

Thursday 27 April, 7:30 p.m.

- Opening and poetry reading by poet and novelist Saadi Youssef
Reception generously offered by Enate, Moritz, Pago and Sumarroca

Friday 28 April, from 6 to 10 p.m.

- *Three Years after the War, the Hour of Truth in Iraq*, lecture by Pierre-Jean Luizard
- *The Organization of Generalised Chaos*, lecture by Hana Al-Bayaty
- *Debris and Diaspora: Iraqi Culture Now*, lecture by Sinan Antoon

Saturday 29 April, from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- *The Art Music of Iraq: A Unity of Diversities*, lecture by Scheherazade Qassim Hassan
- *Uranium Warfare upon Iraq, Context and Ramifications*, lecture by Rashad Salim
- Conversation between Sinan Antoon and Saadi Youssef

More information on activities connected to **Contemporary Arab Representations. The Iraqi Equation** in www.fundaciotapies.org

Contemporary Arab Representations. The Iraqi Equation began with a conference at the Universidad Internacional de Andalucía-UNIA arteypensamiento (14 - 16 November 2005) with lectures by novelist Ali Bader, journalist Kâis Al-Azzawi and sociologist Pierre-Jean Luizard, among others. The project continued as platform for the presentation of documentary films and videos, feature films, video portraits, photographic archive materials, books and magazines, live satellite TV transmissions, artistic interventions and other live activities such as literature readings, lectures and debates. This new phase of the project was on exhibition at KW Institute of Contemporary Art Berlin, and now continues with a showing at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies which includes new elements.

Forthcoming publication **Tamass 3. Contemporary Arab Representations. The Iraqi Equation**

CONTEMPORARY ARAB REPRESENTATIONS

The Iraqi Equation



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Contemporary Arab Representations is a long-term project directed by Catherine David, organized and produced by the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona; the Arteleku-Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa and the Universidad Internacional de Andalucía-UNIA arteypensamiento. **Contemporary Arab Representations. The Iraqi Equation** has been produced in association with the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and the centro de las artes de Sevilla, and has been made possible thanks to support from the German Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes) and the Spanish Ministry of Culture.



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Sinan Antoon, Arab Image Foundation, Hana Al-Bayaty, Sawsan Darwaza, Scheherazade Qassim Hassan, Tariq Hashim, Koutaiba Al-Janabi, Nedim Kufi, Faisal Laibi, Pierre-Jean Luizard, Maysoon Pachachi, Salam Pax, Talal Refit, Rashad Salim, Samir, Baz Shamoun and Saadi Youssef.

28 APRIL - 25 JUNE 2006

CONTEMPORARY ARAB REPRESENTATIONS is a long-term project which includes presentations of works by authors from different disciplines (visual arts, architecture, literature, thought, film), seminars, performances and publications. The aim is to enable production, circulation and exchanges between the different cultural centres of the Arab world and the rest of the world. The project looks at the complex dimensions of aesthetics in relation to social and political situations to acquire a more precise knowledge of what is happening now in various zones of the Arab world. If the first and second part focused on Beirut/Lebanon and Cairo/Egypt respectively, this third stage of the project turns its attention to Iraq.

Since the Gulf War and the invasion and occupation of the country, the images and incomplete news (with omissions and manipulation) that reach us from Iraq through the mass media have to a large extent simplified and distorted representations and information about what is an extremely complex political, cultural and social situation.

The dramatic situation in the country makes it difficult to gain direct access to people, and makes any attempt to make a serene appreciation of contemporary productions derisory if not downright obscene. But that doesn't make it any less urgent to bring together, discuss and disseminate the "debris and diasporas" that bear witness, in Iraq and throughout the world, to the rich, powerful nature of what was one of the most dynamic modern cultures in the Arab world in the 20th century.

The Iraqi Equation does not, therefore, propose an "exhibition" of modern or contemporary Iraqi art; rather, it provides a platform for information, meeting and debate open to artists, film-makers, authors, analysts and activists able to throw some light on the historic, political, social and cultural context that has led to the present situation and to suggest possible ways out of the nightmare that is everyday life for the Iraqi people today. The aim is, then, to put events, images and ideas into perspective to step back from the immediate horizon of destruction, confusion and chaos, a situation deliberately maintained to the benefit of a few, and to gather testimonies and actions enabling us to make an inventory of a complex inheritance (Mesopotamia, cradle of civilisation, but also modern Iraqi culture and monuments) and to encourage possible projects with Iraqis, both inside the country and elsewhere.

With this view in mind, the project presents four artistic situations based on work by Samir, Faisal Laibi, Talal Refit and Nedim Kufi, whose biographies and productions provide testimony to the diversity of histories and expressions that mark the Iraqi diaspora. These artists also took part in building this platform, proposing specific works or interventions: Samir with his film *Forget Baghdad* (2003), a documentary he dedicated to the role of Iraqi Jews in cultural and political life in the country up to the late-1950s, through the lives of certain leading figures: the writers Samir Naqqash, Shimon Ballas, Sami Michael, Moshe Houri and the film theorist Ella Habiba Shohat; Faisal Laibi, allowing his 1984 painting *Coffee Shop in Baghdad*, a very well-known work that has become a symbol for many Iraqis, to be enlarged to the size of a mural creating a virtual agora, or temporary public square, in the Fundació Antoni Tàpies exhibition space; Talal Refit, building a giant bench entitled *Democracy* (2005), drawing his inspiration from the tra-

ditional benches found in cafés in Baghdad; Nedim Kufi, fixing to the wall scrolls of texts and images, that were the preparatory stages for his on-line art and cultural diary *Daftar*, available on the Internet since 2004, providing an excellent introduction to the complexity and paradoxes of the images and references that play a role in building modern and contemporary Iraqi art.

The project also devotes a large space to photographic and video images, and television recordings from several Iraqi networks, which welcome visitors, giving them an idea of the diversity of faces and situations in Iraq, contrasting with the dramatic, recurring images of the war and the stereotypes that European media usually help to propagate. A selection of recent films and videos documents different aspects of the situation in Iraq, and the reactions and opinions of Iraqis from different social groups: a first programme shows "returns to Baghdad" filmed by Iraqis who had left the country in the more or less recent past (Sinan Antoon, Tariq Hashim, Maysoon Pachachi, Baz Shamoun); another features news video clips made by one of the most famous Iraqi bloggers, Salam Pax, highlighting the leading role played by the new media in informing and forming perceptions of this war, a very different one in this respect from the 1991 "war without images". A third programme is devoted to Hana Al-Bayaty's films of the latest meeting of the Iraqi opposition in exile in London in 2003, three months before the war began, and the sessions of the *BRussells* Tribunal to gather testimonies about the violence and war crimes committed by the coalition (and the government that acts under its authority) against the civil population. A series of portraits of leading Iraqi cultural figures by Sawsan Darwaza and Koutaiba Al-Janabi also provides a new vision of the diversity of talents and discourses to be found in the country.

Finally, a series of slideshows made from more than three hundred Iraqi archive images stored in the Arab Image Foundation in Beirut provide a comparative human, cultural, geographic and urban view of Iraq from the 1930s to the late-1970s: anonymous images and portraits in black and white and coloured portraits (children, couples, soldiers) produced by studios in towns and villages from all over the country; artistic montages by Murad Dagestani; images of cabarets, picnics and cultural life; archaeological sites and historic monuments; views of Baghdad in the 1960s by Latif Al-Ani, testifying to the modern beauty of the monuments and infrastructure in a city that was one of the first in the region to become developed, in harsh contrast with the images of ruin and destruction recorded in more recent documentaries.

At the heart of the project are, of course, the authors, artists and other guests. Public readings, testimonies and analyses proposed by the various participants will be exhaustively recorded to form the basis for an archive open to the public, and which will be built up as the project develops.

Images produced during the interventions of the many participants in this forum, and many more from websites and blogs devoted to Iraq on the Internet will also be gradually added to create new slideshows and image banks to be presented as part of the project. **CATHERINE DAVID**

Sinan Antoon (Baghdad, 1967)

He is a poet, novelist and translator. He studied English literature at Baghdad University before moving to the United States after the 1991 Gulf War. He pursued his graduate studies at Georgetown and Harvard, where he is a PhD candidate in Arabic literature. He is also an assistant professor in Arabic Culture at New York University. His poems and articles have been published in *An-Nahar*, *As-Safir*, *Masharef*, *Al-Adab*, *The Nation*, *Middle East Report*, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, *Banipal* and the *Journal of Palestine Studies* as well as in the anthology *Iraqi Poetry Today* (London 2003). His books include *A Prism*; *Wet with Wars* (Cairo 2003) and *I'jam* (Beirut 2004). Antoon returned to Iraq in 2003 as a member of InCounter Productions to film a documentary *About Baghdad* on the lives of Iraqis in a post-Saddam occupied Iraq. Sinan Antoon is currently living in New York.

Sinan Antoon, ABOUT BAGHDAD, 2003



Arab Image Foundation

It is a non-profit organisation that was established in Lebanon in 1996. The Foundation aims to promote photography in the Middle East and North Africa by locating, collecting, and preserving the region's photographic heritage. The material in the collections dates from the early-nineteenth cen-

Arab Image Foundation, TAHRIR SQUARE, BAGHDAD, 1960



tury to the present. Photo research from Iraq was done by the photographer Yto Barrada and includes work by Murad Daguestani and Latif Al-Ani.

Hana Al-Bayaty (Aurillac, 1979)

She is a film-maker and journalist. She studied Political Science in London. She specialized in international relations and military strategy at the Université de la Sorbonne and joined a cinema documentary school in 2001. In 2003, she made



Hana Al-Bayaty, ON DEMOCRACY IN IRAQ, 2003

the documentary *On Democracy in Iraq*, providing an insight into a meeting of the major tendencies in the Iraqi opposition which took place in London three weeks before the invasion. Hana Al-Bayaty is a member of the Executive Committee of the BRussels Tribunal, a commission of inquiry organized in Brussels in April 2004 that investigated the crimes committed by the occupation after the invasion of Iraq. Hana Al-Bayaty returned to Iraq last summer and shot a film about the aftermath of the war in Falluja. She is based in Cairo.

Sawsan Darwaza (Amman, 1962)

She is a pioneer in the field of Jordanian independent theatre and film. Her ongoing cultural program *An Artist With A View* contains 52 video portraits of key cultural figures in the Arab world, consisting of interviews, analyses, and excerpts from individual works. Sawsan Darwaza produced and directed herself the video portraits of the prolific Iraqi Oud musician Naseer Shamma, the Iraqi film-maker Sa'ad Salman, the Iraqi French costume and jewellery designer Hana Sadek, the Iraqi poet Shawki Abdul Amir, and one of the leading Iraqi theatre directors, Jawad Assadi.

Catherine David

She studied Linguistics, Literature and History of Art at the Université de la Sorbonne and the École du Louvre in Paris. From 1982 to 1990 she was curator at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, and from 1990 to 1994 she was Curator at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, both in Paris, where she organized

several solo and group exhibitions including: *Reinhard Mucha, Passages de l'image*; *Stan Douglas: Monodramas and Television Spots*; *Marcel Broodthaers*; *Hélio Oiticica*; *Eva Hesse*; *Jeff Wall* and *Chantal Ackerman: D'Est*, among others. From 1994 to 1997 she served as Artistic Director for documenta X in Kassel, Germany, and from 1998 has been Director of the long-term project *Contemporary Arab Representations* which began at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona. In 2000 she organized *The State of Things* for the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin. Between 2002 and 2004 David was Director of the Witte de With Rotterdam in the Netherlands. She is currently a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin.

Scheherazade Qassim Hassan

She is an Iraqi Ethnomusicologist trained in Ethnology and Islamic Sociology. She is a specialist in music from the Middle East. She founded and directed the first Centre for Traditional Music in Baghdad and created a sound archive based on extensive fieldwork in the country. She taught at the University of Baghdad and in France at the Université Paris Nanterre. She is currently an associate member of the laboratory of Ethnomusicology attached to the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) and chairs the study group for the music from the Arab world within the International Council for traditional music. She has published books and articles in French, English and Arabic.

Tariq Hashim (Baghdad, 1960)

He has studied theatre and film in Baghdad, Bulgaria and Copenhagen. He has directed and edited numerous film and theatre productions. After 23 years in exile, Tariq Hashim returned to his homeland, Baghdad, where he encountered political turmoil, perpetual fear and violence. Shot in only 16 hours, Hashim's film *16 Hours in Baghdad* (2004) reveals the multi layered social landscape of Baghdad today. The film won the Golden Hawk Award at the 4th Arab Film Festival in Rotterdam, 2004. Tariq Hashim is based in Copenhagen.

Faisal Laibi Sahi, COFFEE SHOP IN BAGHDAD, 1984



Tariq Hashim, 16 HOURS IN BAGHDAD, 2004

Koutaiba Al-Janabi (Baghdad, 1959)

He studied photography and cinematography at the Academy of Drama and Cinema in Budapest. He has worked on many feature films, short dramas, TV and documentary films around the world. In 2003 the Emirates Film Festival presented him with a special achievement award for his role as director of photography on *Jiyan* (2003), the first Kurdish feature film. As a director, Koutaiba Al-Janabi made several documentary and short films. *Wasteland - Between London and Baghdad* (1998) is a short documentary about Nahida Rammah, a well-known Iraqi actress, living in exile. Koutaiba Al-Janabi lives in London.

Nedim Kufi (Baghdad, 1962)

He has studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad, at the European Ceramic Work Centre in the Netherlands and Graphic Design at the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in Utrecht. He works with mixed media, from paper and flowers to earth and ceramics, in order to develop a close relationship between the disciplines of printing and etching, sculpture, and design. In his frequent use of grids in his artwork, Nedim Kufi draws on the Islamic tradition of repetition and patterning. Between 2004 and 2005 Kufi published 16 issues of an on-line culture diary *Daftar* (www.daftar.nl), an artist's notebook in Arabic, containing essays, translated articles and other artistic projects. Kufi lives in Cairo and Amersfoort.

Faisal Laibi Sahi (Basra, 1947)

He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad in the late sixties, with further studies at the École supérieure des beaux-arts and the Université de la Sorbonne in Paris. After living for almost 30 years in Europe, Faisal Laibi continually enriches his understanding of Iraq's unique and rich cultural heritage from the Pre-Islamic Mesopotamian civilisations of Sumer, Babylon and Assyria. His paintings and drawings express his keen sense of historical identity far beyond any patriotic attachment to his homeland. The painting *Coffee Shop in Baghdad* (1984) is an emblematic representation of Iraqi society in a period of relative stabilisation. Faisal Laibi Sahi lives and works in London.



Maysoon Pachachi, RETURN TO THE LAND OF WONDERS, 2003

Pierre-Jean Luizard (Paris, 1954)

He is a researcher at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) in France. He has lived for long periods of time in most Arab countries in the Middle East. A historian of contemporary Islam in his native country, he is especially interested in the impact of different manifestations of Islamic faith and the role some of them play within current political systems: the history of the Shi-ite clergy in Iraq; the history of Islamic reformism, particularly after the reform of Al-Azhar and popular Islam as carried through by Sufi brotherhoods in Egypt. He is a member of the G.S.R.L. (Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités) in Paris, and his publications include *La Formation de l'Irak contemporain* (Paris, 1991), *La Question irakienne* (Paris, 2002) and *Le Choc colonial et l'islam: les politiques religieuses des puissances coloniales en terres d'islam* (2006). Together with Martine Cohen and Jean Joncheray he co-directed the jointly written work *Les Transformations de l'autorité religieuse* (2004).

Maysoon Pachachi

She is a documentary film-maker. She studied philosophy at University College London and film at the Slade School of Fine Art and the London Film School. She teaches film and video directing and editing in Jerusalem and Gaza. In 2003, Maysoon Pachachi returned to Baghdad to shoot *Return to the Land of Wonders* after living abroad for 35 years. In this documentary, she accompanies her father, who has returned to head a committee drafting a temporary constitution and Bill of Rights. She follows this tortuous process, with its arguments over changes in wording demanded by Washington or compromises to satisfy sectarian interests. Moving between the political sphere and everyday life on the streets, this film enables one to glimpse the resilience of Iraqis. Maysoon Pachachi lives in London.

Salam Pax

He is a pseudonymous blogger from Iraq whose site *Where is Raed?* received notable media attention during and after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Within his blog, Salam discusses the war, his homosexuality, his friends, the disappearances of people under the government of Saddam Hussein, and his work as a translator for the journalist Peter Maas. In summer 2004 Pax started a second blog titled *Shut Up You Fat Whiner!* Pax's weblog entries have been collected and published in the book *Salam Pax - The Baghdad Blogger* (London 2003). His short video diaries provide his unique view of ordinary life in today's Iraq and are regularly commissioned for BBC's *Newsnight* and Channel 4 News.



Salam Pax, THE BAGHDAD BLOGGER, 2003



Talal Refit (Kirkuk, 1957)

He is a visual artist, architect and multimedia designer. He is a graduate from the Faculty of Architecture of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. After working for Ankara's Department of City and Regional Planning, he settled in Germany in 1985. From 1990 he has worked as an art instructor in painting and graphics. His work *Democracy* (2005) is an enlarged Arab bench, of the sort commonly found in Baghdad. Its function is to offer a substantial extension to the political notion of Democracy. The short film *Epilog* (2005) recalls the lost past through cartoons. Talal Refit lives and works in Bad Bentheim, Germany.

Rashad Salim (Khartoum, 1957)

He graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, in Graphics; and has a degree in audiovisual art from St. Martin's School of Art, London. As an artist, student/researcher in history of art, culture, technology and ecology he is much influenced and inspired by his travels and periods of residence in Iraq, England, Morocco and Yemen. An educator and extensively exhibited artist, he is the author of several publications and has collaborated in creative projects in film, photography, printmaking and sculpture. A cultural activist, he has worked with the UN and non-governmental organisations, involved with volunteers and development. He is a member of the Ashford Visual Artists, Kent, England. He is an active member of iNCIA the international Network of Contemporary Iraqi Artists and belongs to the Iraqi Artists Society. An independent activist, he is affiliated to a number of academic and media based Iraqi anti-war associations in England where he lives; Rashad is particularly concerned with the issue of depleted uranium, its total ban and the consequences that derive from that. He lives in England.

Samir (Baghdad, 1955)

He works with video and electronic cinema. He teaches at the Kunsthochschule für Medien (KHM) in Cologne and at the Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie (dfbb) in Berlin. He has made forty films, including *Morlove - an Ode for Heisenberg* (1986), the documentary *Babylon 2* (1993) and most recently *Snow White* (2005). Over the years, he has focused on issues of alienation and the formation of identity. *Forget Baghdad* (2003) is a reflection upon clichés about "the Jew" and "the Arab" in the last hundred years of cinema and combines it with biographies of some extraordinary individuals: Iraqi-Jewish communists. He portrays among others Samir Naqqash, Shimon



Samir, FORGET BAGHDAD, 2003

Ballas and Ella Habiba Shohat. Samir lives and works in Zurich.

Baz Shamoun (Shikhan Mousel, 1964)

He studied television and film at the Universitas Carolina in Prague. In the short documentary *Where is Iraq?* (2003) the Iraqi-Canadian filmmaker tries to re-enter his homeland after 27 years of forced exile. In Jordan, he meets other Iraqis who are no longer able to cross the border: workers without jobs, truckers, cab drivers and anxious refugees. Worn down by years of war, sanctions, arbitrary arrests, torture and fear of execution, the men angrily recall the darkest years of the fallen regime. Baz Shamoun lives in Canada.

Saadi Youssef (Basra, 1934)

He is a poet, novelist and translator. He has published thirty volumes of poetry, and seven books of prose in Arabic. His translated work includes his poetry collection *Without an Alphabet, Without a Face* (USA 2003) and *Fern vom Ersten Himmel* (Berlin 2004). Saadi Youssef has translated into Arabic major works by writers such as Walt Whitman, Constantine Cavafy, Federico Garcia Lorca, George Orwell and others. Saadi Youssef left Iraq in 1979 and currently lives in London.