

## Free Running Gaza (25 min.)

<http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/artscape/2011/06/2011619123857973866.html>

**Filmmakers: George Azar and Mariam Shahin** This film about parkouring -- an art and a sport -- in Gaza will introduce you to: Palestinian martial artists, break dancers, herbal medicine, a former Israeli settlement used as a gymnastics practice area, discussion of the occupation and economy, and lots of footage of the Gaza Strip. **As you watch the film, notice what the obstacles are that the parkour athletes/artists must overcome. Notice physical, political, and economic barriers.** Here is the article that accompanies the film clip:

In the Khan Younis refugee camp in Gaza, Mohammed and Abdallah have found a way to distract themselves from the overcrowded tenements and squalid alleyways. Both young men have trained for years to become Gaza's leading practitioners of parkour.

As much a life philosophy and an art form as an athletic discipline, parkour is the traversing and scaling of obstacles and barriers through running, jumping and vaulting. Parkour is set apart from political and religious factionalism, from violence and militancy.

For Mohammed, Abdallah and the latest generation of young Palestinians to have grown up in the camp under-educated and unemployed, it is the ultimate means of escape.

The essential definition of parkour is "finding your own way" and *Artscape* journeys around Gaza in the company of Mohammed and Abdallah to experience what this is like.

"When we practise [parkour] we free ourselves," explains Mohammed. "It is as if we're transported to another world."

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### Notes on the film:

When "sanctions" are referred to in the film, they are referring to Israel's blockade of Gaza.

Although the sea looks free, Israel controls Gaza's water border with military ships, sometimes attacking Gaza fishermen. Israel also, with Egypt, controls the border with Egypt and all other ways in and out of Gaza.