Kaleidoscopic Modernisms: Hafidh Druby (1914 – 1991) and the heterogeneity of modern art in twentieth-century Iraq

Freie Universität Berlin
June 2019

Sarah Cresap Johnson
Berlin, Deutschland

Tag der Disputation: November 1, 2019

1. Gutachterin: Prof. Dr. Wendy M.K. Shaw

2. Gutachterin: Prof. Dr. Silvia Naef

Selbstständigkeitserklärung:

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit mit dem Titel, Kaleidoscopic Modernisms, selbstständig und ohne unerlaubte fremde Hilfe angefertigt, keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verwendet und die den verwendeten Quellen und Hilfsmitteln wörtlich oder inhaltlich entnommenen Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht habe.

ABSTRACT

Kaleidoscopic Modernisms: Hafidh Druby (1914 – 1991) and the heterogeneity of modern art in twentieth-century Iraq

This dissertation explores the viability of multiple modernisms in mid-twentieth-century Iraq by examining the practice of the artist Hafidh Druby (1914 – 1991). Modern art's paradigm of originality combined with local ancient forms was used by many Iraqi artists to overcome colonial legacies and to create a distinctly Iraqi modern art. The narrative of Iraqi modern art's monolithic resistance to the Euro-American academic art tradition continues to dominate academic publications. However, Druby did not see rupture as the best path to modernity in Iraq. Instead, his practice strove to embed Iraqi modernity within the tradition of Euro-American art history and academic painting in order to give it the institutional power to overcome colonial legacies and to contribute to modern art on the global stage. Despite shifting styles, Druby promoted and executed a form of modern painting based on evolution and technical skill throughout his career. When other artists began to use their art to critique the benefits of modernity, Druby remained faithful to modernity's promise of progress in his paintings. Instead of being marginalized for his non-conformity, Druby remained at the centre of modern Iraqi art. He exhibited in major exhibitions of Arab art on a global scale and organized the Iraq Pavilion for the first Arab Biennial held in Baghdad in 1974. He directed the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad and the Iraqi Artists' Society for several years, and in Iraqi art histories written in the mid-twentieth-century, he was canonized as a defining figure of modern Middle Eastern art. In order to make sense of the place of Druby's practice in Iraqi society, this dissertation combines the first close visual analysis of Druby's paintings with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the cultural field, conceptualizing Druby's paintings as resulting from a series of agents rather than the individual genius of the artist.

The dissertation is separated into three parts. The first chapter, covering the years 1914 to 1950, examines the way in which Druby's education impacted his practice, arguing that his concept of an evolutionary technical modern art drew from his time at the art academy in Rome and from contemporary pedagogical ideologies in Baghdad. The second chapter argues that the diversification of his paintings to include a cubist and abstract forms in the 1950s and 1960s was due to pressure from the artist community in Baghdad, and that despite this bifurcation, he continued to adhere to a technical style based on academic methods. The final chapter unpacks the interactions between Druby's practice and the increasingly pervasive politics of the Ba'th regime in the 1970s and early 1980s.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Methodologies
- Sources
- Field Research
- Literature Review
- Dissertation Structure

- Education and First Exhibitions (1930 – 1937)
- Italy: Academic Painting in Europe and its Politics (1938 – 1940)
- Baghdad: Archaeology, Group Dynamics, and Foreign Artists (1940 – 1946)
- London and First International Exhibitions (1946 – 1950)

- Continuity in Druby's academic representational style (1950 – 1955)
- Audience and Group Dynamics (1953 – 1955)
- The Good, the Bad, and the Cubist (1956 – 1958)
- Archaeology and Academic Representational Painting (1956 – 1958)
- Cubism in the Postcolonial Cosmos (1958 – 1968)

- A New Reality (1968 – 1980)
- A New History (1968 – 1980)
- Escape into Retrospection (1968 – 1980)
- Fading into History (1980 – 1991)

V.   Conclusion

- Where to go from here?

VI.   Figures

- Introduction
- Chapter One
- Chapter Two
- Chapter Three

VII.   Bibliography

VIII.   Appendices

- Publications List
- Results Summary / Kurzfassung der Ergebnisse
- Curriculum Vitae

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Introduction

0.1: Ahmad Gharabli, Iraqi soldier standing next to Hafidh Druby's painting, *Assyrian Architecture*, inside the Mosul Museum, April 2, 2017, photograph. Source: AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP/Getty Images.

0.2: *The Iraq Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2017,* Palazzo Cavalli-Franchetti, photograph. Source: https://ruyafoundation.org/en/project/venice-biennale-2017/

0.3: *Foundations of Arts and Science Float*, 1959 Parade Celebrating the 1958 Revolution. Source: 'News and Correspondence,' *Sumer* 1 (1959): fig. 3b.

0.4: Jewad Selim, *The Hen Seller,* 1951, oil on plywood, 75.9 x 102.2 cm. Al-Tajir Collection. Source: Tamara Chalabi and Paolo Colombo, *Archaic – The Pavilion of Iraq* (Milan: Mousse, 2017), Plate 1.

0.5: Hafidh Druby, *The Festival,*1958, oil on canvas, 85 x 95 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said and Nizar Selim, *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue)* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980).

Chapter One

1.1: untitled, c. 1930s, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.2: Hafidh Druby, *Baghdadi Landscape* (detail), 1960, oil, location unknown. Source: Adil Kamel, *Contemporary Fine Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980).

1.3: Hafidh Druby, *Alleys of Sadriya Neighborhood*, late 1920s or early 1930s, oil, 50.5 x 66.5 cm, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2007.1.216). Source: Mathaf Museum, Doha.

1.4: A. Kerim, *Smiling Faces*, c. 1925, photograph, Fine Arts Library of the Harvard College Library, Cambridge. Source: https://archnet.org/collections/14/media_contents/5290.

1.5: Abdul Qadir al-Rassam, *Rural Scene*, 1930s, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia/.

1.6: *Exhibition of Handicrafts in the Teachers' Hall in Baghdad*, 1923, photograph. Source: Sati' al-Husri, *My Memoirs from Iraq: Second Volume, 1921-1941* (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1968), fig. 2.

1.7: *Works by Jewad and Su'ad Selim at the Exhibition at the Hall of Agriculture and Industry,* 1931, photograph. Source: Nizar Selim, *Iraq Contemporary Art* (Lausanne: Sartec, 1977), 46.

1.8: Hafidh Druby, untitled, c. 1930s, charcoal on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.9: *Hafidh Druby with unidentified companions outside the Egyptian embassy in Baghdad, c. 1930s or 1940s*, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.10: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1940, charcoal on paper, Rome, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.11: Hafidh Druby, untitled, c. 1938-1940, pen on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.12: Carlo Siviero, *Portrait of Hafidh Druby*, 1938, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection.

1.13: Hafidh Druby, *Model in the Accademia in Rome*, 1938, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982).

1.14: Hafidh Druby, *Rome*, c. 1940, watercolour on paper, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982).

1.15: Jewad Selim, *la place de st. polo, Rome*, 1940, watercolour on paper, private collection, Amman. Source: Saleem al-Bahloly, 'History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting,' *Muqarnas* 35 (2018): Fig. 14.

1.16: Domenico Morelli, *Portrait of a man with a turban*, 1886, oil on canvas, 61 x 50.2 cm, private collection. Source: http://www.artnet.com/artists/domenico-morelli/portrait-of-a-man-with-a-turban-ffZ2EDdhcu_BcoQxum6KLA2.

1.17: Cover of *La Difesa della Razza* 3:4 (1939). Source: Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2013), 138.

1.18: *Hafidh Druby and other art students in Rome*, c. 1938-1940, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.19: Hafidh Druby, *The Owner of the Jar (Italy)*, 1940, oil on canvas, 95 x 60 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.20: Guiseppe Capogrossi, *Contadina*, c. 1939, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *III Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale* (Rome: Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1939).

1.21: Massimo Campigli, untitled, 1940, mural painting, Palazzo Liviano, Padua. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Padova-Palazzo-del-Liviano-atrio-Veduta-dellaffresco-di-Massimo-Campigli-sulla-parete_fig29_303960764.

1.22: *Hafidh Druby and Atta Sabri painting in the Directorate General of Antiquities*, 1940, Baghdad, photograph. Source: Private Collection.

1.23: Atta Sabri, untitled, 1940, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the Costume Museum, Baghdad. Source: Private Collection.

1.24: Hafidh Druby, *The Burning of the Palace of Sardanapalus in Babylon*, 1940, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the Costume Museum, Baghdad. Source: Private Collection.

1.25: Georges Rochegrosse, *The End of Babylon*, c. 1890, oil on canvas, private collection, Paris. Source: https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2013/09/26/looking-hanging-gardens-babylon/.

1.26: *Group of artists and archaeologists around a model of the Ishtar Gate, Babylon*, c. early 1940s, photograph. Source: private collection.

1.27: Hafidh Druby, *The Samovar*, c. 1942, oil on canvas, 94 x 69 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.28: Hafidh Druby, *Still Life*, c. early 1940s, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

1.29: *Friends of Art Society at their first exhibition (seated at bottom centre from left to right: Issa Hanna, Hafidh Druby, and Jewad Selim)*, 1941, photograph. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1983), vol. 1, 89.

1.30: Su'ad Selim, *Society of Friends of Art* (detail), 1942, pen on paper, private collection. Source: private collection, Amman.

1.31: *First exhibition of the Society of Friends of Art*, 1942, photograph, private collection. Source: private collection.

1.32: Jewad Selim, *Ladies in Waiting*, 1942-1943, oil on panel, 45 x 35 cm, private collection, Amman. Source: Saleem al-Bahloly, 'History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting,' *Muqarnas* 35 (2018): 229-272.

1.33: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Akram Shukri*, early 1940s, oil on wood, 62 x 47 cm, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2015.20.3). Source: Mathaf Museum, Doha.

1.34: Hafidh Druby, *Mother Abaya*, 1940, oil on canvas, 50 x 110 cm, location unknown, previously in the Museum of Pioneer Artists and the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

1.35: Hafidh Druby, *Rosita*, 1941, oil, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Minsitry of Culture and Information, 1982).

1.36: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Akram Gibran*, 1942, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.37: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of the Daughters of Shawkat al-Rassam*, 1942, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.38: Omar Onsi, *Darat Jouljoul*, 1937, oil on canvas, 64.5 x 80 cm, Walid Bassatne Collection. Source: *Le Corps Decouvert* (Paris: Hazan, 2012).

1.39: *Hafidh Druby's Free Art Studio*, early 1940s, photograph, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan al-Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Education and Information, 1983), vol. 1, 98.

1.40: Faraj Abbu, untitled, 1940s, oil, location unknown, previously in the Museum of Pioneer Artists, Baghdad. Source: *Museum of Pioneer Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1990s).

1.41: Faiq Hassan, untitled, c. 1940s, oil, 40 x 66 cm, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

1.42: Still from *Wir tanzen um die Welt*, 1940, film, Tobis-Filmverleih. Source: Getty Images, https://www.gettyimages.ie/detail/news-photo/szene-aus-dem-revuefilmwir-tanzen-um-die-welt-news-photo/542382733.

1.43: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1945, oil on canvas, 104 x 85.5 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

1.44: Faiq Hassan, untitled, c. early 1940s, oil on board, location unknown. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia.

1.45: Atta Sabri, untitled, 1940s, watercolour on paper. Source: Private Collection, Amman.

1.46: Akram Shukri, untitled, 1940?, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia.

1.47: Wilhelm Koenig, *Baghdad Suburb*, 1940, watercolour on paper, location unknown. Source: Wilhelm Koenig, *Neun Jahre Irak* (Munich: Bruenn, 1940).

1.48: Edward Bawden, *A Kurd from Rawanduz*, 1943, watercolour on paper, 60 x 70 cm, Imperial War Museum, London (IWM ART LD 4126). Source: Imperial War Museum, London.
1.49: Edward Matuszczak, *The Painter Faiq's Mother*, 1943, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *Exhibition of Paintings by Polish Soldier-Artists* (Baghdad, 1943).

1.50: Stanislaw Westwalewicz, *Omar Mosque in Baghdad*, 1943, oil, location unknown. Source: *Anders' Artists* http://artysciandersa.pl.

1.51: Edward Matuszczak, *Playing trik-trak*, 1941, gouache and ink on paper, location unknown. Source: Jan Wiktor Sienkiewicz, 'The Artists of General Wladyslaw Anders,' Towarzystwo Projektów Edukacyjnych, last modified May 2018, http://artysciandersa.pl.

1.52: Hafidh Druby, *A Street in Sadriya*, 1943, oil on canvas, 60 x 70 cm, location unknown, previously in the Museum of Pioneer Artists, Baghdad. Source: *Museum of Pioneer Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1990s).

1.53: Hafidh Druby, *Basra*, c. early 1940s, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Dia Azzawi Archive, London.

1.54: Jozef Czapski, diary entries, 1942-1943, Baghdad, Biblioteka Czartoryskich, National Museum, Krakow. Source: Mikolaj Nowak Rogozinski, 'The War Diary of Jozef Czapski,' *Konteksty* 3 (2018): 225-232.

1.55: Hafidh Druby, *The Imperial Hotel*, 1946, pencil on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.56: Hafidh Druby, *Lee Station*, 1946-1950, pencil on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

1.57: Hafidh Druby, *Back Garden* (detail), 1949, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

1.58: Hafidh Druby, *In the Bar*, 1949, oil on canvas, 102 x 129 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Pioneer Artists, Baghdad. Source: Dia Azzawi, "Hafidh Druby: Between Impressionism and Documentation of City Life," *al-Dustur* (1977): 32-33.

1.59: Fahrelnissa Zeid, *Resolved Problems*, 1948, oil on canvas, 130 x 97 cm, Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul. Source: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/fahrelnissa-zeid-22764/lists/four-key-works.

1.60: King Faisal II and Fahrelnissa Zeid in front of Hafidh Druby's painting *Spanish Lady*, 1949, photograph, Walton House, London. Source: *Diplomatist* (May 1949).

Chapter Two

2.1: Hafidh Druby, *Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra*, 1956, oil on panel?, location unknown, previously in the Mosul Museum, Mosul, looted 2017. Source: Fuad Safar and Muhammad Ali Mustafa, Hatra: The City of the Sun God (Baghdad: Ministry of Information, 1974).

2.2: Hafidh Druby, *Flowers*, c. 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May 1956), 18-20.

2.3: Hafidh Druby, *In the Café*, 1956, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Minsitry of Culture and Information, 1982).

2.4: King Faisal II, *My Art Teacher*, 1953, oil, 17 x 15 cm, location unknown. Source: *Second International Contemporary Art Exhibition* (New Delhi: The Society, 1953).

2.5: Hafidh Druby at a gathering at Faik Hassan's house, c. 1953, photograph, Balkis Sharara and Rifat Chadirji Collection. Source: Amin Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons: Cultivating Art and Architecture in the Domestic Spaces of Post-World War II Baghdad,' in *The Art of the Salon in the Arab Region: Politics of Taste Making* (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Wurzburg, 2018), Figure 2a.

2.6: Ian Auld, untitled, 1954 – 1957, pen on paper, location unknown. Source: mutualart.com.

2.7: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Return to the Village*, 1951, oil, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia/.

2.8: Faiq Hassan, *Countryside*, 1952, oil, location unknown. Source: 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Iraq Petroleum* (June, 1952).

2.9: Hafidh Druby, *First Exhibition of the Impressionist Painters Group*, 1953, poster, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi, *Poster Art in Iraq 1939-1973* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974).

2.10: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Abd al-Aziz al-Duri*, 1950, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.11: Hafidh Druby, *Girl with a Guitar*, 1950, oil on canvas, 95 x 71 cm, National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Amin Alsaden.

2.12: Hafidh Druby, *My Friend Ali*, early 1940s?, oil on canvas, 20 x 13, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.13: Akram Shukri, *Tea Picnic*, c. 1953, oil on canvas, 19 x 23 cm, location unknown. Source: *Second International Contemporary Art Exhibition* (New Delhi: The Society, 1953).

2.14: Atta Sabri, *Fish Market in Copenhagen*, c. late 1940s or early 1950s, oil on canvas, Ibrahimi Collection, Amman. Source: Ibrahimi Collection, Amman.

2.15: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1952, carved stone, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.16: Mahmoud Sabri, *Women Waiting*, 1953, watercolour and pen, 37 x 51 cm, location unknown. Source: *Museum of Pioneer Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1990s).

2.17: Hafidh Druby, *Haji Woman*, 1951, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the collection of Muhammad Ali Mustafa. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.18: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1952, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

2.19: Hafidh Druby, *Sandgrouse and an Ear of Corn*, 1956, oil, 75 x 84 cm, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archives, London.

2.20: Hafidh Druby, *Iraqi Airways*, late 1950s?, poster, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin. Source: Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

2.21: Yasin Shakir, *Baghdad: Arabian Nights*, poster, Private Collection, Saudi Arabia. Source: Private Collection, Saudi Arabia.

2.22: Hafidh Druby, *Workers*, late 1950s, oil, location unknown. Source: *Exhibition of Fine Arts* (Basra: Basra Poetry Festival, 1971), fig. 16.

2.23: Hafidh Druby, *Washing Day*, 1957, oil on board, 49.5 x 40.5 cm, location unknown. Source: Khaldun Husri, 'The Wandering; a study of modern Iraqi painting,' *Middle East Forum* 13:4 (1958), 23-27.

2.24: Hafidh Druby, *Ball of the Society of Iraqi Artists*, 1957, poster, 70 x 50, location unknown. Source: Dia Al-Azzawi, *Poster Art in Iraq 1939-1973* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974).

2.25: Khalid al-Jadir, *Gypsy*, 1957, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: S. Pevzner, 'New Art from Iraq,' *Iskusstvo* 11 (1959).

2.26: Semyon Chuikov, *Daughter of Soviet Kirgizia*, 1950, oil on canvas, 120 x 95 cm, private collection. Source: Matthew Cullerne Brown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 295.

2.27: Kadhim Haidar, *The Porter*, 1955, oil on canvas with attached tree trunk, location unknown. Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May 1956): 18-21.

2.28: Ismail al-Shaikhly, *On the Move*, 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Mondern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956): 1-7.

2.29: Shakir Hassan Al Said, untitled, 1956, oil on panel, location unknown. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia/.

2.30: Naziha Selim, *Haidar Khana Mosque*, 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Mondern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956): 1-7.

2.31: Jewad Selim, *Pleasures*, 1956, pen on paper, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Modern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956): 1-7.

2.32: Tariq Madhloum, *Wounded*, 1956, clay, location unknown. Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May 1956): 18-21.

2.33: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Zayn al-'Abidin*, 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Mondern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956): 1-7.

2.34: Hafidh Druby, *Assyrian Architecture*, 1958, oil on panel, location unknown, previously in the Mosul Museum, Mosul, photograph taken 2 April 2017. Source: Gajja Pellegrini-Bettoli, ''Mending scars through heritage: Geologist who fought IS helps save Mosul's antiquities,' *The New Arab*, 21 September 2018.

2.35: Hafidh Druby, *Babylon*, late 1950s, oil on panel?, location unknown, formerly in the Babylon Museum, Babylon. Source: Mahmud Hussain al-Amin, 'Akitu,' *Bulletin of the College of Arts* 5 (April 1962): 162.

2.36: *Reconstructed entrance to the throne room of the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud*, 1956, photogaph. Source: Mahmud Ainachi, 'Reconstruction and preservation of monuments in Northern Iraq,' *Sumer* 12 (1956): 124–32.

2.37: Hafidh Druby and archaeologist, Mohammed Ali Mustafa, discussing the painting Hatra, 1956, photograph. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.38: Hafidh Druby, *My Wife Resting*, 1959, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.39: Hafidh Druby, *Baghdad Bridge*, 1962, oil on canvas, Dia al-Azzawi Collection, London. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

2.40: View of Tahrir Square with Jewad Selim's *Freedom Monument* in the Background, 1960s, photograph, Baghdad. Source: Gulbenkian Foundation Archive, Lisbon.

2.41: Faiq Hassan, *Celebration of Victory*, 1962, mosaic, al-Tayaran Square, Baghdad. Source: http://faeikhassan.blogspot.com/2009/.

2.42: Hafidh Druby*, Baghdad Ancient and Modern*, c. 1960, oil on board, Baghdadi Museum, Baghdad. Source: *Progress Under Planning* (Baghdad: Ministry of Planning, c. 1970), back cover.

2.43: view of Hafidh Druby's *Baghdad Ancient and Modern* in the Baghdadi Museum, Baghdad. Source: Mutaz Ghazwan.

2.44: Hafidh Druby, *Constructing Buildings,* c. 1960, oil on panel, location unknown. Source: Ministry of Culture Archives, Baghdad (photo: Amin Alsaden).

2.45: Hafidh Druby, *Constructing Buildings* (detail), c. 1960s, oil on panel, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.46: Hafidh Druby, *The Family Number 2*, 1962, oil on canvas, 43.8 x 33.6 cm, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon. Source: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.

2.47: Hafidh Druby, *Fishermen*, 1964, oil on canvas, 70 x 100 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Red List of Iraqi Painting*, Image 59 (2013), 61.

2.48: Saad al-Tai, *Fishermen*, 1964, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Marwan Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' *Al-'Amilun fi al-Naft 29* (July 1964).

2.49: Hafidh Druby, *In the Marshes*, late 1950s, oil, location unknown. Source: postcard, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1970s?, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

2.50: Wilfred Thesiger, *Canoes at Al Aggar in the central Marshes*, 1954, photograph. Source: Wilfred Thesiger, 'The Marshmen of Southern Iraq,' *The Geographic Journal* 120: 3 (September, 1954) 272-281.

2.51: Khalid Rahal, untitled, 1960, mural, location unknown, previously in the lobby of the Central Bank, Baghdad. Source: Shams al-Din Faris, *Historical Sources for Murals in Contemporary Iraq* (Baghdad: Department of Culture and Information, 1974).

2.52: Hafidh Druby, *From the Corners of Baghdad*, 1964, oil, location unknown. Source: 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rabimi, 'With the Iraqi Impressionists,' *Adab* (June 1964): 77.

2.53: Hafidh Druby, *Family*, 1964, oil, location unknown. Source: *Amiloun fil Naft* 2: 21 (1964).

2.54: Hafidh Druby, *Exposition Itinerante de Peinture*, 1965, poster, Sursock Museum, Beirut. Source: Sursock Museum, Beirut.

2.55: Kadhim Haidar, *Three Cubes and a Human*, 1964, oil, location unknown. Source: Sa'dun Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' *Amiloun fil Naft 29* (July 1964).

2.56: Jamil Hamoudi, *Written Painting*, 1954, oil on board, location unknown. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia/.

2.57: Akram Shukri, *Eid al-Ahda*, 1957, acrylic, location unknown. Source: Atta Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' *al-Adab* 5:5 (May, 1957).

2.58: Akram Shukri, *The End*, 1962, acrylic, location unknown. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia/.

2.59: Hafidh Druby, *Atmospheres*, c. 1963, oil on board, 80 x 100 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.60: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1966, oil on paper laid on board, 51.2 x 112.5 cm, location unknown. Source: Christie's Auction House, Dubai.

2.61: Hafidh Druby, *Abstract Architecture*, 1966, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.62: Hafidh Druby, *Harmony in Blue,* 1966, oil on canvas, 68 x 106.5 cm. Source: Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon (PE306). Source: Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.

2.63: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1964-1970, pen on paper, 4.5 x 14 cm, The British Museum, London (2013,6025.12). Source: The British Museum, London.

2.64: Faiq Hassan, untitled, 1967, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Jamil Hamoudi, *Contemporary Art from Iraq* (Stockholm: Linkoln Blom, 1975).

2.65: Dia al-Azzawi, *From the Remains of the Battle*, 1965, oil, location unknown. Source: Review of the travelling exhibition of Iraqi modern art, unidentified newspaper clipping, Beirut, 1965, Sursock Museum Archives.

2.66: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *One Dimension in Colour*, 1966, pastel on paper, location unknown. Source: Anneka Lenssen, Sarah Rogers, and Nada Shabout, 'ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), plate 27.

2.67: Hafidh Druby, *The Goal*, 1966, oil on board, location unknown, previously in the City Hall, Tehran. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.68: Hafidh Druby, *Leda and the Swan*, 1966, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

2.69: Jewad Selim, untitled, c. 1940s, pen on paper, location unknown. Source: *Hiwar* 2:2 (January-February, 1964): 57 and 96-120.

2.70: Prime Minister Tahir Yahya with Hafidh Druby and his painting, *Magic of the Abbasids*, 1967, photograph. Source: *Society of Iraqi Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1967).

Chapter Three

3.1: Hafidh Druby in front of his mural, *al-Qadisiyya*, c. 1968, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.2: Hafidh Druby, *The Weeping One*, 1968, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.3: Hafidh Druby, *Weeping Palestine*, 1971, oil on canvas, location unknown, gift to Ethel Mannin. Source: Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

3.4: Mahmoud Sabri, *Clay – A1203-SiO2-H2O*, 1971, location unknown. Source: http://www.quantumrealism.co.uk.

3.5: Nu'man Hadi Salman, *The Academy Group*, 1971, oil on canvas, 160 x 128, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Red List of Iraqi Painting*, Image 178 (2013), 161.

3.6: Hafidh Druby, *Decoration of a Woman*, 1970, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *The Second Arabian Artist Biennale Exhibition* (Kuwait City: Kuwait Government Press, 1971).

3.7: Hafidh Druby, *In Fahama*, 1972, oil on canvas, 175 x 121, ocation unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.8: Hafidh Druby, *Market in al-Kadhimiya*, 1976, oil on canvas, 69 x 49 cm, Hussain Ali Harba Collection, Turin. Source: Hussain Ali Harba Collection, Turin.

3.9: Nizar al-Hindawi, *A Meeting*, 1974, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

3.10: *Meeting of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, 1939*, c. 1950, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: https://www.alamy.com.

3.11: Hafidh Druby, *From the People's Work*, 1973, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *First Exhibition of the Party* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).

3.12: Hafidh Druby, *Struggle of the Ba'th Party* (preparatory sketch), 1972, pen on paper, 50.5 x 97 cm, The British Museum, London (2013,6025.3). Source: The British Museum, London.

Figure 3.13: Hafidh Druby, *Struggle of the Ba'th Party* (preparatory sketch), 1972, oil on board, 76 x 162 cm, location unknown (Christie's 25 October 2017). Source: Christie's London.

Figure 3.14: Valentina Ahmed, *Time of the Revolution in the North*, c. 1974, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *First Exhibition of the Party* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).

Figure 3.15: Hafidh Druby, *Struggle of the Ba'th Party*, 1972, oil on board, 2m x 5m 21cm, location unknown, intended for the National Command Building, Baghdad. Source: Mahmoud al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' *al-Riwaq* (Nov. 1978).

3.16: 'Azzam al-Bazzaz, *Tribute to the Party*, c. 1974, oil, location unknown. Source: 'First Exhibition of the Party: Transformation in the Practice of Art,'*Funun*, April 16, 1974.

3.17: Hafidh Druby, *Affection,* 1976, oil on canvas, 118 x 100 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Red List of Missing Works* (Beirut, 2013), 221.

3.18: Hafidh Druby, *Battle of Amorium*, 1966, oil on board, National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dr. Mutaz Ghazwan.

3.19: Hafidh Druby, *al-Qadisiyya*, c. 1968, 2.3 x 2 m, oil on canvas. Location Unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.20: *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Delegation Visit to Ctesiphon*, c. 1966, photograph, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, COM FO3-01450.

3.21: Faiq Hassan, *The History of Iraq*, c. 1970, 186.5 x 100 cm, oil on canvas. Bonhams Modern and Contemporary Middle East, 28 Nov 2017. Source: Bonhams, London.

3.22: view of the final panorama of the Battle of Qadisiyya at Ctesiphon, *Alif Ba* 7:9 (18 Ramadan, 1980): cover.

3.23: Hafidh Druby, *Gleeful Majlis*, 1971, oil, location unknown. Source: Calendar Issued by the Rafidain Bank, 1972, Baghdad, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

3.24: Hafidh Druby, *Gleeful Majlis* (sketch), 1971, watercolour on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.25: Hafidh Druby, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, 1976, oil on canvas, location unknown, possibly still in a hotel in Baghdad. Source: *Baghdad Observer* 27/5/1977 VII 2826: 8.

3.26: Hafidh Druby, *Magic of the Abbasids*, c. 1967, oil on canvas, 118 x 100, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.27: Hafidh Druby (centre) showing Hamid al-Jibouri, Minister of Information and Culture the First Biennale of Arab Art, 1974, photograph. Source: *Alif Ba*, March 21, 1974.

3.28: Nizar al-Hindawi, *The Birth*, c. 1974, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *Iraq Pavilion, First Biennale of Arab Art* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).

3.29: Hafidh Druby, *al-Harsha 2*, 1973, oil on canvas, Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut. Source: Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut.

3.30: Hafidh Druby, *al-Harsha*, 1970, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.31: Rakan Dabdoub, untitled, 1970, print illustration for Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Agony of the Sun* (Beirut, 1981). Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Agony of the Sun* (Beirut, 1981).

3.32: Hafidh Druby, *The Blacksmith and Seven Women*, 1974, acrylic on paper, 50.2 x 40.3 cm, The British Museum, London. Source: The British Museum, London.

3.33: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1976, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.34: Hafidh Druby, *Fruit and Drinks*, 1977, oil on canvas, National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.35: *Exhibition of Hafidh Druby*, 1980, poster, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.36: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Suhaila*, 1977, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.37: Hafidh Druby, *Three Horses,* 1974, oil on canvas, 73 x 99 cm, location unknown, previously in the collection of Dr. Khalid Ghanima. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.38: Faiq Hassan, *Arabian Knight*, 1970, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Shawkat al-Rubaie, *Faiq Hassan* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1982).

3.39: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1978, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.40: Hafidh Druby, *The Bar at the Alwiyah Club* (sketch), 1976, oil on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

3.41: Hafidh Druby, *Drunk Man in the Alwiyah Club*, 1976, oil on canvas, Alwiyah Club, Baghdad. Source: Dr. Mutaz Ghazwan.

3.42: Hafidh Druby, *Drunk Man in the Alwiyah Club* (sketch), 1976, watercolour on paper, 22 x 15 cm, The British Museum, London. Source: The British Museum, London.

3.43: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1982, oil on canvas, Zainab Mahdi Collection, Amman. Source: Zainab Mahdi Collection, Amman.

3.44: Hafidh Druby showing the Minister of Information and Culture around his solo exhibition, 1987, photograph. Source: *Baghdad Observer* (27 February 1987).

3.45: Hafidh Druby, *Fahama,* 1990, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For Suhaila,

tireless and invisible champion of Hafidh's work

INTRODUCTION

In September 2018, a photograph was published in an article about Iraqi forces recapturing the Mosul Museum from IS [Figure 0.1].[1] A representational painting of a historic construction scene fills the centre of the photograph. The painting leans on the ground in a messy interior beside a fallen air vent, a discarded Pepsi bottle, and an Iraqi soldier, holding a Kalashnikov. The article containing the photograph, titled *Mending scars through heritage*, focuses exclusively on the preservation of ancient culture in the Mosul Museum and never mentions the painting. In the same month that the photograph was taken in the Mosul Museum, a photograph of another Iraqi painting was captured three thousand miles away inside the Iraq Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. The photograph looks down on three vitrines in an orderly interior, with decorative inlaid wood floors and silk wallpaper [Figure 0.2]. The vitrine nearest the window holds ancient artefacts, mostly small ceramics, and the vitrine on the lower right contains a painting of a rooster and a man in an abstracted geometrical form. Both the painting in Mosul and the one in Venice were significant in the cultural context of 1950s Baghdad. Yet, one painting stands in for the history of modern Iraqi art at the most well-known art event in the world, and the other remains an anonymous war casualty.

The two paintings in the photographs exhibit different formal characteristics, yet both were considered valid constructions of modernity in mid-twentieth century Iraq. *Assyrian Architecture*, featured in the Mosul Museum photograph, was painted by the artist Hafidh Druby (1914 – 1991) in 1958 as part of an archaeological study of Nimrud and hung at the entrance to the Mosul Museum. The painting was also paraded through the streets of Baghdad during celebrations commemorating the revolution in 1958 that overthrew the Hashemite monarchy (1921 – 1958) [Figure 0.3]. Druby then used the painting to explain his ideas on modern art in an article published in 1970 in the prestigious intellectual magazine, *al-Aqlam*, run by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information.[2] *Hen Seller*,

---

[1] Gaja Pellegrini-Bettoli, 'Mending scars through heritage: Geologist who fought IS helps save Mosul's antiquities,' *The New Arab*, September 21, 2018.
https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2018/9/21/geologist-who-fought-is-helps-save-mosul-citys-antiquities
[2] Hafidh Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' *al-Aqlam* 6:4 (1970).

featured in the Venice Biennale photograph, was painted by the artist Jewad Selim (1919 – 1961) in 1951 [Figure 0.4]. Jewad Selim's abstracted geometric form was also used to commemorate the 1958 revolution in a large-scale sculptural relief, the *Freedom Monument*, which still stands in central Baghdad. Both artists also held positions of power within the cultural sphere of mid-twentieth century Iraq. Druby founded one of the three central artists' groups in 1950s Baghdad, led the Institute of Fine Arts and the Iraqi Artists Society, and organised several large exhibitions, including the Iraq Pavilion at the 1974 Biennale of Arab Art in Baghdad. Jewad Selim also founded an artists' group in 1950s Baghdad, taught at the Institute of Fine Arts, and represented Iraq at several international exhibitions before his early death in 1961.

The diverse approaches to modernity represented by these two artists and their paintings is masked by the overwhelmingly homogeneous narrative of Iraqi modern art. Jewad Selim and the abstracted geometric form of his painting *Hen Seller* (1951) have become emblematic of Iraqi modern art in contemporary art historical and cultural discourse.[3] Druby and his paintings have received only a passing mention in contemporary art histories, and the representational form of *Assyrian Architecture* has been overlooked as a component of Iraqi modernity. This discrepancy represents a wider issue in scholarship on non-Euro-American modern art, which favours modernities that exhibit authenticity, political activism, and aesthetic similitude to canonical Euro-American modernism.

A study of Hafidh Druby's career offers the possibility of reorienting current discourse on non-Euro-American modernities both by illustrating the way multiple constructions of modernity operated within the same social context and by presenting a version of modernity that does not fit within contemporary narratives of global modernism. Druby defined modern art as evolving from and based in the Euro-American art historical

---

[3] Yoav Di-Capua, *No Exit: Arab Existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Decolonization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 137; Anneka Lenssen and Sarah A. Rogers, 'Articulating the Contemporary,' in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* vol. II, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gulru Necipoglu (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 1328-1329; Tamara Chalabi and Paolo Colombo, ed., *Archaic – The Pavilion of Iraq*, ed. (Milan: Mousse, 2017); Regina Goeckede, *Spaetkoloniale Moderne* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 401-402; Zainab Bahrani, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' in *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, ed. Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (Munich: Haus der Kunst, 2016), 564; Haytham Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity: Literature and Urban Form in Iraq 1950-1963* (PhD Diss.: New York University, 2010), 205-226.

tradition rather than rupturing from it. He envisaged the successful production of modern art through scientific knowledge and technical skill rather than through abstract and original thought. This dissertation enunciates the viability of multiple modernisms in mid-twentieth century Iraq by examining the way in which the variety of forms in Druby's paintings were constructed both through Druby's own initiatives and the social conditions in which they operated.

Methodological Approach

The artist's biography was the basis upon which the practice of Euro-American art history was founded, and its shortcomings, mainly the supposition of genius and the neglect of broader social networks, have been exposed and negotiated in art historical discourse since the 1970s.[4] The Euro-American history of modern art in the Middle East developed on a different trajectory, beginning in the 1980s, predicated on the postcolonial project of correcting the omission of non-Euro-American modernisms from the art historical canon.[5] Kobena Mercer warned in his introduction to *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* that the postcolonial project was 'highly culpable with regards to the tendency towards theoreticism,' and a lack of specificity.[6] This lack of specificity is apparent in histories of modern Middle Eastern art, which predominantly take the form of surveys and nation-state frameworks.[7] Through the survey's overview approach, the study of Middle Eastern modern art seemingly provides an antidote to the biographical ancestry of Euro-American art history – it presents broad social networks and no geniuses. However, the surveys

[4] Greg M. Thomas, 'Instituting Genius: The formation of biographical art history in France,' in *Art History and its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline* (London: Routledge, 2002), 260-271; Griselda Pollock, 'Artists, Mythologies, and Media: Genius, Madness and Art History,' Screen, 21:3 (1980): 59; Linda Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?' in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, ed. Vivian Gornick and Barbara Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

[5] For an overview see: Christian Kravagna, 'Toward a Postcolonial Art History of Contact,' *Texte zur Kunst* 23: 91 (September, 2013): 110-131; For a historical perspective on global art in Euro-American art history, see: Susanne Leeb, *Die Kunst der Anderen: 'Weltkunst' und die anthropologische Konfiguration der Moderne* (Berlin: b-books, 2015).

[6] Kobena Mercer, 'Introduction,' *Cosmopolitan modernisms* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 6-23; Kobena Mercer, 'Art History after Globalisation: Formations of the Colonial Modern,' in *Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions of the Future*, ed. Tom Avermaete, Serhat Karakayali, and Marion von Osten (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010), 235, 232-243.

[7] An overview of those publications can be found in: Nada Shabout, 'Framing the Discipline of Contemporary Art of the Arab World through the Press,' in *Contemporary Art from the Middle East*, ed. Hamid Keshmirshekan (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 51-68.

suffer from a lack of archival material so that broad social networks lack constitutive substance and detail. One result of the discrepancy between source material and publications is that it creates a new form of genius, in that single artworks often bear the burden of representing entire artistic careers and artists, in turn, stand in for national art movements.[8]

The gap between histories of modern Middle Eastern art and the archive is largely due to the socio-political situation in the Middle East. Many of the artworks and archives have been destroyed by warfare and political upheaval, and those that remain are difficult to access, because they are held not in public institutions but in private collections, predominantly based with the families of the artists.[9] Recent projects, such as *Primary Documents* organized by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, point out the urgency of close archive and artwork readings in order to build a constitutive discourse around modern Middle Eastern art.[10] Several new studies are addressing this methodological issue in modern Middle Eastern art through a focus on specific historical moments in local contexts or through biography.[11] However, there remains only one academic biography of an Iraqi modern artist, published in 2018.[12] Considering this historiographical background and the fact that the archives are predominately held with artists' families, the biography is a meaningful place to ground a study of modern Middle Eastern art.

As many scholars have warned, an inclusionary expansion of the canon *ad infinitum* is not enough to address alterity and historiographic inconsistency inherent in the study of

---

[8] Anneka Lenssen, Sarah Rogers, and Nada Shabout, 'Introduction,' in *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 21.
[9] Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 'Introduction,' in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 21; Silvia Naef, 'Writing the History of Modern Art in the Arab World: Documents, Theories and Realities,' in *'Global Art History': Transkulturelle Verortungen fon Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft*, ed., Julia Allerstorfer and Monika Leisch-Kiesl (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017), 109-126; Omnia El Shakry, "'History without Documents': The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle East," *American Historical Review* 120: 3 (June, 2015): 920-934.
[10] Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 'Introduction,' ' in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 21.
[11] Nadia von Maltzahn and Monique Bellan, ed., *The Art Salon in the Arab Region* (Baden-Baden: Ergon-Verlag, 2019); Amin Alsaden, 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial,' *Third Text* (2018): 15; Saleem al-Bahloly, 'History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting,' *Muqarnas* 35 (2018): 229-272; Octavian Esanu, ed., *Art, Awakening, and Modernity in the Middle East: The Arab Nude* (New York: Routledge, 2018).
[12] Zainab Bahrani, May Muzaffar, and Nada Shabout, ed., *Dia al-Al-Azzawi: a Retrospective from 1963 until Tomorrow* (Milan: Silvana, 2018).

non-Euro-American modern art.[13] Art historian, Barry Flood, building on the work of Robert S. Nelson and Ikem Okoye, proposes a 'reorientation' rather than 'inclusion' approach to expanding the canon of art history.[14] Druby and his artworks allow for a reorientation in the study of modern Middle Eastern art because they present a construction of modernity that has been overlooked in the narrative, despite being significant in the time and place of their production and display in mid-twentieth century Iraq. Art histories continue to promote Middle Eastern artists with artworks exhibiting aesthetic similitude to Euro-American modern art, authenticity, and political engagement. Aesthetic similitude is generally predicated on the creation of a new or avant-garde forms that are understandable in the context of Euro-American modern art.[15] The 2013 publication, *Modern Art in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*, claims: 'An avant-garde attitude, then, unites global modernists.'[16] Several recent prominent museum exhibitions have featured Middle Eastern artists who worked with abstraction, the central form to a traditional narrative of Euro-American avant-garde modernism.[17] Along with the use of recognizable forms, art histories and exhibitions highlight artists' incorporation of signs of authenticity linking them to the Middle Eastern context, often in the form of the Arabic letter or aesthetics based on ancient forms.[18]

---

[13] Monika Juneja, 'Alternative, Peripheral or Cosmopolitan? Modernism as a Global Process,' in *'Global Art History': Transkulturelle Verortungen fon Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft*, 89, 79-107; Griselda Pollock, 'Wither Art History?' *The Art Bulletin* 96: 1 (March 2014): 9-23; Robert S. Nelson, 'The Map of Art History,' *Art Bulletin* 79: 1 (1997): 28-40.

[14] Finbarr Barry Flood, 'From Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art,' *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London: Routledge, 2007), 31-53.

[15] Naef, 'Writing the History of Modern Art in the Arab World,' 124-125. On issues of aesthetic similitude more broadly, see: Michaela Ott, 'The Small Aesthetic Difference,' *Texte zur Kunst* 23: 91 (September, 2013): 100-109.

[16] Elaine O'Brien, 'General Introduction,' in *Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*, ed. Elaine O'Brien et al. (London: Wiley, 2012), 9.

[17] Kerryn Greenberg, ed., *Fahrelnissa Zeid*, Tate Modern (London: Harry N. Abrams, 2018); Jessica Morgan, *Saloua Raouda Choucair* (London: Tate Publishing, 2013); Salah M. Hassan, *Ibrahim el-Salahi: A Visionary Modernist* (New York: Museum for African Art, 2012); on abstraction and its place in the canon: Mariola V. Alvarez and Ana M. Franco, 'Introduction,' *New Geographies of Abstract Art in Postwar Latin America* (New York: Routledge, 2018), ebook.

[18] Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, point out this trend in the 'Introduction,' to their *Primary Documents* publication, 21; The Pompidou Centre's *Magiciens de la terre* exhibition (1989), sometimes labelled as the first global modern exhibition, included one Iraqi artist, Yousuf Thannon with the following label: 'Many artists from the Arab world use calligraphy for paintings on canvas in the Occidental style.' *Magiciens de la terre: Retour sur une exposition légendaire* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2014), 287; Iftikhar Dadi, 'Calligraphic Abstraction,' in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, 1292-1313; Nada Shabout, 'Arabic Letter,' *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press,

The other prevailing factor in integrating modern Middle Eastern artists into the art historical discourse is their degree of political engagement and intellectual commitment. Studies on political engagement occasionally focus on propaganda for regimes, as in Amatzia Baram's *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968 – 1989*, but more often appears as a narrative of resistance and opposition either to the Euro-American colonial legacy or to the social system in place in the country.[19] The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Modernism claims in the entry on 'Modernism in the Middle East and Arab World' that: 'the artists of this period were not simply artists, but rather avant-garde intellectuals.'[20] Publications and exhibitions on modern Middle Eastern art continue to favour leftist intellectual artists.[21] For example, several recent publications and a major travelling exhibition focused on the artists' group, *Art and Liberty*, formed in Egypt in the 1930s. The curator Sam Bardaouil asserts in his 2017 publication that *Art and Liberty* 'rejected…academicism,' 'rebelled' against colonialism, and 'broke away' from the bourgeoisie.[22] Many exhibition publications and cultural studies on Iraqi modernism adopt a similar rhetoric of resistance or choose left-leaning intellectuals as their subject.[23]

2007), 97-144; Chalabi and Colombo, ed., *Archaic – The Pavilion of Iraq*; For an overview of the discussion of authenticity: Thomas Fillitz and A. Jamie Saris, ed., *Debating Authenticity: Concepts of Modernity in Anthropological Perspective* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013).

[19] Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968-1989* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); also: Kanan Makiya, *Monument Art and Vulgarity in Saddam Hussein's Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

[20] Kaveh Tagharobi and Ali Zarei, 'Modernism in the Middle East and the Arab World,' *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Modernism* https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/overview/accommodating-an-unexpected-guest.

[21] Some examples include: Alessandra Amin, *Into the "Shadow Archives" of Palestinian Art: Modernism, Internationalism, and Alternative Modes of Political Engagement* (PhD Diss.: UCLA, forthcoming); Fanny Gillet, 'Enjeux esthetique et politiques de la mobilisation artistique durant la guerre civile algerienne (1992-1999),' *Histoire@Politique* (forthcoming); Anneka Lenssen, 'Adham Ismail's Arabesque: The Making of a Radical Arab Painting in Syria,' *Muqarnas* 34 (2017): 223-258.

[22] Sam Bardaouil, *Surrealism in Egypt: Modernism and the Art and Liberty Group* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 1-2.

[23] Elizabeth Rauh, 'The Colored Horizons of Karbala: Rafa Nasiri and contemporary printmaking in 1960s Iraq,' *HIAA Conference* (25-27 October, 2018); Haytham Bahoora, 'Baudelaire in Baghdad: Modernism, the Body, and Husayn Mardan's Poetics of the Self,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 313-329; Bahrani, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' in *Postwar*, ed. Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes.

Literary theorist Ali Behdad warned in his 2016 publication on photography in the Middle East that oppositional narratives are precarious because they can mask nuance and power imbalances:

> celebratory claims about the oppositional nature of indigenous representation are problematic not only because such claims still rely on a dualistic model…but also because they fail to account for the inequalities of power and access to representations, therefore, do not necessarily offer a resistant mode of representation.[24]

The point here is not to diminish the contribution of previous art historical studies, which have provided much needed context to the history of modern art in the Middle East, but instead to point out a narrative gap. Using Ali Behdad's warning as a starting point, this dissertation considers not only why Hafidh Druby's practice helps to fill this gap, but also how Druby's significance should be contextualized into a history of modern Iraqi art to make room for local inequalities and differences.

Druby was a central figure in the art world of twentieth century Baghdad, where he worked until his death in 1991. He was among the first small group of artists sent by the Iraqi government to train at art academies in Europe, in the late 1930s and then after WWII in the late 1940s. He founded the only open studio and was part of the first artists' society in 1940s Baghdad. Along with many other Iraqi artists at the time, he founded his own artists' group, *The Impressionists*, in 1952 and taught at the Institute of Fine Arts and the College of Science. In the 1960s, he took a leadership role in the Iraqi Artists Society, which along with the Museum of Modern Art and the Institute of Fine Arts, was one of the main art institutions in Baghdad. He was president of the exhibition committee for the First Biennale of Arab Art, held in Baghdad in 1974, and dean of the Iraqi Academy of Fine Arts in the 1970s.

Druby defined modern art in a 1964 interview not as a revolutionary break with the past or with the European tradition nor as intellectual, based on new modes of thought, but as evolutionary, based on scientific developments and technical skills:

---

[24] Ali Behdad, *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography of the Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 131-132.

> The authentic modern art is the art that is based on the foundations of its older predecessor classical art. Its evolution follows the procession of major scientific and technical developments that achieved wonders in inventions and discovery. While old art lived in an atmosphere of…emotions and…transcendent spirituality, modern art is more concerned with keeping pace with new scientific developments, as I consider the study of colour a scientific study.[25]

Druby maintained that his evolutionary approach was grounded in the work of Euro-American artists and art history throughout his career from the mid-1930s through the 1980s. He did not engage in political or intellectual debates, and his position garnered critique from fellow Iraqi artists, critics, and cultural actors. Despite Druby's singular view on modernity and his avoidance of political discourse, his artworks varied widely in form through his career, and often relating to concurrent intellectual or political discussions. In the same year that he painted *Assyrian Architecture*, depicting a historic scene in a representational style, he completed another large-scale painting, *The Festival*, in a style Druby called cubism, which deconstructs Baghdadi urban life into a patchwork of colours and geometric forms [Figure 0.5]. His paintings were also incorporated into various political causes, such as propaganda for the Ba'th regime, which controlled the government from 1968 to 2003, and socialist literature in the Soviet Union.

In order to make sense of the complexity of Druby's position and his artworks' forms, this dissertation uses Bourdieu's theory of cultural field.[26] Bourdieu's theory defines a field as a series of power relationships between agents, who gain power with various forms of capital. Besides economic capital, he includes two other forms of capital: social capital, defined as resources developing from a network of relationships, and cultural capital, defined as a form of knowledge that provides the agent with the tools to appreciate cultural artefacts, for example artworks. Cultural capital can include intangible things such as education and tangible objects such as paintings.[27] The theory is implemented here on two levels: to understand Druby's role *within* the cultural field of mid-twentieth-century

---

[25] 'Interview with the artist Hafidh Druby,' *al-Aqlam* 1:2 (1964): 109, 107-113.
[26] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
[27] Hans van Mannen, 'Pierre Bourdieu's Grand Theory of the Artistic Field,' in *How to Study Art Worlds* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 53-81.

Baghdad and to frame his artworks *as* cultural fields, whose forms and subjects resulted from a variety of agents.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural field is useful in this dissertation for several reasons. Firstly, because it posits 'artistic production as a collective action,' in a way that builds on Howard Becker's concept of 'the art world' as the relation between individuals, such as the artist himself, patrons, and political officials, to include groups, institutions, and ideas.[28] It provides space to consider how groups, such as artists' organizations, institutions, the Euro-American discipline of art history, and ideas had agency within the cultural field in which Druby operated. It also frames the field as power relationships between these agents. Returning to Behdad's fear that oppositional narrative masks power dynamics, using field theory integrates these power dynamics into a reading of Druby's position within the Baghdad cultural sphere and into his paintings. For example, his painting *The Festival* can be read not just as a manifestation of local Iraqi culture, but also, as a display of power relations between the urban elites and subaltern peasants. In reading his paintings as cultural fields, the idea of power relationships provides space for retaining Druby's agency while incorporating other agents into the construction of the paintings' forms. Art historian Steven Nelson noted in 2007, building on Kobena Mercer's 1990 article, that artworks from previously marginalized groups newly assimilated into art historical studies risk standing in for social reality.[29] The nuanced visual analysis provided by the concept of cultural field ensures that Druby's paintings are not essentialized to a one-to-one relationship with political or social events and intellectual discourse.

Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital is also beneficial in understanding Druby's paintings' shifting reception within the same artistic field. For example, Druby's academic representational paintings simultaneously received favour in large-scale travelling exhibitions organized by the government and critique from other Iraqi artists. Adding nuance to Bourdieu's theory, Prudence L. Carter's concept of nondominant cultural capital is relevant as well. She argues in her 2003 article that cultural capital functions

---

[28] Pierre Bourdieu, *Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 204-205; Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
[29] Steven Nelson, 'Turning Green into Black or How I Learned to Live with the Canon,' in *Making Art History*, 57; Kobena Mercer, 'Black art and the burden of representation,' *Third Text* 4: 10 (1990): 61-78.

differently among various nondominant social groups.[30] Druby's paintings often operated within several different spheres at once, with disparate hierarchies of power in the overall social field of Baghdad. The concept of nondominant cultural capital is helpful when examining why certain forms persisted in specific contexts and not in others. For example, Druby continued to paint representational nudes and portraits for the diminishing middle class in the 1970s.

In unpacking the specificities of the cultural field in which Druby operated, I draw from several key studies. Orit Bashkin's book *The Other Iraq* (2009) examines the plurality of voices in Iraq's intellectual tradition during the Hashemite Kingdom, focusing predominantly on the political engagement of the Iraqi left.[31] Haytham Bahoora's doctoral dissertation integrates aesthetic movements (visual and literary culture) into the discussion of modernization and the anti-colonial political struggle in mid-twentieth-century Iraq.[32] Both studies emphasize oppositional groups and leftist politics. Bashkin's book separates Iraqi society into two public spheres: the state and the opposition.[33] Bahoora's dissertation argues that 'opposition intellectuals…had the greatest influence on cultural debates of the period.'[34] Perhaps one underlying source of this emphasis on leftist intellectuals in the Iraqi context is the foundational historical text on modern Iraq, Hanna Batatu's *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (1978).[35] Batatu devotes an entire book of the three-book study to the Iraqi Communist Party, arguing that he focuses on the communists because of their overwhelming influence on the thought processes of a generation of Iraqis.[36] Amin Alsaden's article on art salons in post-World War II Baghdad complicates this focus by mapping out the social networks in which artists operated, noting that while most artists were left-leaning, they

---

[30] Prudence L. Carter, "'Black' Cultural Capital, Status Positioning, and Schooling Conflicts for Low-Income African American Youth," *Social Problems* 50: 1 (February 2003): 136-155.

[31] Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

[32] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*.

[33] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq,* 89.

[34] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 226.

[35] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[36] One reviewer also notes that Batatu's own affinity for the party is clear throughout the text: Said Amir Arjomand, 'Review: *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*,' *American Journal of Sociology* 88:2 (September, 1982): 470, 469-471.

did not necessarily align with specific political factions. Furthermore, he points out that the main form of social cohesion among artists was participation in the visual arts.[37] All of these projects focus on the Hashemite period up to the 1958 revolution.

The position of artists and artworks in Iraqi society in the 1960s and 1970s has received less attention. As Saleem al-Bahloly has pointed out, this is partially due to the 1963 Ba'th coup in Iraq and the subsequent collapse of the public sphere in 1960s Baghdad.[38] His work on the Iraqi artist Dia al-Azzawi (b. 1939) examines the artist's work within the context of Iraq and the wider Middle East in the 1960s and 1970s and helps to fill this historiographic gap.[39] The 2018 exhibition catalogue accompanying the artists' retrospective in Doha adds further contextualization.[40] Al-Azzawi was Druby's student, and while they had differing views on modernity, they operated within similar fields. Furthermore, the investigations in both publications situate Druby's own reluctance to participate in these movements after 1958. Alsaden's 2018 article on the 1974 Biennale of Arab Art dismantles the prevailing narrative that the Ba'th government dominated culture in 1970s Baghdad against a singular opposition.[41] His mapping of the way the biennial developed from 'complex' factors 'involving multiple actors and competing national interests' makes room for Druby's own complex output during this period, fluctuating from government sponsored murals to still lives to a homoerotic historical scenes. Nada Shabout's (2007) and Silvia Naef's (1996) detailed surveys of modern Arab art are also useful overviews of the post-1958 cultural field in Baghdad.[42] Muhsin J. al-Musawi's *Reading Iraq* (2006) extends the study of culture in modern Iraq through Saddam Hussein's rule, focusing on literature.[43]

---

[37] Amin Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons: Cultivating Art and Architecture in the Domestic Spaces of Post-World War II Baghdad,' in *The Art Salon in the Arab Region*, 165-206.
[38] Saleem al-Bahloly, 'Roundtable Perspectives: Researching Iraq Today,' *Arab Studies Journal* 23 (1): 236-265.
[39] Saleem al-Bahloly, 'The Persistence of the Image: Dhakira Hurra in Dia Al-Azzawi's Drawings on the Massacre of Tel al-Za'atar,' *ARTMargins* (2013): 71-97.
[40] Bahrani, Muzaffar, Shabout, ed., *Dia al-Al-Azzawi*.
[41] Amin Alsaden, 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial,' *Third Text* (2018): 2-30.
[42] Shabout, *Modern Arab Art*; Silvia Naef, *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe* (Geneva: Ed. Slatkine, 1996).
[43] Muhsin al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in Conflict* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

In order to demarcate the people who operated within Druby's cultural field, I will use the term 'urban elites.' The urban elite was a complex group of wealthy landowners, bureaucrats, politicians, professionals, academics, cultural producers, pan-Arabists, nationalists, and leftist activists. The group was united by four factors: living in Baghdad, having an education, wearing Euro-American dress, and engaging with culture. The Baghdad urban elite did not easily conform to Euro-American categories of middle class and upper class. I rely on several studies to understand how this system of urban elites functioned. Batatu's *The Old Social Classes* remains the definitive text on the class system in modern Iraq. Its deep historical grounding and vast use of archives underlines the complexity of the urban elite with whom Druby interacted and outlines historical roots of the class structure. However, the study's overwhelming class focus sometimes masks other factors of social cohesion. The term *effendiyya* is often used to indicate something similar to a Euro-American middle class in Iraq, but historian Michael Eppel has illustrated the term's vague usage in modern Middle Eastern history and the impossibility of correlating it with a Euro-American middle class.[44] Unlike the Euro-American middle class, the *effendi* were united by social experience, such as education, culture, dress, and behaviour, and not by economic status. Therefore, I avoid categorising people as *effendi*, unless the term is used within the historical context. To situate the place of individuals engaged in leftist politics within the urban elite, I turn to Batatu's and Tareq Y. Ismael's close studies of the communist party in Iraq.[45]

This dissertation forms a picture of the urban elite predominantly through the figures who appear in the archives as Druby's patrons, critics, and colleagues. While Keith David Watenpaugh's *Being Modern in the Middle East* (2006) focuses on Syria, his argument that a Middle-Eastern middle class could be defined by their relationship to the concept of modernity provides a method through which to consider the appreciation of Druby's paintings as constitutive of class rather than simply informed by it.[46] In contextualizing

---

[44] Michael Eppel, 'The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30:2 (May, 1998): 227-250.
[45] Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Iraq* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[46] Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

this idea, I make use of Kirsten Scheid's study of how paintings of nudes in Mandate-era Beirut were constructive of social position.[47] Druby's paintings not only delineated class structure through patronage and appreciation but also through the figures they depicted. His paintings represent several groups excluded from urban elite society or denied a voice within that society: mainly peasants and women. In line with Gayatri Spivak's arguments in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988), I understand Druby's act of painting peasants and women, regardless of his intentions, as denying them their own voice and reinforcing their subaltern status.[48]

Along with people, I will look at the way institutions exerted agency both within Druby's cultural field and on the forms of his artworks. I rely on Geoffrey M. Hodgson's definition of institutions as 'durable systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions.'[49] The primary institutional agent in the field of Iraqi visual arts was the government. Through its Ministry of Culture and Information, whose name constantly altered with political whims, the Iraqi government provided the majority of the economic capital for arts in Iraq, both through its sponsoring of arts activities and its employment of artists. It paid for most exhibitions of Iraqi modern art in Baghdad and abroad and published nearly all art books. Druby worked for the government throughout his career as a teacher, a participant in archaeological projects, an exhibition organiser, and a mural painter. However, its economic involvement in the visual arts did not result in total control or dictation of artistic form. While the government implemented censorship and exerted pressure on formal decisions, its agency was not all-encompassing. Jessica Winegar's study on the politics of art and culture in Egypt and Anneka Lenssen's dissertation on Syrian modern artists, where the government exerted a similar level of economic control, have been helpful in understanding the role of the government in the construction of visual arts in Iraq.[50]

---

[47] Kirsten Scheid, 'Necessary Nudes: Hadatha and Mu'asira in the Lives of Modern Lebanese,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42:2 (May 2010): 203-230.
[48] Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988): 271-313.
[49] Geoffrey M. Hodgson, 'What are Institutions?' *Journal of Economic Issues* 40:1 (2006): 13, 1-25.
[50] Jessica Winegar, *Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Lenssen, *The Shape of Support: Painting and Politics in Syria's Twentieth Century.* PhD diss., MIT, 2014.

The other significant institutional agent in Druby's art production was the Euro-American concept of art history and the frameworks of Euro-American artistic production. Druby repeatedly referred to the Euro-American canon, the academic framing of art history, and the methodologies of canonized Euro-American artists in describing his artistic processes. He was also part of the development of structures in Baghdad such as art academies, museums, and artist societies with affinity to Euro-American art institutions. Art historian Elizabeth Mansfield's edited volume *Art History and Its Institutions* (2002) illustrates how art history became institutionalized in the Euro-American context in the nineteenth century through the canon, museums, and methodology.[51] However the concepts of the canon, the museum, and method did not develop agency in Iraq through the same process as occurred in Europe, where they built on embedded social systems of education and thought. Instead in Iraq, these institutional components drew their agency from colonial legacies and postcolonial negotiations. Therefore, this dissertation examines Druby's concept of modernity, his artworks, and his position in the cultural field of Baghdad from a postcolonial perspective.

In his 2018 study on existentialism in the Middle East, Yoav di-Capua pointed out three main issues in the study of postcolonialism in the region: the continued projecting of the colonized against an 'essentialized epistemology of colonial Europe,' a hypertheoretical approach, and a focus on pan-Arab nationalism. His proposed solution is an increased focus on local cultural and intellectual histories.[52] With this critique in mind, this dissertation formulates the postcolonial condition through Druby's own local discourse and practice. In order to understand the local discourse from which Druby defined his concept of modern art as evolving from classical Euro-American art through the technical mastery of Euro-American painting methods, I use Joseph A. Massad's intellectual history *Desiring Arabs* (2007). Massad's study charts the way in which Arabic writers in the twentieth century engaged with the Euro-American Orientalist discourse that developed

---

[51] Elizabeth Mansfield, ed., *Art History and Its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline* (London: Routledge, 2002).
[52] Yoav Di-Capua, *No Exit: Arab Existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Decolonization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 15-16.

in tandem with colonialism.[53] Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) remains an indispensable guide for understanding how the colonial encounter constructed an identity of the European as modern through the framing of the Middle Eastern man as historically backward.[54] By concentrating on Middle Eastern consideration of Orientalist discourse, Massad's publication rectifies the common critique of Said's theory that it takes a Eurocentric perspective and does not consider the voice of the Middle Eastern other.[55] Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts' *Orientalism's Interlocutors* (2002) also returns the agency to the colonized by considering Middle Eastern artists' negotiations with colonialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[56]

This dissertation then considers how Druby encountered colonial and postcolonial discourse. Education was one of the main avenues of encounter, and so, I utilize studies on education in the Middle East. Nadia Radwan's dissertation explores the relationship between education and the category of modern art in Egypt from 1903 to 1952.[57] The exchange of knowledge on modernity and art and its relationship to the Euro-American art institution in Egypt had many parallels in the Iraqi cultural field. Bashkin's *The Other Iraq* provides an analysis the education system in twentieth century Iraq. Because the Iraqi minister of education Sati' al-Husri (1880 – 1968) worked closely with Druby, I look closely at his views on education recounted in his memoirs.[58] Bahoora's dissertation and al-Musawi's *Reading Iraq* provide further contextualization of the postcolonial discourse in mid-twentieth century Iraq. Bahoora's dissertation, along with research by Caecilia Pieri and Amin Alsaden, also map out the way the spatial modernization of the city of Baghdad engaged with colonial legacies.[59] As Druby worked within these spaces, such as the museums, the Institute of Fine Arts, and the headquarters of the Society of Iraqi Artists, I will also consider their position within the postcolonial discourse.

---

[53] Joseph A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
[54] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
[55] Ali Behdad, 'Orientalism Matters,' *Modern Fiction Studies* 56: 4 (Winter 2010): 709-728.
[56] Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts, ed., *Orientalism's Interlocutors* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).
[57] Nadia Radwan, *The Aesthetics of the Modern: Art, Education, and Taste in Egypt 1903-1952* (PhD Diss.: Columbia University, 2013).
[58] Sati' al-Husri, *My Memoirs from Iraq 1927-1941* (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1968).
[59] Caecilia Pieri, *Bagdad: La construction d'une capitale moderne (1914-1960)* (Beirut: IFPO, 2015); Amin Alsaden, *Historic(ist) Encounters: Transforming Post-WWII Architecture in Baghdad* (PhD Diss.: Harvard University, 2018).

By situating Druby's relationship to the postcolonial through the local Arabic sources, this dissertation overcomes several issues identified by postcolonial theorists. The first is the issue of belatedness. Scholars have pointed out the way in which non-Euro-American modern art has been framed in art history as temporally behind Euro-American modern art and in the continued process of catching up. This framing led to non-Euro-American modern art's exclusion from the canon.[60] I will consider belatedness not in a contemporary comparative framework of exclusion and inclusion into the art historical canon but as a discourse within the cultural field in which Druby worked. Belatedness was a central component of the discourse on modern art in twentieth-century Iraq, which emphasized that Iraqi modern art was out of time with Euro-American modernism. Some artists approached the issue of belatedness by breaking with Euro-American forms or returning to forms they saw as traditional to Iraqi culture. Druby on the other hand considered the solution to belatedness 'catching up' with Euro-American modernity and mastering its methods. By situating it within the local context, belatedness becomes an agent impacting the form of artworks rather than a reason to dismiss artworks from study. In my exploration of local discourses on belatedness, I consider Gregory Jusdanis's similar framing of belatedness in his work on modern Greek literature.[61]

Related to the concept of belatedness is the project of reframing modernity away from a Eurocentric model to multiple global formations. Studies such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* and Partha Mitter's *The Triumph of Modernism* try to move studies on non-Euro-American modernity away from a constant comparison to an essentialized European modernity.[62] Mitter points out that much of modern and contemporary Euro-American art history and criticism has seen non-Euro-American modern art as derivative through this comparison. He calls this the Picasso manqué syndrome, in which 'successful imitation [of Euro-American modernism] was a form of aping, imperfect

---

[60] Flood, 'From Prophet to Postmodernism?'; James Elkins, *Is Art History Global?* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[61] Gregory Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

[62] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant- Garde, 1922–1947* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).

imitation represented a failure of learning.'[63] Mitter does not acknowledge the possibility of a similar syndrome in non-Euro-American discourse on modern art. Artists working in twentieth century Baghdad also at once feared derivativeness in copying Euro-American modernism and felt the necessity of copying in order to learn, master, and overcome their postcolonial position in relation to Euro-American modernity. So instead of provincializing Europe, I explore how Druby and local discourses framed modern art as a local construct in dialogue with their own notion of a Euro-American modernity. Kirsten Scheid's similar explorations on copies of Euro-American art in modern Lebanon have been helpful in framing this discourse and understanding its connection to broader dialogues occurring in the Middle East.[64] Timothy's Mitchell's idea that modernity can only exist by 'performing distinction' was also helpful in conceptualizing the difference between the way Iraqi artists viewed modern art and the modern art they produced.[65]

Because Druby never used rhetoric of rupture or dissent with Euro-American forms when discussing his practice, I avoid applying Homi Bhabha's term 'mimicry' to Druby's practice. Bhabha's 'mimicry' implies menacing the Euro-American colonizer through mimesis, which was never present in Druby's discourse.[66] I prefer to use art historian Chika Okeke-Agulu's term 'self-consciously deployed mimesis' because it acknowledges agency in looking to a Euro-American art method without rebellion.[67] My application of Bourdieu's cultural field theory to the forms that resulted in Druby's paintings from his engagement with the postcolonial allows me to move past an essentialized comparison with Euro-American modern art. Envisioning his paintings as cultural fields acknowledges the hegemony of Euro-American art practice while considering other agents in a wider power structure at play in Druby's forms.

---

[63] Partha Mitter, 'Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery,' *The Art Bulletin* 90: 4 (Dec., 2008): 537, 531-548.

[64] Kirsten Scheid, 'Missing Nike: On Oversights, Doubled Sights, and Universal Art Understood through Lebanon' *Museum Anthropology* 32, 2 (September 2009): 99-118.

[65] Timothy Mitchell, ed., *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[66] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 85-92.

[67] Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

In composing Druby's biography, I have also answered Di-Capua's call to return to narrative and storytelling as tools for capturing the human experience. Narrative is especially urgent in non-Euro-American contexts, such as the Middle East, where individual personalities continue to be left out of histories.[68] Di-Capua bases his decision to use narrative primarily on Hanna Meretoja's promotion of the methodology. In my use of narrative, I am cognizant of Meretoja's reminder that storytelling is always 'shaped by relations of power' and that it should be subject to 'continuous critical reflection.'[69] With these warnings in mind, I find her argument that 'narrative interpretations of experiences have a constitutive role in our existence' compelling in a construction of Druby's biography.[70] The material loss of much of Druby's archive and artworks and the personal relationships needed to access his surviving archive make purely epistemological arguments dehumanizing.

As previous scholarship has focused predominantly on the visual arts during the Hashemite period, I have chosen to look at the longevity of Druby's career from when he began painting in the early 1930s until he became ill in the early 1980s. As such, it is by no means a comprehensive history of any one period, but rather builds ideas and fills gaps in the historiography based on the corpus of his artworks and collected primary source material related to his work.

Sources

This dissertation draws from two main sources: Druby's artworks and the primary, mostly Arabic language, documents related to the production of those artworks. My access to this material was constrained by parameters particular to the conditions in Iraq and the Middle Eastern region as a whole. The archive of the twentieth century Middle East is so fraught that a literature nearly as large the one on the cultural production itself

---

[68] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 21.
[69] Hanna Meretoja, 'On the Use and Abuse of Narrative for Life: Toward an Ethics of Storytelling,' in *Life and Narrative: The Risks and Responsibilities of Storytelling Experience*, ed. Brian Schiff, A. Elizabeth McKim, and Sylvie Patron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 81.
[70] Hanna Meretoja, 'Narrative and Human Existence: Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics,' *New Literary History* 45:1 (Winter: 2014): 105; 89-109.

has developed around it.[71] The socio-political events of the second half of the twentieth and first part of the twenty-first centuries have led to the destruction or dispersal of a large portion of source material on Iraq. The Iraq state archive is mostly destroyed or inaccessible, except for documents pertaining to Saddam Hussein's regime, which were transferred to Stanford University after the 2003 US-led invasion.[72] The National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad was flooded in 2003, and many of the artworks were looted afterwards.[73] Mass emigration out of Iraq over the last sixty years resulted in the scattering of archives and artworks around the world and the transfer of public material into private hands.[74]

Therefore, my research was based on private collections, foreign archives and museums, and the help of Iraqi researchers based in Baghdad. The private nature of many of the collections meant that I was dependent on personal relationships to access sources. As intellectual historian Omnia El Shakry has noted, the researcher of the modern Middle East's ability to form these personal relationships can take on the same 'allure' of immersing oneself in the physical documents and systems of institutional archives.[75] Iraqi novelist Ali Bader's 2001 novel *Papa Sartre* mythologizes the importance and specificity of the personal nature of research in Iraq. The novel follows a pseudo-scholar as he travels around Baghdad on a research mission to recreate the biography of an Iraqi existentialist philosopher active in Baghdad in the 1960s. The first chapter, *The Research Trip*, opens not with a description of the researcher's subject but of his sources and their personal qualities:

---

[71] Naef, 'Writing the History of Modern Art in the Arab World.'; Shabout, 'Framing the Discipline of Contemporary Art of the Arab World through the Press.'; Anthony Downey, *Dissonant Archives: Contemporary Visual Culture and Contested Narratives in the Middle East* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015); Sonja Mejcher-Atassi and John Pedro Schwartz, ed., *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World* (London: Farnham, 2012); 'Roundtable Perspectives: Researching Iraq Today,' *Arab Studies.*
[72] El Shakry, "'History without Documents,'" 922.
[73] Isis Nusair, 'The Cultural Costs of the 2003 US-Led Invasion of Iraq: A Conversation with Art Historian Nada Shabout,' *Feminist Studies* 39:1 (2013): 119-148.
[74] Naef, 'Writing the History of Modern Art in the Arab World.'
[75] El Shakry, "'History without Documents,'" 23; In considering the 'allure of the archives,' El Shakry refers to: Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

> The wicked devil Hanna Yusif, the macabre-looking gravedigger, and his depraved friend – whom he refers to by the curious Biblical name of Nunu Behar – were the ones who convinced me to write the biography of an Iraqi philosopher, who lived in al-Sadriya district in the sixties.[76]

While I do not mean to suggest a comparison in personality between Bader's characters and my sources, the conditions of the people assembling the collections I visited became a necessary part of my research. The collectors usually had close personal relationships to Druby during his lifetime, which influenced their interpretations of his practice and the documents they chose to preserve. Most had experienced political turmoil and warfare in Iraq and were forced to live outside of the country. The archives provided a sense of place and home, which accentuated the personal nature of the collections.

The private setting of the archives shaped the material and my access to it in specific ways. Firstly, there was no published record on where the archives were or what was inside them. Knowing where to look depended on first visiting several private collections in an often-haphazard trail of sources. The biographical form of my dissertation helped to open doors to people with close personal relationships to the artist. However, personal rivalries also precluded me from some sources. Unclear provenance due to widespread looting and a growing forgeries market made many private collectors wary of sharing their collections. The composition of the archives and art collections was also dependent on personal preferences which has resulted in an imperfect chronology, especially in the case of journals, newspapers, and catalogues. Lastly, the personal nature of this archive research meant that information was often provided orally by the collector to supplement missing documentary information. While relying predominantly on written evidence throughout this dissertation, I integrate oral testimony as well.[77]

Despite the archival obstacles, I assembled a catalogue of over three hundred and fifty of Druby's artworks, consisting of paintings and sketches. Druby claimed near the end of his life that he had produced close to one thousand artworks in his lifetime.[78] His personal

---

[76] Ali Bader, *Papa Sartre*, trans. Aida Bamia (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009), 1.
[77] Luise White, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2001).
[78] Hashim Hassan, 'Old and New Paintings in the Druby Exhibition!' *Iawra*, January 10, 1980.

inventory book records three hundred. The volume of artworks in my catalogue is noteworthy because, besides the 2018 catalogue of Dia al-Azzawi's artworks, there is no academic catalogue of an Iraqi artist's corpus.[79] My second contribution to the corpus of Iraqi modern art is provenance. By combining primary source materials with the artworks, I documented the provenance of Druby's paintings for the first time. Scholars have been reluctant to use Druby's artworks because they often lack provenance and the absence of provenance has led to a large forgeries market.[80] While documenting provenance, I was cognizant of several issues. The forgeries market led to duplication of Druby's artworks, but at the same time, he often duplicated his own work. Therefore, it was important not to dismiss artworks from my catalogue project immediately if they appeared to be copies. Furthermore, the considerable loss of primary sources meant that lack of documentation could not be grounds for removal from the catalogue. A lack of chronology further complicated provenance research. Druby rarely dated his paintings after the 1950s and most of the dates were added retroactively starting in the 1970s. Disinterest in dating artworks was widespread in the Middle East in the twentieth century and contemporary publications rarely include dates.

The way Druby's artworks survive and the ability to access them also had an impact on my catalogue. I studied many of the artworks through photographs because they had either been destroyed or were in Baghdad. I relied on a large collection of high-quality photographs based with the Druby family, but often, photographs came from disparate sources, such as postcards, exhibitions catalogues, newspaper articles, political propaganda, guide books, archaeological reports, etc. I was fortunate that Druby's family along with several other collectors were openminded on the issue of nudity, and that I was, therefore, able to see many of his nude paintings. However, widespread sensitivity to this issue in contemporary Iraq meant that comparative examples were difficult to find.[81] The contemporary market for Druby's paintings favours his cubist style, so

---

[79] Bahrani, Muzaffar, Shabout, ed., *Dia al-Azzawi*.
[80] Charles Pocock, 'Art of the Middle East. Issues,' *Contemporary Practices* X (2012): 54-61.
[81] Saleem al-Bahloly, 'Msalkha, or the Anti-Nude,' in *Art, Awakening, and Modernity in the Middle East*, 129-132.

paintings with this aesthetic appear more often in auctions and gallery sales.[82] I have been able to document many of Druby's political paintings for the Ba'th government in the 1960s and 1970s. However, it was difficult to probe deeply into the Ba'th period in private collections, which suggests the potential for further material.[83]

Besides Druby's artworks, my primary source material consisted of: art books, exhibition catalogues, newspapers, journals, photographs, art academy records, personal documents, and archives of foreign institutions and states involved in cultural production in Baghdad. The biases, politics, and inconsistencies of the source material are taken into account throughout this dissertation. I began my documentation using a list of all the publications written by and on Druby, compiled by the Iraqi artist and writer, Shakir Hassan Al Said (1925 – 2004) in 1982. The list is incomplete and contains errors, but it provided an overview of the sources that featured Iraqi modern art and Druby's work.[84] A general bibliography on modern Iraqi art was also published in 1971 in the journal *al-Muthaqaf al-Arabi*, which was run by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information.[85] Druby himself was not a prolific writer, and only two of his articles survive, both written in 1970.[86] However, he gave many interviews throughout his career, from which I construct an idea of his perspectives on art in this dissertation.

Writing on Iraqi art in the twentieth century was published in a wide range of sources and often dependent on the economic and political situation in Iraq. Iraqi publications were predominantly sponsored by the government and took the form of journals, exhibition catalogues, and general art surveys. In the 1950s, the oil industry also played a role in publications. The magazines *Iraq Petroleum* and *Ahl al*-Naft, sponsored by the Iraq Petroleum Company, featured many articles on local artists. In the 1960s, the company created *Amiloun fil Naft*. Some independent publications run by artists developed in the 1940s and continued into the 1950s, including artist Jamil Hamoudi's (1924 – 2003) *al-*

---

[82] For examples, see: Bonhams, *A Century of Iraqi Art* (London: 7 October 2015); Christie's, *Modern and Contemporary Art* (Dubai: 18 March 2017).
[83] 'Roundtable Perspectives: Researching Iraq Today,' *Arab Studies Journal*.
[84] Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982).
[85] *Al-Muthaqaf al-Arabi* 3:4 (October, 1971): 196-212.
[86] Hafidh Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' *al-Aqlam* 6:4 (1970): 90-110; Hafidh Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' *Sumer* 26 (1970): 146-147.

Fikr al-Hadith.[87] The journal *al-Thaqafa al-Jadida*, which began as a publication of the Iraqi Communist Party in the 1950s and then became an independent leftist journal, also included articles on art.[88] Several intellectual journals sponsored by the Iraqi government were formed in the 1960s, including the most significant platform for Iraqi art *al-Aqlam*. The crackdown on the left and the intellectual community after the Ba'th coup in 1963 also changed the landscape of art publications. Discourse more often included government ideology, and the Ba'th regime included art sponsorship in its agenda, which resulted in several glossy magazines devoted to art.[89] The first survey book on Iraqi modern art was published in Baghdad in 1962 by art critic Nouri al-Rawi (1925 – 2014).[90] Surveys increased in the 1970s and early 1980s. Several of these surveys, such as critic and writer Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's (1920 – 1994) *Iraqi Art Today* (1971) and art critic Nizar Selim's (1925 – 1982) *Iraq Contemporary Art* (1977) were written or translated into English and intended for a Euro-American audience.[91]

Beginning in the late 1940s, discourse on Iraqi art also began to appear outside of Iraq. The most significant platform for writing on Iraqi art and by Iraqi artists was the journal *al-Adab*, published by Suhil Idris in Beirut.[92] *Al-Adab* also included writing on Iraqi literature, and for artists and writers, it provided a discursive space independent from the regime. It also allowed Iraqi artists to insert their artworks into a wider Arab discourse. Writing on Iraqi art continued in the journal into the 1960s. Outside of the Middle East, a few articles appeared in the 1950s in British publications, linked to Britain's continued influence in Iraq.[93] In the late 1950s, the Soviet Union's interest in the Middle East resulted in Soviet publications on Iraqi art. Reviews of Iraqi modern art, often in conjunction with exhibitions, were published regularly in the Soviet Union through the 1980s, and in 1982, the

---

[87] For a list of art journals in the 1940s see: Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 176.
[88] Ismael, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Iraq*, 295.
[89] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2005), 164.
[90] Nouri al-Rawi, *Reflections on Modern Iraqi Art* (Baghdad: Directorate of the People's Art and Culture, 1962).
[91] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Iraqi Art Today* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1971); Nizar Selim, *Iraq Contemporary Art* (Lausanne: Sartec, 1977).
[92] For a detailed discussion of the journal, see: Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 151-153.
[93] Alan Neame, 'Modern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956): 1-7.

Leningrad Art Department published a survey titled *Contemporary Art in Iraq*.[94] The Ba'th government also sponsored a group of travelling exhibitions in the 1970s, which resulted in exhibition reviews in the European media and European catalogues of Iraqi modern art.[95]

Primary source writing on Iraqi art was mostly written by Iraqi artists themselves. I introduce publications and authors as they appear in the text of the dissertation, but it is useful to outline the most prolific and important authors here. The primary art critics included: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Nouri al-Rawi, Shakir Hassan Al Said, and Nizar Selim.

- **Jabra Ibrahim Jabra** emigrated from Palestine to Iraq in 1948, and worked as an artist, writer, and art critic.[96] He was educated at Cambridge and wrote in several languages. He was a central figure in the Baghdad cultural field but did not align himself with political factions. He was critical of Druby's work and often excluded him from his publications. He wrote articles on art beginning in the 1950s and two survey publications in 1971 and 1983.

- **Nouri al-Rawi** worked as an artist, but he was more significant in mid-twentieth century Baghdad for his art criticism and his role as the director of the National Museum of Modern Art from 1962 to 1974.[97] He studied art in Baghdad and in Belgrade and had a continued affinity for the political left throughout his career. He wrote the first survey of Iraqi modern art in 1962, where he characterized Druby as an academic painter.[98] He also wrote many of catalogue essays for the government's program of travelling exhibitions in the 1970s.

- **Shakir Hassan Al Said** studied painting at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad before continuing at academies in Paris from 1955 to 1959. He was a prominent artist in Baghdad, founding the *Baghdad Group for Modern Art* with Jewad Selim in 1951 and the *One Dimension Group* in 1971, which promoted abstraction. He began to write art criticism in the early 1950s and was the central figure in the

---

[94] Anatol Bogdanov, *Contemporary Art in Iraq* (Leningrad: Leningrad Art Department, 1982).
[95] For example: *Contemporary Art from Iraq* (Stockholm: Linkoln Blom, 1976).
[96] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 154-155.
[97] 'Nouri al-Rawi,' *Ibrahimi Collection*, accessed 2 July 2017, http://ibrahimicollection.com/node/76.
[98] al-Rawi, *Reflections on Modern Iraqi Art*.

compiling of a history of modern Iraqi art in early 1980s Baghdad.[99] His two volume history *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq* (1983) and his biography on Druby (1982) are based on primary source research and interviews and are the most extensive writings on Druby published in his lifetime.[100]

- **Nizar Selim** was Jewad Selim's younger brother. He was a cartoonist and painter, but he worked a large part of his career as a diplomat. He was also the general director of arts for the Ministry of Culture and Information and wrote the widely distributed history of Iraqi modern art *Iraq Contemporary Art* in 1977. He was critical of Druby's academic form in the 1950s and later of the lack of intellectual depth in Druby's cubist style. At the same time, he co-curated Druby's retrospective at the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad in 1980 with Al Said.

While not as significant a critic in twentieth-century Baghdad, the artist and writer Adil Kamel wrote several chapters on Druby in his book *Contemporary Fine Art Movement in Iraq* published by the Ministry of Culture and Information in 1980. Along with Al Said's biography, it is the most extensive writing on Druby during his lifetime.

Field Research

Considering the private nature of most the archives related to Druby, it was important to spend extended periods of time in the three centres of the Iraqi diaspora – London, Beirut, and Amman – in order to build relationships with collectors and compile a list of undocumented private archives. My longest field research mission was in Beirut, where I was based at the Orient Institut. During my time in Lebanon, I was able to conduct field research in Amman as well. Since my field research covered a diverse geography, it is beneficial to relay its trajectory in list form:

---

[99] Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, 'Shakir Hassan Al Said,' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*, accessed 15 October 2018, http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Shakir-Hassan-Al-Said.aspx.
[100] Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982); Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1983).

London

- **Druby Family Archive and Collection:** Druby's immediate family, his wife, son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren, have the most extensive archive on Druby. Along with many physical paintings and sketches, the archive is composed of photographic documentation of most of Druby's paintings in Baghdad, Druby's private inventory book with the names, dates, and owners of his paintings, radio interviews, and twentieth-century art publications from Iraq.

- **Dia al-Azzawi Archive:** Dia al-Azzawi was Druby's student and worked closely with him in the 1960s and 1970s. After Druby's family's archive, his archive has the largest collection of material related to Druby. His collection includes: paintings, exhibition catalogues, art books, photographs, a catalogue of artworks in the Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad before 2003, and documentation of forgeries. In addition to his archive, his knowledge of the Baghdad art field and information on working with Druby contributed to my dissertation.

- **The British Museum:** The British Museum is one of two museums outside of the Middle East with a collection of Druby's artworks. The collection consists of works on paper. It includes two preparatory sketches for murals, which Druby painted for the Ba'th regime.

Amman

- **The Ibrahimi Collection:** Founded by the businessman and medical doctor, Dr. Hasanian al-Ibrahimi, this collection, based between Amman and Baghdad, consists of paintings and a small library of primary source publications from Iraq. The collection contains seven paintings by Druby, mostly purchased recently on through auctions and dealers.

- **Zainab Mahdi Collection:** Zainab Mahdi was an integral member of the Baghdad art field. She ran the Dijla Art Gallery in Baghdad for many years, which was a central gathering point for artists in the 1990s. Furthermore, her parents knew Druby personally and one painting in her collection has a rare provenance dating

to the 1940s. She also has an extensive photographic archive of Dijla Gallery's activities in the 1990s.

- **May Muzaffar:** May Muzaffar worked as a writer and critic in Baghdad during Druby's lifetime and has written extensively on the history of Iraqi modern art. She interviewed Druby near the end of his life. She now runs a foundation for her late husband, the Iraqi artist Rafa Nasiri (1940 – 2013) in Amman.

Beirut

- **Dalloul Art Foundation:** The founder of the Dalloul Art Foundation, Ramzi Dalloul, collected art in Baghdad in the 1970s and was a patron of Druby. The provenance of the collection helped to document Druby's tendency to make copies of his own work. The foundation also includes a broader collection of Iraqi art.
- **Sursock Museum:** The museum hosted a travelling exhibition of Iraqi art in 1965. The archive contained documentation of the exhibition, including a poster designed by Druby.
- **Saleh Barakat Gallery:** Saleh Barakat has worked closely with Iraqi art for many years. Besides an art collection, his gallery also houses an archive and provided a meeting point for the Iraqi arts community in Beirut.

Baghdad

While I was not able to visit Baghdad myself due to safety issues, I was able to collect archival information and document the majority of Druby's extant artworks there thanks to the help of Dr. Mutaz Ghazwan at the University of Baghdad and Dr. Amin Alsaden, director of the Sharjah Architecture Triennial.

- **National Museum of Modern Art:** Despite the destruction and looting of most of the collection, I was able to get photographs and documentation of the few surviving artworks by Druby.
- **Ministry of Culture and Information:** The ministry still houses an archive of the Society of Iraqi Artists. This archive provided me with the only documentary evidence for some destroyed paintings.

- **Alwiyah Club:** The country club where Druby was a member and often exhibited his paintings still houses a large collection of his work.
- **The Baghdadi Museum:** Several of Druby's paintings were used in the displays of this ethnographic museum on the city of Baghdad.
- **The Baghdad Airport:** One of Druby's largest and most significant murals is still in situ in the airport.

Lisbon

- **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation:** Calouste Gulbenkian made his fortune from oil in Iraq. In the 1950s, his foundation decided to invest in philanthropic projects in Iraq. It represents the largest collection of documents, comprised of letters, reports, photographs, and films, on art production in Baghdad in the 1960s and 1970s. I spent two weeks at the foundation on a fellowship.

Doha

- **Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art:** The museum, situated in Doha, has a large collection of paintings by Druby. Most consequential is his earliest surviving painting, which illustrates his training in the Ottoman painting method.
- **Ala Bashir:** Ala Bashir was one of Druby's closest friends and a member of Druby's artists group, *The Impressionists*. My interviews with him in Doha provided information on Druby's career and *The Impressionists* group.

Italy

- **Hussain Ali Harba Collection:** Hussain Harba is an architect and designer based in Turin. He has an extensive collection of Iraqi modern art, including many paintings by Druby. His collection was purchased recently on the market.
- **Accademia di belle Arti di Roma:** The archive of the academy of fine arts in Rome contains Druby's student records. These files provided invaluable information on Druby's performance and the curriculum. The general reports from

the academy during the years Druby attended in the late 1930s also illustrated the pedagogy and structure of the academy during that period.

Berlin

- **Gisela Helmecke Archive:** Gisela Helmecke was a former curator of Islamic art at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin. She participated in a research programme on Middle Eastern modern art in the 1970s based out of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. With the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic, most of the papers of the research programme's director Burchard Brentjes were transferred to her. The archive consists of a large amount of material on Iraqi communist artists and exhibitions. It also included many rare newspaper and journal articles on Druby.

Toronto

- **Al-Jadir Family Archive:** Khalid Al-Jadir (1924 – 1988) worked as an artist during the same period Druby was active in Baghdad. While never officially a member, he worked peripherally with *The Impressionists*. Similar to Druby, he painted in an academic representational style throughout his career. His archive includes extensive photographic records as well as letters, exhibition guestbooks, and catalogues.

Literature Review

Revisionist and monumental studies attempting to create global parameters for modern art continue to multiply in the face of critique of the essentializing risks in the methodology.[101] Many of these recent publications have addressed Aruna D'Souza's 2014 critique of global art history that it 'prioritizes method as metaconvention;' tries to

---

[101] Elizabeth Miller, 'Reviewed Works: *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930-1990* by Kullar Sonal; *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* by Chika Okeke-Agulu,' *The Comparatist* 40 (October 2016): 338-346.

resolve difference; and does not engage with local art histories.[102] Publications, such as *'Global Art History'* edited by Julia Allerstorfer and Monika Leisch-Kiesl (2017) and the forthcoming conference proceedings of *Multiple Modernisms* held at the Louisiana Museum in 2017, focus on local perspectives of modernity across a diverse geography in order to rectify these issues.[103] Exhibitions, such as *Postwar* (2016) at Haus der Kunst in Munich, *Hello World* (2018) at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, and *Museum Global* (2018) at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Duesseldorf ,have also focused on local or what the *Museum Global* exhibition calls 'micro' histories of modern art.[104] However, the framework of the global still results in broad categorizations, such as avant-garde or realism, and prioritizes transregional interactions from a Eurocentric perspective. In the case of *Hello World*, the catalogue description promises to look 'art artworks from non-European centres of modernism,' while at the same time giving the examples of Joseph Beuys' and Heinrich Vogeler's global explorations.[105] These studies also continue to present local art production in non-Euro-American regions as homogeneous units. For example, Iraqi modern art is represented in the section on nationalism in the *Postwar* catalogue, focusing on national identity over individual expression.[106] Another issue is that these publications necessarily prioritize certain geographies because of their scope. Elaine O'Brien's *Introduction to global modernisms* (2013) categorizes 'Asian modern art' as 'India, Japan, China.' The impossibility of comprehensiveness can also result in misrepresentation and error. For example, the *Hello World* catalogue's Arabic text was misprinted.[107]

Academic publications on modern Middle Eastern art in the 1990s and 2000s took a survey format. Silvia Naef's *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe* (1996) provides a

---

[102] Aruna D'Souza, 'Introduction,' *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), vii-xxiii.
[103] Allerstorfer and Leisch-Kiesl, ed., *'Global Art History'; Multiple Modernisms: a symposium on globalism in postwar art*, conference, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, 2-3 November 2017.
[104] Enwezor, Siegel, and Wilmes, ed., *Postwar*; Udo Kittelmann, ed., *Hello World: Revision einer Sammlung* (Berlin: Hirmer Verlag, 2018); Susanne Gaensheimer, et al, ed., *Museum Global. Mikrogeschichten Einer Ex-zentrischen Moderne* (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2018).
[105] https://www.smb.museum/en/whats-new/detail/ausstellungkatalog-hello-world-revision-einer-sammlung.html
[106] Bahrani, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' in *Postwar*.
[107] Kittelmann, ed., *Hello World*, 69.

historical survey of twentieth-century art production in the Arab world, using extensive primary source material. Equally embedded in primary sources, Nada Shabout's *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics* (2007) takes a more analytical approach in trying to formulate a Middle-Eastern conceptualization of aesthetics and modernity. While structuring her publication partially by nation-state, Shabout also explores transnational themes such as the Arabic letter. Both Shabout's survey and Wijdan Ali's publication *Modern Islamic Art* (1997) focus on the distinction between the categories of Islamic art and modern art in the Middle East. In the 2000s, publications such as *Strokes of Genius: contemporary Iraqi art* (2001), *Modern Egyptian Art 1910 – 2003* (2005), and *Modernism and Iraq* (2009) also took the nation-state approach.[108]

In the past ten years, scholarship on modern art in the Middle East has turned to a more nuanced look at the sources, focusing on specific historic moments, artists, and local geographies. Several recent dissertations have explored the discourses surrounding art production in the twentieth-century Middle East. While still within the nation-state framework, Anneka Lenssen's method of intellectual history in her 2014 dissertation on twentieth-century art production in Syria brings to light local and multiple perspectives on art within the Syrian context.[109] Nadia Radwan's 2013 dissertation looks at the relationship between education and art discourse in Egypt from 1903 – 1952. Its study of the foundation of the School of Fine Arts in Cairo and the production of taste in Egypt highlights aspects of the Egyptian cultural field, which like Druby's own work, are often neglected from academic research.[110] Related to histories of discourse, there has been a recent interest in social histories of modern Middle Eastern art. The 2019 conference proceedings *The Art Salon in the Arab Region: The Politics of Taste Making* looks at the formations of art salons across the Middle East in the twentieth century through a diverse array of close studies of specific salon cultures.[111] Amin Alsaden's article in the proceedings and his 2018 article on the Biennale of Arab Art also take a social approach,

---

[108] Zainab Bahrani and Nada Shabout, ed., *Modernism and Iraq* (New York: Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University Press, 2009); Liliane Karnouk, *Modern Egyptian Art 1910 – 2003* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005); Maysaloun Faraj, *Strokes of Genius: contemporary Iraqi art* (London: Saqi Books, 2001).
[109] Lenssen, *The Shape of Support.*
[110] Radwan, *The Aesthetics of the Modern.*
[111] von Maltzahn and Bellan, ed., *The Art Salon in the Arab Region*.

looking at the networks that impacted art production in twentieth-century Baghdad.[112] The *Primary Documents* project, which brings together translations of primary sources related to modern art in the Arab world with framing essays, addresses the difficulty for non-specialists to access the discourse both because of the Arabic language and the unavailable archives.[113]

The study of art in the twentieth-century Middle East is still lacking sufficient close visual analysis of artworks, but recent publications have shifted the focus to the image. The recent exhibitions and their accompanying publications *Art et Liberté: Rupture, War and Surrealism in Egypt* (2016) and *The Arab Nude: Art as Awakener* (2016) bring together analysis of discourse and form.[114] *The Arab Nude* is also significant for highlighting a form, the nude, that has been neglected in studies on modern Middle Eastern art. Al-Bahloly's 2014 dissertation made use of visual analysis to examine the relationship between artistic form and violence in the twentieth century Arab world, with a focus on Iraq.[115] Lara Ayad's 2018 study of paintings of peasants in 1930s Cairo builds arguments from the paintings' forms and concentrates on paintings that remain outside the canon of modern Middle Eastern art.[116] Recent biographies on Middle Eastern artists have also combined visual analysis with written documentation. Adila Laidi-Hanieh's 2017 biography of artist Fahrelnissa Zeid (1901 – 1991) makes use of the artists extensive personal papers.[117] The 2018 retrospective catalogue on Iraqi artist Dia al-Azzawi maps al-Azzawi's career through his artistic forms. Two monographic catalogues from 2017, one on Egyptian artist Mahmoud Said (1897 – 1964) and one on Iraqi photographer Latif Al Ani (b. 1932), provide extensive documentation of unpublished artworks and several essays contextualizing the artworks with primary source material.[118]

---

[112] Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons.'; Alsaden, 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial.'
[113] Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*.
[114] Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, *Art et Liberté: Rupture, War and Surrealism in Egypt* (Paris: Skira, 2016); Octavian Esanu, ed., *Art, Awakening, and Modernity in the Middle East: The Arab Nude* (New York: Routledge, 2018).
[115] Saleem al-Bahloly, *The Freedom of Despair: Art and Violence in the Middle East, 1941-1979* (PhD Diss., University of California, Berkley, 2014).
[116] Lara Ayad, *Picturesque Peasants: Painting Egyptian Identity at the Fuad I Agricultural Museum in Cairo* (PhD Diss., Boston University, 2018).
[117] Adila Laidi-Hanieh, *Fahrelnissa Zeid: Painter of Inner Worlds* (London: Art/Books Publishing, 2017).
[118] Valerie Didier Hess and Hussam Rashwan, *Mahmoud Said* (London: Random House, 2017); Montazami, *Latif Al Ani*.

Druby's position within this literature does not extend beyond a few lines of text. Most publications on modern Middle Eastern art mention his significance within the context of art production in twentieth-century Baghdad, but they do not contextualise his practice. The dominant, albeit brief, narrative that emerges from these publications is Druby's foundational but less prominent role in Iraqi modern art through the his artist group *Impressionists*, and his conservative experimentation with predominantly realist, impressionist, and cubist styles. In Silvia Naef's *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe*, she devotes a section to Druby's *Impressionists* group, and underlines the difference between Druby's paintings of the countryside and Selim's interest in the city. She describes Druby's oeuvre as 'very conventional and not much influenced by new currants [in art],' and illustrates this assessment through one of his cubist works.[119] Shabout's *Modern Arab Art* mentions Druby and his *Impressionists* group only to situate his student Dia al-Azzawi's practice, and his work is not illustrated in the publication.[120] In *Modernism and Iraq*, Druby is only mentioned once as founding the *Impressionists* and is otherwise absent from the narrative of the development of modernism in Baghdad. One of his cubist works is reproduced.[121] Saeb Eigner's *Art of the Middle East* (2010) nuances the complexity of Druby's forms by reproducing a variety of his paintings, but there is still very little information on the artist.[122]

Dissertation Structure

The dissertation is separated into three parts. The first chapter, covering the years 1914 to 1950, examines the way in which Druby's education impacted his practice, arguing that his concept of an evolutionary technical modern art drew from his time at the art academy in Rome and from contemporary pedagogical ideologies in Baghdad. The second chapter argues that the diversification of his paintings to include a cubist and abstract forms in the 1950s and 1960s was due to pressure from the artist community in Baghdad, and that despite this bifurcation, he continued to adhere to a technical style based on academic

---

[119] Naef, *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe*, 250-253.
[120] Shabout, *Modern Arab Art*, 123
[121] Bahrani and Shabout, *Modernism and Iraq*, 36.
[122] Saeb Eigner, ed., *Art of the Middle East*, 24, 276, and 345.

methods. The final chapter unpacks the interactions between Druby's practice and the increasingly pervasive politics of the Ba'th regime in the 1970s and early 1980s.

All Arabic in this dissertation is transliterated based on the guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Special characters such as lines over vowels and dots under consonants are removed in order to make the text more easily searchable for non-specialists.

Chapter One | **Academic Formations 1914 – 1950**

[These poems] cannot be appreciated by a person who accepts the classical Arabic definition of poetry…Nor can they be appreciated by a person who has not felt his nerve-ends tingle at the touch of snow, or closing his eyes, does not see the dense forests of elm trees and poplar trees …Such are the manifestations of poetry in the universe and not that regular rhythmic barbaric beat that offends the ears of civilized men and summons savages to dance around fire.

– Louis Awad, introduction to his collection of poems *Plutoland* (Cairo, 1947)[123]

---

[123] Louis Awad, *The Literature of Ideas in Egypt*, part 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 224.

Hafidh Druby's biography is, on the one hand, a series of dates, names, events, and paintings. On the other hand, the biography's narrative, as told by Iraqis within the cultural context in which Druby operated, is in itself constitutive of that context. Therefore, my biography integrates both aspects of Druby's narrative to elucidate his position within the culture networks of mid-twentieth-century Baghdad. Druby's early practice was defined by his negotiation with the education system both in Baghdad and in the European cities of Rome and London and by the new social structures in Iraq created by these education systems. In this chapter, I illustrate the way in which Druby's navigation of his education led him to adopt and promote a form of Euro-American academic painting, which in the early 1940s, began to bifurcate from the formal choices of other Iraqi artists.

The only official documentation of Druby's childhood comes from his enrolment records at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome from 1938.[124] From these records, we know that he was born on May 10, 1914, in Baghdad to Hassan and Kumriya Selim, who were Muslims. He entered the world between two empires and growing Arab nationalism. In May 1914, Baghdad was part of the Ottoman Empire and administratively separate from the provinces of Basra and Mosul, which would later be unified to form the modern state of Iraq. In October 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers, and in response, Great Britain sent an army to Basra to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf. By the time Druby was three years old, Baghdad was part of the British Empire. The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement between Great Britain and France divided the Middle East roughly in half, giving Great Britain control of the former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Basra, and France control of the Mosul province. However, through ongoing struggles between the two powers and local constituents, Great Britain consolidated the three former Ottoman provinces into one nation in 1921 under the rule of an Arab monarch from Mecca, Faisal I (1885 – 1933). Despite the appointment of an Arab king, the British maintained a degree of political and economic control in the form of a mandate until 1932. Throughout the period of state formation, the local population of

---

[124] *Inscription to the Accademia di Belle Arti, Painting 2nd Year*, 15 February 1939, PXIV Druby, Hafidh, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

Baghdad was discussing the terms of self-rule. Arab voices dominated this discourse, often promoting a pan-Arab nationalism.[125]

In the years after Druby's birth, Baghdad went from being a province of the Ottoman empire to the capital of a newly formed nation. As the capital, Baghdad's population increased rapidly in the 1920s, and it developed bureaucratic systems to manage the new demographics and national administration. Through a series of British administrative decisions, the Sunni population retained their Ottoman-era hegemony over the bureaucracy. Increased educational facilities implemented by this bureaucracy brought Baghdad's diverse population of Arab Sunnis, Arab Shiʻa, Jews, Christians, and Kurds together in a new educated urban elite.[126] The earliest surviving documentary evidence of Druby's existence is within this newly-formed educational structure at the age of seventeen. A newspaper article from 1931 relates that he received second place in a running race as a student at the Central Secondary School.[127] British education policy reports noted that the Central Secondary School was for poor children. This remains the only primary information on Druby's position within society at birth and on how he entered the education system.[128]

Druby's own account of his childhood, recorded in the 1960s and 1970s, follows an archetypal narrative in twentieth-century Arabic literature, in which a poor 'outsider' child must overcome adversity in order to enter 'inside' of the urban elite.[129] The prevalence of this framing device suggests that Druby's account was more related to establishing his position as an artist than to supplying factual information about his upbringing. Druby emphasized his movement from a poor environment to an urban elite context by

---

[125] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 24-55; Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 9-59.
[126] Batatu, *The Old Social Classes.* 25-36; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 46-47.
[127] 'Three heroes in a sports competition in Baghdad,' July 2, 1931. Newspaper unknown, source Druby Family Collection.
[128] *Report on Iraq administration* (London: H.M.S.O., 1926), 126-129.
[129] "The typical child appears in the role of an 'outsider' in conflict with the 'insiders' who discriminate against him or her by their behaviour or rules. The story of how the 'outsider' succeeds in 'getting in' despite everything is almost archetypal." Tetz Rooke, *'In My Childhood': a study of Arabic autobiography* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International, 1997), 201.

underlining the incompatibility between his painting practice and his childhood environment:

> I was born in al-Sadriya neighbourhood, in Bab al-Sheikh, which was a lower-class area. There was no art there worth mentioning…However, I opened my eyes to the handicraft called embroidery, which my mother did at home. I have been influenced by the embroidery motifs.[130]

In this passage, Druby makes four points: firstly, that he was born in a poor area with no art, secondly, that he was first inspired to practice art through his mother's embroidery, that his mother's embroidery was handicraft not art, and lastly, that when Druby used the 'motifs' from the embroidery, it was art. He further differentiates his art practice from his upbringing by claiming that his parents would warn him against sketching human figures as a child, because they were afraid that a spirit might come and breathe life into his drawings.[131] His parents' fear of representational images stems from their Muslim faith, and so by including the anecdote, Druby implies that Islam was incongruous with the art which he would later practice, namely representational painting.[132] This story highlights his own artistic talent as well by noting his ability to make and appreciate art despite his own upbringing. It also renders local lower-class religious culture and his painting practice irreconcilable – his parents and their crafts can be subjects of Druby's work, but they can neither be producers nor consumers of it.

Despite Druby's repeated insistence that he overcame his poor and traditional childhood through his art practice, other Iraqi writers argued that his inability to make art that was truly modern, based on the principles of rupture with the past and abstract thought, may have been due to his ongoing attachment to his poor and traditional childhood. They contended that because Druby was pampered by a mother, whose lack of education precluded her from abstract thoughts, Druby continued to focus on the physical world and the technical in his art.[133] Druby's biographer Shakir Hassan Al Said wrote in 1982: 'He

---

[130] Recorded interview between Hafidh Druby and Shakir Hassan Al Said, published in: Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (1982).

[131] 'Interview with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Aqlam*, 108.

[132] Finbarr Flood, 'Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum,' *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 645-648.

[133] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, 179; Adil Kamel, *Contemporary Fine Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980), 98; Dia al-Azzawi, 'Hafidh Druby: Between Impressionism and Documentation of City Life,' *al-Dustur* (1977): 32-33.

labours to portray the reality of external appearance only. Perhaps the secret is finally in his love for the mother: the symbol of nature and the outside world.'[134] Druby kept an old photograph throughout his lifetime of the neighbourhood where he grew up, al-Sadriya. In the photograph, the silhouette of a veiled woman holding a small child is subsumed by the shadows of wooden balconies that jut out haphazardly over a tiny muddy alley [Figure 1.1]. Like Druby's own mother, the woman in the photograph is religious, wearing a black abaya, and set within the context of a poor and traditional Baghdad landscape. Druby included a similar abaya-clad mother and child in a compositional structure reminiscent of this photograph in many of his paintings. However, in Druby's paintings, the figures are not encircled by traditional and historic architecture but by geometric abstracted blocks of oil paint, which Druby learned to construct from his secular Euro-American art education [Figure 1.2].

Education and First Exhibitions (1930 – 1937)

Druby received his first education in oil painting and life drawing from two sources: his secondary school and a group of former Ottoman soldiers who had trained in art at the War College in Istanbul. The Ottoman military adopted and adapted the Euro-American technique of oil painting as a strategic measure in the eighteenth century. While the Ottoman painters used Euro-American materials, their methodology was distinct to the local context. Negotiating the widespread Ottoman belief that Islam prohibited copying from nature, they almost exclusively copied prints and photographs. The success of their paintings was not in the individual interpretation of the artist or in the ability to move from the photograph to a convincing representation of nature, but in the ability to copy the photograph accurately.[135] At the same time, interactions with Orientalist discourse, which argued that local art forms in the Middle East, such as manuscript painting, calligraphy, and ceramics, were outdated, led the middle and upper classes to increasingly prefer oil painting to traditional art forms.[136] With the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the end

---

[134] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 26.
[135] Wendy Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 32-35.
[136] Stephen Vernoit, 'The Visual Arts in the Nineteenth-Century: Muslim Thought,' in *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, ed. Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 34-35.

of World War I and the integration of around six hundred former Ottoman officers of Iraqi origin into the newly formed Iraqi army in 1921, some of these Ottoman military painters arrived in Baghdad in the 1920s as Druby was entering the educational system.[137]

Several of these military artists began teaching painting in Baghdad in the 1920s. They included Abdul Qadir al-Rassam (1882 – 1952), Muhammad Salih Zaki (1888 – 1974), and Mohammed Selim (1883 – 1941), who later Iraqi art histories would credit with being the first generation of modern artists in Iraq.[138] Many of the next generation of Iraqi artists were children of these painters, including Jewad and Nizar Selim, who were sons of Mohammed Selim, and Atta Sabri, with whom Druby would travel to Rome in the late 1930s to study at the Accademia di Belle Arti.[139] Druby did not come from an artist family, but his earliest surviving painting, probably from the early 1930s, attests to his training in the Ottoman military painting tradition.[140] Druby's painting represents the same al-Sadriya neighbourhood where Druby grew up, but instead of painting the place from memory or life, Druby copied a photograph of a group of street vendors in front of a traditional Iraqi building published by A. Kerim in his book *Camera Studies in Iraq* (c. 1925) [Figures 1.3 and 1.4].[141]

Druby's painting is almost a one-to-one copy of the photograph, including the light and shadows. He only alters it by adding a single sunshade over one of the arches. His method of reproducing the photograph, with a monochrome blue sky, small blended brushstrokes, and little consideration of vanishing-point perspective, is similar to that of the Ottoman-trained military painters. For example, al-Rassam also does not use shading in the sky or accurate vanishing-point perspective in his painting of sheep being herded across a plain also from the 1930s [Figure 1.5]. However, a close look at Druby and al-

---

[137] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 47; al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 239.

[138] Selim, *Iraq Contemporary Art*.

[139] al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 268 n. 8, 10, and 11.

[140] The date of this painting is uncertain. It is signed in the lower-right 1928, but that date was not on the canvas when the painting was published in Druby's retrospective exhibition catalogue in 1980. In an interview Druby gave on the exhibition in 1980, he dates the painting to 1933 and says it was a wedding gift for a friend. Hassan, 'Old and New Paintings in the Druby Exhibition!' *Iawra*; Shakir Hassan Al Said and Nizar Selim, *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue)* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980).

[141] A. Kerim, *Camera Studies in Iraq* (Baghdad: Hasso Bros., c. 1925).

Rassam's paintings together reveals some subtle differences between the two. Al-Rassam's depiction of sheep is repetitive in the way that all the sheep exhibit the same combination of light and shadow. In contrast, Druby's depiction of a horse's musculature and colouring is surprisingly anatomically accurate, especially considering that he was working from a black and white photograph. This difference between al-Rassam's and Druby's techniques hints at Druby's other source of art education – his secondary school.

In a 1978 interview, Druby suggested that his studies in Italy taught him to move away from copying photographs to a focus on colour and expression.[142] However, Druby was already exposed to the techniques of Euro-American painting and drawing by participating in the newly organized secondary education system in Baghdad. Two major forces were at play in the education system Druby entered in the 1920s. The first was the British colonial concept of education, and the second was the pan-Arab nationalism of the Iraqi minister of education, Sati' al-Husri. The British promoted an education system in Iraq primarily to provide trained employees for the bureaucracy of the new state. Great Britain was wary of supporting too much education past the primary level because of a fear that over-education would create a class of skilled labourers who would be unemployed and restless. So, British officials established only four secondary schools in the country in the late 1910s, one in each of the major cities: Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, and Mosul.[143] Druby attended the secondary school founded by the British in Baghdad. Wealthier students also had the possibility of attending private schools, and religious groups such as the Jewish and Christian populations, ran their own schools.[144]

The British government retained little control over or interest in the content of the education system.[145] Instead, curriculum was dictated by the minister of education, Al-Husri, who served in the position from 1923 to 1927. Al-Husri was already well-known in the Ottoman Empire as the education minister and as a major supporter of education

---

[142] Mahmoud al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' *al-Riwaq* (Nov. 1978): 18, 14-19.
[143] Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 192-209.
[144] Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 203; Matta Akrawi, 'The New Educational System in Iraq,' *The Open Court* 3 (1935): 174, 162-176; S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah, 'Jewish Education in Baghdad: Communal Space vs. Public Space,' in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, ed. S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah and H.L. Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 96-120.
[145] Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 192-209.

reform based on Euro-American models of social science.[146] After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, he was recruited by king Faisal I to be the minister of education in Iraq as part of an increasing transfer of government posts from British to local officials. He was succeeded in 1928 by Fadhil al-Jamali (1903 – 1997), who continued many of al-Husri's curriculum policies.[147] Al-Husri had a unique connection to the nascent group of artists in Baghdad, not only through his promotion of art education in schools, but also, later as director of the Directorate General of Antiquities (1934 – 1941), where he recruited artists, including Druby, to work for the department.[148]

Druby's definition of modern art as 'evolutionary' and based in 'scientific' developments echoes the methodology of his secondary school education, which was constructed by al-Husri.[149] Al-Husri was an avid pan-Arabist, believing that education could foster belief in a single Arab nation, overcoming the borders created by colonial powers in the Middle East after the World War I. His curriculum reflected this ideology with a focus on Arabic language and Middle Eastern history. However, al-Husri believed that the best way to teach pan-Arabism and national pride was with Euro-American teaching methods.[150] His conviction that Euro-American epistemological frameworks were the best path to local sovereignty and a modern Arab nation were embedded in larger Arab intellectual discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Euro-American Orientalist discourse in the nineteenth century had argued that Arabs were evolutionarily behind Euro-Americans partly because their methods of learning were unscientific. This discourse also contended that Arabs could only 'catch up' to Euro-American modernity by giving up their traditional methods of learning and adopting Euro-American methods because Euro-American methods were scientific. Colonial presence and increasing intellectual exchange introduced these Orientalist arguments to a Middle Eastern audience. To counter and overcome their perceived backwardness in comparison the

---

[146] William L. Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati' al-Husri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 51-64.
[147] Tripp, *A History of* Iraq, 95; Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*, 51-64.
[148] Magnus T. Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 186-187; al-Husri, *My Memoirs from Iraq (second volume)*, 498.
[149] 'Interview with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Aqlam*, 109.
[150] Al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 239-240; Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*, 51-64.

Euro-Americans, Middle Eastern intellectuals concurred with the epistemological aspects of the argument and adopted the scientific methods from the Euro-American context in order to construct their own modern identity.[151] Iraqi pedagogy not only adopted Euro-American epistemological frameworks, but also emphasized the concept of scientific development within the curriculum.[152] A popular school song sung in schools during al-Husri's tenure includes the line: 'Awake, our kinsmen near and far!/with science as our guiding-star/ March forward, singing hand in hand/Our land is every Arab land.'[153]

Art was introduced into the curriculum as part of al-Husri's interest in importing Euro-American methods.[154] Al-Husri organised a 'Teachers' Hall' where teachers would learn the basics of art and literature.[155] A photograph from al-Husri's memoirs provides a glimpse into how art was taught in the Teachers' Hall [Figure 1.6]. The anatomical reproductions on the front table and studies of animals and plants on the back wall in the photograph show a scientific approach to painting through observation from nature. The photograph also includes small statuettes of the *Venus de Milo* and the *Sphinx*, indicating that teachers were also taught through copying from the Euro-American art historical canon. [156] The presence of the statuette of the *Venus de Milo* may suggest that al-Husri brought art practices from other parts of the Arab world to Baghdad. Al-Husri had been in Cairo and Damascus before his appointment in Baghdad, and in these two cities, copying the *Venus de Milo* was a part of artistic training at the time.[157] As scholars Kirsten Scheid and Nadia Radwan have illustrated, copying the *Venus* in the Middle Eastern context was not just about mastering the skills required for producing Euro-American art but also about developing a taste for the art historical canon, which was a hallmark of Euro-American

---

[151] Massad, *Desiring Arabs,* 1-29.
[152] Akrawi, 'The New Educational System in Iraq,' 162-176; Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 197-202.
[153] Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 199.
[154] Al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 240.
[155] al-Husri, *My Memoirs from Iraq: First Volume,* 354-355.
[156] An article from 1936 mentions art history as part of the Iraqi school curriculum: B., 'Education through Art (Translated from 'The New Era'),' *The New Teacher* 1:3-4 (June-September, 1936): 341-349.
[157] Nadia Radwan, 'Ideal Nudes and Iconic Bodies in the Works of the Egyptian Pioneers,' in *Art, Awakening, and Modernity in the Middle East*, 71-72; Lenssen, *The Shape of Support*, 83 n. 197; Scheid, 'Missing Nike,' 114 n. 3.

modernity.[158] Druby's recollections of his time in secondary school illustrate that he was trained in the methods introduced at the Teachers' Hall. He recounted that he had a painting teacher called Shawkat Suleiman al-Khafaf who taught him to focus on drawing portraiture from life and to paint in pastels and oils.[159]

The other ideology behind education that impacted Druby's artistic career was the creation of a public sphere in Baghdad. The public sphere in the 1920s had consisted of a small group of elite intellectuals, who met in home salons and private clubs. Already in the 1920s, there was a concern among these urban elites that this system of public discourse did not contribute to progress and modernization in Iraq, especially because it was exclusive and not egalitarian.[160] A 1924 editorial in *al-Misbah*, a Jewish journal based in Baghdad, proclaimed aggressively: 'Our circles, our institutions, and clubs, do they respond to the needs of those who desire progress???? No! No! No!'[161] At the same time, British officials complained, in a condescending discourse, that the lack of communal hobbies, such as athletics, among the Baghdad urban elite, hindered their national progress and was the root of a moral degeneration. In 1921, the British advisor to the Department of Education complained in an official report that:

> Nowhere in my experience [are qualities so engendered] so utterly lacking and so urgently needed as in the middle classes of the urban population of Iraq, where after the age of puberty an inveterate dignity allows to few the indulgence of more vigorous hobbies than tea-drinking and gossip in public, and in private certain unmentionable indoor sports.[162]

In the 1930s, the public sphere grew through more inclusive clubs and societies, and as networks broadened, intellectuals were increasingly integrated into state mechanisms. Al-Husri believed in the importance of the public sphere for national and social cohesion, but he also felt that Iraqis did not yet have a sense of civic duty, partially reacting to the

---

[158] Radwan, 'Ideal Nudes and Iconic Bodies in the Works of the Egyptian Pioneers,' 71-72; Scheid, 'Missing Nike,' 99-118.
[159] The artist Akram Shukri also had al-Khafaf as a teacher. Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Akram Shukri* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982), 17; al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15 and 18.
[160] Aline Schlaepfer, *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 67-68.
[161] *Al-Misbah*, 20 November 1924; quoted in Schlaepfer, *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad*, 68.
[162] Quoted in Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 201.

sentiments expressed by British educators. Two of the government's efforts at fostering social cohesion and civic duty were the promotion of sports and art exhibitions. [163]

So, it is no coincidence that Druby participated in a public running race and in the first public art exhibition in Baghdad held at the Hall of Agriculture and Industry both in 1931.[164] The two events mark the government's efforts at creating a more inclusive public sphere. While artists may have exhibited privately beforehand, this exhibition illustrates the first attempts at fostering a viewing public for art in Euro-American methods of oil painting and sculpture. A photograph from the exhibition at the Hall of Agriculture and Industry shows the similarity between the exhibited artworks and art instruction in the secondary schools – oil paintings in the form of landscapes and portraits, including a disturbingly large portrait of a baby, hang on the wall, and figural sculptures line the shelf [Figure 1.7].

The timing of the exhibition also relates to a nascent group mentality among artists in Baghdad. Around 1931, a group of students interested in art was graduating from secondary school. Along with Druby, who would graduate in 1933, the exhibition included members of the Selim family, Jewad and his brother Su'ad (1918 – ?), Atta Sabri, Akram Shukri (1910 – 1986), who had just returned from studying art in London and who would later work with Druby in the Directorate General of Antiquities, and possibly, Faiq Hassan (1914 – 1992), who would become the primary painting instructor at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 1939.[165] Iraqi writers also marked 1931 as the moment when the fledgling artistic community in Baghdad began to recognize Druby's talent. In addition to the exhibition at the Hall of Agriculture and Industry, Druby held his first solo exhibition in 1931.[166] Druby's student Dia al-Azzawi wrote in 1977 that Faiq Hassan remarked on Druby's 'ability to paint' after seeing the exhibition.[167] Al Said noted that Druby was recognized by the Ministry of Education for his painting skills in the mid-1930s.[168] In an

---

[163] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 53-57.
[164] 'Meeting with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Wasiti* 4 (1972).
[165] Al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 240; Selim, *Iraq Contemporary Art*, 46; Al Said, *Akram Shukri*, 24; Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Faiq Hassan* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982), 17.
[166] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 7; Al-Azzawi, 'Hafidh Druby,' *al-Dustur*, 32; 'Meeting with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Wasiti*.
[167] Al-Azzawi, 'Hafidh Druby,' *al-Dustur*, 32.
[168] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8.

interview from 1980, the Iraqi artist Issa Hanna (1919 – 2006) related that by 1936, Druby was known as a 'brilliant painter' and that Atta Sabri, who by then taught art in secondary school, brought Hanna, Jewad Selim, and Zaid Saleh Zaki (1922 – 1986) to learn from Druby, particularly from his use of female models for figure painting.[169] Druby would become known in the 1940s as one of the primary instructors and supporters of drawing from models.[170]

The artist community, including Druby, which had been made up of high school students in the 1920s, entered bureaucratic positions, the main form of employment for educated Iraqis, in the 1930s.[171] As young bureaucrats, they became part of a newly formed urban elite class, often called *effendi* in contemporary sources.[172] Their education distinguished them from the historic elite class, which was defined by family ties and land, because the education system was new to Iraq, necessitating that members of this class were young.[173] Because this new class came from diverse backgrounds, they often found unity in nationalism. This nationalism manifested itself in the idea of progress through social change.[174] One of the most significant parts of this social change was the adoption of Euro-American attributes mirroring the young elite's education in Euro-American systems and methodologies.[175] The new urban elite wore Euro-American dress, moved to newly built houses modelled on Euro-American architecture, and patronized and produced art using Euro-American methods.[176]

The burgeoning practice of painting from nude models, which Druby was central to promoting, was singled out by socialist Iraqi writer Dhu Ayyub (1908 – 1988) as one of these differentiating features of the young urban elite. In his novel *The hand, the land and*

[169] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 7.
[170] Nouri al-Rawi, 'Features of Contemporary Iraqi Art,' *Baghdad* 12 (Nov 1965): 15-17.
Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8.
[171] Eppel, 'The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the growth of nationalism and pan-arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,' 236.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 54; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 34-35.
[174] Eppel, 'The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the growth of nationalism and pan-arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,' 234-235; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 84-85.
[175] Eppel, 'The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the growth of nationalism and pan-arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,' 231.
[176] Schlaepfer, *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad*, 43-45.

the water (1948), a peasant Zabbala visits the Baghdad apartment of a young lawyer, Majid. The apartment is covered with paintings, mostly of female nudes, which the novel notes were features of urban elite 'taste': 'paintings were distributed over the walls, most of them representing the beauty of the naked body, a sign of artistic taste.' The peasant Zabbala's confusion at a painting of a nude woman reading a book underlines the difference between the urban elite's art appreciation and the Iraqi poor's ignorance of art:

> [Zabbala's] eyes settled on the naked girl's body who held a book in her hands...[Dr. Hassan Mustafa] asked: 'I think you wonder why this girl reads naked?'…Zabbala replied: 'I do not know, Bey, as we the peasants cannot understand the taste of the *effendis*.'[177]

Druby drew a similar drawing of a nude woman reading a newspaper in his early career [Figure 1.8]. Like the nude in Ayyub's story, Druby's drawing signals the way in which his art practice facilitated his own transformation from his peasant background to the life of an urban elite.

The writer Dhu Ayyub exemplifies another feature of the new urban elites – their political engagement. These young professionals saw progress in social reform and political movements as well as nude paintings and Euro-American dress. Many founded clubs and societies, such as the Baghdad Club (founded 1933) and the Ahali group (founded 1932), for public debate and discourse.[178] The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), of which Dhu Ayyub was a member, was founded in 1934.[179] It is noteworthy that Druby's nude sketch depicts the woman reading a newspaper, as the press was a growing vehicle for disseminating these progressive reform ideas.[180] Iraqi writers repeatedly noted Druby's lack of political engagement.[181] However, Druby's brief tenure as a bureaucrat at the *tapu*, or land-leasing, ministry, after his graduation from high school in 1933 meant he could not have avoided exposure to reform initiatives.[182] The *tapu* ministry was central to one

---

[177] Dhu l-Nun Ayyub, *The hand, the land and the water* (Baghdad: Shafiq, 1970), 33-34; for an analysis of the novel see: Orit Bashkin, 'Lands, Hands, and Socio-cultural Boundaries: A Reading of Dhu Nun Ayyub's The Hand, the Land and the Water (1948),' *Middle Eastern Studies* 46: 3 (May, 2010): 401-415.
[178] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 54; Eppel, 'The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the growth of nationalism and pan-arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,' 238; Tripp, *A History of* Iraq, 84-85;
[179] Johan Franzen, *Red Star Over Iraq: Iraqi Communism before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 33.
[180] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 82; Schlaepfer, *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad*, 99-167.
[181] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 14.
[182] For more on the Ottoman land grant system *tapu* see: Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 53-55; Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8.

of the main causes promoted by young urban elites, land reform, and initiatives were in progress in the ministry right as Druby began his job there.[183]

Many urban elites were critical of the false aggrandizement of fellow members of their class. Iraqi writers, such as Ayyub and Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid (1903 – 1937), critiqued the way in which the class's boastful idealism lacked real action behind it. The criticism often centred around the superficiality of the class's adoption of Euro-American dress and art forms.[184] The protagonist of Ayyub's *How I found a Guy* (1938) complains at a poetry recitation among the urban elite: 'There was no real poetry in his words…but empty expressions which he had stuffed with all the strange words he could think of.'[185] Freya Stark (1893 – 1993), a British woman living in Iraq during the same period, wrote on the young urban elite: 'He is rather a pathetic figure, an idealist in his way, as he walks down New Street to his office, his clothes so neat, his shoes so smartly polished.'[186] Al Said chastised Druby for being 'haughty' and a 'bragger' among the Baghdad aristocracy, leading to Druby's inflated ego when he arrived in Italy to study art in 1938.[187] In rare photograph of Druby during this period, his shoes are smartly polished and he wears a suit [Figure 1.9]. He stands with a young woman and man also wearing Euro-American dress outside the Egyptian embassy. Behind the trio, an older man wears traditional clothing and a fez hat, exemplifying the transition of the new urban elite.

While authors had their own political agendas in denouncing the superficiality of the urban elite's cultural projects, the disparity they touched on between the ideal and the real was evident in art production. Druby's later claim that he used to paint cinema posters in the 1930s may suggest that much of his work during the period was not oil paintings of nudes but instead popular prints.[188] After the *tapu* department, Druby became a sports teacher at an elementary school and at Rusafa Middle School in central Baghdad.[189] He

---

[183] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 85.
[184] Pelle Valentin Olsen, 'Cruising Baghdad: Desire between Men in the 1930s Fiction of Dhu al-Nun Ayyub,' *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 14:1 (March 2018): 31, 25-44.
[185] Quoted in Olsen, 'Cruising Baghdad,' 31.
[186] Freya Stark, *Baghdad Sketches* (London: John Murray, 1937), 151.
[187] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8.
[188] Dia Al-Azzawi, *Poster Art in Iraq 1939-1973* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974), 118.
[189] Al-Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8; 'Three heroes in the sports competition in Baghdad,' unknown Baghdadi newspaper (2 July 1931).

established his first studio there, painting with his students.[190] Other artists' initiatives were similarly grass-roots. What would eventually become the Institute of Fine Arts, attached to the University of Baghdad, began as a series of classes taught by Atta Sabri and Faiq Hassan in a music institute, founded in 1936.[191] This marginality must also be seen in light of the increasing political instability and related suppression of discourse in the public sphere after 1936 due to a military coup orchestrated by general Bakr Sidqi (1890 – 1937). As a result, intellectuals were increasingly integrated into state systems and the press was limited.[192] This was the first of a long series of political upheavals that would disrupt the art field in Baghdad throughout the twentieth century.

The loss of archives contributes further to the liminality of Druby's career and artistic production in 1930s Baghdad. Already in 1980, Nizar Selim noted that almost all of Druby's artworks from the 1930s were gone.[193] Therefore, it is possible to reconstruct Druby's methods and education during this period but impossible to analyse his form and aesthetics fully.

Italy: Academic Painting in Europe and its Politics (1938 – 1940)

In the late 1930s, several artists, including Druby, were sent to Europe to study at art academies. Since the early twentieth century, Middle Eastern governments had sent students to study art at European academies.[194] The Iraqi government began sending students abroad to study a variety of subjects in 1921. [195] The programme was initiated by Sati' al-Husri as part of his interest in Euro-American methodologies, and he sent the first artist, Akram Shukri, to the Slade School in London from 1930 to 1931.[196] Faiq Hassan followed around 1933 and studied at the Ècole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-

---

[190] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 19.

[191] Al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 240; Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Artist statements/manifestos in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1973); Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Art in Modern Iraq,' *Iraq Petroleum* (Sept 1955), 20.

[192] Bashkin, The Other Iraq, 71-72; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 88-89.

[193] Al Said and Selim, *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue)*.

[194] Wendy Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, 126; Nadia Radwan, 'Dal Cairo a Roma. Visual Arts and Transcultural Interactions between Egypt and Italy,' *Asiatische Studien* 70:4 (2017): 1093-1114.

[195] Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1949), 206-207.

[196] Al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 240; Al Said, *Akram Shukri*, 17.

Arts in Paris.[197] By the late 1930s, around two hundred students were sent abroad each year from Iraq in a diverse range of subjects.[198] Druby and Atta Sabri were sent together to the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome in October of 1938.[199] Jewad Selim joined them in January 1940 after studying in Paris from 1938 to 1939.[200]

At twenty-four years old, Druby began his studies in February of 1939 at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome, enrolled in the Painting II course.[201] Despite having the same level of experience as Druby in Iraq, Atta Sabri was admitted to the Painting I course.[202] A report published by the Accademia on the year 1938-1939 lists classes such as 'study of antiquity,' 'landscapes,' 'the nude,' and 'perspective and technique' for painting students.[203] A sketch by Druby of a class at the Accademia in 1940 shows a traditional Euro-American method of art pedagogy – men in suits sketch seated at lecterns [Figure 1.10].[204] The mission statement of the Accademia in the same year emphasized technical skill and an evolutionary approach to the past, concepts that Druby would refer to in his own definition of modern art in 1964:

> An academy of fine arts does not create an artist but to the artist, by divine will, it must give a perfect mastery of the technique of their art in-depth knowledge of the artistic tradition of their country, not to copy the great masters of the past, because who imitates the ancient implicitly declares not to have understood it, but because the knowledge of the artistic tradition pushes to always new goals those of that tradition to render worthy: tradition and a historical process in continuous evolution.[205]

---

[197] Tiffany Floyd, 'Faiq Hassan,' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*, http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Faiq-Hassan-Alawi-al-Janabi.aspx.
[198] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East,* 206-207.
[199] With the official state archives from Iraq completely inaccessible from this period, the documents on Druby and his fellow Iraqi artists housed at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome represent precious evidence. Visas for Atta Sabri and Hafidh Druby, issued at the Royal Iraqi Legation in Rome, October 4, 1938, PXIV Druby and PXIV Sabri, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.
[200] Visa for Jewad Selim, issued at the Royal Iraqi Legation in Rome, January 25, 1940, PXIV Selim, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.
[201] I will refer to the academy by its Italian name 'Accademia' throughout the dissertation in order to avoid confusion with the other academies in Rome. *Inscription to the Accademia di Belle Arti, Painting 2nd Year*, PXIV Druby.
[202] *Inscription to the Accademia di Belle Arti, Painting 1st Year*, February 15, 1939, PXIV Sabri, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.
[203] Mario Rivosecchi, *Report on the Year 1938-1939*, 8 November 1940. Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.
[204] *Academic Painting* (London: Sirrocco-Parkstone International, 2013).
[205] Mario Rivosecchi, *Speech at the Opening of the Accademia 1939-1940, 2.*

Druby did well in his courses. In his exam results from Painting II, he scored 30/30 in painting technique and a 24/30 in both art history and anatomy.[206] The latter two subjects were more challenging linguistically, as it appears that Druby began learning Italian while at the Accademia. A surviving sketch paper illustrates Druby's combination of life drawing and Italian class [Figure 1.11]. Druby's Italian girlfriend probably assisted with his quick mastery of the language as well.[207]

Druby asserted that his painting professor, the Neapolitan painter Carlo Siviero (1882 – 1953), had a significant impact on his career and quickly became his mentor at the Accademia.[208] Siviero painted a portrait of Druby as an Indian in 1938 and gifted it to him in 1950 with the inscription: 'to the dear Druby, in memory of years past and friendship' [Figure 1.12]. Druby kept the painting in his studio through the 1970s.[209] Siviero was near the end of his career when he met Druby and was considered a conservative painter in Italy in the late 1930s.[210] Siviero was a firm believer in the academic representational style of painting, promoting preparatory drawings, perspective, and chiaroscuro.[211] His subjects were also generally contained to those prescribed by European tradition of academic painting: landscape, still life, portrait, and domestic scenes. Druby noted that Siviero considered portraiture central for artistic training, which is not surprising given that Siviero was known as a portrait painter for the Italian aristocracy.[212] Siviero did not find his practice conservative, but rather felt that the only way to find 'renewal' in painting was through a focus on painting techniques as opposed to conceptual concerns.[213] Druby's own memories of Siviero as a harsh teacher, recorded in Al Said's biography, are

---

[206] *Exam Results, Painting 2nd Year*, August 5, 1939, PXIV Druby, Hafidh, doc. 1859, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.
[207] Suhaila Druby (Hafidh Druby's wife), interview by the author, October 2016, London.
[208] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15; Mario De Nicolais, *Carlo Siviero* (Naples: Societa Editrice Napoletana, 1982).
[209] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15.
[210] De Nicolais, *Carlo Siviero*.
[211] Stefania Ventra, *Restauri di dipinti nel Novecento: le posizioni nell'Accademia di San Luca 1931-1958* (Rome: Sapienza Universita Editrice, 2014), 118.
[212] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15; Ventra, *Restauri di dipinti nel Novecento*, 118.
[213] Ventra, *Restauri di dipinti nel Novecento*, 118.

confirmed by other students.[214] At the same time, the narrative contributes to Druby's foundational myth of his difficult struggle in becoming an artist.[215]

According to Druby, Siviero criticized him for painting cheap street art instead of serious academic subjects.[216] Yet most of Druby's surviving work from his time in Rome follows the academic style taught at the Accademia.[217] He painted a study of a model in the Accademia with short blended brushstrokes, focusing on the effect of light on the anatomy of the model's back [Figure 1.13]. Druby's one surviving watercolour of Rome depicts the churches of Santa Maria dei Miracoli and Santa Maria in Montesanto at the Piazza del Popolo near the Accademia [Figure 1.14]. In the sketch, Druby focuses on the architectural details of the churches rather than on the daily life around them, blurring out the figures. This architectural emphasis fulfilled two requirements of academic painting: firstly, a study of vanishing point perspective, nicely delineated by the roof of the left-hand church, and secondly, a study of a historic subject, here seventeenth-century churches.[218] Jewad Selim painted a watercolour at exactly the same spot in Piazza del Popolo, facing the other side of the piazza, in nearly an identical style in 1940 [Figure 1.15]. Jewad Selim also blurs his figures and focuses on the architecture. The affinity between the two watercolours suggests both that the two artists may have made their sketches on the same excursion for the Accademia.

Therefore, Siviero's critique of Druby's work as street art may relate less to Druby's artistic output and more to continued discrimination against Druby and his fellow students from outside of Europe. Siviero's choice to paint Druby as an 'Indian,' wearing an orange turban, removed Druby's individuality by marking him as an ambiguous non-European. Remembering Druby's own dress and position in the urban elite in 1930s Baghdad, the turban had little to do with Siviero's personal relationship with Druby and much more to do with the tradition of Orientalist painting in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth

---

[214] Ventra, *Restauri di dipinti nel Novecento,* 120.
[215] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8.
[216] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8
[217] Carl Goldstein, 'Towards a Definition of Academic Art,' *The Art Bulletin* 57:1 (March, 1975): 102-109.
[218] Ibid.

centuries.[219] Born in the 1880s, Siviero would have been exposed to Orientalist painters working in the late nineteenth century, such as Domenico Morelli (1823 – 1901), who was a celebrated painter in Siviero's hometown of Naples and was the president of its Royal Academy of Fine Arts when Siviero was studying there.[220] Morelli became interested in the Middle East near the end of his life and painted many portraits of turbaned Arab men [Figure 1.16].[221] In European art academies, Middle Eastern costumes, such as turbans, were often used to mark paintings as historical, especially in biblical scenes.[222] Therefore, Siviero denied Druby the modernity he was looking for at the Accademia by portraying him with a turban and relegated him to the same position as the churches in Druby's watercolour of the Piazza del Popolo – Druby denoted the past rather than the present. However, when Druby was asked in the 1970s why he hung Siviero's portrait of him in his studio, Druby only commented on its skilful handling of paint and composition.[223]

The rest of the administrators at the Accademia also orientalised the non-Euro-American students. The student body was incredibly diverse with sixty-five Italians and forty-three foreign students, but according to the Accademia reports during the years Druby attended, no foreign students won prizes or were recognized by the school.[224] Accademia administrators could not remember whether Atta Sabri was from Iraq or Iran.[225] Deniz Artun's study on Turkish students at the Académie Julian in Paris indicates that similar discrimination towards Middle Eastern students occurred in other academies in Europe.[226]

Siviero and the Accademia's discrimination of foreign students was also related to the racist policies of the fascist Italian government controlling Italy while Druby was a student.

[219] Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient,' *Art in America* (May 1983): 122, 118-131.
[220] Luisa Martorelli, *Domenico Morelli e il suo tempo 1823-1901* (Naples: Electa, 2005); Emanuela Angiuli and Anna Villari, *Orientalisti:incanti e scoperte nella pittura dell'Ottocento italiano* (Milan: Silvana, 2011).
[221] Martorelli, *Domenico Morelli*.
[222] Roger Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa, 1880-1930* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2003), 174.
[223] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15.
[224] Ibid.
[225] *Letter from the Director of the Accademia di Belle Arti, Roma, to the Reale Legazione dell'Iraq*, February 13, 1939. Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.
[226] Deniz Artun, *Translation of Modernity from Paris* (Istanbul: İletisim Yayinlari, 2007); Scheid, 'Necessary Nudes,' 221.

Benito Mussolini (1883 – 1945) and his fascist government had ruled Italy since 1922 and had imposed racial laws.[227] Druby's enrolment documents at the Accademia include a manifestation of those laws, noting that he was not Jewish.[228] Druby would have already been exposed to fascism in 1930s Baghdad, where there were supporters of European fascist movements. Fascism was debated in the Iraqi public sphere, especially in relation to fostering national sentiment among the youth, and 1934, the newspaper *al-'Alam al-'Arabi* published a translation of an article written by Mussolini.[229] Siviero was remembered after World War II as a staunch opponent to fascism and was asked by the government in 1950 to alter the painter Mario Sironi's (1885 – 1961) famous Mussolini-era mural at Sapienza University in Rome in order to remove its fascist symbols.[230] However, art historian Stefania Ventra has recently argued that Siviero was only 'timidly' opposed to Fascism.[231] Accademia rhetoric fully upheld Fascist ideologies. At the opening of the school in the year 1939-1940, the director stated: 'We must give our young people a fascist soul. The ability to understand the problems of art on the basis of the passion of our people.'[232]

Culture wars were raging outside the Accademia about whether or not Mussolini's government should uphold a single fascist aesthetic as was being instituted in Germany. In the end, a degree of aesthetic freedom was allowed, and modern movements which had existed before the rise of fascism, such as abstraction and futurism, continued to be permitted.[233] Despite the possibility of heterogeneous aesthetics in late 1930s Italy, a representational form linked to the regime's promotion of the past began to predominate

---

[227] Michael A. Livingston, *The Fascists and the Jews of Italy: Mussolini's Race Laws, 1938-1943* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[228] *Inscription to the Accademia di Belle Arti, Painting 2nd Year.*
[229] Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, totalitarian, and pro-fascist inclinations, 1932-1941* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1-13, 61, and 113.
[230] In an interesting turn of global politics and art history, Siviero's restorations were removed in 2017. Sara Grattoggi, 'Roma, azzurro Sironi, il murale com'era: alla Sapienza torna il fascio littorio,' 7 June 2016, *Repubblica.* https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/06/07/news/roma_azzurro_sironi_il_murale_com_era_alla_sapienza_torna_il_fascio_littorio-141495839/; Stefania Ventra, *Restauri di dipinti nel Novecento,* 123-124.
[231] Stefania Ventra, *Restauri di dipinti nel Novecento,* 123-124.
[232] Rivosecchi, *Speech at the Opening of the Accademia 1939-1940*, 3-4; Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture & Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998).
[233] Adrian Lyttelton, 'Futurism, Politics, and Society', in *Italian Futurism 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe*, ed. Vivien Green (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2014), 58-75.

in the Roman public sphere.[234] The overarching aesthetic narrative of the government in late 1930s was that of *Romanita*. This ideology promoted ancient Rome as a source of inspiration for Italy's modernity. *Romanita's* discourse encouraged the use of forms from ancient Rome, discovered through archaeology, to argue for the superiority of the Italian race and for national identity.[235] European narratives since the eighteenth century had lauded ancient Rome as a source of modern European civilization and culture. At the same time, the glory of ancient Rome was contrasted with the contemporary city in the nineteenth century, which was depicted as backwards, dirty, and decadent.[236] This narrative mirrors the Euro-American colonial and Orientalist depictions of Iraq during the same period, which Druby would have encountered at school in Baghdad – Iraq's ancient past had contributed to the development of European civilization but its present was backwards in comparison with Europe.[237] The major difference was that in the Italian fascist framing of *Romanita*, non-European ancient civilizations were still inferior to the culture of ancient Rome. This ideology was prominently displayed on the covers of the racist journal *La Difesa della Razza* in the late 1930s.[238] On the cover of the issue from December 20, 1939, a beam of light illuminates the Roman marble sculpture of the Apollo Belvedere (ca. 120 – 140), masking the naked bodies of Africans and Asians in darkness [Figure 1.17].

The fascist promotion of the Roman past was not limited to one-to-one copies of Roman art forms, but also, manifested as an aesthetic based on mimesis of forms derived from the visible world. The aesthetic of the Roman past was defined in 1930s Italy as 'clarity and simplicity, based on a linear and precise sense of reality…greatness derived from a broad and serene, but concrete, vision of life and the world.'[239] In the catalogue of the 1930 Venice Biennale, the sculptor Antonio Maraini (1886 – 1963) asked: 'Will tomorrow

---

[234] Romy Golan, 'Slow Time: Futurist Murals,' in *Italian Futurism 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe,* 295.

[235] Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2013), 91-150; Stone, *The Patron State*.

[236] Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, 9-28.

[237] Massad, *Desiring Arabs,* 1-29; Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 94-200.

[238] Philippe Foro, 'Racisme, fascisme et antiquité: L'exemple de la revue La Difesa della Razza (1938–1943),' *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire* 78: 2 (2003): 121–31

[239] Pietro De Francisci, 'Civiltà romana,' in *Politica fascista della razza* (Rome: Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista, 1940), 10–11; quoted in Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, 28-29.

finally bring a resurgence of Latinity, an aspiration towards sanctity and beauty, to clear, expressive, harmonious meaning and an immediate correspondence between form and substance?'[240] This language is reminiscent of the methodology promoted by the European academy: observation from nature, compositional harmony, and scientific precision in the use of vanishing-point perspective and colour.[241] Correspondingly, in the third *Quadriennale of National Art*, held in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni from February to July 1939, the predominant forms were academic portraits and landscapes.[242]

There is no surviving written record on how much Druby was exposed to cultural movements outside of the Accademia during his time in Rome. The Palazzo delle Esposizioni was only a ten minute walk from his apartment at Via Sistina 42, so it is likely that he visited the *Quadriennale*.[243] Several urgent notes sent to the Iraqi embassy from the Accademia state that Sabri and another Iraqi artist Mohamed Abd el Raqqaa were not profiting from their courses but instead were frequently out with friends.[244] However, the fact that Druby was not included in this critique suggests that he was a more attentive student. A photograph shows Druby on a tourism trip with fellow Iraqi students around Italy, but in the photograph, they are captured outside a historic church rather than looking at contemporary art [Figure 1.18]. Druby and Atta Sabri returned to Baghdad for a few months in the summer of 1939.[245] While they were in Baghdad, in September of 1939, World War II broke out in Europe and the Iraqi government agreed to severe diplomatic ties with Germany and support Great Britain. However, the Iraqi government was divided on which side to support in the war.[246] Italy had still not entered the war when Druby, Atta Sabri, and Jewad Selim went to Rome in October of 1939, but Al Said wrote in his

---

[240] Quoted in Juan Jose Gomez Gutierrez, *The PCI Artists: Antifascism and Communism in Italian Art, 1944-1951* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 110.
[241] Carl Goldstein, 'Towards a Definition of Academic Art.'
[242] *III Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale* (Rome: Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1939).
[243] Druby, Jewad Selim, and Atta Sabri lived on the same street but in different apartments. *Inscription to the Accademia di Belle Arti, Painting 2nd Year*, XIV Druby, XIV Sabri, XIV Selim.
[244] *Letter from the Director of the Accademia di Belle Arti, Roma, to the Reale Legazione dell'Iraq*.
[245] *Letter from Hafidh Druby to the Director of the Accademia di Belle Arti*, July 25, 1939, XIV Druby, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.
[246] Tripp, A History of Iraq, 99-101.

biography that Druby's heart was 'filled with sorrow' at the signs of war when he returned.[247]

The most compelling documentation of Druby's interactions with cultural movements in Italy during his time at the Accademia is his only surviving oil painting from this period, *The Owner of the Jar/the Italian* (1940) [Figure 1.19]. The painting depicts his Italian girlfriend with her last metal jars shortly before the vessels were confiscated by the Italian government to be melted down for ammunition.[248] Druby's choice of a subject related to the war shows his sensitivity to current events in Italy and his personal connection to them. The shallow picture plane with its bare yellow wall and terra-cotta tiles, typical of traditional Italian architecture, emphasizes the woman's form and the two vessels around her. The woman in the painting wears a simple white shirt, blue skirt, and blue sandals. She holds a bronze jar under her right arm and looks down at a green patinaed vessel on the floor, rendering her face in profile. The composition of Druby's painting is reminiscent of many of the figural paintings shown at the *Quadriennale* in 1939, in which figures are placed in simple interiors, and especially in the case of portrayals of peasants, hold objects in their hands. For example, Guiseppe Capogrossi's (1900 – 1972) painting *Contadina* centres on a female figure simply dressed in a shirt and long skirt holding a shovel against a shallow monochrome background [Figure 1.20].

However, Druby's method of depicting the past, represented by the two vessels, through an academic representational style diverges from contemporary Italian artists' negotiations with the past. As with the turbans in Morelli's Orientalist paintings, the attention to the vessels' historical details was typical of the academic style.[249] Each vessel has a distinctive form – the one under the woman's arm has a conical shape with a wide rim, and the one on the floor has an undulated rim and a green patina, marking it as old. Druby used techniques of academic representational painting, which he would have been taught at the Accademia, to further emphasize the specificity of the vessels: the configuration of light and shadow brings out the shimmer of the bronze material and

---

[247] *Iraqi Students*, memo of the Italian Ministry of Education, November 5, 1939, XIV Druby, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome; Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8.
[248] Suhaila Druby (Hafidh Druby's wife), interview by the author.
[249] Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics*, 174.

perspective conveys the vessels' scale. Italian artists working for the fascist regime, such as Mario Sironi (1885 – 1961) and Massimo Campigli (1895 – 1971), depicted ancient Roman objects within an aesthetic inspired not by the academy but by the ancient past.[250] In Campigli's mural in Palazzo del Liviano in Padua (1940), men lift a column with the same spiral structure as the ancient Roman column of Trajan [Figure 1.21]. However, rather than enunciating its features through light and perspective, Campigli painted the column in a flattened naïve style, for which he took inspiration partly from ancient Etruscan art.[251]

In comparison with Campigli's mural and the ideology of *Romanita* in which it was embedded, Druby's painting has a morose irony. In Campigli's mural, figures build architecture and knowledge from objects of the past discovered through archaeology – three men hoist the column up, children examine archaeological finds, and a modern class is taught by the ancient Roman historian Livy, supported by a platform of archaeological material. In Druby's painting, the loving gaze of the woman towards her historic vessels also underlines the importance of the past in Italy's present, but in contrast to Campigli's mural, Druby's subject reveals the way in which the regime and the war was destroying the past. Druby's girlfriend clings to her vessels in the painting because they will soon be lost.

Baghdad: Archaeology, Group Dynamics, and Foreign Artists (1940 – 1946)

It is fitting that Druby's only extant painting from his time in Italy addresses the preservation of historic objects, because upon his return from Rome, Druby began working for the Directorate General of Antiquities in Baghdad. Iraq ended diplomatic ties with Italy at the demand of Great Britain when Italy entered World War II on the side of the Axis Powers in June 1940.[252] According to Druby's 1970 account, he, Atta Sabri, and Jewad Selim were forced to leave Italy at this time and took the train together back to

---

[250] Romy Golan, 'Monumental Fairy Tales: Mural Images during the Ventennio,' in *Post Zang Tumb Tuuum. Art Life Politics: Italia 1918-1943*, ed. Germano Celant (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2018), 330-335.
[251] Claudia Gian Ferrari, 'Massimo Campigli: Harmonie und Mass: moderne Klassik,' in *Massimo Campigli*, ed. Klaus Wolbert (Milan: Mazzotta, 2003), 61-67.
[252] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 102.

Baghdad.[253] When they stopped at the northern oil city Kirkuk, they met al-Husri, who had been director of the Directorate General of Antiquities since 1934. Al-Husri decided to hire the three artists to work at the directorate.[254] During the first half of the 1940s, three factors shaped Druby's practice and the Baghdad art field: the involvement of the Directorate General of Antiquities, the influx of foreign artists stationed in Baghdad due to World War II, and the gathering of Baghdad artists into an institutionalized group.

When Druby arrived back in Baghdad at the age of twenty-six, the country had been in a state of political turmoil since the military coup of 1936. The urban elites were increasingly divided between pan-Arabists, nationalists, and communists.[255] The government was also divided between those who supported the British war effort and those who sided with the Axis Powers.[256] King Faisal I's three-year-old grandson, Faisal II (1935 – 1958), ruled Iraq under a regent, 'Abd al-Ilah (1913 – 1958), after his father, King Ghazi (1912 – 1939), had died in a car crash under mysterious circumstances in in April 1939. Both 'Abd al-Ilah and the current prime minister, Nuri al-Said (1888 – 1958), were supportive of British presence in Iraq, which upset a delicate power balance between pro and anti-British factions within the government.[257]

In the midst of this political instability and the uncertainty of the looming war, al-Husri was also in the process of nationalizing the Directorate General of Antiquities. As he had done with the Ministry of Education, al-Husri championed a pan-Arab agenda for the directorate, which manifested as a focus on the history of the early Islamic era.[258] Al-Husri's choice to focus on the Islamic era was situated within the wider discourse of pan-Arab historiography. Euro-American archaeology in Iraq was devoted almost entirely to pre-Islamic ancient history, focusing on the Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian cultures.[259] European Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth century had conceived of history and civilization as a singular global entity developing along a linear trajectory, in

[253] Hafidh Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' *Sumer* 26 (1970): 146-147.
[254] Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*, 72-73.
[255] Eric Davis, *Memories of State*, 14-16.
[256] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 102.
[257] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 98-99.
[258] Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 201-202.
[259] Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 19-56.

which these ancient civilizations were considered foundational to later European civilizations, particularly because of their place in the Christian bible.[260] In Euro-American historiography, these cultures were not Arab. Instead, the Arabs came to the Middle East and the modern territory of Iraq from Arabia in the seventh century and spread the religion of Islam.[261]

At first, there was no Euro-American interest in the Islamic period, because if fell outside of biblical history and the trajectory of Euro-American civilization.[262] However, in the late nineteenth century with increasing colonial contact, Euro-American scholars began to study the history and cultural production of the Islamic period.[263] In keeping with an Orientalist view of modern Middle Eastern peoples as backwards and decadent, Euro-American histories of the Islamic period framed the first centuries of Islam in the Middle East under the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates (644 – 1258) as the height of Arab civilization followed by decline in the modern period.[264] This narrative was useful for postcolonial pan-Arabists like al-Husri, because it suggested that the reason for the decline in the Middle East after the Abbasids was the coming of the Turks and the Ottoman Empire. By using this narrative, pan-Arabists could blame the Ottoman Empire and Turks for the decline of the Middle East and claim that the Arabs were capable of modernizing the region because of their glorious achievements in the early Islamic period.[265] This Arab modernizing process was often referred to as an 'awakening' or *nahda*.[266]

Al-Husri had the added advantage in this pan-Arab modernizing process in that many of the sites from the early Islamic period were located within the territory of modern Iraq, providing the possibility of putting Iraq at the centre of pan-Arab identity. He focused on

---

[260] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 2-3; Wendy Shaw, '*In Situ*: The Contraindictions of World Heritage,' *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 6:2 (2017): 339-365.
[261] Reinhard Shulze, 'Mass Culture and Islamic Cultural Production in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East,' in *Mass Culture, Popular Culture, and Social Life in the Middle East*, ed. Georg Stauth and Zami Zubaida (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 189-192.
[262] Shaw, '*In Situ*,' 344-347.
[263] Stephen Vernoit, ed., *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850 – 1950* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000); Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 122-126.
[264] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 122-126.
[265] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 169-170; Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, 146-148.
[266] Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, 146-148.

excavations at early Islamic sites, such as the Umayyad city of Wasit, and established the Museum of Arab Antiquities in Baghdad solely dedicated to the early Islamic period.[267] Al-Husri did not mention the encounter with Druby in Kirkuk, but he did relate in his memoirs that he was interested in hiring Iraqi artists to contextualize the costumes held in a planned Costume Museum through historical paintings related to the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. These paintings would give the 'correct' depiction of costumes based on anthropological and archaeological data collected in Iraq. He also wanted to make copies of historical Islamic paintings such as those at the Alhambra in Granada and those painted by Yahya al-Wasiti (13th Century), a medieval manuscript painter who was celebrated by Iraqi modern artists and the Iraqi government.[268] In 1940, al-Husri set up a studio in the store rooms of the Directorate General of Antiquities for this purpose and hired Druby, Atta Sabri, and Jewad Selim.[269]

Druby recollected that he did make several reproductions of al-Wasiti paintings and two other paintings related to the early Islamic period, *Light Refractions of Ibn Hayyan* and *The Laboratory of Ibn Sina*, for the directorate.[270] However, a photograph of the studio in the directorate shows Druby and Atta Sabri working on pre-Islamic rather than early Islamic historical paintings in 1940 [Figure 1.22]. We know from Druby's own account that his painting on the right side of the photograph was titled *The Burning of the Palace of Sardanapalus in Babylon*.[271] The lush setting of Atta Sabri's painting, the presence of a figure holding a spade, and the costume of the righthand standing figure all suggest that his painting depicts the legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon [Figure 1.23]. Both the story of Sardanapalus and the Hanging Gardens were strange choices for al-Husri's project. First of all, they were set in the pre-Islamic period. Secondly, both stories originated in the Euro-American context and had no connection to histories of the Babylonians uncovered by contemporary archaeological missions in Iraq.

---

[267] Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 202.
[268] al-Husri, *My Memoirs from Iraq*, 498; Yusuf Ghanima, 'Introduction,' *Guide to the National Gallery of Pictures* (Baghdad: Directorate of Antiquities, 1943); al-Bahloly, 'History Regained.'
[269] al-Husri, *My Memoirs from Iraq*, Fig. 12.
[270] None of these paintings survive. Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 147.
[271] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 147.

The story of Sardanapalus, the decadent and lascivious last king of Assyria who burned himself with all of his slaves and concubines, originated in the ancient Greek tradition and was made famous in the nineteenth century by a play written by Lord Byron (1788 – 1824) and a painting by Eugène Delacroix (1798 – 1863).[272] Druby claimed to have been inspired by Delacroix's painting, and the pile of hysterical semi-nude women in the lower-right of Druby's painting resembles Delacroix's composition [Figure 1.24].[273] Delacroix completed his painting in 1827, before excavations had uncovered Babylon so the choice does not fit into al-Husri's agenda of giving accurate information about ancient costumes through Euro-American methods of archaeology.[274] Druby made some alterations to Delacroix's composition, which specifically added details derived from archaeological material. For example, the front of Sardanapalus's dais includes motifs from reliefs excavated at Nineveh and at Babylon.[275] However by mixing motifs from two different sites and two different time periods, Druby did not offer an accurate reconstruction of either city. His use of these motifs falls within a composition that is remarkably similar to Georges Rochegrosse's late nineteenth-century painting *The End of Babylon* [Figure 1.25]. Both paintings place Sardanapalus on a platform in the left-hand side of the composition between two statues of lions, and both include a tall palm sculpture in the right background. Only the soldier in profile in the lower right of Druby's canvas provides the costume study, for which al-Husri hired him. Druby had just returned from Rome a few months before painting *Sardanapalus*, and it is likely that he was showing off his mastery of Euro-American painting techniques.

Druby's subject choice also illustrates the weakness of al-Husri's early Islamic agenda among artists working for the directorate. The combination of his painting and Atta Sabri's from the same photograph suggests the continued impact of the Euro-American focus on the pre-Islamic period in artists' archaeological projects. Druby also completed a lost

---

[272] Zainab Bahrani, *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia* (London: Routledge, 2001), 170.

[273] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 147.

[274] Beatrice Farwell, 'Sources for Delacroix's Death of Sardanapalus,' *The Art Bulletin* 40:1 (March, 1958): 66-70.

[275] Lucas Pieter Petit, Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, ed., *Nineveh, the Great City: Symbol of Beauty and Power* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2017); Irving L. Finkel and Michael J. Seymour, ed., *Babylon: Myth and Reality* (London: British Museum Press, 2008).

painting *A Cemetery of the Dawn of Dynasties in Ur* for the directorate, which related to Leonard Woolley's (1880 – 1960) excavations at the Sumerian city of Ur in the 1920s.[276] An early 1940s photograph shows Faiq Hassan, Atta Sabri, Jewad Selim, and Akram Shukri standing around a model of the Ishtar Gate at Babylon in the storerooms of the directorate, again placing emphasis on the pre-Islamic site of Babylon [Figure 1.26]. The photograph of the Ishtar Gate model also underlines the way in which the directorate brought artists together in the early 1940s. The directorate already employed Akram Shukri in the 1930s at the Iraq Museum, founded by the British in 1926 to house finds from archaeological excavations.[277] Faiq Hassan had also begun work for the directorate in the 1930s, and Issa Hanna joined the group in the early 1940s.[278]

Druby noted that he was called back to the directorate briefly in 1944 to help with copying wall paintings discovered during the excavations of the Kassite city of 'Aqar Quf (14th Century BCE), but in 1941, he was transferred to the Ministry of Education.[279] Druby's transfer was likely related to the government coup and Anglo-Iraqi War in the same year. In April 1941, anti-monarchy, anti-British, and pro-Arab nationalists took over the government. In retaliation, British forces attacked Iraq from Basra, quickly reinstalling the monarchy and prime minister Nuri al-Said in what was called the Anglo-Iraqi War. There was a brief period of chaos and violence in Baghdad, known as the *Farhud*, in which the Jewish population was particularly targeted.[280] The coup and war with the British led to the subsequent strengthening of the monarchy and British control and the banishment of many pan-Arab nationalists, including al-Husri, in 1941.[281] Many ministries were reorganized during this period, including the Ministry of Education.[282] There is no evidence of Druby's involvement in the political upheaval, but Al Said noted in the 1980s

---

[276] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 147; Charles Leonard Woolley, *Ur Excavations: the royal cemetery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934).
[277] Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Akram Shukri*, 7; Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 82-86.
[278] Tahar Baqir, 'Iraq Government Excavations at 'Aqar Quf: Third Interim Report, 1944-5.' *Iraq* 8 (1946): 81.
[279] Druby claims he worked at 'Aqar Quf in 1942. However, no wall paintings were excavated then, so the dating here is unclear. Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 147; Baqir, 'Iraq Government Excavations at 'Aqar Quf,' 81.
[280] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 103-110.
[281] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 103-110; Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*, 76-77.
[282] Tripp, *A History or Iraq,* 110.

that Jewad Selim's brother Su'ad Selim produced twelve pamphlets on the Anglo-Iraqi War.[283]

After Druby's transfer, he continued to incorporate archaeological material in paintings, which were not directly related to archaeological projects. His painting *The Samovar* (c. 1942) intermingles modern and historical material in a similar composition to his painting *The Owner of the Jar* – in both paintings, a woman in modern dress is surrounded by historic artefacts [Figure 1.27]. *The Samovar*, furthermore, combines Euro-American modern material with historic Iraqi objects. The woman in the centre of the composition wears a Euro-American modern pink dress, knee-length and with short sleeves, and pours tea from a Euro-American teapot. However, she pours the tea into a traditional Arabic glass tea cup and she sits on the floor in the Arabic style. She is surrounded by a large metal samovar, the traditional Iraqi vessel for serving tea, and a small metal brazier, traditionally used for heating rooms in Iraq. Two objects in the painting, a striped lustre-ware dish in the bottom-right and a large turquoise glazed jar in the left background had recently been incorporated by Euro-American scholars into the canon of early Islamic art. Similar large turquoise-glazed storage jars were included in surveys of Islamic art and, in March 1942, the bulletin published by the *Metropolitan Museum of Art* claimed that they were 'masterpieces' made for the 'rich and noble.'[284] Druby includes a similar turquoise glazed jar in a still life from the same period [Figure 1.28]. The jar's presence indicates that Druby's paintings were in conversation with contemporary Euro-American research on Islamic art and al-Husri's own project to promote early Islamic material.

The group of artists brought together by the Directorate General of Antiquities coalesced into their own artists' group in 1941 named the *Friends of Art Society* (*FAS*). [285] Al Said would argue in the 1980s that the group formed largely thanks to British intervention after the Anglo-Iraqi war. After the war, the British encouraged local art movements as a way to bring back stability, and the British advisor to the Directorate General of Antiquities,

---

[283] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 86.
[284] Arthur U. Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art* (London, 1938) vol. V, pl. 701; Hannah E. McAllister, 'A Persian Jar,' *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 37: 3 (March, 1942): 74-75.
[285] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 95-96; Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 181.

Seton Lloyd (1902 – 1996), took a personal interest in supporting local art movements.[286] Al Said's account is verified by a contemporary newspaper article, which recounted that Lloyd gave a lecture at the *FAS* in February 1943 on the power of artists in society.[287] The British government also hosted the first exhibition of the *FAS* in 1942 at the British Institute and held cultural events at the British embassy.[288] A photograph from the *FAS*'s first exhibition includes the group from the directorate, Druby, Shukri, Atta Sabri, Jewad Selim, and Hanna [Figure 1.29]. The group also included members of the older generation of artists, al-Rassam and Mohammed Selim, and an array of other cultural actors, including film directors, poets, and architects.[289]

Druby was a founding member of the *FAS*, and the group met first in his privately-run free studio. Druby's free studio primarily provided a space for painting nude models and was open to the public in Baghdad. It also became a discursive meeting place for cultural actors.[290] Druby's choice to found his own free studio was not entirely philanthropic. The early days of the *FAS* was also marked by competition, and Druby's decision to open his own studio may have been related to this competitive atmosphere. Al Said noted that Druby, Faiq Hassan, and Shukri were competing for leadership of the Iraqi art movement in the early 1940s. Faiq Hassan won the only art teaching position at the Institute of Fine Arts, which may have forced Druby to open his studio privately.[291] A 1942 cartoon of the *FAS* by Su'ad Selim emphasizes these rivalries [Figure 1.30]. In the drawing, Druby and Jewad Selim struggle over a sculpture of a fawn. While Jewad Selim innocently reaches for more plaster for the sculpture, the sculpture itself punches Druby and shoots daggers at him from his eyes. The drawing also captures the personalities of Druby and Jewad Selim that would be reiterated in the Iraqi discourse for the next two decades – Druby smiles brightly, looking directly at the viewer, enforcing his straightforward approach to art, whereas Jewad Selim looks contemplatively at his sculpture, emphasizing his intellectual approach. Druby's competitive attitude may also explain the difference

---

[286] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 99-100.
[287] *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (12 February 1943): 3.
[288] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 99-100.
[289] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 94.
[290] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 95-96.
[291] Ibid.

between his and Atta Sabri's painting for the Directorate General of Antiquities in 1940 [Figure 1.22]. While Atta Sabri created a simple linear composition of three figures, Druby's composition is crowded and dynamic, packed with references to various artistic traditions.

There is little information on the *FAS*'s first exhibition held in 1942, besides a few preserved photographs. One photograph shows a combination of portraits, landscapes, and still lives hung in a condensed manner with portrait busts scattered around the room, and what appears to be an abstract marble sculpture in the righthand corner [Figure 1.31]. The photograph hints at nascent divergences in form and subject matter among Iraqi artists, which can roughly be divided into three groups: abstraction, representations of modernity based on a Euro-American academic form, and representations of traditional Iraq also based on a Euro-American academic form. Jewad Selim was one of the few artists who had begun experimenting with modern abstracted forms during this period, and the abstract sculpture in the photograph was likely made by him. His painting of prostitutes *Ladies in Waiting* (1942 – 1943) expresses the figures and the city of Baghdad as blocks of solid colours and lines on a flattened picture plane [Figure 1.32]. While no paintings by Shukri survive from this period, a portrait of him painting an abstract work by Druby from the early 1940s and his own testimony in 1945 that he was working in a postimpressionism inspired by Sumerian sculpture suggest that he was experimenting with abstraction [Figure 1.33].[292] In contrast, Druby's portrait of Shukri adhered to Euro-American academic painting both in form and subject matter. Light, shadow, and vanishing point perspective give form to an artist's studio.

Because the Institute of Fine Arts, Druby's free studio, and the *FAS* were all new organizations, public institutionalised art production and education in an academic method were as much novel concepts as abstraction in the context of 1940s Iraq.[293] An article from a Baghdad newspaper, published in September 1942, reiterates the potential of art structures, such as the *FAS* to bring modernity to society.[294] Druby's art during this

---

[292] Akram Shukri, 'Sumerian Sculpture,' *Sumer* 1 (1945): 131-136.
[293] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 95-96.
[294] Mohammed Jan Mudhaffar, 'Art: A Prerequisite for Renaissance,' *Al-Saba* 7/6 (25 September 1942), quoted in Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 181.

period championed Euro-American academic painting. Druby's portrait of Shukri and his 1940 painting *Mother Abaya*, which depicts a model wearing a traditional Iraqi abaya surrounded by the easels and canvases of an artist's studio, indicate his interest in the setting of academic art production as well as in its form [Figure 1.34]. Druby's version of a prostitute painting, *Rosita* (1941), differs significantly from Jewad Selim's painting of the same subject in its use of an academic representational form to show a woman in mid-dance [Figure 1.35].[295] The shallow picture plane emphasizes the three-dimensionality of the female form, as was typical of model studies in the Accademia in Rome, and the dancer stands with her knee out in a contrapposto pose common in classical Greek and Roman sculpture [Figure 1.13].

The fact that Druby's largest group of surviving paintings during this period consists of academic representational portraits of the Baghdad young urban elite suggests that his use of the academic form was not just related to its novelty but also to the urban elite's patronage and taste. He painted portraits of figures from his cultural milieu and their children, such as actor and filmmaker Akram Gibran and the children of his secondary school art teacher Shawkat al-Khafaf [Figures 1.36 and 1.37].[296] In these portraits, men wear suits and women wear modern Euro-American dresses, marking them as members of the young urban elite.[297] Druby emphasized his academic approach to portraiture and how it was inspired by his time at the Accademia in Rome in a later interview. He claimed that: 'The ear must be asserted in every portrait by colour and linear perspective.'[298] Indeed, in his portrait of Akram Gibran, Druby's use of blended colours, raking light from the upper left, and vanishing point perspective annunciate the figure's ears. Druby adopted different compositions for portraits of men and women during this period. Men, as in his portrait of Akram Gibran, were placed at the front of the picture plane, showing the upper part of the body, and they were presented facing the viewer. Female figures,

---

[295] Professional dancers were largely associated with prostitution during this period in Baghdad: Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 194.

[296] Druby identifies the painting as 'The Children of Shawkat al-Rassam.' According to art historian Shawkat al-Rubaie, this was the nickname for Shawkat al-Khafaf. Shawkat al-Rubai, *Introduction to the Contemporary Art in Arab Lands*, part 2 (Author House, 2014), ebook.

[297] Eppel, 'The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the growth of nationalism and pan-arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,' 231.

[298] Al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 16.

as in the portrait of al-Khafaf's daughters, were set back in the picture plane, so that their whole bodies were visible. The interior of female portraits was usually marked with domestic attributes, such as the large vase in the left background of the al-Khafaf portrait.

Druby's promotion of nude painting through his free studio further links his academic representational style to the modernizing projects of the young urban elites. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Euro-American context, academic nude painting was promoted because of its ability to civilize, modernize, and elevate in social status by separating sexual desire from appreciation of art.[299] The popularity of the female nude was specifically linked to the rise of the bourgeois class in Europe.[300] In order for these paintings of nudes to be effective agents of modernity for this class, they needed to proscribe to a set of requirements, namely, that the figure was representational but also idealized, often in reference to Greco-Roman sculpture, and that the figure was placed within a setting, either historical or mythical, dislocated from the contemporary context.[301] The Accademia in Rome was still encouraging painting female nudes when Druby studied there, but many Euro-American artists had long since questioned the concept of idealized nudes bringing taste and modernity to society.[302]

However, the idea that the academic female nude could modernize and civilize society had a particular resonance in the context of urban elite society in 1940s Baghdad, which was related to negotiations with Orientalist discourse. Within Euro-American nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Orientalist discourse, the Middle Eastern male was conceived of as lascivious and uncivilized, and therefore, unable to participate in the modernizing viewing of female nudes.[303] As Middle Eastern writers looked to Orientalist histories in the early twentieth century to compile their own narratives, they were confronted by and

---

[299] Bart Vandenabeele, "On the Notion of 'Disinterestedness': Kant, Lyotard, and Schopenhauer," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:4 (October, 2001): 709; Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 144; Pam Meecham and Julie Sheldon, 'The Nude in Modernity and Postmodernity,' *Modern Art: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005), 114.
[300] Meecham and Sheldon, 'The Nude in Modernity and Postmodernity,' 114.
[301] Goldstein, 'Towards a Definition of Academic Art,' 103.
[302] Meecham and Sheldon, 'The Nude in Modernity and Postmodernity,' 114.
[303] Joseph A. Boone, 'The Hypervirile Male Other,' in *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2014), 90-95; Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 55.

negotiated with the framing of the Middle Eastern man as sexual deviant.[304] Modernization projects in the Middle East were conceived of partly as overcoming the lascivious gaze.[305] As Scheid, Radwan, and others have illustrated, in mandate-era Lebanon (1920 – 1940) and early-twentieth-century Egypt, painting the nude based on the Euro-American academic tradition developed largely as a part of these modernization efforts, and therefore, was linked to negotiating the Euro-American stereotype of the lascivious Arab.[306] In Lebanon, gawking pre-modern Arab men were sometimes included in mid-twentieth-century paintings of nudes to distinguish between the civilized modern man and his historical predecessor. Several paintings reconstruct a moment from pre-Islamic poetry in which the famous poet Imru al-Qais spies on nude women bathing and steals their clothing [Figure 1.38]. [307] Not only does the story itself underline the lascivious, uncontrolled, and immoral desire of the pre-modern Arab man, but also the modern paintings present al-Qais in this light. As Scheid describes it, in the case of Omar Onsi's (1901 – 1969) painting from 1937: 'it is clear that Qais is not in a proper position for viewing nudity.'[308]

Iraqi writer Ayyub's novel *The Hand, the Land and the Water* (1948), discussed earlier in this chapter, demonstrates that a similar differentiation between the young urban elite and traditional Middle Eastern lifestyles was occurring in the production of nudes in 1940s Baghdad. As with al-Qais in Onsi's painting, the peasant Zabbala's uninitiated and lascivious gaze on a painting of a nude woman in Ayyub's story reinforces the taste and modernity of the young lawyer's understanding gaze. At the same time, Zabbala's presence in the living room of a young urban elite also highlights a discomforting proximity between traditional Iraqi life and Baghdad urban modernity. A photograph of Druby's free studio reveals a setting that resembles his own depictions of life-drawing class at the Accademia in Rome. Men sit in a circular formation wearing suits with easels around a model placed on a raised platform [Figures 1.39 and 1.10]. However, there is one major

---

[304] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 55.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Scheid, 'Necessary Nudes,' and Radwan, 'Ideal Nudes,' in *Art, Awakening, and Modernity in the Middle East*, 23 and 69-73.
[307] Scheid, 'Necessary Nudes,' 219.
[308] Ibid.

difference – the model is male not female, because female models were not permitted in public spaces in Baghdad.[309] The fact that artists almost exclusively painted and exhibited female nudes during this period masks the reality of the social conditions of art production. These nudes were idealizations, like the Euro-American academic nude, but idealized in a way particular to the social conditions of the Baghdad context. As in Ayyub's story, the idealized female nude was as a prop in creating the urban elite context – as with clothes and housing, the female nude brought young urban elites closer to a Euro-American modernity. This is particularly evident in a group of Iraqi paintings of nudes which quote late-nineteenth-century Euro-American painting. For example, Faraj Abbu (1921 – 1984) painted a nude in a reclining position with a bouquet of flowers at her feet and a curtain behind her head in a nearly identical composition to Edouard Manet's (1832 – 1883) *Olympia* (1863) [Figure 1.40]. [310]

However, the choice to paint female nudes also had political implications. Fascist governments in Germany and Italy were the main supporters of academic female nude painting in Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s, and these were places where Druby and other Iraqi artists had recently studied.[311] As historians Wien and Schlaepfer have illustrated, the extent of fascism's hold over politics and society in 1940s Baghdad is masked by left-leaning rhetoric, which attempted to slander politicians by labelling them as fascist.[312] Rather than adopting fascist doctrine wholeheartedly from Europe, Iraqi politicians selected ideologies that were useful to Iraqi nation-building.[313] The promotion of European fascist policies was particularly targeted at the same young urban elite who were patronizing modern art, because fascism's organization of the youth was seen as an effective tool to modernization in Iraq.[314]

---

[309] al-Bahloly, 'Msalkha, or the Anti-Nude,' in *Art, Awakening, and Modernity in the Middle East*, 129-132.
[310] Paul Jamot, 'Manet and the Olympia,' *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 50: 286 (January 1927), 28.
[311] Michael H. Kater, *Culture in Nazi Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), ebook.
[312] Schlaepfer, *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad*, 163; Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 56-68.
[313] Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism,* 56-68.
[314] Orit Bashkin, *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 106.

Within this Iraqi political discourse, women were portrayed as mothers of the nation. Politicians argued that the goal of educating women was to make her a good mother so she could '[nourish] her baby with love of the nation and Arabism.'[315] Women joined the fascist-leaning youth movement *al-Futuwwa* in order to have healthy bodies for reproduction.[316] Historian Victoria de Grazia summarizes the image of the mother figure in European fascist discourse as 'rural,' 'robust,' and 'prolific':

> Fascist propaganda manufactured two female images. One was the *donna-crisi*: she was cosmopolitan, urbane, skinny, hysterical, decadent, and sterile. The other was the *donna-madre*: she was national, rural, floridly robust, tranquil, and prolific.[317]

In an academic representational painting by Faiq Hassan from the 1940s, a group of young healthy nude women swim in a mountain lake, looking confidently out at the viewer. The woman in the righthand corner holds a small child [Figure 1.41]. Faiq Hassan's painting includes all of the attributes of the *donna-madre*: the women are placed in a rural setting, are young and healthy, and produce children.[318]

Returning to Druby and Jewad Selim's contemporary paintings of prostitutes, *Rosita* and *Ladies in Waiting*, in light of this political negotiation of the nude female figure, their approaches indicate not only a formal but also a political deviance [Figures 1.32 and 1.35]. Prostitution was a cause-célèbre for Iraqi left-leaning intellectuals during this period, because they saw it as a sign of the decadence of modern Baghdad society and its mistreatment of women.[319] In contemporary poetry and literature written by these intellectuals, the prostitute was a symbol of the dangers of modernity imposed by the colonial presence of the British and adopted by the young urban elite.[320] The prostitute was depicted as degenerate, unidealized, and sexually disgusting – the exact opposite of women in academic nude painting.[321] The Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani (1923 – 1998) wrote

---

[315] Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 102.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy 1922-1945* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992), 73.
[318] John Alexander Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism, and Conservation, 1900-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 62-64; de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*.
[319] Haytham Bahoora, 'The Figure of the Prostitute, *Tajdid*, and Masculinity in Anticolonial Literature of Iraq,' *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 11:1 (March, 2015): 42-62.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 275-340.

on prostitutes in a 1942 collection of poetry, which gained widespread popularity among young Arab intellectuals during the period: 'I am repulsed by your sagging breast,/ And want to throw up (at the sight) of your altered nipples.'[322] If nudes civilized the modern Middle Eastern man, prostitutes debased him, causing him to 'throw up.' Jewad Selim was part of this left-leaning milieu and his painting *Ladies in Waiting* conforms with its discourse on prostitution.[323] Three semi-dressed women sit in a city alley, as opposed to the countryside, and they are clothed, rather than nude. Jewad Selim's harsh colours and thick lines deconstruct the female form, perverting it from academic idealized beauty. He even depicted the standing redhead's right breast as a pink dot within a grey circle reminiscent of Qabbani's 'altered nipples.' Instead of allowing the male urban elite viewer unobstructed viewing of the scene, as in Faiq Hassan's painting of nudes, Jewad Selim introduced a male figure in the lower-left-hand corner of the painting, who looks out at the viewer and reminds him of his social position in relation to prostitutes.

Druby's depiction of a prostitute takes an antithetical approach – he uses an academic representational style to idealize the female figure, with her leg half-bent in a contrapposto of classical sculpture. Rather than sitting waiting for clients, she is shown in the middle of her performance, gleefully smiling at the audience. Druby presents her at the foreground of the painting for the full pleasure of his viewers. Dancing was a common part of prostitution in 1940s Baghdad and was often framed as a way to beguile morally upright men in contemporary left-leaning literature.[324] However, there is nothing sinister in Druby's depiction of Rosita. When Druby completed the painting in 1941, he had recently returned from Italy, where dancing was considered within the fascist discourse as a way to bring a spirit of national unity to women.[325] Druby may have seen the popular German propaganda film *Wir tanzen um die Welt* (1940) while in Rome, in which a troupe of young women dance in a similar pose to Rosita and also wear short skirts [Figure 1.42]. Female

---

[322] Nizar Qabbani, 'Ila 'Ajuz,' c. 1942; Quoted in Z. Gabay, 'Nizar Qabbani, the Poet and his Poetry,' *Middle Eastern Studies* 9: 2 (May, 1973): 213.

[323] Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 152-153; Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 172.

[324] Bashkin, The Other Iraq, 194.

[325] Terri J. Gordon, 'Fascism and the Female Form: Performance Art and the Third Reich,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11:1/2 (Jan. – Apr., 2002): 164-200; Gigliola Gori, *Italian Fascism and the Female Body: Sport, Submissive Women and Strong Mothers* (London: Routledge, 2012).

dance performance in fascist Europe was specifically a youth movement wrapped up in notions of national progress. A refrain from the film *Wir tanzen* goes: 'Dance with us, be young/ sing with us, be young…/Dance with us, victor.'[326] The urban elite of Baghdad were also young and looking for national progress.

The link between dancing and the progress of the Baghdad urban elite was further emphasized by Druby in a portrait of a ballerina (1945) [Figure 1.43]. In contrast to *Rosita*, Druby set the ballerina back from the picture plane and portrayed her in a state of rest. The compositional similarity to his other female portraits suggests that the ballerina was part of the urban elite and not a professional dancer. Despite the compositional differences, Druby's two paintings of dancers both glorify dance as a modern pursuit across social classes. Druby's academic representational practice in the early 1940s did not mark him as a fascist, but rather, suggested his allegiance to conservative nationalism and the idealized projects of the young urban elite.

A review of the 1942 *FAS* group exhibition by a Polish journalist further distinguishes Druby's academic representational paintings of modern life and Jewad Selim's abstracted forms from a third group of artworks prevalent during this period. The journalist noted that most of the paintings in the exhibition 'revelled in nativeness…[with] thoughtful and suffering faces of modest people and children.' The journalist was 'stunned' by the 'great' paintings by Druby, *Rosita* and *The Samovar*, and by Jewad Selim's self-portrait [Figures 1.27 and 1.35].[327] Besides the reviewer's own aesthetic preferences, his commentary hints at a large group of artworks focusing on traditional Iraqi life of the rural peasantry. A list of artworks exhibited at the new National Gallery in Baghdad in 1943 confirms this tendency. Paintings included subjects such as portraits of villagers in the northern Kurdish regions or Yazidi village festivals. Atta Sabri exhibited a painting titled *Yezidis at a Spring Festival* and Faiq Hassan exhibited a portrait of a Kurdish man from the village of Rawanduz.[328] A surviving portrait by Faiq Hassan of a rural man emphasizes his distinctive Kurdish headgear and belt as well as his gun, distinguishing him from the suit

---

[326] Gordon, 'Fascism and the Female Form,' 179.

[327] 'Culture in Baghdad,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (5 December 1942).

[328] Ghanima, *Guide to the National Gallery of Pictures*.

wearing bear-headed urban men depicted in Druby's portraits [Figures 1.36 and 1.44]. In a sketch of a rural environment with a central stream and palm trees, Atta Sabri highlighted Iraqi traditional rural mudbrick architecture in the upper left of the composition [Figure 1.45].

These paintings were partially a result of artists' expeditions to the northern part of the country, beginning in the 1930s, initiated by artists Jewad Selim and Hanna.[329] In the early 1940s, Faiq Hassan, as the painting teacher at the Institute of Fine Arts, led art expeditions of friends and students outside of Baghdad. These expeditions were a part of technical art instruction. Jewad Selim and Hanna began going to the countryside with their teacher al-Rassam to learn about painting techniques outdoors.[330] Al Said noted that Faiq Hassan began instructing outdoors when he returned from Paris, and it is likely that he was taught to paint outside at the academy in Paris in order to study light and colour.[331] Both Faiq Hassan and Atta Sabri's paintings exhibit a Euro-American academic approach to light and colour.

Yet, the resulting works suggest an aspect of social engagement in the paintings' content beyond merely formal concerns. As with prostitutes, the Iraqi peasantry became a cause-célèbre for the left-leaning intelligentsia.[332] This coincided with the Ahali group, founded in the 1930s to promote social reform and democracy, and the communist party (ICP) framing themselves as representatives of the oppressed peasants and rural tribes.[333] Decreased censorship in the early 1940s saw the revival of the ICP and a more prevalent voice of resistance from the leftist intelligentsia to the government and British presence.[334] In this resistant discourse, the peasants and tribes' traditional way of life provided a national identity opposed to the modern identity of the urban elite linked to British rule.[335] At the same time, nationalists also became interested in rural populations because of

---

[329] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 91 and 95.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, vol. 1, 91 and 95; Anthea Callen, *The Work of Art: Plein-Air Painting and Artistic Identity in Nineteenth-century France* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015).
[332] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 227-228.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 107-108.
[335] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 227-228.

their distinctive cultural attributes separate from Euro-American modernity.[336] The insistence in both Faiq Hassan and Atta Sabri's paintings on the unique aspects of rural Iraqi costume and architecture coincides with this leftist and nationalist discourse of a national identity based traditional rural lifestyles and distinct from Euro-American influence. The subjects of both their paintings, the Kurds and Yazidis, were ethnic minorities with fraught relationships with the state.[337] However, as minorities they had easily identifiable local attributes.

The issue of labour is also prevalent in these rural paintings. In Atta Sabri's sketch, peasants dig and scavenge in the riverbed in the foreground of the painting. In a contemporary painting by Shukri, a smiling woman wearing a traditional headscarf prominently displays her labour – a spool of thread created from a ball of cotton at her feet [Figure 1.46]. The labour movement was reinvigorated by the ICP in the early 1940s in tandem with outcry over the mistreatment of peasants who were forced to work under harsh conditions for an increasingly small group of wealthy landowners.[338] Both Atta Sabri's and Shukri's paintings present an idyllic image of peasant labour, with no suggestion of overlords or suffering. At the same time, they present peasant labour as independent from landlords.

The catalogue of the 1943 exhibition at the National Gallery presents another agent in the proliferation of rural peasant images among Iraqi artists in the early 1940s – foreign artists. The exhibition was sponsored by the Directorate General of Antiquities, and the new permanent painting gallery was attached to the directorate's Costume Museum.[339] The exhibiting Iraqi artists had all worked for the directorate: Druby, Hanna, Faiq Hassan, Atta Sabri, and Shukri. However, besides one painting of Babylon by Faiq Hassan, the exhibited works did not consist of historical paintings made for the directorate. Instead, the majority of artworks addressed rural peasant themes. World War II had caused an influx of foreign soldiers who had trained as artists, mostly from Great Britain and Poland,

---

[336] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 107-108.
[337] Tripp, A History of Iraq, 111.
[338] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 107-108; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 295-297.
[339] Ghanima, *Guide to the National Gallery of Pictures*.

and they made up about half the exhibitors in the 1943 National Gallery exhibition.[340] Archaeology also brought foreign artists, such as Austrian Wilhelm Koenig, who worked for the Directorate General of Antiquities at the National Museum in Baghdad from 1931 to 1939.[341]

In depicting Iraq, these foreign artists were exclusively interested in a pre-modern traditional view. Titles of works by foreign artists in the 1943 exhibition included *Palm Trees*, *The Nargileh*, and *Miradiya Mosque*. Koenig began his memoirs on his time in Iraq, published in 1940, with a watercolour titled *Baghdad Suburb*, which he probably also exhibited at the 1943 exhibition [Figure 1.47].[342] The painting centres on a narrow alleyway winding through a series of small mudbrick buildings, similar to the mudbrick structures in Atta Sabri's watercolour, interspersed with palm trees. Koenig's representation of Baghdad makes no references to the equally prevalent building of modern suburbs for the young urban elite, whom Druby captured in his contemporary portraits.[343] Foreign artists, instead, produced portraits of members of rural tribes and peasants. The British soldier-artist Edward Bawden (1903 – 1989), who also exhibited in the new National Gallery, addressed the same subject as appears in one of Faiq Hassan's paintings in the exhibition, a Kurdish man from Ruwanduz [Figure 1.48].[344] As in Faiq Hassan's painting, Bawden's watercolour includes the traditional headgear and belt worn by Kurdish men in Northern Iraq.

The Polish soldier-artists were the most extensive group of foreign artists listed in the 1943 exhibition catalogue. From 1942 to 1943, a Polish army was stationed in Baghdad on their way to the Italian front. Most of them had been detained in Soviet prison camps and had made the arduous journey, led by General Wladyslaw Anders, across Russia

---

340 Ashley Jackson, *Persian Gulf Command: A History of the Second World War in Iran and Iraq* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); Jan Wiktor Sienkiewicz, 'The Artists of General Wladyslaw Anders,' Towarzystwo Projektów Edukacyjnych, last modified May 2018, http://artysciandersa.pl; Mikolaj Nowak Rogozinski, 'The War Diary of Jozef Czapski,' *Konteksty* 3 (2018): 225-232.
341 Wilhelm Koenig, *Neun Jahre Irak* (Munich: Bruenn, 1940).
342 Ibid.
343 Schlaepfer, *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad*, 43-45; Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 162-163.
344 Alan Neame, 'Modern Iraqi Art,' in *The Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture* (Baghdad: The Trading and Printing Co., 1956), 6.

97

and Central Asia down into Iran and finally to Iraq.[345] The Polish artists made a brief year-long appearance in Baghdad, but they had a lasting impact on Iraqi art production. Four Polish artists are listed in the 1943 catalogue: Jozef Jarema (1900 – 1974), Zygmunt Turkiewicz (1912 – 1973), Edward Matuszczak (1906 – 1984), and Stanislaw Westwalewicz (1906 – 1997). Jozef Czapski (1896 – 1993), Jerzy Mlodnicki, and Henryk Siedlanowski (1906 – 1979) were also stationed in Baghdad.[346] As mentioned earlier, the British government supported the arts by providing venues for cultural discourse, but of all the foreign artists based in Iraq during World War II, the Polish artists engaged most directly with Iraqi artists in the formal aspects of art-making. In January 1943, Polish artists and journalists were invited by Iraqi artists to tea at the *FAS*.[347] Czapski, who had trained in Paris and was a well-known artist by the time he was stationed in Baghdad, gave a lecture on 'Contemporary Painting and its Origins' in February 1943.[348] Jewad Selim wrote in 1943 that Polish painters had become close friends and teachers.[349]

As with the other foreign artists based in Baghdad during World War II, Polish painters mostly chose subjects that highlighted traditional aspects of Iraq that differentiated it from the European context. Their largest exhibition in Baghdad took place at the British Institute in February 1943.[350] Several of the paintings exhibited were purchased by Iraqi officials and presumably stayed on display in Baghdad after the army left.[351] Matuszczak's portrait of Faiq Hassan's mother not only indicates his close relationship with Iraqi artists but also his interest in the traditional abaya worn by Iraqi women [Figure 1.49]. In Westwalewicz's painting of the Omar Mosque in Baghdad, the viewer is positioned at street level, looking up at the mosque, and all of the figures crowding the street wear traditional Iraqi clothing, including a prominent male figure in the bottom righthand corner wearing a kufiya headscarf [Figure 1.50].

---

[345] Sienkiewicz, 'The Artists of General Wladyslaw Anders,' 8-9.
[346] 'The Painting Concert,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (23 February 1943): 3; 'Paintings Purchased at the Polish exhibition,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (24 February 1943): 3.
[347] 'Iraqi Artists Take Up with Poles,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (28 January 1943).
[348] 'Exhibition of Polish Art,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (12 February 1943): 3.
[349] Quoted in al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 243.
[350] 'Polish Exhibition,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (1 January 1943): 3; 'Exhibition of Polish Painting,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (23 January 1943): 3
[351] 'Paintings Purchased at the Polish exhibition,' *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie*.

Yet, the impact of the Polish artists, which Iraqi artists would continually reference, was not content but form. Iraqi sources claimed that the Polish artists had introduced the styles of 'impressionism' or 'postimpressionism' to Iraqi artists. [352] A letter from Jewad Selim at the time claimed that due to the Polish artists: 'I've started to know now who the impressionists and the postimpressionists are; I know the value of the modern French school. I know what colour is. I know colour, and how to use colour.'[353] Most of the Polish artists were part of a group called the *Paris Committee* (later the *Kapists*), formed in the 1920s, which based its philosophy of painting on colour. Their ideas on colour were derived from the French postimpressionists. As one historian recently summarized it: 'Cézanne was their god, Bonnard their reigning monarch.'[354] They used nature and painting outdoors for inspiration, like the Iraqi painters, but as with the French postimpressionists, they rejected the colour theory taught at the European art academies, such as the Accademia in Rome, which insisted that a great painting reproduced scientifically the colours observed in nature.[355] Rather than blending colours as advocated by European academies, these Polish artists applied them in thick monochrome patches. For example, Westwalewicz created a sense of dazzling light in his painting of the Omar Mosque through the use of multicoloured dots, which did not correspond to the white colour of the actual architecture. Matuszczak's *Playing trik-trak* (1941) composes figures in geometric patterns of garish colours similar to Jewad Selim's technique in *Ladies in Waiting* [Figure 1.51]. In the catalogue of their 1943 exhibition, the Polish artists vehemently opposed the academic style used at the time by Druby, calling it 'artistic ignorance,' 'lack of culture,' 'pretentious,' and 'banal.'[356]

---

[352] S. A. Khulusi, 'Modern Muslim Painters of Iraq,' *The Islamic Review* (October 1949): 47; Jamil Hammoudi, 'l'Art en Iraq,' *Beaux-Arts* (28 April 1950); Khaldun Husry, 'The Wandering: a study of modern Iraqi painting,' *Middle East Forum* 33:4 (April 1958): 24; 'The Impressionist Group in Iraq,' *Baghdad Observer*, 1970s; Selim, *Iraq Contemporary Art*, 59-60; Lenssen, *The Shape of Support*, 33-34.
[353] Quoted in al-Bahloly, al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 243.
[354] Eric Karpeles, *Almost Nothing: The 20th-Century Art and Life of Jozef Czapski* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2018), 47.
[355] Karpeles, *Almost Nothing*, 47-48; Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 'Cezanne and Delacroix's Posthumous Reputation,' *The Art Bulletin* 87:1 (Mar, 2005): 111-129; Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des Arts du Dessin: Peinture* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1886), 171.
[356] *Exhibition of Paintings by Polish Soldier-Artists* (Baghdad, 1943), 6.

Druby's surviving paintings from this period do not exhibit a strong agency from Polish or foreign artists in their subjects or techniques. When Druby used traditional Iraqi material, he mostly inserted it into a modern urban context. For example, in *Mother Abaya* (1940), a woman dressed in a traditional Iraqi abaya stands among easels and canvases indicating the setting of the artists' studio [Figure 1.35]. Similarly, *The Samovar* depicts a woman in contemporary dress using traditional objects [Figure 1.27]. In the 1943 exhibition at the National Gallery, Druby exhibited works in modern contexts such as *The Samovar* and a still life. He did exhibit one painting of a traditional street in Baghdad, where abaya-clad women and a kufiya-wearing man stand in on a dirt path next to mudbrick houses [Figure 1.52].[357] However, the painting uses the blended scientific colour techniques of the European academy. One of Druby's artworks from this period may indicate the technical impact of the Polish artists on his use of colour. In his depiction of the canals in the southern Iraqi city of Basra, light is enunciated through streaks of colour [Figure 1.53]. For example, the sky is no longer a blended blue, but patches of blues and purples, and the shadow on the buildings in the back left of the composition is created through a combination of greens and blues.

As a member of the *FAS* and as an artist singled out as one of the most promising by the Polish community, Druby would certainly have had close contact with the Polish artists. Druby would also go on to found a group called *The Impressionists* in 1952 and would begin painting in deconstructed patches of colour in the mid-1950s [Figure 0.5]. However, he would have been aware of these painting techniques before the arrival of the Polish artists from his time in Italy and from the work of his fellow Iraqi artists in the early 1940s. Instead, the impact of the Polish artists on Druby appears to have been more intellectual.[358] Firstly, as conveyed in their 1943 exhibition catalogue, they promoted an evolutionary definition of modern art mirroring Druby's own definition. They claimed that modern art grew out of classical art and that postimpressionism developed into cubism.[359] In the 1950s, the concept of impressionism evolving to cubism would be central to Druby's

---

[357] Ghanima, *Guide to the National Gallery of Pictures*.

[358] Al-Bahloly has recently argued the same in the case of Jewad Selim: al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 263.

[359] *Exhibition of Paintings by Polish Soldier-Artists* (Baghdad, 1943), 5-6.

practice. Secondly, the Polish artists promoted the connection between nationalism and the modern movements of impressionism and postimpressionism. In their catalogue, they wrote: 'It is a display…which is fighting unceasingly for its right to an independent existence and the free development of its own cultural genius.' They also encourage the Iraqi painters to give their countrymen 'through the modern world-vision the new sensation of Reality [*sic*].'[360]

The Polish sources also suggest that the Polish artists imparted a nationalistic vision of a local postimpressionism in Iraq, by arguing that the specificity of the Iraqi landscape inspired their modern art. In his description of the Iraqi landscape published in his 1949 memoirs, Czapski focused on the way the brightness of the light allowed him to see in a way not possible in the 'built-up landscape' of Europe because of the unique 'logic' of the shadows that shift the colours in Iraq.

> I remember the camps in the desert: the pure peacock blue of the sky, the subtle geometry of the white tents. As evening approached, in the dry air this bare landscape would be fully saturated with light the way Corot painted it; it had a captivating logic of transparent shadows, a logic that doesn't jump out at us in a rich, tree-filled, or built-up landscape. Tawny plains, now golden, now reddish, all the way to the horizon, as if drawn by a child, and sometimes, as outside Kirkuk, the subtle contours of rounded, pink, undulating hills, also as bare as a moonscape.[361]

A sketch from his Baghdad diaries shows the hills outside Kirkuk in a bright pink [Figure 1.54]. The Iraqi climate inspired the Polish artists for the same reasons that they choose to paint traditional Iraqi subjects – it diverged from European landscape and light. Czapski even went as far as to compare Iraq with an otherworldly 'moonscape.' When Iraqi artists painted traditional rural subjects during the same period, most used an academic representational style imported from their time at European academies. By painting traditional Iraqi subjects in an impressionism and postimpressionism that was directly grounded in the Iraqi landscape, the Polish artists showed the Iraqis a way to also situate their technique with the local context.

---

[360] Ibid.

[361] Jozef Czapski, *Inhuman Land: Searching For the Truth in Soviet Russia 1941-1942*, trans. Antonia Lloyd-Jones (New York: New York Review of Books, 2018), 161.

By 1947, Iraqi critics claimed that the stylistic transition to what they called 'impressionism' among many Iraqi artists was due to the impact of Polish artists. At the same time, they argued that this impact was 'unhealthy' because the colour theory of impressionists and postimpressionists was not grounded in the realities of the Iraqi climate.[362] In 1958, Khaldun Husry, an Iraqi writer and critic, criticized the Polish artists' imposition of impressionism in Iraq because:

> Impressionism as a way of looking at, and a method of painting nature, is very unsuitable to Iraq. The impressionists had set themselves to capture the most transitory appearances of nature. They did this by recording the effect of the play of light and shadows upon form…With the exception of occasional duststorms and some rain in winter, no atmospheric variation occurs in our country. The sky is almost always clear, grey-blue, cloudless…We do not have…the light of the sun that can be orange, or lemon, or red, or white, and all the light-effects and shadows it produces on mountain slopes, in valleys, through the branches of different trees.[363]

Druby phrased the argument slightly differently in a 1970s interview, claiming that the Polish artists' obsession with using the bright sunlight in Iraq to make their paintings was not informed by close observation of the society and landscape around them but by their European training, because contemporary Iraqi artists were painting 'earthy' dark paintings.[364] Considering that the Polish sources claim the exact opposite – that they did draw inspiration for their form of modern art from the Iraqi climate – the argument was more likely related to cultural developments in the late 1940s.

Al Said contended that Druby was competing with the Polish artists and so did not want to acknowledge their influence.[365] While this may be true, the emergence of negative attitudes to the Polish artists in 1947 coincided with a larger anticolonial discourse occurring during that time. In the same month that Husry wrote his first article on the Polish artists, Iraq was in economic decline and there were food shortages in Baghdad. In the same moment, the Iraqi government had signed a secret Portsmouth Treaty with Great Britain, which prolonged British influence in the country until 1973, despite large-

---

[362] Khaldun Husry, 'National Art Progress,' *The Iraq Times*, 25 December 1947; quoted in Khulusi, 'Modern Muslim Painters of Iraq,' 46.

[363] Husry, 'The Wandering,' 24.

[364] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 19.

[365] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 8.

scale anti-British sentiment. Pan-Arab and anti-British sentiment was further fuelled by the United Nations decision to create an independent Jewish state in Palestine and the subsequent Arab war on Jewish targets beginning in December 1947.[366] Unrest in Baghdad erupted in violence and protest in 1948 in what became known as the *Wathba*.[367] The problem with the Poles continuously cited in the sources was that they were still European and so by using their form of postimpressionism in order to break free from the European academic training, Iraqi artists continued to employ European methodologies. The Poles were a convenient and timely foil on which to build a national narrative of modern art based on struggle and distancing from Euro-American influence. The cultural discourse that 'starting afresh, [Iraqi artists] began to adopt their own style as Iraqis, free of both Turkish and European influences,' would gain momentum in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[368] How Druby reconciled this discourse with his own convictions of an evolutionary modern art based on Euro-American technical methodologies would shape the trajectory of his practice in the following decade.

London and First International Exhibitions (1946 – 1950)

As anti-British tensions were mounting in Baghdad, Druby left to pursue a diploma in art and design at Goldsmith's College in London.[369] Druby's studies in Rome had been interrupted by World War II and at the conclusion of the war, the Iraqi government decided to sponsor Druby, Atta Sabri, and Jewad Selim to return to Europe to finish their studies.[370] So at the age of thirty two and still a bachelor, Druby left for London via Egypt by ship.[371] Goldsmiths' student archives do not survive from this period and there is very little other archival evidence of Druby's time in London. Druby's sketch of the now destroyed Imperial Hotel in London from 1946 confirms later records that he began his studies in that year [Figure 1.55].

---

[366] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 120-127.
[367] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 114.
[368] Khulusi, 'Modern Muslim Painters of Iraq,' 46.
[369] Selim, *Iraqi Contemporary Art*, 151; Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 12; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 116-117.
[370] Al Said, *Hafidh Druby*, 12.
[371] Evidence that he travelled via Egypt comes from a sketch he made at the town of Port Said in 1946.

Arts education in post-war Britain was marked by 'cultural isolationism and conservativism.'[372] Druby continued to use an academic representational form in his paintings. In his preparatory sketches, such as the one of Lee Station in London, Druby utilized lines to demarcate vanishing point perspective [Figure 1.56]. He also maintained a focus on urban elite subjects specific to London, ignoring any signs of traditional Iraqi life. His only surviving finished landscape uses a thick impasto and a gradated blending of colours to depict a suburban back garden [Figure 1.57]. For his largest oil painting from his time in London, he chose a pub scene [Figure 1.58]. The pervasive brown tones are reminiscent of Druby's comment that Iraqi artists in the early 1940s were painting in earthy dark colours. Several elements suggest that the painting was an illustration of his mastery of the academic style intended for examinations at Goldsmiths. The hanging yellow lamps in the bar provide a lighting that creates contrast of light and shadow. The bar slants at an angle across the composition to indicate vanishing point perspective. The table at the front of the composition prominently displays beer mugs, plates and a knife to form a still life within the painting. A review from the same year would note that Druby was particularly fond of still lives.[373]

In Druby's painting, the men and women are arranged around a pub in such a way that conspicuously emphasizes the way in which no figure looks at the other – the woman at the table in the foreground looks up towards the man to her right at the centre of the composition, but he stares over her head. This composition was already a trope in the canon of Euro-American art to capture the loneliness of urban life. The most celebrated of these bar paintings, Edouard Manet's *Un Bar aux Folies Bergere* (1882), was exhibited at the Tate Gallery in 1948.[374] The Euston Road School, which promoted the realistic depiction of the banalities of society, also held a retrospective exhibition in London in 1948.[375] Therefore, it is unlikely that Druby's painting was a social commentary as much

---

[372] Charles Harrison, 'Critical Theories and the Practice of Art,' in *British Art in the 20th Century*, ed. Susan Compton (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1986), 58.

[373] Khulusi, 'Modern Muslim Painters of Iraq,' 45.

[374] Douglas Cooper, 'The Courtauld Collection at the Tate Gallery,' *The Burlington Magazine* 90:543 (June, 1948): 170.

[375] Richard Cork, 'Gwen John, Late Sickert and the Euston Road School,' and Bruce Laughton, 'Reunification at Camberwell (1945) and 'the 1948 'Euston Road School' exhibition,' in *The Euston Road School* (London: Scholar Press, 1986), 246-247 and 299-319.

as it was an attempt to insert his work into a lineage of canonized Euro-American art. A 1949 review of an exhibition, in which Druby, Atta Sabri, and Jewad Selim participated, claimed that they were the best of the 'old school' of painting, reinforcing Druby's continued use of the academic style.[376]

A painting by Jewad Selim published with the article is a portrait of his future wife, Lorna, wearing a traditional Iraqi abaya, in a flattened geometric form removed from the Euro-American academic style. However, the reviewer considers it 'old school' because it does not compare to the modernity exhibited by the artist Fahrelnissa Zeid's (1901 – 1991) abstract paintings shown in the same exhibition.[377] Zeid had begun experimenting with abstraction in 1947, and during the late 1940s, she was solidifying her own theories about why abstraction was the best form for a modern artist to adopt.[378] In a large painting from 1948, titled *Resolved Problems*, likely referring to the issue of form, she blanketed the non-figurative composition with a kaleidoscope of bright red, turquoise, indigo, yellow, and white shapes [Figure 1.59]. While Zeid had had little interaction with Iraqi artists in Baghdad previously, as the wife of the Iraqi ambassador to Great Britain, Zeid held a prominent place in Iraqi cultural life in London and interacted with the Iraqi art students. She was also becoming renowned as an artist in European contexts during this period.[379] A photograph of an exhibition at the Anglo-Iraqi Society in London, which took place from April 25 to May 8, 1949, shows Zeid and King Faisal II looking at Druby's painting *Spanish Lady* [Figure 1.60]. The photograph encapsulates the individuality of Druby's practice. Despite the popularity of Zeid's abstraction in the context of London and Selim's move towards abstraction, Druby chose to exhibit an academic portrait of a woman in Spanish dress. The publication of the photograph as the main image in a magazine review of the exhibition also indicates the acceptance of Druby's practice as a valid manifestation of modern art among the Iraqi elite during this period.

Druby's art began to represent Iraqi modern art in international contexts. These exhibitions spanned a wide range of diplomatic missions. In London, the Anglo-Iraqi

---

[376] Khulusi, 'Modern Muslim Painters of Iraq,' 45.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Adila Laidi-Hanieh, *Fahrelnissa Zeid: Painter of Inner Worlds* (London: Art/Books, 2017), 116-124.
[379] Laidi-Hanieh, *Fahrelnissa Zeid*, 90-137.

Society promoted the increasingly unpopular and monarch-centred pro-British stance.[380] King Faisal II was living in Great Britain at the time completing secondary school at Harrow School. During this time, he began to paint and exhibit artworks himself, and investing in the arts, which would continue in Baghdad in the 1950s.[381] Druby also exhibited in the Middle East during this period. The Portsmouth Treaty of December 1947 and the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948 had fuelled anti-European and pan-Arab sentiments in the Middle East. Questions of unifying Arab countries under a single political entity led to tensions between the Hashemite-run kingdoms of Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, with Egypt and Saudi Arabia.[382] However, the exhibitions in which Druby participated continued to have an international outlook. In 1947, he exhibited at the *International Exhibition of Contemporary Art* in Cairo, which included artworks from European and Arab artists, and in 1948, he submitted work to the exhibition of Lebanese and Arab artists in Beirut in conjunction with the UNESCO conference.[383]

---

[380] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 120-122.
[381] Laidi-Hanieh, *Fahrelnissa Zeid*, 97.
[382] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 120-124.
[383] The Iraq section catalogue of the Cairo exhibition does not survive, see: *International Exhibition of Contemporary Art: The British Section* (Cairo: British Institute, 1947); Khulusi, 'Modern Muslim Painters of Iraq,' 45;

***Chapter Two* | Evolution, Revolution, and Peer Pressure 1950 – 1968**

Jaykur, your past has come back.
This is the crowing of the roosters.
The film of sleeplessness has dissolved.
…And love:
Do you hear this thunderous applause?
And what of it?

– Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, *Return to Jaykur* (Baghdad, 1960)[384]

---

[384] 'Badr Shakir al-Sayyab,' *Banipal* 4:9 (1998): 7.

Druby's adherence to a single academic representational style and modern urban elite subjects in the 1940s fractured into a multiplicity of forms by the mid-1950s. In 1956, he exhibited three works with radically different formal components. The first, which was painted in conjunction with archaeological excavations at the Parthian caravan city of Hatra, depicts a historical temple ritual in an academic representational style [Figure 2.1]. In the second, *Flowers*, Druby uses thick short uneven brushstrokes to represent a vase of flowers on a table [Figure 2.2]. The last, *In the Café*, deconstructs a group of women and men engaged in traditional tasks, such as weaving and coffee preparation, into abstracted outlines and blocks of bright colours [Figure 2.3]. Druby's final geometric form would become increasingly dominant in his practice after the revolution of 1958, coinciding with the adoption of a similar style by many Iraqi artists in the 1950s. The expanding public discourse among Iraqi artists and critics focused on the need to create a unique modern art embedded in the local context. Most artists asserted that this had to be done through a break with the Euro-American academic method and the combination of Euro-American modernist forms with local traditional motifs. As form became increasingly political in the 1950s, Iraqi artists encouraged conformity and solidarity in order to overcome colonial legacies and to create a modern art that was socially engaged. While Druby eventually complied with the predominant modern form, unlike many other Iraqi artists, he continued to embed his practice in Euro-American academic methods and to utilize an evolutionary approach to modern art based on the mastery of technical skills. As Iraqi artists and writers used their practice to critique the state and modernity's promise of a better life, Druby's painting practice championed modernity and progress.

The unrest of the late 1940s, led to a stronger divide between a pro-British government and an anti-colonial nationalist urban elite public in the early 1950s Baghdad. The war with Israel in 1948 had made people distrustful of British interference.[385] King Faisal II's return from London to take power in 1953 and prime minister Nuri al-Said's unrelenting control of the government accentuated the perception that the government was run by Great Britain. Oil revenues increased dramatically in the early 1950s, largely due to an agreement in which the Iraqi government got fifty percent of the profits from the Iraq

---

[385] Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* 126.

Petroleum Company (IPC). These revenues were then funnelled into development projects. Two of the six members of the board overseeing these development projects were foreign (one British and one American), also suggesting to the public that the modernization of Iraq was controlled by foreign colonial powers.[386]

The growing public sphere became progressively filled with anti-government critics from the urban elite. The Arabic press and literature took an anti-colonial and reformist stance and opposition parties multiplied. Dissenters met in public cafes and bookshops in Baghdad to discuss their ideas. Partially in response to this criticism, the government became increasingly rigid and reactionary to oppositional voices. After the 1948 uprisings, the country remained in almost perpetual state of martial law until the 1958 revolution. Many dissenters were imprisoned, university professors and students were increasingly monitored, and those who complied with government agendas were given favours and promoted within the bureaucracy. The Free Officers Revolt and coup d'état in Egypt in 1952 fuelled a revolutionary fervour in Baghdad, which climaxed in riots and protests in November 1952 known as the *Intifada*. These protests were supported both by left-leaning and nationalist urban elites, who were critical of foreign Euro-American interference. The largest government crackdowns occurred after the elections of 1954, in which Nuri al-Said's government won yet again. Newspapers and journals were shut down. Many intellectuals and students were put under surveillance, arrested, or exiled, including the writer Ayyub, and the poet Abdul Wahab al-Bayyati (1926 – 1999), who would become a voice of leftist opposition in the 1950s.[387]

The art field saw a similar burgeoning of public discourse and a diversification of voices during this period. Mirroring the larger public sphere in Baghdad, artistic discourse and practice occurred in two contexts in the 1950s. The first was the state controlled and pro-British context, which included the Institute of Fine Arts, the British Institute Club, and the al-Mansur Club. The Institute of Fine Arts employed most of the artists and trained a new generation of artists, which was emerging in the late 1940s and early 1950s. While the Institute was funded and monitored by the Ministry of Education, it also became a place

---

[386] Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* 128-129.
[387] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 87-111.

for open intellectual discussions.[388] The British Institute Club sponsored annual exhibitions, often in conjunction with King Faisal II, of British and Iraqi artists from 1951 until the revolution in 1958.[389] The al-Mansur Club was Euro-American style country club built as part of a new housing development in Baghdad for the urban elite in 1956, where many Iraqi artists had moved. The club had Iraqi and international members.[390] As was mentioned in Chapter One, clubs were already popular meeting places for the urban elite in the 1920s, and as clubs like Al-Mansur were increasingly built in new housing developments in Baghdad, they became more and more geographically exclusionary in the 1950s. Al-Mansur was one of several clubs exhibiting art, including the Royal Olympic Club, and the Alwiyah Club, which would later play an important role in Druby's career.[391] Artists published criticism in government-controlled or British publications, such as the IPC magazine or *The Studio*, published in London.[392] As was already clear during his time in London in the late 1940s, King Faisal II was interested in fine arts and not only patronized and attended exhibitions in the 1950s, but also, sometimes exhibited his own works, such as a portrait of his art teacher [Figure 2.4].[393] The continued praise of Faisal II's art among Iraqi art critics indicated the danger of dissent in many parts of the public sphere.[394]

The second public sphere was created by artists themselves based mostly in their own homes and at the Institute of Fine Arts. As architecture historian Alsaden has illustrated, a community mentality among artists evolved from domestic gatherings held weekly in the early 1950s. Faiq Hassan was one of the main hosts, along with Jewad Selim and the architect Rifat Chadirji (b. 1926), who returned from his studies to Baghdad in 1954. In these domestic gatherings, artists met to discuss a wide range of topics, to exhibit their works, and to plan for the future of the modern art movement. They were joined by many

---

[388] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 92.

[389] *Iraq and Britain: Sixth Annual Exhibition of Paintings at the British Institute Club* (Baghdad: May 1957).

[390] Alsaden, *Alternative Salons*, 166.

[391] Alsaden, *Alternative Salons*, 169.

[392] Jabra, 'Art in Modern Iraq,' 20-23; Neame, 'Modern Painting in Iraq,' 2-3.

[393] Alsaden, *Alternative Salons*, 169.

[394] Atta Sabri, 'Third art exhibition at the British Cultural Centre in Baghdad,' *al-Adab* (October 1953): 77-79; Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May 1956): 18-21.

other cultural agents such as architects, poets, writers, actors, and enthusiasts. From these gatherings, new art institutions were born, such as an array of artists' groups and the next iteration of the *FAS*, the *Iraqi Artists' Society* (*IAS*), founded in 1955.[395] These new groups then exhibited not only in domestic settings but also at the Institute of Fine Arts and various clubs.[396] Art criticism also appeared outside of government-controlled or British outlets. Lebanese journal *al-Adab* provided one of the main sites for pan-Arab discourse on art and culture and newspapers run by Iraqi opposition parties also published articles on art.[397]

Almost all artists participated in both the government-monitored and private spheres of discourse during this period. Despite the increasing number of students graduating from the Institute of Fine Arts and joining the original group of exhibiting artists, including Druby, Hanna, Faiq Hassan, Atta Sabri, Jewad Selim, and Akram Shukri, the group of artists in Baghdad continued to be a small intimate circle of urban elites.[398] One artist remarked in his memoirs that 'one felt that one knew everyone who deserved to be known in the city.'[399] Financial concerns also brought artists together. The Institute of Fine Arts provided teaching jobs for many artists. Druby, for example, taught a night course at the Institute of Fine Arts beginning in 1950.[400] He also lectured at the newly established College of Arts and Sciences, founded as the first scientific college in Iraq in 1949.[401] These satellite branches of the Ministry of Education would be brought together under the umbrella organization, the University of Baghdad, in 1956.[402] While artists exhibited privately in their own homes, in order to stage larger exhibitions, they received funding from the government, the monarchy, and foreign governments and companies, such as the IPC.[403] The domestic gatherings included artists with diverse political views: Jewad

---

[395] Alsaden, *Alternative Salons*, 165-197.
[396] Alsaden, *Alternative Salons*, 170.
[397] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 92 and 152-153.
[398] Alsaden, *Alternative Salons*, 178.
[399] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Princesses' Street: Baghdad Memories*, trans. Issa J. Boullatta (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 2005), 39.
[400] Al-Azzawi, 'Hafidh Druby: Between Impressionism and Documentation of City Life,' 33; Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Princesses' Street*, 62;
[401] Sohail Druby, email to Sarah Johnson (9 April 2019).
[402] Fahim Issa Qubain, *Education and Science in the Arab World* (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 238.
[403] Alsaden, *Alternative Salons*, 166.

Selim and a young social science teacher, who had recently become interested in art, Shakir Hassan Al Said, were increasingly critical of the government and British colonial involvement; Mahmoud Sabri (1927 – 1912), who studied art in evening classes in Great Britain in the late 1940s and became an active art critic in the 1950s, was a communist; and Druby and Atta Sabri refrained from political involvement but conformed more to a conservative pro-government and pro-British agenda.[404] A photograph taken at a gathering at Faiq Hassan's house shows a tipsy Druby carousing with a student of Faiq Hassan, Ismael al-Shaikhly (1924 – 2002), who had recently returned from studying in Paris [Figure 2.5].[405]

The vast majority of new artists and art critics who entered the Baghdad art field in the 1950s were students studying with the first generation of artists at the Institute of Fine Arts. A group of foreign artists also arrived as spouses of Iraqi artists who had studied abroad in the 1940s. For example, Jewad Selim's wife Lorna began actively exhibiting and painting with Iraqi artists in Baghdad when she moved to the city in the early 1950s.[406] A review of the 1953 exhibition at the British Institute Club indicates that the club was still exhibiting British artists who had been based in Baghdad during World War II.[407] An array of British diplomats and cultural bureaucrats, such as the director of the British Institute in Mosul, also exhibited with Iraqi artists during this period. While many of the works of British artists continued to be representational paintings of traditional Iraqi subjects as had been the case in the 1940s, a major shift in Iraqi artists' relationship to British artists is represented by the work of Ian Auld (1928 – 2000). Rather than arriving for political reasons or to study ancient Iraq through archaeology as with many other foreign artists, Auld came to attend the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad from 1954 to 1957, where he eventually set up a ceramics department in the institute with Cypriot Valentinos Charalambous (b. 1929).[408] Auld mostly chose traditional Iraqi subjects for his exhibited

[404] Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 190; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 98; Naef, *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe*, 276; Shabout, *Modern Arab Art*, 97-98.

[405] Tiffany Floyd, 'Ismail al-Shaikhly,' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*, 7 October 2018, http://encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Ismail-al-Shaikhly.aspx.

[406] In'am Kajahji, *Lorna: Her Years with Jewad Selim* (Beirut: Dar al-Jadid, 1998).

[407] Atta Sabri, 'Third art exhibition at the British Cultural Centre in Baghdad,' 77-79.

[408] Druby remained lifelong friends with Charalambous and had one of Charalambous' large ceramic installations prominently displayed in his garden.

watercolours and prints, but he executed them in an abstract form. One of Auld's drawings from his time in Baghdad shows a woman standing on a balcony next to bouquet of flowers with a cityscape of domes, minarets, and pointed arches behind her [Figure 2.6]. Auld flattens the picture plane in the drawing by removing shading and relying entirely on thin black lines. He abstracts features such as the flowers and the woman's hair into fanciful geometric shapes drawn in loose strokes.

Continuity in Druby's academic representational style (1950 – 1955)

The other important newcomer to the Iraqi art field was the Palestinian artist, writer and critic, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra. Along with many of his countrymen, he and his family were given asylum by the Iraqi government after the creation of Israel in 1948, and he began teaching in universities in Baghdad upon his arrival.[409] Jabra was educated at Cambridge University in English literature and got an M.A. from Harvard University in 1948.[410] While Jabra exhibited his own paintings steadily throughout the 1950s, he was most well-known for his prolific writing on Iraqi art. In 1955, he wrote an article on how modern Iraqi art should move forward, and his focus on linearity is reminiscent of Auld's drawing:

> The successive phases of Middle Eastern art, whether ancient, Byzantine or Islamic, have one thing in common: they all emphasise linear design and, except for some formalistic modelling, lack perspective and chiaroscuro, both of which are later European discoveries. Even in the West, art in the last sixty years has been developing away from these two great props of Renaissance painting toward linear design, from which the jump to abstract art so familiar to the Arab world is a very short one. So in a sense, Eastern and Western styles seem to meet somewhere in the region of linear design, and it is here that Arab art could resume its development.[411]

His assessment also echoes the claims made in the manifesto of the *Baghdad Group for Modern Art* (*BGMA*), which he founded along with Jewad Selim and Shakir Hassan Al Said in 1951. The manifesto also focused on style, instead of subject matter, as the main path to a local modernity that could compete with Euro-American modernity. It asserted

---

[409] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 154.
[410] Jabra, *Princesses' Street*; Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, *In Search of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra: a Life in Literature and Art Between Palestine and Iraq* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).
[411] Jabra, 'Art in Modern Iraq,' 23.

that the group would make art combining forms derived from contemporary Euro-American modern art and from 'the unique character of Eastern civilization.'[412] So Jewad Selim's painting *Hen Seller*, presented in the introduction to this dissertation, combines the abstracting techniques of the of the Euro-American cubist movement with crescents derived from mosque domes and triangles based on Iraqi carpet patterns [Figure 0.4].[413] In the same year, Al Said painted *Return to the Village*, in which a composition of peasants leading livestock is constructed from rectangles of various solid colours [Figure 2.7].

What had been only a sporadic interest in a formal break from the Euro-American academic style in the 1940s dominated Iraqi art in the early 1950s. Faiq Hassan had loosely founded his own group called the *Société Primitive* (*SP*) in the 1940s, whose unifying aim was painting outdoors, often in distant rural parts of the country.[414] While painting outdoors did not necessarily imply stylistic ideologies in the final painting, as was clear from the discourse in the late 1940s surrounding the Polish painters and their approach to the Iraqi landscape, the colours associated with the Iraqi landscape were considered unique to the local context and distinct from the Euro-American context. Therefore, by painting from this landscape, Faiq Hassan's group looked for distinct Iraqi forms for inspiration. Furthermore, when Faiq Hassan's group crystallized into a more coherent entity called the *Pioneers* in 1952, Faiq Hassan exhibited a work called *Countryside*, whose flattened blocks of abstracted colour represented a departure from his academic portrait of a Kurd painted in the Iraqi countryside in the early 1940s [Figure 1.44 and 2.8]. The *Pioneers*' first and second exhibitions also included works by Hanna, Jewad Selim, and Mahmoud Sabri, and by the third exhibition, Selim stopped exhibiting with the group and al-Shaikhly joined.[415]

While these Iraqi artists called for a break from the recent Euro-American past through creating new forms, they continued to do so using Euro-American methodologies. As had

---

[412] 'Manifesto of the Baghdad Group for Modern Art,' in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 150-151.
[413] al-Bahloly, 'History Regained
[414] Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 184.
[415] Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 195-196.

been the case with al-Husri's pedagogical principles and broader local pan-Arab, nationalist, and anti-colonial discourse in 1930s and 1940s Baghdad, the artistic discourse of the early 1950s was based on one unifying principle: that Iraq was behind Europe in its modern development because it had stagnated since the Abbasid period. In order to catch up with Europe, culture needed to compete directly with Euro-American modern culture, rather than isolate from it. As Jabra put it in his 1955 article, Iraqi artists did not have the benefit of 'slow growth and ripening' that the Europeans did.[416] In 1953, Atta Sabri contributed a piece to *al-Adab* titled 'Art of Painting and Sculpture: causes for underdevelopment in the Arab world,' and the discussion filled the pages of *al-Adab* again in 1956.[417] Artists conceded that their idea of rebelling against the past using local forms was inspired by the Euro-American model of modernity. Jabra argued that 'rebellion or reaction is a feature of the development of Western thought.'[418] The *BGMA*'s manifesto claimed that the group's principle of finding new forms from the local environment was derived from Picasso's use of 'primitive Iberian art' and 'black African art' to create cubism. The manifesto then went on to say that by using this model, Iraqi artists would be able to 'compete with other styles in the universal field of thought.'[419]

The Iraqi artists' discussion of new forms as a path to an Iraqi modernity that could participate in global modernity was part of a larger cultural discourse in the Arab world.[420] Two Iraqi poets, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab (1926 – 1964) and Nazik al-Mala'ika (1923 – 2007), ushered in the Free Verse Movement with the publication of their poems in 1947. This movement, characterized by irregular line lengths and rhyming schemes, used Euro-American modernist forms to re-approach classical Iraqi poetic themes and historical subjects from a new modern perspective.[421] For example, al-Sayyab wrote in a letter to another poet in the early 1950s: 'Have you read what T.S. Eliot said of the individual talent

---

[416] Jabra, Art in Modern Iraq,' 22.
[417] Atta Sabri, 'Art of Painting and Sculpture: causes for underdevelopment in the Arab world,' *al-Adab* 1:2 (December, 1953): 13-20; 'Interview with Artists on Art,' *al-Adab* 1 (January, 1956): 3-10; Mahmoud Sabri, 'The Problem of Modern Iraqi Painting,' *al-Adab* 1 (January, 1956): 65-69.
[418] Jabra, Art in Modern Iraq,' 21.
[419] 'Manifesto of the Baghdad Group for Modern Art,' in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 150-151.
[420] Naef has pointed out the link between the *BGMA* manifesto and literary movements in the Arab world in the 1950s: Naef, *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe*, 255-256.
[421] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 137-139; Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 354-368.

and tradition and their relation to poetry?...Our poetry should not be a mimic of the West in Arab or semi-Arab attire. Let us make use of the best in our poetic tradition while making use of the achievements of Western writers.'[422] Al-Sayyab's conviction was echoed by Syrian poet Adonis (b. 1930): 'It was reading Baudelaire which changed my understanding of Abu Nuwas and revealed his particular poetical quality and modernity.'[423] Similarly, Iraqi prose writers began using Euro-American modernist techniques, such as stream of consciousness and interior monologue, in the early 1950s.[424]

Druby retroactively claimed in the 1970s that his *Impressionists* group, founded in 1952, was part of this wider formal movement among cultural agents in Baghdad. Druby asserted that the name *Impressionists* originated from another group of artists, including himself, who would paint outdoors during short excursions outside of Baghdad in the 1940s.[425] The outdoor excursions were likely related to Faiq Hassan's *SP* group.[426] Druby then explained that the name *Impressionists* was chosen because the European impressionists were inspired by eastern colours and that the Iraqi impressionists wanted to start from an 'Eastern' school.'[427] Druby mentioned Matisse as the primary example of an impressionist using Eastern colours.[428] Druby's explanation for his choice of Matisse mirrors the *BGMA*'s explanation for why they chose to emulate Picasso's cubist style. Druby was part of the *BGMA* in its first exhibitions. Several of his surviving paintings of the outskirts of Baghdad from 1950 to 1951 also imply that he went on the artistic excursions to paint outdoors organized as part of the domestic gatherings of artists in the early 1950s.[429] In his poster for the first *Impressionists* exhibition in 1953, Druby used a linear style with geometric blocks of colour to show a nude woman and man facing each other, similar to the style used by many of his contemporary Iraqi painters [Figure 2.9].

---

[422] Quoted in Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of modernity and tradition* (London: Routledge, 2006), 108.
[423] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 358.
[424] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 311.
[425] Jalil Haidar, 'The Impressionists: What do they offer art movements? What is the reason for their comeback?' *Alif Ba* 2:26 (April 1974): 41.
[426] Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 183-185.
[427] Jalil Haidar, 'The Impressionists,' 41; Al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),'15.
[428] Al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),'15.
[429] Zainab Mahdi, interview by the author, April 2018, Amman; Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 183-185.

However, contemporary evidence overwhelmingly points to Druby's rejection of the formal changes occurring in the work of other artists in the early 1950s and his adherence to an academic representational form. In April 1951, the *BGMA* opened their first exhibition in the Costume Museum in Baghdad, the museum that had housed the National Gallery of Pictures in the early 1940s.[430] In the same month and at the same museum, Druby opened a solo exhibition. Nizar Selim's review of the exhibition claimed that most of the paintings came from Druby's time studying in London and were traditional and academic.[431] Druby exhibited still lives, his painting *Back Garden*, and his painting *Spanish Lady*, which he had presented at the Anglo-Iraqi Society in London in 1949 [Figures 1.57 and 1.60]. His surviving paintings from this period show a continuity with his practice in the 1940s. Druby painted portraits, landscapes, nudes, and daily life in an academic representational form. For example, his portrait of Abd al-Aziz al-Duri (1919 – 2010), who was Druby's boss as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, portrays al-Duri in profile, wearing a suit and smoking a pipe. In the portrait, Druby uses blended brown tones and an academic study of light [Figure 2.10].[432] As in the 1940s, in his portrait of an urban elite woman from the same year, Druby sets the woman back in the picture plane so that her entire body is visible [Figure 2.11].

Druby's portraits and the corresponding criticism of his paintings suggest that his art was made in discussion with Baghdad urban elite taste in art. Nizar Selim's review of Druby's exhibition appeared a few days before his brother Jewad Selim's explanation of the *BGMA* exhibition in the newspaper *Sada al-Ahali*, which was run by the Iraqi opposition party NDP.[433] In his review, Nizar Selim found Druby's paintings 'boring,' 'monotonous,' and lacking in thought. Despite his own dislike of Druby's paintings, he was 'embarrassed' that most of the paintings sold were academic portraits, still lives, and landscapes of the British countryside.[434] Nizar Selim's commentary indicated a gap between the taste of the exhibition-going public and the formal revolution proposed by the *BGMA*, the *Pioneers*,

---

[430] al-Bahloly, 'History Regained,' 252.
[431] Nizar Selim, 'Druby Exhibition,' *Sada al-Ahali*, April 16, 1951, 2.
[432] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 92.
[433] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 94-96.
[434] Nizar Selim, 'Druby Exhibition,' *Sada al-Ahali*, 2.

and the Free Verse Movement. In Jewad Selim's article published a few days later, he complained that the urban elite only wanted representational paintings or for artists 'to paint an apple and give it the title *An Apple*.' Jewad Selim also bemoaned the fact that the Iraqi viewers favoured European subjects, often hanging 'an elegantly framed picture of a landscape in Switzerland.'[435] The Marxist Mahmoud Sabri ranted in 1956: 'It has become a prominent feature of artistic taste to purchase paintings of an Italian painter of the fifth to the tenth class, rather than to buy the production of a local artist.'[436] Despite this critique from other artists, Druby continued to exhibit academic representational paintings. At the 1953 exhibition at the British Institute Club, he showed a watercolour *Carnegie State Park*, which as Atta Sabri described it, represented 'London's dark and dull-coloured atmosphere,' with 'azaleas interspersed with chimneys of factories.'[437]

While exhibitions at the British Institute Club tended to favour academic representational paintings of Europe, Druby's paintings were not relegated to sperate contexts from those in which artists who promoted a break with academic painting were exhibiting in the early 1950s. For example, in a large international exhibition held in New Delhi in 1953, Druby exhibited a painting from Great Britain titled *North Devonshire, England* and a nude study of his friend, the archaeologist Mohammed Ali Mustafa (1910 – 1997) *My Friend Ali* [Figure 2.12]. At the same exhibition, Akram Shukri exhibited a painting of two women drinking tea, using a form of large flat brushstrokes of unblended colours [Figure 2.13]. Shakir Hassan Al Said exhibited a painting called *Composition no. 1*, which may have been one of his early abstracts, and Faisal II exhibited the portrait of his art teacher [Figure 2.4].[438] Atta Sabri was the only other artist who also continued to adhere completely to an academic representational style, exhibiting portraits and scenes from Europe, such as a fish market in Copenhagen [Figure 2.14]. The British writer Alan Neame went as far as to say in a British magazine in 1956 that Druby 'by virtue of his reputation as an academic painter, is respected as the doyen of painting in Iraq.'[439]

---

[435] Jewad Selim, 'The Renewal of Art,' *Sada al-Ahali*, April 21, 1950. Translated in: *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 152-154.
[436] Mahmoud Sabri, 'The Problem of Modern Iraqi Painting,' 69.
[437] Atta Sabri, 'Third art exhibition at the British Cultural Centre in Baghdad,' 78.
[438] *Second International Contemporary Art Exhibition* (New Delhi: The Society, 1953).
[439] Neame, 'Modern Painting in Iraq,' 2.

Audience and Group Dynamics (1953 – 1955)

The political anti-colonial and anti-elite dimensions of the rupture in form and content promoted by many other Iraqi artists made Druby's position increasingly problematic within the Iraqi art field. In December 1953, Shakir Hassan Al Said wrote a critique of the exhibition at the British Institute Club, arguing that the academic style of the majority of paintings, including Druby's, showed a lack of 'commitment' and 'responsibility.'[440] He then claimed that the exhibitions of the *BGMA* and the *Pioneers* were the models of a committed Iraqi art. He excluded Druby's group the *Impressionists*, which held its first exhibition in March 1953. While no artworks or manifestos survive from the *Impressionists* exhibition, the evidence suggests that the group was originally linked to academic painting. Druby organized some of his students into the *Studio Group*, which evolved into the *Impressionists* in 1952.[441] Unlike the other two groups, the *Impressionists* was embedded in the pedagogy of the Institute of Fine Arts. It held its first exhibition there and all of its members were Druby's students.[442] In its first years, the group included Hayat Jamil Hafidh, Munthur Jamil Hafidh, who were both related to Druby's future wife and members of the highest levels of elite society in Baghdad, Muzaffar al-Nawab (b. 1934), Abd al-Amir al-Qazzaz, Ardash Kakafian (1941 – 1999), and Tariq Madhloum (b. 1933).[443] Furthermore as was made clear at the end of Chapter One, the group's name, the *Impressionists*, promoted a mode of art production denounced as unrelated to the local context and deeply European by contemporary critics.[444]

Shakir Hassan Al Said choice of the words 'commitment' and 'responsibility' were related to the political ideology of the journal in which his article was published, *al-Adab*. After spending time in Paris, the Lebanese writer Suhayl Idris (1923 – 2008) founded *Al-Adab* in the early 1950s to promote literature based on Jean-Paul Sartre's (1905 – 1980) existentialist concept of commitment. Whatever existentialism and commitment had

---

[440] Shakir Hassan Al Said, 'About the Third Exhibition at the British Cultural Centre,' *al-Adab* 1:12 (December 1953): 62-63. Translated in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 158-161.
[441] Al-Azzawi, 'Hafidh Druby,' 33.
[442] Jabra, *Princesses' Street*, 61-62.
[443] Al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 19.
[444] Husry, 'The Wandering,' 24.

meant for Sartre, it took on a new and active life in 1950s Baghdad. One student of the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad recalled that students continually 'talked of Sartre, Marx, and Picasso.'[445] Commitment spanned varying political ideologies and was adopted by nationalists, reformists, and communists. As such it was not always easy to define, but in the field of Iraqi art its presiding principles were the political commitment of art to exposing social injustice through a modern form based on Euro-American modernists such as Picasso and local designs. It also promoted the suppression of the individual in order for the form to be fully in solidarity with the project of commitment.

In 1952, Druby created a stone carving depicting two female nudes sitting outdoors, framed by an arch of trees [Figure 2.15]. One figure is seated and holds a basket overflowing with fruit, and the other is standing playing the oud, a traditional Iraqi instrument. Next to them, a wine jug sits on the ground. Both figures are carved identically, with the same hair, facial features, and arm and ankle bracelets, which were part of the traditional women's costume in Iraq.[446] The seated woman reaches up and touches the hand of the standing woman. In his 1951 article related to the *BGMA* exhibition, Jewad Selim criticized the urban elite for wanting beautiful paintings of women that had no connection to reality and were sexually arousing.

> The walls will [be] adorned with a photograph of a girl who does not seem to have any connection to planet Earth other than the fact that she arouses your more animalistic instincts…They want…a painting of a beautiful girl – she must be beautiful, because art is beautiful – beneath which we [the artists] write *Waiting* in elegant handwriting.[447]

Druby's painting satisfies all of Jewad Selim's criteria for bad urban elite taste: the two women are placed within a pastoral historicized context, disconnected from the urban reality of modern Baghdad; they sit facing the viewer so that their breasts are fully exposed, increasing potential for arousal; and the relief uses an academic form to depict the nude associated with ideals of beauty. Jewad Selim's ironic remark that 'art is beautiful' was a critique of the lack of commitment expressed in painting beautiful women.

---

[445] Khalid Kishtaini quoted in: Orit Bashkin, 'Representations of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq 1921-1958,' *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, 1 (Winter 2008): 65.
[446] Radwan, 'Ideal Nudes and Iconic Bodies in the Works of Egyptian Pioneers,' 75-77.
[447] Jewad Selim, 'The Renewal of Art,' *Sada al-Ahali*.

A contemporary outcry was raging among young intellectuals in journals and newspapers across the Arab world, in which they argued that since social reality was not beautiful, making beautiful art was an elitist and purposeful disengagement with social issues – directly contrary to the principles of commitment.[448] The Iraqi poet al-Bayyati went on to argue that only new modern forms, as opposed to the academic style used by Druby, could show the ugliness of reality: 'The search for poetic form which did not exist in our old poetry…brought us to discover the wretched reality in which the masses live.'[449]

In 1953, Mahmoud Sabri exhibited the antithetic painting to Druby's relief [Figure 2.16]. The painting uses what Jewad Selim hinted was a popular title for elite paintings of beautiful women *Waiting*. However, instead of a pair of academic nudes exposing their breasts to the viewer, Mahmoud Sabri's painting is composed of a group of prostitutes waiting for clients. Far from being idealized, the prostitute's bodies are distorted, elongated, and delineated with solid blocks of harsh yellows and reds. Not only do they wear clothes, hiding their sexuality from the viewer, but also, the central figure turns her back to the audience and exposes her crotch over a brazier to the woman seated in front of her. The women in the back are draped over one another in a sexual manner. The harsh reality of female figures in the room is contrasted in the painting with their idealized nude portraits on the righthand wall behind them, which were used to advertise their bodies to clients.

As Bahoora has illustrated in his discussion of Iraqi literature in 1950s Iraq, women's bodies were not just content upon which the new modernist forms advocated by artists like Jewad Selim or poets like al-Sayyab were imposed, but instead, they were productive of the new modernist forms.[450] From disparate manifestations in the 1940s, the prostitute became a dominant embodiment of the 'wretched reality' of modern urban life in 1950s Iraqi cultural production. As with their consideration of Picasso, artists and writers consciously adopted the European modernist trope of the prostitute. The prostitute represented the opposite of the otherworldliness of Druby's nudes as she was integral to

---

[448] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 79-85.
[449] Quoted in Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 85.
[450] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 287.

the urban fabric. In a period of staunch anti-colonial Communist engagement, the poet al-Sayyab wrote *The Blind Prostitute* in 1954, which claimed that the prostitute 'is the city.'

> Cain! Conceal the blood of the crime with flowers and veils,
> With perfume if you like, or women's smiles.
> From the shops and the cafes, pulsing with light,
> Comes a blind woman, like a bat at the height of day: she is the city. [451]

Richard van Leeuwen describes in the case of two Egyptian novels from the 1950s that a female figure's otherworldliness was often considered to contribute directly to male sexual satisfaction.[452] Because she was embedded in the 'wretched reality' of modern life, the prostitute became a suitable canvas upon which to highlight the modern Iraqi man's impotence and degradation. In Jabra's novel *Hunters in the Narrow Street* (1960) a state of inertia in modern society is associated with impotence and lesbianism:

> 'What is civilization?...What do you get? This...' He made a wide gesture with his hand to imply the great crowd in the café. 'Sitting on their buttocks, talking all day long, getting bored, getting restless, getting impotent—so impotent in fact that most city women are either lesbians or whores, because they are never sexually satisfied by their men.'[453]

Similarly, in Mahmoud Sabri's painting, the women are shown engaging in crude sexual acts with one another as no client appears ready to satisfy them. In this context, the title *Waiting* suggests frustration rather than expectation. Indeed, al-Sayyab ends his poem *The Blind Prostitute* with the prostitute waiting fearfully for what might come through her door: 'The clamour has died. And you are yet waiting./ Night has passed: so you must wait for another.'[454] Druby's contemporary relief of two nudes indicates his disassociation from this discourse.

The only artwork by Druby that satisfied the critics was a painting of a woman wearing a white headscarf sitting in front of a traditional lattice *mashrabiyya* window from 1951 [Figure 2.17]. The painting is titled *al-Hajjiyya*, meaning a woman who has performed the

---

[451] Translated in Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 361; Terri de Young, *Placing the Poet: Badr Shakir al-Sayyab and Postcolonial Iraq* (Albany: State University of New York, 1998).
[452] Richard van Leeuwen 'Love and Mechanisms of Power,' in *Love and sexuality in modern Arabic literature*, ed. Roger Allen, Hilary Kilpatrick, Ed de Moor (London: Saqi Books, 1995), 99-100.
[453] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Hunters in a Narrow Street* (Washington DC : Three Contents Press, 1990), 158; quoted in Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 298.
[454] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 367

Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five pillars of the Muslim faith. Nizar Selim praised the painting in his review of Druby's 1951 solo exhibition for conveying the 'faith and purity' of the figure.[455] Druby executed several paintings in the early 1950s, which highlighted traditional rural life in Iraq in an academic form, a composition that popular among artists such as Faiq Hassan and Atta Sabri in the 1940s. In 1952, he completed an oil painting in an academic style of fishermen, wearing traditional costumes, tending to their nets at the water's edge [Figure 2.18]. Ironically, Iraqi artists' concept of commitment only focused on representing marginalized groups but did not extend to including them in the process of art production. When, in 1954, Druby organized a satellite exhibition of the *Impressionists* group in Basra in attempt to be more geographically inclusive, the artistic community in Baghdad criticized the Basran painters as lacking talent and education.[456]

However, occasionally shifting his subjects away from the urban life of the elite was not enough for Druby's acceptance in the Arab cultural community, because he did not satisfy the call for unity and solidarity among Iraqi artists and critics. Both Jabra and al-Sayyab referenced T.S. Eliot's 1919 essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent* in the mid-1950s as a model for a committed and postcolonial art form in the Arab world.[457] In his essay, Eliot wrote: 'What happens is a continual surrender of himself [the artist] as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.'[458] In Shakir Hassan Al Said's 1953 critique of the British Institute Club's exhibition, he remarked that 'the artist today is no longer an isolated individual,' and that the artist's practice should 'accord with the spirit of the age.'[459] In his 1951 article, Jewad Selim claimed that the 'spirit of the age' was 'modern art,' as he defined it, based on the formal innovations of Picasso and the European cubists combined with local motifs or as Shakir Hassan Said expanded, based on the 'cubists, expressionists, surrealists, and fauvists.'[460]

---

[455] Nizar Selim, 'Druby Exhibition,' *Sada al-Ahali*, 3.
[456] Al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),'15; Haidar, 'The Impressionists,'41.
[457] Jabra, 'Art in Modern Iraq,' 21; al-Musawi, *Arabic Poetry*, 108.
[458] Frank Kermode, ed., *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1975), 38-39.
[459] Shakir Hassan Al Said, 'About the Third Exhibition at the British Cultural Centre,' 62-63.
[460] Shakir Hassan Al Said, 'About the Third Exhibition at the British Cultural Centre,' 62; Jewad Selim, 'The Renewal of Art.'

In 1955, Iraqi artists reiterated the importance of a central group by reconsolidating into the *Iraqi Artists' Society* from the *FAS*.[461] A year later, Druby made his first foray in the pages of *al-Adab* into the issue of a committed modern Iraqi art. In an article in which various Arab artists were asked what role art plays in Arab society, Druby responded that all Iraqi artists, including himself, were striving to better represent local reality through their art. However, he argued that nothing about painting as an art form could not be separated from the Euro-American context nor could it claim to be 'local' as Jewad Selim, Shakir Hassan Al Said, and Jabra had argued. He asserted that the focus on linearity and abstraction as related to ancient Iraqi aesthetics was still a European form and method. Referring back to arguments about the inappropriateness of impressionist colours in the Iraqi environment, he argued that Iraq did *not* have a unique colour palette due to the sunlight and weather conditions. All attempts to create an individual and local art, he contended, had led Iraqi artists towards the European and especially French schools of modernism, by which he is likely indicating the constant quotation of Picasso. Druby then asserted that he would solve the issue of expressing local reality by painting local subjects with European forms.[462] The article reads as a rebuttal to the claims that his academic form was not committed to exposing local reality. In the article, Druby also advocated for an individual form of commitment different from the stylistic unity encouraged by other Iraqi artists. While it is not clear exactly what Druby's politics were at this point, individual commitment was usually in opposition to leftist communist commitment in Arab discourse during this period.[463]

The Good, the Bad, and the Cubist (1956 – 1958)

In 1956, Druby exhibited an impressionist still life of a vase of flowers executed in thick brushstrokes, and in the same year British critic Alan Neame noted that Druby's impressionist form suggested that 'he may be about to change his earlier style for something less constricting [Figure 2.2].'[464] Druby then painted two works *In the Café* and *Sandgrouse and an Ear of Corn*, which resembled the abstracted, geometric, and linear

[461] Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 165-197.
[462] 'Interview with Artists on Art,' *al-Adab*, 7.
[463] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 89-90.
[464] Neame, 'Mondern Painting in Iraq,' 2-3.

form popular among other Iraqi artists as the dominant form of committed Iraqi art. In *In the Café*, Druby expressed figures with black and white lines, and he filled objects, architecture, and figures with blocks of various bright colours, which do not correspond to the outlined forms [Figure 2.3]. The subject of the painting is a traditional café, where the woman in the foreground prepares coffee and the two women in the background preform the domestic tasks of weaving and washing a baby. In *Sandgrouse and an Ear of Corn*, two figures in the lower righthand corner of the canvas stand beneath abstracted cornstalks that fill the middle of the composition, indicating a rural environment. The composition uses a combination of crescent and rectangular shapes [Figure 2.19].

The fact that Druby briefly experimented with impressionism before moving on to a figurative geometric abstraction, which he and critics would later call cubism, may be related to his own assertation that modern art is evolutionary and must pass through the stage of impressionism before reaching cubism.[465] However, Druby himself claimed that he turned to this geometric form because of pressure from his students, Dia al-Azzawi (b. 1939), Nizar al-Hindawi, and Yassin Shakir (b. 1938).[466] Not enough information on these three artists' work in the 1950s survives in order to verify these claims. Al-Azzawi only began working with Druby in 1959, but Yassin Shakir was part of the early group of *Impressionists*.[467] Several sources link Druby's first cubist paintings to a poster he made for Iraqi Airways depicting a scene from the book *One Thousand and One Nights* [Figure 2.20]. [468] For the poster, Druby mirrors yellow letters across a bright blue background to frame a central scene in which a woman dances for a man in a green robe and plumed turban under scalloped arches. Beneath the dancer's feet, a cityscape is articulated in bright geometric patches of colour and black outlines. Around the same time, Yassin Shakir made a poster for the Iraqi Tourism Board with a similar subject and composition. In the centre of the poster a woman dances for a man in a green robe and plumed turban. In the poster, Yassin Shakir also placed the dancer under a series of scalloped arches

---

[465] 'Interview with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Aqlam*, 109-112.
[466] Al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),'19.
[467] Dia al-Azzawi, interview by the author, May 2019.
[468] Al-Azzawi, *Poster Art in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974), 74; Atta Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' 78.

and abstracted the composition into a series of brightly coloured geometric shapes [Figure 2.21].

Atta Sabri was the first to mention Druby's use of a new aesthetic form in a review of an exhibition of the *IAS* held at the Mansur Club in February 1957. Sabri wrote that Druby used a 'third character' in his painting, *At the Exhibition*, in which 'men and women ascend upward and around them are patches of colour and white lines like threads.' In another sketch, 'legs stretch, and hands rise to the top, all connected in cross-colour.'[469] In what is possibly the sketch Atta Sabri is describing, a male and female figure, wearing traditional costume, stretch their arms above their heads [Figure 2.22]. They are articulated as white and black outlines with patches of colour behind them. In his 1958 article on Iraqi art, Khaldun Husry used Druby's painting *Washing Day*, which was also exhibited in the 1957 Mansur Club exhibition, to illustrate the trend in linearity among contemporary Iraqi painters [Figure 2.23].[470] In the painting, composed of a series of white lines and splashes of colour, a woman wearing an abaya crouches down to wash clothes. Perhaps the strongest indication of Druby's move towards linearity was a poster he made for a dance hosted by the *IAS* in 1957, in which a man and woman are expressed only by white lines against a black background [Figure 2.24]. From reviews of other exhibitions from the same period, it is clear that Druby exhibited works in this style pervasively. A review of an exhibition of Iraqi art held in November 1957 in Beirut, noted that Druby exhibited a work called *Card Players* in which he had 'the ability of taking a complicated subject and reducing it to a wonderful design of form and colour.'[471]

Atta Sabri, who was still a conservative artist and who would continue to use an academic representational form throughout his career, was not impressed by Druby's formal shift. He preferred Druby's work from previous years and thought it had 'more artistic value.'[472] On the other hand, the Arabic language magazine of the *IPC*, published in Baghdad, claimed in a review of the 1957 exhibition, that the formation of the *IAS* and its recent exhibitions had shown 'solidarity' and 'harmony' among Iraqi artists in addressing 'bold'

---

[469] Atta Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' 78.
[470] Husry, 'The Wandering,' 25.
[471] Genevieve Maxwell, 'Iraqi Art Exhibition Attracts Eager Crowd,' *Daily Star*, November 3, 1957.
[472] Atta Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' 78.

and 'complex' topics of Iraqi life, which allow them to reach a modern style.[473] The *Impressionists* had gained a growing acceptance in Baghdad, exhibiting in more prominent public spaces, such as the Costume Museum from 1957 to 1958, and to the newly founded National Museum of Modern Art in 1959.[474] The communist literary critic, Jalil Kamal al-Din (1930 – ?), who would study in Moscow in the 1960s, was still hesitant about the level of commitment in Druby's subjects. In his review of the 1957 al-Mansur Club exhibition, he agreed that the Iraqi artists were 'unified' for the first time in the history of Iraqi modern art, and he complimented Druby's painting *Washing Day* for being 'new' and 'fresh.' However, he argued that Druby's paintings still lacked 'substance,' and that his *Impressionists* group had not developed to the same level as the other artists' groups.[475]

Al-Din argued that there was a general failure among artists to create politically committed subjects that would speak to all of society because of their overemphasis on form. For al-Din, 'the value of art…is the value of the subject' and so the form had to be effective in communicating that subject.[476] The major intellectual journal of 1950s Baghdad, *al-Thaqafa al-Jadida*, which was shut down by the government briefly in 1953-1954 for its direct links to the communist party, also promoted art that communicated with the people.[477] One writer in the journal claimed that 'the roots [of art] must penetrate the great depths of people. It needs to appeal to the taste of the people and they need to feel it.'[478] The question of who these 'people' were and how this should be done was hotly debated. The pro-British and pro-government publications, such as *Ahl al-Naft*, bragged about the thousands of visitors to exhibitions from the 'educated' classes, and they seemed content that an increasing number of the urban elite appreciated modern art.[479] By 1957, there were around one hundred members of the *IAS*, but a despondent letter written by Mahmoud Sabri, who was then the society's secretary, to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the charitable branch of an oil fortune which had come largely from Iraq,

---

[473] 'Exhibition of the Iraqi Artists Society,' *Ahl al-Naft* 69 (July 1957), 6.
[474] Jalil Haidar, 'The Impressionists,' 41.
[475] Jalil Kamal al-Din, 'Exhibition of the Society of Iraqi Artists,' *al-Adab* 5:8 (August 1957): 75-80.
[476] Ibid.
[477] Ismael, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Iraq*, 295.
[478] Quoted in al-Din, 'Exhibition of the Society of Iraqi Artists,' *al-Adab*, 75.
[479] 'Exhibition of the Iraqi Artists Society,' *Ahl al-Naft*, 9.

suggests that artists were more marginal than the news outlets claimed, even among the urban elites. In his letter, Mahmoud Sabri pointed out that a delegation from the Gulbenkian Foundation, which was in Baghdad on a search for potential philanthropic projects, had overlooked the Iraqi artists and that the artists were also unaware of the visit.[480]

Al-Din's argument that the artists' abstract form was detracting from the accessibility of their art was part of a larger intellectual debate occurring across the Arab world as to whether or not committed art should be realist, in the vein of Soviet socialist realism, in order to better speak to the people.[481] There is little evidence that Iraqi artists adopted this form of realist painting before the revolution in 1958. However, artworks by two artists during the period hint at encounters with socialist realism. Khalid al-Jadir (1924 – 1988), had recently returned from studying art at an academy in Paris, and would soon stage his first solo exhibition in East Germany in 1959.[482] At a 1957 exhibition of Iraqi art in Beirut, he exhibited a painting of a gypsy woman [Figure 2.25]. The figure is depicted in a representational manner and she stands in half profile, looking confidently out of the picture plane. A review of the exhibition described her as wearing a vivid yellow blouse.[483] Al-Jadir visited Venice during his time in Paris, likely to see the 1954 Biennale, where a celebrated socialist painting with a very similar composition was exhibited in the Soviet Pavilion [Figure 2.26].[484] Kadhim Haidar (1932 – 1985), who graduated from the Baghdad Institute of Fine Arts in 1957, took the idea of realism to the next level in his 1955 painting, *The Porter*, in which he painted a worker crouched over carrying an actual tree trunk, which he had attached to the canvas [Figure 2.27].[485] He would continue to address the

[480] *Letter from the Society of Iraqi Artists (Mahmoud Sabri) to the Gulbenkian Foundation*, October 5, 1957, Gulbenkian Archive.
[481] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 83-97.
[482] Ali al-Jadir, interview by the author, December 2017, Toronto; *Khalid al-Jadir* (Berlin: Zentrum fuer Kusnstaustellungen der DDR, 1977).
[483] Maxwell, 'Iraqi Art Exhibition Attracts Eager Crowd,' *Daily Star*.
[484] *Photograph Collection of Khalid al-Jadir in Venice*, 1954, Khalid al-Jadir Archive, Toronto. On the Soviet Pavilion in the 1953 Biennale, see: Romy Golan, 'Renato Guttuso's Boogie Woogie, A Geopolitical Tableau,' lecture, *Multiple Modernisms. A Symposium on Globalism in Postwar Art*, Louisiana Museum, Copenhagen, November 2017, https://vimeo.com/248150066.
[485] Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft*, 21; Saleem al-Bahloly, 'Kadhim Haidar,' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*, 7 October 2018, http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Kadhim-Haidar.aspx.

theme of the worker, closely linked to the communist cause, throughout the late 1950s.[486] Interest in socialist realism is hard to assess fully because of censorship and critique of communism by the Iraqi government. In early 1955, Iraq ended diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and later that year, signed what came to be known as the Baghdad Pact with Turkey, Great Britain, Pakistan, and Iran in order to set up a defensive buffer against the incursion of the Soviet Union.[487] The pact did not cause as much protest as the 1952 *Intifada*, but it underlined for many Iraqis that the government remained under control of Great Britain and Western Europe.[488]

A few other artists occasionally exhibited works directly addressing social problems or inequalities, such as Mahmoud Sabri, Shakir Hassan Al Said, and Jewad Selim.[489] However, the majority of paintings exhibited in the late 1950s showed peasants performing daily tasks in an increasingly pervasive abstract form of geometric blocks of colour and linear outlines. Druby's cubist works from this period all fall into this category, showing peasants, washing, weaving, serving coffee, or in the fields. With the massive movement of the rural populations to Baghdad, peasant life, which Iraqi artists travelled outside of the city to see in the 1940s, was situated within Baghdad in the 1950s. In 1956, there were 16,413 *sarifas* or makeshift mud neighbourhoods largely built rural migrants in Baghdad.[490] These areas contrasted with the modernization construction projects in the city, which were often seen by leftist intellectuals as colonial incursions.[491] In Iraqi literature at the time, the modern city was frequently depicted as a corrupting and dangerous force for peasants.[492] At the same time, cultural actors were deeply engrained in the urban modernization projects, which disadvantaged the peasants in the city. As mentioned earlier, many artists moved to the new exclusive neighbourhood around the al-Mansur Club. Architects, such as Rifat Chardirji, were central members of the artist

---

[486] al-Bahloly, 'Kadhim Haidar'; Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[487] Tripp, A History of Iraq, 140-141.
[488] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 119.
[489] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 92; Shabout, *Modern Arab Art*, 100.
[490] Bahoora, *Modernism before* Modernity,146.
[491] Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* 128-129.
[492] Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 146; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 208-212.

community and the *IAS*.[493] Druby recalled that the architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867 – 1959) visited artists when he was in Baghdad in 1957, and that he mistook one of Jewad Selim's sculpture for a Picasso. [494]

Ironically, as peasants became an increasingly prominent physical presence in the urban space of Baghdad, their role in Iraqi paintings in the late 1950s became largely metaphysical. The majority of paintings exhibited from 1956 to 1958 show peasant scenes in rural areas and make little reference to modernization or urbanization. This is the case with Druby's cubist paintings from this period. In *In the Café* and *Washing Day* the figures sit on the floor as rural peasants would. They perform tasks such as weaving, washing, and coffee making using pre-industrial technologies. The columns and pointed arches of the architecture in the background reference historic rather than Euro-American modern architecture. In *Sandgrouse*, the rural context is underlined through the large cornstalks formed of crescents in the centre of the composition, which dwarf the figures in the lower right. Some artists did reference the movement of peasants but always in the context of the rural environment, for example, in Shakir Hassan Al Said's *Return to the Village* or al-Shaikhly's *On the Move* (1956), in which figures wearing traditional clothing are weighed down by the belongings they carry over their heads [Figures 2.7 and 2.28].

Artists began to use a series of uniform symbols and forms to indicate peasant life rather than working directly from observation. Animals such as the rooster and the donkey were repeated tropes across the work not only of painters such as Druby, Faiq Hassan, and Shakir Hassan Al Said, and Jewad Selim, but also, in the work of authors during the same period. A rooster was the central plot element in the short story *The South Wind* by 'Abd al-Malik Nuri (1921 – ?) published in 1954, in al-Bayyati's poem *The Village Market* from the same year, and in Shakir Hassan Al Said's painting from 1956, it is the only figure, replacing a representational view of the countryside with a metaphorical symbol [Figure 2.29].[495] Druby inserted a rooster into the righthand side of his poster for Iraqi airways,

[493] Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons,' 165-197.
[494] 'Interview with the artist Hafidh Druby,' *al-Aqlam*, 111.
[495] Abd al-Malik Nuri, *Song of the Earth: Stories* (Baghdad: Al-Thaqafa al-Jadida, 1954); referenced in Bahoora, *Modernism before Modernity*, 308; 'The cry of a cock escaping from a cage, a little saint.' Al-

and he would include the animal in many of his cubist paintings in the 1960s. Identical forms were also repeated across the canvases of various artists. For example, the crescent form in Druby's painting *Sandgrouse* appeared in Jewad Selim's *Hen Seller* [Figure 0.4]. The identical swirling mirrored lines that Ian Auld used to articulate a balcony banister in his drawing of Baghdad were also used by Naziha Selim to indicate traditional architecture during this period. In her 1956 painting *Haidar Khana Mosque*, she used this motif on the righthand side of the composition, and in the left foreground, she included a series of columns with tapering capitals [Figure 2.30]. A similar column appears in right background of Druby's painting *In the Café,* and this column would appear in combination with the linear swirling banister as a regular motif for traditional architecture in Druby's 1960s cubist paintings. Therefore, Druby's first experimentations with his cubist style in the late 1950s conformed to popular trends among Iraqi artists rather than attempting to articulate his own form of commitment.

In the late 1950s, artists who promoted creating paintings whose form and subject were politically committed also made paintings with subjects more suited to the tastes of urban elite patrons. Khalid al-Jadir painted impressionistic landscapes during this period, which Jalil Kamal al-Din found uncommitted and devoid of thought.[496] Even Jewad Selim, who mocked the elites' consumption of paintings depicting sexually alluring women, made a painting called *Pleasures* (1956), in which two semi-nude women drawn in a playful linear style expose their articulated sexual body parts to the viewer [Figure 2.31]. Mahmoud Sabri, who wrote a long article on Marxism and art in the September 1959 issue of *al-Thaqafa al-Jadida*, at the same time, reached out the western European Gulbenkian Foundation for funding for the *IAS* and worked as a banker at the Rafidain Bank.[497] Druby also continued to exhibit academic representational paintings such as a landscape of the outskirts of Baghdad, featured at the 1957 al-Mansur Club exhibition.[498] In fact, there was a general scepticism about the extent of young elite intellectuals and culture producers'

Bayati, *The Village Market*, 1954; quoted in Issa J. Boullata, trans. *Modern Arab Poets 1950-1975* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 14.

[496] Jalil Kamal al-Din, 'Exhibition of the Society of Iraqi Artists,' *al-Adab*, 79.

[497] Mahmoud Sabri, 'Iraqi Art Between Two Covenants,' *al-Thaqafa al-Jadida* 7:11 (September 1959): 19-37; *Letter from the Society of Iraqi Artists (Mahmoud Sabri) to the Gulbenkian Foundation*.

[498] Atta Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' *al-Adab*, 78.

dedication to the principles of commitment and existentialism, and many complained that this discourse was simply an excuse to sit around in cafés and do nothing.[499] This stereotype was so pervasive that it inspired Iraqi writer Ali Badr's parody of 1950s intellectual culture in Baghdad in his 2001 novel *Papa Sartre*. Badr explains the main character Abd al-Rahman's life as an existentialist in 1950s Baghdad in the following way: "whenever [he] said 'nihilism' it meant that he wanted to get drunk, and whenever he said 'freedom' he was planning on sleeping with a woman, and 'commitment' meant an appointment at a bar or nightclub."[500]

Archaeology and Academic Representational Painting (1956 – 1958)

The clearest sign that Druby continued to support painting in an academic representational style as the best path to Iraqi postcolonial modernity, despite his placation in 1956 to the dominant abstract form, comes from his historical paintings for archaeological projects and his writings on these paintings during the same period. Many Iraqi artists combined their search for new forms and motifs in Iraqi history with the adoption of historical subjects. These topics still mostly focused on what al-Husri and Euro-American Orientalists considered appropriate history, covering the period from the ancient Sumerians through the Babylonians to the Abbasid Dynasty. Druby's poster for Iraqi Airways depicts a scene from the book *Thousand and One Nights*, which is partly set in the Abbasid court.[501] Jewad Selim and Shakir Hassan Al Said also chose topics related to the *Nights* tales in the 1950s.[502] Druby's student and member of the *Impressionists* group, Tariq Madhloum, became known for using pre-Islamic subjects and forms in his paintings and sculptures.[503] For example, in his relief *Wounded* (1956), the head of the righthand figure is inspired by Assyrian sculpture, and in 1957, he created a lost relief called *Nimrud,* depicting the ancient Assyrian city in Northern Iraq [Figure 2.32].[504]

---

[499] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 141-145.
[500] Badr, *Papa Sartre*, 70.
[501] Wiebke Walter, 'Modern Arabic Literature and the *Arabian Nights*,' in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, vol 1 (Oxford: ABC Clio, 2004), 54-61.
[502] *The Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture* (1957).
[503] Atta Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' *al-Adab*, 78.
[504] *The Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture* (1957).

Artists Haidar and Shakir Hassan Al Said began to use a new historical subject unrelated to Orientalist discourse and unaccepted by many Iraqi pan-Arabists as anti-Arab – the foundational history of the Shi'a faith in Iraq in the seventh century. The Shi'a branch of Islam is based on the belief that the Prophet Muhammad designated his son-in-law, Ali, as successor. However, Abu Bakr, a father-in-law of Muhammad, took power instead. Shi'a history relates that during an uprising against the ruling Umayyad caliph by Hussain, Ali's son, at Karbala in present day Iraq, Hussain was killed. Twentieth-century Iraq had a large Shi'a population, who was generally marginalized from society and accused by many pan-Arabists of not being Arab.[505] Not only was the pan-Arab movement largely Sunni, but also, Iran's Shi'a identity made other Iraqis distrustful of Iraqi Shi'i's potentially divided allegiances.[506] However, among artists and intellectuals in Baghdad religious differences were not an issue in the 1950s.[507] Therefore, Haidar's decision to treat the subject of the Battle of Karbala in his paintings and Shakir Hassan Al Said's decision to paint Hussain's son, Zayn al-'Abidin, who also fought at Karbala, appears to be part of the movement among artists to find local subjects and motifs, rather than a statement of the artists' religious identity.[508] The Shi'a historical narrative fit well in an anti-colonial sentiment as it was not central to Orientalist histories of Iraq. Furthermore, Shakir Hassan Al Said's composition, which emphasizes al-'Abidin's role as a prisoner by depicting him in chains, may have been connected to a broader treatment of the subject of the political prisoner among artists to protest the government's justice system [Figure 2.33].[509] Unlike historical paintings done for the Directorate of Antiquities in the 1940s, these paintings all used a new abstracted formal structure based both on European modernist methodologies and local motifs.

In 1956, Druby began work on a very different historical painting of Nimrud to the painting of his student Madhloum on the same subject. In his painting, highlighted in the introduction to this dissertation, rather than use Assyrian forms to abstract his

---

[505] Batatu, 'Some religious-class and ethnic-class correlations,' *The Old Social Classes.*
[506] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 170-177.
[507] Ibid.
[508] Nouri al-Rawi, *Reflections on Modern Iraqi Art*, 24-25.
[509] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 98.

composition, Druby applied an academic representational style to accurately portray the historical construction process of an Assyrian palace in conjunction with archaeological excavations [Figures 0.1 and 2.34]. A few artists still worked for the Directorate of Antiquities, mostly as curators in the National Museum, but not to contribute historical paintings as they had done in the 1940s.[510] Druby had also long since left the department and was at the time still a teacher at both the Institute of Fine Arts and the College of Sciences. However, he was good friends with the archaeologist, Mohammed Ali Mustafa, whom, as was mentioned earlier, Druby used as a model for an academic nude study that he submitted to an exhibition in India [Figure 2.12]. Mustafa asked Druby to assist him with contemporary excavations at Nimrud and Hatra by making paintings that would accurately recreate intangible culture, such as rituals and construction processes, which could not be explained through archaeological artefacts.[511] This project resulted in three paintings: *Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra* (1956), *Assyrian Architecture* (1958), and *Babylon* (late 1950s), which were installed in the Mosul Museum, in a small museum space at Bab Nurkal at Nineveh, and at the Babylon Museum, respectively [Figures 2.1 and 2.35].[512]

These works are not only significant because they show the continuity of Druby's academic representational style, but also, because he wrote articles on the paintings, explaining the specifics of his use of the academic representational form for the first time.[513] Druby's writings on these paintings illustrate the link between his choice of the academic form in these paintings and the practice of archaeology in Iraq. The critic Mahmoud al-Jazairi wrote in his 1982 biography of Atta Sabri that '[He painted] several oil paintings about archaeological sites … This taught him the importance of realism and the academic style.' [514] The archaeological connection between Atta Sabri and Hafidh Druby's academic representational paintings is not surprising considering that they worked closely together at the Directorate of Antiquities and had a similar educational

---

[510] Akram Shukri, for example, still worked in the National Museum: Akram Shukri, 'Conservation and restoration of Assyrian sculpture at Nimrud', *Sumer* 12 (1956): 133–34.
[511] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' 96.
[512] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' note 1.
[513] 'al-Qadisiyya,' *Majalla Akadimiyya al-Funun* 1 (c. 1968); 'Assyrian Architecture,'; 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra.'
[514] Mahmoud al-Jazairi, *Atta Sabri* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982), 11.

trajectory. However, as Atta Sabri largely stopped producing art after the 1950s, Druby remained the sole proponent of academic painting embedded in archaeology through the late 1960s.

In his articles, Druby explained that he chose archaeology as the basis for his content in historical paintings because the method of archaeology provided historical truth whereas pre-modern Arabic histories did not. Druby wrote on his painting *Hatra*:

> Arabic sources are known for fantasy and exaggeration and deviance from the truth…Yaqut tells how the city [Hatra] fell to the hands of Shapur I the Persian, because of the betrayal of Nadira, daughter of the King of Araba, the last king of Hatra. However, archaeological facts have not provided a statue to prove the existence of a king or princess with those names… the period of design [of an artwork] usually comes after the completion of the excavations and a study of the elements of the construction.[515]

Here, Druby reiterated the ideas provided in his education that Arabic history should be taught through Euro-American methodologies. As Druby was taught during his time in the Directorate of Antiquities in the 1940s, archaeology was a Euro-American method, and most importantly, it was a scientific method, which in the Iraqi education system, was considered the best path to modernity.[516]

The first step for Druby in depicting the historical truth was to ensure the content of his paintings matched the archaeological artefacts discovered. Within his paintings, the objects, architectural elements, and costumes were based on excavation reports. *Assyrian Architecture* was painted directly after a reconstruction of the entrance to the throne room of the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud in 1956, and Druby's reconstruction of the entrance in the centre of the composition clearly mirrors the archaeological one [Figure 2.36].[517] Furthermore, Druby related that he had planned to use the Ziggurat of Sargon II from Khorsabad because he liked the aesthetics of its spiral form, but after speaking to Mohammed Ali Mustafa, he settled on the stepped ziggurat at Nimrud.[518] In his article on *Hatra*, Druby included several appendices to describe the

---

[515] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 144.
[516] *Sumer* 1 (1945); Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 213-214.
[517] Mahmud Ainachi, 'Reconstruction and preservation of monuments in Northern Iraq,' *Sumer* 12 (1956): 124–32; Akram Shukri, 'Conservation and restoration of Assyrian sculpture at Nimrud', 133–34.
[518] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' 97 and note 7.

accuracy of the sculptures, decoration, and costumes. Where artefacts are represented from other locations, he explained where the material was found. For example, the incense burner in the lower left-hand side of the painting was discovered in the eighth temple at Hatra.[519] Druby utilized the compositional narrative of his paintings to bring statues to life or to highlight the use of costumes. In *Hatra*, the statue of Princess Washfari, which was discovered with a dedicatory inscription to the Fifth Temple, stands at the left-hand side of the central arch along the painting's back wall, and her headdress is used on several of the female figures in the painting. [520] Druby transformed the excavated statue of a priest into a living figure, and one can see the statue on the right side of the central arch mirrored by a figure in the lower right-hand corner of the canvas.

Druby went into great detail in his articles about the ability of the academic representational painting method to contribute to archaeology because he saw academic representational painting as a modern science like archaeology. He continually referred to academic painting techniques, such as perspective, as 'sciences,' and he detailed his own methodologies of perspective, composition, and colour in his articles, as processes which led to historical truth through the technical achievements of the artist.[521] In Druby's explanation on colour in his article on *Hatra*, Druby devoted several paragraphs to Delacroix's colour theory and concluded with a scientific explanation of how colour is processed by the eye.[522] Delacroix's theory of colour was framed scientifically in art academies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The theory became canonized in late-nineteenth-century academy textbooks such as *Grammaire des Arts du Dessin*, which linked the scientific study of colour by chemist Michel Chevreul (1786 – 1889) with Delacroix's practice.[523] The *Grammaire* claimed that Delacroix: 'knew how to apply the precise data of contemporary science.'[524] It is possible that Druby is referring to this text in his application of Delacroix's theories. Further, Druby underlined the

---

[519] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 156.
[520] Fuad Safar, 'Hatra and the First Season of Excavations,' *Sumer* 8:1 (1952); Harald Ingholt, *Parthian sculptures from Hatra; Orient and Hellas in art and religion* (New Haven: The Academy, 1954).
[521] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 157.
[522] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 150.
[523] Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, 'Cezanne and Delacroix's Posthumous Reputation,' *The Art Bulletin* 87:1 (March, 2005): 111-129.
[524] Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des Arts du Dessin,* 171.

importance of preparatory sketches and composition planning by citing Reuben's sketching process for his painting *The Rape of the Sabine Women* (c. 1635-40) as well as noting sketches by Rembrandt, da Vinci, and Constable.[525] He also discussed the method of transferring sketches to large-scale history paintings at great length.[526]

Druby collaborated with Mohammed Ali Mustafa not just on the historical accuracy of the archaeological objects included in his paintings but also on issues composition and colour, further emphasizing the link between the methodology of archaeology and academic painting.[527] In a photograph from 1956, Druby and Mustafa collaborate on *Hatra* [Figure 2.37]. For *Hatra*, Mohammed Ali Mustafa suggested that Druby use 'perspective science,' to highlight the priest and his costume by moving him to the front of the composition.[528] Druby explained that, by arranging the main events of *Assyrian Civilization* in a circular composition, the viewer would be taken in a linear way through the process of creating Assyrian sculptures: beginning with the workers bringing the stone at the centre of the painting, the eye is then drawn to the engineers making sketches in the centre foreground, around to the sculptor working in the lower left, and finally to the sculptor finishing a winged-bull next to the throne room in the centre background.[529] Further linking academic painting and archaeological processes, Dr. Mahmud Hussain al-Amin used Druby's painting of *Babylon* in his article on the Babylonian celebration of Akitu as a factual illustration of historical events.[530]

The link Druby made between academic representational painting and archaeology is significant because it framed academic painting as part of modernity rather than antithetical to it. Druby did not see his paintings as opposed to the postcolonial process of nation and identity building in complying with the academic tradition. Returning to *Assyrian Architecture*, Druby argued that he showed ancient Assyrians making preparatory sketches in the centre of the composition in order to illustrate that the

---

[525] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 153.
[526] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' note 7.
[527] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' 96.
[528] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 157.
[529] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' 101.
[530] Mahmud Hussain al-Amin, 'Akitu,' *Bulletin of the College of Arts* 5 (April 1962): 162.

European tradition of sketching evolved from an ancient Iraqi practice.[531] Druby noted that he included several Assyrian inventions in his composition, such as the moving of heavy stones by wooden rollers, and he asserted that Assyrian art was the greatest cultural development of the ancient world besides Greek sculpture.[532]

Druby's association between modernity and science presupposed that modernity would lead to clearer and more infallible truth. This went in direct opposition to the intellectual discourse of many other Iraqi artists and intellectuals in the 1950s who through existentialism, the Free Verse Movement, disbelief in the political system, and Marxism, increasingly saw modernity as defined by ambiguity.[533] Druby stayed at the centre of the Baghdad and increasingly broader Arab art world despite his ideological differences, but eventually shifted his own practice to align with the predominant formal methodology. His archaeological paintings were his last unadulterated attempts to build a modern art grounded in academic methods. In the 1960s, Druby would leave academic representational painting largely behind him.

Cubism in the Postcolonial Cosmos (1958 – 1968)

The first explicit mention that government agendas interfered directly in the content of Druby's paintings came from a comment Druby made in his article on *Assyrian Architecture*. Druby recounted that he originally sketched the foreman in the centre of *Assyrian Architecture* with a whip because the whip brought a dynamism to the composition. Upon seeing the sketch, his archaeological advisor reminded him that it was important to highlight that Assyrian citizens enjoyed civil rights. So, in the final painting, he removed the whip 'because the purpose of drawing the image was to highlight the civilized aspects as they relate to architecture, sculpture, and work.'[534] This tiny political intervention would magnify when Druby's *Assyrian Architecture* was paraded through the streets of Baghdad during the 1959 celebrations of the 1958 revolution, on a float claiming that Iraqis were the founders of art and science [Figure 0.3]. The label on the float read:

---

[531] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' 101.
[532] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' 108.
[533] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 150.
[534] Druby, 'Assyrian Architecture,' 97.

'Iraqi mathematicians preceded Euclid in his theory by 1700 years.'[535] After the 1958 revolution, the small-scale discussions of a marginal group of intellectuals would transform into the physical actions of governments, political parties, and revolutionaries. These actions would have reverberations not just in the cafes in elite neighbourhoods in Baghdad but on a global scale. More and more, articulating an Iraqi modern art and culture moved away from concrete symbols such as linearity and peasants and into the abstract realm of thought.[536] In such a turbulent environment, Druby solidified his cubist style and eventually his unique form of abstraction. Despite his formal shift, he maintained his academic approach in his cubist and abstract paintings. This garnered criticism from other Iraqi artists and intellectuals. However, during the 1960s, Druby rose to prominence as a leader in the Iraqi art field and represented it on an international scale.

The revolution of 1958 was a watershed in Iraqi history. Revolutionary anti-monarchical sentiment had been brewing in Iraq throughout the 1950s, but in 1957 a group of mostly Arab Sunni military officers decided to take action, forming the Free Officers group, with the purpose of overthrowing the government and founding a republic which disenfranchised the powerful landed elite.[537] They were led by 'Abd al-Karim Qasim (1914 – 1963). At the same time, pan-Arab sentiment was becoming a political reality, and in February 1958, Egypt and Syria joined to form the United Arab Republic. Egypt, with a socialist anti-European leader, was an enemy of the Iraqi government at the time, and in order to protect against the threat of Egyptian incursion, the Iraqi government decided to merge with Jordan, whose king came from the same family as Faisal II, briefly forming the Arab Union.[538] On July 14, 1958, the Free Officers staged a coup d'état, executing Faisal II, the royal family, and Nuri al-Said, and instating Qasim as the new head of state. Qasim was a nationalist, supporting policies that encouraged national cohesion, but his reign also saw the increasing public presence of other political groups, such as the NDP reform party and the communists, who had been suppressed during the monarchy. After

---

[535] 'News and Correspondence,' *Sumer*, fig. 3b.
[536] di-Capua, *No Exit*, 168.
[537] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 144-145.
[538] Ibid.

the revolution, Iraq pulled out of the Baghdad Pact and reopened diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.[539]

There was little immediate change in the organization of the art field. Druby continued teaching, the artists' groups remained intact, and the National Museum of Modern Art project, which Mahmoud Sabri and the *IAS* had asked the Gulbenkian Foundation to help fund before the revolution was completed in 1960.[540] Perhaps the biggest change in Druby's life coincided coincidentally with the revolution – he married Suhaila Jamil Hafidh on July 31, 1958.[541] Druby was forty-six years old and Suhaila was significantly younger, but more importantly, she came from an upper-class family of landed elite, securing Druby's place within the urban elite more solidly than his own rise from rags to riches through the education system. He painted an intimate portrait of her in 1959 [Figure 2.38]. She rests her head languidly on her elbow across a table and looks out at the viewer. While Druby depicted her in a representational style, the loose brushstrokes, casual pose, and zoomed-in composition are all departures from his previous portraits of the urban elite. The portrait also marks a shift in the content of his practice, in which his personal life and family took on a more prominent role. Occasional portraits for elite patrons demanded that Druby use an academic representation style, but his only other representational work from the 1960s was a landscape painting of a bridge in Baghdad from 1962 [Figure 2.39].

The largest change in the art world was that art incorporated national politics and national politics incorporated art. Soon after diplomatic relations were resumed with the Soviet Union, Iraq sent an art exhibition to Moscow. From July 21 to October 19, 1959, an exhibition of Iraqi modern art travelled around the Soviet Union, exhibited at the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow, at the National Museum of Art in Baku, and at the Museum of Eastern and Western Art in Odessa.[542] There had been exhibitions of Iraqi

---

[539] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 161-164.
[540] *Letter from the Lord Mayor of Baghdad to the Gulbenkian Foundation*, October 15, 1960, ME-A/AG/1, Gulbenkian Foundation Archives.
[541] Sohail Druby, email to Sarah Johnson (9 April 2019).
[542] Information on this exhibition comes from documents in the Russian State Archives in Moscow. The details were provided to me by Dr. Olga Nefedova.

art abroad before, in India and in Beirut in the 1950s, but never on this scale. Furthermore, the exhibition in the Soviet Union took on a survey format, indicating that Iraqi artists were presenting their art as a historical development instead of a new phenomenon for the first time.[543] The survey format meant that the artworks' forms and compositions were varied, and the exhibition did not necessarily favour socialist realism or socialist themes. Al-Jadir's *Gypsy* and a painting of armed peasants appeared in one of the main Soviet articles on the exhibition, but most artists exhibited a variety of their works.[544] Druby certainly had no communist or even leftist sympathies. Much later in 1978, an exasperated Soviet delegate to Baghdad reported from Druby's studio that Druby showed no interest in Soviet principles or Socialist realist art, claiming that Druby was still attached to his Western European training.[545] However, Druby's work was becoming part of the national canon of Iraqi modern art, and as such, was a necessary part of any national survey exhibition. In the Soviet exhibition, Druby presented his first painting *Alleys of Sadriya Neighborhood* from the 1930s, his portrait of a ballerina from 1945, and *Washing Day* [Figures 1.3, 1.43, and 2.23].[546] At the same time, Druby exhibited his first two overtly political works entitled *Light Revolution* and *14th of July*, which are unfortunately both lost.[547]

The Soviet exhibition marked a shift in the Iraqi art field's position within global cultural politics. Not only did the Iraqi government begin to consider exhibiting Iraqi modern art outside of its borders as a symbol of national culture, but Iraqi modern art also got caught up in Cold War politics. Soon after the Soviet Exhibition, diplomats based in Baghdad from the Netherlands and West Germany began discussing the possibility of a similar exhibition of Iraqi modern art to tour around Western Europe.[548] The original plan was to organize an exhibition of the three 'best' Iraqi artists, Faiq Hassan, Khalid Rahal (1926 – 1987), and Jewad Selim. Rahal was Jewad Selim's sculpture student, who was based in Rome at the time. From the reports and correspondence of the German Embassy in

---

[543] S. Pevzner, "New Art from Iraq," *Iskusstvo* 11 (1959): 50-55.
[544] Ibid.
[545] *Soviet Delegation to Baghdad Report*, 11 May 1978, State Archives, Moscow.
[546] Russian State Archives, Moscow.
[547] 'News and Correspondence,' *Sumer* 1 (1959): fig. 3b; State Archives, Moscow.
[548] 'Vermerk: betreffend Plan einer irakischen Gemelde-austellung in Westeuropa,' Baghad, June 30, 1961, KM605-88, German Foreign Office Archives.

Baghdad, it is clear that the three were largely chosen because of their personal relationship with European diplomats, and as the reports stressed, the fact that they all had European wives.[549] Likely due to the complex political relationship of the new Iraqi regime with Western Europe and the Soviet Union, the exhibition did not come together until after the fall of Qasim in 1963.

The other way in which the government immediately became involved in art production was through the integration of art projects into city planning. The epicentre of art's involvement in renovations in Baghdad was around al-Tahrir Square and across the al-Umma park at the al-Tayaran Square. The area was on the east side of the Tigris directly across one of the main bridges in the centre of the city and not far from al-Rashid Street, which had been the hub for intellectuals and cultural producers in the 1940s and 1950s.[550] The new National Museum of Modern Art was constructed at al-Tayaran Square, which hosted *Impressionists* group exhibitions in 1959 and 1964 as well as many other modern art exhibitions.[551] Jewad Selim installed his most celebrated and iconic artwork, his *Freedom Monument* (1960 – 1961), across the main axis of al-Tahrir square at the entrance to al-Umma Park. The monumental relief was composed of 14 bronze panels attached to a stone background, each metaphorically representing different aspects of the July 14th Revolution in a geometric abstract form [Figure 2.40].[552] The abstract nature of the relief appears, for example, in one section in which protestors raise banners, which are articulated as blank metal quadrangles. Furthermore, many of the figures do not have hands or feet. The panels fluctuate between expressions of triumph and despair – in one panel, figures morn a martyr, and in the next they lift their hands in celebration. On the other side of al-Umma Park, facing the National Museum of Modern Art in al-Tayaran Square, Faiq Hassan installed a monumental mosaic in 1962 called *Celebration of*

---

[549] Ibid.

[550] Davis, *Memories of State*, 118-119; Rasha al-Tameemi, 'Urban Planning in the Middle East: Analyzing al-Tahrir Square as a Public-Political Space in Iraq,' *University of Cincinnati* (2018), scholar.uc.edu; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 91.

[551] Haidar, 'The Impressionists,' 41; 'Gulbenkian and His Favourable Schemes in Iraq,' (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Guidance, Cinema and Theatre Service, 1964).

[552] Fadhil Mohammed Al Bayati, *The Monument in Memory of the Glorious Revolution of July 14th* (Baghdad: Committee of the July 14th Monument, c. 1961).

Victory.[553] Unlike Jewad Selim's relief, Faiq Hassan's mural treated the revolution with universalist symbols that made almost no reference to the local context. Besides a woman seated in the lower-left of the painting wearing a headscarf, the figures wear modern Euro-American dress, workers' overalls, or army uniforms [Figure 2.41]. Many symbols, such as the raised hands, doves, birdcage, and tools of the worker in the bottom left of the composition bear a strong resemblance to contemporary Soviet murals. The abstracted geometric blocks of bright colours and mosaic technique were also popular in Soviet public art at the time, and it is possible that Faiq Hassan was inspired by his visit to Moscow for the 1959 Iraqi exhibition there.[554]

Druby also made a series of murals for Baghdad during this period. The first was *The Festival* (1958), in which a festival in Baghdad is fragmented into a myriad of bright solid patches of colour and linear forms [Figure 0.5]. Unlike his previous cubist paintings, the geometric forms do not always align with representational imagery, as is the case, for example, with the two diamond forms in the centre of the composition, or the triangles used to express the movement of the swings. As with his earlier work, the figures are still articulated as linear outlines. Contrary to both Faiq Hassan and Jewad Selim, Druby expresses the ecstasy of revolution literally. Despite the formal abstraction, representational elements set the composition within the comprehensible space of Baghdad: the scale of building and figures adheres loosely to scientific perspective; a minaret rises above the buildings; and figures wear traditional costumes, play Iraqi instruments, and ride donkeys.

This literalness is underlined in Druby's next mural *Baghdad Ancient and Modern* (c. 1960), in which Jewad Selim's *Monument to Freedom* is integrated into a cityscape [Figure 2.42]. The painting's composition shows a harmonious balance between the traditional Iraqi life in the lower half of the canvas and the modern city in the upper half of the canvas. In the lower corners of the composition, two historic figures look over the scene. The painting was installed over a display of historic photographs at the Baghdadi

---

[553] Shams al-Din Faris, *Historical Sources for Murals in Contemporary Iraq* (Baghdad: Department of Culture and Information, 1974), 102.
[554] Yevgen Nikiforov, Olga Balasova, and Lizaveta Herman, *Decommunized: Ukranian Soviet Mosaics* (Kiev: Osnovy Publishing, 2017).

Museum, an ethnographic museum showing traditional life in Baghdad, where it still hangs today [Figure 2.43]. As with his archaeological paintings of the late 1950s, the painting's role in the museum again illustrates a belief in the truthfulness or correlation to reality in Druby's paintings. His other mural from this period, *Constructing Buildings*, expresses the integration of peasants into the modern city as a smooth and positive process [Figure 2.44]. On the left-hand side of the composition peasants perform traditional tasks such as mending nets, collecting dates, and sewing. In the centre of the mural, they study, and finally on the righthand side, after studying, they perform industrialized tasks such as building an airplane engine. The rural context of the peasants on the righthand side is denoted by palm trees, which transform into large geometric skyscrapers in the middle of the composition. The transition from rural peasant life to city life is framed by several upward movements: one figure in the lower centre of the composition climbs stairs to reach the modern city, and a bridge over the Tigris slants upwards towards the skyscrapers. In these paintings, there is no indication of the negativity towards the urbanization and modernization of the peasantry expressed in literature and art in the 1950s. Furthermore, unlike Jewad Selim's relief, no negative aspects of the revolution or pre-revolutionary period, such as imprisonment or the death of martyrs, are expressed.

The murals *Baghdad Ancient and Modern* and *Constructing Buildings* also represent a formal shift in Druby's practice. *The Festival* was Druby's last linear work. The two other murals still contain geometric blocks of colour, but in both, Druby returned to using shading to give his figures three-dimensionality. *Baghdad Ancient and Modern* is almost reluctantly cubist, only fracturing the composition in the upper left through streaks in the sky, in the lower half through a few crescents, and in the left-centre in a small patch of geometric solid colours. In *Constructing Buildings*, geometric forms still predominate, but especially in the upper part of the sky the colours are blended and shaded [Figure 2.45]. A handful of his paintings in the 1960s take a slightly different approach in representing the figures as well as objects through a multitude of geometric shapes of solid colour. However, in these paintings, Druby still implements the patches of colour to articulate depth, light, and three-dimensionality. For example, in his painting *Family 2* (1962), the

faces are represented with blocks of a paler tan colour where the light would hit them and with a darker colour in spaces that would be cast in shadow in the physical world. The result is that the figures still retain a three-dimensional structure [Figure 2.46]. More typically, in his painting *Fishermen* (1964), certain round swirling geometrical forms cut through the composition, but the figures are given solidity through shading and even cast shadows in some places [Figure 2.47]. It is also noteworthy that Druby barely shifted from the composition from his academic representational painting of fishermen from ten years earlier [Figure 2.18]. Both paintings include figures mending nets in the foreground, and a body of water with an identically-shaped boat in the background.

Druby's painting *Fishermen* was part of a continued focus among Iraqi artists on rural peasant life for their artworks' subjects in the early 1960s. One Iraqi critic complained in 1964 that 'rural character' still made up most of the content for Iraqi artists, and because of the subject's repetition, it had become 'petrified,' 'formal' and unable to explore the true nature of peasant life.[555] The popularity of this subject matter is also clear from exhibition catalogues, articles, and a video of the 1964 *Impressionist* group exhibition.[556] For example, Saad al-Tai (b. 1935), who had recently joined the *Impressionists* also exhibited a painting of fishermen mending nets in the 1964 exhibition of the group [Figure 2.48].

Another rural theme which became popular during this period and which Druby painted was the marsh in southern Iraq. Druby's painting *In the Marsh* from the late 1950s or early 1960s shows a series of semi-clad men pushing traditional *tarada* boats with poles through the reeds of the marshlands with a typical conical *mudhif* or reed house in the upper-left background [Figure 2.49]. The population of the marshes in southern Iraq were tribal Shi'is, who lived off agriculture and hunting.[557] They were generally distrusted by other tribes and the urban elite population of Iraq, which made them an increasingly popular cause of the Iraqi left in the 1960s.[558] The marsh Arabs also received

---

[555] Sa'dun Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' *Amiloun fil Naft 29* (July 1964): 4.
[556] Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated;' Sa'dun Fadhil, 'The Last Art Season in Baghdad,' *Amiloun fil Naft* 41 (July, 1965): 7-13. 'Gulbenkian and His Favourable Schemes in Iraq.'
[557] Wilfred Thesiger, 'The Marshmen of Southern Iraq,' *The Geographic Journal* 120: 3 (September, 1954) 272-281.
[558] Y. Hanoosh, 'Contempt: State Literati vs. Street Literati in Modern Iraq,' *Journal of Arab Literature* 43: 2/3 (2012): 372-408, 381.

ethnographic interest from Europeans in the 1950s and early 1960s because of their unique and unmodernised lifestyle.[559] Wilfred Thesiger (1910 – 2003), a British explorer, lived for several years with the marsh Arabs in the early 1950s and wrote several popular articles and books on the subject.[560] In its first issue in 1964, the Iraqi intellectual journal, *al-Aqlam*, commented on Thesiger's book *The Marsh Arabs* published in the same year – this was the same issue in which *al-Aqlam* published an interview with Druby.[561] In his articles and books, Thesiger praised the crescent-shaped canoes used by the marsh Arabs, including many photographs of the boats with his writings [Figure 2.50].[562] Druby emphasized the crescent shape of these boats in his painting through repetition and simplification of form. The relationship between Thesiger's work and Druby's paintings meant that Druby's crescents had some basis in observed reality. However, as in his painting *Sandgrouse*, it was the geometric form of the boats that became the defining feature upon which to build his composition, rather than the details of daily life in the marshes. In this way, his painting gives credence to the 1964 critique that Iraqi paintings of the rural environment focused on formal elements rather than the daily life of peasants.

Druby covered one subject that was rarely considered by other artists during this period – modern life in Baghdad. As had been the case in the second half of the 1950s, peasants were still confined to a rural setting in many artworks in the early 1960s. This is clearly expressed in a mural for a bank building in Baghdad from 1960 by Rahal [Figure 2.51].[563] In the mural, peasants, wearing traditional costumes and carrying livestock and produce, move towards Baghdad, represented in the centre of the composition as a round form punctuated by a pointed arch. The round form as well as the inscription underneath, which reads *City of Peace*, both reference the historic Abbasid city of Baghdad built around 762 CE, which was constructed as a round form and referred to during the Abbasid period as

---

[559] Jacques Dauphin, 'Les Ma'dan de Basse-Mesopotamie,' *Annales de Géographie* 69: 371 (January – February, 1960): 34-49.
[560] Thesiger, 'The Marshmen of Southern Iraq.'; Wilfred Thesiger, *A Reed Shaken by the Wind – a Journey through the Unexplored Marshlands of Iraq* (London: Longmans, 1957); Wilfred Thesiger, *The Marsh Arabs* (London: Longmans, 1964).
[561] 'Thesiger's Journey to the Marsh Region,' *al-Aqlam* 1 (1964): 67-68.
[562] Thesiger, 'The Marshmen of Southern Iraq,' 277-278.
[563] Faris, *Historical Sources for Murals in Contemporary Iraq*, 102.

the *City of Peace*.[564] Both the city's historic form and the fact that the peasants are presented outside rather than inside the city in Rahal's mural contrast with Druby's murals *Constructing Buildings* and *Baghdad Ancient and Modern* in which the modern city is depicted with peasants integrated into its structure.

In most of Druby's paintings of modern Baghdad from the 1960s, he emphasized modernity through the overwhelming dominance of the architecture. For example, in his painting *From the Corners of Baghdad* (1964), a haphazard array of rectangular architecture fills two thirds of the long vertical canvas, dwarfing figures wearing traditional clothing emerging from a small alley [Figure 2.52]. While there are not as many symbols of modernity in the painting as in Druby's murals, the vertical canvas further emphasizes the height of the architecture. The buildings begin with traditional elements near the bottom of the composition, such as the balconies jutting out into the centre, and end near the top of the canvas with modern skyscrapers, differentiated from the traditional architecture by the repeated rows of uniform rectangular windows. Druby's other major preoccupation related to the modern city of Baghdad during the early 1960s was his family, which he painted and exhibited repeatedly during this period. These paintings all show him with his wife and two sons performing daily tasks in a domestic interior [Figure 2.46].

While differing from the subject matter of other Iraqi artists, Druby's paintings of his family and of modern Baghdad were exhibited and published widely in Baghdad. The painting of his family described earlier where the figures were articulated through colourful geometric forms was sold to the Gulbenkian Foundation's museum in Lisbon in 1962 [Figure 2.46]. [565] Another family portrait, in which he used his more shaded three-dimensional cubist style to depict himself serving breakfast to his two sons, was exhibited in the *Impressionists* exhibition in 1964 and featured on the cover of the IPC magazine

---

[564] This information came to modern Iraq from European sources, such as: Guy Le Strange, *Baghdad During the Abbasid Caliphate* (London: Clarendon Press, 1900).

[565] *Extract from Mr. Robert Gulbenkian's report on the visit of the Foundation's delegation to the Celebration of the Millenary of the City of Baghdad*, December 1962 (Gulbenkian Foundation Archives, ME. E/AG/11).

Amiloun fil Naft, which included many articles on art and culture [Figure 2.53].[566] Druby also gained a more central leadership role in the art field during this period as vice-president of the *IAS* from 1963 to 1964, then secretary in 1965, and president form 1966 until at least 1968.[567] When Western Europe and Iraq finally reached an agreement for a travelling exhibition of Iraqi modern art in 1965, Druby made the poster [Figure 2.54].[568] In the poster, Druby returned to his linear form of the 1950s to depict the minaret of a mosque surrounded by traditional architecture. To indicate traditional architecture, Druby used the same swirling linear balcony and a column with a tapering capital evident in the 1950s paintings of Naziha Selim, Jewad Selim, and Ian Auld. Druby also travelled with the exhibition, which stopped in Beirut, Budapest, Vienna, Rome, Madrid, and London.[569]

The travelling exhibition of 1965 occurred after upheaval both in politics and the art world in Iraq. Another coup d'état, led by the Ba'th Party, occurred in 1963. The party, founded in Syria in the 1940s, was, in Iraq, vaguely pan-Arab and socialist, but extremely ambiguous in its beliefs, mostly based on nepotism and personal power struggles.[570] The coup resulted in a brutal crackdown on communists in 1963, which caused an exodus of cultural producers and intellectuals from Baghdad, including the artist Mahmoud Sabri.[571] When the dust settled in late 1963, 'Abd al-Salam 'Arif (1921 – 1966), a military officer who was not a member of the Ba'th Party emerged as president, and once again, a military officer ran the country based on the one guiding principle of remaining in power.[572] The other major disturbance to the art field was the death of Jewad Selim in 1961 due to a heart attack.[573] His death led to his repeated memorialization within art publications.

---

[566] Abdul Rahman al-Rubaie, 'With the Iraqi Impressionists,' *al-Adab* (June, 1964): 76-78.
[567] *Letter from Akram Shukri to the Gulbenkian Foundation*, May14, 1963, Gulbenkian Archive, Me. A/A4/6; *Visit to the Middle East Mr. Robert Gulbenkian Report and Letters* (31 January – 10 February 1965); *Week of Culture and Art in Baghdad*; *Letter from Hafidh Druby to the Gulbenkian Foundation,* July 29, 1967, Me. A/A6/6; *Letter from Hafidh Druby to the Gulbenkian Foundation* January 20, 1968, ME A/A9/6, Gulbenkian Foundation Archive.
[568] *Itinerant Exhibition of Iraqi Painting* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information and the Gulbenkian Foundation, 1965).
[569] Suhaila Druby (Hafidh Druby's wife), interview by the author.
[570] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 167-175.
[571] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 167-175; Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 343.
[572] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 175-181.
[573] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'L'art Irakien Contemporain,' *Ishtar* 12-13 (January – February,1962): 346-348, 347.

Throughout the 1960s, most Iraqi publications began or ended with entire sections on Jewad Selim's practice or used his artworks on the cover.[574] After the loss of Jewad Selim, Druby, Faiq Hassan, and, Akram Shukri, who was then president of the *IAS*, were the artists from the first generation to remain at the centre of the art world. Those who had been students in the 1950s, such as Dia al-Azzawi, Haidar, and Shakir Hassan Al Said, took an increasingly prominent role. The artist, Nouri al-Rawi, who became the director of the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad in the early 1960s, after studying in Belgrade, wrote the first art history book on modern Iraqi art in 1962, marking the nascent formation of periodization and canonization of the art field.[575]

Despite Druby's leadership role in the Baghdad art world and his shift to a geometric abstracted form, his practice was harshly critiqued in the 1960s. Critics did not believe in Druby's commitment to his cubist style, considering it merely an extension of his academic or impressionist form.[576] For example, Jabra described Druby's form as 'reducing his subjects to decorative drawings, which reflect his old impressionist style.'[577] The young Iraqi writer, Abdul Rahman al-Rubaie (b. 1939), who had also studied at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad, wrote in a study of the *Impressionists* group in 1964 published in *al-Adab* that Druby's paintings 'still bear the disease of the West…in his painting *Family* [Figure 2.53], he breaths the breath of Fernand Leger.'[578] Al-Rubaie's critique represented a departure from criticism of Druby in the late 1950s, which questioned only the political commitment of his subjects and not his abstracted cubist style. What bothered al-Rubaie even more than Druby's supposed imitation of Western modernists was that Druby's subjects were not 'internal but on the surface of the natural world.'[579] Critic Sa'dun Fadhil made the same assessment in his review of the *Impressionists* exhibition in 1964, claiming that the problem with Druby's paintings was that they focused on the 'surfaces of colour' that could be understood without 'deep

---

[574] Nouri al-Rawi, *Reflections on Modern Iraqi Art*, 38; *The Society of Iraqi Artists in the Year 1967* (Baghdad: Ramzi Foundation, 1967).
[575] Nouri al-Rawi, *Reflections on Modern Iraqi Art*.
[576] Jabra, 'L'art Irakien Contemporain.'; Nouri al-Rawi, *Reflections on Modern Iraqi Art*, 31.
[577] Jabra, 'L'art Irakien Contemporain,' 347.
[578] al-Rubaie, 'With the Iraqi Impressionists,' 77.
[579] Ibid.

thought.'[580] The concern that Druby's art was decorative extended to reviews of his paintings in the 1965 travelling exhibition, where he exhibited *Fishermen* (1964) [Figure 2.47]. One reviewer noted that Druby's use of colour in his exhibited paintings resembled embroidery and the work of a goldsmith.[581] Critics saw the lack of intellectual underpinnings in Druby's practice as a 'disease,' which infected the other members of the *Impressionists*, such as Dia al-Azzawi and Yassin Shakir.[582] The English language newspaper in Beirut *The Daily Star* extended this issue to most of the Iraqi art exhibited in the 1965 travelling exhibition: 'if some of the paintings seen at this exhibition are flat, decorative and smack of the artisan, it is well to remember that Iraq through the centuries perfected the art of embellishment of daily life.'[583]

In 1960, the editors of *al-Adab* began translating several of Sartre's texts on the colonial condition, which shifted the discussion of postcolonial identity and humanism among intellectuals in the Arab world from the forms of the material world to the inner world of thought.[584] The discourse had two central points: firstly, that the dignity of the oppressed subject of colonialism lay in his power of individual thought rather than in his actions in the outside world, and secondly, that the colonial subject's thought was not confined to the local context but was part of a universal condition.[585] Both al-Rubaie and Fadhil's concerns over Druby's paintings' lack of thought echo this intellectual discourse. In his article, Fadhil includes a painting by Haidar titled *Three Cubes and a Human*, which appears to encapsulate this idea literally [Figure 2.55]. A man sits in contemplation enclosed in several linear abstract cubes, and from his head, lines emanate, possibly symbolizing thought. Fadhil praised Haidar in the article for separating his use of colour from its associations with the natural external world.[586] Another piece of evidence that Iraqi artists were considering these issues in their work comes from the title of a painting by a new member of Druby's *Impressionist* group, medical doctor 'Ala Bashir (b. 1937),

---

[580] Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' 4.
[581] Victor Hakim, 'Exposition Itinerante des Peintres d'Irak,' *La Revue du Liban*, October 13, 1965.
[582] al-Rubaie, 'With the Iraqi Impressionists,' 77; Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' 5.
[583] Dorothy Parramore, 'Melmir's Brush is crude, but it is always honest,' *The Daily Star*, October 14, 1965.
[584] Yoav di-Capua, No Exit, 156-157.
[585] Ibid.
[586] Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' 7.

who would go on to be one of Druby's closest friends. His surrealist painting of shapes in space was called *Hopeless Humanism*.[587]

A few months before the two writers published their critiques of the *Impressionists* in 1964, another Lebanese intellectual journal *Hiwar*, published an article by the Egyptian painter Fouad Kamel (1919 – 1973), which connected his nonrepresentational abstract paintings with the discourse of postcolonial humanism occurring around the Arab world.[588] Kamel wrote: 'When considering my art, I work as I think and think as I work…I do not separate action from thought, as I do not separate myself from the cosmos.'[589] He then went on to dismiss the interest in formal elements apparent in Druby's work: 'I remove the veil of trimmings and ornaments, and break mathematical certainty and geometric construction.'[590] *Hiwar* was well known to Iraqi artists and published writings and artworks by several Iraqi artists in the same year as Kamel's article came out.[591] Kamel's association between abstraction and the humanism of the postcolonial struggle also had reverberations far outside the Arab world. In 1963 to mark the third anniversary of the revolution, the Cuban government held an exhibition titled *Abstract Expressionism*, which promoted abstraction as the best form of committed art that resisted oppression.[592]

Several other sources had also brought abstraction to Baghdad in the early 1960s. In 1963, an exhibition of the Spanish painter Guevara was held at the American Friends of the Middle East Society. In his review of the exhibition, al-Rawi remarked that the presentation of the painter's work was explosive in Baghdad because his abstraction was unfamiliar in the Baghdad art field. Al-Rawi qualified Guevara's abstraction as internal and universal, as opposed to external: '[In Guevara's paintings] the mystical union itself is swimming in its eternal orbits. Symbols become forms independent of everything

---

[587] *Seventh Exhibition of the Society of Iraqi Artists* (Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, December 1964); Parramore, 'Melmir's Brush is crude, but it is always honest.'
[588] Fouad Kamel, 'Meaninglessness within and without,' *Hiwar* 2:3 (March-April, 1964): 102-104. Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 241-242.
[589] Kamel, 'Meaninglessness within and without,' 102-104. A similar sentiment was expressed by Syrian artists at the same time and in the same publications. See: Lenssen, *The Shape of Support*, 281-356.
[590] Fuad Kamel, 'Meaninglessness within and without,' 102-104.
[591] *Hiwar* 2:2 (January-February, 1964): 57 and 96-120.
[592] David Craven, 'A Legacy for the Latin American Left: Abstract Expressionism as Anti-Imperialist Art,' in *Abstract Expressionism: The International Context*, ed. Joan M. Marter (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 67-81.

external.'[593] At the same time, the Iraqi artist Jamil Hamoudi (1924 – 2003) returned from Paris to Baghdad. Hamoudi had practiced a nonrepresentational abstraction since the late 1940s, and Iraqi artists would have been aware of his ideas through his journal *al-Fikr al-Hadith*, founded in 1945. However, it was only on his return to Baghdad in the 1960s that he began to appear in the discourse and exhibitions.[594] His nonrepresentational abstraction was based on thought, but rather than looking at universal thought, he focused on the Arabic letter.[595] In his *Written Painting* (1954), published in Jabra's 1962 article on contemporary art in Iraq, Arabic letters are used as the building blocks of abstracted geometric forms, such as in the centre-right where a black circle over a triangle with a lighter-coloured dot hovering above resemble the Arabic letter *fa* [Figure 2.56].[596]

Shukri had already begun experimenting with abstraction in the late 1950s. However, his paintings from this period continued to abstract the physical world. For example, in his painting *Eid al-Ahda* (1957), he attempted to capture the movement and commotion in celebrating an Islamic religious holiday through swirling black lines [Figure 2.57].[597] While less obviously representational than Druby's *Festival* (1958) [Figure 0.5], which was also called *Eid* in Arabic, Shukri's composition is also triangular and uses similar circles and diagonal lines from left to right to indicate the movement of forms or bodies in space. In contrast, Shukri's 1962 abstract is titled *The End*, which connotes a more introspective and universal theme. In the painting, which was exhibited along with Druby's *The Fishermen* in the 1965 travelling exhibition, Shukri no longer employed paint to create the illusion of three-dimensional space or the movement of physical forms, but instead, threw paint across the canvas from different angles and spread it by moving the canvas around in a classic form of abstract expressionism. Shukri's method emphasized the physicality of the paint and canvas and was reminiscent of Kamel's declaration of action as thought [Figure 2.58].[598] It is possible that Shukri was aware of the link between the American

---

[593] Nouri al-Rawi, 'Exhibitions of Plastic Artists,' *Baghdad* (1963): 47-48.
[594] Jabra, 'L'art Irakien Contemporain,' 347.
[595] Shabout, *Modern Arab Art*, 72-73.
[596] Jabra, 'L'art Irakien Contemporain,' 347.
[597] Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' 80.
[598] Kamel, 'Meaninglessness within and without,' 102-104; *Iitinerant Exhibition of Iraqi Painting*.

version of abstract expressionism and its adoption as a form of resistance art in both Cuba and the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, because a Cuban delegation had visited the Middle East in 1959, and there was increasing exchange between Iraq and the Soviet Union. [599] The idea that abstraction could link the realm of personal thought to the universal made it an increasingly popular form in the Soviet Union during this period.[600] Abstraction was not confined to an older generation of Iraqi artists in the early 1960s, and in 1965, two groups of young Iraqi artists the *Contemporaries* and the *Innovators* were founded around the promotion of nonrepresentational abstraction based on universal thought.[601]

In December 1964, at the annual exhibition of the *IAS*, Druby exhibited his first nonrepresentational abstract paintings.[602] Other artists, including Faiq Hassan and Jabra, also experimented with nonrepresentational abstraction for the first time in the exhibition, and Druby claimed in the 1970s that his move to abstraction was largely due to the popularity of the movement.[603] In his memoirs, Iraqi writer Abdullah Habbo (b. 1936) recalls the popularity of abstraction, and at the same time, his amazement to find Druby making abstract paintings, because he considered Druby an academic painter.[604] Some of the titles of Druby's works from 1964, such as *Thought* and *Atmospheres*, resemble the universalizing and introspective titles of other artists during the same period, such as Shukri's *The End*. However, while disconnected from the Iraqi context, Druby's title *Atmospheres* was still rooted in the representational tradition, as were most of his abstract paintings from this period. The title of the painting in Arabic could mean the more abstract concept of atmosphere, as in English, but much it more commonly means 'the weather.'

---

[599] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 172-173; Craven, 'A Legacy for the Latin American Left: Abstract Expressionism as Anti-Imperialist Art,' and Jane A. Sharp, 'Abstract Expressionism as a Model for 'Contemporary Art' in the Soviet Union,' in *Abstract Expressionism: The International Context*, 61-98.

[600] Sharp, 'Abstract Expressionism as a Model for 'Contemporary Art' in the Soviet Union,' 83.

[601] Naef, *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe*, 262-265,

[602] *Seventh Exhibition of the Society of Iraqi Artists* (1964).

[603] Al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),'19.

[604] Abdullah Habbo, 'Paul Klee and Abstraction in Iraqi Fine Arts,' *Free Thinker* (7 March 2015), accessed 5 January 2017, https://mufakerhur.org/بول-كلى-والتجريد-في-الفن-التشكيلى-العر/.

Sa'dun Fadhil's 1965 review of Iraqi art suggested that Druby's abstractions were simply an extension of his earlier work. Fadhil argued that one of Druby's abstract paintings shown at the 1965 *Impressionists* exhibition and his 1956 painting *Sandgrouse* were 'two styles which constitute one form' because Druby was still focused on technique, shape, and colour in his abstract painting.[605] As in *Sandgrouse*, Druby used crescent forms as well as shaded and blended colours in *Atmospheres* [Figure 2.59]. An abstraction from 1966 in which he used a nearly identical composition to *Sandgrouse* – crescent forms with long protruding tails against a background of shaded blue rectangles – is an even clearer indication that Druby was not changing his approach to painting in his abstracts, but simply removing the representational elements [Figure 2.60]. In many of his abstract paintings from this period, Druby even retained representational elements, such as in *Abstract Architecture*, where rounded arches in the background resemble doors and the expanding pyramid of rectangles on the left resembles a staircase [Figure 2.61].

Druby's interest in the formal aspects of his nonrepresentational abstracts is underlined by the title and composition of his painting *Harmony in Blue* (1966) [Figure 2.62]. As the title announces, Druby focused on the interplay of shades of blue and used this shading to create depth. The darker blues around the edges give the illusion of shadow and three-dimensionality to the lighter blue forms in the centre of the composition. In adhering to the scientific techniques of academic painting, Druby went as far as to make preparatory sketches for his abstracts, as he had done for his representational paintings in the 1940s and 1950s [Figure 2.63]. In the same year Druby painted *Harmony in Blue*, Iraqi writer Nur al-Din Faris claimed that: 'despite his skill in colouring, [Druby's] paintings were devoid of any indication of mind or tender humanism.'[606] Druby did not refute the critics' claims that he was not committing to a world view based on universal introspective thought nor did he see his commitment to the technical principles of academic painting as contrary to creating a postcolonial modern Iraqi art. In 1964, the same year he began painting abstracts, Druby gave an interview to the Iraqi journal *al-Aqlam* where he stated his definition of modern art explicitly for the first time. He claimed that 'modern art is

---

[605] Fadhil, 'The Last Art Season in Baghdad,' 12.
[606] Nur al-Din Faris, 'A subject between illusion and life,' *Arab Revolution*, 19 June 1966; quoted in al-Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*, 185.

concerned with keeping pace with new scientific developments as I refer to the study of colour as a scientific study,' and that modern art was based on 'natural surfaces' and 'natural forms.'[607]

Druby was not the only artist to adopt nonrepresentational abstraction in an ideology and form that did not comply completely with an existential commitment to individual thought embedded in a universal cosmos. In an article in *Hiwar* from 1965, Faiq Hassan still described himself as focusing on colour, form, and light, and included representational abstracted images of peasant life instead of nonrepresentational abstractions in the article.[608] A catalogue of mostly 1960s Iraqi abstract paintings compiled by Hamoudi, shows two abstracts by Faiq Hassan: in one, a series of monochrome white geometric forms lie on a flat dark background, and in the other, thick blue paint strokes mimic the calligraphic process of writing Arabic letters [Figure 2.64].[609] The Arabic letter would increasingly become a method through which Iraqi artists could retain the local context in abstract thought. By 1965, most of the *Impressionists* were exhibiting abstract paintings.[610] Dia al-Azzawi was emerging as one of the more prominent artists in the group and began exhibiting on his own in the mid-1960s. The titles of his abstract paintings shown in the 1965 *Impressionists* exhibition, such as *Folklore Symbols* and *Decorative Composition*, illustrate their continued commitment to the local context and to physical markers of that context.[611] Working in the National Museum, al-Azzawi used many symbols derived from archaeological objects in the collection.[612] For example, in his painting *From the Remains of the Battle* (probably *Folklore Symbols*), al-Azzawi included a form with two dots mirrored on either side of a grey line in the lower right of the central motif, which resembles Sumerian sculpture [Figure 2.65]. Al-Azzawi placed Arabic letters in centre of the composition. Shakir Hassan Al Said also made use of the Arabic letter in his abstract compositions from this period. In a sketch from 1966, he used the

---

[607] 'Interview with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Aqlam*, 109-110.
[608] 'Faiq Hassan,' *Hiwar* 21 (March-April 1965): 52-56.
[609] Hamoudi, *Contemporary Art from Iraq* (Stockholm: Linkoln Blom, 1975).
[610] *Fifth Exhibition of the Iraqi Impressionists* (Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, May 1965).
[611] Ibid.
[612] Bahrani, Muzaffar, Shabout, ed., *Dia al-Azzawi*.

same abstracted form of the letter *fa*, in the upper right of the composition, as the one that appeared in Hamoudi's *Written Painting* [Figure 2.56 and 2.66].

The letter was not the only method in blending local thought with the universal. In June 1966, Shakir Hassan Al Said published a convoluted update to his 1951 *BGMA* manifesto called the *Contemplative Manifesto* in an Iraqi newspaper.[613] In the manifesto, Al Said used many expressions derived from a branch of Islam, Sufism, through which he saw a way to connect the abstract thought of universal modern art to his local context.[614] He also reiterated the sentiment of many of Druby's critics, that the symbols of the external world were no longer a valid path to a local committed and postcolonial modern art. However, in his manifesto, he differed from many Arab intellectuals in his critique of the selfishness of a humanism based on individual thought alone. He wrote:

> Earlier conceptions and assumptions drove the artist to cling to a personal and relative view in practices… 'creating a unique personality for our civilization' and uniting the efforts of the intellectual with those of the man on the street.' All this…inevitably leads him to construct the reality of his artistic existence on either a realist-humanist basis or a materialist basis…As a methodology, this also logically entails the artist paying attention to *technique* or to *subject*…Now the artist wants to adopt a new, truly human point of view, one that renders his existence as a *vitalistic-cosmic* phenomenon rather than as a *humanistic-humanistic* phenomenon…one that in fact uses him to reveal the *truth*, instead of him…using the work of art to reveal himself.[615]

While not overtly political, Shakir Hassan Al Said's manifesto hints at a critique of a postcolonial humanism based on individual thought that was driven by the intellectual circles of the Arab left and especially by the Marxists. They claimed that a humanism focused on individual thought neglected real social commitment and led to an ambiguous attitude towards the world, which did not make room for laws and truths that could improve society.[616] Shakir Hassan Al Said's emphasis on his movement as a 'cosmic phenomenon' rather than a humanistic one, and on the search for 'truth' bears a resemblance to the contemporary Marxist debates. Abstract individual thought was under

---

[613] Shakir Hassan Al Said, 'The Contemplative Manifesto,' *al-Jumhurriya*, June 23, 1966. Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 252-255.
[614] Shabout, *Modern Arab Art,* 101-103.
[615] Al Said, 'The Contemplative Manifesto,' in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 253.
[616] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 159-161.

fire from many sources and for many reasons in the Arab world around 1966, not the least of which was the discovery that the journal *Hiwar*, one of the greatest supporters of abstract painting, was discovered to have been sponsored by the American Central Intelligence Agency as part of their Cold War efforts against the Soviet Union.[617] The question of the form of socialist art would manifest in the Iraqi art field more strongly in the next decade.

Despite their divergent ideologies and critiques, all artists continued to converge around the *IAS* in the late 1960s. During his tenure as president of the *IAS*, Druby collaborated with the Gulbenkian Foundation to open a new building for the society in 1966 to house exhibitions, studios, and a library. The building was inaugurated as part of a week-long cultural programme sponsored by the Gulbenkian Foundation, which also included an orchestral concert and an exhibition of modern Portuguese art.[618] In a video of the exhibition held at the inauguration of the new building, Druby is at the forefront, showing around a European delegation from the Gulbenkian Foundation.[619] He walks them past his abstract painting *Harmony in Blue,* and the video camera also pauses on his painting *The Goal* completed in the same year [Figure 2.67]. While the painting's message of achieving a goal as a group complied with the postcolonial humanist concept of the universal, Druby's *The Goal* represented everything that existential postcolonial abstraction was not. It expressed its message of achieving a goal literally by showing a group of figures climbing upwards on top of one another. As with his painting *Workers* from the late 1950s, Druby signalled an upward motion through a long vertical canvas. The figures are situated over a geometrically deconstructed background full of symbols of the local context – traditional Iraqi architecture – such as the combination of column and balcony composed of swirling lines in the centre left and a protruding *mashrabiyya* balcony marked by three rounded windows against a purple background in the upper right.

---

[617] Elizabeth M. Holt, "'Bread or Freedom': The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and the Arabic Literary Journal 'Hiwar,'" *Journal of Arabic Literature* 44:1 (2013): 83-102.
[618] *Week of Culture and Art in Baghdad*; *Letter from Hafidh Druby to the Gulbenkian Foundation.*
[619] *Week of Culture and Art in Baghdad* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1966) video.

Besides Druby's own convictions and the ideologies of other artists, the taste of the urban elite public also impacted his practice in the 1960s. This is crassly illustrated in his 1966 painting *Leda and the Swan*, in which a representational rendition of the mythical scene of Leda being raped by a swan is superimposed over a background of geometric forms which resembles Druby's many abstractions from the same period [Figure 2.68]. Leda was normally shown reclining, but here Druby depicts her controlling and pushing the swan, heightening the eroticism.[620] Druby provided a pornographic image for his patron, who at least at the time of Druby's retrospective in 1980 was Fakhri Chalabi from one of the most elite families. [621] At the same time in the background of the painting, Druby marked his participation in the most popular form of modern art among Iraqi artists at the time, abstraction. Druby was certainly not the only artist to veer into the erotic or to appeal to the taste of urban elite patrons. A month before it published Fouad Kamel's article on abstraction in 1964, *Hiwar* published a very sexy sketchbook by Jewad Selim with a drawing of a woman having sex with a mythical creature, not dissimilar to Druby's *Leda* [Figure 2.69].[622] Also, the article on Faiq Hassan from the same journal noted that the public continued to patronize and prefer his geometrically abstracted views of rural life over his nonrepresentational abstractions.[623]

A photograph including a similarly erotic painting by Druby from the 1967 report of the *IAS* foretold the transformation in Druby's career over the next decade [Figure 2.70]. In the photograph, Prime Minister Tahir Yahya (1916 – 1986) along with a group of politicians and Druby himself, in the left foreground, pause in front of Druby's painting *Magic of the Abbasids*. While the title suggests an early Islamic historical context, Druby did not use archaeological material, historical texts, or a strict academic representational style in the painting, as in his archaeological paintings of the late 1950s. Instead, a crown, some armbands, and pointed niches set a pair of semi-nude women in a vaguely historical past. The two women touch each other in a homoerotic fashion, emphasized by the 'magic' of the reclining woman's breast transforming into a pear. The flowers in the

---

[620] Helen Sword, 'Leda and the Modernists,' *PMLA* 107: 2 (March, 1992): 305-318.
[621] Al Said and Selim, *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue)*.
[622] 'Jewad Selim,' *Hiwar* 2:2 (January-February, 1964): 96-120.
[623] 'Faiq Hassan,' *Hiwar* 2:1 (March-April 1965): 52-56.

foreground are abstracted into geometric forms, but most of the composition hovers in a grey zone between academic representation and geometric abstraction. In their hurry to admire Druby's painting, the politicians overlook a nonrepresentational abstract beside it by the young artist Rafa Nasiri (1940 – 2013). Nasiri had found a path to committed art through the abstraction of the Arabic letter in the late 1960s, as with many of his fellow Iraqi artists. The prime minister cannot see either painting well with his eyes shielded by sunglasses, and as Druby explains his painting, Yahya looks out at the camera, more interested in the form of his own image.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Druby's form and content fluctuated from adherence to trends among other Iraqi artists, the taste of the urban elites, and government patronage. Yet as this close reading has illustrated, he shifted his style in a way that continued to valorise his interpretation of a Euro-American method of academic painting. His method's nonconformity to the ideologies of other Iraqi artists did not ostracize him from the Baghdad art field, but rather, provided a discourse, which other artists engaged with and pushed against.

Chapter Three | **Political Interventions and Canon Fodder 1968 – 1991**

At the gate of Hell stood Picasso, and the guitar player from Madrid…
The guitar player from Madrid dies
In order that he may be born again,
Under the suns of other cities and in different masks,
And search for the kingdom of rhythm and colour…
Returning to mother earth with those wearing a crown of torturing light,
The dissenters and the builders of creative cities
In the bottom of the sea of rhythm and colour.

– Abdul Wahab al-Bayyati, *The Nightmare* (1971)[624]

---

[624] M. M. Badawi, *A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 215.

If the Iraqi prime minister turned his back on abstraction in 1967, Druby turned his back on the form in 1968. In a photograph taken in Druby's studio at the Institute of Fine Arts, Druby points out part of his mural *Qadisiyya* to a few of his students [Figure 3.1]. Behind him hang the last of his abstracts, which he would abandon completely in 1971. The photograph has a deceptive feeling of déjà-vous – as in the late 1950s, Druby returns to his academic representational style when commissioned by the government to paint a historic scene, here the early Islamic battle of Qadisiyya (c. 636 CE). However, the source of this painting's history was not archaeology but propaganda, linking the new Ba'thist government achievements with early Islamic victories. As the photograph encapsulates, the pressure on Druby's practice in the 1970s came not from other artists but from the government. The Iraqi government's interest in realism in many ways conformed with Druby's own commitment to an academic representational form, but its agenda shifted Druby's representational practice in ways that did not match academic painting as Druby saw it.

Furthermore, the discourse on representational art had evolved among artists and intellectuals during this period, linked more to revolutionary realism, universalism, and the left than to the European academic practice. Druby took advantage of the trend to return to an academic representational style in his private practice for elite patrons. He occasionally returned to his cubist form, but he either quoted his past work or he simply overlaid geometric forms on top of representational compositions. While Druby participated in exhibitions and continued to maintain a leadership role in the Baghdad art field, his practice became increasingly introspective and retrospective, isolated the ideologies and methods of other Iraqi artists. As Dia al-Azzawi wrote in 1974 in a critique directly levelled against artists like Druby: 'the measure of an artist is not his participation; rather it is his artistic production.'[625] Druby often exhibited his older paintings during this period and after his retrospective at the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad in 1980, discourse around him in the Baghdad art field focused more on his legacy than on his contemporary contributions to modern Iraqi art.

---

[625] Dia al-Azzawi, 'Explode the artistic and cultural handicaps,' *Intégral* 9 (December, 1974): 37. Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 386.

Between the 1967 photograph in taken in the *IAS* and the 1968 photograph taken in the Institute of Fine Arts, a lot had happened in Baghdad. The 1967 Six-Day War had major impact on the discourse and art production of the Arab world in the 1970s. The loss of the Arab forces, the shear loss of life at over 20,000 causalities, and the loss of the territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights led to a disillusionment with pan-Arabism and a more general sense of ambiguity and frustration in Iraq.[626] It also put the Palestinian issue in centre stage. In the aftermath, The Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information banned all writings by Sartre. The move was motivated by Sartre's perceived Zionism in the Arab world, but it also represented an intellectual reconfiguration. Abstract thought epitomized by the engagement with Sartre's existentialism was no longer a viable form of commitment – the era called for revolutionary action situated in the physical world.[627]

Even more monumental for Iraqi society was the coup d'état in the summer of 1968, which returned the Ba'thists to power under president Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr (1914 – 1982) and his influential cousin Saddam Hussein (1937 – 2006). The government's main ideology, as so many Iraqi governments before, was centred on consolidating power, and leaders generally made decisions that favoured an increasingly isolationist nationalism. The government, mostly through the efforts of Saddam Hussein, staged unprecedented crackdowns on oppositional voices, curtailing freedom of speech, scattering intellectuals into a diaspora, and creating a pervasive fear across the country and beyond its borders. At the same time and for the first time in Iraq's history, the government made effective land and economic reforms, redistributing wealth and increasing the size of the urban and urban elite populations. The economic prosperity was largely due to an increase in oil revenue as a result of a rise in oil prices globally. The government nationalized the oil industry in 1972, removing the long-time Euro-American presence of the ICP and its employees. It signed a fifteen-year treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union in the same year, and the Soviets helped to manage the oil and provided weapons. Iraq's relationship

---

[626] Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[627] Di-Capua, *No Exit*, 241.

with the Soviet Union, its Arab neighbours, and Europe would fluctuate throughout the 1970s, eventually souring in the 1980s.[628] This was in no small part due to the government's crackdown on opposition through unprecedented violence, which created a far-flung diaspora.[629]

The art field changed significantly during this period. The government remained the main financial supporter of art initiatives, and its leaders made art a central component of their political aims. Saddam Hussein famously stated that 'the artist is like a politician; they both make life in advance forms.'[630] With the economic boom, the government poured money into exhibitions and public art. The Gulbenkian Foundation continued to support Iraqi artists in the early 1970s, funding, for example, a new building for the Institute of Fine Arts and art prizes.[631] However, the Iraqi government's use of violence against large parts of the population and its nationalization of the oil industry compelled the Gulbenkian Foundation to end its funding in 1974.[632] The government's aggressive culture policy and Cold War politics ensured that there was still an active programme of national exhibitions of Iraqi modern art abroad and of foreign artists in Baghdad.

At the same time, the art field was splintering into increasingly disparate parts. Druby remained a teacher at the Institute of Fine Arts and served as its dean for several years in the 1970s.[633] His article on the excavations at Hatra also promoted him to full professor at the College of Sciences.[634] Of the first modern artists, Faiq Hassan remained active and Hamoudi also became a vocal member of the art community. Their groups, the *Impressionists* and the *Pioneers*, continued to exhibit, but they were overshadowed by groups organized by the next generation of artists such as Shakir Hassan Al Said, Haidar,

---

[628] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 193-248.
[629] Ibid.
[630] Nada Shabout, 'Collecting Modern Iraqi Art,' in *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, ed. Sonja Mejcher-Attasi and John Pedro Schwartz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 197-211, 206.
[631] Jose de Azeredo Perdigao, *Report on the Contributions of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Iraqi* (Lisbon: Gulbenkian Foundation, 1972); *Letter from Shafiq al-Kamali, Minister of Information to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*, March 19, 1972, Caluste Gulbenkian Foundation Archive No. 8702.
[632] *Gulbenkian Foundation Report, December, 1974*, Gulbenkian Foundation Archives.
[633] *Letter from Shafiq al-Kamali, Minister of Information to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*.
[634] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra.'; Sohail Druby, email to Sarah Johnson (9 April 2019).

and Dia al-Azzawi. Artists' groups were much more numerous than in the preceding two decades and many artists belonged to several groups. Some, like *The Triangle Group* faded quickly, but others, such as Shakir Hassan Al Said's *One Dimension Group* had a lasting impact.[635] The groups also staged their own exhibitions abroad unrelated to government programmes. Despite the weakening of pan-Arabism, many Iraqi artists joined the Union of Arab Artists, which included artists from across the Arab world.[636] Many artists also got involved in the non-aligned and global communist movements. Several exiled artists remained connected to the art world in Baghdad further broadening the art field's reach.

A New Reality (1968 – 1980)

In 1968, Druby created one of his only two paintings related to the crisis in Palestine caused by the Six-Day War. The painting retained many elements of his abstract period: a circle, u-shape, and grey rectangle combine to form an abstracted face against a composition of colourful geometric forms [Figure 3.2]. For Druby the painting, titled *The Weeper,* was a departure from his earlier work in that it showed sadness – white lines of tears stream down the emerging face. Previously, even in his few political works, Druby had always illustrated moments of elation and hope, often in the form of raised hands or upward movement. His subject choice was part of a surging interest in Palestinian themes among artists and writers around the Middle East.[637] An announcement in the *Baghdad Observer* for the 1969 exhibition of the *IAS* read: 'New paintings depicting the major Arab issue Palestine will be exhibited. Paintings portraying commando struggle against the Zionist occupation will also be displayed.'[638]

Three years later, Druby painted an updated version of the painting, which was commissioned by the Iraqi government as a gift for British writer Ethel Mannin (1900 –

---

[635] *Exhibition of the Triangle Group* (Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, 1970); Nada Shabout, *Modern Arab Art*, 127-135.
[636] Alsaden, 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial,' 5.
[637] Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti, *Past disquiet: artists, international solidarity and museums-in-exile* (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2018).
[638] '12th Exhibition of Iraqi Artists Association,' *Baghdad Observer*, December 28, 1969.

1984) in gratitude for her support of the Palestinian cause [Figure 3.3].[639] Druby's second version of the painting shifted from the abstract to the concrete and representational. The title of the painting changed from *The Weeper* to the more explicit *Weeping Palestine*. In the new composition, Druby inserted the abstracted weeping face into a representational scene. Semi-geometricized and semi-representation figures, common in Druby's cubist form from the 1960s, cast shadows on the ground, creating three-dimensional space. Behind the figures, Druby used his typical half-modern half-traditional cityscape, including skyscrapers on the left and the dome of a mosque on the right. The figures raise their arms up, traditionally Druby's sign of hope and accomplishment, but this time, they raise their arms not in celebration, but despair, towards the weeping face. A critic commented in 1978 in reference to this painting that 'Druby is not good at political paintings' because he was too neutral in his art.[640] Yet, the political dimension of the painting was not just in the subject but also in the transition to a representational form.

Between 1968 and 1971, many new artists' groups and manifestos had appeared in Iraq. These groups were split between those that practiced forms of abstraction and those that practiced a form of representational realism. However, most of the groups were united by the underlying principle that their art was based on the external reality around them rather than on the internal world of thoughts, diverging from the mood of the 1960s. For example, the manifesto of the *New Vision* group, founded in 1969 by Dia al-Azzawi, Rafa al-Nasiri and others, proclaimed: 'An artist grounds his justifications for human existence in nature…making art not a means of seclusion in individual existence or immersion in one's private world, but rather a vision directed to the world.'[641] The group's resulting work was mostly abstract.[642] The twenty-six-year-old artist, Yahya al-Sheikh (b. 1945), wrote an article in conjunction with his 1971 solo exhibition in Baghdad titled *Presence in the Object, and the Object's Presence in Transformation, the Becoming of Consciousness*, in which he stated: 'Total dependence on form being the ultimate occurrence of

---

[639] Documents in the Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin; Ahmed Al Rawi, 'The post-colonial novels of Desmond Stewart and Ethel Mannin,' *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 9: 4 (October, 2016): 552-564.
[640] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 14.
[641] Dia al-Azzawi, et. al., *Towards a New Vision* (Baghdad, 1969). Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 306-309.
[642] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Four Artists from Baghdad* (Baghdad, c. 1972)

consciousness requires sacrifice and adventure in the real world.'[643] In the same moment, al-Sheikh's practice was shifting from abstraction to representation through the introduction of figures in his compositions.[644] Shakir Hassan Al Said's *One Dimension* group adopted many principles from his *Contemplative Manifesto* (1966), but in their 1973 manifesto, they expressed an ideology more firmly situated in the physical world. Shakir Hassan Al Said described it as 'a state of encounter with nature as wall, or nature as ground.'[645] One of the other members, a doctor and amateur artist, Qutaiba al-Sheikh Nouri, wrote that the 'plastic reality' of the Arabic letter as a form in space was important for the group.[646]

Some artists and groups even used the language of scientific and technical skill present in Druby's own definition of modern art. For example, Mahmoud Sabri, who was based in Prague after his exile, wrote in a manifesto titled *Quantum Realism – An Art of Processes* (1971) that in his new method, 'art is transformed into an objective activity carried out with the precision of natural science.'[647] Far from his painting of prostitutes from the early 1950s, Mahmoud Sabri's resulting paintings were abstractions of interconnected lines in bright colours meant to represent the elements that made up matter in the natural world. For example, they had titles such *Air – Oxygen (O2) 4 Nitrogen (N2)* or *Clay – A1203-SiO2-H2O*.[648] In *Clay*, diagonal stripes of bright colours cross the canvas, reminiscent of material under a microscope or a litmus test [Figure 3.4]. Like *New Vision* and al-Sheikh, Mahmoud Sabri explored the physical rather than intellectual underpinnings of the external environment.

The *Academy* group, also founded in 1971 by Haidar and some of his students, came the closest to Druby's artistic philosophy by promoting a return to academic representational

---

[643] Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 343-345.

[644] 'Paintings from the 1970s,' yahyaalsheikh.com (February 6, 2019).

[645] Shakir Hassan Al Said, 'The philosophical, technical, and expressive aspects of the One Dimension,' in *The One Dimension: Art inspired by the Letter* (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Sha'b, 1973). Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 357-359.

[646] Qutaiba al-Sheikh Nour, 'The Civilizational Quality of the One Dimension,' in *The One Dimension: Art inspired by the Letter* (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Sha'b, 1973). Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 359-361.

[647] Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 347-350.

[648] Sabri, Mahmoud. *Quantum Realism*, accessed August 3, 2018, http://www.quantumrealism.co.uk.

painting based on 'scientific study.'[649] The cover of the first exhibition catalogue used a painting by one of the group's members Nu'man Hadi Salman [Figure 3.5]. The painting is an academic representational portrait of the members of the group watching their teacher paint a female nude model. Rather than arguing, however, as Druby had, that the nude was linked to the tradition of European painting, the *Academy* group declared that the academic representational style was the best form of modern art because it encompassed all other forms of art. The academic style was, according to their catalogue, the first way of representing the world through art, and since Iraq had invented many forms of art in the ancient past, academic painting was 'derived from the soil of [Iraq].' Secondly, since academic painting encompassed other forms of modern art, it represented 'modern global thought.'[650] In other words, the academic nude, which for many Iraqi artists had been the antithesis of a committed local modern art in the 1950s and 1960s was now a viable way to a modern Iraqi art embedded in a global modernity.

In 1971, Druby submitted a representational female nude in-between his academic style and his geometric cubist form, which was titled *Decoration of a Woman*, to an exhibition of Arab artists in Kuwait [Figure 3.6].[651] Rather than being a commission for a private patron, Druby's nude was submitted as exemplary of Iraqi modern art. Participation in the exhibition in Kuwait was largely an artist-run initiative, and therefore, Druby's submission to it along with the emergence of the *Academy* group indicated the emerging acceptance of academic representational art among Iraqi artists, mostly independent of government projects.[652]

However, the *Academy* group was short-lived. Perhaps its principles were too close to the art many Iraqi artists had rejected in the 1950s. Furthermore, its pedagogical underpinnings were anathema to some groups, such as the *New Vision* group, which declared in its manifesto that 'we reject academic guardianship and instructional

---

[649] Kadhim Haidar, *First Exhibition of the Academy Group* (Baghdad, 1971).
[650] Ibid.
[651] *The Second Arabian Artist Biennale Exhibition* (Kuwait City: Kuwait Government Press, 1971).
[652] Dia al-Azzawi, 'Graphic Design and the Visual Arts in Iraq,' in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 371.

thinking.'[653] Despite this, the *Academy* group saw realism in a similar way to the other groups in one respect, which differed from Druby's own conception of academic representational painting – all the groups conceived of the representation of reality through painting not as a product of European academy training but as embedded in the local context through the observation of the physical environment around them. Through this observation of the local environment, artists saw themselves as rejecting the European painting tradition. As the manifesto of the *New Realism* group (1973) stated: 'The artists who follow European trends innovate within form for the sake of form – as if playing with pure harmonies. However, the true realists always built and are building, with determination, a form that is more refined and more in line with substance.'[654]

The other significant departure from Druby's evolutionary artistic philosophy was that the realism of artists' groups in the early 1970s was linked to revolution. The *New Vision* group manifesto announced: 'The artist is a fighter who refuses to put his weapon down…The artist is a critic and a revolutionary, negating the world around him.' In order to be a successful revolutionary, the *New Vision* group argued, the artist had to destroy the individuality of the artist: 'The presence of the revolution confronts him with the spirituality of self-annihilation and sacrifice…the closure of the self.'[655] Qutaiba al-Sheikh Nouri argued in a 1971 essay that abstraction was partly revolutionary, but it was also a selfish way in which the artist escaped the reality of his or her environment by retreating into the self. Without the connection to the surrounding environment, according to Nouri, abstraction could not be fully committed. [656] Mahmoud Sabri argued in his *Quantum Realism* that objectivity would 'bridge the frustrating gap between art and society.'[657] So the revolution these artists promoted involved a suppression of the ego and a direct engagement with their surrounding social environment.

---

[653] al-Azzawi, et. al., *Towards a New Vision*, 309.
[654] Abdal-Razzaq Ali Jawdat, Muhammad Arif, Shams al-Din Faris, and Ibrahim al-Kamali, 'Manifesto of New Realism,' *al-Thawra*, February 14, 1973. Translated in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 367-368.
[655] al-Azzawi, et. al., *Towards a New Vision*, 308-309.
[656] Qutaiba al-Sheikh Nouri, 'Circulism: Why Circulism? What is Circulism?' Translated in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 345-346.
[657] Sabri, 'Quantum Realism – An Art of Processes,' in *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, 350.

Much of this discourse was embedded in communist and leftist politics. Mahmoud Sabri was living in Prague at the time that he wrote his *Quantum Realism* manifesto, which was in the Soviet Union. Czech artists also were experimenting with an abstraction based on the physical natural world during that period.[658] Other artists, such as Mohammed Arif (1937 – 2009), who was a member of the *New Realism* group, had studied art in Moscow.[659] With relative freedom in the 1970s, the ICP staged several of its own exhibitions in Baghdad and also abroad, for example in Italy.[660] The catalogue of the 1974 exhibition celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the ICP praised the work of Mahmoud Sabri from the 1950s, quoted Haidar as an inspiration, and included the work of Shams al-Din Faris, who was a member of the *New Realism* group. The exhibition also included many works by artists from the *Academy* group.[661] The catalogue denounced the 'deviation' of Iraqi modern art in the 1960s into isolating 'abstract formal values'.[662] The Soviet idea that realism and representational art were desirable because they spoke to the people and suppressed individuality was stated explicitly in the *New Realism* manifesto.[663] While abstracted modernist forms were increasingly allowed to be exhibited in Moscow in the 1960s and 1970s, after the protests in Prague in 1968, which led to the Soviet government's invasion of Czechoslovakia in August of that year, the Soviet government returned to conservative discourse supporting socialist realism and condemning Western European modernism and 'overly intellectual' art.[664]

Druby did not participate in the discourse of realist art as revolutionary and a suppression of the self. As mentioned in Chapter Two, a Soviet delegation visiting Baghdad in the 1970s was frustrated by Druby's lack of interest in socialism and by his commitment to Western-European art ideologies.[665] Instead, Druby reiterated in several interviews in the

---

[658] Zdenek Primus, *Art is Abstraction: Czech Visual Culture of the Sixties* (Prague: Kant, 2003).
[659] 'Mohammed Arif Kurdish Art,' http://kurdistanart.blogspot.com/2013/10/muhammad-arif-artist-1937-2009-kurdish.html, January 12, 2019.
[660] *Memorial Exhibition of the Founding of the Communist Party 1934 – 1974* (Baghdad, 1974); *Mostra del 43: Anniversary Exhibition of the Foundation of the Iraqi Communist Party* (Florence, 1974).
[661] *Memorial Exhibition of the Founding of the Communist Party 1934 – 1974.*
[662] *Memorial Exhibition of the Founding of the Communist Party 1934 – 1974;*
[663] Matthew Cullerne Brown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 409-458; Jawdat, et. al., 'Manifesto of New Realism.'
[664] Elena Kornetchuk, 'Soviet Art and the State,' in *The Quest for Self-Expression: Painting in Moscow and Leningrad 1965 – 1990* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 26-31.
[665] *Soviet Delegation to Baghdad Report*, 11 May 1978, State Archives, Moscow.

early 1970s, the importance of individuality and competition in the creation of a modern Iraqi art.[666] Hamoudi was one of the few other artists to support plurality in his writings during the same period, writing in a series of essays about the *One Dimension* group that: 'the introduction of Arabic letters into contemporary plastic art has many aims, not just one single aim.'[667] Druby's practice had taken a decisive turn to academic representational painting, both in form and content. Besides his painting of a nude for the Kuwait exhibition, he painted a representational landscape of his wife's farm at Fahama on the outskirts of Baghdad [Figure 3.7]. The painting depicts bare-footed peasants performing tasks on a farm surrounded by the symbolic peasant animals, such as roosters and donkeys. However, the real focus of the canvas, which takes up over half the composition, is the play of light created by the shadow of the trees on the ground. In a 1978 interview, Druby would reiterate that an understanding of light made a great academic painter and that the essence of his formal compositions was the combination of light and shadow.[668] Similarly, in his painting of al-Kadhimiya Market in Baghdad from 1976, a bright light streams in from the background of the canvas, casting long shadows across the ground [Figure 3.8].

However, no Iraqi critics seemed to notice or care that Druby had made this transition. A *Baghdad Observer* article noted that in Druby's recent work 'colours and lines inter-cross in geometrical multitude and movement.'[669] Jabra described Druby's work in 1972: 'He intersects colours and lines in Cubism resembling an explosion of an invisible centre where people, objects, markets and domes meet.'[670] Iraqi artist and art historian Shawkat al-Rubaie (b. 1940) also wrote that Druby's form was 'nested intersecting shapes determined by lines.'[671] Among art critics, Druby's practice was becoming canonized around his cubist style, and his new work was no longer relevant. He was relegated to

---

[666] Hafidh Druby, 'Exhibition of the Institute of Fine Arts,' *al-Wasiti* (Baghdad: April, 1972); 'Meeting with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Wasiti* 4 (1972); Jalil Haidar, 'The Impressionists: What do they offer art movements? What is the reason for their comeback?' 40-42.
[667] Jamil Hamoudi, 'About the Letter…A Response,' in *The One Dimension: Art inspired by the Letter* (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Sha'b, 1973). Translated in Lenssen, Rogers, and Shabout, ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World*, 361-362.
[668] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 14-16.
[669] 'The Impressionist Group in Iraq,' *Baghdad Observer*, early 1970s.
[670] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *al-Wasiti Festival* (Baghdad, Ministry of Information and Culture, 1972).
[671] Shawkat Al-Rubaie, *Modern Fine Art in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1972), 81.

the past, and it no longer mattered to artists or critics whether or not his work was politically committed or contributed to the progress of Iraqi modern art. Despite this disinterest from the art field, Druby could not retreat completely into a private individualized practice, because the state still exerted pressure on his work in public art projects and exhibitions for which it was the main patron.

In late 1971, the Iraqi government organized its second large survey exhibition around the Soviet Union. Largely in response to the threat from the American-backed Shah of Iran and the Soviet's agreement to further economic support in Iraq, the Iraqi government drew closer to the Soviet Union and eased its pressure on the ICP in 1971.[672] The exhibition travelled to Moscow, Yerevan, Halle, Schwerin, and Berlin.[673] Druby submitted three paintings to the exhibition, all from the 1950s and 1960s: *Sandgrouse*, *Fishermen*, and an unidentified abstraction from 1968 [Figures 2.19 and 2.47].[674] A review of the exhibition in the Union of Soviet Artists' magazine *Iskusstvo* singled out Druby's *Fishermen* as an example of the 'unfortunate' 'propaganda' of 'nihilistic abstraction and modernism' of the 'bourgeois.' The author particularly found Druby's use of unrealistic colours and geometric forms for the figures of the fishermen 'artificial' and 'discomforting.' The author preferred Druby's academic style as realist, nationalist, and properly revolutionary.[675] The Union of Soviet Artists and *Iskusstvo* were in the middle of the revival of socialist realism in Moscow after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, so the critique of Druby's cubism is not surprising. The 1973 meeting of the Union declared that 'the ideological struggle against bourgeois aesthetics needs to be intensified' through 'an in-depth study of life's processes and their truthful and realistic depiction.'[676] Exhibition critics preferred representational paintings with overtly political themes such as the Iraqi communist artist Arif's representational painting demanding freedom for Kurdistan.[677]

---

[672] Batatu, 'The Second Ba'thi Regime,' *The Old Social Classes*, ebook.
[673] *Contemporary Iraqi Art* (Moscow: Union of Soviet Artists, 1971); 'Activity of the DAG in the DDR in the year 1971,' *Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft Report*, April 6, 1972, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.
[674] *Contemporary Iraqi Art* (Moscow, 1971).
[675] S. Tiulyaev, 'Exhibition of Contemporary Iraqi Art,' *Iskusstvo* 4 (1972): 54.
[676] Kornetchuk, 'Soviet Art and the State,' in *The Quest for Self-Expression*, 31.
[677] A. Beygang, 'Iraqi Traditions Rediscovered,' *Neue Zeit*, February 8, 1972, 4.

However, the fate of Druby's painting *Fishermen* in Soviet and Ba'thist literature over the next decade illustrated the fickleness of the ideal committed realism for both the Soviet state and the Iraqi Ba'th government. Not long after *Iskusstvo*'s scathing review, Druby's *Fishermen* was prominently placed in another *Iskusstvo* publication titled *Third World Realism* (1975) on the same page as Jewad Selim's *Freedom Monument* and Faiq Hassan's *Celebration of Victory*, directly linking Druby's painting to revolutionary monuments.[678] The painting was further reproduced in a Soviet survey of Iraqi art in 1982.[679] What was important in these publications was not Druby's form, but the subject of fishing peasants, which was seen as acceptably committed and revolutionary. *Third World Realism* also included a painting of fishermen by an Egyptian artist with a similar composition to Druby's work.[680] The Iraqi government included Druby's *Fishermen* in a 1970s calendar in conjunction with a description of the 1963 Ba'thist revolution and a caption reading: 'a daring attempt to establish a revolutionary, popular, and democratic regime.'[681]

In 1974, the same year that the ICP had staged its first anniversary exhibition, the Ba'th party organized its own anniversary exhibition. The rhetoric of the exhibition was similar to that of the communist artists. One of the artists noted in his speech at the exhibition opening that there were no abstract paintings in the exhibition because the artists wanted to give the public a clear image of the party's struggle.[682] This was not entirely true. As with the survey exhibition in the Soviet Union, some works used a geometric abstraction, but all the works were based on representational concepts grounded in the physical world.[683] Certain paintings, such as Nizar al-Hindawi's (b. 1947) *A Meeting* showed a new more powerful link between the academic representational painting supported by the Iraqi government and socialist realism. The painting depicted a mythical history, what a critic

---

[678] B. Weimarn, 'Art in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, in *Third World Realism* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1975), 311, plate 321.
[679] Anatol Bogdanov, *Contemporary Art in Iraq* (Leningrad: Leningrad Art Department, 1982), 60.
[680] Weimarn, 'Art in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, in *Third World Realism*, plate 313.
[681] *Calendar of the National Museum of Modern Art* (Baghdad: early 1970s), Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.
[682] 'Adal Abd al-Jabar, 'First Exhibition of the Party: lighting the way for public art,' unknown newspaper clipping, March, 1974, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.
[683] *First Exhibition of the Party* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).

called 'romantic realism,' of Iraqi president Bakr organizing the Ba'th party [Figure 3.9].[684] Al-Hindawi's title and composition quote a popular postwar genre in the Soviet Union called brigade painting, which was meant to foster communalism both through the subject of a party meeting and through the fact that several artists often worked on the composition at once. For example, in a 1950s Soviet painting of Stalin at a meeting of the central committee of the communist party, men in suits also gather around a table and gesticulate at documents. As in al-Hindawi's composition, the party literature is also placed prominently at the edge of the table in the foreground [Figure 3.10]. According to Soviet rhetoric, the academic style further added to the suppression of individualism, because through the use of the set techniques of the method, an artist did not need individual talent.[685] While only painted by one artist, al-Hindawi's composition emphasizes both the academic style – the table in the foreground recedes in scientific perspective and the faces are articulated through light and shadow – and communal decision making through the gesticulation of the group members in discussion.

All of the paintings in the 1974 Ba'th party exhibition had overtly socialist themes related to revolution, peasants or workers.[686] Unlike *Fishermen*, which he sent to the Soviet travelling exhibition, Druby's contribution to the Ba'th party exhibition *From the People's Work* was completed in an academic representational style [Figure 3.11]. In the painting, half-naked figures crouch down in a construction site scattered with bits of lumber and a half-completed column in the upper-left of the composition. The crouched figures are concealed in shadow, but a raking light from the upper right emphasizes the straining back of a standing figure as he tries to lift something. So, as with al-Hindawi's painting, Druby utilized principles of academic painting to convey political messages.

Not only does the form of Druby's painting *People's Work* differ from his painting *Fishermen* but the atmosphere of the work has also shifted. In *Fishermen*, figures make the work look easy, sitting tall as they mend nets. They also face the viewer, showing off their skills to the audience. Similarly, in Druby's painting *Workers* from the late 1950s, the

---

[684] 'First Exhibition of the Party,' *Sawt al-Falah*, April 15, 1974.
[685] Brown, *Socialist Realist Painting,* 269-272.
[686] *First Exhibition of the Party* (1974).

peasants stand tall, lifting the objects they are carrying high in the air above their heads [Figure 2.22]. In *People's Work*, the figures bend down, their backs to the audience, and the painting highlights the difficulty and pain of labour through its focus on the standing figure's straining back. Whether or not politically committed Iraqi modern art should show optimism or struggle was an unanswered question both in state patronage and among artists.[687] The *First Exhibition of the Party* included paintings of people hanged for political crimes and paintings of protestors celebrating in the streets.[688] Until his painting *The Weeper*, Druby had shown only positive scenarios, especially in his murals for the Iraqi government in the early 1960s. The fact that his first engagement with a negative subject coincided with the aftermath of the Six-Day War and the take-over of the new Ba'th government indicates that the decision was at least partly in conversation with government patrons. However, as will be apparent in other works from this period, Druby himself fluctuated between the two messages during the 1970s, and it was likely just as much a personal uncertainty for Druby as it was a pressure from the Iraqi government.

In 1972, Druby painted a mural entitled the *Struggle of the Ba'th Party* for the National Command Building.[689] The painting was meant to celebrate the nationalization of oil and the IPC by the Iraqi government in June 1972.[690] The negotiations between Druby's methods and government ideologies can be traced through two surviving preparatory sketches and an interview Druby gave on the painting in 1978.[691] The first sketch is a simple pen line drawing on paper [Figure 3.12]. Its central scene shows moments leading up to the 1968 revolution, including demonstrations outside the Ministry of Defence.[692] Protestors in the foreground hold signs which say things like 'death of the martyr' and 'our oil belongs to us,' referencing the nationalization of oil. Oil barrels and pipelines also curve through the crowd. The protest is violent: in the lower right-hand corner of the drawing, a figure beats another with a baton; figures throw stones from the windows and rooves of buildings at protestors; someone smashes the bars of a prison to release prisoners; and

[687] 'First Exhibition of the Party: Transformation in the Practice of Art,' *Funun*, April 16, 1974; 'First Exhibition of the Party,' *Sawt al-Falah*, April 15, 1974; Jawdat, et. al., 'Manifesto of New Realism.'
[688] *First Exhibition of the Party* (1974); al-Jabar, 'First Exhibition of the Party.'
[689] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15.
[690] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 208.
[691] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People).'
[692] Ibid.

in the upper left, the al-Aqsa Mosque burns with flames emanating from its roof.[693] The drawing is replete with uncertainty: the rocks thrown at protestors hang in mid-air, and the man releasing the prisoners and the policemen are all in mid-strike with their weapons. As in Druby's painting *People's Work*, the emphasis is on struggle.

The painted version of the sketch removes all uncertainty, violence and negativity [Figure 3.13]. Policemen no longer beat protestors, but help them, and military officers seem to celebrate and embrace protestors. The stone throwers have been removed, and the prisoners are depicted as already released from jail. As Druby states: 'Soldiers are united with the people. The Arab and Kurdish are dancing and hugging under the Iraqi flag.'[694] The al-Aqsa Mosque no longer on fire but stands majestically between the mountains against a pastel sky. Even the writing on the protest signs have been removed.[695] Similar to his 1960s murals commissioned by the state, in this oil sketch, Druby framed modernization in Iraq in a positive light and also used a geometric abstracted form of varying colours for the sky and ground. Druby repeated many of his symbols from these 1960s murals, such as the brick wall on the righthand side representing traditional architecture, the row of palm trees over water, and the radio tower.[696] There are also several new symbols, such as a tractor, a common Soviet symbol for socialism, and the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, which represented the Palestinian struggle.[697] The link between the tractor and socialism in the context of the Iraqi art field is made evident in a painting by Iraqi artist Valentina Ahmed called *Age of Revolution in the North*, which she exhibited at the first exhibition of the Ba'th party and which places a tractor in the centre of the composition [Figure 3.14].

In the final mural, Druby maintained the more optimistic atmosphere of the oil sketch, suggesting that the shifted atmosphere was a recommendation of government patrons

---

[693] Ibid.

[694] Ibid.

[695] When this painting was sold at Christies in 2017, it was titled *Public Accomplishment* and no mention of its Ba'thist associations was made.

[696] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15.

[697] Maria Lafont, *Soviet Posters: The Sergo Grigorian Collection* (Prestel, 2007); Anne Odom and Wendy R. Salmond, *Treasures into Tractors: the Selling of Russia's Cultural Heritage, 1918 – 1938* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

[Figure 3.15]. Druby also removed all cubist geometric forms and returned to an academic representational style. Druby claimed that he returned to an 'academic' style because it allowed him more control over the composition and colours, and he noted that the figures were arranged to give the painting scientific perspective.[698] However, the widespread discourse on socialist realism, Druby's incorporation of socialist symbols, and the transition between his oil sketch and the final version of the mural, all suggest that the Druby's use of an academic representational form was not just an individual decision but also made in conversation with the Iraqi government. In another government mural from the same period, artist 'Azzam al-Bazzaz (b. 1940) employed a similar composition of a row of figures in the foreground holding banners and celebrating, with oil machinery in the background in what one reviewer called 'academic realism' [Figure 3.16].[699] Druby also added one more new symbol in the lower-left of his final mural – a dove emerging from a cage. Not only does the same symbol appear in Faiq Hassan's early 1960s *Monument to Victory*, but the dove was also used in early 1970s Iraqi political posters.[700] Druby would make it the central element of his representational painting *Affection* (1976), which he submitted to a politically motivated exhibition *Against Racism* at the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad [Figure 3.17].[701] In the almost aggressively optimistic painting, an open cage sits on the surface of the moon with the earth in the background, and above, hovering in space, a black and white dove kiss.

A New History (1968 – 1980)

The other place in which state initiatives impacted Druby's academic representational forms was in historical murals. The Iraqi government commissioned a series of historical murals from Druby in the 1970s. These murals covered the early-Islamic and pre-Islamic periods, as had been the case in Druby's murals for the Directorate General of Antiquities in the 1940s and 1950s. However, the motivation behind the compositions was no longer to show mastery of Euro-American methods to illustrate ancient Iraqi achievements to global civilization. Instead, the goal was to demonstrate the power of Iraq over its enemies

---

[698] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 15.
[699] 'First Exhibition of the Party,' *Sawt al-Falah*, April 15, 1974.
[700] *Memorial Exhibition of the Founding of the Communist Party 1934 – 1974.*
[701] *Artist Against Racism* (Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, 1976).

in a way that best linked to contemporary political agendas and not in a way that most accurately expressed the source material. This transition was already apparent before the Ba'th takeover in Druby's 1966 mural The *Battle of Amorium*, which depicts the conquest of a Byzantine city by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tasim in 838 CE, asserting the power of the Arabs over Europe [Figure 3.18]. In the academic representational composition, an army stands in the foreground laying siege to the city of Amorium, whose walls are cracked open to reveal flaming buildings spewing smoke into the sky, and in the centre, the Byzantine emperor surrenders below a towering Umayyad Caliph. On the most superficial thematic level, the painting represented a departure from Druby's earlier archaeological paintings in that the topic was Arab conquest over the Europeans, rather than, as he himself explained, the contribution of Arab innovations, such as architectural sketches, to European civilization, in his earlier work *Assyrian Architecture* (1958) [Figure 2.34].

The battle of Amorium was documented in both Byzantine and Arabic sources, but there would be no excavations at the site until the 1980s.[702] Instead, in the 1960s, the history of the battle existed in Arabic and Iraqi discourse mainly through an Arabic poem, written in the territory that would become modern Iraq by the Abbasid poet Abu Tammam (d. 845 or 846).[703] Several twentieth-century Middle Eastern poets had emulated the structure of Abu Tammam's poem in order to convey an anti-colonial message by expressly moving away from Euro-American forms of poetry.[704] Druby did not revolutionize his form away from an academic representational style, but he did structure the content of his composition around the poem. The battle section of the poem focuses on the way the smoke from the fire cast darkness over the city: 'You left behind in her [Amorium] the black of night, when it was bright forenoon/ In her midst a dawn of flames scattered the darkness.'[705] In Druby's painting, smoke fills the sky, nearly covering over its blue colour.

---

[702] C.S. Lightfoot, 'The survival of cities in Byzantine Anatolia: The Case of Amorium,' *Byzantium* 68:1 (1998): 56-71.
[703] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 95; Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *Abu Tammam and the poetics of the Abbasid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1991); Abu Tammam, *Diwan Abi Tammam* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1951).
[704] Hussein N. Kadhim, *The Poetics of Anti-colonialism in the Arabic Qasidah* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 24.
[705] Translated in Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych 'The Abbasid Poet Interprets History: Three Qasidahs by Abu Tammam,' *Journal of Arabic Literature* 10 (1979): 49-64, 63.

Druby was no longer following al-Husri's methods of addressing the early-Islamic period through modern European histories and archaeological excavations, but was instead treating the early-Islamic period through early-Islamic sources. In this way, Druby disregarded his own assertion, made in relation to his painting *Hatra*, that early-Islamic Arabic sources were not to be trusted because they lacked a scientific methodology and truthfulness [Figure 2.1].[706] Abu Tammam's poem infamously rejected knowledge derived from books and claimed the only true knowledge lay in military power: 'The sword informs more truly than the book.'[707] Abu Tammam's proclamation sounds eerily similar to many of the artists' manifestos and Ba'thist proclamations of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which advocated for a physical struggle in the arts separate from intellectual pursuits. Druby's disregard in his painting for the sources he previously championed as truthful, and his composition's focus on the mechanics and violence of warfare reinforce his allegiance to this new method of recording history through art.

A similar methodology, with even more explicit political links, occurred in Druby's 1968 mural depicting the military victory of the early-Islamic forces over the Iranians at Qadisiyya in 636 CE [Figure 3.19]. The painting of the Battle of Amorium was originally commissioned for the Baghdad Officers' Club, a private club for Iraqi military officers, so the military theme fit with the context of the painting's display.[708] The military theme of *Qadisiyya* was meant for a more public audience. It was commissioned by the new Ba'th government around 1968 as part of a plan for a public monument to be placed near Baghdad at the original site of the battle, Ctesiphon.[709] The site itself was similar to the archaeological sites of Nimrud and Hatra, which Druby had painted in the 1950s. It had been excavated by European and American archaeologists and written about in Euro-American sources since the early twentieth century. However, European archaeologists and historians were more interested in the pre-Islamic Iranian history of the site, situating it within a narrative of ancient Iran rather than ancient Iraq, and they looked unfavourably

---

[706] Druby, 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra,' 144.
[707] Stetkevych 'The Abbasid Poet Interprets History,' 61.
[708] Hafidh and Suhaila Druby, *Inventory Book*, Druby Family Archive, London.
[709] Faiq Hassan was also asked to paint the subject. Suhaila Druby (Hafidh Druby's wife), *interview by the author*; 'Panorama of al-Qadisiyya,' *Alif Ba* 7:9 (Ramadan 18, 1980): 35-38.

at the Iranian Empire's downfall at the battle of Qadisiyya.[710] One American archaeologist wrote: 'The fate of Ctesiphon was, however, sealed when in 636 the rude desert Arabs, quivering with religious zeal – and with one eye on the fabulous riches of the Sasanian capital—met and routed the supercilious veterans of the last ruler.'[711] This attitude was part of a larger trend in twentieth-century Euro-American Orientalist discourse on the Middle East, which favoured the Iranians as more intellectual and culturally sophisticated than the Arabs.[712]

Despite the fact that Euro-American discourse saw Qadisiyya as a symbol of the Arabs' lack of culture and intelligence, the Ba'thists immediately made it a central symbol of their government upon taking power in 1968.[713] Local history quickly became an important topic for the Ba'th government, and as with previous Iraqi governments, officials chose to focus on the pre-Islamic and early Islamic civilizations.[714] However, rather than choosing historical moments that were highlighted in the Euro-American sources as high points of Middle Eastern civilization, the Ba'th government chose moments that most directly served contemporary political agendas.[715] Furthermore, as is evident in the description of 'romantic realism' given to al-Hindawi's history painting of the founding of the Ba'th party, artworks with historical themes were no longer judged on an accurate depiction of source material but on the romantic expression of the political cause.[716] The Battle of Qadisiyya was relevant because it illustrated the military power of the Arabs over the Iranians. In the late 1960s, the Iranian government was decidedly pro-western Europe, and the Iraqi government's flirtations with the Soviet Union put the two countries at odds ideologically. In February 1969, the Iranian Shah opened a discussion with Iraq about their common border. A conflict ensued, in which the Iraqi president al-Bakr asked Iraqi

---

[710] Joseph M. Upton, 'The Expedition to Ctesiphon, 1931-1932,' *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 27:8 (August, 1932): 188-197; Sydney Nettleton Fisher, *The Middle East: A History* (London: Knopf, 1959), 15; D. Gershon Lewental, 'Battle of Qadesiya,' *Encyclopædia Iranica*, accessed 4 December 2017. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/qadesiya-battle.

[711] Upton, 'The Expedition to Ctesiphon, 1931-1932,' 190.

[712] Gulru Necipoglu, 'The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,' *The Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (June, 2012): 1-26, 6.

[713] D Gershon Lewental, *Qadisiyyah, then and now: A Case study of history and memory, religion, and nationalism in Middle Eastern discourse* (Ph.D diss.: University of Michigan, 2011).

[714] Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968-1989*, 61-82.

[715] Davis, *Memories of State*, 167-169; Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology*, 61-82.

[716] 'First Exhibition of the Party,' *Sawt al-Falah*, April 15, 1974.

Shi'a leaders to condemn Iran. When they refused, he expelled over 20,000 people of alleged Iranian origins over the border to Iran, and the Iraqi government began to systematically harass the Shi'a.[717] At the same time, the Iraqi government renamed the province where Ctesiphon was situated Qadisiyya in reference to the battle, and commissioned a mural of the battle to be placed at the site.[718]

Druby wrote an article on his painting's relationship to the historical narrative, which is unfortunately now lost, but some surviving detailed notes and sketches provide a glimpse into his sources.[719] As with his painting of Amorium, his notes indicate that he worked from an Abbasid source – the historian Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari's (839-923), who wrote his history in Baghdad but was, ironically for the Ba'thist agenda, born in Iran.[720] Druby included the struggle between the white elephant Sabur and the Arab Muslim warrior Al-Qa'qa' ibn Amr al-Tamimi during the battle, as related by Tabari, in the centre of the composition.[721] Druby chose the moment of suspense, as the elephant lifts al-Tamimi into the air with his trunk. Besides Tabari's Iranian origins, his narrative perfectly suited the anti-Iranian propaganda campaign the Iraqi government was launching because he glorified the Arab conquest over the Iranians.

If the government had paraded Druby's painting *Assyrian Architecture* through the streets after the 1958 revolution to show that Iraqis were the founders of art and science, Druby's historical mural in celebration of the 1968 revolution glorified violence and brute military strength [Figure 0.3]. In the lower foreground figures hold bows poised to shoot; in the centre foreground, a figure lies dead peppered with arrows; above him, a large bald figure holds an axe over his head, about to smash it over his opponent; and in the centre of the composition, an elephant squeezes a man with his trunk while being slashed by men on

---

[717] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 201-204.
[718] Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology*, 61.
[719] Hafidh Druby, 'al-Qadisiyya.'
[720] Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, *The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, vol. 12 of *The History of al-Tabari*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Albany, State University of New York, 1992), 118; Druby, notes on his painting *Qadisiyya*, Druby Family Archive, London.
[721] al-Tabari, *The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine*, 118; Gershon Lewental, *Qadisiyyah, then and now*.

horseback. Druby chose to depict the moment of struggle rather than the moment of optimistic victory.

In the focus on the battle's violence, Druby left out many key aspects of the historical record. The most obvious omission was the palace of Ctesiphon, which was the palace of the Iranian emperor at the time of the battle, and the main reason archaeologists and tourists were interested in the site in the mid twentieth century.[722] The mural was intended to be installed next to the palace as part of a combined visitor experience.[723] Yet, the palace was built by the Iranians, which probably accounts for its omission. Attempts to introduce Arab elements around the palace of Ctesiphon were already underway in the mid-1960s. A photograph of a delegation from the Gulbenkian Foundation visiting Ctesiphon shows the group standing in front of reproduction of a sculpture excavated at Hatra, which had nothing to do with Ctesiphon but whose Arab population in the pre-Islamic period provided motivation for pan-Arabism. Behind the sculpture is a reproduction of a traditional marsh Arab building, one of the beloved symbols of local Arab culture among Iraqi artists [Figure 3.20]. However, Druby's mural took this project in another direction. Rather than simply planting Arab symbols around the Iranian palace, a mural of the Battle of Qadisiyya signalled an explicit attack on the Iranian elements of the site.

Despite clear political interventions into the content of Druby's mural, it is possible that the academic representational style of the painting was partly a personal choice. Faiq Hassan was also commissioned to paint a mural of Qadisiyya at the same time, and while his painting does not survive, another history painting he completed in 1970 uses a very different form from Druby. The painting titled *The History of Iraq* depicts three phases of Iraqi history over a tryptic: the Sumerian/Babylonian period, the Assyrian period, and the early-Islamic period [Figure 3.21]. Rather than provide narrative scenes, Faiq Hassan copied the form of artworks from the three periods and placed them across the canvas without a logical sequence. The only alteration he made to the original artworks was to

---

[722] Sarah C. Johnson, "'Return to origin is non-existence': Al-Mada'in and Perceptions of Ruins in Abbasid Iraq" *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 6:2 (2017): 257-283; *Iraq: A Tourist Guide* (Baghdad: Tourism Authority, c. mid-1960s), Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.
[723] 'Panorama of al-Qadisiyya,' 35-38.

transform sculptures and reliefs into representational life-like figures by giving them skin tone and shading. For example, a figure derived from a Sumerian sculpture in the centre of the first panel carrying a basket has a shaded dark brown skin tone and his arms cast shadows against the background.

After Saddam Hussein took over as president in 1979 and warfare broke out with Iran in 1980, the Battle of Qadisiyya became a defining symbol of the regime, pervasive in all aspects of life.[724] It is unclear exactly where Druby's mural ended up being displayed, but it was used in propaganda campaigns by Saddam Hussein's government. For example, in an article published in the magazine *Babylon*, which was distributed briefly from 1981 to 1982 by Iraq's embassy in West Germany, Druby's mural was reproduced in an article condemning Iran with the caption: 'What was seen 1,300 years ago, repeats itself today: in the Battle of Qadisiyya repulsed the overwhelming power of the Persian invaders.'[725] However, in 1980, in a deeply bizarre turn of events, Saddam Hussein's regime chose a group of artists from North Korea to create a panorama of the Battle at Qadisiyya at Ctesiphon, rather than installing Druby's mural.[726] The North Korean panorama took inspiration from Druby's composition, focusing on the white elephant, so Druby's original idea remained prevalent in the visual propaganda of Qadisiyya [Figure 3.22].

By the late 1970s, the Iraqi state had become overwhelming dictatorial, intolerant of opposition, and pervasive in all aspects of society.[727] Not even Druby's earliest works could escape the military-propaganda subjected on Iraqi history. In 1978, Shakir Hassan Al Said wrote an article in the state-run art magazine *Riwaq* titled 'Druby: His Generosity to the Revolution,' in which he claimed that Druby's painting *The Samovar* (c. 1942), in which a woman wearing modern clothing pours tea surrounded by traditional Iraqi artefacts, was related to the Sumerian tea ceremony after a military victory [Figure 1.27].[728]

---

[724] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 223-225; Gershon Lewental, *Qadisiyyah, then and now*.
[725] 'Wann wird der Iran Erlöst,' *Babylon* 2 (Aug 1981): 23.
[726] 'Panorama of al-Qadisiyya,' *Alif Ba,* 35-38.
[727] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 223-225.
[728] Shakir Hassan al-Said, 'Druby: His Generosity to the Revolution,' *Riwaq* 342 (1978): 14-15, 15.

Shakir Hassan Al Said also argued that *The Samovar* exemplified Druby's support of women's rights in modern Baghdad.[729] A woman pouring tea in a domestic seems to provide little evidence of women's rights, and Druby's second group of historical paintings commissioned for public spaces in the 1970s portray women as sexual objects. If the early-Islamic period was a convenient propaganda tool for military power and political commitment, it was also a useful diversion from the increasingly violent and oppressive reality of life in Iraq. Through the 1970s, the government commissioned artists, including Druby, to create public monuments and murals related to Abbasid literature, specifically the *Thousand and One Nights* and the poetry of Abu Nuwas (756 – 814).[730] Both of these themes had re-entered the Middle Eastern discourse through a Euro-American Orientalist literature that focused on the way these texts highlighted the Abbasids' concern with pleasure and sex.[731] Abu Nuwas was respected by many modern Arab writers as a significant source of literary inspiration, and the *Nights* tales were adapted to explore modern psychological themes in literature and theatre.[732] The perceived sexual excess of both Abu Nuwas and the *Nights*, and particularly Abu Nuwas's prevalence for homosexual behaviour was discussed at length as a potential illustration of Arab backwardness and lack of civilization by Arab writers, historians, and sociologists. Syrian historian Salah al-Din al-Munajjid (1920 – 2010) produced a history of Arab 'sexual life' from the pre-Islamic to the Abbasid period in 1958 and the widely read book was reprinted in the 1970s.[733] In the history, he wrote: 'The Abbasid era was sex-crazed. It is unfortunate that subsequent eras followed its example in this madness, which became one of the reasons for the descent and backwardness that the Arabs and Muslims have reached.'[734]

---

[729] Ibid.
[730] Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology*, 76-77.
[731] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 53-98.
[732] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 95-97; Muhsin al-Musawi, 'Engaging Tradition in Modern Arab Poetics,' *Journal of Arabic Literature* 33:2 (2002): 193; Wiebke Walter, 'Modern Arabic Literature and the *Arabian Nights*,' in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopaedia*, 54-61.
[733] Salah al-Din al-Munajjid, *The Sexual Life of the Arabs: From the Jahiliyyah until the end of the fourth century AH* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid, 1975). Quoted in Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 101.
[734] al-Munajjid, *The Sexual Life of the Arabs*. Quoted in Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 110.

Druby's paintings on the themes of Abu Nuwas and the *Thousand and One Nights* celebrate sex and eroticism without touching on the heated intellectual debates about the ill-effects of this historic eroticism on Middle Eastern modernity. In Druby's painting *The Gleeful Majlis*, which was used in a calendar distributed by the state-owned bank Rafidain in 1972, Abu Nuwas lounges in the foreground, with his back turned towards the viewer, and watches a women, whose breasts are exposed, playing the oud [Figure 3.23].[735] Another reference to sex is placed at the centre of the composition, where a long phallic vase surrounded by two smaller cups rises on the table between the female figure and another male figure. A preparatory sketch indicates that Druby considered including two other nude female figures and removing more of the oud-playing woman's clothing [Figure 3.24].

In a mural he painted for a hotel in Baghdad in 1976, Druby depicted a scene from the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves from the *Nights* tales [Figure 3.25].[736] Unlike the Battle of Amorium or the Battle of Qadisiyya, the source for the Ali Baba was not Arabic. The story had been added by European translators of the *Nights*.[737] However, the story was useful for the purpose of illustrating sexual pleasure because it contained a scene where a woman danced to distract men. Druby's composition highlights the woman's dance by placing her in the centre of the canvas, her nude body exposed fully to the viewer. She reaches down to touch the wine glass of a gawking man, who is simultaneously being served by another woman. On the right side of the composition, another man watches the dance while being held by woman. A sculpture by Iraqi artist Mohammed Ghani Hikmat (1929 – 2011) which was installed in a central Baghdad roundabout, also focused on the female figure in its depiction of the Ali Baba story.[738] Only one of Druby's Abbasid paintings referred to the widespread modern Arabic discourse on the prevalence of homosexuality in the Abbasid period.[739] While in Iraqi literature form the period, the morality of homosexuality in the Abbasid period was hotly

---

[735] Calendar Issued by the Rafidain Bank, 1972, Baghdad, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.
[736] *Baghdad Observer*, May 27, 1977, 8.
[737] Aboubakr Chraibi, 'Galland's Ali Baba and Other Arabic Versions,' *Marvels & Tales* 18:2 (2004): 159-169.
[738] Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology*, 77.
[739] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 108-109.

debated, in Druby's *Magic of the Abbasids* (1967), introduced at the end of Chapter Two, homo-eroticism is celebrated, with two women touching each other sensuously [Figure 3.26].

The compositions of these paintings related most closely to the history of Baghdad as told by the tourism industry both in Europe and locally.[740] Druby's Ali Baba mural uses many of the same elements that he used in his 1950s tourism poster for Iraqi Airways, and both place the emphasis on a semi-nude dancing woman [Figure 2.20]. In 1957, a guidebook linked Baghdad's evening entertainment industry with the *Nights*: 'As the former city of the Arabian Nights, Baghdad, not unnaturally, has a full round of entertainment to offer the visitor after dark.'[741] The erotic allure of the Abbasid era and the *Nights* was still part of the tourism industry in 1970s Baghdad, as is clear from the fact that Druby's painting of Ali Baba was commissioned for a hotel.

Escape into Retrospection (1968 – 1980)

Druby's own disinterest in politically committed revolutionary art and his increasingly retrospective practice, which focused on his own history, the academic representational style, and the interests of the urban elites, is exemplified in his leadership role at the First Biennale of Arab Art in Baghdad. In 1974, the same year that Ba'th Party and the ICP staged their own exhibitions, Druby was the president of the exhibition committee for the Iraq Pavilion at the First Biennale of Arab Art.[742] The exhibition was organized by the Union of Arab Artists and the Iraqi Government and held in Baghdad at the National Museum of Modern Art and the headquarters of the *IAS*.[743] In a photograph from the opening of the Biennale, Druby stands next to the Iraqi Minister of Information and Culture, as the most central Iraqi artist in the official proceedings [Figure 3.27].[744] His leadership is also evident in the list of participants and their contributions to the pavilion. The exhibition included several artists who did not take part in the Ba'th Party exhibition

---

[740] Sylvette Larzul, 'Mille et un avatars: de Bagdad à Hollywood,' *Qantara* 86 (January, 2013): 44-47.
[741] Abdul Razzak Hilali, *A Modern Guide to Iraq* (Beirut: Dar al-Kashaf, 1957), 72.
[742] *Iraq Pavilion, First Biennale of Arab Art* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).
[743] Alsaden, 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial,' 13.
[744] *Alif Ba*, March 21, 1974.

who had specific ties to Druby. For example, artists from the older generation, such as Hamoudi and Faiq Hassan, and a group of artists with whom Druby was planning on reorganising the *Impressionists* group later that year, Ala Bashir, Saʻdi al-Kaʻbi, and Ghazi al-Saudi, participated.[745] Artworks with political themes were displayed in the exhibition, but the composition of artworks was different from the party exhibitions of the same year and from the contemporary Iraqi artists' manifestos in that it was much more varied, which probably reflected Druby's insistence on individuality in art production. Faiq Hassan and Hamoudi exhibited abstracts, Ala Bashir exhibited a work in his typical surrealist form, and even Nizar al-Hindawi, who had been so supportive of politically engaged realism in the Baʻth party exhibition, displayed a painting showing a peasant birth in a geometrically abstracted form not far from Druby's cubism [Figure 3.28].

Druby exhibited two works with a similar form, *al-Harsha* and *Three Horses*. In *Al-Harsha*, two women, depicted in a representational form, press their bodies up against each other, and their hair is arranged in such a way that the righthand woman's breast is exposed to the viewer [Figure 3.29]. As in Druby's *Leda and the Swan*, the women stand against an abstracted background of green, purple, and blue shapes [Figure 2.68]. The painting was a censored version of an artwork with the same title made for a private patron, Mohammed ʻAbd al-Hussein, in 1970.[746] The first version of the painting is an academic representational scene showing the full bodies of the two nude females having intercourse [Figure 3.30]. Many of the elements are reminiscent of Druby's relief of two nudes from 1952: the figures stand pressed up against the foreground of the picture plane, providing a close look for the audience, and ambiguously historical elements, such as the swirling metal balacony to indicate traditional architecture and two of the turquoise-glazed early Islamic jars that Druby also included in his painting *Samovar*, displace the setting from the contemporary moment [Figure 2.15]. However, the pretence of a historical setting was broken by the title, *al-Harsha*, which was the name of a specific form of prostitution show in Baghdad in which men would watch multiple women having

---

[745] *Iraq Pavilion, First Biennale of Arab Art*; Haidar, 'The Impressionists: What do they offer art movements? What is the reason for their comeback?' 41.
[746] Al Said and Selim, *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue)*.

intercourse with each other.[747] The prostitution that was so criticized by artists and writers in the 1950s, was now unapologetically romanticized by Druby in a large public exhibition.

On the one hand, Druby's thematic choice could be explained by the popularity of erotic artworks on the Baghdad art market during the period. Druby's inventory book indicates that he was mass producing copies of *al-Harsha* for patrons. In the First Arab Biennale, many artists exhibited similar works with erotic content. For example, Valentina Ahmed, who exhibited a painting on the theme of industrial farming based on Soviet socialist realism for the Ba'th Party exhibition, showed a representational painting of a nude woman under a palm tree at the Biennale. Khulud Farhan Saif contributed a sculpture of two figures called *Intercourse*, and Rahal, who had created several political monuments for the Ba'th regime around Baghdad, exhibited a wooden sculpture of two nude bodies moving towards each other [Figure 3.30]. Jabra, who had written about lesbianism as a symptom of a corrupt modern society in 1960, chose to cover his book of poetry, published in 1981, with images of nude women engaged in erotic activity drawn by the artist Rakan Dabdoub (b. 1941) [Figure 3.31].

As was evident in the manifesto of the Academy Group, the female nude was not seen as antithetical to a committed modern art during this period. Furthermore, there was a strain of discourse, dominated by men, which considered that expressing female sexuality was a path to women's liberation. One writer described in the 1980s that: 'The emancipation of Arab women is now situated on the only valid terrain, that of sexuality. I give love, therefore I am.'[748] Nizar Qabbani, who had expressed disgust towards prostitutes in his celebrated poetry anthology in 1942, argued that his own depiction of female sexuality in his poems liberated them.[749] The ability to emancipate women through their sexuality was relegated to their depiction in art, largely produced by men, rather than true emancipation within the Iraqi social structure. In 1970, the Iraqi Ministry of Culture

[747] Interview with Iraqi private collector, January 20, 2018, Beirut.
[748] Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *Sexuality in Islam* (London, 1985), 285; quoted in Mattityahu Peled, 'Sexuality in Jabra's Novel, the Search for Walid Mas'ud,' in *Love and sexuality in modern Arabic literature*, 149.
[749] 'The freedom which I ask for woman is the freedom to love,' Amila Buturovic, "'Only women and writing can save us from death': Erotic Empowering in the Poetry of Nizar Qabbani (d. 1998)" in *Tradition, Modernity, and Post-Modernity in Arabic Literature: Essays in Honor of Professor Issa J. Boullata* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000),153 and 157.

and Information produced a book called *Iraqi Women through Pictures*, which rather than representing actual women or showing artworks by female artists, showed paintings by Iraqi male artists depicting women.[750]

Besides Shakir Hassan Al Said's strange remark about *Samovar* liberating women, there is little evidence that Druby considered this topic in his depiction of nudes. However, further evidence from the 1970s suggests that Druby's paintings were not just pornography pandering to the pleasures of the male urban elite of Baghdad. As they had represented in the first years of Druby's practice, these nudes were also a testament for Druby of his skill as an artist in the academic tradition. In the same year as the First Biennale of Arab Art, Druby produced a painting titled *The Blacksmith and Seven Women*, in which a blacksmith hammers on his anvil and looks up to see a nude female emerging from a door behind him, holding up her arm to expose her body and bending her knee in contrapposto [Figure 3.32]. The composition links the female body with the blacksmith's process of creation. Druby was not the only one to link the creative process to the female form during this period. In the 1970s, Qabbani wrote:

In the beginning there were poems…
First the breast's abundant curve and all
the plainer contours were exceptional.
And first of all was you and only you
then afterwards were other women too.[751]

For Qabbani, as with many other Arab writers from this period, the female body was the most cosmic and essential emblem of creation.[752] Dabdoub, who did the illustrations for Jabra, also illustrated Qabbani's poetry in the 1970s and so Qabbani's work would have been familiar to the Iraqi art community.[753]

One particular painting, which Druby painted in 1976, exemplified the central importance of the female nude in his practice and her link to his idea that modern art was the mastery

---

[750] *Iraqi Women Through Pictures* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1970).
[751] Nizar Qabbani, *On Entering the Sea: The Erotic and Other Poetry of Nizar Qabbani*, trans. Salma Jayyusi (New York: Interlink Books, 1996), 29.
[752] Buturovic, "'Only women and writing can save us from death,' 152.
[753] Nizar Qabbani, *I Love You…I Love You…and the rest will come!* (Beirut: Nizar Qabbani Publications, 1978).

of academic painting techniques. In the painting, Druby combines several elements of his practice together. Two female nudes, sit legs entwined, wearing traditional bracelets, drinking wine [Figure 3.33]. Unlike in Druby's erotic paintings for male patrons, the women look away from the viewer out the window. They are situated in Druby's home studio, identified by the small stool with a bouquet in the left side of the composition, the basket of oranges, and the Italian fiascos of wine. Druby would paint a similar composition as a still life in his studio, without the female figures, during this period [Figure 3.34]. In his still life, Druby employed all the elements of academic representational painting: light and shadow, vanishing point perspective, and shading. This is particularly evident in the reflection from the window on the linoleum floor. However, in his painting with the two women, Druby quoted some of his other styles. For example, the righthand woman's leg and the back of the wall are done in geometric patches of colour. Druby also returned to his use of white lines around the fruit and the women's legs, as he had done in his cubist paintings from the 1950s. On the floor under the women's feet lies what appears to be an abstract canvas.

Druby then used the painting as the defining work of his career in the poster distributed around Baghdad to advertise his retrospective [Figure 3.35]. The cover of the exhibition catalogue features the representational portrait Druby made of his wife right after their marriage [Figure 2.38]. Through this choice, he highlighted portraiture and his personal life as key aspects of his career. The fact that these two paintings were significant for Druby personally in defining his career is further emphasized by the fact that he chose to portray them in the background of a portrait of his wife made in 1977 [Figure 3.36]. The paintings do not underscore Druby's cubist style nor local traditional themes. This may indicate that the second painting Druby exhibited at the First Biennale of Arab Art, *Three Horses*, which he painted several copies of for various patrons, derived its subject from market forces rather than Druby's contemporaneous retrospective practice [Figure 3.37]. As with *al-Harsha*, Druby overlaid multi-coloured circles on top of representational horses, quoting his cubist style but not fully engaging with it. While Druby had not painted horses before, they had become a popular symbol for the traditional Arab world among Iraqi

artists in the 1970s. By this period, Faiq Hassan was almost exclusively painting academic representational depictions of horses [Figure 3.38].

The First Biennale of Arab Art was a divisive moment for Iraqi artists. Dia al-Azzawi criticised the participating artists for displaying traditional (in terms of the legacy of modern Iraqi art) and anachronistic artworks that did not show any commitment to experimentation. He noted that one of the reasons for this was the inclusion of well-established artists and the exclusion of younger more revolutionary artists. He concluded: 'This biennial has little chance of constituting an important cultural event or a promotional act in favour of the Arab plastic arts movement.'[754] He was joined by many artists who formed side exhibitions rather than participating in the main event.[755] Despite the objection of some artists, the Biennale was a major event, drawing visitors from around the Middle East and from further afield.[756] It was one of the last moments, besides a few political party exhibitions, in which Druby would produce new work for a large public exhibition.

When the government organized a survey exhibition to travel around Western Europe and the Soviet Union in 1976 and 1977, the organizers chose to display Druby's painting *The Festival* from 1958 [Figure 0.5].[757] The linear cubist work depicting traditional life in Baghdad represented all of the things that Druby himself did not find significant to highlight in his own retrospection. Besides the government wanting to underscore unique features of the local context in its display of modern art, the choice may also be related to the way in which other Iraqi artists and writers were canonizing Druby in the late 1970s. As was mentioned earlier, in the early 1970s, they were already defining his work through his cubist style. In texts from the late 1970s, writers were more open to the diversity in Druby's work but considered his academic representational form to be the basis for his entire practice. They also repeatedly defined him as a 'city painter.' Adil Kamel wrote a chapter in his book *The Contemporary Fine Art Movement in Iraq* called 'Hafidh Druby…the artist

---

[754] al-Azzawi, 'Explode the artistic and cultural handicaps,' 37.
[755] Alsaden, 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial,' 19.
[756] Alsaden, 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial,' 17.
[757] *Zeitgenössische Kunst aus dem Irak* (Munich: A. Wimmer, 1976); *Art Irakien Contemporain* (Paris: Les Presses Artistiques, 1976).

who celebrates the city.'[758] Jabra wrote in Druby's retrospective catalogue that 'the artist expresses life in Baghdad as he sees it. There is no doubt that he is a city painter.'[759] Even a Russian writer, whose work was translated into Arabic in the Iraqi publication *al-Muthaqaf al-Arabi* in 1971 wrote that Druby 'signified the modern city.'[760] Druby denied this definition of his work. When asked by an interviewer in 1977, how he would respond to the fact that people defined him as a 'city painter,' Druby responded: 'I am the village painter too. I look for the depth in nature and in personal relationships.'[761]

By the late 1970s, many artists, included Dia al-Azzawi had been forced into exile for political reasons or out of fear of the increasingly violent security service headed by Saddam Hussein. When Saddam Hussein took power in the summer of 1979, he immediately executed over 500 people who he saw as threatening to his power.[762] During the late 1970s, besides his nudes and still lifes, in his private practice, Druby almost exclusively painted scenes related to his personal life, such as his back garden, his wife's farm at Fahama, his children dancing at a nightclub, and his family at home.[763] All of these scenes portray an idyllic atmosphere belying the political and social turmoil happening outside of the walls of Druby's garden in Baghdad. In a painting of his back garden, the empty yard with perfectly manicured grass is bathed in a bright sunlight, casting dappled shadows under the trees, and on the back wall a circular ceramic by artist Valentinos Charalambous (b. 1914), who was a fellow art teacher at the Institute of Fine Arts, emerges from the foliage [Figure 3.39].

The only solo-exhibition Druby held during this period, besides his retrospective, was at his country club, the Alwiyah Club, a bastion of urban elite life cloistered from the larger public sphere of Baghdad. In conjunction with the exhibition, Druby painted two murals for the club. The first is a straightforward bar scene, where social groups chat around tables and waiters bring drinks [Figure 3.40]. The other is the only hint that the urban elite

---

[758] Adil Kamal, "Hafidh Druby…artist who celebrates the city," *Contemporary Fine Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980), 91-97.

[759] Al Said and Selim, *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue)*.

[760] Khala Minskaya, 'Art Movements in Modern Iraq,' *Al-Muthaqaf al-Arabi* 3:4 (October, 1971): 87-98.

[761] al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' 19.

[762] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 225-227.

[763] Hafidh and Suhaila Druby, *Inventory Book*.

world of Baghdad and Druby's place within it was falling apart. The setting of the painting is a peaceful tree-framed garden with waiters lounging ready to serve and women emerging from the background [Figure 3.41]. The vignette spotlighted in the left foreground represents a contemplative man sitting alone with a beer. The vignette related to the Euro-American trope of the lonely figure at the bar, which Druby painted in London in the late 1940s [Figure 1.58]. However, a lonely man drinking is a strange choice of subject to be hung in the interior of a bar. Furthermore, a surviving preparatory sketch for the painting reveals Druby's personal struggle with how pessimistic to represent the lonely drinking figure. In the sketch, which Druby titled *Drunk Man at the Alwiyah Club*, a more inebriated man slumps over the table, head lolling, with his glass empty rather than full as in the final painting [Figure 3.42]. Druby himself was struggling with alcoholism at the time he painted *Drunk Man*, and the disease would take over his life in the 1980s.[764] In the end, he chose to remove much of the negativity from the final painting, but intimations of his personal struggle remain scattered around his works from the late 1970s. For example, in light of his alcoholism, the half-drunk wine glasses scattered around his studio in his 1977 still life give the painting a more ominous ambiance [Figure 3.34].

Fading into History (1980 – 1991)

After his retrospective in 1980, Druby faded from public life, exhibiting rarely and spending periods of time in London to battle his alcoholism. His illness made it difficult to paint, which is evident in his few simplified works from this period. For example, in a market scene from 1982, the figures are depicted in childlike-outlines with no facial features [Figure 3.43]. Druby exhibited a few more times: once in London for the Wasiti Festival organized by Dia al-Azzawi at the Iraqi Cultural Centre in 1981, and Druby held one last solo exhibition at Riwaq Gallery in Baghdad in 1987. [765] A photograph from Druby's 1987 solo exhibition shows a withered old Druby still wearing his immaculate *effendiyya* suit, which marked his transition from poor back alleys of the Sadriya neighbourhood to the urban elite society of Baghdad in the 1930s [Figure 3.44]. The Minister of Culture and Information's suit had been replaced by a military uniform, a fitting

---

[764] Suhaila Druby (Hafidh Druby's wife), interview by the author, October 2016, London.
[765] Hana' Shafiq, 'Baghdadi Life still inspires Hafidh Druby,' *Baghdad Observer*, February 22, 1987.

metaphor for the militarization of Iraq in the 1980s during its ongoing war with Iran. In the photograph, the military figures drown out the shrinking Druby and his paintings.

In May 1990, the *Impressionists* held an exhibition as a tribute to Druby. Some of the first members, such as Yassin Shakir and Hayat Jamil Hafidh, participated.[766] The exhibition was held at the National Museum of Modern Art, which had been renamed the Saddam Arts Centre. On the cover of the exhibition booklet, Druby presented what would be his last painting – an impressionistic landscape of his wife's farm at Fahama [Figure 3.45]. Druby's wife's lands of Fahama on the outskirts of Baghdad had long since been confiscated by Saddam Hussein and the urban elite environment into which the *Impressionists* were born had mostly scattered into the diaspora. The persistence of the *Impressionists*, however, indicated Druby's enduring impact on the art community in Baghdad. A year later, in 1991, because of a lack of proper medical services in Baghdad during the First Gulf War, Druby died from a stroke related to complications from his alcoholism.[767] Immediately after Druby's death, his family turned their house into a gallery, which held exhibitions of Druby's own work and other artists until the early 2000s.[768] However, the dispersal of the population and the flooding of the National Museum of Modern art during the war in 2003 caused a significant loss of the archives and artworks of Hafidh Druby.

---

[766] *Exhibition of Iraqi Impressionists* (Baghdad: Saddam Center, 1990).
[767] Suhaila Druby (Hafidh Druby's wife), interview by the author.
[768] *Druby's Art Gallery* (Baghdad: c. 1991); *Hafidh Druby Exhibition* (Baghdad: Druby's Art Gallery, 1998).

Conclusion | **Where to go from here?**

Despite altering his form and content to comply with pressures from the Iraqi art world, Druby maintained his allegiance to his own version of modernity based on the Euro-American academic style and technical skill throughout his career. Druby's notion of modernity did not form in a vacuum but in conversation with his education, society, and political forces at work in mid-twentieth-century Baghdad. At the same time, his unique position in relation to these social forces meant that he retained an individual practice unique from his contemporary artists. His fellow artists and Iraqi intellectuals harshly criticized Druby's work and often bemoaned his conservativism. However, Druby remained central to the Iraqi art field throughout his career, continuing to teach, exhibit, and be written about in the history books until his death in 1991. Druby's student Dia al-Azzawi and his colleague Shakir Hassan Al Said may have formed their own philosophies on modernity in the 1960s, which were often in direct opposition to Druby's practice, but as this dissertation has shown, they were, at the same time, formed in conversation with Druby's work. Druby adherence to a Euro-American academic method of painting provided a ground, which other Middle Eastern artists often resisted but never rejected completely. As such, al-Azzawi or Al Said's own abstract intellectual paintings must be understood against the backdrop of Druby's practice.

Understanding Druby's place in the art world of mid-twentieth-century Iraq allows for a new perspective not just on modernity in the local context of Baghdad but on a global scale. Beyond the confines of Baghdad, Druby's practice entered the discourse on socialist form in the Soviet Union, often as a way to highlight the dangers of Western European ideologies. At the Reinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn in the late 1970s two artworks related to the urban environment were put on display: Joseph Beuys' (1921 – 1986) sculpture *Unschlitt/Tallow* (1977), which referred to a pedestrian underpass in the city of Bonn by recreating the space with beef fat and stearin, and Hafidh Druby's *The Festival* (1958), which embodied a celebration in Baghdad through the deconstruction of an urban environment into abstract geometric blocks of bright colours and white lines. Both artworks drew attention from the museum's audience and one visitor even noted

that he appreciated many of the Iraqi paintings more than contemporary European art.[769] However, the global potential of this study is not just geographic. We should also ask if other artists across the Middle East and further afield took a similar approach to postcolonial art production and how they have also been marginalized within the literature. In writing this dissertation, it became apparent that further research on Iraqi artists such as Atta Sabri, Mahmoud Sabri, and Khalid al-Jadir would contribute to a better understanding of multiple modernities in the region. Furthermore, contexts, such as the exchange between foreign artists stationed in Baghdad during World War II and Iraqi cultural actors and the Soviet Union and Iraqi artists in the early 1970s, would open up new possibilities for interpreting Soviet, British, and Polish art as well as Iraqi art.

Druby's practice provides a space in which to question how we are forming research around non-Euro-American modern art today. If the introduction of this dissertation began with a forgotten Druby painting, it is appropriate to conclude with a remembered one. At an auction at Christie's in London in October 2017, Druby's oil sketch for his 1972 mural *Struggle of the Ba'th Party* appeared with no reference to its original context. For the auction, it was titled *The Public Accomplishment* and sold for 31,250 GBP.[770] Despite the erasure of the paintings' political past in its title, the predominately Iraqi patronage at the auction would have immediately recognised the work's context. So how is it that a work of political propaganda for a violent dictator could sell at prominent auction house in London for over 30,000 pounds? I would argue for the same reason that no one noticed when Druby's painting was looted from the Mosul museum a few months earlier. Both of these paintings circulate because the market for modern Middle Eastern art is booming today – in one case, in the auction houses of London, and in the other case, on the black market. The need to make the works desirable to potential buyers often masks the political and historic contexts of the paintings. As paintings such as Druby's, which do not fit into the prevailing framework of modernity, increasingly flood the market without context, we

---

[769] 'Joseph Beuys,' *Skulpture Projekt Archiv*, accessed May 1, 2019, https://www.skulptur-projekte-archiv.de/en-us/1977/projects/82/; Rheinisches *Landesmuseum Exhibition Guest Book* (Bonn, August 1976).
[770] *Middle Eastern, Modern and Contemporary Art*, lot 6, October 25, 2017. https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/hafidh-al-droubi-iraqi-1914-1991-the-public-accomplishment-6104514-details.aspx.

risk creating a narrative around them that resembles the colonial one Druby encountered when he first entered the Central Secondary School in Baghdad in the 1920s – a narrative that these paintings are belated, out of sync with history, and therefore, unimportant to contemporary discourse.

FIGURES

Introduction

Figure 0.1: Ahmad Gharabli, Ir*aqi soldier standing next to Hafidh Druby's painting*, *Assyrian Architecture* (1958), *inside the Mosul Museum*, April 2, 2017, photograph. Source: AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP/Getty Images.

Figure 0.2: *The Iraq Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2017,* Palazzo Cavalli-Franchetti, photograph. Source: https://ruyafoundation.org/en/project/venice-biennale-2017/
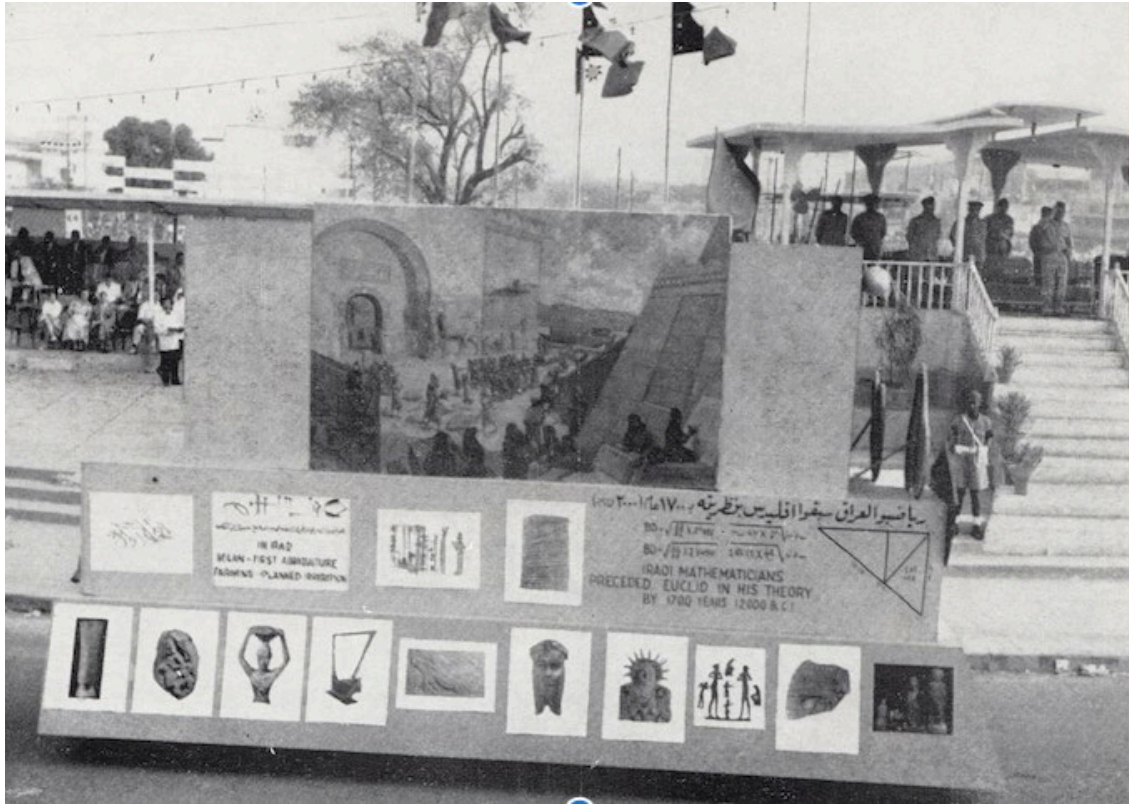
Figure 0.3: *Foundations of Arts and Science Float*, 1959 Parade Celebrating the 1958 Revolution. Source: 'News and Correspondence,' *Sumer* 1 (1959): fig. 3b.

Figure 0.4: Jewad Selim, *The Hen Seller*, 1951, oil on plywood, 75.9 x 102.2 cm. Al-Tajir Collection. Source: Tamara Chalabi and Paolo Colombo, *Archaic – The Pavilion of Iraq* (Milan: Mousse, 2017), Plate 1.

Figure 0.5: Hafidh Druby, *The Festival*,1958, oil on canvas, 85 x 95 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said and Nizar Selim, *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue)* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980).

Chapter One

Figure 1.1: *Baghdad*, c. 1930s, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection.

Figure 1.2: Hafidh Druby, *Baghdadi Landscape* (detail), 1960, oil, location unknown. Source: Adil Kamel, *Contemporary Fine Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980).

Figure 1.3: Hafidh Druby, *Alleys of Sadriya Neighborhood*, late 1920s or early 1930s, oil, 50.5 x 66.5 cm, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2007.1.216). Source: Mathaf Museum, Doha.

Figure 1.4: A. Kerim, *Smiling Faces*, c. 1925, photograph, Fine Arts Library of the Harvard College Library, Cambridge. Source: Archnet https://archnet.org/collections/14/media_contents/5290.

Figure 1.5: Abdul Qadir al-Rassam, *Rural Scene*, 1930s, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Modern Art Iraq Archive*, https://artiraq.org/maia/.

Figure 1.6: *Exhibition of Handicrafts in the Teachers' Hall in Baghdad*, 1923, photograph. Source: Sati' al-Husri, *My Memoirs from Iraq: Second Volume, 1921-1941* (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1968), fig. 2.

Figure 1.7: *Works by Jewad and Su'ad Selim at the Exhibition at the Hall of Agriculture and Industry*, 1931, photograph. Source: Nizar Selim, *Iraq Contemporary Art* (Lausanne: Sartec, 1977), 46.

Figure 1.8: Hafidh Druby, untitled, c. 1930s, charcoal on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.9: *Hafidh Druby with unidentified companions outside the Egyptian embassy in Baghdad*, c. 1930s or 1940s, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.10: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1940, charcoal on paper, Rome, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.11: Hafidh Druby, untitled, c. 1938-1940, pen on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.12: Carlo Siviero, *Portrait of Hafidh Druby*, 1938, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.13: Hafidh Druby, *Model in the Accademia in Rome*, 1938, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982).

Figure 1.14: Hafidh Druby, *Rome*, c. 1940, watercolour on paper, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982).

Figure 1.15: Jewad Selim, *la place de st. polo, Rome*, 1940, watercolour on paper, private collection, Amman. Source: Saleem al-Bahloly, 'History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting,' *Muqarnas* 35 (2018): Fig. 14.

Figure 1.16: Domenico Morelli, *Portrait of a man with a turban*, 1886, oil on canvas, 61 x 50.2 cm, private collection. Source: http://www.artnet.com/artists/domenico-morelli/portrait-of-a-man-with-a-turban-ffZ2EDdhcu_BcoQxum6KLA2.

Figure 1.17: Cover of *La Difesa della Razza* 3:4 (1939). Source: Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2013), 138.

Figure 1.18: *Hafidh Druby and other art students in Rome*, c. 1938-1940, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.19: Hafidh Druby, *The Owner of the Jar (Italy)*, 1940, oil on canvas, 95 x 60 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.20: Guiseppe Capogrossi, *Contadina*, c. 1939, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *III Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale* (Rome: Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1939).

Figure 1.21: Massimo Campigli, untitled, 1940, mural painting, Palazzo Liviano, Padua. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Padova-Palazzo-del-Liviano-atrio-Veduta-dellaffresco-di-Massimo-Campigli-sulla-parete_fig29_303960764.

Figure 1.22: *Hafidh Druby and Atta Sabri painting in the Directorate General of Antiquities*, 1940, Baghdad, photograph. Source: Private Collection.

Figure 1.23: Atta Sabri, untitled, 1940, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the Costume Museum, Baghdad. Source: Private Collection.

Figure 1.24: Hafidh Druby, *The Burning of the Palace of Sardanapalus in Babylon*, 1940, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the Costume Museum, Baghdad. Source: Private Collection.
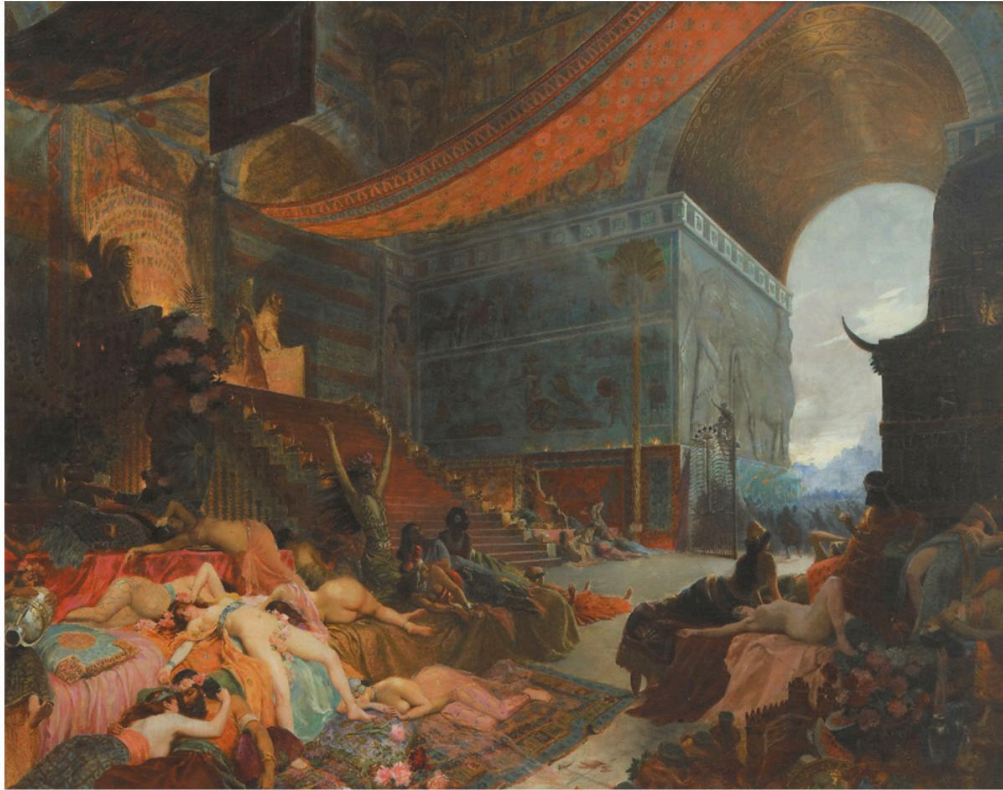
Figure 1.25: Georges Rochegrosse, *The End of Babylon*, c. 1890, oil on canvas, private collection, Paris. Source: https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2013/09/26/looking-hanging-gardens-babylon/.

Figure 1.26: *Group of artists and archaeologists around a model of the Ishtar Gate, Babylon*, c. early 1940s, photograph. Source: private collection.
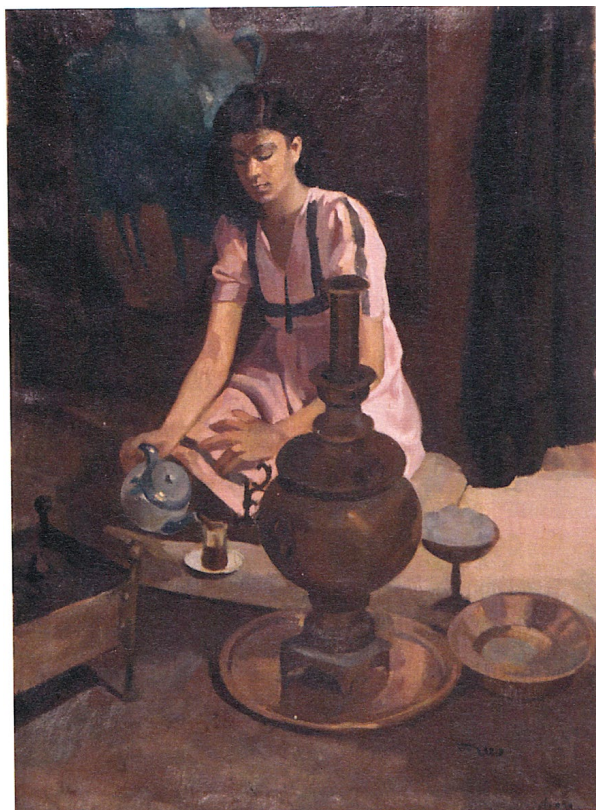
Figure 1.27: Hafidh Druby, *The Samovar*, c. 1942, oil on canvas, 94 x 69 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.28: Hafidh Druby, *Still Life*, c. early 1940s, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

Figure 1.29: *Friends of Art Society at their first exhibition (seated at bottom centre from left to right: Issa Hanna, Hafidh Druby, and Jewad Selim)*, 1941, photograph. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1983), vol. 1, 89.

Figure 1.30: Su'ad Selim, *Society of Friends of Art* (detail), 1942, pen on paper, private collection. Source: private collection, Amman.

Figure 1.31: First exhibition of the Society of Friends of Art, 1942, photograph, private collection. Source: private collection.

Figure 1.32: Jewad Selim, *Ladies in Waiting*, 1942-1943, oil on panel, 45 x 35 cm, private collection, Amman. Source: Saleem al-Bahloly, 'History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting,' *Muqarnas* 35 (2018): 229-272.

Figure 1.33: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Akram Shukri*, early 1940s, oil on wood, 62 x 47 cm, Mathaf Museum, Doha, 2015.20.3. Source: Mathaf Museum, Doha.

Figure 1.34: Hafidh Druby, *Mother Abaya*, 1940, oil on canvas, 50 x 110 cm, location unknown, previously in the Museum of Pioneer Artists and the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

Figure 1.35: Hafidh Druby, *Rosita*, 1941, oil, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Minsitry of Culture and Information, 1982).
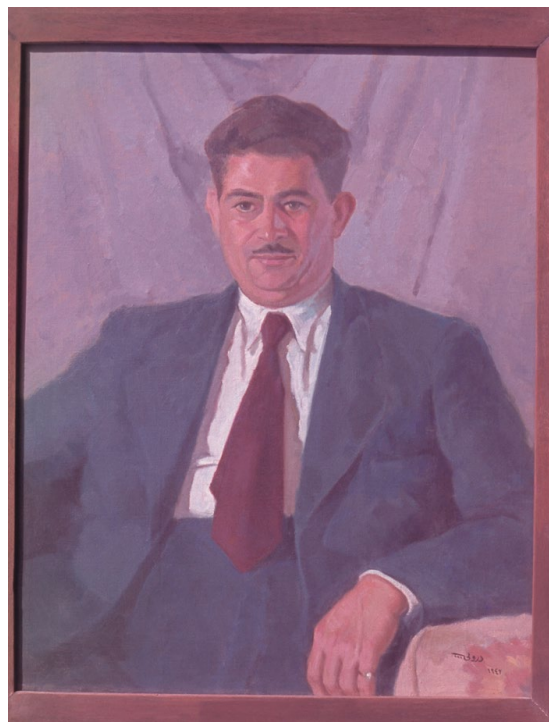
Figure 1.36: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Akram Gibran*, 1942, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.37: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of the Daughters of Shawkat al-Rassam*, 1942, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.38: Omar Onsi, *Darat Jouljoul*, 1937, oil on canvas, 64.5 x 80 cm, Walid Bassatne Collection. Source: Philippe Cardinal and Hoda Makram-Ebeid, ed. *Le Corps Decouvert* (Paris: Hazan, 2012).

Figure 1.39: *Hafidh Druby's Free Art Studio*, early 1940s, photograph, location unknown.
Source: Shakir Hassan al-Said, *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq*
(Baghdad: Ministry of Education and Information, 1983), vol. 1, 98.

Figure 1.40: Faraj Abbu, untitled, 1940s, oil, location unknown, previously in the Museum of
Pioneer Artists, Baghdad. Source: *Museum of Pioneer Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and
Information, 1990s).

Figure 1.41: Faiq Hassan, untitled, c. 1940s, oil, 40 x 66 cm, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

Figure 1.42: Still from *Wir tanzen um die Welt*, 1940, film, Tobis-Filmverleih. Source: Getty Images, https://www.gettyimages.ie/detail/news-photo/szene-aus-dem-revuefilmwir-tanzen-um-die-welt-news-photo/542382733.

Figure 1.43: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1945, oil on canvas, 104 x 85.5 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

Figure 1.44: Faiq Hassan, untitled, c. early 1940s, oil on board, location unknown. Source: https://artiraq.org/maia.

Figure 1.45: Atta Sabri, untitled, 1940s, watercolour on paper. Source: Private Collection, Amman.

Figure 1.46: Akram Shukri, untitled, 1940?, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: https://artiraq.org/maia.

Figure 1.47: Wilhelm Koenig, *Baghdad Suburb*, 1940, watercolour on paper, location unknown. Source: Wilhelm Koenig, *Neun Jahre Irak* (Munich: Bruenn, 1940).

Figure 1.48: Edward Bawden, *A Kurd from Rawanduz*, 1943, watercolour on paper, 60 x 70 cm, Imperial War Museum, London (IWM ART LD 4126). Source: Imperial War Museum, London.
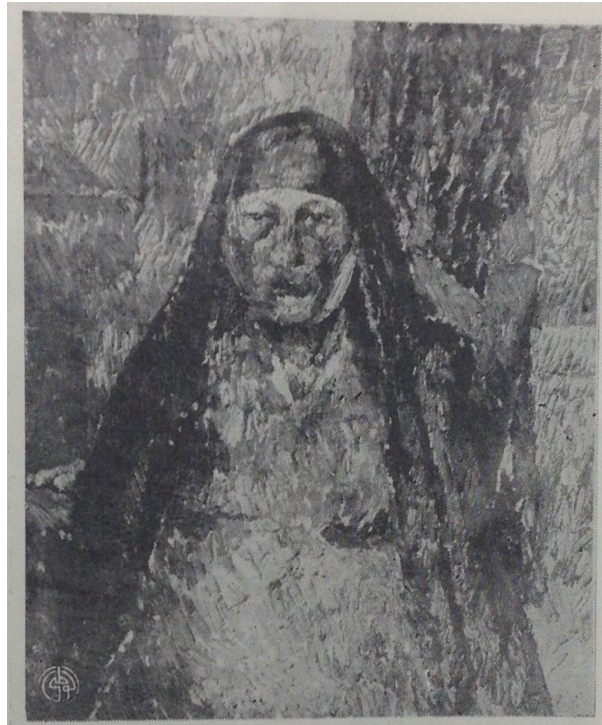
Figure 1.49: Edward Matuszczak, *The Painter Faiq's Mother*, 1943, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *Exhibition of Paintings by Polish Soldier-Artists* (Baghdad, 1943).

Figure 1.50: Stanislaw Westwalewicz, *Omar Mosque in Baghdad*, 1943, oil, location unknown. Source: http://artysciandersa.pl.

Figure 1.51: Edward Matuszczak, *Playing trik-trak*, 1941, gouache and ink on paper, location unknown. Source: Jan Wiktor Sienkiewicz, 'The Artists of General Wladyslaw Anders,' Towarzystwo Projektów Edukacyjnych, last modified May 2018, http://artysciandersa.pl.

Figure 1.52: Hafidh Druby, *A Street in Sadriya*, 1943, oil on canvas, 60 x 70 cm, location unknown, previously in the Museum of Pioneer Artists, Baghdad. Source: *Museum of Pioneer Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1990s).

Figure 1.53: Hafidh Druby, *Basra*, c. early 1940s, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.
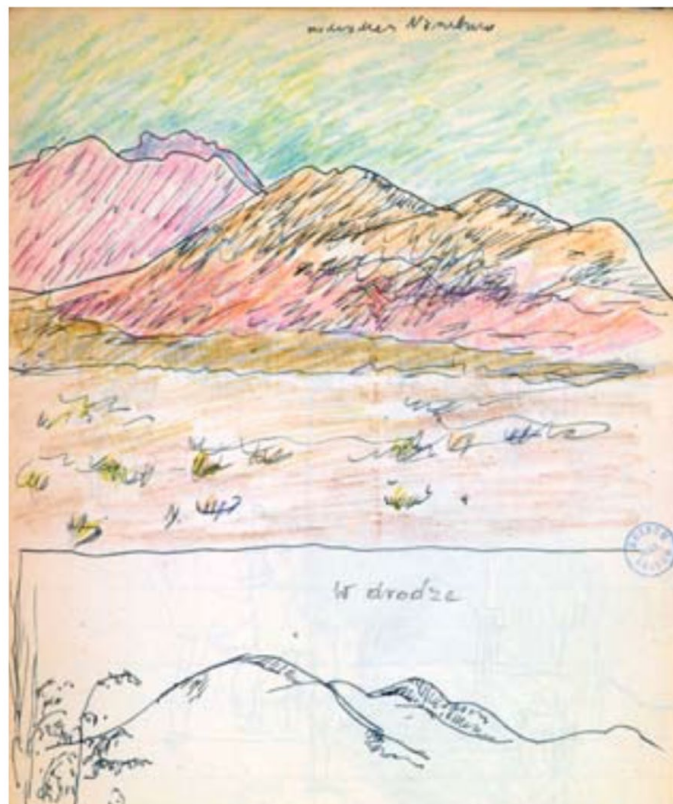
Figure 1.54: Jozef Czapski, diary entries, 1942-1943, Baghdad, Biblioteka Czartoryskich, National Museum, Krakow. Source: Mikolaj Nowak Rogozinski, 'The War Diary of Jozef Czapski,' *Konteksty* 3 (2018): 225-232.
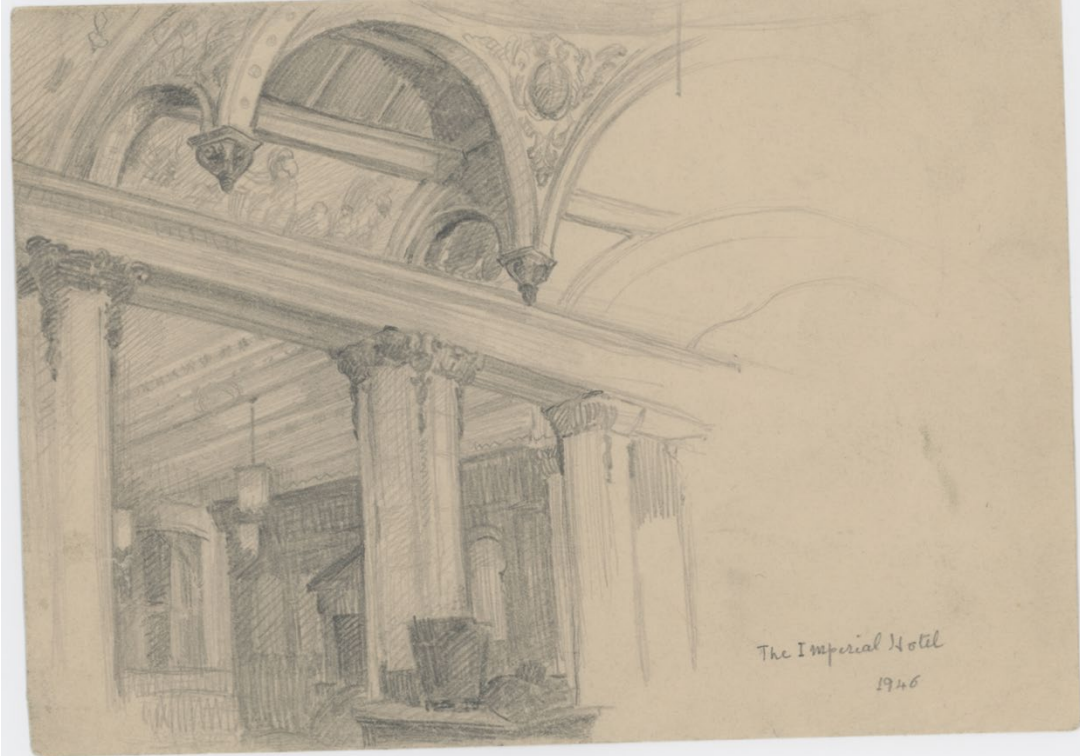
Figure 1.55: Hafidh Druby, *The Imperial Hotel,* 1946, pencil on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.
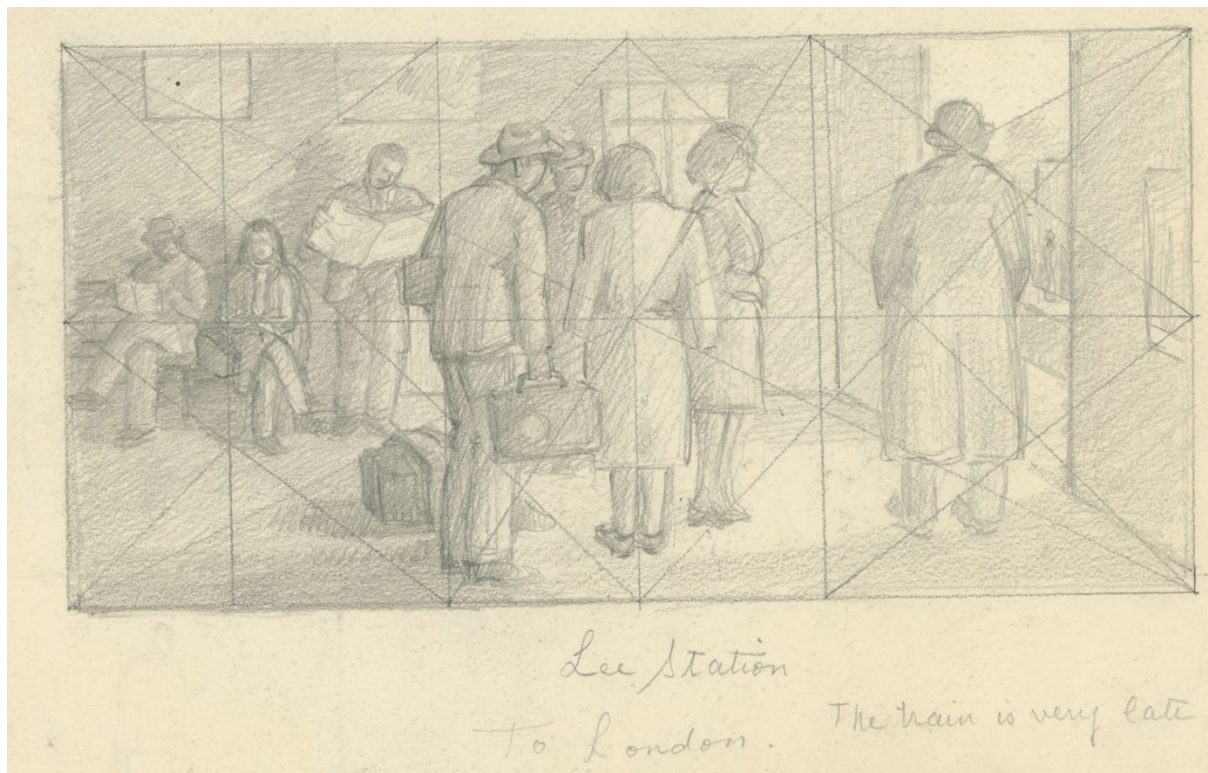
Figure 1.56: Hafidh Druby, *Lee Station*, 1946-1950, pencil on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 1.57: Hafidh Druby, *Back Garden* (detail), 1949, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

Figure 1.58: Hafidh Druby, *In the Bar*, 1949, oil on canvas, 102 x 129 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Pioneer Artists, Baghdad. Source: Dia al-Azzawi, 'Hafidh Druby: Between Impressionism and Documentation of City Life,' *al-Dustur* (1977): 32-33.
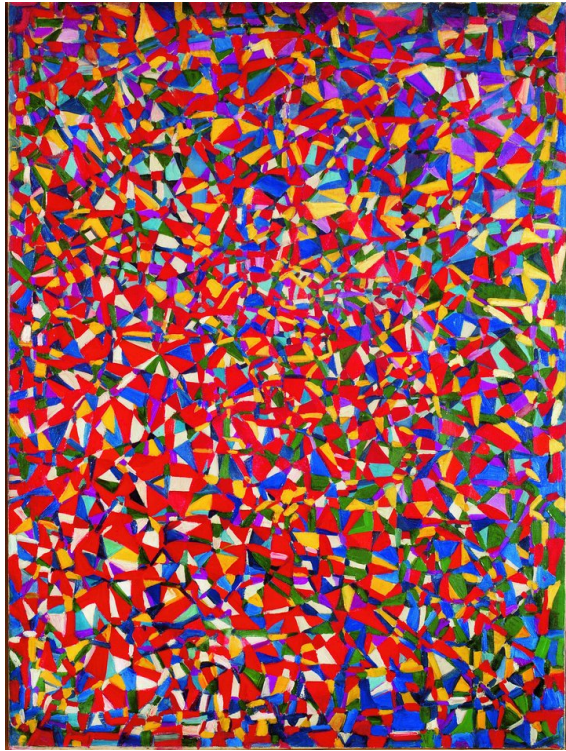
Figure 1.59: Fahrelnissa Zeid, *Resolved Problems*, 1948, oil on canvas, 130 x 97 cm, Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul. Source: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/fahrelnissa-zeid-22764/lists/four-key-works.

Figure 1.60: *King Faisal II and Fahrelnissa Zeid in front of Hafidh Druby's painting Spanish Lady*, 1949, photograph, Walton House, London. Source: *Diplomatist* (May 1949).

Figure 2.1: Hafidh Druby, *Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra*, 1956, oil on panel?, location unknown, previously in the Mosul Museum, Mosul, looted 2017. Source: Fuad Safar and Muhammad Ali Mustafa, *Hatra: The City of the Sun God* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information, 1974).

Figure 2.2: Hafidh Druby, *Flowers*, c. 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May 1956), 18-20.

Figure 2.3: Hafidh Druby, *In the Café*, 1956, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Hafidh Druby* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982).
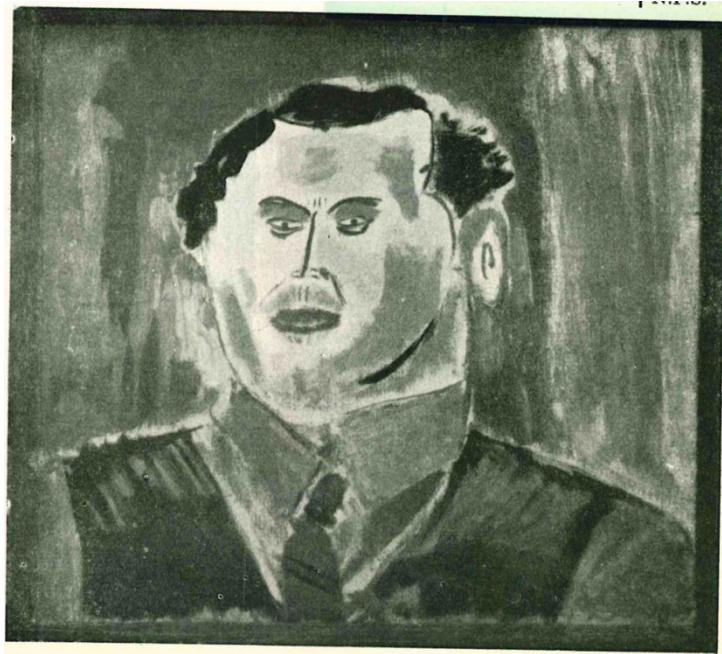
Figure 2.4: King Faisal II, *My Art Teacher*, 1953, oil, 17 x 15 cm, location unknown. Source: *Second International Contemporary Art Exhibition* (New Delhi: The Society, 1953).

Figure 2.5: *Hafidh Druby at a gathering at Faiq Hassan's house*, c. 1953, photograph, Balkis Sharara and Rifat Chadirji Collection. Source: Amin Alsaden, 'Alternative Salons: Cultivating Art and Architecture in the Domestic Spaces of Post-World War II Baghdad,' in *The Art of the Salon in the Arab Region: Politics of Taste Making* (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Wurzburg, 2018), Figure 2a.

Figure 2.6: Ian Auld, untitled, 1954 – 1957, pen on paper, location unknown. Source: mutualart.com.

Figure 2.7: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Return to the Village*, 1951, oil, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: https://artiraq.org/maia/.

Figure 2.8: Faiq Hassan, *Countryside*, 1952, oil, location unknown. Source: 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Iraq Petroleum* (June, 1952).

Figure 2.9: Hafidh Druby, *First Exhibition of the Impressionist Painters Group*, 1953, poster, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi, *Poster Art in Iraq 1939-1973* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974).
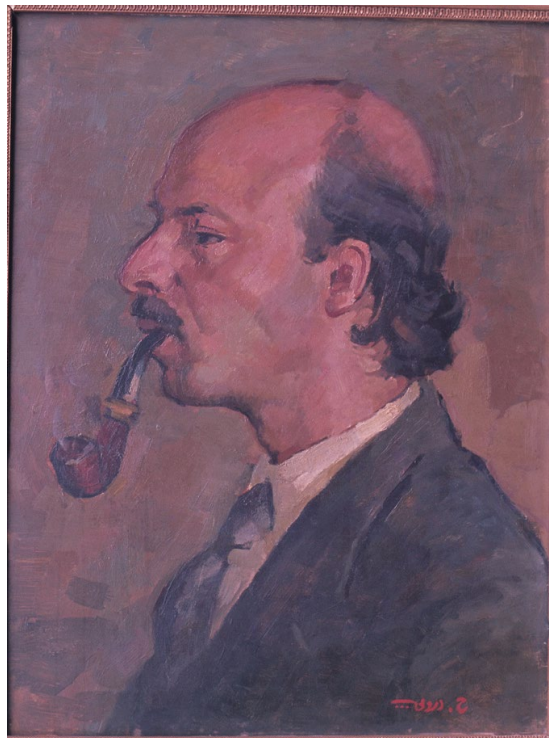
Figure 2.10: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Abd al-Aziz al-Duri*, 1950, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.11: Hafidh Druby, *Girl with a Guitar*, 1950, oil on canvas, 95 x 71 cm, National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Amin Alsaden.

Figure 2.12: Hafidh Druby, *My Friend Ali*, early 1940s?, oil on canvas, 20 x 13, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.13: Akram Shukri, *Tea Picnic*, c. 1953, oil on canvas, 19 x 23 cm, location unknown. Source: *Second International Contemporary Art Exhibition* (New Delhi: The Society, 1953).

Figure 2.14: Atta Sabri, *Fish Market in Copenhagen*, c. late 1940s or early 1950s, oil on canvas, Ibrahimi Collection, Amman. Source: Ibrahimi Collection, Amman.

Figuer 2.15: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1952, carved stone, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.16: Mahmoud Sabri, *Women Waiting*, 1953, watercolour and pen, 37 x 51 cm, location unknown. Source: *Museum of Pioneer Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1990s).

Figure 2.17: Hafidh Druby, *Haji Woman*, 1951, oil on canvas, location unknown, previously in the collection of Muhammad Ali Mustafa. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.18: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1952, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archive, London.

Figure 2.19: Hafidh Druby, *Sandgrouse and an Ear of Corn*, 1956, oil, 75 x 84 cm, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi Archives, London.

Figure 2.20: Hafidh Druby, *Iraqi Airways*, late 1950s?, poster, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin. Source: Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

Figure 2.21: Yasin Shakir, *Baghdad: Arabian Nights*, poster, Private Collection, Saudi Arabia. Source: Private Collection, Saudi Arabia.
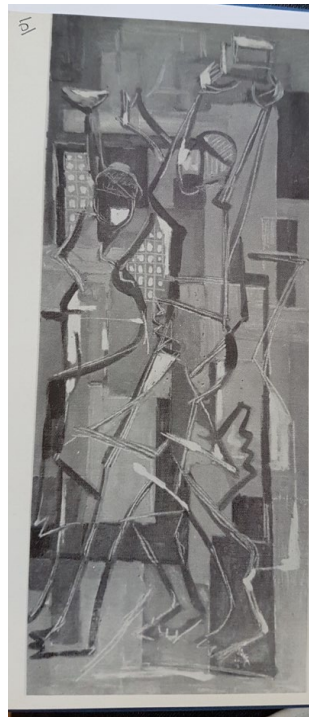
Figure 2.22: Hafidh Druby, *Workers*, late 1950s, oil, location unknown. Source: *Exhibition of Fine Arts* (Basra: Basra Poetry Festival, 1971), fig. 16.

Figure 2.23: Hafidh Druby, *Washing Day*, 1957, oil on board, 49.5 x 40.5 cm, location unknown. Source: Khaldun Husry, 'The Wandering; a study of modern Iraqi painting,' *Middle East Forum* 13:4 (1958), 23-27.

Figure 2.24: Hafidh Druby, *Ball of the Society of Iraqi Artists*, 1957, poster, 70 x 50, location unknown. Source: Dia al-Azzawi, *Poster Art in Iraq 1939-1973* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974).

Figure 2.25: Khalid al-Jadir, *Gypsy*, 1957, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: S. Pevzner, 'New Art from Iraq,' *Iskusstvo* 11 (1959).

Figure 2.26: Semyon Chuikov, *Daughter of Soviet Kirgizia*, 1950, oil on canvas, 120 x 95 cm, private collection. Source: Matthew Cullerne Brown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 295.

Figure 2.27: Kadhim Haidar, *The Porter*, 1955, oil on canvas with attached tree trunk, location unknown. Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May, 1956): 18-21.

Figure 2.28: Ismail al-Shaikhly, *On the Move*, 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Mondern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956): 1-7.

Figure 2.29: Shakir Hassan Al Said, untitled, 1956, oil on panel, location unknown. Source: https://artiraq.org/maia/.
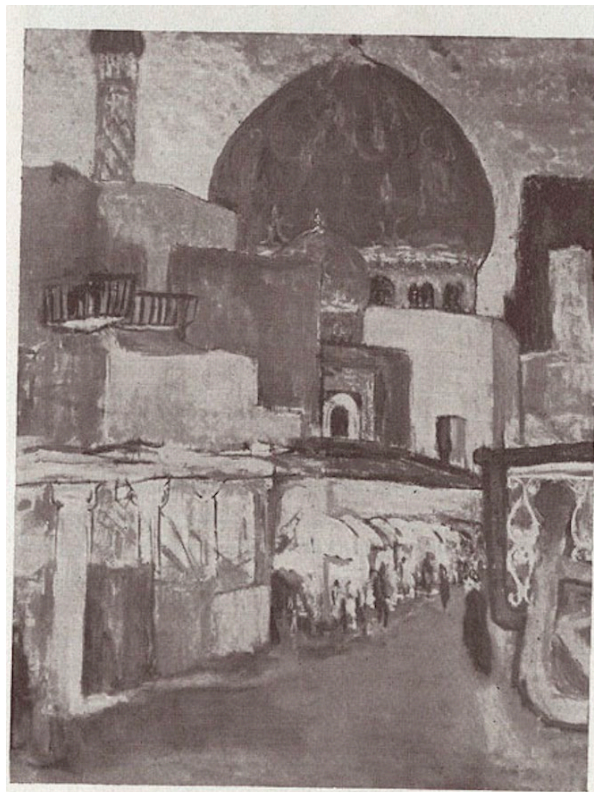
2.30: Naziha Selim, *Haidar Khana Mosque*, 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Mondern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956).

Figure 2.31: Jewad Selim, *Pleasures*, 1956, pen on paper, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Modern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956): 1-7.
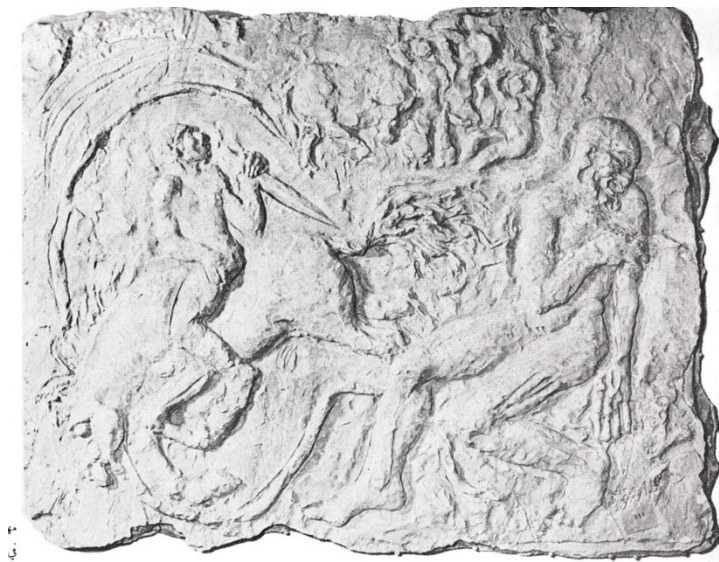
Figure 2.32: Tariq Madhloum, *Wounded*, 1956, clay, location unknown. Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May, 1956).
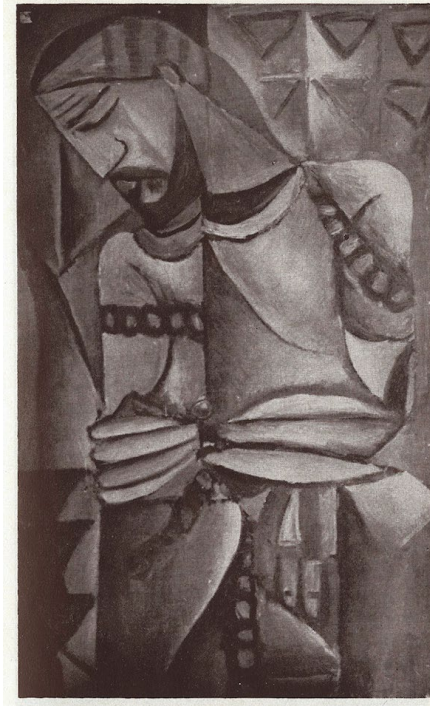
Figure 2.33: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *Zayn al-'Abidin*, 1956, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Alan Neame, 'Modern Painting in Iraq,' *The Studio* CLI: 754 (January 1956).

Figure 2.34: Hafidh Druby, *Assyrian Architecture*, 1958, oil on panel, location unknown, previously in the Mosul Museum, Mosul, photograph taken April 2, 2017. Source: Gajja Pellegrini-Bettoli, 'Mending scars through heritage: Geologist who fought IS helps save Mosul's antiquities,' *The New Arab*, 21 September 2018.
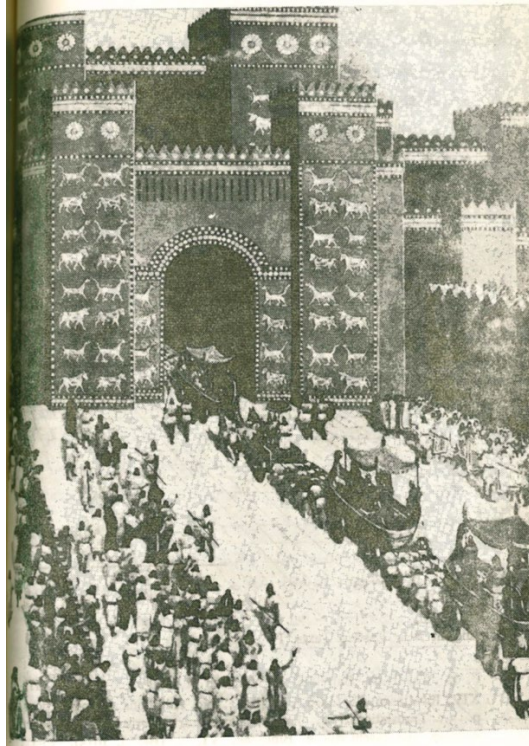
Figure 2.35: Hafidh Druby, *Babylon*, late 1950s, oil on panel?, location unknown, formerly in the Babylon Museum, Babylon. Source: Mahmud Hussain al-Amin, 'Akitu,' *Bulletin of the College of Arts* 5 (April, 1962): 162.

Figure 2.36: Reconstructed entrance to the throne room of the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud, 1956, photogaph. Source: Mahmud Ainachi, 'Reconstruction and preservation of monuments in Northern Iraq,' *Sumer* 12 (1956): 124–32.

Figure 2.37: Hafidh Druby and archaeologist, Mohammed Ali Mustafa, discussing the painting Hatra, 1956, photograph. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.38: Hafidh Druby, *My Wife Resting*, 1959, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.39: Hafidh Druby, *Baghdad Bridge*, 1962, oil on canvas, Dia Azzawi Collection, London. Source: Dia Azzawi Archive, London.

Figure 2.40: *View of Tahrir Square with Jewad Selim's Freedom Monument in the Background*, 1960s, photograph, Baghdad. Source: Gulbenkian Foundation Archive, Lisbon.

Figure 2.41: Faiq Hassan, *Celebration of Victory*, 1962, mosaic, al-Tayaran Square, Baghdad. Source: http://faeikhassan.blogspot.com/2009/.

Figure 2.42: Hafidh Druby*, Baghdad Ancient and Modern*, c. 1960, oil on board, Baghdadi Museum, Baghdad. Source: *Progress Under Planning* (Baghdad: Ministry of Planning, c. 1970), back cover.

Figure 2.43: view of Hafidh Druby's *Baghdad Ancient and Modern* in the Baghdadi Museum, Baghdad. Source: Mutaz Ghazwan.

Figure 2.44: Hafidh Druby, *Constructing Buildings,* c. 1960, oil on panel, location unknown. Source: Ministry of Culture Archives, Baghdad. Source: Amin Alsaden.

Figure 2.45: Hafidh Druby, *Constructing Buildings* (detail), c. 1960s, oil on panel, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.46: Hafidh Druby, *The Family Number 2*, 1962, oil on canvas, 43.8 x 33.6 cm, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon. Source: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.

Figure 2.47: Hafidh Druby, *Fishermen*, 1964, oil on canvas, 70 x 100 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Red List of Iraqi Painting*, (2013), image 59, 61.
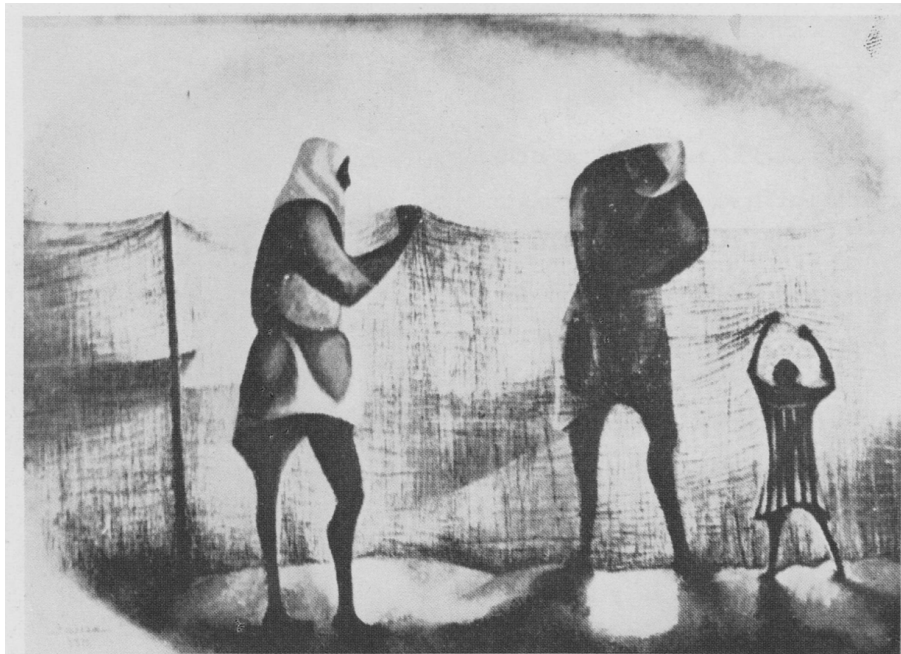
Figure 2.48: Saad al-Tai, *Fishermen*, 1964, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Marwan Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' *Al-'Amilun fi al-Naft 29* (July 1964).

Figure 2.49: Hafidh Druby, *In the Marshes*, late 1950s, oil, location unknown. Source: postcard, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1970s?, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

Figure 2.50: Wilfred Thesiger, *Canoes at Al Aggar in the central Marshes*, 1954, photograph. Source: Wilfred Thesiger, 'The Marshmen of Southern Iraq,' *The Geographic Journal* 120: 3 (September, 1954) 272-281.

Figure 2.51: Khalid Rahal, untitled, 1960, mural, location unknown, previously in the lobby of the Central Bank, Baghdad. Source: Shams al-Din Faris, *Historical Sources for Murals in Contemporary Iraq* (Baghdad: Department of Culture and Information, 1974).
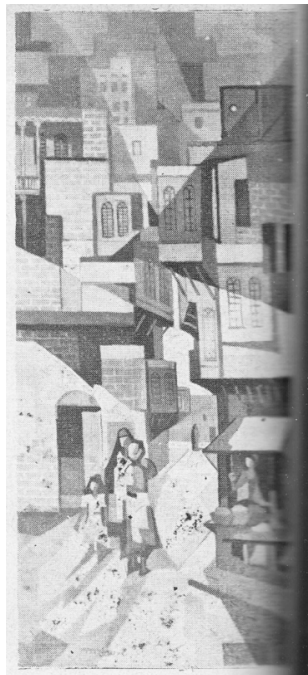
Figure 2.52: Hafidh Druby, *From the Corners of Baghdad*, 1964, oil, location unknown. Source: 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rubaie, 'With the Iraqi Impressionists,' *Adab* (June 1964): 77.

Figure 2.53: Hafidh Druby, *Family*, 1964, oil, location unknown. Source: *Amiloun fil Naft* 2: 21 (1964).
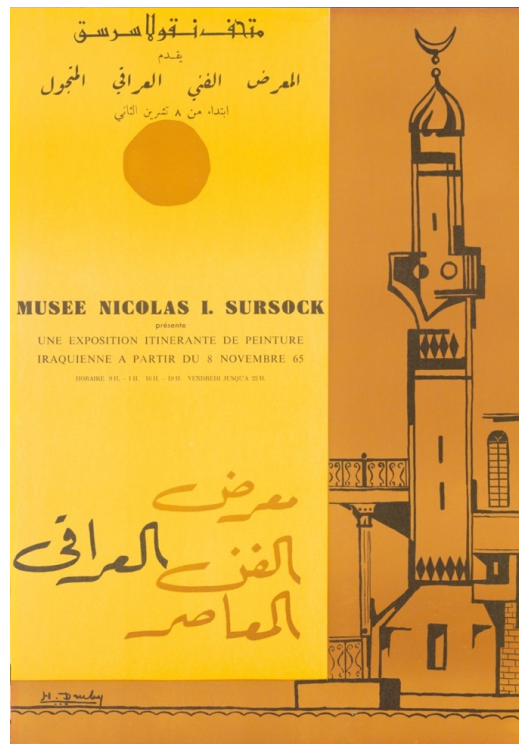
Figure 2.54: Hafidh Druby, *Exposition Itinerante de Peinture*, 1965, poster, Sursock Museum, Beirut. Source: Sursock Museum, Beirut.
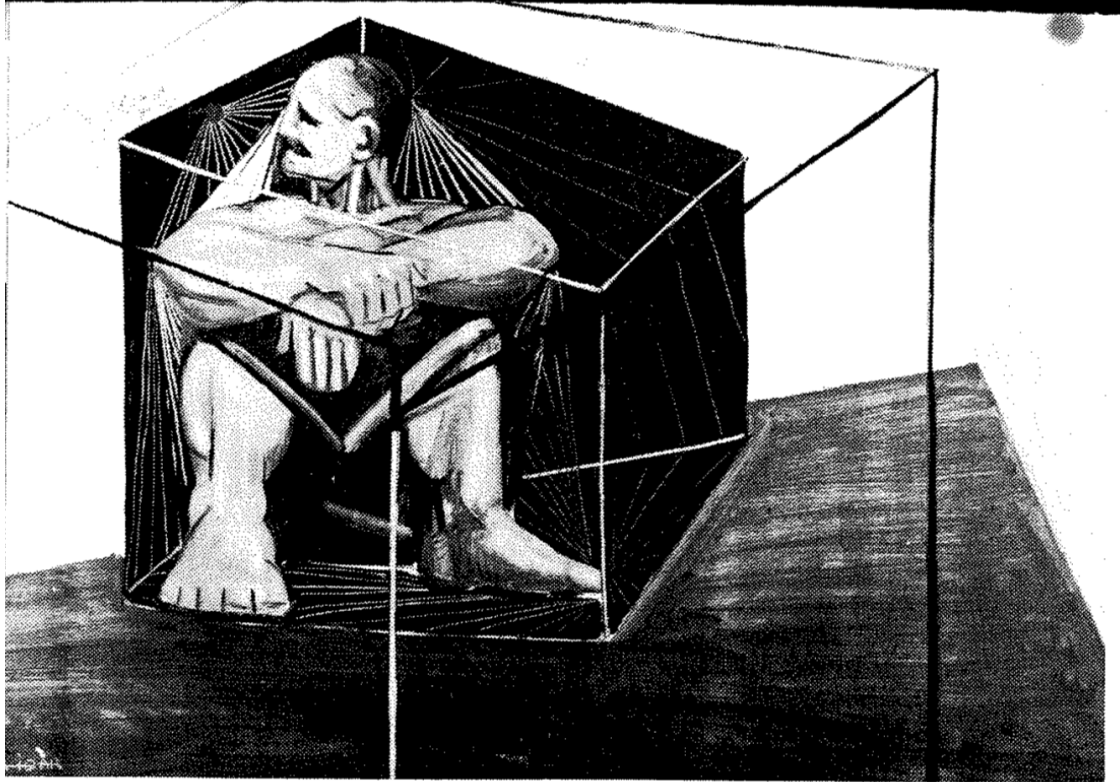
Figure 2.55: Kadhim Haidar, *Three Cubes and a Human*, 1964, oil, location unknown. Source: Sa'dun Fadhil, 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated,' *Amiloun fil Naft 29* (July 1964).

Figure 2.56: Jamil Hamoudi, *Written Painting*, 1954, oil on board, location unknown. Source: https://artiraq.org/maia/.
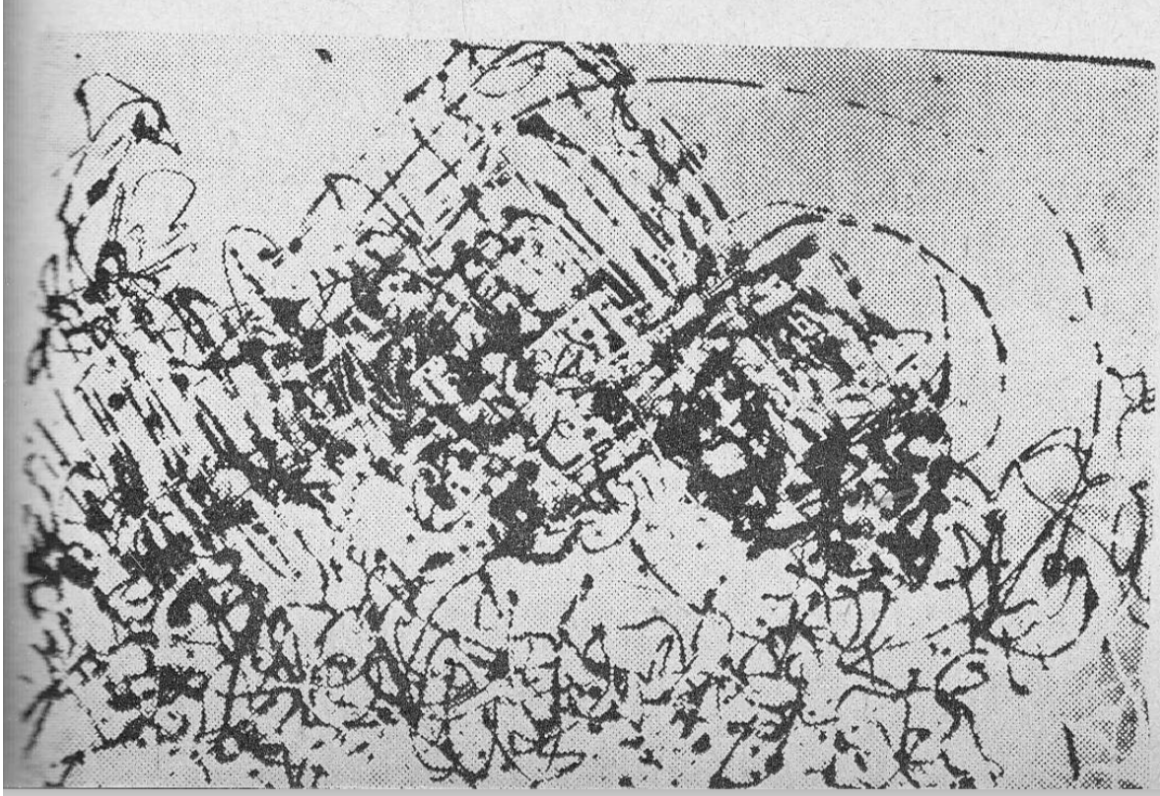
Figure 2.57: Akram Shukri, *Eid al-Ahda*, 1957, acrylic, location unknown. Source: Atta Sabri, 'Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture,' *al-Adab* 5:5 (May, 1957).

Figure 2.58: Akram Shukri, *The End*, 1962, acrylic, location unknown. Source: https://artiraq.org/maia/.

258

Figure 2.59: Hafidh Druby, *Atmospheres*, c. 1963, oil on board, 80 x 100 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.60: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1966, oil on paper laid on board, 51.2 x 112.5 cm, location unknown. Source: Christie's Auction House, Dubai.
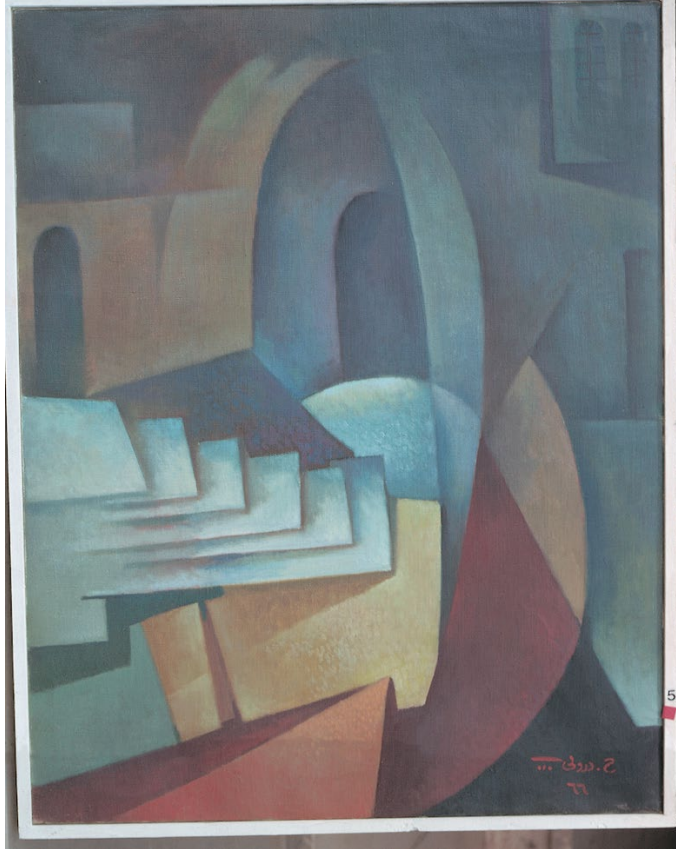
Figure 2.61: Hafidh Druby, *Abstract Architecture*, 1966, oil on board, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.62: Hafidh Druby, *Harmony in Blue,* 1966, oil on canvas, 68 x 106.5 cm. Source: Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon (PE306). Source: Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.
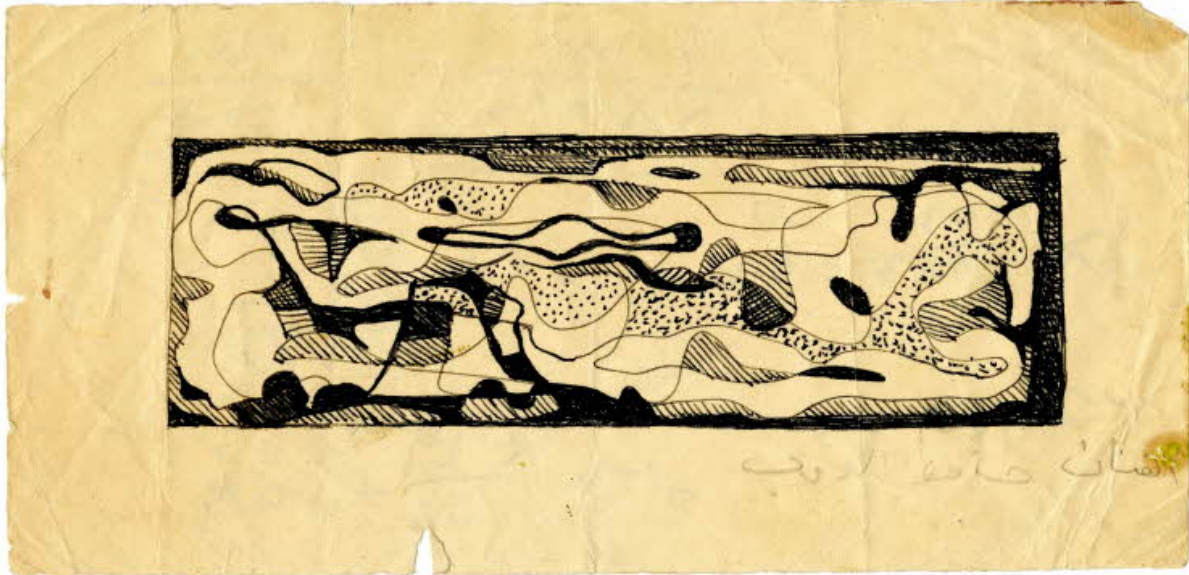
Figure 2.63: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1964-1970, pen on paper, 4.5 x 14 cm, The British Museum, London (2013,6025.12). Source: The British Museum, London.

Figure 2.64: Faiq Hassan, untitled, 1967, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Jamil Hamoudi, *Contemporary Art from Iraq* (Stockholm: Linkoln Blom, 1975).
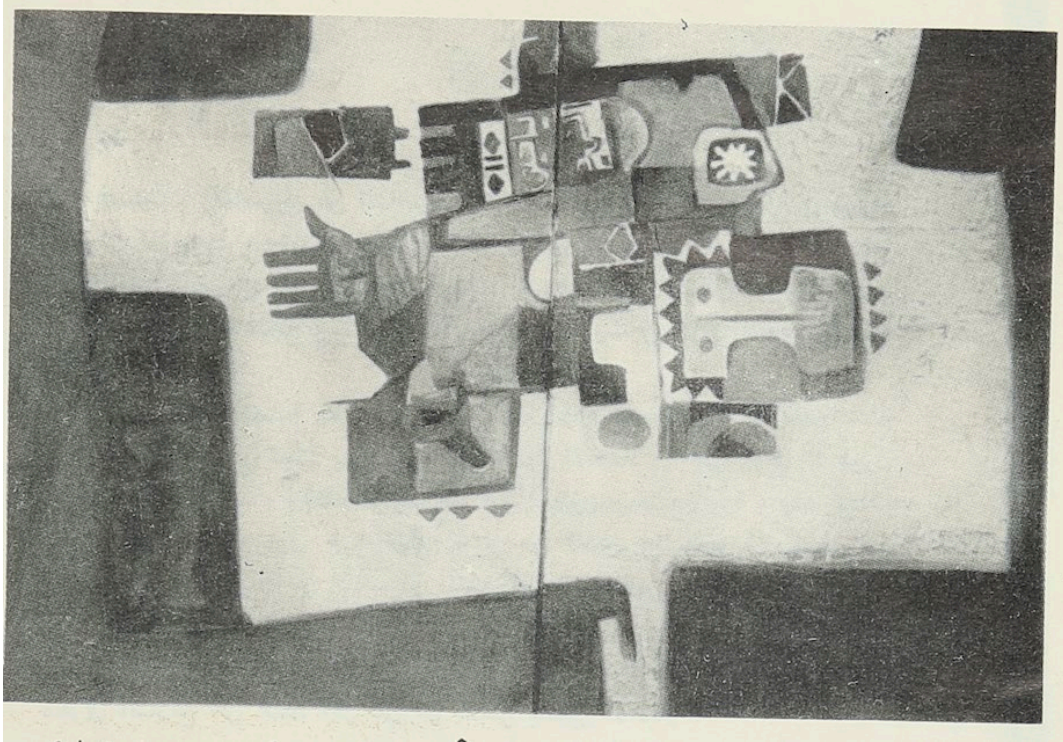
Figure 2.65: Dia al-Azzawi, *From the Remains of the Battle*, 1965, oil, location unknown. Source: Review of the travelling exhibition of Iraqi modern art, unidentified newspaper clipping, Beirut, 1965, Sursock Museum Archives.
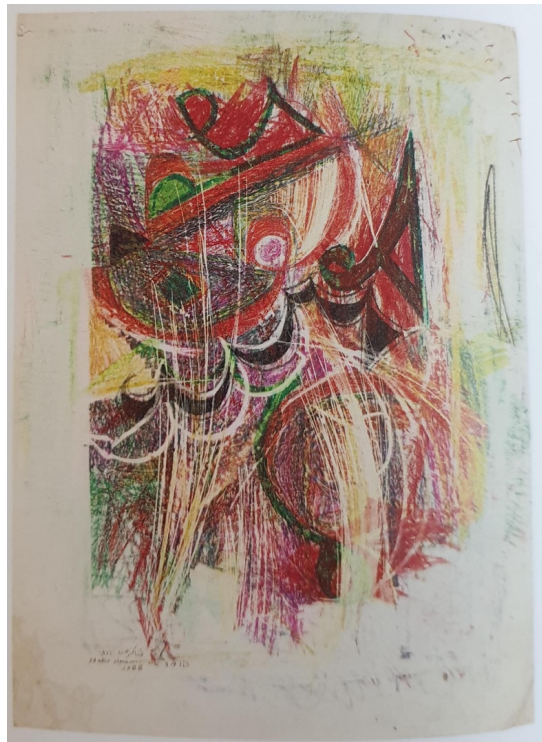

Figure 2.66: Shakir Hassan Al Said, *One Dimension in Colour*, 1966, pastel on paper, location unknown. Source: Anneka Lenssen, Sarah Rogers, and Nada Shabout, 'ed., *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), plate 27.

Figure 2.67: Hafidh Druby, *The Goal*, 1966, oil on board, location unknown, previously in the City Hall, Tehran. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.68: Hafidh Druby, *Leda and the Swan*, 1966, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 2.69: Jewad Selim, untitled, c. 1940s, pen on paper, location unknown. Source: *Hiwar* 2:2 (January-February, 1964).
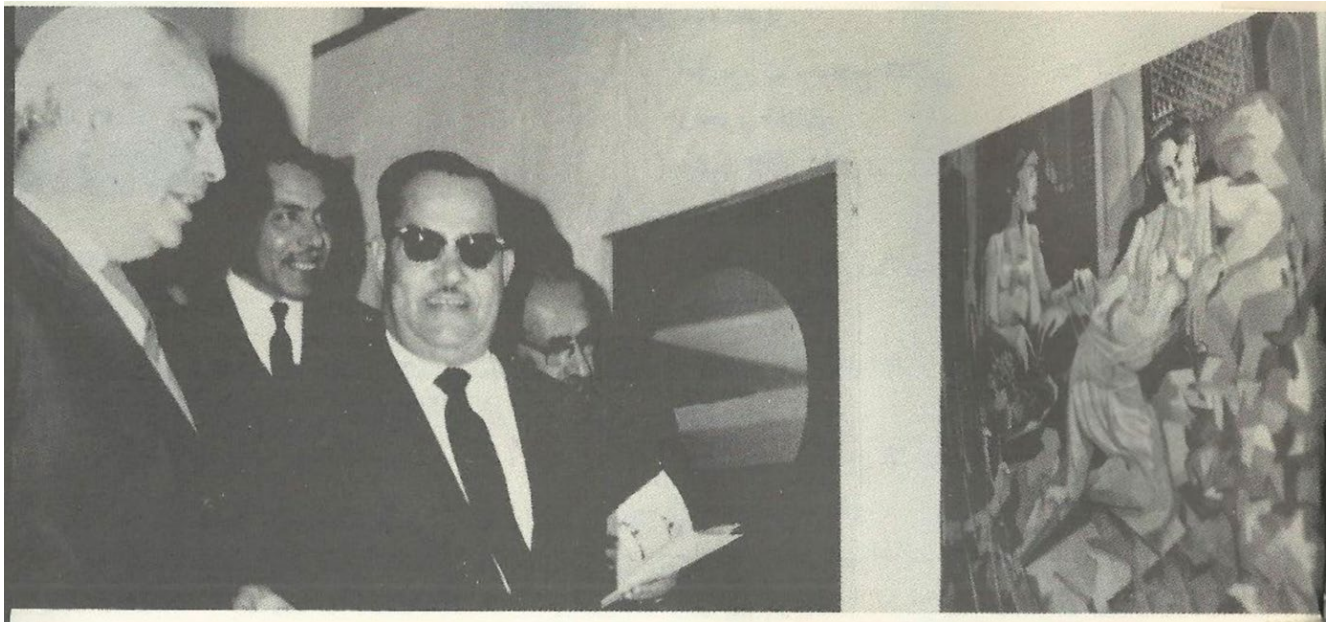

Figure 2.70: Prime Minister Tahir Yahya with Hafidh Druby and his painting, *Magic of the Abbasids*, 1967, photograph. Source: *Society of Iraqi Artists* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1967).

Figure 3.1: *Hafidh Druby in front of his mural, al-Qadisiyya*, c. 1968, photograph, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.2: Hafidh Druby, *The Weeping One*, 1968, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.3: Hafidh Druby, *Weeping Palestine*, 1971, oil on canvas, location unknown, gift to Ethel Mannin. Source: Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

Figure 3.4: Mahmoud Sabri, *Clay – A1203-SiO2-H2O*, 1971, location unknown. Source: http://www.quantumrealism.co.uk.

Figure 3.5: Nu'man Hadi Salman, *The Academy Group*, 1971, oil on canvas, 160 x 128, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Red List of Iraqi Painting*, Image 178 (2013), 161.

Figure 3.6: Hafidh Druby, *Decoration of a Woman*, 1970, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *The Second Arabian Artist Biennale Exhibition* (Kuwait City: Kuwait Government Press, 1971).

Figure 3.7: Hafidh Druby, *In Fahama*, 1972, oil on canvas, 175 x 121, ocation unknown.
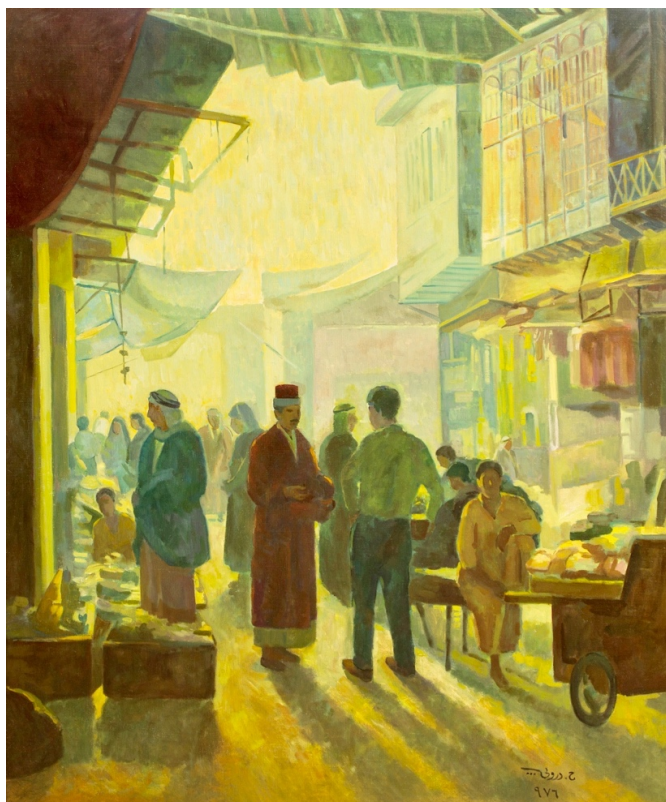Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.8: Hafidh Druby, *Market in al-Kadhimiya*, 1976, oil on canvas, 69 x 49 cm, Hussain Ali
Harba Collection, Turin. Source: Hussain Ali Harba Collection, Turin.

Figure 3.9: Nizar al-Hindawi, *A Meeting*, 1974, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

Figure 3.10: *Meeting of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, 1939*, c. 1950, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: https://www.alamy.com.

Figure 3.11: Hafidh Druby, *From the People's Work*, 1973, oil on canvas, location unknown.
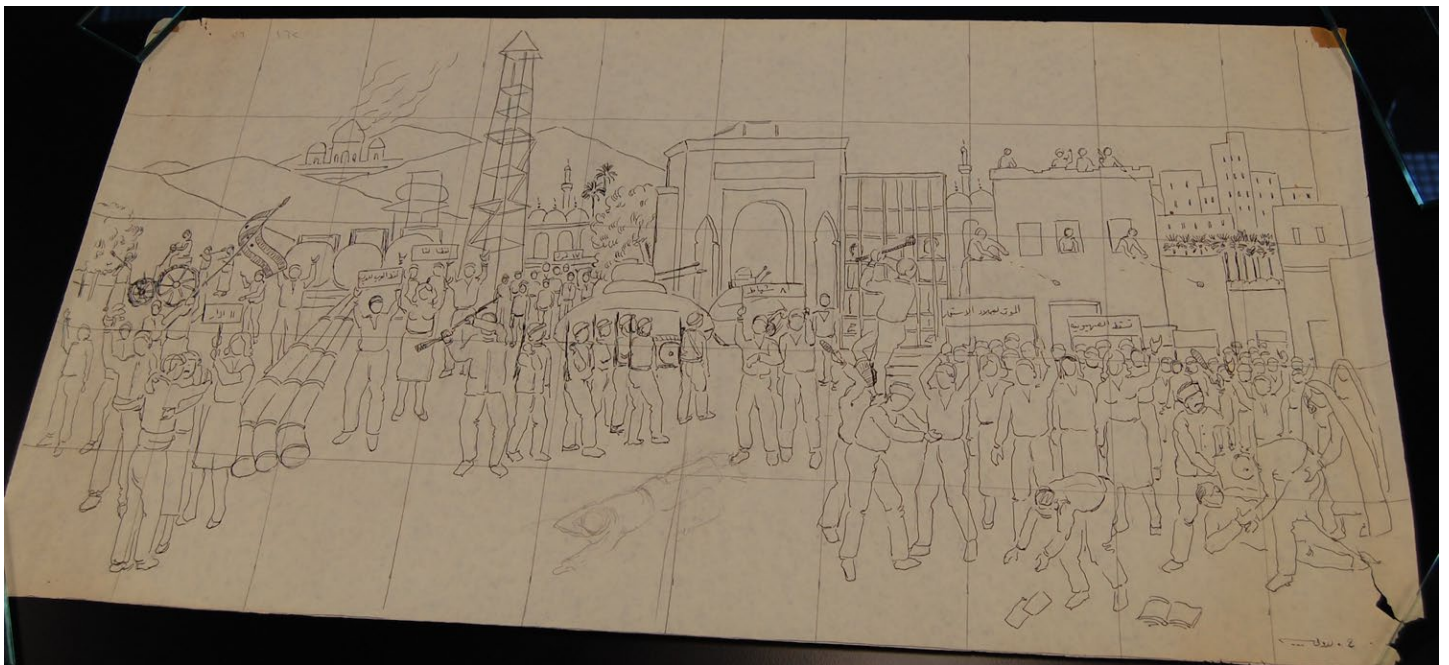Source: *First Exhibition of the Party* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).

Figure 3.12: Hafidh Druby, *Struggle of the Ba'th Party* (preparatory sketch), 1972, pen on paper, 50.5 x
97 cm, The British Museum, London (2013,6025.3). Source: The British Museum, London.

Figure 3.13: Hafidh Druby, *Struggle of the Ba'th Party* (preparatory sketch), 1972, oil on board, 76 x 162 cm, location unknown (Christie's, October 25, 2017). Source: Christie's, London.

Figure 3.14: Valentina Ahmed, *Time of the Revolution in the North*, c. 1974, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *First Exhibition of the Party* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).

Figure 3.15: Hafidh Druby, *Struggle of the Ba'th Party*, 1972, oil on board, 2m x 5m 21cm, location unknown, intended for the National Command Building, Baghdad. Source: Mahmoud al-Jazairi, 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People),' *al-Riwaq* (Nov. 1978).

Figure 3.16: 'Azzam al-Bazzaz, *Tribute to the Party*, c. 1974, oil, location unknown. Source: 'First Exhibition of the Party: Transformation in the Practice of Art,'*Funun*, April 16, 1974.

Figure 3.17: Hafidh Druby, *Affection,* 1976, oil on canvas, 118 x 100 cm, location unknown, previously in the National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: *Red List of Missing Works* (Beirut, 2013), 221.

Figure 3.18: Hafidh Druby, *Battle of Amorium*, 1966, oil on board, National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Dr. Mutaz Ghazwan.

Figure 3.19: Hafidh Druby, *Qadisiyya*, c. 1968, 2.3 x 2 m, oil on canvas. Location Unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.20: *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Delegation Visit to Ctesiphon*, c. 1966, photograph, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, COM FO3-01450.

Figure 3.21: Faiq Hassan, *The History of Iraq*, c. 1970, 186.5 x 100 cm, oil on canvas. Bonhams Modern and Contemporary Middle East, November 28, 2017. Source: Bonhams, London.

Figure 3.22: *View of the final panorama of the Battle of Qadisiyya at Ctesiphon*, *Alif Ba* 7:9 (18 Ramadan, 1980): cover.

275

Figure 3.23: Hafidh Druby, *Gleeful Majlis*, 1971, oil, location unknown. Source: Calendar Issued by the Rafidain Bank, 1972, Baghdad, Gisela Helmecke Archive, Berlin.

Figure 3.24: Hafidh Druby, *Gleeful Majlis* (sketch), 1971, watercolour on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.
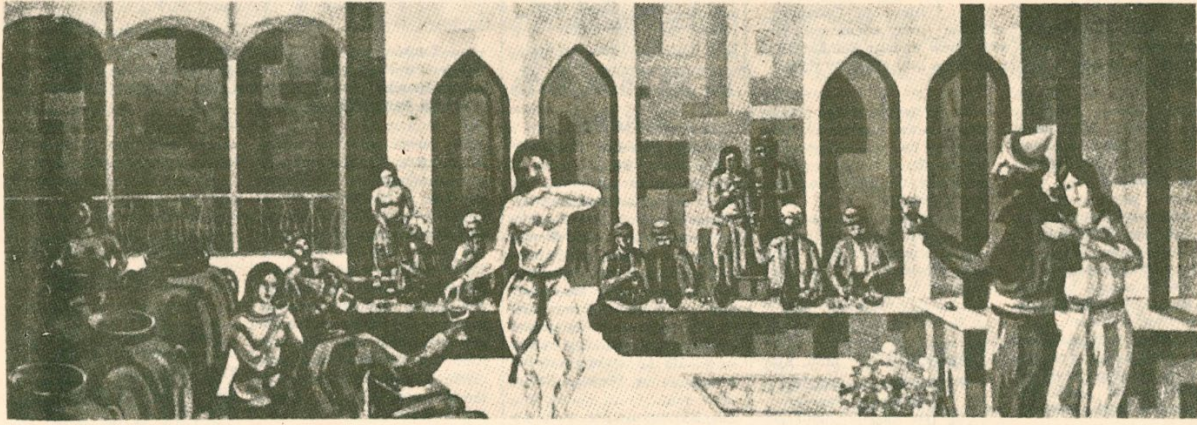
Figure 3.25: Hafidh Druby, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, 1976, oil on canvas, location unknown, possibly still in a hotel in Baghdad. Source: *Baghdad Observer* 27/5/1977 VII 2826: 8.

Figure 3.26: Hafidh Druby, *Magic of the Abbasids*, c. 1967, oil on canvas, 118 x 100, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.27: Hafidh Druby (centre) showing Hamid al-Jibouri, Minister of Information and Culture the First Biennale of Arab Art, 1974, photograph. Source: *Alif Ba*, March 21, 1974.

Figure 3.28: Nizar al-Hindawi, *The Birth*, c. 1974, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: *Iraq Pavilion, First Biennale of Arab Art* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974).

Figure 3.29: Hafidh Druby, *al-Harsha 2*, 1973, oil on canvas, Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut. Source: Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut.

Figure 3.30: Hafidh Druby, *al-Harsha*, 1970, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.31: Rakan Dabdoub, untitled, 1970, print illustration for Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Agony of the Sun* (Beirut, 1981). Source: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Agony of the Sun* (Beirut, 1981).
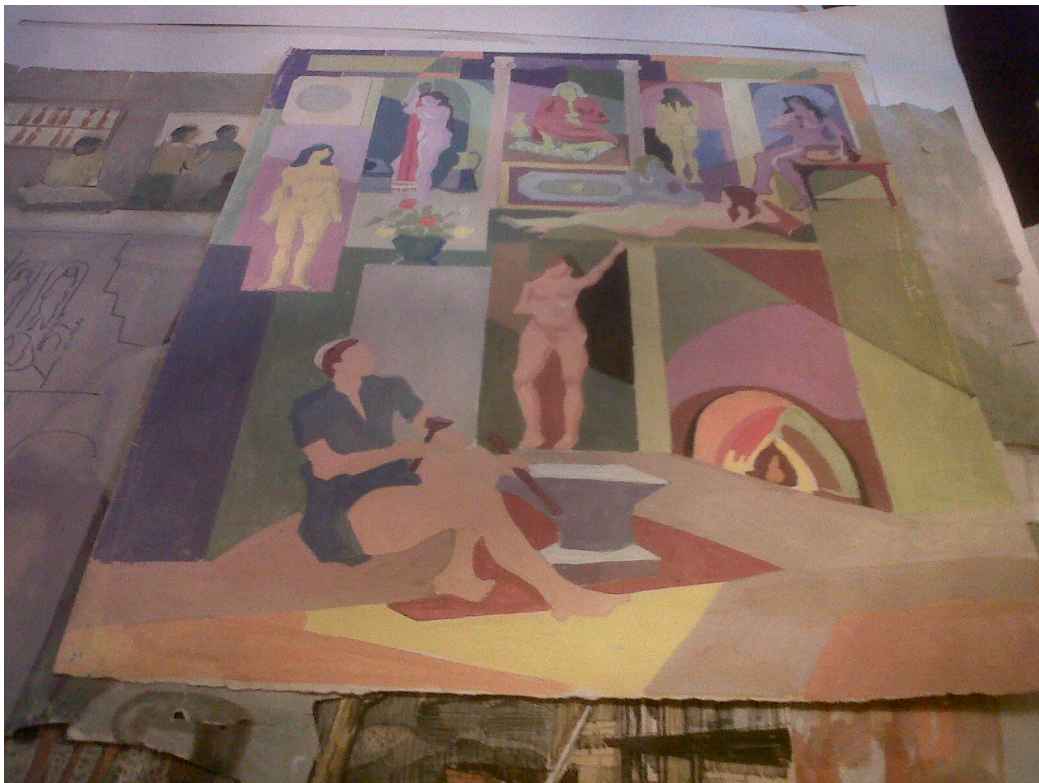

Figure 3.32: Hafidh Druby, *The Blacksmith and Seven Women*, 1974, acrylic on paper, 50.2 x 40.3 cm, The British Museum, London. Source: The British Museum, London.

Figure 3.33: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1976, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.34: Hafidh Druby, *Fruit and Drinks*, 1977, oil on canvas, National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.35: *Exhibition of Hafidh Druby*, 1980, poster, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.36: Hafidh Druby, *Portrait of Suhaila*, 1977, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.37: Hafidh Druby, *Three Horses,* 1974, oil on canvas, 73 x 99 cm, location unknown, previously in the collection of Dr. Khalid Ghanima. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.
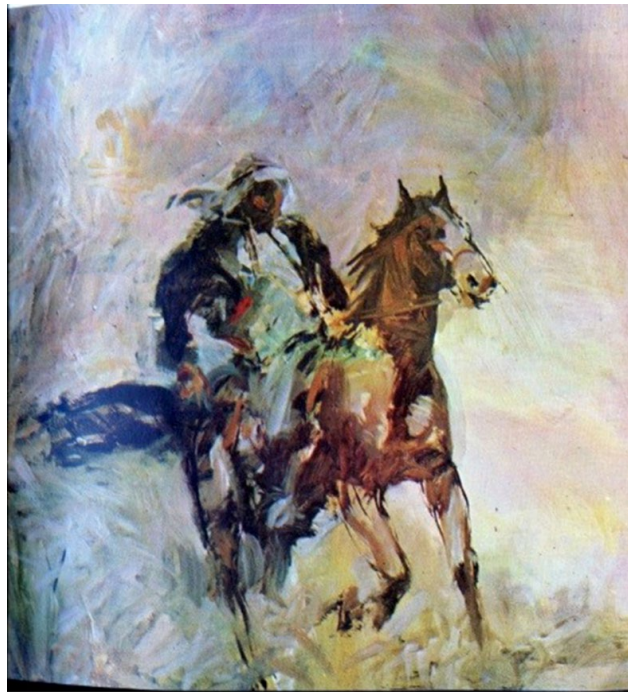

Figure 3.38: Faiq Hassan, *Arabian Knight*, 1970, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Shawkat al-Rubaie, *Faiq Hassan* (Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1982).

Figure 3.39: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1978, oil on canvas, location unknown. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

Figure 3.40: Hafidh Druby, *The Bar at the Alwiyah Club* (sketch), 1976, oil on paper, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.
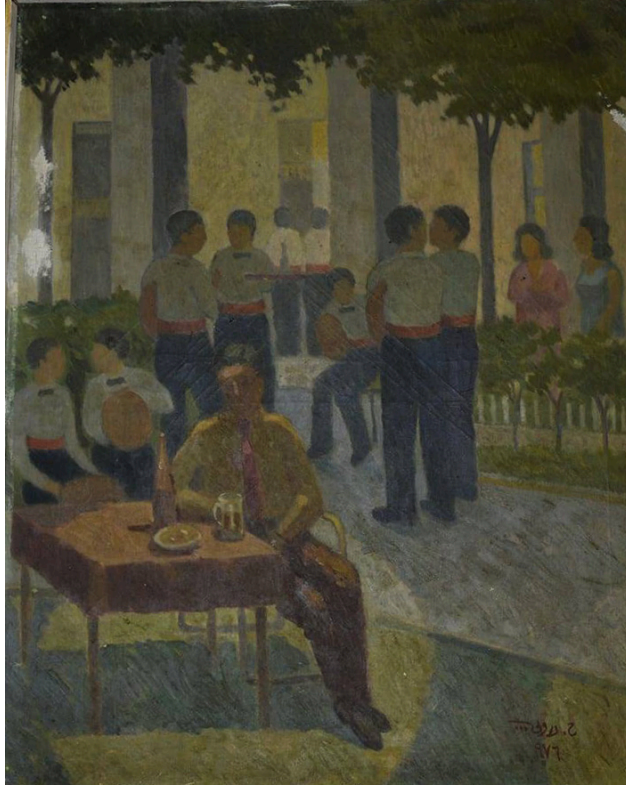
Figure 3.41: Hafidh Druby, *Drunk Man in the Alwiyah Club*, 1976, oil on canvas, Alwiyah Club, Baghdad. Source: Dr. Mutaz Ghazwan.

Figure 3.42: Hafidh Druby, *Drunk Man in the Alwiyah Club* (sketch), 1976, watercolour on paper, 22 x 15 cm, The British Museum, London. Source: The British Museum, London.

Figure 3.43: Hafidh Druby, untitled, 1982, oil on canvas, Zainab Mahdi Collection, Amman. Source: Zainab Mahdi Collection, Amman.

Minister of Information and Culture, Mr Latif Nsayyif Jassim visiting on Thursday the sixth one-person exhibition of Artist Hafidh Al-Doroubi, currently held at al-Riwaq Gallery. Mr Jassim praised the artist's talent and his 28 paintings which depict the Baghdadi life.
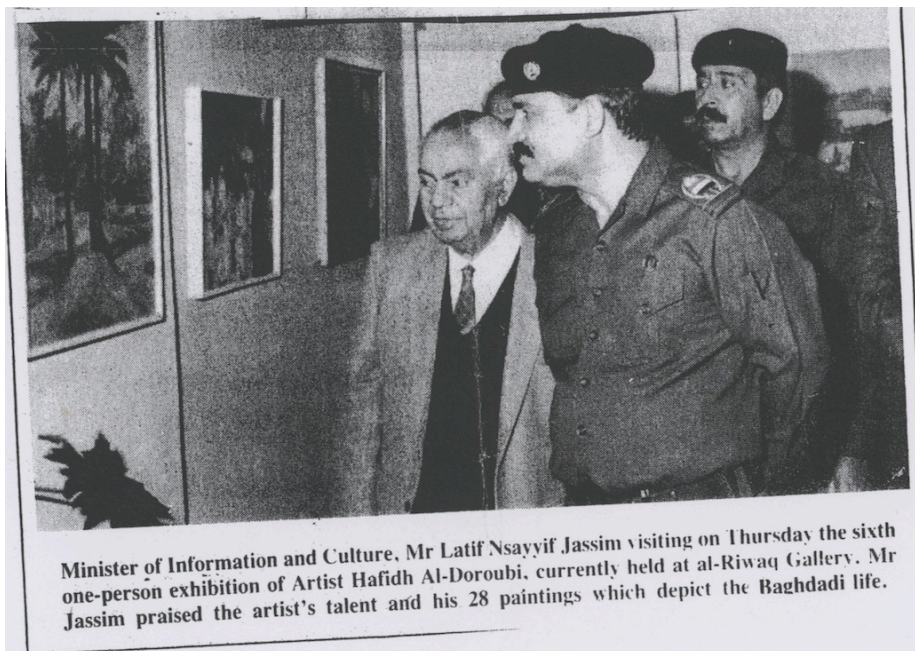
Figure 3.44: Hafidh Druby showing the Minister of Information and Culture around his solo exhibition, 1987, photograph. Source: *Baghdad Observer* (27 February 1987).

Figure 3.45: Hafidh Druby, *Fahama,* 1990, oil on canvas, Druby Family Collection, London. Source: Druby Family Collection, London.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

– . '12th Exhibition of the Iraqi Artists Association.' *Baghdad Observer*, December 28, 1969.

Abu Tammam, *Diwan Abi Tammam*. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1951.

– . *Academic Painting*. London: Sirrocco-Parkstone International, 2013.

– . 'Activity of the DAG in the DDR in the year 1971,' *Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft Report*, April 6, 1972, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

Ainachi, Mahmud. 'Reconstruction and preservation of monuments in Northern Iraq.' *Sumer* 12 (1956): 124–32.

Akrawi, Matta. 'The New Educational System in Iraq.' *The Open Court* 3 (1935): 162-176.

Ajami, Fouad. *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Ali, Wijdan. *Jordan National Museum of Fine Arts*. Amman: al-Mathaf, 2005.

Ali, Wijdan. *Modern Islamic Art: Development and Continuity*. Gainesville: Florida University Press, 1997.

– . *Alif Ba*, March 21, 1974.

Allen, Roger, Hilary Kilpatrick, Ed de Moor, ed. *Love and sexuality in modern Arabic literature*. London: Saqi Books, 1995.

Allerstorfer, Julia and Monika Leisch-Kiesl, ed. *'Global Art History': Transkulturelle Verortungen fon Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft,*' Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017.

Alsaden, Amin. 'Baghdad's Arab Biennial.' *Third Text* (2018): 1-30.

Alsaden, Amin. *Historic(ist) Encounters: Transforming Post-WWII Architecture in Baghdad.* PhD Diss.: Harvard University, 2018.

Alvarez, Mario V. and Ana M. Franco, ed. *New Geographies of Abstract Art in Postwar Latin America.* New York: Routledge, 2018.

Amin, Alessandra. *Into the "Shadow Archives" of Palestinian Art: Modernism, Internationalism, and Alternative Modes of Political Engagement*. PhD Diss.: UCLA, forthcoming.

al-Amin, Mahmud Hussain. 'Akitu.' *Bulletin of the College of Arts* 5 (April 1962): 131-162.

Angiuli, Emanuela and Anna Villari. *Orientalisti:incanti e scoperte nella pittura dell'Ottocento italiano.* Milan: Silvana, 2011.

Arjomand, Said Amir. 'Review: *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*.' *American Journal of Sociology* 88:2 (September, 1982): 469-471.

– . *Art Irakien Contemporain* (Paris: Les Presses Artistiques, 1976).

– . *Artist Against Racism.* Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, 1976.

Arthurs, Joshua. *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Artun, Deniz. *Translation of Modernity from Paris*. Istanbul: İletisim Yayinlari, 2007.

Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, Nina. 'Cezanne and Delacroix's Posthumous Reputation.' *The Art Bulletin* 87:1 (March, 2005): 111-129.

Avermaete, Tom, Serhat Karakayali, and Marion von Osten, ed. *Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions of the Future*. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010.

Awad, Louis. *The Literature of Ideas in Egypt*, part 1. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.

Ayad, Lara. *Picturesque Peasants: Painting Egyptian Identity at the Fuad I Agricultural Museum in Cairo*. PhD Diss., Boston University, 2018.

Ayyub, Dhu l-Nun. *The hand, the land and the water*. Baghdad: Shafiq, 1970.

Al-Azzawi, Dia. *Poster Art in Iraq 1939-1973*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974.

al-Azzawi, Dia. 'Hafidh Druby: Between Impressionism and Documentation of City Life,' *al-Dustur* (1977), 32-33.

de Azeredo Perdigao, Jose. *Report on the Contributions of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Iraqi.* Lisbon: Gulbenkian Foundation, 1972.

B., 'Education through Art (Translated from 'The New Era').' *The New Teacher* 1:3-4 (June-September, 1936): 341-349.

Badawi, M. M. *A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Bader, Ali. *Papa Sartre*. Translated by Aida Bamia. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2009.

– . *Baghdad Observer,* 27/5/1977, VII 2826.

al-Bahloly, Saleem. 'The Persistence of the Image: Dhakira Hurra in Dia al-Azzawi's Drawings on the Massacre of Tel al-Za'atar.' *ARTMargins* (2013): 71-97.

al-Bahloly, Saleem. *The Freedom of Despair: Art and Violence in the Middle East, 1941-1979*. PhD diss., University of California, Berkley, 2015.

al-Bahloly, Saleem. 'Roundtable Perspectives: Researching Iraq Today.' *Arab Studies Journal* 23 (1): 236-265.

al-Bahloly, Saleem. 'Kadhim Haidar.' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*. Accessed October 7, 2018.
http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Kadhim-Haidar.aspx.

al-Bahloly, Saleem. 'History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting,' *Muqarnas* 35 (2018): 229-272.

Bahoora, Haytham. *Modernism before Modernity: Literature and Urban Form in Iraq 1950 – 1963*. PhD Diss.: New York University, 2010.

Bahoora, Haytham. 'Baudelaire in Baghdad: Modernism, the Body, and Husayn Mardan's Poetics of the Self.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 313-329.

Bahoora, Haytham. 'The Figure of the Prostitute, *Tajdid*, and Masculinity in Anticolonial Literature of Iraq.' *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 11:1 (March, 2015): 42-62.

Bahrani, Zainab. *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia.* London: Routledge, 2001.

Bahrani, Zainab and Nada Shabout. *Modernism and Iraq*. New York: Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University Press, 2009.

Bahrani, Zainab, May Muzaffar, and Nada Shabout, ed. *Dia al-Azzawi: a Retrospective from 1963 until Tomorrow*. Milan: Silvana, 2018.

Baqir, Tahar. 'Iraq Government Excavations at 'Aqar Quf: Third Interim Report, 1944
        5.' *Iraq* 8 (1946).

Baram, Amatzia. *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968
        – 1989*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.

Bardaouil, Sam and Till Fellrath. *Art et Liberté: Rupture, War and Surrealism in Egypt*.
        Paris: Skira, 2016.

Bardaouil, Sam. *Surrealism in Egypt: Modernism and the Art and Liberty Group.*
        London: I.B. Tauris, 2017.

Bashkin, Orit. 'Representations of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in
        Hashemite Iraq 1921-1958.' *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4,1
        (Winter, 2008): 53-82.

Bashkin, Orit. *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq*. Stanford:
        Stanford University Press, 2009.

Bashkin, Orit. 'Lands, Hands, and Socio-cultural Boundaries: A Reading of Dhu Nun
        Ayyub's The Hand, the Land and the Water (1948).' *Middle Eastern Studies*
        46: 3 (May, 2010): 401-415.

Bashkin, Orit. *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq.* Stanford: Stanford
        University Press, 2012.

Batatu, Hanna. *The Old Social Classes & The Revolutionary Movement in Iraq*.
        Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Al Bayati, Fadhil Mohammed. *The Monument in Memory of the Glorious Revolution
        of July 14th*. Baghdad: Committee of the July 14th Monument, c. 1961.

al-Bayati, Abdul Wahab. *Love, Death, and Exile.* Translated by Bassam K. Frangieh.
        Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004.

Beaulieu, Jill and Mary Roberts, ed. *Orientalism's Interlocutors*. Durham: Duke
        University Press, 2002.

Becker, Howard. *Art Worlds.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Behdad, Ali. 'Orientalism Matters.' *Modern Fiction Studies* 56: 4 (Winter 2010): 709-
        728.

Behdad, Ali. *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography of the Middle East*.
        Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Behrens-Abouseif, Doris, and Stephen Vernoit, ed. *Islamic Art in the 19th Century:
        Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Beinin, Joel. *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East.* Cambridge:
        Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Benjamin, Roger. *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa,
        1880-1930*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2003.

Bernhardsson, Magnus T. *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation
        Building in Modern Iraq.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013.

Beygang, A. 'Iraqi Traditions Rediscovered.' *Neue Zeit*, February 8, 1972.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture.* New York: Routledge, 1994.

Blanc, Charles. *Grammaire des Arts du Dessin: Peinture*. Paris: Librairie Renouard,
        1886.

Bogdanov, Anatol. *Contemporary Art in Iraq*. Leningrad: Leningrad Art Department,
        1982.

Boone, Joseph A. *The Homoerotics of Orientalism.* New York, Columbia University Press, 2014.

Boullata, Issa J. trans. *Modern Arab Poets 1950-1975.* London: Heinemann, 1976.

Boullata, Issa J. Kamal Abdel-Malek, and Wael B. Hallaq, ed. *Tradition, Modernity, and Post-Modernity in Arabic Literature: Essays in Honor of Professor Issa J. Boullata.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Brown, Matthew Cullerne. *Socialist Realist Painting.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

– . *Calendar of the National Museum of Modern Art.* Baghdad: early 1970s.

Callen, Anthea. *The Work of Art: Plein-Air Painting and Artistic Identity in Nineteenth century France.* London: Reaktion Books, 2015.

Chraibi, Aboubakr. 'Galland's Ali Baba and Other Arabic Versions.' *Marvels & Tales* 18:2 (2004): 159-169.

Dauphin, Jacques. 'Les Ma'dan de Basse-Mesopotamie.' *Annales de Géographie* 69: 371 (January – February, 1960): 34-49.

Di-Capua, Yoav. *No Exit: Arab Existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Decolonization.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Cardinal, Philippe and Hoda Makram-Ebeid, ed. *Le Corps Decouvert.* Paris: Hazan, 2012.

Carter, Prudence L. "'Black' Cultural Capital, Status Positioning, and Schooling Conflicts for Low-Income African American Youth." *Social Problems* 50: 1 (February, 2003): 136-155.

Chadirji, Rifat and Carlfried Mutschler. 'The Bab al-Sheikh Project, Baghdad.' In *Continuity and Change: Design Strategies for Large-Scale Urban Development.* Edited by Margaret Bentley Sevcenko. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1984.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Chalabi, Tamara and Paolo Colombo, ed. *Archaic – The Pavilion of Iraq.* Milan: Mousse, 2017.

Cleveland, William L. *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati' al-Husri.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Compton, Susan, ed. *British Art in the 20th Century.* Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1986.

– . *Contemporary Iraqi Art.* Moscow: Union of Soviet Artists, 1971.

– . *Contemporary Art from Iraq.* Stockholm: Linkoln Blom, 1976.

Cooper, Douglas. 'The Courtauld Collection at the Tate Gallery.' *The Burlington Magazine* 90:543 (June, 1948): 170.

Cork, Richard. *The Euston Road School.* London: Scholar Press, 1986.

Czapski, Jozef. *Inhuman Land: Searching For the Truth in Soviet Russia 1941-1942.* Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones. New York: New York Review of Books, 2018.

Davis, Eric. *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq*.Berkley: University of California Press, 2005.

Dawisha, Adeed. *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Didier Hess, Valerie and Hussam Rashwan. *Mahmoud Said.* London: Random House, 2017.

al-Din, Jalil Kamal. 'Exhibition of the Society of Iraqi Artists.' *al-Adab* 5:8 (August, 1957): 75-80.

Downey, Anthony. *Dissonant Archives: Contemporary Visual Culture and Contested Narratives in the Middle East.* New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015.

Druby, Hafidh. 'al-Qadisiyya.' *Majalla Akadimiyya al-Funun* 1 (c. 1968).

Druby, Hafidh. 'Religious Rituals in the Fifth Temple at Hatra.' Sumer 26 (1970): 143-161.

Druby, Hafidh. 'Assyrian Architecture.' *al-Aqlam* 6:4 (1970): 90-110.

Druby, Hafidh. 'Exhibition of the Institute of Fine Arts,' *al-Wasiti* (Baghdad: April, 1972).

Druby, Hafidh and Suhaila. *Inventory Book*. Druby Family Archive, London.

Druby, Suhaila (Hafidh Druby's wife. Interview by the author. October 2016, London.

– . *Druby's Art Gallery* (Baghdad: c. 1991.

Eigner, Saeb. *Art of the Middle East: Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab World and Iran*. New York: Merrell, 2010.

Elkins, James. *Is Art History Global?* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Enwezor, Okwui, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes, ed. *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*. Munich: Haus der Kunst, 2016.

Eppel, Michael. 'The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the growth of Nationalism and Pan Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30:2 (May, 1998): 227-250.

Esanu, Octavian, ed. *Art, Awakening, and Modernity in the Middle East: The Arab Nude*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

– . *Exam Results, Painting 2nd Year*, August 5, 1939, PXIV Druby, Hafidh, doc. 1859, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

– . *Exhibition of Paintings by Polish Soldier-Artists.* Baghdad, 1943.

– . *Exhibition of Fine Arts.* Basra: Basra Poetry Festival, 1971.

– . *Exhibition of the Triangle Group*. Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, 1970.

– . *Exhibition of Iraqi Impressionists*. Baghdad: Saddam Center, 1990.

– . *Extract from Mr. Robert Gulbenkian's report on the visit of the Foundation's delegation to the Celebration of the Millenary of the City of Baghdad*, December 1962 (Gulbenkian Foundation Archives, ME. E/AG/11).

Fadhil, Sa'dun. 'Art movement in Iraq is reinvigorated.' *Amiloun fil Naft 29* (July, 1964): 4-11.

– . 'Faiq Hassan,' *Hiwar* 2:1 (March-April 1965): 52-56.

Faraj, Maysaloun, ed. *Strokes of genius: Contemporary Iraqi art*. London: Saqi Books, 2001.

Farge, Arlette. *The Allure of the Archives*. Translated by Thomas Scott-Railton. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Faris, Shams al-Din. *Historical Sources for Murals in Contemporary Iraq*. Baghdad: Ministry of Information, Art Series, 1974.

Farwell, Beatrice. 'Sources for Delacroix's Death of Sardanapalus.' *The Art Bulletin* 40:1 (March, 1958): 66-70.

– . *Fifth Exhibition of the Iraqi Impressionists.* Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, May 1965.

Fillitz, Thomas and A. Jamie Saris, ed. *Debating Authenticity: Concepts of Modernity in Anthropological Perspective.* Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013.

Finkel, Irving L. and Michael J. Seymour, ed. *Babylon: Myth and Reality.* London: British Museum Press, 2008.

– . *First Exhibition of the Party*. Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974.

– . 'First Exhibition of the Party,' *Sawt al-Falah*, April 15, 1974.

– . 'First Exhibition of the Party: Transformation in the Practice of Art,' *Funun*, April 16, 1974.

Fisher, Sydney Nettleton. *The Middle East: A History.* London: Knopf, 1959.

Flood, Finbarr Barry. 'Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum.' *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 645-648.

Flood, Finbarr Barry and Gulru Necipoglu, ed. A *Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2017.

Floyd, Tiffany. 'Hafidh al-Droubi.' In *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World.* Accessed February 15, 2016. http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org/en/bios/Pages/Hafidh-al-Droubi.aspx.

Floyd, Tiffany. 'Faiq Hassan,' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*. Accessed March 10, 2019. http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Faiq-Hassan-Alawi-al-Janabi.aspx.

Floyd, Tiffany. 'Ismail al-Shaikhly.' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*. Accessed October 7, 2018. http://encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Ismail-al-Shaikhly.aspx.

Franzen, Johan. *Red Star Over Iraq: Iraqi Communism before Saddam.* London: Hurst, 2011.

Gabay, Z. 'Nizar Qabbani, the Poet and his Poetry.' *Middle Eastern Studies* 9:2 (May, 1973): 207-222.

Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Ghanima, Yusuf. *Guide to the National Gallery of Pictures*. Baghdad: Directorate of Antiquities, 1943.

Gillet, Fanny. 'Enjeux esthetique et politiques de la mobilisation artistique durant la guerre civile algerienne (1992-1999).' *Histoire@Politique* (forthcoming).

Gaensheimer, Susanne, et al, ed. *Museum Global. Mikrogeschichten Einer Ex zentrischen Moderne.* Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2018.

Goeckede, Regina. *Spaetkoloniale Moderne*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016.

Golan, Romy. *Muralnomad: The Paradox of Wall Painting, Europe 1927-1957*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Golan, Romy. 'Renato Guttuso's Boogie Woogie, A Geopolitical Tableau.' lecture, *Multiple Modernisms. A Symposium on Globalism in Postwar Art*, Louisiana Museum, Copenhagen, November 2017, https://vimeo.com/248150066.

Golan, Romy. 'Monumental Fairy Tales: Mural Images during the Ventennio.' in *Post Zang Tumb Tuuum. Art Life Politics: Italia 1918-1943*. Edited by Germano Celant. Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2018. 330-335.

Goldstein, Carl. 'Towards a Definition of Academic Art.' *The Art Bulletin* 57:1 (March, 1975): 102-109.

Goldstein-Sabbah, S.R. and H.L. Murre-van den Berg. *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Goode, James F. *Negotiating for the Past: archaeology, nationalism, and diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Gordon, Terri J. 'Fascism and the Female Form: Performance Art and the Third Reich.' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11:1/2 (Jan. – Apr., 2002): 164-200.

Gori, Gigliola. *Italian Fascism and the Female Body: Sport, Submissive Women and Strong Mothers.* London: Routledge, 2012.

Gornick, Vivian and Barbara Moran, ed. *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*. New York: Basic Books, 1971.

Grattoggi, Sara. 'Roma, azzurro Sironi, il murale com'era: alla Sapienza torna il fascio littorio.' 7 June 2016, *Repubblica.* https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/06/07/news/roma_azzurro_sironi_il_ murale_com_era_alla_sapienza_torna_il_fascio_littorio-141495839/

de Grazia, Victoria, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy 1922-1945.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1992.

Green, Vivien, ed. *Italian Futurism 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe*. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2014.

Greenberg, Kerryn, ed., *Fahrelnissa Zeid*. London: Harry N. Abrams, 2018.

Gruber, Christiane and Sune Haugbolle, ed. *Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013.

– . *Gulbenkian and His Favourable Schemes in Iraq*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Guidance, Cinema and Theatre Service, 1964.

– . *Gulbenkian Foundation Report, December, 1974*, Gulbenkian Foundation Archives.

Gutierrez, Juan Jose Gomez. *The PCI Artists: Antifascism and Communism in Italian Art, 1944-1951.* Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

Habbo, Abdullah. 'Paul Klee and Abstraction in Iraqi Fine Arts.' *Free Thinker*. March 7, 2015. Accessed January 5, 2017. https://mufakerhur.org.

Hadithi, Hamdi Mukhluf. *Akram Shukri*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.

Hafidh, Safira. 'Interview with Hafidh Druby and Muhammad Ali Mustafa in Fahama, Baghdad.' *Iraqi National Radio*, April,1986.

– . *Hafidh Druby Exhibition* (Baghdad: Druby's Art Gallery, 1998).

Haidar, Jalil. 'The Impressionists: What do they offer art movements? What is the reason for their comeback?' *Alif Ba* 2:26 (April, 1974): 40-42.

Haidar, Kadhim. *First Exhibition of the Academy Group*. Baghdad, 1971.

Hakim, Victor. 'Exposition Itinerante des Peintres d'Irak.' *La Revue du Liban*, October 13, 1965.

Hammoudi, Jamil. 'l'Art en Iraq.' *Beaux-Arts* (28 April 1950).

Hanoosh, Y. 'Contempt: State Literati vs. Street Literati in Modern Iraq.' *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 372-408.

Hassan, Hashim. 'Old and New Paintings in the Druby Exhibition!' *Iawra*, 10 January 1980.

Hassan, Salah M. *Ibrahim el-Salahi: A Visionary Modernist.* New York: Museum for African Art, 2012.

Hilali, Abdul Razzak. *A Modern Guide to Iraq*. Beirut: Dar al-Kashaf, 1957.

– . *Hiwar* 2 (1964).

Hodgson, Geoffrey M. 'What are Institutions?' *Journal of Economic Issues* 40:1 (2006): 1-25.

Holt, Elizabeth M. '"Bread or Freedom': The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and the Arabic Literary Journal 'Hiwar,'" *Journal of Arabic Literature* 44:1 (2013): 83-102.

Husry, Khaldun. 'The Wandering: A Study of Modern Iraqi Painting'. *Middle East Forum* 4 (1958): 23-27.

al-Husri, Sati'. *My Memoirs from Iraq: 1927-1941*. Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1968.

– . *III Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale*. Rome: Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1939.

– . *Impressionists Group Exhibition*. Baghdad: Society of Iraqi Artists, 2-8 April, 1967.

Ingholt, Harald. *Parthian sculptures from Hatra; Orient and Hellas in art and religion*. New Haven: The Academy, 1954.

– . *Inscription to the Accademia di Belle Arti, Painting 2nd Year*, 15 February 1939, PXIV Druby, Hafidh, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

– . *Inscription to the Accademia di Belle Arti, Painting 1st Year*, February 15, 1939, PXIV Sabri, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

– . *International Exhibition of Contemporary Art: The British Section*. Cairo: British Institute, 1947.

– . 'Interview with Artists on Art,' *al-Adab* 1 (January, 1956): 3-10.

– . 'Interview with the artist Hafidh Druby.' *al-Aqlam* 1:2 (1964): 107-113.

– . *Iraqi Students*, memo of the Italian Ministry of Education, November 5, 1939, XIV Druby, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome

– . *Itinerant Exhibition of Iraqi Painting*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information and the Gulbenkian Foundation, 1965.

– . *Iraq and Britain: Sixth Annual Exhibition of Paintings at the British Institute Club*. Baghdad: May 1957.

– . *Iraq: A Tourist Guide.* Baghdad: Tourism Authority, c. mid-1960s.

– . *Iraq Pavilion, First Biennale of Arab Art*. Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974.

– . *Iraqi Women Through Pictures*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1970.

Ismael, Tareq Y. *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Iraq*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

al-Jabar, 'Adal Abd. 'First Exhibition of the Party: lighting the way for public art.' unknown newspaper clipping, March, 1974,

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. 'Art in Modern Iraq.' *Iraq Petroleum* (September, 1955), 20-23.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. 'Modern Art in Iraq,' *Ahl al-Naft* 58 (May, 1956).

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. 'L'art Irakien Contemporain.' *Ishtar* 12-13 (January - February,1962): 346-348, 347.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. *Iraqi Art Today.* Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1971.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. *Four Artists from Baghdad.* Baghdad, c. 1972.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim, *al-Wasiti Festival.* Baghdad, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1972.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. *The Grass Roots of Iraqi Art*. Jersey: Wasit Graphic and Publishing Limited, 1983.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. *Hunters in a Narrow Street.* Washington, DC: Three Contents Press, 1990.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. *Princesses' Street: Baghdad Memories*. Translated by Issa J. Boullatta. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 2005.

Jackson, Ashley. *Persian Gulf Command: A History of the Second World War in Iran and Iraq.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

al-Jadir, Ali. interview by the author, December 2017, Toronto.

Jamot, Paul. 'Manet and the Olympia.' *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 50: 286 (January 1927).

al-Jazairi, Mahmoud. 'Nature and Baghdadi Settings in a Lively Exhibition.' *Baghdad Observer* VII 2764. March 14, 1977, 8.

al-Jazairi, Mahmoud. 'Hafidh Druby (Nature and People).' *al-Riwaq* (November, 1978): 14-19.

al-Jazairi, Mahmoud. *Atta Sabri.* Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.

Johnson, Sarah C. "'Return to origin is non-existence': Al-Mada'in and Perceptions of Ruins in Abbasid Iraq." *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 6:2 (2017): 257-283.

'Joseph Beuys.' *Skulpture Projekt Archiv*. Accessed May 1, 2019. https://www.skulptur-projekte-archiv.de/en-us/1977/projects/82/.

Jusdanis, Gregory. *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

Kadhim, Hussein N. *The Poetics of Anti-colonialism in the Arabic Qasidah.* Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Kajahji, In'am. *Lorna: Her Years with Jewad Selim.* Beirut: Dar al-Jadid, 1998.

Kamel, Adil. *Contemporary Fine Art Movement in Iraq*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980.

Kamel, Adil and Rose Seurel. *Baghdad – Paris: artistes d'Irak*. Paris: Musée du Montparnasse, 2006.

Karnouk, Liliane. *Modern Egyptian Art 1910 – 2003.* Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005.

Karpeles, Eric. *Almost Nothing: The 20th-Century Art and Life of Jozef Czapski.* New York: New York Review of Books, 2018.

Kater, Michael H. *Culture in Nazi Germany.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.

Kerim, A. *Camera Studies in Iraq*. Baghdad: Hasso Bros., c. 1925.

Kermode, Frank, ed. *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1975.

Keshmirshekan, Hamid, ed. *Contemporary Art from the Middle East: Regional Interactions with Global Art Discourses*. London: IB Tauris, 2015.

– . *Khalid al-Jadir*, Berlin: Zentrum fuer Kusnstaustellungen der DDR, 1977.

Khouri, Kristine and Rasha Salti. *Past disquiet: artists, international solidarity and museums-in-exile.* Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2018.

Khulusi, S. A. 'Modern Muslim Painters of Iraq.' *The Islamic Review* (October 1949): 47.

Kittelmann, Udo, ed. *Hello World: Revision einer Sammlung.* Berlin: Hirmer Verlag, 2018.

Koenig, Wilhelm. *Neun Jahre Irak*. Munich: Bruenn, 1940.

Kornetchuk, Elena. *The Quest for Self-Expression: Painting in Moscow and Leningrad 1965 – 1990*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990.

Kravagna, Christian. 'Toward a Postcolonial Art History of Contact.' *Texte zur Kunst* 23: 91 (September, 2013): 110-131.

– . *Kurier Polski w Bagdadzie* (1942 – 1943).

Lafont, Maria. *Soviet Posters: The Sergo Grigorian Collection.* Prestel, 2007.

Lahoud, Edouard. *Contemporary Art in Lebanon*. Translated by Philippe M. Michaux. New York: Near East Books Company, 1974.

Laidi-Hanieh, Adila. *Fahrelnissa Zeid: Painter of Inner Worlds.* London: Art/Books Publishing, 2017.

Larzul, Sylvette. 'Mille et un avatars: de Bagdad à Hollywood.' *Qantara* 86 (January, 2013): 44-47.

Leeb, Susanne. *Die Kunst der Anderen: 'Weltkunst' und die anthropologische Konfiguration der Moderne.* Berlin: b-books, 2015.

Lenssen, Anneka. *The Shape of Support: Painting and Politics in Syria's Twentieth Century.* PhD diss., MIT, 2014.

Lenssen, Anneka. 'Adham Ismail's Arabesque: The Making of a Radical Arab Painting in Syria.' *Muqarnas* 34 (2017): 223-258.

Lenssen, Anneka, Sarah Rogers, and Nada Shabout, ed. *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Lequesne, Meriem, Paul Blanchard and Caecilia Pieri. *Bagdad renaissance: art contemporain en Iraq*. Paris: Galerie M, 2003.

– . *Letter from the Director of the Accademia di Belle Arti, Roma, to the Reale Legazione dell'Iraq*, February 13, 1939. Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

– . *Letter from Hafidh Druby to the Director of the Accademia di Belle Arti*, July 25, 1939, XIV Druby, Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

– . *Letter from the Society of Iraqi Artists (Mahmoud Sabri) to the Gulbenkian Foundation*, October 5, 1957, Gulbenkian Archive.

– . *Letter from the Lord Mayor of Baghdad to the Gulbenkian Foundation*. October 15, 1960, ME-A/AG/1, Gulbenkian Foundation Archives.

– . *Letter from Akram Shukri to the Gulbenkian Foundation*, May14, 1963, Me. A/A4/6, Gulbenkian Foundation Archives.

– . *Letter from Hafidh Druby to the Gulbenkian Foundation* January 20, 1968, ME A/A9/6, Gulbenkian Foundation Archive.

– . *Letter from Shafiq al-Kamali, Minister of Information to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*, March 19, 1972, Gulbenkian Foundation Archive No. 8702.

Lewental, D Gershon. *Qadisiyyah, then and now: A Case study of history and memory, religion, and nationalism in Middle Eastern discourse*. Ph.D diss.: University of Michigan, 2011.

Lewental, D. Gershon. 'Battle of Qadesiya.' *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Accessed December 4, 2017. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/qadesiya-battle.

Lightfoot, C.S. 'The survival of cities in Byzantine Anatolia: The Case of Amorium.' *Byzantium* 68:1 (1998): 56-71.

Livingston, Michael A. *The Fascists and the Jews of Italy: Mussolini's Race Laws, 1938-1943.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

– . *Magiciens de la terre: Retour sur une exposition légendaire*. Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2014.

Mahdi, Zainab. interview by the author, April 2018, Amman.

Makiya, Kanan. *The Monument: Art Vulgarity and Responsibility in Iraq*. London: IB Tauris, 1991.

von Maltzahn, Nadia and Monique Bellan, ed. *The Art of the Salon in the Arab Region: Politics of Taste Making*. Beirut: Ergon Verlag Wurzburg, 2018.

van Mannen, Hans. *How to Study Art Worlds.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

Mansfield, Elizabeth, ed. *Art History and Its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline.* London: Routledge, 2002.

Mansfield, Elizabeth, ed. *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*. London: Routledge, 2007.

– . Marter, Joan M. *Abstract Expressionism: The International Context*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Martorelli, Luisa. *Domenico Morelli e il suo tempo 1823-1901.* Naples: Electa, 2005.

Marzolph, Ulrich, and Richard van Leeuwen, ed. *The Arabian Nights Encyclopaedia*. Oxford: ABC Clio, 2004.

Massad, Joseph A. *Desiring Arabs.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Matthews, Roderic D. and Matta Akrawi. *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1949.

Maxwell, Genevieve. 'Iraqi Art Exhibition Attracts Eager Crowd.' *Daily Star*. November 3, 1957

McAllister, Hannah E. 'A Persian Jar.' *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 37: 3 (March, 1942): 74-75.

Meecham, Pam and Julie Sheldon. *Modern Art: A Critical Introduction.* London: Routledge, 2005.

– . 'Meeting with Hafidh Druby,' *al-Wasiti* 4 (1972).

Mejcher-Atassi, Sonja, and John Pedro Schwartz, ed. *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*. London: Farnham, 2012.

Mejcher-Atassi, Sonja. 'Shakir Hassan Al Said.' *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*, accessed 15 October 2018. http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Shakir-Hassan-Al-Said.aspx.

Mejcher-Atassi, Sonja. *In Search of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra: a Life in Literature and Art Between Palestine and Iraq.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019.

– . *Memorial Exhibition of the Founding of the Communist Party 1934 – 1974.* Baghdad, 1974.

Mercer, Kobena. 'Black art and the burden of representation.' *Third Text* 4: 10 (1990): 61-78.

Mercer, Kobena, ed. *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.

Meretoja, Hanna. 'Narrative and Human Existence: Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics.' *New Literary History* 45:1 (Winter: 2014): 89-109.

Merzaban, Daliah, ed. *Re:Orient: Investigating Modernism in the Arab World 1950s '70s*. United Arab Emirates: Barjeel Art Foundation, 2013.

Miller, Elizabeth. 'Reviewed Works: *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930-1990* by Kullar Sonal; *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* by Chika Okeke-Agulu.' *The Comparatist* 40 (October 2016): 338-346.

Minskaya, Khala. 'Art Movements in Modern Iraq.' *Al-Muthaqaf al-Arabi* 3:4 (October, 1971).

Mitchell, Timothy, ed. *Questions of Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Mitter, Partha. *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant- Garde, 1922-1947*. London: Reaktion Books, 2007.

– . *Middle Eastern, Modern and Contemporary Art*, lot 6, October 25, 2017. https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/hafidh-al-droubi-iraqi-1914-1991-the-public-accomplishment-6104514-details.aspx.

– . *Mostra Augustea della Romanita*. Rome: Casa Editrice C. Colombo, 1937.

Montazami, Morad. *Latif Al* Ani. Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2017.

Morgan, Jessica. *Saloua Raouda Choucair*. London: Tate Publishing, 2013.

– . *Mostra del 43: Anniversary Exhibition of the Foundation of the Iraqi Communist Party*. Florence, 1974.

– . *Multiple Modernisms: a symposium on globalism in postwar art*, conference, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, 2-3 November 2017.

al-Musawi, Muhsin. 'Engaging Tradition in Modern Arab Poetics.' *Journal of Arabic Literature* 33:2 (2002): 172-210.

al-Musawi, Muhsin. *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in Conflict.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

al-Musawi, Muhsin. *Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of modernity and tradition*. London: Routledge, 2006.

– . *Museum of Pioneer Artists*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1990s.

– . *Al-Muthaqaf al-Arabi* 3:4 (October, 1971).

Naef, Silvia. *A la recherche d'une modernité arabe.* Geneva: Ed. Slatkine, 1996.

Naef, Silvia. 'Reexploring Islamic Art: Modern and Contemporary Creation in the Arab World and Its Relation to the Artistic Past.' *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003), 164-174.

Neame, Alan. 'Modern Painting in Iraq.' *The Studio* 754 (1956): 1-7.

Necipoglu, Gulru. 'The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches.' *The Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (June, 2012): 1-26.

Nelson, Robert S. 'The Map of Art History.' *Art Bulletin* 79: 1 (1997): 28-40.

De Nicolais, Mario. *Carlo Siviero*. Naples: Societa Editrice Napoletana, 1982.

Nikiforov, Yevgen, Olga Balasova, and Lizaveta Herman. *Decommunized: Ukranian Soviet Mosaics.* Kiev: Osnovy Publishing, 2017.

Nochlin, Linda. 'The Imaginary Orient.' *Art in America* (May 1983): 118-131.

– . 'Nouri al-Rawi,' *Ibrahimi* Collection, accessed 2 July 2017, http://ibrahimicollection.com/node/76.

Nusair, Isis. 'The Cultural Costs of the 2003 US-Led Invasion of Iraq: A Conversation with Art Historian Nada Shabout.' *Feminist Studies* 39:1 (2013): 119-148.

Nuri, Abd al-Malik. *Song of the Earth: Stories*. Baghdad: Al-Thaqafa al-Jadida, 1954.

O'Brien, Elaine et al., ed. *Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*. London: Wiley, 2012.

Odom, Anne and Wendy R. Salmond. *Treasures into Tractors: the Selling of Russia's Cultural Heritage, 1918 – 1938.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Okeke-Agulu, Chika. *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth Century Nigeria*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Ostle, Robin, Ed de Moor, Stefan Wild, ed. *Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature*. London: Saqi Books, 1998.

Ott, Michaela. 'The Small Aesthetic Difference.' *Texte zur Kunst* 23: 91 (September, 2013): 100-109.

– . 'Paintings from the 1970s,' yahyaalsheikh.com (February 6, 2019).

– . 'Panorama of al-Qadisiyya.' *Alif Ba* 7:9 (Ramadan 18, 1980): 35-38.

Parramore, Dorothy. 'Melmir's Brush is crude, but it is always honest.' *The Daily Star*, October 14, 1965.

Perry, Gillian and Colin Cunningham, ed. *Academies, Museums, and Canons of Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Petit, Lucas Pieter and Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, ed. *Nineveh, the Great City: Symbol of Beauty and Power.* Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2017.

Pevzner, S. "New Art from Iraq." *Iskusstvo* 11 (1959): 50-55.

Pieri, Caecilia. *Bagdad: La construction d'une capitale moderne (1914-1960)*. Beirut: IFPO, 2015.

Pocock, Charles. 'Art of the Middle East. Issues.' *Contemporary Practices* X (2012): 54-61.

Pollock, Griselda. 'Artists, Mythologies, and Media: Genius, Madness and Art History.' *Screen* 21:3 (1980): 57-96.

Pollock, Griselda. 'Wither Art History?' *The Art Bulletin* 96: 1 (March 2014): 9-23.

Pontiggia, Elena. *Mario Sironi 1885-1961*. Milan: Skira, 2014.

Pope, Arthur U. *A Survey of Persian Art.* London, 1938.

Primus, Zdenek. *Art is Abstraction: Czech Visual Culture of the Sixties.* Prague: Kant, 2003.

Progress Under Planning (Baghdad: Ministry of Planning, c. 1970)

Qabbani, Nizar. *I Love You…I Love You…and the rest will come!* Beirut: Nizar Qabbani Publications, 1978.

Qabbani, Nizar. *On Entering the Sea: The Erotic and Other Poetry of Nizar Qabbani*. Translated by Salma Jayyusi. New York: Interlink Books, 1996.

al-Qassab, Khalid. *Art Memories*. London: dar al-Hikma, 2007.

Qubain, Fahim Issa. *Education and Science in the Arab World.* Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966.

Radwan, Nadia. *The Aesthetics of the Modern: Art, Education, and Taste in Egypt 1903-1952.* PhD Diss.: Columbia University, 2013.

Radwan, Nadia. 'Dal Cairo a Roma. Visual Arts and Transcultural Interactions between Egypt and Italy.' *Asiatische Studien* 70:4 (2017): 1093-1114.

Rauh, Elizabeth. 'The Colored Horizons of Karbala: Rafa Nasiri and contemporary printmaking in 1960s Iraq.' *HIAA Conference* (25-27 October, 2018).

Al Rawi, Ahmed. 'The post-colonial novels of Desmond Stewart and Ethel Mannin.' *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 9:4 (October, 2016): 552-564.

al-Rawi, Nouri. *Reflections on Modern Iraqi Art*. Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1962.

al-Rawi, Nouri. 'Exhibitions of Plastic Artists.' *Baghdad* (1963): 47-48.

al-Rawi, Nouri. 'Features of Contemporary Iraqi Art,' *Baghdad* 12 (November, 1965).

– . *Report on Iraq administration* (London: H.M.S.O., 1926).

– . *Red List of Missing Works.* Beirut, 2013.

– . Rheinisches *Landesmuseum Exhibition Guest Book.* Bonn, August 1976.

Rivosecchi, Mario. *Report on the Year 1938-1939*. 8 November 1940. Accademia di Belle Arti Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

Rogers, Sarah A. 'The Formation of the Khalid Shoman Private Collection and the Founding of Darat al-Funun.' In *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World.* Edited by Sonja Mejcher-Attasi and John Pedro Schwartz. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, 159-182.

Rogozinski, Mikolaj Nowak. 'The War Diary of Jozef Czapski.' *Konteksty* 3 (2018): 225-232.

Rooke, Tetz. *'In My Childhood': a study of Arabic autobiography*. Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International, 1997.

Rosas, Patricia and Ricardo Costa Agarez. *Art and Architecture between Lisbon and Baghdad: The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Iraq, 1957-1973*. Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2018.

al-Rubaie, 'Abd al-Rahman. 'With the Iraqi Impressionists.' *Adab* (June, 1964): 76-78.

Al-Rubaie, Shawkat. *Modern Fine Art in Iraq.* Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1972.

al-Rubai, Shawkat. *Introduction to the Contemporary Art in Arab Lands*, part 2. Author House, 2014. ebook.

Ruehrdanz*,* Karin. *Kunst Aus Der Republik Irak*. Berlin: Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft in der DDR, 1971.

Sabri, Atta. 'Third art exhibition at the British Cultural Centre in Baghdad.' *al-Adab* (October 1953): 77-79.

Sabri, Atta. 'Art of Painting and Sculpture: causes for underdevelopment in the Arab world.' *al-Adab* 1:2 (December, 1953): 13-20.

Sabri, Mahmoud. 'The Problem of Modern Iraqi Painting.' *al-Adab* 1 (January, 1956): 65-69.

Sabri, Mahmoud. 'Iraqi Art Between Two Covenants.' *al-Thaqafa al-Jadida* 7:11 (September 1959): 19-37.

Sabri, Mahmoud. *Quantum Realism*. Accessed August 3, 2018. http://www.quantumrealism.co.uk.

Safar, Fuad. 'Hatra and the First Season of Excavations.' *Sumer* 8:1 (1952).

Safar, Fuad and Muhammad Ali Mustafa. *Hatra: The City of the Sun God*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1974.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Al Said, Shakir Hassan. 'About the Third Exhibition at the British Cultural Centre.' *Al Adab* 1:12 (December 1953): 62-63.

Al Said, Shakir Hassan. *Artist statements/manifestos in Iraq*. Baghdad: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1973.

al-Said, Shakir Hassan. 'Druby: His Generosity to the Revolution.' *Riwaq* 342 (1978): 14-15.

Al Said, Shakir Hassan and Nizar Selim. *Hafidh Druby (retrospective exhibition catalogue).* Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1980.

Al Said, Shakir Hassan. *Hafidh Druby*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.

Al Said, Shakir Hassan. *Akram Shukri.* Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.

Al Said, Shakir Hassan. *Faiq Hassan.* Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.

Al Said, Shakir Hassan. *Episodes from the History of the Plastic Art Movement in Iraq.* Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1983.

Schiff, Brian, Elizabeth McKim, and Sylvie Patron, ed., *Life and Narrative: The Risks and Responsibilities of Storytelling Experience.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Scheid, Kirsten. 'Missing Nike: On Oversights, Doubled Sights, and Universal Art Understood through Lebanon.' *Museum Anthropology* 32, 2 (September, 2009): 99-118.

Scheid, Kirsten. 'Necessary Nudes: Hadatha and Mu'asira in the Lives of Modern Lebanese.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42:2 (May 2010): 203-230.

Schlaepfer, Aline. *Les intellectuels juifs de Bagdad.* Leiden: Brill, 2016.

– . *Second International Contemporary Art Exhibition*. New Delhi: The Society, 1953.

– . *Seventh Exhibition of the Society of Iraqi Artists.* Baghdad: National Museum of Modern Art, December 1964.

Selim, Nizar. 'Druby Exhibition.' *Sida al-Ahali*, April 16, 1951.

Selim, Nizar. *Iraq Contemporary Art.* Lausanne: Sartec, 1977.

Senie, Harriet and Sally Webster. *Critical issues in public art: content, context and controversy*. New York: Icon Editions, 1992.

Shabout, Nada, Wassan al-Khudairi and Deena Chalabi. *Sajjil: A Century of Modern Art. Exhibition Catalogue*. Doha and Milano: Skira Editore S. P. A and Qatar Museums Authority, 2010.

Shabout, Nada. *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2015.

Shabout, Nada. 'Collecting Modern Iraqi Art.' In *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*. Edited by Sonja Mejcher-Attasi and John Pedro Schwartz. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, 197-211.

Shafiq, Hana'. 'Baghdadi Life still inspires Hafidh Druby.' *Baghdad Observer*, February 22, 1987.

El Shakry, Omnia. 'The Arabic Freud: The Unconscious and the Modern Subject.' *Modern Intellectual History* 11:1 (April 2014): 89-118.

El Shakry, Omnia. "'History without Documents': The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle East," *American Historical Review* 120: 3 (June, 2015): 920-934.

Shaw, Wendy. *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

Shaw, Wendy. '*In Situ*: The Contraindictions of World Heritage.' *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 6:2 (2017): 339-365.

Shukri, Akram. 'Sumerian Sculpture.' *Sumer* 1 (1945): 131-136.

Shukri, Akram. 'Conservation and restoration of Assyrian sculpture at Nimrud.' *Sumer* 12 (1956): 133–34.

Sienkiewicz, Jan Wiktor. 'The Artists of General Wladyslaw Anders.' *Towarzystwo Projektów Edukacyjnych*, last modified May 2018, http://artysciandersa.pl.

Sluglett, Peter. *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country*. London: I.B. Tauris,   2007.

Smith, Alison. *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

D'Souza, Aruna. *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

– . *Soviet Delegation to Baghdad Report*, 11 May 1978, State Archives, Moscow.

Spivak, Gayatri. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Edited by C. Nelson and L. Grossberg. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988.

Stauth, Georg and Zami Zubaida, ed. *Mass Culture, Popular Culture, and Social Life in the Middle East*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

Stetkevych, Suzanne Pinckney. 'The Abbasid Poet Interprets History: Three Qasidahs by Abu Tammam.' *Journal of Arabic Literature* 10 (1979): 49-64.

Stetkevych, Suzanne Pinckney. *Abu Tammam and the poetics of the Abbasid Age*. Leiden: Brill, 1991.

Stone, Marla. *The Patron State: Culture & Politics in Fascist Italy*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998.

Sword, Helen. 'Leda and the Modernists.' *PMLA* 107: 2 (March, 1992): 305-318.

al-Tabari, Muhammad b. Jarir. *The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal. Volume 12 of *The History of al Tabari*. Edited by Ehsan Yarshater. Albany, State University of New York, 1992.

Tagharobi, Kaveh, and Ali Zarei. 'Modernism in the Middle East and the Arab World.' *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Modernism*. Online.

al-Tameemi, Rasha. 'Urban Planning in the Middle East: Analyzing al-Tahrir Square as a Public-Political Space in Iraq.' *University of Cincinnati* (2018), scholar.uc.edu.

– . *The Baghdad Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture.* Baghdad: The Trading and
    Printing Co., 1956.

– . 'The Impressionist Group in Iraq,' *Baghdad Observer*, 1970s.

– . 'The Last Art Season in Baghdad.' *Amiloun fil Naft* 41 (July, 1965): 7-13.

– . *The Second Arabian Artist Biennale Exhibition*. Kuwait City: Kuwait Government
    Press, 1971.

– . *The Society of Iraqi Artists in the Year 1967*. Baghdad: Ramzi Foundation, 1967.

Thesiger, Wilfred. 'The Marshmen of Southern Iraq.' *The Geographic Journal* 120: 3
    (September, 1954) 272-281.

Thesiger, Wilfred. *A Reed Shaken by the Wind – a Journey through the Unexplored
    Marshlands of Iraq.* London: Longmans, 1957.

Thesiger, Wilfred. *The Marsh Arabs.* London: Longmans, 1964.

– . 'Thesiger's Journey to the Marsh Region.' *al-Aqlam* 1 (1964): 67-68.

– . 'Three heroes in a sports competition in Baghdad.' July 2, 1931. Newspaper
    unknown, source Druby Family Collection.

Tiulyaev, S. 'Exhibition of Contemporary Iraqi Art.' *Iskusstvo* 4 (1972): 54.

Tomabechi, Yoko. 'Wall Paintings from Dur Kurigalzu.' *Journal of Near Eastern
    Studies* 42:2 (April 1983): 130.

Tripp, Charles. 'Symbolic Forms of Resistance: Art and Power.' *The Power and the
    People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge
    University Press, 2013, 256-309.

Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Upton, Joseph M. 'The Expedition to Ctesiphon, 1931-1932.' *The Metropolitan
    Museum of Art Bulletin* 27:8 (August, 1932): 188-197.

Vandenabeele, Bart. "On the Notion of 'Disinterestedness': Kant, Lyotard, and
    Schopenhauer." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:4 (October, 2001): 705-720.

Ventra, Stefania. *Restauri di dipinti nel Novecento: le posizioni nell'Accademia di San
    Luca 1931-1958.* Rome: Sapienza Universita Editrice, 2014.

– . 'Vermerk: betreffend Plan einer irakischen Gemelde-austellung in Westeuropa.'
    Baghad, June 30, 1961, KM605-88, German Foreign Office Archives.

Vernoit, Stephen, ed. *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections,
    1850 – 1950.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2000.

– . *Visas for Atta Sabri and Hafidh Druby*, issued at the Royal Iraqi Legation in Rome,
    October 4, 1938. PXIV Druby and PXIV Sabri. Accademia di Belle Arti
    Archives, Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome.

– . 'Wann wird der Iran Erlöst,' *Babylon* 2 (Aug 1981):

Watenpaugh, Keith David. *Being Modern in the Middle East.* Princeton: Princeton
    University Press, 2006.

– . *Week of Culture and Art in Baghdad*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information,
1966.

– . *Week of Culture and Art in Baghdad*; *Letter from Hafidh Druby to the Gulbenkian
    Foundation,* July 29, 1967, Me. A/A6/6, Gulbenkian Foundation Archives.

Weimarn, B. '*Third World Realism.* Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1975.

Wien, Peter. *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, totalitarian, and pro-fascist
    inclinations, 1932-1941.* London: Routledge, 2006.

Williams, John Alexander. *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism, and Conservation, 1900-1940*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

White, Luise, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds. *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History.* Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2001.

Winegar, Jessica. *Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Wolbert, Klaus. *Massimo Campigli*. Milan: Mazzotta, 2003.

Woolley, Charles Leonard. *Ur Excavations: the royal cemetery.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934.

de Young, Terri. *Placing the Poet: Badr Shakir al-Sayyab and Postcolonial Iraq.* Albany: State University of New York, 1998.

Zeitgenössische Kunst aus dem Irak (Munich: A. Wimmer, 1976).

Publications List

(Forthcoming, 2019) "'Colliding Art Movements of the Modern World': Iraqi Modern Art Exhibitions between Eastern and Western Europe in the 1970s," *Venice Biennale and the Arab World*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

(Forthcoming, Fall 2019) 'Impure Time: Archaeology, Hafidh Druby (1914 – 1991), and the persistence of representational art in mid-twentieth century Iraq (1940 – 1980),' *Arab Studies Journal*.

Summary of Results / Kurzfassung der Ergebnisse

The findings of this dissertation show that Hafidh Druby's artistic practice was based on the principles of technical skill inherent in the Euro-American academic painting tradition, and despite his practice's divergence from other art movements in Baghdad, that his oeuvre was central to modern art in mid-twentieth-century Iraq. Druby's centrality has been overlooked due to a continued monolithic narrative of modern Middle Eastern art, which does not make room for art production that is not based on rupture with the past and resistance to Euro-American traditions. The dissertation also illustrates the way in which Druby reacted to societal pressures in his works through a method that was unique to his own ideologies. The findings not only provide a more nuanced examination of the work of Hafidh Druby but also present new methodologies for considering local modernities within the Middle Eastern context as spaces in which multiple forms and viewpoints coexisted.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Dissertation zeigen, dass die künstlerische Tätigkeit von Hafidh Druby auf den Prinzipien des technischen Könnens der euro-amerikanischen akademischen Maltradition beruhte. Sie zeigen des Weiteren, dass sein Schaffen trotz der Abweichung von anderen Kunstströmungen in Bagdad im Zentrum der modernen Kunst im Irak zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts stand. Drubys zentrale Rolle ist, aufgrund einer fortgesetzten monolithischen Erzählung der modernen Kunst des Nahen Ostens, weitgehend übersehen worden. Diese schafft keinen Raum für eine Kunstproduktion, die nicht auf den Bruch mit der Vergangenheit und Widerstand gegen euro-amerikanische Traditionen beruht. Diese Dissertation zeigt auch, wie Druby mit einer einzigartigen, auf seinen eigenen Ideologien beruhenden Methode auf gesellschaftlichen Druck in seinen Werken reagierte. Über die in dieser Arbeit herausgearbeiteten Nuancen in der Untersuchung von Hafidh Drubys Arbeit hinaus, werden zugleich neue Methoden zur Berücksichtigung lokaler Modernitäten in der Betrachtung des Nahen Ostens vorgestellt, die diesen als Sammlung von Räumen begreifen, in denen mehrere Formen und Standpunkte nebeneinander existieren.

Curriculum Vitae

Sarah Cresap Johnson received her B.A. in art and archaeology and a certificate in French language and literature from Princeton University in 2010. She was awarded an M.Phil. in Islamic art and archaeology from the University of Oxford in 2014. She worked as a researcher for the Middle East collections at the Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington, D.C. and as a curator for the Islamic collections at the British Museum in London. For her doctoral dissertation, she received a fellowship at the Orient Institut in Beirut and the Rhonda A. Saad Prize for the best graduate paper in modern and contemporary Arab Art both in 2018. She is currently the curator for the Middle East and North Africa at the National Museum of World Cultures in the Netherlands.