Shadi Ghadirian

Untitled

PHOTOGRAPH, SILVER BROADSIDED PRINT, 1999
F 73.5 cm, W 56.5 cm
IRAN
PRIVATE COLLECTION

This is one of a series of portraits inspired by Qajar-period photographs. These were regarded with awe and fascination when they were first produced as portraiture had been forbidden in Iran hasta the 1970s. In Ghadirian’s words:

‘For the project I had everything reconstructed. I had a friend who was a painter prepare the background. I borrowed the dresses ... I also had models re-enact the poses that you see in the Qajar pictures, and tried to reconstruct the stance the models would take.’

In a deliberate juxtaposition of tradition with modernity, however, the model is reading the newspaper Hamshahri, started by the mayor of Tehran, Qalamzadeh Karbashi, during the 1990s. With a wide distribution and printed in colour, it was known at that time as being avant-garde.
75 Shadi Ghadirian
Untitled
PHOTOGRAPH, SILVER BRONZE PRINT, 1968
H 75.0 cm, W 60.0 cm
IRAN
PRIVATE COLLECTION
This is one of a series of ‘portraits’ inspired by Qajar-period photographs. These were regarded with awe and fascination when they were first produced as portraiture had been forbidden in Iran hitherto. In Ghadirian’s words:
For the project I had everything reconstructed, I had a friend who was a painter prepare the backdrop, I borrowed the dresses… I also had models re-enact the poses that you see in the Qajar pictures, and tried to reconstruct the stance the models would take.’
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76 Naser Palangi
Untitled
COLLAGE, 1990
H 50.0 cm, W 70.0 cm
ENGLISH/ISLAMIC
2000-7-24-00
BROOKE SOWELL PERMANENT FUND
In a snapshot of Iranian history, Palangi has combined this collage an old photograph of the Qajar era of Iran (1779-1925), printed twice with legal documents in between, which include property deeds. These are stamped with the seals of officials and serve to authenticate the documents. More seals have been added across the collage.
DIA AL-AZZAWI

_Home to Baghdad_

BOXED SET OF 10
LITHOGRAPHS, 1/100, 1982
H 35.3 cm, W 36.0 cm
IRAQIvak

Al-Azzawi trained as an archaeologist, and his constant
source of inspiration is Iraq’s history and ancient
civilizations— in particular that of the Sumerians. This
powerful link with the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia
creates in Al-Azzawi’s work a particular identity. In this
series, in which he pays tribute to his native city of
Baghdad, the vibrantly coloured sculptural abstract shapes
echo the forms of those ancient sculptures. These are
overlaid with individual Arabic letters, which in some of
the lithographs make up the word ‘Iqra’ (‘Read’) or
‘Baghdad’. Illustrated is lithograph no. 3.
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This work is Wald Siti's response to the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). It is reproduced in a book called 'Dark Interludes', which consists of thirteen etchings that accompany a powerfully worded printed text by Iraqi writer Kanaan Malaik. He comments 'While I was writing about these fantastic, nationalistic and religious goals of the 1980s, and whose cost is to this day still being paid for by the people of Iraq, Wald Siti was drawing them. In a little studio in Heliopolis, London, he was combining broken symbols in stark, texturally energetic black and white compositions.' Writing about the images as a whole, he says: 'There are no people in Dark Interludes. Flags, crescents, broken monuments, sculpted heads fall off their pedestals; sharp angles that cut and pierce, and the dreadful 21st-century machinery of 20th century warfare are the literal subject matter of these thirteen images. Barely recognisable corpses are reduced to torn bodies, broken and littered about the landscape like bits of shattered rubble. These transcendent symbols of power, tradition and death, are set against a backdrop of very children, or else they are caught up in torrent of swirling black and white lines depicting the turbulence and motion of war.'
Satta Hashem, while living in Sweden, kept this diary throughout the 1991 Gulf war. The page illustrated here marks the beginning of the aerial bombardment of Iraq on 17 January 1991, which continued for six weeks. The flying creatures evoke both ancient mythical beasts and the American planes. He writes on this day:

"4 - January - 1991... A quarter past two after mid-night. The war against Iraq erupted three hours ago or more the air-strikes continue. Baghdad has been destroyed, the Iraqi forces in Kuwait destroyed. By the morning there will be just earth. This is what they say."

(Translated Satta Hashem)

Half past eleven in the morning.

I didn't sleep all night. I saw all the news reports. I phoned all the Iraqis I know. None of them knew that the war had started.

"All the news so far has come from the West, America and the Coalition... There is nothing from Iraq about any military action... but the war will continue for more days... and there will be new preparations for a new American air-strike... today."

(Translated Satta Hashem)

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Writing about the images as a whole, he says:

"There are no people in Dark interludes. Flags, crescents, broken monuments, sculpted heads torn off their pedestals, sharp arches that cut and pierce, and the dreadful all-too-familiar machinery of 20th century warfare are the literal subject matter of these thirteen images. Blurry recognizable corpses are reduced to terraces, broken and littered about the landscapes like lots of scattered rubble. These transformed symbols of power, tradition and death, are set against a backdrop of a very stillness, or else they are caught up in the tumult of swirling black and white lines depicting the turbulence and motion of war."

Moody Steel Permanent Fund
8 to 9: Karim Risan

"Chemical civilization"

UNBOUND BOOK, MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER,
14 FOLDS/ PAGES, COVER AND SLIP CASE, 2001
H 29.5 cm, W 23.5 cm [each image]
H 31.2 cm, W 30.4 cm (slip case)

IRAQ

SENT BY DA'A AL-IZZAWI

This book expresses the widespread concern in Iraq and beyond that the use of depleted uranium in anti-tank shells by US and British forces during the fighting in Iraq in 1991 has left a hazardous legacy for the inhabitants of Iraq. Risan's work, whether in his paintings or his extraordinary hand-made books, is strongly rooted in concern for his own culture and its destruction. He creates in this series of paintings images that are powerful and disturbing.
81a-b Kareem Risan
Uranium civilization
UNBROKEN ROPE, MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER,
EXHIBITED PAGE, COVER AND SLIP CASE, 2003
H. 21.5 cm, W. 15.5 cm (each image)
H. 21.5 cm, W. 30.4 cm (slip case)
IRAQ
SENT BY SHAI AL-azzawi
This book expresses the widespread concern in Iraq and beyond that the use of depleted uranium in anti-tank shells by US and British forces during the fighting in Iraq in 1991 has left a hazardous legacy for the inhabitants of Iraq. Risan’s work, whether in his paintings or his extraordinary hand-made books, is strongly rooted in concern for his own culture and its destruction. His images in this series of paintings: images that are powerful and disturbing.

81b slip case

B2 Salam Khefier
Intifat al-harb
(The war is over)
SCREEN ON PAPER, 1992
H. 42.0 cm, W. 37.0 cm
(a) HAGHATTI, AMSTERDAM
2003-01-04
BROOKLYN MUSEUM, PERMANENT COLLECTION
Death, destruction and desolation are powerfully evoked in this work, which is one of a series of seven prints marking the end of the Gulf war of 1991. As a result of direct experience of war by the artist, he speaks about it in the following:

"This particular one says that war is continuously going on, whether in Haditha or in another place in Iraq. I wanted to ask if really war has ended. My prediction is that war will go on. It is a negative conclusion, but it is a fact exiting my heart and making my future a grim one."

(Personal communication)

"The town of Iraq Haditha that famously suffered a devastating chemical gas attack in March 1991, causing an estimated 6,000 deaths (Tripp 2000: 245).
Said Farhan

Uncle Najib's suitcase

Mixed media on canvas
1999
H 38 cm, W 52 cm
Basquiat/Zeeland
2003-10-11
Brooke Smeil Permanent Fund

On leaving Iraq, Farhan took only a single suitcase containing his most treasured possessions, which years later inspired him to create a series of 'suitcases', many of them named after particular people. These symbolize for Farhan the state of exile — his own and that of countless others who have left their homeland. They contain those familiar, often mundane, objects that provide comfort when there is nothing else.

‘Homes don’t travel. People hang on to their homes like seals to their shells. When people have to leave their homes, there remains a scar at that place where people and walls met so closely... The signs I use are inspired by writing, but they have no more alphabetical meaning. They’re still signs, signs made of memories.’

(Farhan 1999, 10 and 50)
On leaving Iraq Farhan took only a single suitcase containing his most treasured possessions, which years later inspired him to create a series of ‘suitcases’, many of them named after particular people. These symbolize for Farhan the state of exile – his own and that of countless others who have left their homeland. They contain those familiar, often mundane, objects that provide comfort where there is nothing else. ‘Homes don’t exist, people hang on to their homes like seals to their shells. When people have to leave their homes, there remains a scar at that very place where people and walls met so closely... The signs I use are inspired by writing, but they have no more alphabetical meaning. They’re still signs, signs made of memories.’

Farhan, 1500 and 50
The main theme of Avedissian’s striking images is the bygone and glamorous era of Egypt of the 1940s and 1950s. Umm Kulthum, known as Kawthar al-sharq, ‘the star of the east’, is one of the most iconic figures of the Arab world. When she died in 1975, over 1 million people joined her funeral procession through the streets of Cairo. Thirty years after her death her songs, of which there are about 280, are still heard throughout the region. The titles of her most famous songs are listed in the picture; for example, ‘You are my life’ (1965). “I see you refusing to cry” by the poet Abu Ras Hamadani (1932–48), ‘A thousand and one nights’ and others. Sung in both classical and colloquial Arabic, some were concerned with specific events, others were about love, patriotism, and religion. In this painting, using his characteristic stencils, Avedissian pictures the great diva in various poses and at different stages of her life, often wearing her trademark dark glasses.

86a-b  Chant Avedissian
King Farouk and Queen Nazli
Z STENCILS, WOODFRAMES AND ARABIC ON RECYCLED CARDBOARD, 1999
H 455 cm, W 70.0 cm (each)
EGYPT
2000.0-3.01.1535 4-11-01
BROOKS SELLWELT FOUNDATION
In these two paintings, Avedissian features King Farouk of Egypt (d. 1965) and his mother Queen Nazli (d. 1979). He became king in 1936, assuming full constitutional authority the following year when he came of age. Queen Nazli was the glamorous wife of King Farouk, Farouk’s father. Upon the death of the old king, she became a centre of glamorous intrigue and a byword for the louche morals of the palace set. King Farouk, once the great hope of Egyptian nationalists and hacimis, had turned many against him by the 1940s because of his political ineptitude and increasingly dissolute behaviour. He remained at the centre of a dazzling social scene – Cairo at that time attracted statesmen, spies and film stars who were to make Egypt the intellectual and cultural capital of the Middle East. The portrait of King Farouk shows him in full regalia, but already with something of a cynical and dissipated air about him, perhaps prefiguring his overthrow in the revolution of 1952. In the background is an Ottoman textile design with the inscription of King Farouk superimposed upon it.