

# *Our Boys* and the Traumatic Breakdown of an Event

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The HBO-Keshet miniseries *Our Boys* deals with the 2014 kidnap and murder of the Palestinian teenager, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, by three Israeli settlers, two of whom were themselves teenagers. This presentation will examine some of the narrative and aesthetic strategies employed by the makers of the series in its portrayal of this traumatic event. The starting point is a consideration of the televisual techniques of serial drama that function as a 'breaking down' of a complex event, where the notion of event is itself understood as a kind of breakdown. In many ways, the definition of an event is that it is a breakdown, a breakdown in the normal run of things, of how things are, and that after this, things will never be the same again. Machines break down, as do people, as do relationships, so it is possible to consider this idea across a range of phenomena that revolve around the concept of the event. *Our Boys* follows other creative works in recent years that seek to articulate something of the post-traumatic nature of Israeli society whilst, significantly, this series also attempts to give a voice to a sense of Palestinian trauma. In the context of this fifty-year occupation, we can think of such a situation as a certain regime of madness, where breakdown signals both a psychic collapse and a potential for breakthrough, yet one that seems necessarily defined by some form of violence.

Conference theme:

- Media, arts and creativity on breakdown, dissolution and resolution