



la Biennale di Venezia

56. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

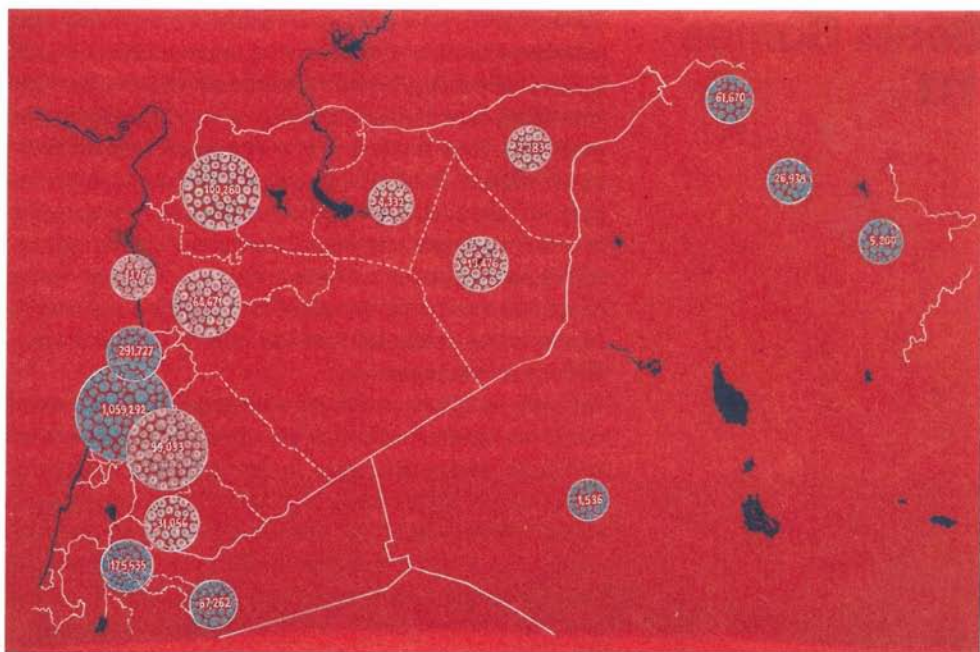
**THE
WORLD'S
FUTURES**

Tiffany Chung 110

Tiffany Chung's delicately painted and embroidered maps possess a beauty completely at odds with the horrendous realities they represent. Superimposing maps from different historical periods, the artist interweaves geography with history to revisit sites of cultural trauma. Her investigations often lead back to colonial times, when today's contested borders were drawn up by foreign powers. Chung's resulting works chart the destruction and recovery of war-struck areas, for which she regularly predicts possible futures. This interweaving of fact and speculation undermines the apparent objectivity of cartographical maps to remind the viewer that, as philosopher Alfred Korzybski famously put it in 1931, "the map is not the territory." Chung's interests have recently expanded from the geographic to the demographic, as evidenced by her ongoing project related to the Syrian conflict.

Tiffany Chung embarked on the *Syrian Project* in 2011. Having herself lived through the Vietnam War and its aftermath, her engagement with Syria affords her a way to confront her own trauma from a distance. She initially attempted to unpack the sectarian violence by tracing it back to 1916 Sykes-Picot-Agreement between Britain and France. While anticolonial struggle united the Arab peoples against a common enemy, it may also have prevented them from addressing the internal differences that underlie recent outbursts of violence. As Chung's research evolved, she meticulously gathered statistics about the increasing numbers of internationally displaced persons and war casualties, which she subsequently translated into a series of maps wherein the colors and magnitudes of the dots indicate the intensity of the crisis. The fragile visual order of these works conveys the precariousness of Chung's endeavor to represent a disaster that is beyond human imagination.

—TR



Tiffany Chung, Syria Deeply Day 1387: December 31, 2014—numbers of casualties and refugees, 2015