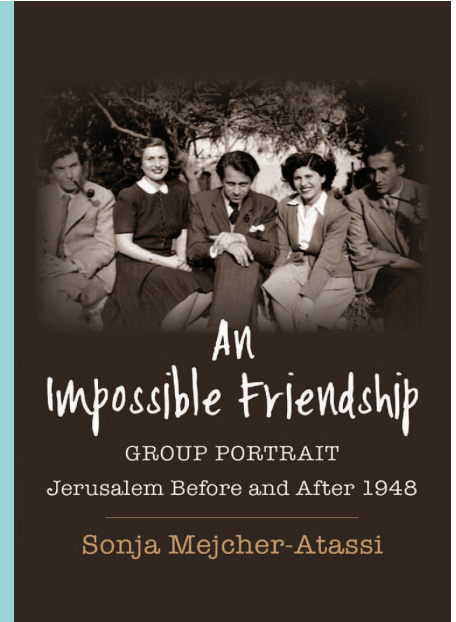




Book Talk & Roundtable

**“An Impossible Friendship.
Group Portrait, Jerusalem Before
and After 1948”**



22nd Oct 2024, 6:15 - 8 pm

Rämistrasse 59, CH-8001 Zürich (RAA-G-01)

Book Talk & Roundtable

With: Author Sonja Mejcher-Atassi (American University in Beirut), Elisabeth Bronfen (UZH), Nijmi Edres (University of Bern), Rebecca Sauer (UZH)

Chair: Bettina Dennerlein (UZH)

Abstract:

In Jerusalem, as World War II was coming to an end, an extraordinary circle of friends began to meet at the bar of the King David Hotel. This group of aspiring artists, writers, and intellectuals—among them Wolfgang Hildesheimer, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Sally Kassab, Walid Khalidi, and Rasha Salam, some of whom would go on to become acclaimed authors, scholars, and critics—came together across religious lines in a fleeting moment of possibility within a troubled history. What brought these Muslim, Jewish, and Christian friends together, and what became of them in the aftermath of 1948, the year of the creation of the State of Israel and the Palestinian Nakba? In *An Impossible Friendship*, Sonja Mejcher-Atassi tells the story of this unlikely friendship and in so doing offers an intimate cultural and social history of Palestine in the critical postwar period.

Following Sonja Mejcher-Atassi's presentation of her work in a book talk, there will be an interdisciplinary roundtable in which scholars from history, literary and area studies will discuss the various ways in which personal histories interlace with broader developments, addressing questions such as: How can we work towards a more nuanced understanding of the past, present, and future? Are there alternative ways to deal with difficult histories and heritage? How political can the personal become? What can academia contribute in times of crisis and uncertainty? How does excavating and highlighting micro-histories of cooperation and understanding provide pathways to build similar forms of understanding today and in the future?

After the Book Talk & Roundtable, we cordially invite all those interested to an Apéro. Please register in advance until Oct. 8, 2024, at isl.office@aoi.uzh.ch