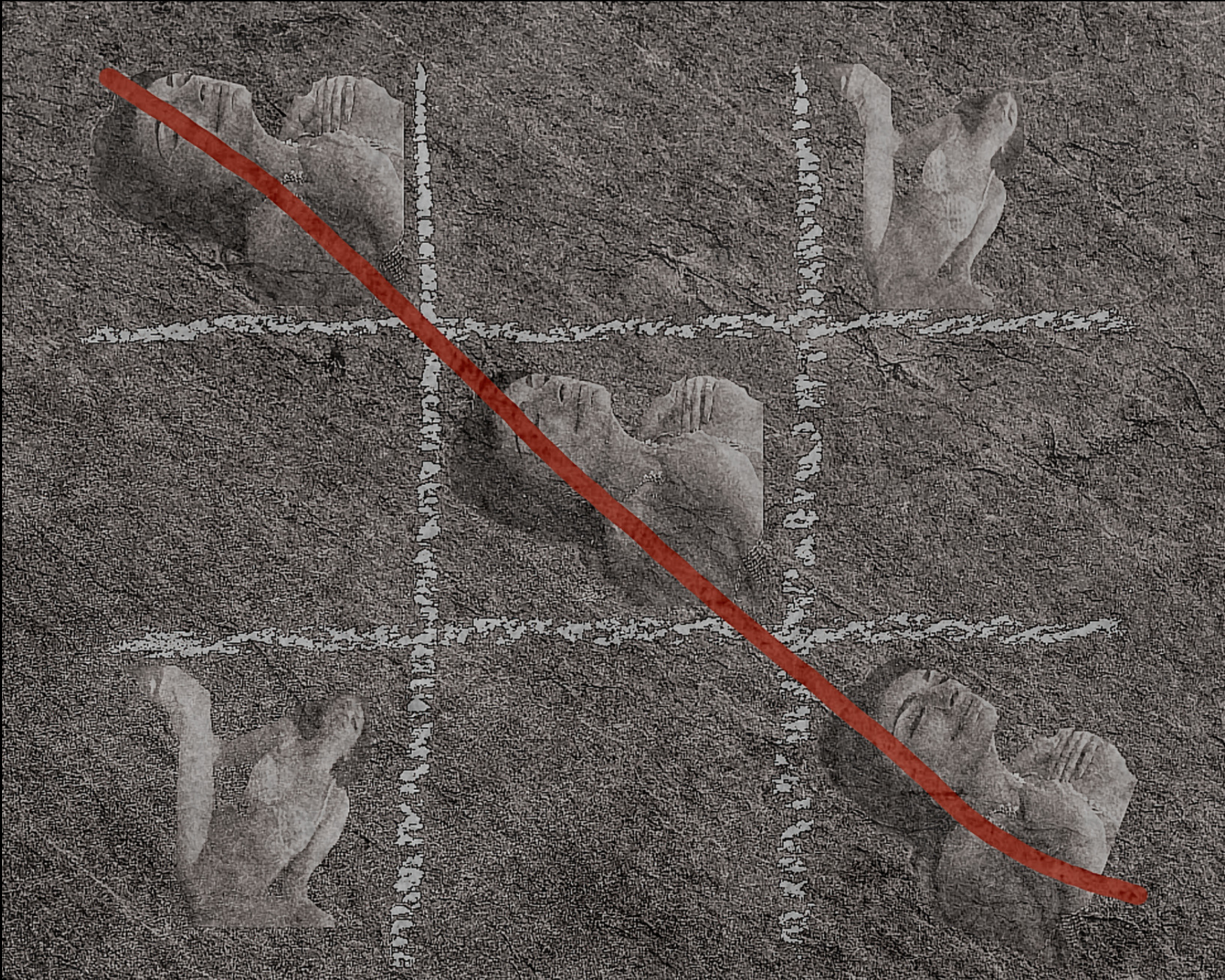


Ambush





Doublecross



Battle



Captured



Fence





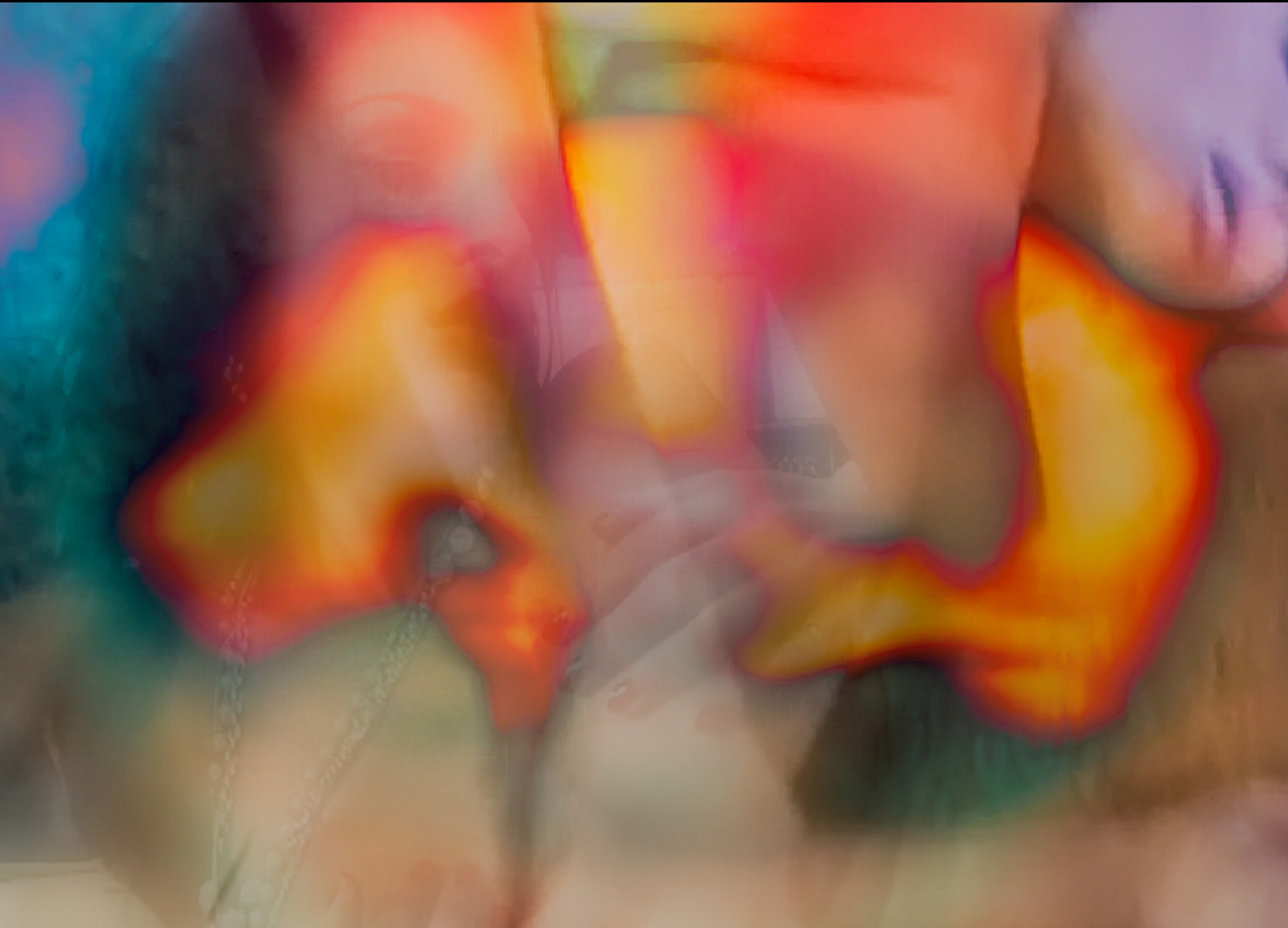






Spoils









Victory





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