

John Halaka, M.F.A.**Professor of Visual Art, College of Arts & Sciences**

Over the past several years, Professor John Halaka has developed extensive relationships with refugee and internally displaced communities in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Lebanon. The life experiences and personal narratives he has recorded with four generations of Palestinian refugees have directly informed his creative practice, his teaching, and many other contributions to USD. The artwork he produces offers viewers a space to reflect on their personal and collective relationships and responsibilities to the experiences of displaced individuals and populations. As a result of his engagement with Palestinian refugees, John has developed several art projects, including drawings, paintings, photographs as well as documentary films and oral history archives. The support of IOGs, Faculty Research Grants, a Sabbatical Leave, and a Fulbright Research Fellowship that enabled him to live in Lebanon for a year, have allowed him to work closely with the refugees and produce a multi-phased project titled Portraits of Denial & Desire. The drawings, photographs and documentary videos he has created for this project have been exhibited nationally and internationally in nine one-person exhibitions and 27 group exhibitions. Additionally, he has completed two documentary films and is developing a video archive of the 220 interviews recorded with Palestinian refugees. John has established extensive relationships with communities of Palestinian visual artists whose work highlights the experiences of displacement. John brings his extensive international experience and research alive to develop undergraduate courses on campus and to create experiential learning opportunities for courses abroad.