

2022 Wellek Prize for a monograph:

Gil Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future* (Duke UP 2021)

The 2022 winner of the René Wellek Prize is a powerful accomplishment – deeply informed and carefully conceptualized, drawing astutely from the range of visionary works it configures. Gil Hochberg's *Becoming Palestine* reads the re-working and re-definition and re-imagining of archives deeply and broadly – in Jumana Manna's film on Palestine's musical archives; in Kamal Aljafari's three Jaffa films and their "productive violation" of the colonial visual archive; in Larissa Sansour's futuristic film of an archaeological archive in the past-future tense; in the exhibits and installations of Ruanne Abou-Rahme and Basel Abbas's return to the ruins of demolished Palestine as an archive of the present; in Farah Saleh's dance performances and their archive of gestures.

In its stunning assemblage and readings, *Becoming Palestine* points at "the power of the archive not primarily as an instrument of repair, restoration, or recovery of lost archives, but rather as a means for facilitating a critical engagement with the very promise of 'recovery'" (133), as "also an opportunity to imagine a radically different reality" (134). In that careful insistence on a present of becoming, on the present itself as a kind of archive of becoming, and drawn from the impressive range of texts, images, sounds, performances that it assembles, *Becoming Palestine* resonates deeply and widely in the context of Palestine – and beyond.