



KOW  
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# HIWA K SELECTED WORKS 2006 - 2018

**HIWA K**

\*1975 in Kurdistan, Iraq, lives and works in Berlin

Teaching		Solo Exhibitions	
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MA students, Goldsmith College, London</li></ul>	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly Unlikely but not Impossible, Zaczęta - National Gallery of Art, Poland</li><li>• Blind as the Mother Tongue, New Museum, New York</li><li>• Moon Calendar, Kunstverein Hannover</li><li>• Moon Calendar, S.M.A.K., Ghent</li></ul>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cooking with Mama, MA Raumstrategien, Berlin-Weissensee</li></ul>		
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chicago Boys, Makan Art Space, Amman</li></ul>	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't Shrink Me to the Size of a Bullet, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin</li><li>• To remember, sometimes you need different archeological tools, De Appel, Amsterdam</li></ul>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summer Arts Intense, Sada, Echo</li><li>• We Are The Time, Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam</li></ul>	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This Lemon Tastes of Apple, KOW, Berlin</li></ul>
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Affinity Group, summer school, Kunstverein München</li><li>• We Are The Time, Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam</li><li>• DAI Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem</li><li>• Forever Academy - The New DIY Art School 2011, Swansea</li><li>• Hoogeschool voor Kunsten, Utrecht</li></ul>	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Home Works, Kunsthalle C, Stockholm, curated by Jenny Richards</li></ul>
		2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My Father's Color Periods, Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan</li></ul>
		2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Festival Internacional de Las Artes de Castillay</li><li>• For a few Socks of Marbles, Laboratorios 987 at MUSAC, León, curated by Leire Vergara</li></ul>
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goldsmith College, London</li></ul>	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As if it was here long before, Kunstbuero, Vienna, curated by Aneta Szylak</li></ul>
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Estrangement Workshops Amna Suraka, Aram Gallery and Sha'ab Teahouse in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, with Aneta Szylak</li><li>• American University of Sulaymaniyah</li></ul>	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chicago Boys: while we were Singing they were Dreaming, Serpentine Gallery, London</li></ul>
		2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Qatees, Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan</li></ul>
		2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cooking with Mama, Babel lounge at the Babylon exhibition, Pargamonmuseum Berlin &amp; United Nations Plaza, Berlin</li></ul>
			<b>Group Exhibitions (Selection)</b>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Estrangement Workshops in Art Institute in Halabja, Aram Gallery and Amna Suraka in Sulaymaniyah and Media Center in Arbil, with Aneta Szylak</li></ul>	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Street. Where The World is Made, MAXXI, Rome</li><li>• Festival For The People, Philadelphia Contemporary, Philadelphia, PA</li><li>• Voiceless – Return of the foreclosed, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul</li><li>• Middle Gate II – The story of Dymphna, M HKA &amp; De Werft, Geel</li><li>• globalocal, Kunsthalle zu Kiel</li><li>• Field of Codes, PiK - Projektraum im KunstWerk, Cologne</li><li>• 74 million million million tons, Sculpture Center, New York</li><li>• Power to the People, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main</li><li>• Finding Home: The Global Refugee Crisis, UCF Art Gallery, Orlando</li><li>• These fingers read sideways, Monomatic - Fettes College, Edinburgh</li></ul>
		2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NOW, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh</li><li>• documenta 14, Kassel / Athens</li><li>• Rock the Kasbah, Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris</li><li>• Tension &amp; Conflict, Video Art after 2008, MAAT, Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon</li><li>• Autumn Season 2017 Exhibition, Hospitalfield, Arbroath</li><li>• Learning from documenta, Museum Cultuur Strombeek, Gent</li></ul>
		2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wir Flüchtlinge - Von dem Recht, Rechte zu haben, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe</li><li>• Out of the Dark, KOW, Berlin</li></ul>
		2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All the World's Futures, 56th Venice Biennale, curated by Okwui Enwezor</li></ul>
		2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parle Pour Toi, Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, curated by Marie Muraciot</li><li>• This Lemon Tastes of Apple, New Museum, NYC</li></ul>
		2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flatness, Oberhausen Film Festival, curated by Shama Khanna</li><li>• Possession, Khiasma, curated by Olivier Marboeuf</li><li>• RENDEZ- VOUS SORTIE DE MON CORPS, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin</li><li>• This Lemon Tastes of Apple, Relevant Music, Villa Elisabeth, Berlin</li></ul>

## KOW 2

## Residencies

2012	• MACRO, Rome		• This Lemon Tastes of Apple, Impakt Festival, Utrecht
2010	• Serpentine Gallery, London, in the framework of the project, Edgware Road: Center for Possible Studies, curated by Janna Graham and Sally Tallant	2012	• The Reader, BAK, Utrecht, curated by Benjamin Fallon • Schizophonia, Synagogue de Delme, curated by Anna Colin & Sam Thorne • Video Screening, La Galerie, Paris, curated by Emily Renard • Alternativa 2012 - International Visual Arts Festival, Gdańsk, curated by Arne Hendriks, Ines Moreira, Aneta Szyłak and Leire Vergara
2009/2010	ACC Gallery Weimar		• What the Barbarians did not do, did the Barberini, curated by Maria Alicate. • La Triennale, Intense Proximity, Paris, curated by Okwui Enwezor • Edgware Road Project, Serpentine Gallery, London, curated by Janna Graham • Hayward Touring Exhibition, Hayward Gallery London, curated by Karyn Culeman-Mojika
2007	• IFA, Study trip to Istanbul to pursue research for Estrangement project at Platform Garanti, Istanbul	2011	• Chicago Boys, While We Were Singing, They Were Dreaming, Collaboration with Casco and If I Can Dance I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, Utrecht, Enschede, Arnhem, Amsterdam • Studio Dispatches at Art Dubai, curated by Victoria Brooks • Estrangement Project, Wyspa Institute of Art, in the framework of Alternativa 2012, Gdańsk
		2010	• Labor and Leisure, in the framework of Alternativa 2012, Gdańsk • Estrangement Project, The Showroom, London, co-curated by Aneta Szyłak • Chicago Boys: while we were Singing, they were Dreaming, Center for Possible Studies, Serpentine Gallery, London • Open Eye Award Gala, KOW, Berlin • Dwelling In Travel, Art Today Association, Plovdiv, curated by Andrea Wiarda and Katia Angelova • This Story Is Not Ready For Its Footnotes, X Elettronica, Rome, curated by Pelin Uran and Camilla Pignatti Morano
		2009	• All that is Solid Melts into Air, City Visions, Mechelen, Organized by MuHKA, curated by Bart de Baere • The View from Elsewhere, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, curated by Kathryn Weir and Mark Nash • Cooking with Mama, Summer Drafts, Bolzano, curated by Paolo Plothegers • The Inescapable Experience of Translation, Ecole du Magasin, Grenoble, curated by Season 5 • 7th Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre
		2008	• The Rest of Now, X- Alumix in Bolzano, Manifesta 7, Fortezza, Bolzano, Trient, Rovereto, curated by Adam Budak, Anselm Franke, Hila Peleg and Raqs Media Collective • Cooking with Mama, webcast project, Staedelschule, Frankfurt and 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica
		2007	• Cooking with Mama, webcast project for Intimacy, Submission, Performance Festival, Goldsmiths College, University of London • Cooking with Mama, webcast event for World Chat 7080 at Wyspa Institute of Art, Gdańsk
		2006	• You won't feel a thing: on Panic, Obsession, Rituality and Anesthesia, curated by Aneta Szyłak, Wyspa Institute of Art, Gdańsk • Participation in The Institute for New Social Research, a project organized by the United Nations Plaza e.V., Berlin • You Won't Feel a Thing: On Panic, Obsession, Rituality and Anesthesia, Kunsthau Dresden, Germany, curated by Aneta Szyłak

# He Who Stares at the Sky Will Go Blind!

## 2018



**He Who Stares at the Sky Will Go Blind!, 2018**

Mixed Media Installation

2 rooms

Comissioned by Kunstverein Hannover

Text room 1:

My grandmother once told me that when someone dies, the soul leaves the body.

One day, Ako and I visited my brother Shwan and his friend Hiwa in the cafeteria of the technical institute. We were in the middle of a conversation when we suddenly heard shots being fired. What had been looming for a long time in the tense atmosphere of the city now erupted: People knew that the third revolt against the central government had begun and that it was time to take up arms. An off-road vehicle with fighters drove past us, and Ako jumped onto the bed. I wanted to go along too, but Ako told me that he had sworn at the grave of his brother, who had died several years before that he would never drag me into the fighting.

The clerical mortician startled me out of my trance-like state when he asked, »Do you just want to watch, or do you want to help me with the ritual cleansing?« A lifeless body lay in front of him that I didn't dare touch. The mortician explained that he couldn't wrap him in white sheets as long as blood was still dripping out of his wounds, because the deceased should be able to meet Allah untainted and immaculate. Otherwise he couldn't be judged. Moreover, another strange physical reaction became apparent: the corpse displayed a strong erection. The mortician cautiously grasped the lifeless body by the neck and the thighs, causing the erection to soon subside. After that, I was supposed to fill the bullet hole in his chest with cotton. I had to penetrate deep into Ako's wound with my fingers. I couldn't really comprehend the whole scene. Blood flowed out of his body even during the funeral, so that the sheets he was wrapped in had red spots.

Shameran's Memories (Ako's Friend)





**He Who Stares at the Sky Will Go Blind!, 2018**

Mixed Media Installation

2 rooms

Comissioned by Kunstverein Hannover

Text room 2:

He Who Stares at the Sky Will Go Blind!

Blindness has apparently been a part of my life since I was very small. My siblings used to make fun of me when I temporarily went blind for a month or so, the result of a nasty infection in my upper teeth. I don't even have any concrete memories about it.

It's a hot day in July 1991, and I'm studying logistics at the technical institute of Sulaymaniyah. My friend Shwan is expecting his brother Shameran and Ako, a friend of his, in our cafeteria. Both of them were peshmerga, and the city was about to revolt for the third time against the central government.

After a nice conversation with the guy Shameran brought along with him, I found out that he was in fact Ako, who'd been my friend until we moved away when I was five. And now, 16 years later, he's in front of me excitedly saying, »So you're the little Hiwa!«

I had a sudden recollection: »Do you remember once coming out of your house and saying 'people who stare at the sky go blind'?« I never dared to look up for very long.

Afterwards, we heard shots being fired outside, and both guys left to take part in the third revolt on July 18, 1991.

I don't know whether I went blind before or after Ako's warning back then, but a few hours after our re-encounter in the cafeteria, Shwan called me to say:

»We want you to do a poster for Ako's funeral.«

Hiwa K

# Gods Wearing Pots

## 2018



**Gods Wearing Pots, 2018**  
Forged stainless steel  
8 drawings, ink on paper, each 34 x 24 cm  
205 x 205 x 290 cm

Gods Wearing Pots is a new body of work comprising drawings as well as a sculpture - a forged steel morion, or colonial style helmet, inverted like a cooking pot. This new work gives shape to Hiwa K's inquiries into early colonial encounters between the Inca and Spanish Empires, and reflects on hybrid and hidden narratives, the circulation of cultures and traditions, and the perception - and misperception - of others.

*Somewhere I heard that the Incas thought that the conquistadors were wearing pots on their heads, and that they were llamas and not human beings. Researching this account, I came across Efraín Trelles, an art historian that confirmed that this story exists. The story comes from a book written by Guaman Poman in the 16th century telling the history of the Andean region and the encounter with the Spanish conquistadors. The drawings 'Salute God of Thunder' are based on my exchanges with Trelles. The work is also about history written by one part, of history written by Europeans, and how the Incas thought that the conquistadors were gods.*





# When We Were Exhaling Images 2017



When We Were Exhaling Images, 2017, installation view documenta 14, Kassel

Mixed Media Installation

Vitrified clay pipes, laminated beams, furniture, various objects  
each pipe 600 x 100 x 100 cm

Comissioned by documenta 14





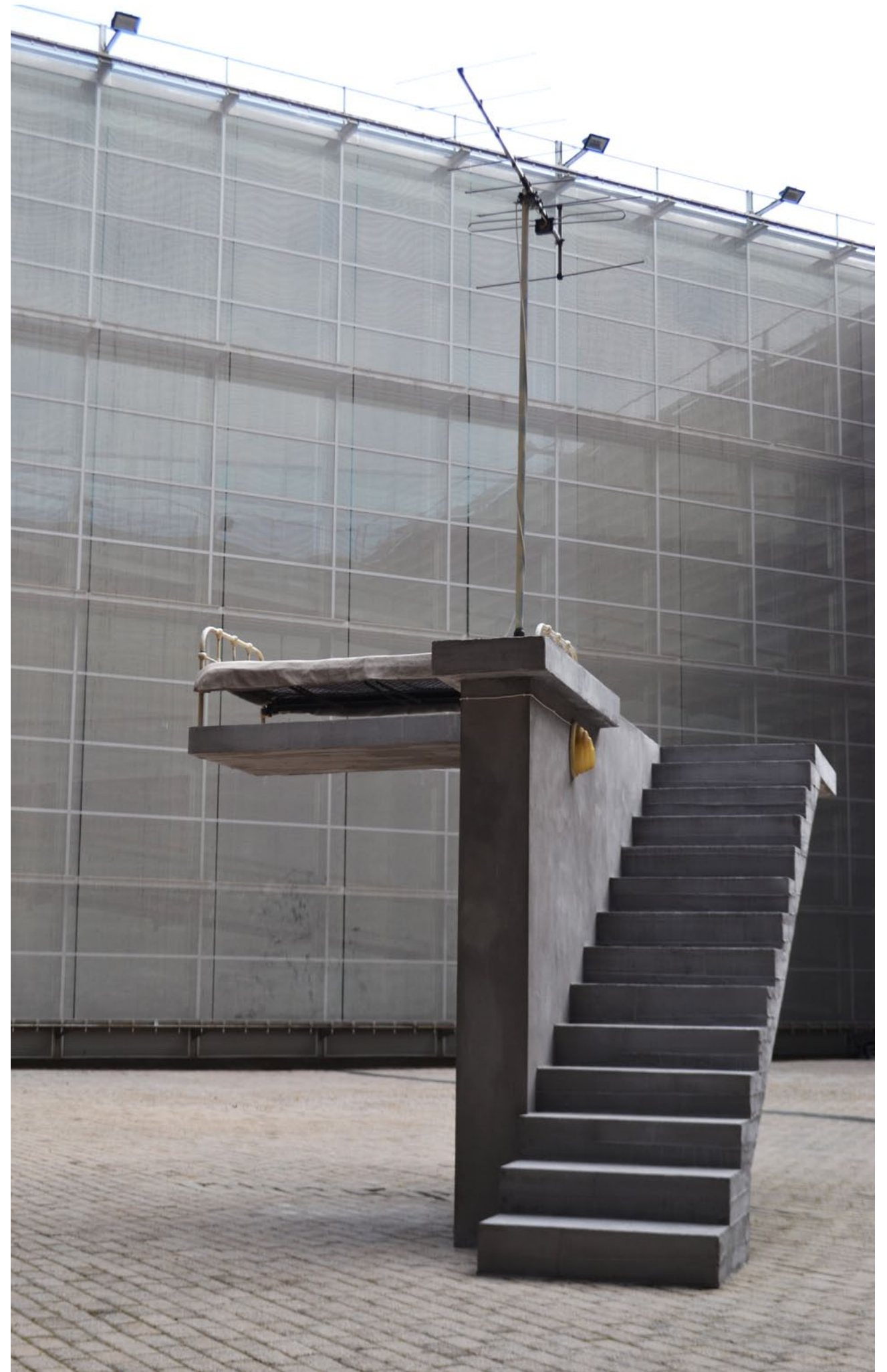
# One Room Apartment 2008



One Room Apartment, 2008, installation view documenta 14, Kassel, 2017

Mixed Media Installation  
Protocol, wood, cement, metal, mixed media  
644 x 332 x 684 cm

Comissioned by documenta 14





# Pre-Image (Blind As The Mother Tongue)

## 2017

As a member of the immigrant generation that illegally journeyed from Iraqi Kurdistan to Europe on foot, Hiwa K's 'Mirror' simulates an experience of walking through foreign territory. Using an "object-sculpture" made of stick and motorbike mirrors which he balances on his nose, Hiwa K finds his way. The object acts as a navigation device and what Hiwa K calls "an adaptation tool" that he uses to familiarize himself with unknown spaces. It is an extension of the organs and senses, providing the traveler (and viewer) with various mirrored perceptions, "seemingly longing to my body rather than belonging to it", describes Hiwa K. The artist sees both his own reflection and reflections of the environment through which he is walking, causing the viewer to consider him not as an individual, but as an entity in relation to his environment.

The artist and viewer are involved in a multifaceted balancing act, of sorts, as Hiwa K moves and adapts to accommodate the mirror object, and as the viewer shifts his/ her perception to accommodate Hiwa K's movements. Both must orient themselves through shaky images, never fully aware of what is in front of or behind the frame. The surrounding landscape is scenic and visually interesting, but the traveler does not have the luxury to stop and look around due to the instability of his situation. As Hiwa K treks to the top of a tower/dome, the audience can sense the dizzying effect of having to maintain that equilibrium for such a prolonged amount of time. The viewer tries to see the artist's unobstructed reflection in one of the many mirrors but the images are never fully clear. We can see glimpses of Hiwa K's surroundings, what he calls "pre- images", fragments of a puzzled future, which leave us with no choice but to continue looking up.



### Pre-Image (Blind as the Mother Tongue), 2017

Single channel HD video, 16:9, color,  
sound (with English language)

18 min

Ed 5 + 2AP

Commissioned by documenta 14

<https://vimeo.com/271288406>

pw: KOWWOK



# 0° Blind Spot, Where Beloved is... 2017 – 2018

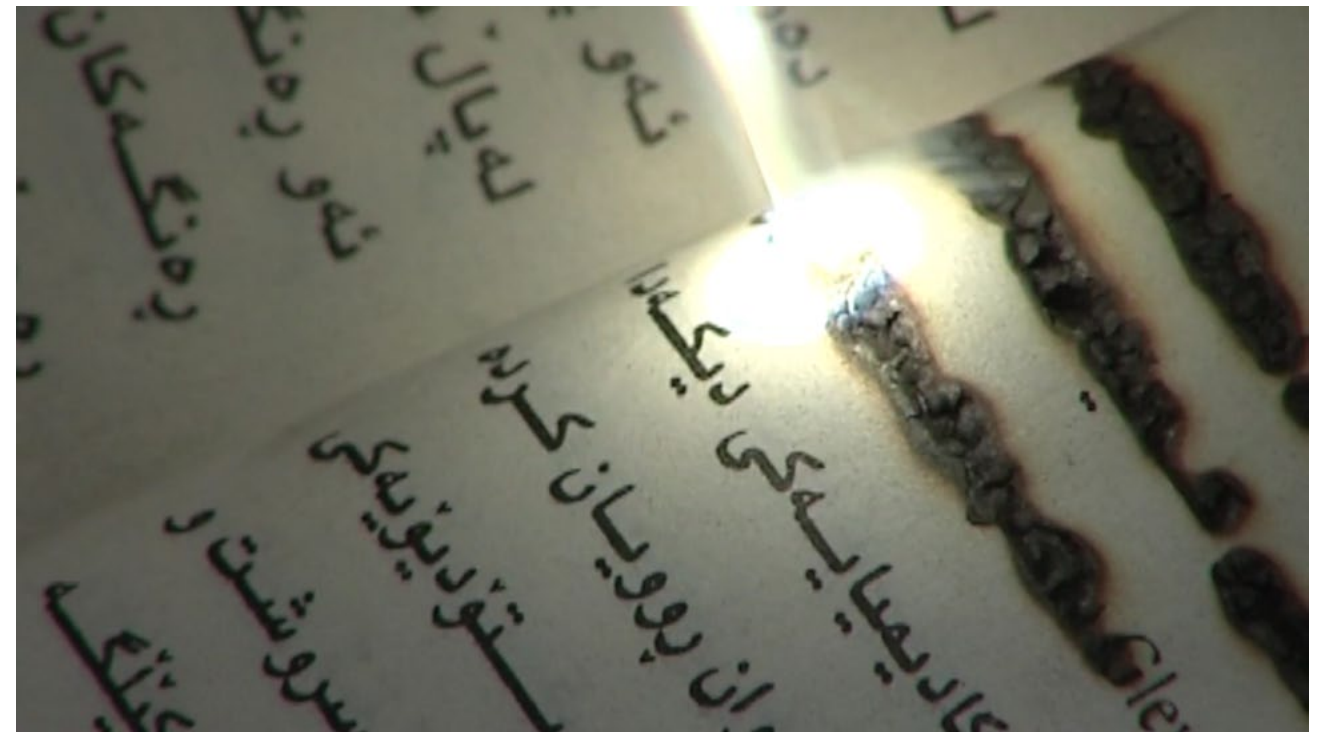


**0° Blind Spot, Where Beloved is...,  
2017 – 2018**  
Mixed media  
225 x 120 x 50 cm

“Years ago, I came to Europe by foot, walking, among others, through Iran, Turkey, Greece and Italy to find a refuge in Germany. This long and often dangerous trip was an experience of space and time, through which I destined myself for the unknown through the partiality of spatial and cultural experience. I built an object-sculpture out of prefabricated elements: a stick and motorbike mirrors. It is given a function of an adaptation tool for lost in the city.

By balancing it on my nose I find my way by looking into different mirrors. The use of a device makes possible adding to or including things into the fragmented perception of the surrounding city. In this case, the transmuting of historical meanings of city by walking through this is made possible. It is also an extension of my organs and senses. Here, I am dealing with the very balance as the activity signing the will to comply with the given condition. The mirror is not meant however mainly to reflect but to navigate. It is a form of survival kit, as I never arrive at the full picture of the place through which I am strolling but functionality of it helps me to complete my journey.”

# Do You Remember? 2017



**Do You Remember?, 2017**  
Single channel HD video, 16:9, color,  
sound  
4:51 min  
Ed 5 + 2AP

The video documents an intervention undertaken by Hiwa K and group of local activists on April 25th 2011 in Sarai Azadi Square- Slemani/ Nother Iraq, after two months of the civil protest. The international media have never properly covered the protest, which was finally brutally smashed by actual armed force and numerous threats by the local government.

Legal demonstrations were subsequently prohibited. On April 18th 2011 in Sarai Azadi square, the stage from which the activists were addressing the people was burnt.

<https://vimeo.com/254843779/539bdb2251>



# View From Above

## 2017

In the last four decades, many people have come from Iraq as refugees. In 1991, a division was created between northern Iraq (Kurdistan) and the rest of Iraq. The UN considers Kurdistan a safe zone. As a refugee you have to come from the unsafe zone, or at least prove that you do, in order to qualify as a refugee.

During the interview for refugee status, an official checks to see whether you really come from the unsafe zone. He asks about small details of the city you claim to come from, and compares your answers to a map to confirm that your answers correspond to it. If you cannot prove that you come from the unsafe zone, you are sent back to your country.

Many people have difficulty proving that they come from the unsafe zone, even if they really come from there.

Here is a story about someone who we can call M.

M tried to apply for asylum in one of the Schengen countries—let's call the country "X." He was not aware that the city he came from was in the safe zone, according to the UN. He waited five years for a positive answer from country X, but unfortunately he got one negative answer after another, until he received the final rejection from X and was set to be deported back to his country. Back then, his country was still ruled by a dictator. As a deserter from the army, returning to his country was the worst ending he could imagine. After a while he managed to cross the border of X without legal papers and enter another country—let's call it XX—to apply for refugee status again. From that moment he was a new person.

Before going for the interview, he spent weeks with people from a town in the unsafe zone. Let's call that town J. During this period he started to draw a map of J, which he had never visited before. He wanted to know every corner of it—the names of all the streets, the schools, the major buildings, and even the minor buildings. The people from J taught him everything and helped him draw the map of their town, all the while asking him questions to confirm that he had mastered everything about J.

When M finally had his refugee interview, the official was quite surprised, even impressed. He asked M questions about the geography of the town, and compared M's answers to a map. M's answers demonstrated knowledge of J as it was seen from above.

It took only twenty minutes for the official to grant M refugee status. Meanwhile, thousands of people who were actually from J and other cities in the unsafe zone waited as long as ten to fifteen years for the same thing, because their answers only demonstrated knowledge of their towns from the ground.



### View From Above, 2017

Single channel HD video, 16:9, color,  
sound with English language

12:27 min

Ed 5 + 2AP

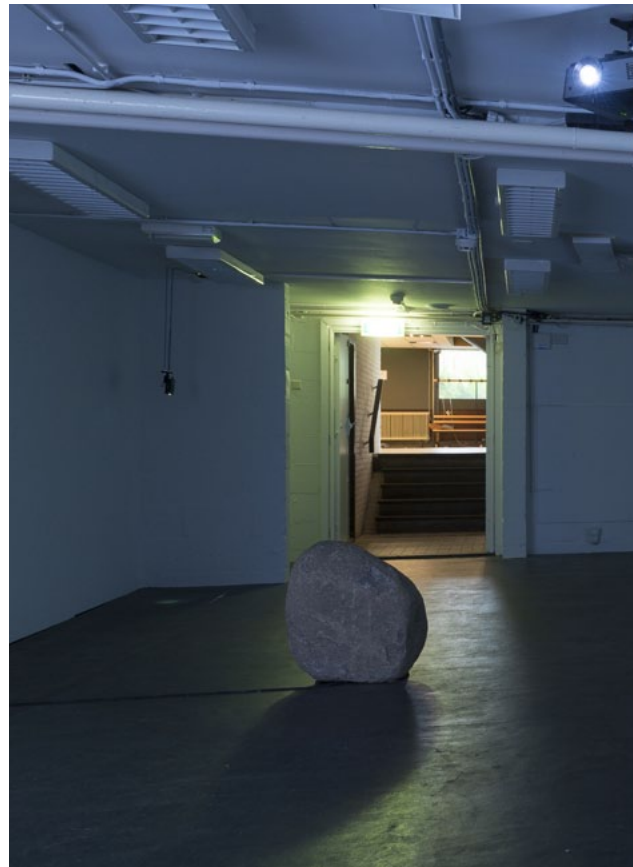
Commissioned by documenta 14

<https://vimeo.com/221188140>

pw: KOWWOK



# deDutched 2017



deDutched, 2017  
Installation view De Appel, 2017

Boulder, heating system  
80 x 50 x 60 cm

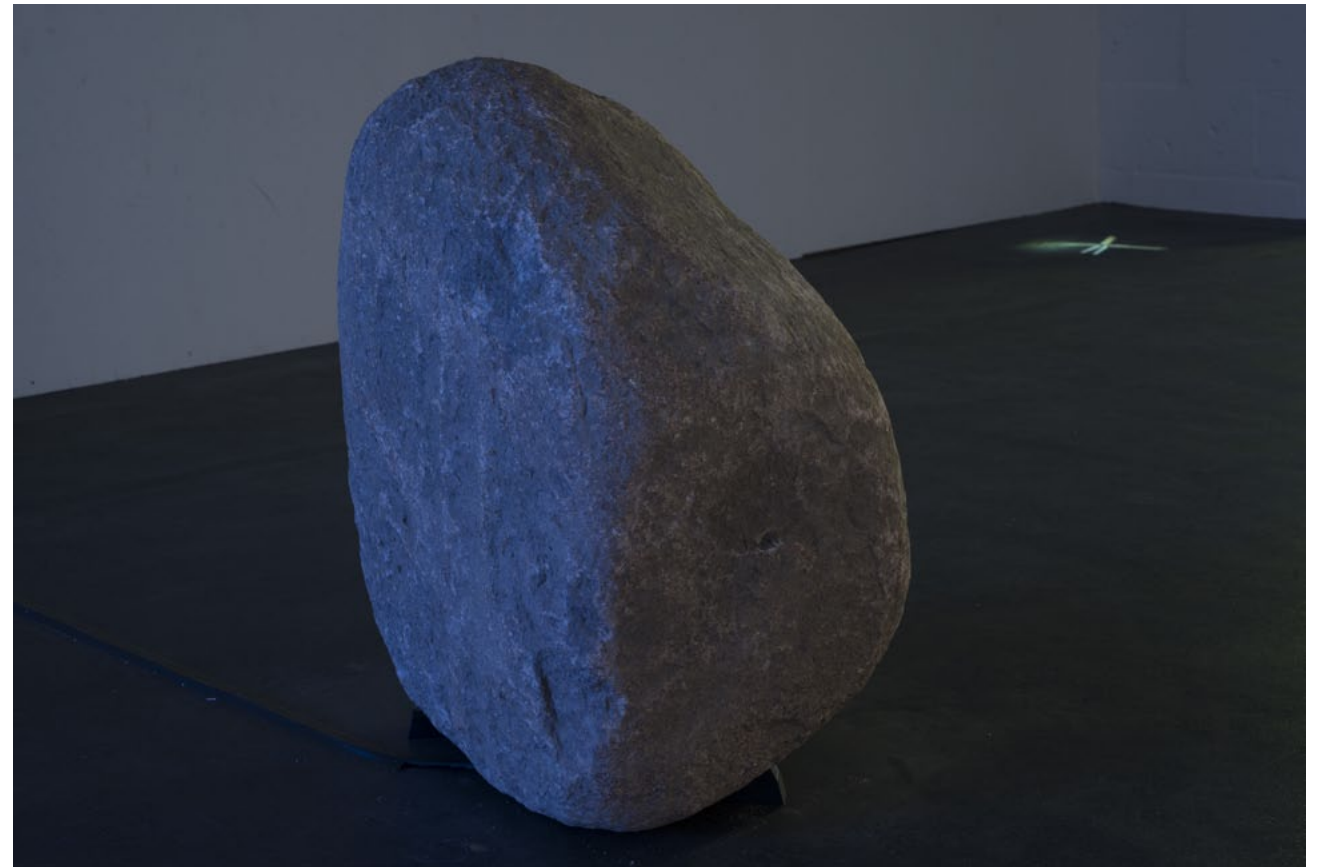
Commisioned by De Appel

“After they stabbed me under the bridge, they ran away. I slowly lay down on my back. My breath was very cold because I was surrounded by snow. It was after midnight, December in Amsterdam Nieuw-West. I was looking at the underside of the bridge. My lungs were cold; blood was dripping down into my lungs. Each drop would warm them. It was pleasant.”

The above account is by Hiwa K and concerns a certain K, a fictive persona the artist regularly quotes. K, at the time a recent immigrant to the Netherlands, was violently attacked by four people on a cold, snowy winter night. They perforated his lungs with a knife and abandoned him, leaving him for dead in the freezing street. K, according to the artist, had never felt welcome in the Netherlands and eventually opted to leave the country.

With this story in mind, De Appel invited Hiwa K to Amsterdam to collaboratively produce two new works (Pin-Down, 2017, and deDutched, 2017) and an exhibition in which the artist addresses severe acts of violence and conflict.

Text from exhibition brochure „To remember, sometimes you need different archeological tools“, 2017, De Appel.



# Pin-Down 2017



Decidedly more performative, and defined by the artist as an “occasion”, Pin-down (2017) stages an intellectual wrestling game between Hiwa K and Bakir Ali, an Iraqi-Kurdish philosopher and writer currently working as a taxi driver in Berlin. Over the past years the artist and the philosopher have had wide-ranging poetic and philosophical conversations, which initially took place in intimate settings. Together they discussed the Kurdish question, ideas of non-belonging and “tracelessness”, “horizontalism” versus “verticalism” and an unfixed understanding of the world.

Recently, however, these encounters have shifted towards intense, and notably amateurish, wrestling-sessions, in which the movement of bodies acts as a memory tool. These unfold not as prescribed performative gestures but rather organically, anytime the conversation comes to a verbal impasse. For Pin-down, Hiwa K challenges Bakir Ali to a public “battle” staged at the renowned El Otmani Gym fight club in Amsterdam Nieuw-West. The work is shown here for the first time as a three-channel video-installation.

Text from exhibition brochure „To remember, sometimes you need different archeological tools“, 2017, De Appel.



Pin-down, 2017  
Installation view De Appel, Amsterdam,  
2017

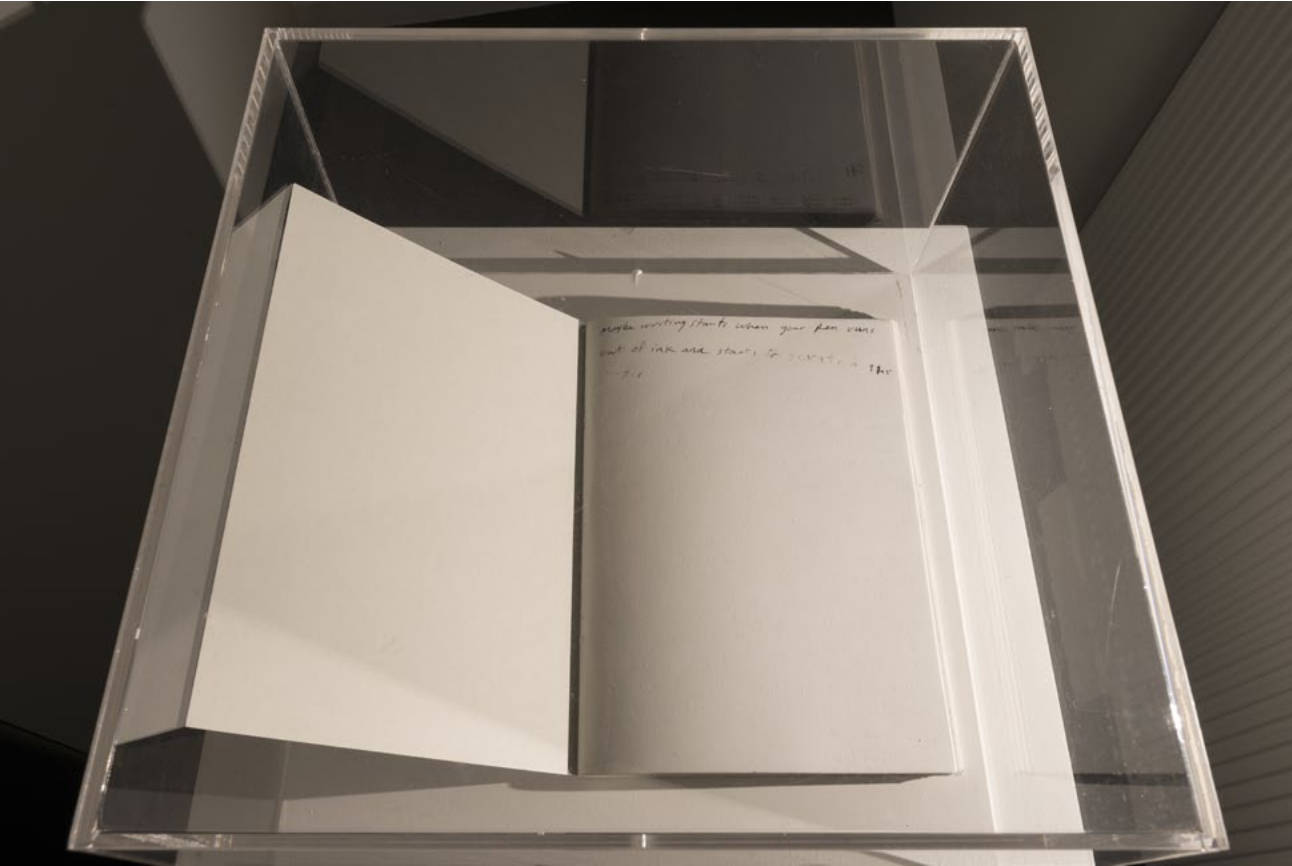
3 channel HD video installation  
16:9, color, sound with English language  
34:12 min

Commisioned by De Appel

<https://vimeo.com/251513183>  
(password: KOWWOK)



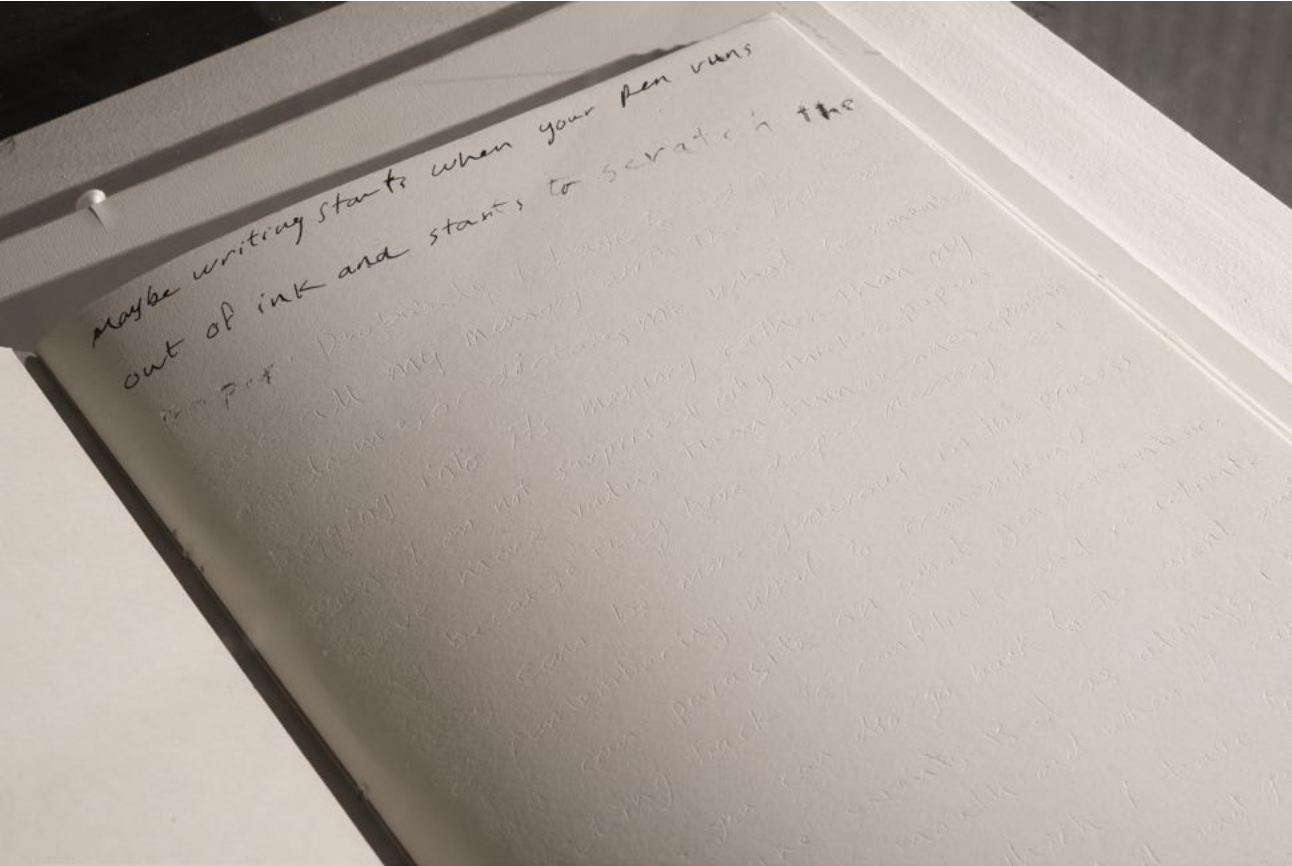
deDutched  
2017



deDutched, 2017  
Installation view De Appel, 2017

Notebook, ink  
29,7 x 42 x 5 cm

Commisioned by De Appel



# The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan (Raw Materiality 01) 2017



The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan  
(Raw Materiality), 2017  
Installation view KW Institute for Con-  
temporary Art, Berlin, 2017

Multichannel HD video installation  
16:9, color, sound



# Tonight This Film Will Be Broadcasted In Color 2016

“Tonight the film will be broadcast in color.”

A rumor spread in 1979 that the state-owned television station would show a film in color despite the fact that most televisions were black and white. Unlike in cities with Arab inhabitants, the majority of the people in the Kurdish area of Iraq still didn't have color TV sets.

So my father decided to cut a sheet of colored cellophane and stick it on the screen of our TV at home. It stayed a whole week until he switched it to another color. We used to watch films, music videos, and other programs in a single shade of blue, pink, green, or yellow. Later he began dividing the screen in two, three, or four sections with a different color in each area. We watched figures walking from blue to green, or though yellow to purple to pink.

Eventually, he constructed stripes and other elaborate forms.

After a while, I realized that my father was not the only one making his own color TV. Many other people in the Kurdish area had devised their own unique filters.



Tonight This Film Will Be Broadcasted In  
Color, 2016

Multichannel video installation with 15  
vintage TV sets and cellophane sheets  
Dimensions variable

# The Bell

## 2015



The Bell, 2015  
Installation view La Biennale di Venezia,  
Venice, 2015

War metal waste, wood, two channel  
video installation (SD & HD video, color,  
sound with English subtitles)  
35:25 min and 25:29 min

<https://vimeo.com/154423137/1773ed55ed>  
<https://vimeo.com/152818930/d1aa13cbfe>  
(password: KOWWOK)





Nazhad brings us to the workplace of a man from the town South from Sulaimaniyah/ Iraqi Kurdistan whose mission is to recycle the battlefield waste. His childhood passion to melt metal has been transformed into his profession as an ironmaster utilizing mines, bombs, bullets, parts of military planes and tanks as well as other remnants of the three Iran-Iraq wars as well as both Gulf Wars. The final process of this undertaking is metal bricks, which he sells as a material for further production. He leads us to the world of his work and his life. His activity transforms the utilities of war into utilities of life. His knowledge was growing though years by doing. He has collected a significant body of knowledge both about the metal itself and its military use as well as a place of origin.

The work links two places distant from each other by all means - the wasteland in northern Iraq, and the church in Italy - by manufacturing a bell from the displaced war metal waste. This process will include prefabrication of material in Iraq, transportation via land and sea to Italy, bell casting in a foundry in Italy and the display in the church as well as accompanying activities of knowledge production, such as lectures, performances and publication.

The history knows situations, when cannons were made out of the melted church bells in the time of wars, as the access to bronze was limited. The proposal is to make a reverse transformation and bring back to Europe the metal used for making arms and weapons and give it a form of a bell. The deconsecrated Romanesque church of San Matteo now functions as contemporary art space, and has a niche within a facade that was intended for a bell. The oversized sculpture being produced will be too large to be mounted in a facade. The dysfunctional church bell will rest on the adjacent ground, a silent object which can neither call for prayer, nor raise alarm about imminent dangers. The person, whose history and activity was a trigger for a project is a Kurdish entrepreneur named Najad from a settlement south of Sulaimanyah. His childhood passion for melting metal became a source of income, the business and mission is to recycle the battlefield waste as a professional ironmaster. It is of a controversial nature as the business that made him a rich man selling metal moulds globally would not be possible without the Iraq-Iran war (1980-88) and both Gulf Wars (1991, 2003).

Najad utilizes mines, bombs, bullets, parts of military planes and tanks as well as other remnants of military operations. The final products of this undertaking are metal bricks, which he sells as a material for further production in places as distant as China. In the accompanying video, he leads us through the world of his work and his life. What unfolds is his practical experience throughout the years that has accumulated a significant body of knowledge about both the metal itself and the circulation of the original weapons from which it was obtained. The project involves students from the local university to research with transdisciplinary approach around all issues connected to the project, such as church history, bell-making, transformation of object, reuse of material and many others. This knowledge is meant to be delivered in performative, oral way during exhibition project and finally become a part of the project's publication.



The Bell, 2015

SD & HD video, color, sound with English subtitles  
35:25 min and 25:29 min

# My Father's Color Period 2013



My Father's Color Period, 2013  
Installation view prometeogallery di Ida  
Pisani, Lucca/Milano, 2013

Multichannel videoinstallation with 16  
vintage TV sets and cellophane sheets



# What the Barbarians did not do, did the Barberini 2012

The work conceived and produced by Hiwa K during his residency at MACRO links monuments and sites as distant as Rome's Pantheon and war metal wasteland in the North of Iraq. Its title relates to the telling criticizing Maffeo Barberini — the bellicose pope Urban VIII of the seventeenth century — for the use of bronze from the Pantheon's portico to make the papal baldachin and for his canon foundry.

Bronze is a metal used for both art and war, linking therefore the fields of visual representation and military execution of power. Previously, as in the seventh century, decorative elements such as stars or rosettes from the Pantheon's dome were taken to Constantinople by its emperor Constans II. These stories, belonging to different times and locations, are connected through the work to the foundry in the outskirts of As Sulaimanyah, where the local businessman Nazhad melts and casts metal obtained from the battlefields of the Iraq-Iran War, Gulf Wars and, recently, Syria's Arab Spring. The methods of casting are executed in sand moulds and the casting forms pressed in sand bring similar formal references. The coffers of Pantheon's concrete ceiling and its form resemble foundry-type molds. The sand sculpture presented here is made through a similar molding technique to create the mockup for a Pantheon's dome unit whilst photos and purposely-raw video material from Nazhad's foundry allow us to follow melting and casting processes.

Important part of the project was guessing and immersion to the object of study. The artist calculated the angles using a basic equipment of nails and threads as historically builders used to and the traces of this process can be seen on the walls. The outcome became the basis for making the mold to press the sand in order to receive the shape of the sculpture resembling casting forms.



What the Barbarians did not do,  
did the Barberini, 2012

Sand  
20 x 200 x 200 cm



What the Barbarians did not do,  
did the Barberini, 2012  
Installation view KW Institute for Con-  
temporary Art, Berlin, 2017

Sand  
40 x 400 x 400 cm



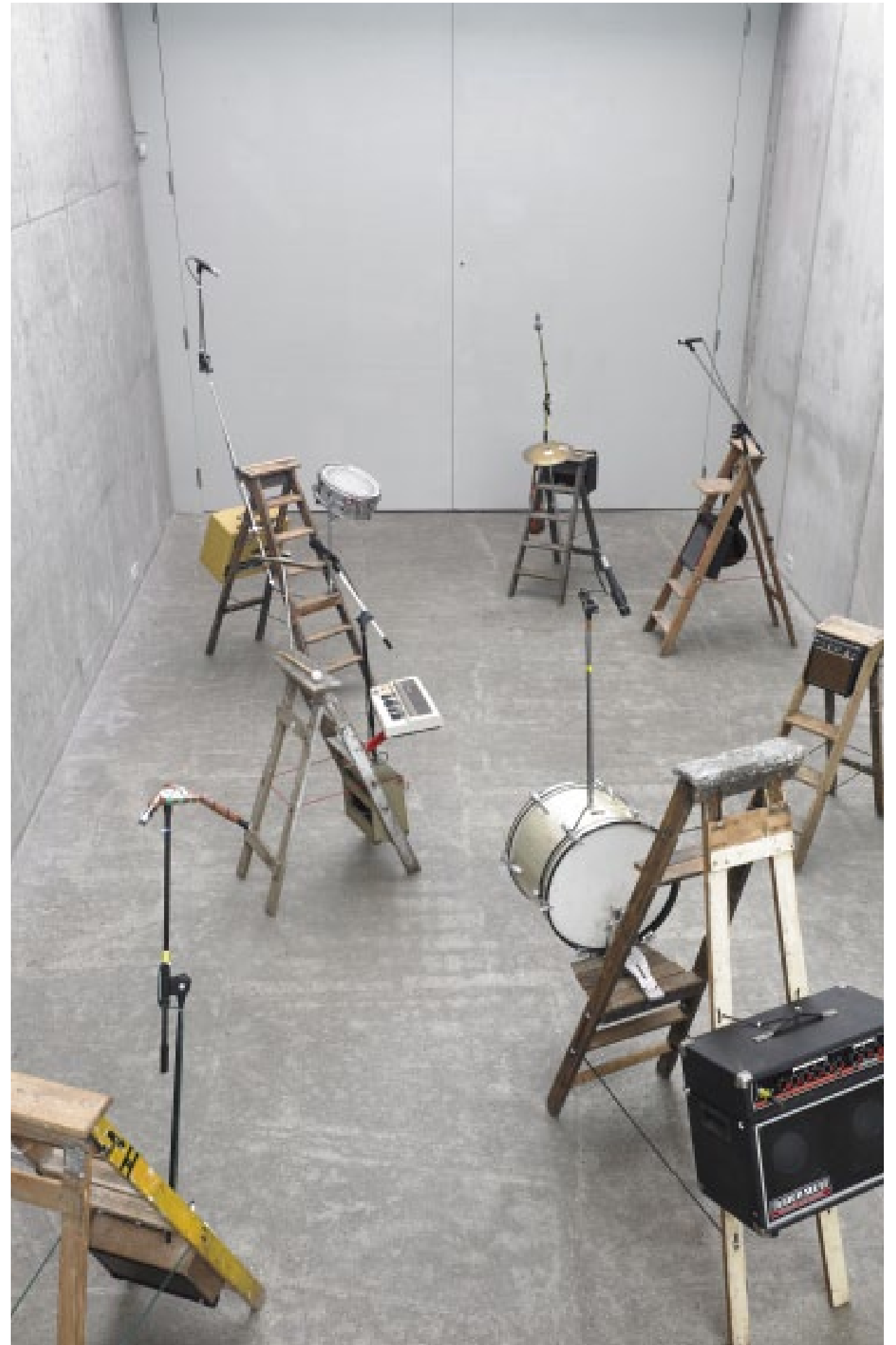
# It's Spring And The Weather is Great So Let's Close All Object Matters 2012

Commissioned by the Serpentine Gallery in 2010 Hiwa K planned to organize Chicago Boys concert at Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park, which has been a public free-speech zone since 1872. Today's speakers usually bring stepladders to exercise their right to the free expression of their views from an elevated standpoint. Yet the cherished tradition did not originate as a privilege: a gallows had stood nearby since the twelfth century, and many of those who were executed there, often regime critics, used their last minutes to address anyone who would listen, speaking their minds without fear of repercussions. Hiwa K titled his action IT'S SPRING AND THE WEATHER IS GREAT SO LET'S CLOSE ALL OBJECT MATTERS, a riposte to a line in a song from the 1970s in which the Egyptian poet, revolutionary, and patriot Salah Jahin ironically characterized Anwar Sadat's strategy of rapprochement with the West, which paved the way for the economic Americanization of the Orient and stifled alternative leftist political projects, as a fair-weather policy. Hiwa K hoped to reopen the debate with his event at Speakers' Corner.

He designed seven stepladders equipped with microphones and musical instruments the performers would build together and bring along to stand upon. After the concert had to be canceled, he eventually decided to reconstruct the projected stepladder ensemble at the Serpentine Gallery. Highlighting how the artist continually renegotiates the tensions between the performative and material dimensions of his art, the installation also brings out the possibilities implicit in the friction between collective events and individual voices, of which Hiwa K's own is merely one. His horizontal conception of the social allows him to unlock the creative potential of these tensions, inquiring into alternatives to an understanding of authorship predicated on the distinctions between experts and amateurs, between artist subjects and non-artist subjects. He ultimately advocates an egalitarian social model that jettisons exclusion and vertical hierarchies in favor of solidarity.

It's Spring And The Weather Is Great So  
Let's Close All Object Matters, 2012

Mixed media installation







# This Lemon Tastes Of Apple

## Iraq April 17, 2011

This Lemon Tastes Of Apple  
Iraq April 17, 2011

HD video, 16:9, color  
sound with kurdish language  
13:26 min.

<https://vimeo.com/152807494/c6fa34b0a3>  
(password: KOWWOK)

Kurdistan- Northern Iraq was called by Saddam, Allah's paradise on earth. I started to understand the irony after 1988 when I was told by some of our relatives who survived the chemical attack in Halabja, that the chemicals smelled after apple.

The video documents an intervention undertaken by the artist on April 17th 2011 in Sulaimany, during one of the last days of the civil protest that consisted of two months of struggle. The international media never properly covered the protest, which was finally brutally smashed by the armed forces of the local government. The matter has been somewhat swept under the carpet: as if this protest is an unwanted one, as if happening not as a revolution against officially annoyed tyrants, like in the other Middle-East countries, but as a surge against at least theoretically democratically elected politicians. This unfitting protest, a strong claim for transparency, participation and equal access to the country's wealth, spreads across generations, professions and cities so it can be assumed that it is producing an entirely new basis for the further development of a civil society in Kurdistan. The wave of protests started on February 17th in the Kurdish region of Iraq and continued for eight weeks at the cost of a minimum of ten deaths and four hundred injured in clashes between citizens and militia.

The harmonica motif by Ennio Morricone, from the movie "Once upon a time in the West", which the artist previously used in his performance, "With Jim White: Once upon a time in the West", is transformed here into a signal of protest, a call to go forth, and a song for the unexpressed. Hiwa K plays harmonica, with Daroon Othman playing the guitar utilizing megaphones. The day of performance is the last day of legal demonstration, which was subsequently prohibited and when the stage from which the activists were addressing the people was burnt. The artist came twice with the protesters from the Sarai Azadi [Freedom Square] towards the frontier, before and after gas attacks. The inhalation of the teargas through the harmonica internalises again why the protest broke out. The work occurred within the protest and is not a work about the protest.

The title, "This Lemon Tastes of Apple", refers to the use of gas against Kurdish people in a genocide attempt. When, in 1988, Saddam's forces were pouring suffocating gas into Halabja and other Kurdish settlements, the gas had a smell of apple. The smell has since had a strong association in the political memory of the country. During the recent months of demonstrations, the people of Kurdistan were attacked by teargas, deployed by their own Kurdish regional government. To relieve the impact of the gas the protesters used lemon as an immediate detoxifying agent. The fruity smells connect the two ends of this 23-year-long history.

The work has intentionally not been translated into English. The words of protest remain in their own language and are not adapted to the rhetorical frames of protest elsewhere. The particular is not translated here; the work brings through the image and the music the atmosphere of the momentum. The assumption is that the content of the protest is often the same but the event of participation is always singular. It operates in a communicational gap but does not expose a lack of communication. It



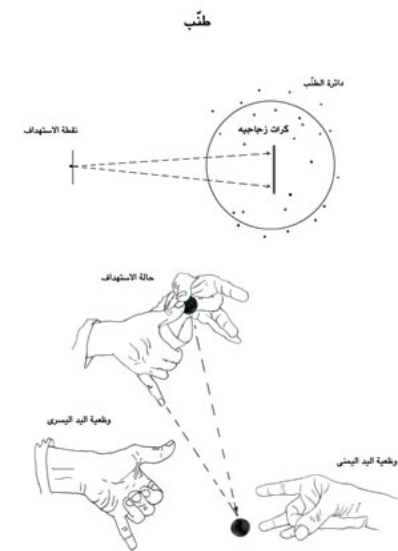
# For a Few Socks of Marble

## 2011

I grew up in different neighbourhoods, Arab and Kurdish ones. Until I was ten I lived in an Arab neighbourhood. The people who lived there were sent from the south to the north of Iraq as part of their service in the Baath Party. I was always the black sheep there – they use to call me Kurd and meant it as a form of insult. They could tell I was a Kurd because of my accent. When I turned ten, we moved to a Kurdish neighbourhood. I was the only one who wasn't wearing the Kurdish Shirwal (the traditional wide trouser). This time my biggest fear was to be called the Arab because of my Arabic accent when speaking Kurdish. It didn't take long until they understood what I was afraid of, and soon they started calling me Arab as a form of insult and I was marginalized and excluded again. For a child, it was really very hard. Anyway, children play games according to seasons. For example, in Autumn we used to play with kites because of the wind. Then, when the Summer came they started to play with marbles. Marbles and cowboy card collections from bubble gum wrappings were really very popular among children. There were children who had many of them and were quite well known even beyond their own neighbourhoods. There were children who come to play and gamble from far away and they sometimes lost thousands of cowboy cards. The same happened with marbles. There were children who had ten socks full of marbles – it was like becoming a millionaire when you made your first sock! It was at that time that I started using what I had learned from the Arab style of marble playing. The Kurdish children in the neighbourhood were playing the Kurdish way, horizontal hand position, which made it hard to hit the target when stones and small hills were in between. They were playing according a Kurdish marble game, which was called Mushien. This game was very complicated and had lots of rules. In some cases for example you were not allowed to hit the last marble that was called Hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca) and many other regulations in which one didn't feel free, and usually won or lost only a few marbles at a time. On top of that the most important marble is made from stone with the use of small hammer, by the children themselves. Sometimes it took a player months until the stone had the perfect round shape. I told them about my new game, it was called Tannab. Tannab was much easier and has almost no restrictions at all, but had really big consequences where you lose for example up to five marbles, but if you win, you would win twenty-five. They were quite seduced by it's freedom and profitability. So we started playing. With the vertical hand position that I learned from the Arabic neighbourhood I managed to bankrupt the whole street. Then afterwards I sold the marble back to them. It was 1981. I remember I earned one Dinar at that time and I gave it to my mother to buy me a pair of Kurdish Shirwal. From then on I was accepted as one of them and no one called me an Arab again.

For A Few Socks of Marble, 2012  
Mixed media installation  
Carpets, vitrine, various materials  
HD video, 16:9, color, sound with kurdish language  
3:56 min.

<https://vimeo.com/152822698/51f586c9fc>  
(password: KOWWOK)



The rules:Arabic game Tannab:- You have a two meters diameter circle with a line at the centre, where twenty-five marbles are laying – five for each participant. Each player shoots with his key marble starting from another line that is parallel to the one in the circle.You should hit one or more marbles in the circle and scatter them around. If your key marble goes out of the circle with the others, you can take all the ones, which are outside. Then the other players would shoot from the circle line. If your key marble stay in the circle and manages to push at least one of the marbles out of the circle you can take all the twenty-five marbles.The Kutrdish game Mushien:This game was so complicated I still don't know how exactly the rules were. But I remember few things. There are 3 marbles on one line with a distance of 1 meter between each of them. You cannot take the Hajj that is the last remaining marble, when there are three players. If you are allowed to then the other players would stick their key-marbles to the Hajj and the protect it. You have to hit exactly the Hajj, which is between them. And such other regulations only for one or two marbles.( this is for the sketch which is a line with three marble).- In the Arab strategy, for shooting the tension comes from the middle finger and the thumb, which makes it stronger than in the Kurdish game where the tension comes from the index and the middle finger.( for the images with both right hand)- In the Kurdish game, you put the marble on the back of your hand, always in the sameposition, in the hollow between thumb and index finger. The hand is horizontal and it is attached with the whole palm to the floor, which makes it not easy to shoot in the uneven surfaces where we use to play.The Arab style, on the contrary, is vertical and erected and the hand is attached to the floor only with the pinkie: in this way you have a wider view and you shoot from above. ( for image with both, Kurdish and Arabic left hand position)



# Chicago Boys While We Were Singing They Were Dreaming 2010



Chicago Boys, While We Were Singing  
They Were Dreaming, 2010  
SD video, 16:9, color, sound  
17:27 min.

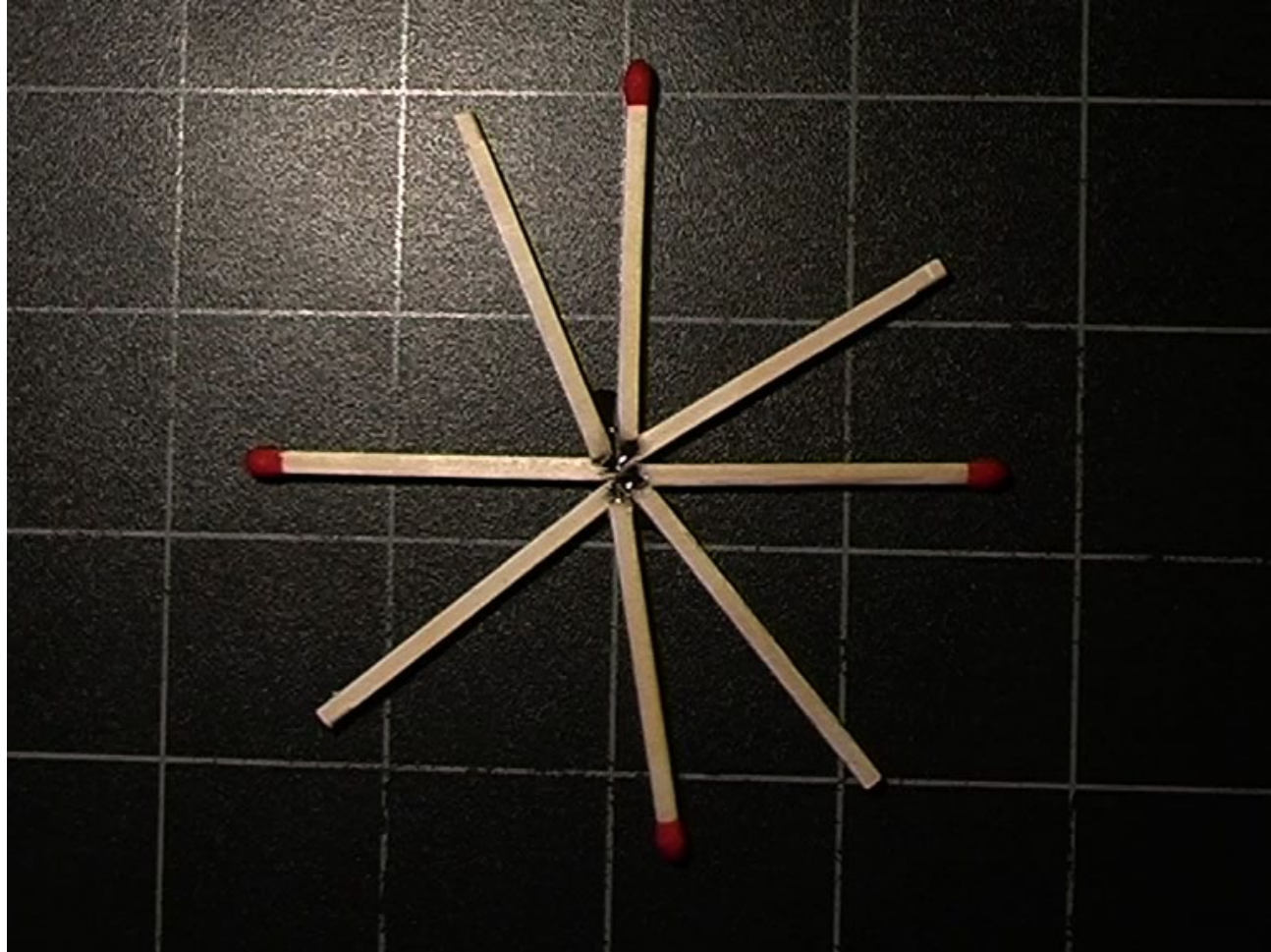
An evening music of played by a 1970s revival band and neo-liberalism study group composed of non-professional musicians, artists, and writers assembled by Hiwa K. The band plays popular music from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, England, Bangladesh, Poland and Lebanon in the 1970s, followed by presentations from archives relating to personal memories and neo-liberal policies. The Chicago Boys (c. 1970) were a group of about 25 young Chilean economists who were trained at the University of Chicago under Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger. Their advice was influential in free market economic reforms introduced to the military junta led by General Pinochet. These reforms were responsible for the economic decline of Chile's lower classes. Chicago Boys ideas have been disseminated widely in Latin America. Chicago Boys project was realized for the Center for Possible Studies on Edgware Road, Serpentine Gallery, London. The concerts in 2010 took place in: the Shishawi Restaurant, London, The Showroom, London, Wyspa Institute of Art, Gdansk in the framework of Alternativa 2010-2012, KOW Gallery, Berlin.





# Star Cross

## 2009



Star Cross, 2009

Single channel SD video installation,  
4:3, color, sound with English language  
12:14 min

Right page:  
Installation view KW Institute for Con-  
temporary Art, Berlin, 2017

<https://vimeo.com/152822853/6b7517be5e>  
(password: KOWWOK)

Star Cross is drawn from a story told to Hiwa K by his oldest brother when he was eleven. Adib, the artist's brother, was just back from the prison where was held captive for three months - he had tried to escape from the regime in Iraq and go to Europe, but he found himself in this Pakistani jail where he was asked by the other prisoners to solve the following riddle, told to him in the form of fairytale:

„A man goes to the West and falls in love with the Princess there. He asks the King for her hand. The father puts him into prison and gives him a riddle: 'If you make a cross out of this star without touching it then you will be my sonin- law, but if you don't manage this by tomorrow morning, you will be hanged in public.' The poor young man looks at the puzzle all night and cries tears of helplessness. A few teardrops fall where the broken matches were conjoined and they start to stretch back to form the shape of a cross.“





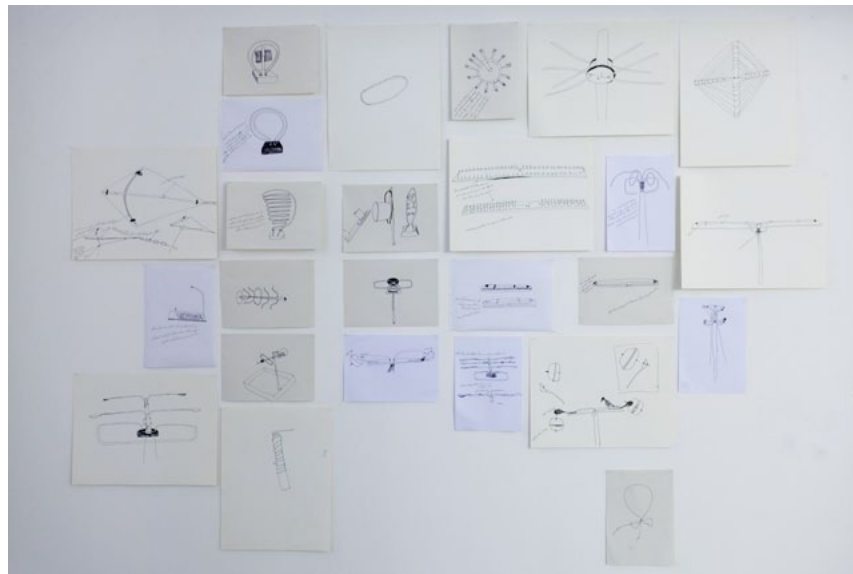
# Qatees 2009

Qatees, part of Muntadar, is a project consisting of four episodes that examine the memories of four Iraqis: four almost ordinary stories that retrace the past and the present of Iraq, involving politics, international interests and everyday life.

Qatees means something that can be neither pushed nor pulled. In this case, it recalls the story of Abas the deserter, electrical technician and antennas builder. Absconding for many years during the Iran-Iraq war led to a dual rift with reality for Abas. In the first instance, reality is replaced by what he receives from the precarious, camouflaged antennas that he makes and uses in his underground hiding place. In the second instance, during the curfew, when he seeks refuge in the dark attic of his shop, reality comes to a halt and, through a shaky attempt to project films, Abas brings to life another time – the time of cinema. Qatees examines the interference that is created between two extremes: politics, desires, amateur ingenuity, the regenerative power of the image and poetry on the one hand, and the artist's desire to tell his story on the other. The setting for the story is Tanjaro, a scrap metal tip. Amongst bits of iron, Abas's memory and the artist's attempt to recapture its strands and historical sensations creates the outline for the exhibition project. The installation created for the Prometeo gallery experiences the same precariousness of the research as disturbed by that trace. This leads to a scarcely formalized state of suspension between the various layers of reality that constitute different levels of time and geography in the project, underlined also by the musical performance during the exhibition opening. What is conjured up is an in-between time that moves on the waves of the ether and of memory. The effect is that of making the public feel part of a project in which the objects disregard their interaction with the gallery and literally rest upon it, as though it were nothing.

The installation consists of unedited video footage shown directly from the camera, a sculpture based on Abas's knowledge of antennas, a set of sketches and photos related to the project.





Qatees, 2009

Mixed media installation





# Diagonal

## 2009

In *Diagonal*, the work by Hiwa K, the artist is depicted inside of a fallen watchtower, his body strained as if in an attempt to push it even further. The sun is high and there is a shadow cast by the derelict fragment of architecture. What emerges is the tension between the luminous sky and the contrasting brutality of the concrete walls and surrounding barbed wire. The human figure is vital and energetic, positioned in the way that recalls the classical representation of the masculine body, like in the *Discobolus*. There is no plinth, no pedestal that holds the hero though. And there is no hero. The dysfunctional architecture of control provides little support for standing still as if the process of falling is still going on. The title of the work has abstract qualities. It does not contain a historic resemblance although it is clear to us that the location chosen by him is neither accidental nor lacking this reference. Not really a documentation of performance and not portraiture either, the photo brings numerous references without the actual circumstances being known.

We are looking at Amna Suraka – the Red Security Building - built in the early 1980s by Saddam Hussain in Sulaimany – a Kurdish city in Northern Iraq – as a political prison for those who opposed the authority of the Ba'ath Party. The building was taken over by the rebels in 1991 and severely damaged. Still it remains a dark symbol of the authoritarian regime in the very centre of the city. The artist has a lot of memories connected with the shifting history of the site, which used to be just a meadow, then a football field, then Amna Suraka's construction site, where he and his sisters and cousins used to play hide and seek. The work sprouts from these mixed memories and emotions, pointing towards what is trembling, shaking and uncertain in the way one can be present without an ideological position, with all memories and associations within.



*Diagonal*, 2009

C-Print  
133 x 200 cm

# One Room Apartment 2008



One Room Apartment, 2008

C-Print  
133 x 200 cm

A photo of a new house located in Iraqi Kurdistan. The depicted building exemplifies new forms of living that came to Iraq after the shock 'therapy' of the Gulf Wars, of a new political order, and the application of global market economy. This situation reinforces forms of dwelling that differ dramatically from the sense of communal life before. It links the situation in Kurdistan to other socio-economic shifts around the globe and re-formulated, newly individualised societies, which used to be collective. New economic models reshaped the social structure and caused the rise of individualism and singular modes of living.

# Highjack 2008



Highjack, 2008

C-Print  
79 x 130 cm



# Moon Calendar, Iraq 2007



Moon Calendar, Iraq, 2007

SD Video, 4:3, color, sound  
12:16 min.

Documentation of the rehearsals for  
unrealized performance at The Red  
Security building

[https://vimeo.  
com/152806887/001b4b2df2](https://vimeo.com/152806887/001b4b2df2)  
(password: KOWWOK)

Documentation of the rehearsals for an unrealized performance at The Red Security-building, 2007 The rehearsals for an unrealized dance performance took place during a visit to Amna Souraka, The Red Security Building, in northern Iraq.

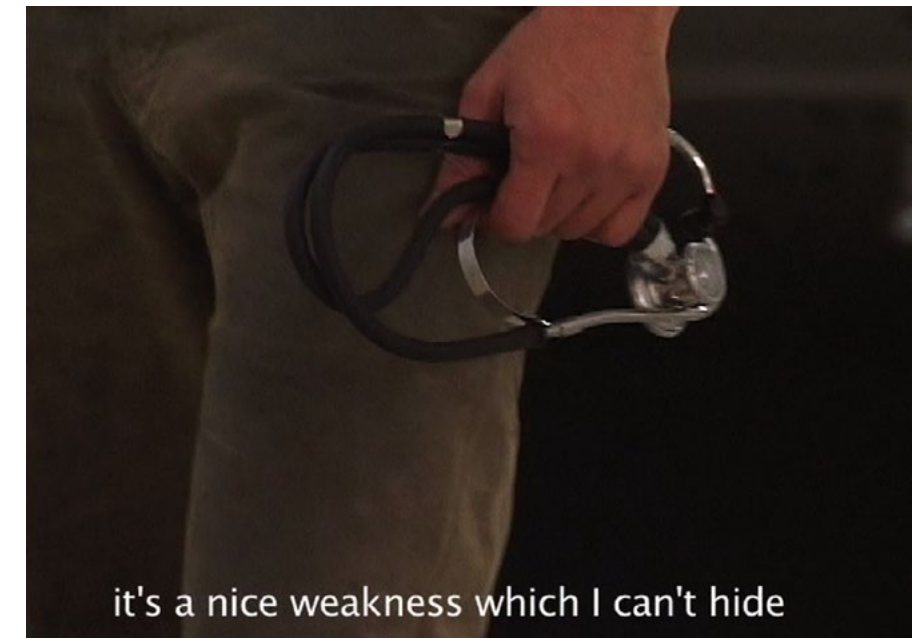
This building complex used to be one of the infamous jails where Saddam Hussein-detained the political prisoners and today it hosts the Iraqi National Museum of War Crimes.

Hiwa K tap-dances in the premises of Amna Souraka to the rhythm of his own heart beat that he follows by listening through a stethoscope. With the increasing intensity of the dance, the speed of the feet and that of the heart lose simultaneity and chase each other in beat and counter-beat, a dissonant pulsation. The rhythm of the heart isolates the artist from the surroundings thus creating a private and hidden space for his own thoughts. The ludic dimension of the dance allows for a state of suspension, where the former trauma is deferred by the concentration on the body which allows the artist to remain in the present.

By focusing on the rhythmic dimension of the movement and the beat, the piece generates a semantic slippage that allows for a reflection on time and temporality. The reference to the lunar calendar opens to a different understanding of the passing of time and hence triggers a shift in the perception of the events.

Moon Calendar leads the viewer to a lateral understanding of the unspoken events which happened in the Red Security Building. Through a decentralisation of the prominence and the possible banality of the emotional engagement, it hints at the past but never reveals it, thus offering a counter-narrative space of reflection.

Hiwa K states, „this performance has the potential to transform the space in which it occurs. The version shot in Germany [for Manifesta 7] relates more to my connection to the audience. The one shot in Saddam Hussein's former security building in Iraq is very different. Although the video only shows a rehearsal, since the performance never took place, the viewer reads the work through the context of historical events.“





# Cooking with Mama

## Initiated in 2006

In this project, we are cooking with friends and guests in accordance with instructions from my mother for the cooking team. In Summer 2006, I organized this event first in the kitchen at the Art Academy in Mainz, Germany. I hadn't seen my mother for four years and it turned out to be the first encounter via a live video broadcast from Iraqi Kurdistan. Negotiating how I felt after not seeing her for so many years, the internet provided a point of connection however it was not that straightforward. There was still such a distance to her, and in spite of my longing to see her it made me quite uncertain how to respond to this digital Mama. Is it her, or not? That is what I was asking myself the whole times. Sure, it was Mama, demanding as she used to that I should be polite, listen to her, following the instructions and strive to translate accurately her commands to my cooking team. After the first encounter Mama and I continued to cook every Friday for the whole academy over the duration of the summer. Our times in the kitchen at home are replaced today with cooking with my friends. Today, the only way I could re-connect with the emotions associated with cooking with her is to contact her through the internet. Being in the position of translating a certain food structure, which is hundreds of years old, coupled with a different technological reality and way of understanding digitalization, I still experienced the extended intimacy of my Mum's environment.

This work in a way extends, or perhaps expands the mechanism in which the domestic kitchen functions. Employing it in a broader context, the educational format which is today has become its own self-regulating market. An orthodox art school in Germany whose structure is dedicated to training and increasing the employability of the students as artists in the labour market. This system divides the students into different studios and territories which are marked by traces of style: a taste which shape and has been shaped by occidental criteria. For me coming from a different background, it was crucial to bring this "what if-ness" to the table of the colloquium. Offering a different format in which education could rethink its position in regards to its location and history.

The concept of motherland, and the symbols of national borders disappear and resolves into smoothness of digitality. The food receipts dating back thousands of years which have been passed orally from generations to generation, and undergoing all form of transformation, has been translated here into digital then organic form according to what ingredients were available in Germany.

Cooking With Mama  
Initiated in 2006

SD Video, 4:3, color, silent  
10:21 min.

<https://vimeo.com/152011397/dbfdc6586c>  
(password: KOWWOK)





**HIWA K**  
**Selected Works 2007 – 2018**

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