

ARTIN**IRAQ**TODAY

ARTIN**IRAQ**TODAY

IN MEMORY OF JABRA IBRAHIM JABRA

ART IN **IRAQ** TODAY: PART II

CURATED BY DIA AL-AZZAWI

GHASSAN
GHAIB

HEAVEN'S OUTCAST: AUTOGRAPHY

It was always my destiny to be an artist, since art has been a necessity for me since childhood. I had then the readiness and predisposition towards the arts which has characterised my progression as an artist today. Fortunately, the surrounding circumstances, my environment and potential, aided me in my development and pushed me in the direction of the arts until I joined the Fine Arts Institute, a time which coincided with the wars and their painful consequences, which we are still witnessing up to this day.

Academic study was the phase during which my artistic development was honed until it took its present shape by acquainting me with artists and observing their universal experiences. The Institute was the womb where we grew as students and later as artists.

My early works tended to have a broad outlook of issues that would encourage us to realise existence more explicitly, and try to awaken the mind and its talents by spurring both imagination and sagacity to uncover new and uninvestigated facts. I tried to organise the elements of the painting in the form of colourful relationships represented as chromatic surfaces and accumulated layers. In later stages, I used some different materials such as readymade glass bars, chrome and fabrics - objects and materials which people come into contact with in everyday life - in an attempt to show a specific harmony between the objective exterior and the subjective interior.

From this point onward, my artistic research led to changes and developments. These gradually concurred with the changes and developments that not only accompanied the direct incidents and conflicts of my country, but also their consequences.

I therefore tried to make a project of documents representing the burning and devastation that has imbued every aspect of our lives - human, environmental and theoretical - and I relied upon the document itself (the image of a newspaper, a map etc.) as a resource. Through this, I

built up my work to be in harmony with documents and other materials like cords and metals, which may indicate many things, as a means of transforming the shape into an iconic symbol representing reality, or to act as a symbolic or indicative resource of reality.

My recent works represent an extension of my previous experiences. Nature prevailed strongly after I submissively and yearningly threw myself into its heart. I approached it with the imagination of a child amazed by the beauty and security I missed of the city where I lived and grew up, and where visual pollution and cruelty now prevail.

My work is the outcome of an experience that is abstracted from the heart of nature, an experience that is more akin to a bird's instinct in its constant search for safety and security. The richness of beauty outweighs the images from my memory, and I have memorised innumerable images, smells, and sensual and visual experiences.

In my latest works, emigration and departure prevail along with nature, where each idea is connected to the other; not unlike a bird that has lost its nest, struck down in a storm, trying to rebuild its home again.

This type of organised disorder is the general impression of my latest work.

Ghassan Ghaib
Amman
August 2010

GHAFFAN GHAIK

b. Baghdad, 1964

EDUCATION

- 1986** Diploma in Fine Arts, Fine Arts Institute, Baghdad
1997 BA in Fine Arts, Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad University, Baghdad

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2001** Orfali Gallery, Amman
2005 *Alwasham*, Dar Alanda Gallery, Amman
2010 *Banned from Paradise*, Karim Gallery, Amman

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1986** First International Iraqi Art Festival, Baghdad
1988 Second International Iraqi Art Festival, Baghdad
1991 *Contemporary Iraqi Art Exhibition*, Gallery Allea, Amman
1992 *Three Iraqi Artists*, Art Centre, Baghdad
1992 *Three Iraqi Artists*, Baladna Gallery, Amman
1995 Hiwar Gallery, Baghdad
1996 Abaad Gallery, Amman
1997 *Environment and Surroundings in Iraqi Art*, Jordanian National Museum, Amman
1998 Hiwar Gallery, Baghdad
1999 *Three Iraqi Artists*, Agial Gallery, Beirut
2000 Athar Gallery, Baghdad
2000 *Iraqi Art*, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
2001 *Six Iraqi Artists*, Albareh Gallery, Manama

- 2002** Asian Art Biennale, Dhaka
2002 *Two Artists Exhibition*, Four Walls Gallery, Amman
2003 *Before. After. Now.* Deluxe Gallery, London
2003 *Five Contemporary Artists from Iraq*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai
2004 *Artists’ Books Exhibition: Ten Iraqi Artists*, Frankfurt Exhibition International, Frankfurt
2004 *Homage to Shakir Hassan Al Said*, Orfali Gallery, Amman
2005 *Homage to Shakir Hassan Al Said and Ismail Fattah*, Athar Gallery, Baghdad
2005 *Iraqi Art*, East and West Foundation, Amsterdam
2005 *Three Iraqi Artists*, Athar Gallery, Baghdad
2005 *Seven Iraqi Artists*, Besan Gallery, Doha, Alrwaq Gallery, Bahrain, and 4 Walls Gallery, Amman
2006 *Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East*, British Museum, London
2006 Third International Collage Exhibition, Vilnius
2009 *Beyond Boundaries: Interpretations of Nine Artists*, Karim Gallery, Amman
2010 *My Home Land*, Art Sawa Gallery, Dubai
Art in Iraq Today: Part II, Meem Gallery, Dubai

AWARDS

- 1987** Sixth Al Wasiti Award
1996 Third Place, Contemporary Iraqi Art Festival, Baghdad
2000 Creativity Award, Baghdad

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Arab Museum of Modern Arab Art, Doha
Art Center for Fine Arts, Baghdad
British Museum, London
Jordanian National Museum, Amman

On the Shore of Paradise (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
200 * 200 cm



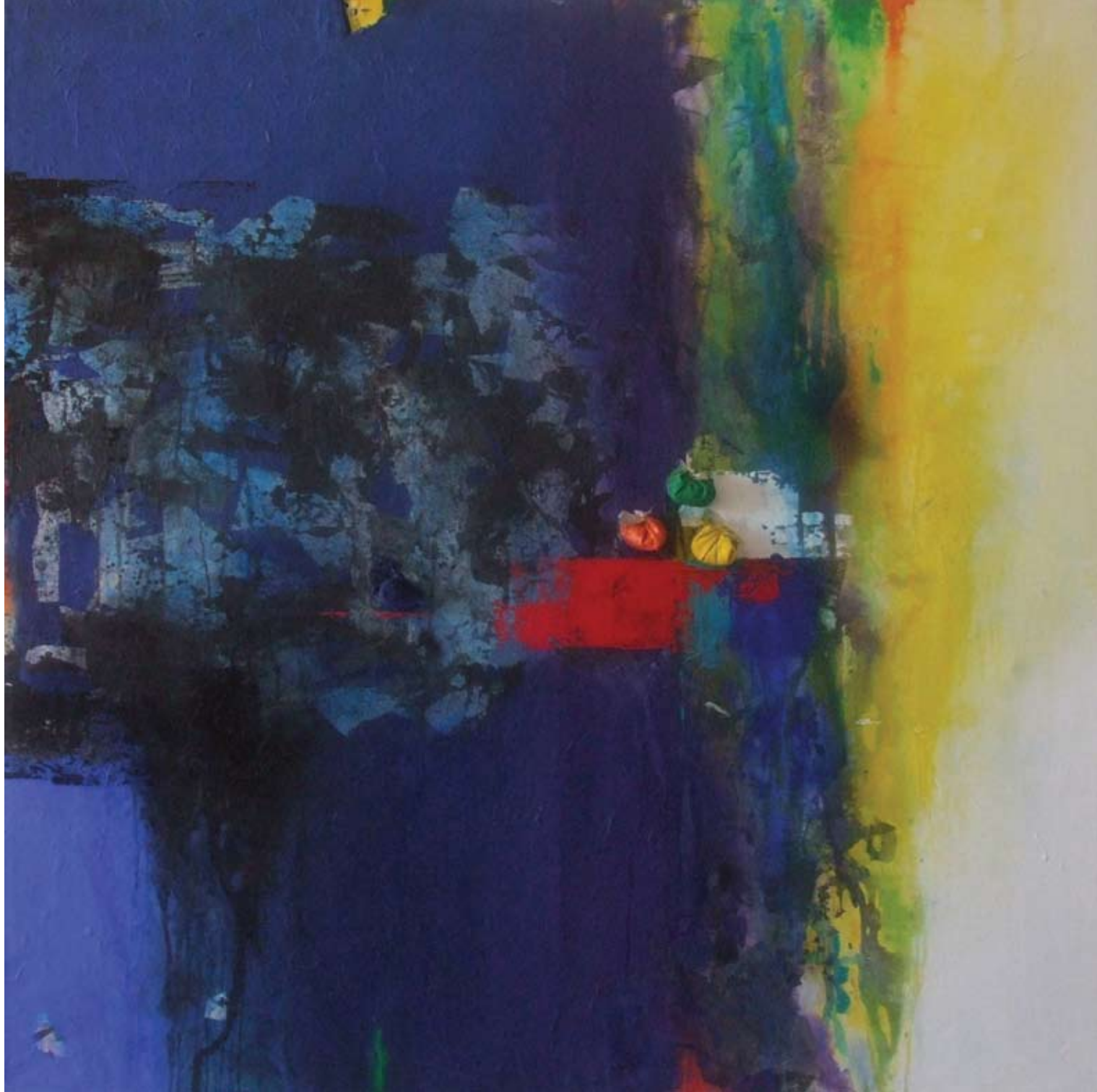
My Shadow on Paper (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
200 * 200 cm



My Beautiful Tree (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
160 * 160 cm



One- and a Half-Steps to Heaven (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
200 * 200 cm



Rain (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
200 * 200 cm



Organised Anarchy (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
180 * 360 cm
(180 * 180 cm each)





The Tree of Memories (2010)
Nickel with mixed media
165 * dim 80 cm



KAREEM
RISAN

WALLS OF WARTIME

My recent paintings are the result of a consecutive, insightful and developed series that complements what I have previously accomplished. They are photo-slides of wall sections displaying many images: indications, signs and text. They carry too the message of the occurrences that have marred these spaces since the time they were first created. This series can either be approached by the viewer with this deep understanding, or viewed in isolation based solely on the interpretation of some of their visual elements. It is the same as with the wall slogans which express cases and incidents, while evoking other elements also, in and out of the painting spontaneously. Such elements are either generated under the influence of the surrounding environment or as marginal elements within that environment, just like the randomly posted promotional prints, accumulations and denudations of chromatic layers on those same walls.

Wall paintings and signs were, and still are, one of humanity's expressive styles, and a means by which man could face his daily problems, especially when deprived of the freedom of expression. They also represent the inability to find a solution, resulting in the need to resort to wall painting as a form of expression, which, in my view, uses a different method to produce an art work that is deliberately and spontaneously created away from galleries and exhibitions.

In my artistic production of the past years up until now, I have tried to track the imprint of man in relation to the environment. This model of human expression is part of my modernised artistic and visionary interest in producing works that complement that vision and rely upon special technical processes and means. The dynamism of adhesion, erasure, and addition of one layer over another, including personified paintings adjacent to abstract ones, is one aspect of my aesthetic interests which I sometimes call 'Chaos and Disarray.' I create paintings without ignoring the conceptual and technical aspects of their execution, particularly when creating methodologies or finding inspiration in wall paintings.

Through my art work, I also try to express my daily needs and problems as a painter and a human being. I use my art to remind audiences of what has happened in my country; to condemn the causes ensuring that my emigration was the only choice after life became impossible in my homeland.

There, in the country where I was born, studied and gained knowledge, I left a lot of memories which I try to retrieve through what I create on my walls. I recreate the walls of my city, Baghdad; its lanes and neighbourhoods, its dusty walls worn down by the ruination of the culture prevailing today

Kareem Risan
Toronto
September 2010

KAREEM RISAN MANSOUR

b. Baghdad, 1960

EDUCATION

1988 BA in Painting, Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad University, Baghdad

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1992 National Museum, Baghdad
1994 Nadhar Gallery, Baghdad
1996 Hiwar Gallery, Baghdad
1997 Dar Al Mashriq Gallery, Amman
1998 French Cultural Centre, Baghdad
2002 Hiwar Gallery, Baghdad
2004 Dar Alanda Gallery, Amman
2005 Al Riwaq Gallery, Manama
2009 Gallery Hittite, Toronto

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

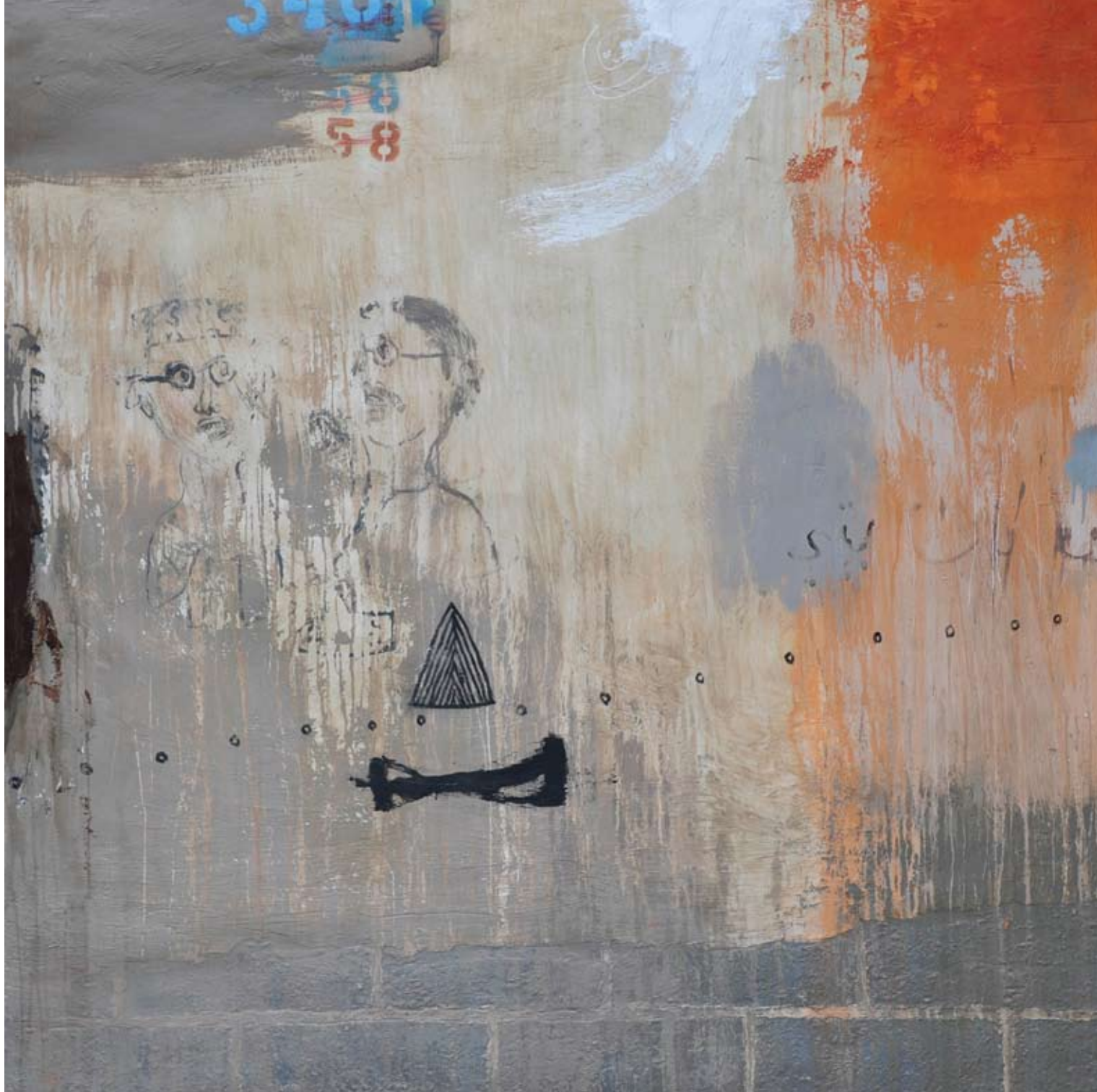
1986 Fredrik Shtad Graphic Biennial, Oslo
1988 *Between the Tigris and Euphrates*, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
Third Cairo Biennial for Plastic Art, Cairo
1990 Kan Sur Mer Exhibition, France
1992 Muhres International Exhibition, Tunis
1993 Joint Exhibition, University of Nevada, Nevada
1994 *Chair Exhibition: Arabic Contemporary Artists*, Darat Al Funun, Amman
1997 *Four Iraqi Artists*, Cultural House of Foreigners, Shambhala Art Gallery, Copenhagen
1998 Muhres International Exhibition, Tunis
1999 *Iraqi Graphic Exhibition*, Darat Al Funun, Amman
Third Egyptian International Print Triennial, Cairo
2000 *Contemporary Iraqi Art*, Museum of Art, Tunis

Contemporary Iraqi Art, Museum of Modern Art, Caracas
Seven Iraqi Artists from the Embargo Generation, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
Mesopotamia Exhibition, Darat Al Funun, Amman
2001 *Contemporary Iraqi Art*, China International Museum, Beijing
2002 *Seven Iraqi Artists*, Albareh Gallery, Bahrain
Contemporary Perspectives for Arabic Art, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
2003 *Before. After. Now.*, Deluxe Gallery . London.
Five Contemporary Artists from Iraq, Green Art Gallery, Dubai.
The Broken Letter: Arab Contemporary Artists, Kunst Gallery, Darmstadt
2004 *Artists’ Books Exhibition: Ten Iraqi Artists*, Frankfurt Exhibition International, Frankfurt
2005 *Contemporary Iraqi Book Art*, University of North Texas Gallery, Texas
Seven Iraqi Artists, 4 Walls Gallery, Amman
Iraqi Artists, East and West Foundation, Amsterdam
2006 *Iraqi Art*, Montparnasse Museum, Paris
Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East, British Museum, London
Art Books: Exhibition for Modern Iraqi Artists, Minnesota University Gallery, Minnesota
Modern Iraqi Art, Montparnasse Museum, Paris
2007 *Art Books: Exhibition for Modern Iraqi Artists*, Art Books Center, New York
2009 *Modernism and Iraq*, Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, New York
Iraqi Artists in Exile, Station Museum, Houston, Texas
2010 *My Home Land*, Art Sawa Gallery, Dubai
Beyond the War, LTMH Gallery, New York
Art in Iraq Today: Part II, Meem Gallery, Dubai

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha
Athar Gallery, Baghdad
British Museum, London
Darat Al Funun, Amman
Kinda Foundation, Saudi Arabia
Touch@Art, London

Black Mark on Wall (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
150 * 150 cm



Wall of Wartime (2010).
Mixed media on canvas
150 * 150 cm



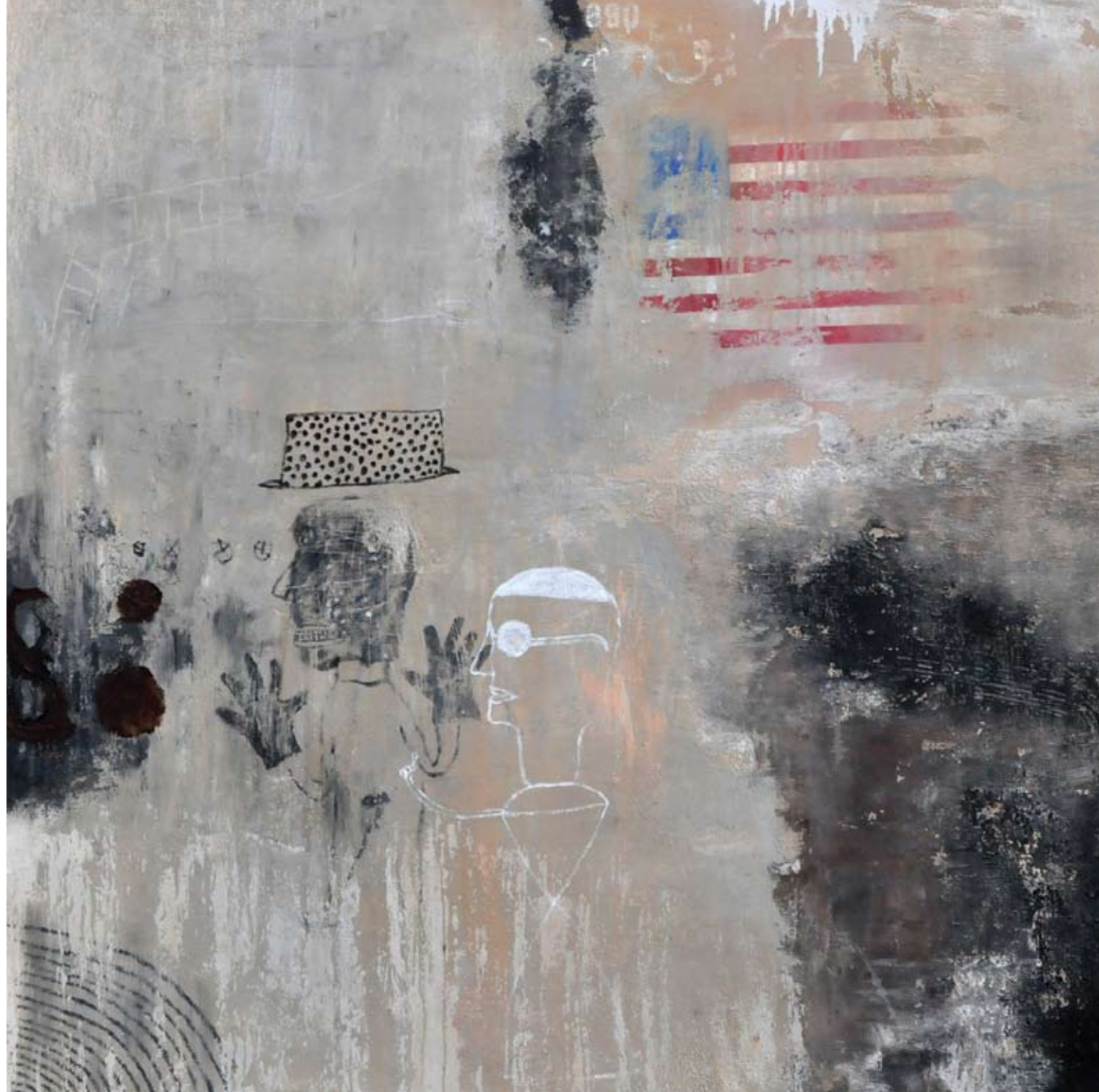


Remains of Writing and Drawing (2010)

Mixed media on canvas

150 * 150 cm

Remains of the Flag (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
150 * 150 cm



Here Was My Home (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
180 * 150 cm



Drawings and Marks (2010)
Mixed media on canvas
180 * 150 cm



NAZAR
YAHYA

O TIGRIS

Through my artistic work, I try to investigate the answers provoked by my personal confrontation with a changing world: the antiquated remains of war, wandering from one country to another, and finally accepting expatriation as a late psychological outlet. These changes and the windows they opened, with regard to information and experience, were positively reflected in my artistic work and its relation to personal pain.

Shapes that are taken from reality have symbolic meanings that become more effective and inspiring when seen in relation to other shapes, lending them a motive for the imagination. Loaded with a power that emulates the language of Sufi poetry and verse in its approach, a path is opened to wide channels of knowledge that invite the recipient to become an important player in the space of this art. Such concepts, by which I orchestrate the natural shapes with perceptions that surround us in our daily lives, are what achieve the ‘shock’ I aspire to. A shock that leads to the creation of a new vision with clear symbolic renderings that are evident in the variant Islamic and Arabic literary and scientific scripts, which have a creative presence in building my art work.

In my recent works, I use different interventions to highlight the imaginary world I want to create. I do this by printing a silky grid along a photograph, and other concepts, to achieve layers of different temporal eras that seem both to come together and move apart simultaneously.

The Tigris River is the subject that link the works I present in this exhibition. They were created through the use of different media on fabrics of different sizes, and revolve around the alteration of the Tigris River from a space of beautiful memories to an arena stained with sectarian conflict and policy, thus overwhelming my dreams. I was born near this river and watched its rapidly flowing water, carrying boats, wandering between Karkh and Rasafa every day in the placid, peaceful life of the people of Bagdad. This transports me from what I know of it now: it is a river that conceals anonymous massacred victims, feeding the fish in its waters. A nightmare

resonates within the river which turned into ink and blood at the time of the Mongols, it is now turning into blood and radiant toxic substances.

The clash of this age of occupation can be heard against the voice of Al-Jawahiri when he addressed the Tigris as an expatriate:

I greet you from afar, O greet me back,
O blessed Tigris, river of gardens green.
I greet your banks, seeking to quench my thirst,
Like doves between water and clay aflutter seen.
O blessed Tigris, oft have I been forced to leave
To drink from springs which didn't my thirst relieve.*

Nazar Yahya
Houston, Texas
August 2010

* translated by Hussein Hadawi, excerpt cited in Venetia Porter, Word into Art (London: British Museum Press, 2006), p.8.

NAZAR YAHYA

b. Baghdad, 1963

EDUCATION

1987 BA in Painting, Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad University, Baghdad

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1994** *Graphic Expiation*, Riwaq Gallery, Baghdad
- 2000** French Cultural Centre, Doha
- 2002** *Steel and Asphalt Memory*, French Cultural Centre, Doha
- 2004** *Blocks*, Orfali Gallery, Amman
- 2007** *Beard Land*, Karmin Gallery, Amman
- 2008** *Beard Code*, Sultan Gallery, Kuwait

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1985** Fredrickstad Biennale, Fredrickstad
- 1997** *Environment and Surroundings in Iraqi Art*, Jordanian National Museum, Amman
Homage to Jawad Salim, Athar Gallery, Baghdad
- 1999** *Three Iraqi Artists*, Agial Gallery, Beirut
Fifty Years of Iraqi Graphics, Darat Al Funun, Amman
- 2000** Fredrickstad Triennial, Fredrickstad
- 2001** *Six Iraqi Artists*, Albareh Gallery, Manama
- 2002** Asian Art Biennale, Dhaka
- 2003** *Five Contemporary Artists from Iraq*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai
- 2005** *Improvisation Exhibition: Seven Iraqi Artists*, Alrwaq Gallery, Bahrain and Besan Gallery, Doha
Contemporary Iraqi Book Art, University of North Texas, Houston, Texas

- 2006** *World into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East*, British Museum, London
- 2007** *Negative Positive to Iraqi Artists*, Albareh Gallery, Manama
- 2010** *Chair and Painting*, Albareh Gallery, Manama
My Home Land, Art Sawa Gallery, Dubai
Art in Iraq Today: Part II, Meem Gallery, Dubai

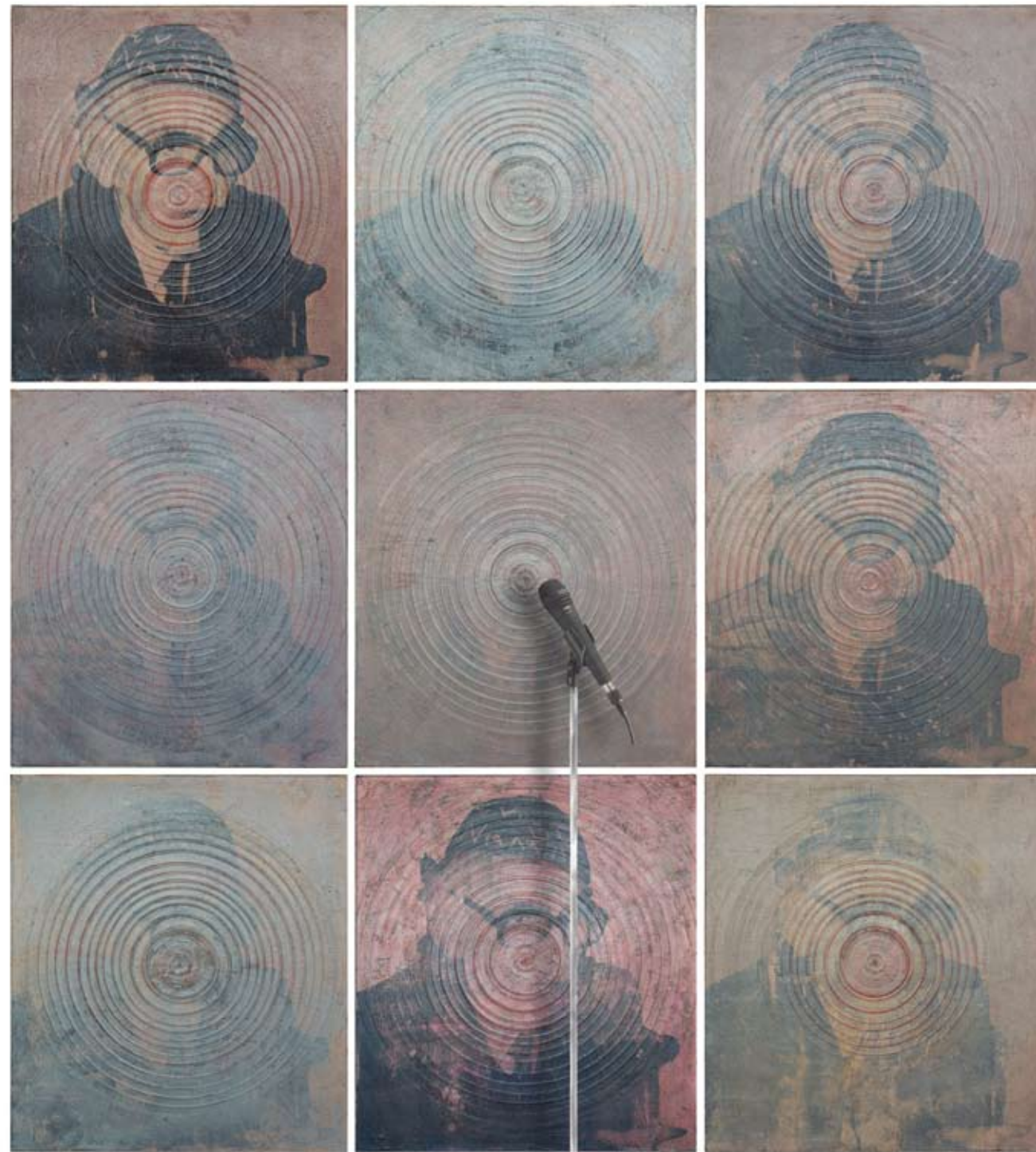
AWARDS

- 1997** *Homage to Jawad Salim*, received three artistic awards
- 2004** First Prize in Painting, Emaar, Dubai

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Arab Museum of Modern Arab Art, Doha
Art Centre for Fine Arts, Baghdad
British Museum, London
Jordanian National Museum, Amman

Al Jawahiri (2010)
Acrylic on chinese paper on canvas
90 * 81 inch
(30 * 27 inch each)

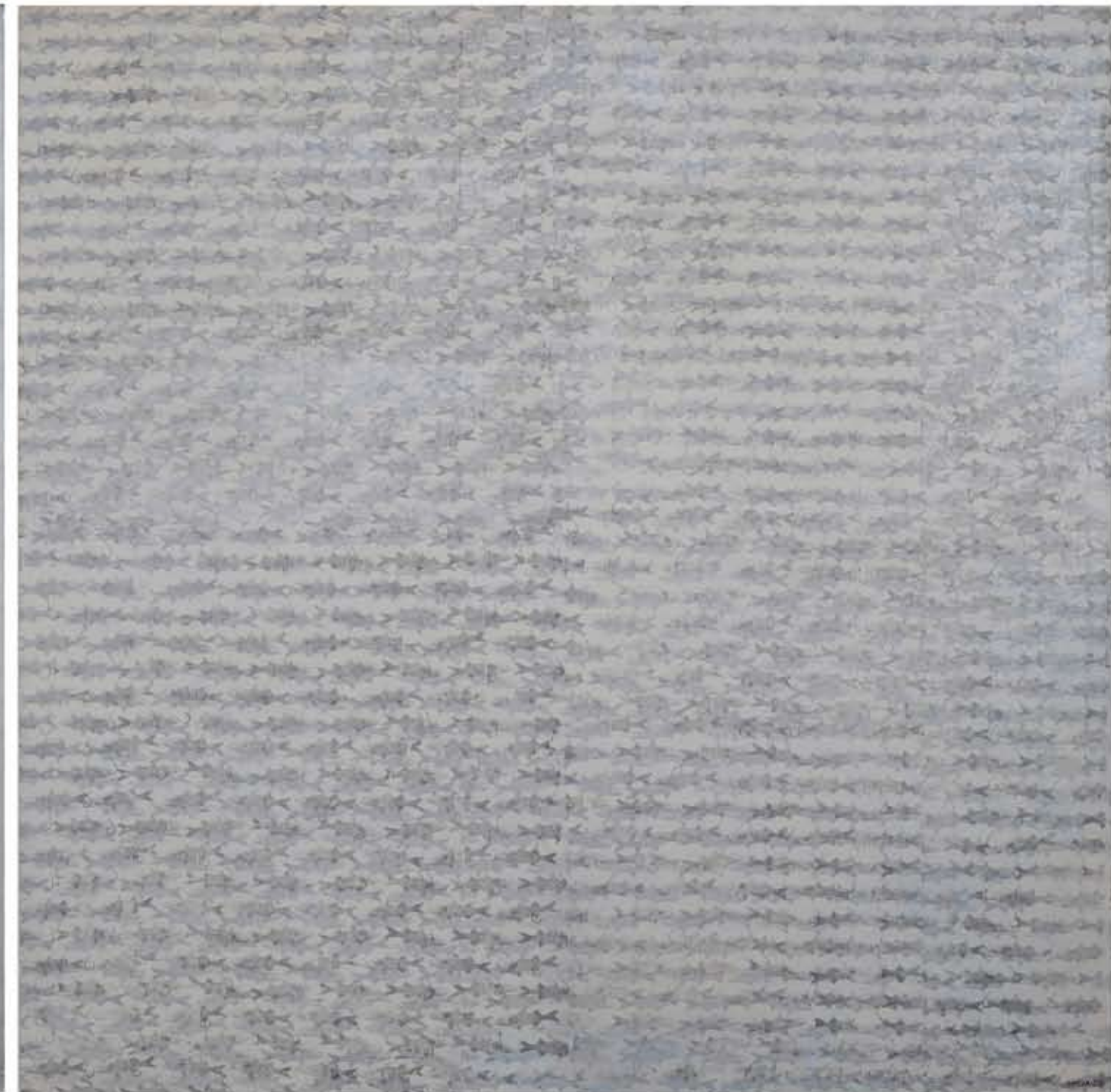


Love Dijla 1 (2010)
Acrylic on chinese paper on canvas
78 * 96 inch
(78 * 32 inch each)



Love Dijla 2 (2010)
Acrylic on chinese paper on canvas
63 * 92 inch
(63 * 46 inch each)

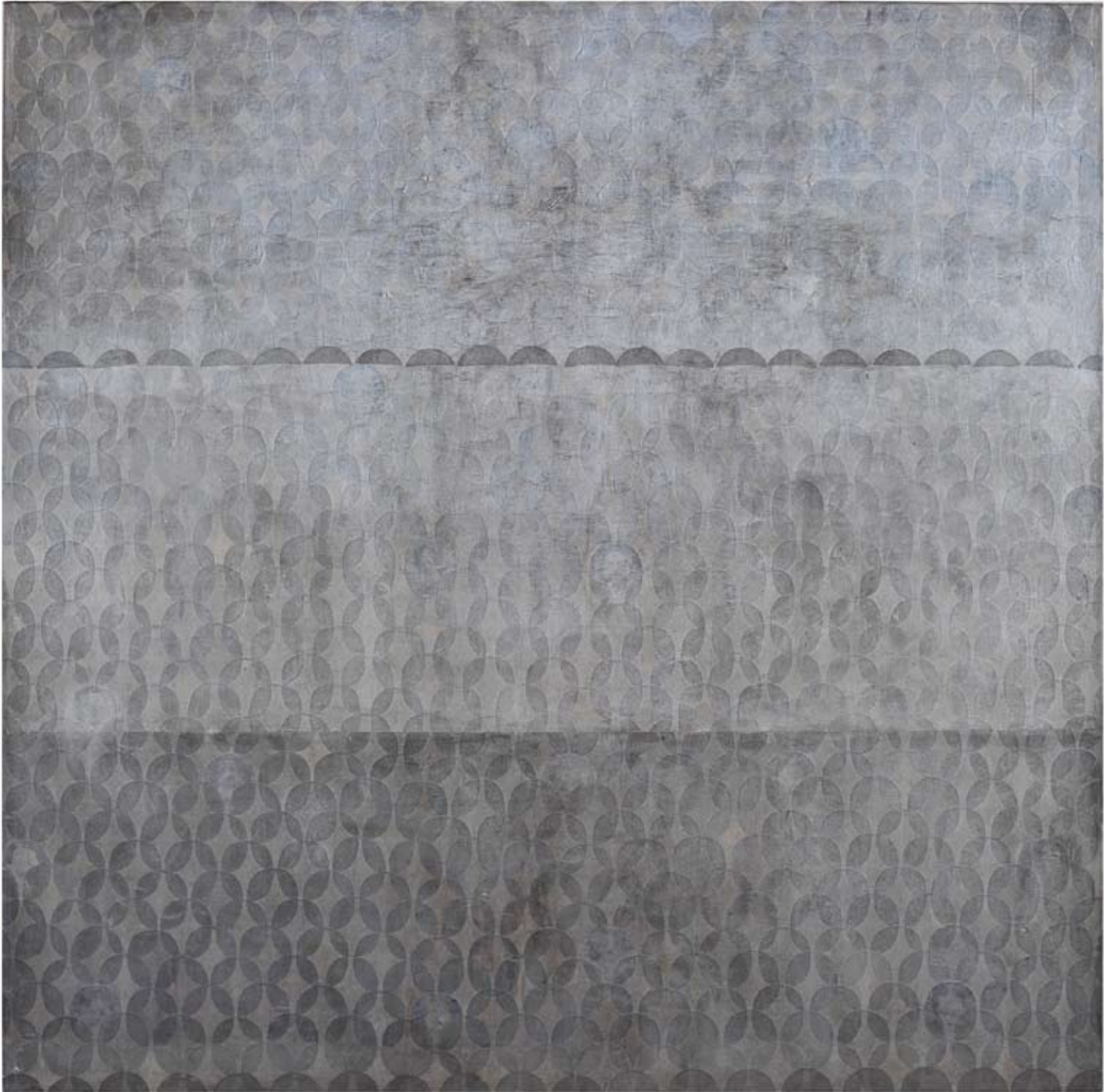




Al Sinara (2010)
Acrylic on chinese paper on canvas
68 * 172 inch
(68 * 68 inch each)

Love Dijla 3 (2010)

Acrylic on chinese paper on canvas
66 * 66 inch





Spring (2010)
Acrylic on chinese paper on canvas
66 * 132 inch
(66 * 66 inch each)

This catalogue is published in conjunction with the *Art in Iraq Today: Part II* exhibition held at Meem Gallery, Dubai, 14 November - 12 December 2010.

Published in 2010

© Ghassan Ghaib
© Kareem Risan
© Nazar Yahya
© Meem Gallery
© Art Advisory Associates Ltd.

All works by Ghassan Ghaib, Kareem Risan, and Nazar Yahya © 2010 Ghassan Ghaib, Kareem Risan, and Nazar Yahya.
Used by permission. All rights reserved.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library, Library of Congress, Bibliothèque National de France, Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the Al Noor Institute. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means; electronic, mechanical, photocopying, and recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publishers.

Art Direction and Design by Noura Haggag of Meem Gallery

Edited by Samar Faruqi of Meem Gallery

Translated by Text Match Legal Translation L.L.C, Abu Dhabi

Published by the Publications Department of Meem with Art Advisory Associates Ltd.

M E E M

DIA AL-AZZAWI
ALI OMAR ERMES
PARVIZ TANAVOLI
ABBAS KHANDSTAMI
RAFA AL-NABIRI
ALI TALIB
MOBHIR AHMED
NEDIM KUFU
HANAA MALALLAH
GHASSAN GHAIB
KAREEM RISAN
NAZAR YAHYA
AMAR DAWOD
DELAIR SHAKER
HIMAT ALI
POOYA ARYANPOUR
MORTEZA DAREHBAGHI
HASSAN EL-GLADUI
AHMED CHERKADUI
RACHID KBRATCHI
HAMZA BOUNDOU
SHIRIN NESKAT
JAWAD SALIM
FATQ HASSAN
ADAM HENEIN
ISSAM EL SAID
LOUAY KAYYALI
ISMAIL TATTAR
NJA MAHDAQUI
SHAFIQ ABBUD
MOHAMED KANDU
JAMIL HAMMOUDI
KHALID AL-RAHAL
SALEH AL-JUMATE
SOHRAB SEPEHRI
FATEH MOUDARRES
AFSHIN PIRASHEMI
KAFICH AL-DROUBI
IBRAHIM EL SALAH
PAUL GUTRAGOSSIAN
ABDULLAH MUHARRAQI
MOHAMMAD OMAR KHALIL
SHAKER HASSAN AL SAID
ABDALLAH BENANTEUR
JAMAL ABDUL RAHIM
FARID BELKAHIA
FAISAL SAMRA
MONA HATOUM
ZENDEROUZI
MENGI QUTBI
ISMAIL AGAR
MONA SAADI
BOULLATA
MELEHI

MEEM GALLERY
PO BOX 800
DUBAI
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

+971.4.347.7888

ح