



# Israel Lessons

## Industrial Arcadia. Teaching and Research in Architecture

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- An urbanist research project on concepts of social space rooted in land domestication and landscape idolatry
- Explores in particular the role agriculture played in Israel's urbanisation processes, creation of a national narrative, and changes in local climate
- Research results are visualised in spectacular graphics and maps
- Features proposals for architectural interventions by laba students

The Middle East is the birthplace of the Neolithic revolution that came to humanise and domesticate the planet. It is also considered the cradle of civilisation as it saw some of the very first developments in human social and technological inventions, such as cities, class-based societies, monumental architecture, writing, the wheel, and irrigation. The 2016/17 research campaign of EPFL's Laboratory Basel (laba) took a critical look at the part of this region that today forms the state of Israel and the role agriculture there played in territorial appropriation and domestication, in structuring the development of urbanisation, in creating a national homeland narrative, and in changing the climate. The research explored the three major types of Israeli agricultural development: the vernacular Palestinian/Bedouin, the socialist utopian Kibbutz/Moshav, and the contemporary high-tech desert farming. *Israel Lessons: Industrial Arcadia* presents the findings as text as well as visualised in striking images, graphics and maps. It also demonstrates how facts and narratives related to agriculture and the climate crisis are intertwined with geopolitics and sectarian ideals of earthly paradises. Proposals for architectural interventions designed by laba's students round out the book.

**Harry Gugger** is an architect and has been a Professor at EPFL's School of Architecture since 2005. He is head of EPFL's Basel-based satellite studio Laboratory Basel (laba). **Barbara Costa** is laba's Head of Research. She graduated in architecture from the University of Porto's Faculty of Architecture and has also completed a Master's degree in drawing at the University of Lisbon's Faculty of Fine Arts. **Juliette Fong** is laba's web project manager and administrator. **Salomé Gutscher** studied architecture at EPFL and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and currently works as a teaching assistant at laba. **Stefan Hörner** graduated in architecture from ETH Zurich and is currently laba's Head of Teaching. **Charlotte Truwant** graduated in architecture from EPFL and currently works as a research assistant at laba.