



Don't Shrink Me to the Size of a Bullet: The Works of Hiwa K

Edited by Anthony Downey

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پیموایه باوکم دایکمی خوښده ویست بهلام هه رگیز ئه و خوښه ویستیه ی پیشان نه ده دا. باوکم هه زوئاره زوی خوئی هه بوو له ژیاندا و هینده ی یادم بیټ دایکیشم نه یده ویست به شیک بیټ له ژیانئ ئه و. زۆربه ی ژیانئ باوکم له دهره وه ی خیزانه که بوو بهلام هه ر هه وئی ده دا خوښه ویستی خوئی بو دایکم دهر بپرئټ. هاوینان هه موومان له سه ربان ده خه وتین و دایک و باوکیشم له پال یه کدا جیگه یان داده خست.

به یانیه ک له کاتی نانخواردندا، خوشکه که م، که نیوه شه وی پیشتر له خه و هه ستابوو، باسی ئه وه ی بو کردین که ئه و شه وه بینیبوو ی: دوینی شه و له سه ربان ئیوه نوستبوون، باوکم بینئ له تینوا دهستی برد بو ئه و په رداخه ئاوه ی که دایکم تا قمه که ی تیا داده نیټ. منیش وامزانی باوکم لی تیکچوو و ویستم هاوار بکه م بلیم ئه وه په رداخی ئاوه که نیه، بهلام بووم دهرکه وت که باوکم به په نجه ی تا قمه که ی له په رداخه که دا گرتوو و ئاوه که هه لده قورینئ.

I Kiss, You Bite

I think my father loved my mother but she never reciprocated or registered his love. My father had his own “pleasures” in life, and my mother did not want to have anything to do with him for as long as I could remember. He spent most of his time marginalized from the family, but would still chase after my mother and offer her his love. In the summer, when everyone slept on the roof because of the heat, my mother and father slept side by side.

During breakfast one morning, my sister, who had woken up during the night, told us what she had seen:

“Last night on the roof, when you were sleeping, I saw father, who was thirsty, take the glass of water that mother keeps her false teeth in and try to drink from it. I wanted to shout out and tell him it was the wrong glass but then I realized that he was holding the teeth with his index finger inside the glass as he drank.”

In literature, “K.” is the alternative to both the “I” of psychoanalysis and the “we” of politics. In Franz Kafka’s books *The Trial* (1925) and *The Castle* (1926), K. signifies the simultaneous and reciprocal emergence of the institution and its subject. Without K. there is no process and no bureaucratic machine, and vice versa. While it may affirm itself as the one who provokes the system, K. is ultimately a figure without agency.¹

In a recent interview, the artist Hiwa K commented on the shift from “we” to “I” in his country of origin, Kurdistan. He said: “Before the 2003 invasion, Kurdish society was a collective one. People shared rooms, pots, and pans. Now it is a country copying the Western model of independence. Every day new plans arise for another shopping mall causing a certain kind of amnesia, in which recognition fades away and new realities arise. No one has the time for each other and society has become increasingly driven by consumerism. Collectivity is a thing of the past.” Following the so-called second Gulf War, or the Iraq War, Hiwa K managed to flee his country, travelling on foot across the mountains to the Iranian border, through to Turkey, to finally settle in Germany. The tension between belonging and estrangement has been a crucial aspect of the life and work of Hiwa K. By concealing his last name, he underlines his detachment and continuous battle with refuge so that the letter K comes to the foreground and operates as a figure without agency; a figure that is not able to identify with either “I” or “we”.

Coming from a place at war, the artist’s gaze constantly shifts from horizontality (the landscape) to verticality (the sky), therefore making himself hyper-aware of his surroundings. The disconnection to what was formally known as “home” is what drives Hiwa K to produce work in which vernacular forms, oral histories, and political constructs are intertwined. The various references consist of stories told by family members and friends; found situations as well as everyday encounters that evolve around pragmatics and necessities. The artist tries on the one hand to hold onto the traditions of his upbringing, while on the other he attempts to obtain knowledge by learning various skills that might integrate

him more into daily life. When arriving in Germany in 2001, he took on the opportunity to study music and became a pupil of the Flamenco master Paco Peña. His relation to music has since been used as a tool for leveling a different dimension of critique within today’s society. It has also often functioned as a bridge to build a strong collective and participatory dimension within the work. The longing for connection, ferocious curiosity, and a desire to learn are what drive Hiwa K to produce art, and concerns around both the personal and the collective are integral to his practice.

For his exhibition at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, the artist developed, amongst others, a new ambitious project titled *The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan (Raw Materiality 01)* (2016–ongoing), commissioned and co-produced by Schering Stiftung with the support of the Medienboard Berlin–Brandenburg. Recalling the contexts of some of Hiwa K’s previous work, this project traces oral histories from the vantage point of an intellectual subculture that formed in Iraqi Kurdistan during the 1970s and ’80s. In retrospect, the 1970s can be seen as a high point in Iraq’s modern history. A new young technocratic elite was governing the country and the fast-growing economy brought prosperity and stability. However, with the rise of Saddam Hussein, the following decades would be a disaster for the country. As a political asylum seeker himself, Hiwa K tries to connect several events that occurred within the existentialist scene back in Iraq’s heyday, so as to better understand and portray the fight for individual freedom through the lens of collective agency. For the artist, the notion of individual freedom was influenced by the then nascent ethos of neoliberalism — nowhere more so than in the definition proposed by the economist Milton Friedman, that personal freedom can only be guaranteed by the freedom of the market. This film is one of Hiwa K’s most ambitious projects to date, taking the form of a documentary that depicts a number of individuals living across the globe in an attempt to preserve their histories in a collective manner. At the same time, *The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan (Raw Materiality 01)* reflects the beginning of a cultural and economic

reorientation in the Middle East, which was followed by countless wars, some of which are ongoing.

Alongside this new production, earlier works are included in the exhibition such as Hiwa K's deeply engaged *The Bell Project* (2014–15), which links two places distant from each other — an armaments dump in Northern Iraq and a church in Italy — by manufacturing a bell made out of the metal waste extracted from defunct munitions. Also included here is the video *Moon Calendar* (2007), which shows the artist tap-dancing on the premises of Amna Suraka (the so-called Red Security Building in Northern Iraq, used as a prison by Saddam Hussein) to the rhythm of his own heartbeat, which he listens to through a stethoscope as he dances. The artist measures the space in auditory terms while also reflecting on its inherent history and former use as a detention centre and site of torture.

The urgency and energy around Hiwa K's practice is felt poignantly through a unique combination of autobiographical constructs in which politics and history form the backdrop to performative interventions. His sincere and

original dedication to topical concerns is what makes him one of the most exciting artists working today and for this reason we are pleased to grant him the Schering Stiftung Art Award 2016. We would like to thank the jury members Mariana Castillo Deball, Natasha Ginwala, Charlotte Klonk, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Jacob Proctor, and Wael Shawky, for their excellent choice in selecting Hiwa K. Since the Schering Stiftung Art Award not only comprises prize money but also a solo exhibition at KW and a monograph on the artist's work, we would like to express our gratitude for Hiwa's dedication, rigour, and endless energy in bringing this show and book together. Our wholehearted thanks go out to him. Last, but not least, we would also like to thank Walther König Verlag and, in particular, Anthony Downey for his contribution to, and editing of, this extraordinary monograph.

Krist Gruijthuijsen

Director, KW Institute for Contemporary Art

Heike Catherina Mertens

Director, Schering Stiftung

1 Introductory note by curator Juan A. Gaitán for the exhibition organized at the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, in 2012.

Given the open nature of Hiwa K's practice, this volume has not only involved a considerable number of collaborators but also an extended conversation with the artist. This process began in May 2015 and continued up until the final version of this book went to press, with the artist closely involved in every aspect of it. It was during this time, and despite the fact that I had first written about his work in 2008, that I began to more fully understand and appreciate the conceptual intricacy and intentional informality of Hiwa K's practice. I realized the significance of his personal experiences of major historical events, in Iraq and elsewhere, and how they found their way, for the most part unassumingly, into his work. I also came to fully appreciate how much his practice involves details from his own biography — pithy anecdotes, family lore, historical narratives, chance encounters, informal peer-to-peer learning, and accounts of the arduous five-month journey he made from Kurdistan to Germany in the mid-1990s. What emerged over these two years was the sense of an artist who relishes accessibility, of both language and practice, and is constantly ready to improvise makeshift approaches to complex issues. The upshot of this accessibility and improvisation is a body of work that invites the audience, sometimes literally, to not only engage with it but to also develop components of the works in question.

Covering a decade or so of output, *Don't Shrink Me to the Size of a Bullet: The Works of Hiwa K* provides the first comprehensive account of the artist's practice and details works from 2005 onwards, including *Arbeitsplatz* (Workspace) (2005), *Cooking with Mama* (2005–ongoing), *Inappropriation* (2009), and *Country Guitar Lessons* (2005–11), all of which either utilized or subverted spaces within an art institution to produce collaborative projects and inclusive models of working. Other projects, such as *Moon Calendar* (2007), *This Lemon Tastes of Apple* (2011), and *Do You Remember What You Are Burning?* (2011), focus on historical events in Kurdistan and, more broadly, Iraq; while issues of migration and the fraught experiences associated with forced exile are explored in *Pre-Image* (2010).

The historical and geopolitical realities of immaterial and material exchange come to the fore in *Qatees* (2009), *Chicago Boys: While They Were Singing, We Were Dreaming* (2010–ongoing), *It's Spring and the Weather Is Great, So Let's Close All Object Matters* (2012), *My Father's Colour Period* (2013), and *The Bell Project* (2014–15). More recent works, such as *The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan (Raw Materiality 01)* (2016–ongoing), call attention to the influence of neoliberal dogma on Kurdistan and its all too imminent impact on the region's population, economic history, and cultural practices.

A series of notes on these works have been prepared and revised by the artist for this volume, and he has also included a number of anecdotes that recount gossip, stories, jokes, personal insights, conundrums, and aphorisms garnered from multiple sources. Amongst other things, these anecdotes add a significant degree of context to his works and, with humour and directness, frequently give form to the sense of disorientation associated with exile and migratory states. What remains steadfast throughout all of these elements is a commitment to using this vernacular material and incorporating it, with both stealth and considerable wit, into an approachable body of work.

The essays and conversations included in this volume, by contributors who have either worked with or have known the artist for some time, piece together a portrait that seeks to understand how he uses his associated roles — including that of an accomplished musician, dancer, educator, and informal interlocutor — to engage audiences. Inclusion is a key factor here, but the works encompassed also tend to elude definitive points of reference and resolution, for artist and spectator alike. They initiate a dynamic collective process that, as we will see, threatens the continuities of formal thought and the expectations placed upon cultural practitioners in an era of accelerated global capital. None of this is done in the spirit of obfuscation or mystification; rather, to quote the artist, the intention is to bring ideas and scenarios into a “zone of possibility” and, from there, to orchestrate interventionist forms of collective engagement and solidarity. The artist's role in these events, hovering between tentative activity and productive inaction,

is often deferred to others, and we see how the inclusive and transitive nature of life, in all its historical contingency and personal forms of insecurity, has come to define the broader context of Hiwa K's practice.

To the extent that some of the primary ideas explored in my introduction were first discussed with Hiwa over two years ago, I remain all the more grateful to him for developing those conversations and for working so closely with me on the final version of this book. Apart from the artist, who has generously given over much of his time to the volume's production, I would also like to personally thank Heike Catherina Mertens and Krist Gruijthuijsen for their discerning foreword and unsparing support for this volume; Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, and Natasha Ginwala for their trenchant texts; and Bakir Ali for his oversight of the Kurdish translations and engaging conversation with the artist, a version of which is included here. A special thanks must be expressed to Aneta Szyłak, a long-time collaborator of the artist, for her

astutely personal essay on Hiwa's practice and her involvement with the preceding research that informed elements of this volume. For the translation, we are indebted to the assiduous work of Sarhang Hars; for the book's design, we owe a particular word of gratitude to Grégory Ambos and Rémi Brandon (Zak Group); and, for the meticulous copy-editing, thanks are due to Hannah Gregory. We are also very grateful for the generous support of Franz König, for the publishing of this volume, and the assistance of Hanna Schmandin at Walther König Verlag. Finally, this book would not have been possible were it not for the management skills, acumen, and patience that Aimee Dawson actively brought to it. We collectively hope that *Don't Shrink Me to the Size of a Bullet: The Works of Hiwa K*, in the spirit of the artist's work, introduces a new audience to his projects and offers additional insights and interpretive models for those who are already familiar with it.

Anthony Downey

Unbearable States:
Hiwa K and the Performance of Everyday Life
Anthony Downey

“None of us has a map in our pocket as we walk along. Rather, we have a jumble of tangled maps in our heads; the psyche is nothing but a patterned landscape on which we draw maps every day.”

— Bakhtiyar Ali, *I Stared at the Night of the City*, 2016.¹

“The naming of the world, through which men constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance.”

— Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1968.²

In 2011, a popular revolt in Sulaymaniyah saw thousands of people take to the street to protest against the corruption and nepotism associated with the ruling Kurdish Democratic Party. These protests, which went on from February 21 until April 30, mostly took place around the so-called Freedom Square, or Saray Azadi, where protestors were met with tear gas and live bullets.³ The violence that ensued injured five hundred protestors and resulted in the deaths of over a dozen people. In late April, at the height of these demonstrations, Hiwa K joined the protestors and staged a performance of sorts. This intervention was subsequently filmed by cameramen, who were on hand that day to cover events for news agencies. At the outset of *This Lemon Tastes of Apple* (2011), which is made up of footage later acquired by the artist, we see protestors in and around Saray Azadi holding aloft spent bullet casings to prove that live rounds were being fired, while another man collects used bullets from protestors. Some of those present wear surgical masks to stave off the effects of the tear gas and, to add to the urgency of the moment, a visibly wounded man is rushed through the crowd as they search for medical attention. Elsewhere, protestors — suffering from the damage by tear gas to their respiratory systems and tear ducts — are liberally doused with lemon juice, an improvised antidote. Throughout this turmoil, Hiwa K, employing

a hand-held megaphone for amplification and accompanied by a guitarist, begins to play the ominous melody of Ennio Morricone’s “Man with a Harmonica”, a well-known tune from Sergio Leone’s film *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968).⁴ Sections of the crowd appear re-animated by this familiar melody and begin following the artist and his motley crew towards the frontline of the protests. This short film ends with the protestors, artist included, fleeing from yet another volley of bullets and tear gas.

There are many sites of infamy associated with Saddam Hussein’s ruthless and brutal rule of Iraq, which began in July 1979, when he formally assumed the presidency after years of outmanoeuvring his rivals, and ended with him — in a vain attempt to avoid capture by US forces in April 2003 — meekly surrendering after being located in a fetid subterranean cell.⁵ Two events among the many instances of brutality perpetrated in Iraq stand out for their ruthlessness: the Anfal campaigns against the Kurds (1986–89), and the chemical attack, using mustard gas, hydrogen cyanide, and other nerve agents, on Halabja, a Kurdish village on the Iran–Iraq border, in 1988.⁶ When nerve gas and chemical weapons were dropped on Halabja it was widely reported that the initial odour reminded people of the smell of sweet apples.⁷ In drawing a horticultural reference in the film’s title to the sickly sweet smell of apples and the acidity of lemons, the notoriety of the chemical attack on Halabja permeates *This Lemon Tastes of Apple*. The lemons being used by the protestors in Sulaymaniyah become an allegorical reminder of the fateful smell of “apples”, and a direct allusion is made between the tear gas pervading the demonstration in April 2011, and the chemical gas that descended upon Halabja almost a quarter of a century earlier.

Throughout *This Lemon Tastes of Apple*, Hiwa K occupies a position that is both proactive (he is very much part of this protest) and relatively passive, inasmuch as he is still an observer of sorts. His presence is kinetic, sparking a dynamic that taps into the energy of the protestors and the unfolding scenario before him. Throughout these interventions, the artist tends to adopt the role of the “newly arrived”, the one who has just turned up but

is all too ready to get involved. Being at once a spectator — who is conscious of a broader picture — and a performer allows, as we see in this video, for a series of performative manoeuvres to take place. Although newly arrived, he is also, to use the artist's terminology, a "midwife" of sorts, prepared to see through a process — be it the tail end of a protest or another more abstract historical event — that has already gestated in his absence.⁸

In a broader context, Hiwa K's work explores, often through the disarmingly simple use of music, dance, sporadic interventions, collective conversations, and impromptu workshops, a series of conditions associated with unbearable, unstable, and fortuitous states of being. Such states are, in turn, frequently presented against, or foreshadowed by, the local, national, and geopolitical realities that have affected both Kurdistan and Iraq over the course of the last forty years, a timeline that is roughly in keeping with the artist's childhood in Sulaymaniyah and the time he spent there before leaving for Germany in the mid-1990s.⁹

There is, admittedly, a fine line to be walked between assertiveness, when the artist actively engages in proceedings, and passivity — that is, when he becomes a bystander of sorts.

In its strategic disavowal of ultimate control and definitive meaning, this attenuated state, oscillating between tentative activity and productive inaction, enables Hiwa K to provisionally locate himself in events associated with, variously: historical trauma (*Moon Calendar*, 2007, *This Lemon Tastes of Apple*, 2011, and *Do You Remember What You Are Burning?*, 2011); migratory states and the perilous paths of journeys undertaken (*Pre-Image*, 2010); institutional critique and appropriation (*Arbeitsplatz* (Workspace), 2005, and *Inappropriation*, 2009); transcultural practices (*Cooking with Mama*, 2005–ongoing, and *Country Guitar Lessons*, 2005–11); economic theory and pedagogical practices *Chicago Boys: While They Were Singing, We Were Dreaming*, (2010–ongoing); the historical and geopolitical realities of immaterial and material exchange (*Qatees*, 2009, *My Father's Colour Period*, 2013, and *The Bell Project*, 2014–15); and the imposition of neoliberal dogma on Kurdistan and its imminent effects on the region's population and cultural discourses (*It's Spring and the Weather*

Is Great, So Let's Close All Object Matters, 2012, and *The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan (Raw Materiality 01)*, 2016–ongoing).

Based on the gathering of informal bodies of knowledge — garnered from multiple sources including conversations, YouTube videos, and peer-to-peer learning — these projects also propose a direct questioning of what roles an artist is expected to play, in both social and institutional contexts, and how such expectations can be productively subverted. It is in the role of the artist that Hiwa K also distances himself from its apparent function and, in so doing, transforms it into associated roles such as musician, dancer, educator, and casual interlocutor.¹⁰ It is this everyday, receptive, and transitive nature of life as *experienced*, in all its historical contingency and personal forms of insecurity, that underwrites these works. Estranging nominal points of absolute reference or conclusive resolution, for artist and spectator alike, they initiate a process that relishes accessibility of both language and practice, and open-ended, approachable models of engagement.

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In "Let's Assume", one of the many anecdotes included in this volume, the artist makes a specific reference to a popular Kurdish song of the same name. This song narrates a singer's longing to bring into being the ideal conditions that would enable him to be in physical contact with the woman he desires. The song effectively (and affectionately) attempts to give a concrete structure to an abstraction and, in that reified moment, achieve an outcome or goal: *If I wish it, articulate it, name it, perform it*, the singer plaintively assumes, *it will come to pass*. Recounting how, in this context, the process of naming brings into being a "zone of possibility", the artist has observed that, "when you live under a dictatorship you don't even think about change because it's completely impossible, and for these moments you need a certain kind of pretension or illegal statement in which you name things into being which are almost impossible."¹¹ The articulation of calls for political and economic reform, a conspicuous feature of the protests in Sulaymaniyah in 2011, produced a framework where collective

demands for change and democratic freedoms could potentially mutate into such a “zone of possibility”. The chanting and repeated use of slogans by the protestors, as witnessed in *This Lemon Tastes of Apple*, not only summon up the spectre of historic oppression but also embody a political call for transformation; a plea for something else to come into being, namely, an accountable form of governance.

In playing the melody of Morricone’s “Man with a Harmonica”, as the maelstrom of protests continued to swirl, the artist became one with the demonstration, breathing in, through his instrument, the tear gas that is blinding and choking those around him. Further blurring the lines between spectator and actor, this was an interventionist form of incitement and solidarity that orchestrated and focused the clamour of the protestors into the resonances of a familiar harmonica tune.¹² In a moment of musical distraction, an assemblage of competing and disparate components — the protestors, the security forces, the cameramen, the guitarist, those who are being gassed and shot at, and the intrepid artist — come together and meld into one transient, yet concerted, movement. In refusing to bear the weight of corruption and economic cronyism, protestors and artist alike engage with the emancipatory potential of a transformative political moment where the didacticism of government control and oppression gives way to a dialectical call for change.

Twenty years before these protests in Saray Azadi, another popular revolt occurred in Sulaymaniyah — this time against Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath party and the most feared symbol of its power in the region, the notorious prison complex Amna Suraka, also known locally as the Red Gaol or Red Security Building.¹³ Designed by East German architects and engineers in 1979, and subsequently handed over to the representatives of the local Ba’ath party in the mid-1980s, this prison was an apparatus of power and torture that attempted to humiliate, subjugate and, ultimately, annihilate the local Kurdish population through a campaign of surveillance, harassment, control, violence, torture, murder, and the deployment of chemical weapons.¹⁴ Following its liberation by Kurdish forces in 1991, the full details of the atrocities that had been committed in

Amna Suraka were specified and confirmed.¹⁵ They included the employment of men who were officially contracted to rape men and women, with the result that many children were subsequently born in the prison. It had separate holding cells for men, women, and children, and came complete with holding rooms for solitary confinement and a warren of torture cells. Within the walls of this prison, inmates, including children, were subjected to physical and sexual abuse, alongside other forms of psychological torture. Inmates were regularly electrocuted and tormented in a soundproof room so that their cries of desperation could be recorded and broadcast to instil fear in other inmates.¹⁶ Those who “admitted” their crimes were sentenced to life imprisonment in Abu Ghraib, while others died under the physical and mental duress of regular torture.¹⁷ This building was, in sum, an accursed place where many experienced atrocious, often fatal, levels of abuse.

In 2007, sixteen years after it was liberated, Hiwa K gained access to Amna Suraka. It was here that he set about rehearsing a flamenco dance, an art form associated with rapid, accelerated footwork and accomplished precision. The video *Moon Calendar* (2007) shows the artist, as he uses a stethoscope to listen to his own heartbeats, endeavouring to synchronize the inner beat of his heart with the external sound of his footwork. In an effort to escalate his heartbeat, he dances faster and faster, but is defeated by the recursive nature of his activity. Something, somewhere, must give, and he finally admits to the impossibility of full synchronization between dance steps and heartbeat, feet and heart; between the performer’s intention and the reality of his performance. When I first encountered *Moon Calendar*, I was intrigued by its conflictual premise: Herculean-like in endeavour, it was nevertheless hopelessly Sisyphean in its outcome.¹⁸ This forlorn sense of insurmountability was reinforced when I found out that *Moon Calendar* documented a rehearsal for a performance that never happened in front of an audience.¹⁹ The original recursivity of the work — the escalation of heartbeat mirroring the rapidity of dance — is amplified in a closed-circuit performance that suggests no potential for catharsis, or relief, or, indeed, release.

In this absence of catharsis as a tool of emotional and physical release, there is an echo of Augusto Boal's work on theatre and performativity, specifically his refusal of cathartic gestures in theatre. In *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1974), Boal advocated that spectators should transgress the binary opposition of performer/performance and become "spect-actors".²⁰ In advocating a more active form of spectatorship, one that was integrated into the performance and capable thereafter of directing its outcomes, Boal was attempting to find ways to include the audience in the play. As part of this theatrical revolution, a number of tactics were employed including the switching of roles midway through performances, the employment of multiple genres, a collaborative approach to storytelling and plot development, and the use of music to bolster (or undermine) onstage narrative activity.²¹ Catharsis, in these contexts, was viewed with suspicion insofar as in the moment of alleviating an audience's passion it diminishes their ability to engage in the action. Boal's suspicion of catharsis as a viable theatrical device — the extent to which it prompted, for example, emotional responses to complex social realities — reveals how such a process diffuses the very energies needed to effect historical, political, and social justice. "Catharsis is correction", Boal wrote, but, "What does it correct? Catharsis is purification: what does it purify?"²² The ambition for Boal was to actively disavow the equilibrium associated with catharsis and "create disequilibrium" which in turn prepares the way for action.²³ To this end, Hiwa K's performance in *Moon Calendar* and *This Lemon Tastes of Apple* stimulates a response that does not lead to catharsis as much as it seeks to spur the energy required for a participative, if not transitional, political intervention.²⁴ His presence as performer and spectator, in both works, disrupts internal and external equilibrium, suggesting an alternative dynamic of engagement with the socio-politics of historical events and the narratives they espouse.

The horror of Amna Suraka, irremediably imbricated in the building and those who survived it or died within its confines, compels us to rethink how we can ever understand such unbearable states of being and non-being through the aesthetic traditions of

commemoration or performance, however assuasive or magnanimous these forms seek to be. The disavowal of catharsis thus raises a fundamental question about what role, if any, an artist can perform in the context of historical injustice. This is not, crucially, to admit dismay in the face of the "debris" of history, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin; rather it is to catalytically restage a form of dramatic, non-didactic potentiality that is activated in the moment of adopting and adapting the dual roles of actor and spectator, observer and creator, artist and bystander. It is, to continue the reference to Benjamin, an attempt to "blast open the continuum of history", through an all too modest, self-effacing, and perhaps irreconcilable, transformative gesture.²⁵

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In the same year that *Moon Calendar* was produced, Hiwa K embarked on an eight-year venture that would eventually materialize as *The Bell Project* (2014–15). Comprised of a two-channel HD video installation, *Nazhad and the Bell Making* (2007–15), and a bronze bell secured in a wooden frame, the starting point for *The Bell Project* was a scrapyards in Northern Iraq. Working with Nazhad, the owner of the scrapyards, the artist reifies, in the form of an actual bell, a number of intertwined histories based on the use of specific materials and their deployment during times of conflict and war.²⁶ In *Nazhad and the Bell Making*, the viewer sees how the eponymous Nazhad capitalized on smelting the countless mines that were set by Iranian and Iraqi forces during the 1980–88 war, and, as his business grew, how he turned his skills to deactivating armaments and recycling other residue from two successive Gulf Wars (1991 and 2003). The ensuing detritus of other civil conflicts in Iraq, including mines, bombs, bullets, and parts of military planes and tanks, also provided raw materials for Nazhad, as have the remnants of conflicts with ISIS (or Daesh, as they are more commonly called in the Middle East). At several points in the video, Nazhad displays his encyclopedic knowledge of the armaments in his scrapyards as he casually picks through 11 mm shells, 12 mm shells, 152 mm shells, and bullets from a heavy

machine gun, a so-called Dashka (or DShK), which was produced in the former Soviet Union. At one stage he observes that “weapons from most of the countries come here; they all come back to me”, and adds that in his scrapyards over forty countries are represented through their sales of weapons to Iran and Iraq, including, to name but a few, the United States, Italy, Germany, Japan, China, and Turkey. The continuum of recent history in Kurdistan, and Iraq as a whole, is read through this indexical repository of weapons and the remnants of military conflict. Nazhad’s scrapyards exist as a veritable archive of conflict in Iraq, its owner the archivist of an industrial military complex that defines, and consistently undermines, the geopolitics of the region.²⁷ A narrative of upheaval, that includes war, civil conflict, revolt, and the so-called tactic of “shock and awe” warfare used by US forces in 2003, is present here in synecdochic form, its parts signifying the trajectory of violence by proxy that has underwritten Iraqi history for at least four decades.²⁸

At the outset of *Nazhad and the Bell Making*, Nazhad’s nephew, upon seeing a low-flying military plane in the sky, casually observes that he would like to shoot it down with a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) and “collect the parts, melt them down, and then send them to where it came from in order for them to make another airplane.” His aside on recycling the aftermath of warfare in Iraq into an actual object — encapsulated here, in apparent perpetuity, in the shape of a plane — is a key element in the materialization of the bell that is at the centre of *The Bell Project*. For the bell to be made, the artist needed three hundred kilograms of bronze. The smelted metal was produced as ingots in Nazhad’s scrapyards and thereafter shipped to a foundry in Crema, in northern Italy, where it was moulded into a bell with a strike tone of B-flat minor (a chord that consists of the notes B-flat, D and F).²⁹ As the artist relates in accompanying notes to *The Bell Project*, the manufacture of a church bell from the metal waste of the Iran–Iraq War, along with other conflicts in Iraq, effectively reverses a historical process, prevalent throughout Medieval times, that saw bells being melted into weapons and cannons.

During the production process of making the bell in Crema, news broke of the serial attacks on artefacts in the Mosul Museum by ISIS. Of the many objects destroyed in Mosul, a number stand out because of their presence in a video released by ISIS on February 26, 2015, including a *lamassu* that had stood at the entrance of the Nergal Gate in Nineveh (an ancient Mesopotamian city on the outskirts of Mosul). These winged, human-headed creatures are traditionally understood to be protective figures and are positioned at the entrances to buildings. Of the two in Nineveh, one was shown being smashed with sledgehammers. An image of a *lamassu* reappears on the bell in the video accompanying *The Bell Project*, its motif standing proud on the bell’s “waist”, alongside other motifs that circumnavigate the “sound ring”. As we witness the bell mould being removed, the *lamassu* motif seems to be in the process of being unearthed or excavated, its appearance allegorically reversing the instances of destruction wrought at the time by ISIS across Northern Iraq and parts of northern Syria. The artist explains:

“I was thinking about the whole market for oil and weapons and how ISIS are involved in that trade, especially in the looting and trade of artefacts, so I used some of the insignia from various objects that were being destroyed by ISIS at the time I was making the bell.”

The various states of destruction — whether brought about by weapons and armaments or the sledgehammers of iconoclasts — and reconstitution, be this of a bell or the motifs of destroyed artefacts, are rendered fluid in *The Bell Project*. Their liquidity is literalized in the smelting process, and their states of materialization are testament to the endurance of cultural forms.

The geopolitics and political economy of Iraq remain central to another of Hiwa K’s most recent works, *The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan (Raw Materiality 01)* (2016–ongoing). The project takes as its starting point the premise that the freedom of the individual, as developed and popularized by existentialist philosophers and writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus, was co-opted and redirected to serve the logic of the market (where the freedom of the individual is understood to be predicated upon the inviolable

freedom of markets) by, amongst others, the economist Milton Friedman.³⁰ Examining through various media the background to the emergence of an existentialist scene in Iraqi Kurdistan during the 1970s and '80s, Hiwa K traces, via a group of intellectuals who followed the existentialist idea of “being thrown into the world”, the imposition of free trade models of production and consumption, leading up to and following the US-led 2003 invasion of Iraq. In exploring the motivations and stories of Kurdish existentialists across two generations, the artist analyses the way in which the ideal of individualism in collective societies such as Iraq in the 1970s and early '80s was affected by neoliberal dogma and, subsequently, what the author Naomi Klein refers to as “disaster capitalism”.³¹ The didactic ascendancy of neoliberalism at all costs first emerged, for the artist, out of the Iran–Iraq War and became central to Iraqi economic policy after the 2003 invasion. The dominance of neoliberalism was further assured under the stewardship of Paul Bremer, the short-lived, but catastrophic, Presidential Envoy to Iraq (from May 2003 until June 2004).³² Drawing on Klein’s work in *The Shock Doctrine* (2007), Hiwa K examines the extent to which Friedman’s theories have been deployed in the aftermath of military defeats — such as the policies following the “shock and awe” campaign in the 2003 Gulf War — to initiate and effect large-scale privatization projects. *The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan* traces the historical moments leading up to 2003 and after, when the transformation of economies through political turmoil was taking place. The attempt to replace the notion of the freedom of the individual with a different model tended, as we see throughout this project, to favour the consumerist, individualizing paradigm of global free trade rather than collective and communitarian models of co-existence.

The orthodoxies of neoliberal doctrine — including free trade, privatization, the withdrawal of state welfare and responsibility, rampant capital accumulation, and the dogma of “market forces” — have frequently been proposed as “progress”, in one material guise or another.³³ In fact, it increasingly seems that the entire teleology of Western history has been outsourced to this one abiding goal: the withdrawal of government involvement in the

ascendancy of the free market and everything — privatization, free trade, limited expenditure on social services, the dominance of profit as a guide to social wellbeing — that comes with it. In the context of Iraq, the linguistic economy of neoliberal thought, encapsulated in such terms as human rights, democracy, freedom of expression, liberty, and secularism, are often posited as the rhetorical underpinning for a concerted exploitation of the country’s natural resources.³⁴ Bremer’s ministry, for example, saw the privatization of almost all Iraqi state companies, among them the national banks, and their sale to foreign investors. Customs duties were abolished, alongside import tariffs, and Iraqi industry and manufacturing collapsed after years of sanctions put in place from the 1990s onwards. As part of these new policies, to highlight one particularly egregious example, investors could take one hundred percent of the profit made in Iraq back to their home countries without reinvesting any of it within the country.

One of Bremer’s most injurious orders — and there is a dizzying array to choose from — was Order 81, also called “Lex Monsanto”, which involved “Patent, Industrial Design, Undisclosed Information, Integrated Circuits, and Plant Variety.” The order declared that “Iraqi farmers are not allowed to save seeds, they are not allowed to share seeds ... and they are not allowed to replant harvested seeds.” Farmers in Iraq, who operated for generations in an essentially unregulated, informal seed supply system, had to thereafter buy the seed of international corporations such as Monsanto.³⁵ The “shock and awe” that was unleashed in 2003 across Iraq was soon to be replaced with a form of rapid dominance involving the unprecedented sale of the nation’s infrastructure and resources to non-national interests. This misguided and fundamentally flawed policy was to threaten the very viability of the state of Iraq as a social, economic, political, and historical entity. It may yet prove to have ushered in something that will have momentous repercussions across the region and on a global scale: a profoundly destabilized state at the heart of the Middle East, and the calamitous confrontations that could result from such a scenario.

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Many of the anecdotes included in this volume recount gossip, stories, family folklore, jokes, historical details, personal insights, conundrums, and partial accounts of Hiwa K's journey from Kurdistan to Germany in the 1990s. Compiled here in print for the first time, these tales add a degree of context to his works, but they also allude to specific experiences and, in some instances, the sense of disorientation associated with exile and migratory states. A number of these stories also offer counterpoints to understanding aspects of the processes that have come to define Hiwa K's practice, including the manner in which playfulness, improvisation, allusiveness, and, characteristically, a measure of elusiveness, are all productively utilized to embody contingent models of engagement. In "A View from Above", to take one pertinent example, the artist recounts how as a refugee from Iraq it was necessary for those seeking asylum to prove in an interview that you came from a so-called "unsafe zone". These interviews would invariably involve precise questions about the city that an applicant claimed to be from and the topographic details of its environs. If the interviewee failed to convince the interviewer, asylum was denied and many, even if they had originally come from an "unsafe zone", found it difficult to prove that fact beyond doubt.

In an instance that exemplifies this conundrum and how it might be circumvented, the artist narrates how an individual, a former deserter from the Iraqi army who had applied to a Schengen country in Europe, had his application denied after five years and the threat of deportation, and possible execution back in Iraq, levelled at him as a result. The failed interviewee decided to flee to another Schengen country and, while there, learned everything he could from a hand-drawn map made by individuals who had fled "unsafe zones". This process of garnering a graphic representation of a city from above, rather than just understanding it from ground level, enabled him to pass the interviewer's questions and demonstrate that he was from an "unsafe zone". Both interviewer and interviewee, in this instance, understood the city from above, not from the ground, whereas those who were actually from the city, relaying its horizontal terrain without a hierarchical purview of the city, often failed the test.

This deceptively simple anecdote demonstrates the indelible links between the nature of an individual's hierarchical overview — their viewpoint and how this scope affects understanding — and the potentially fatal politics of exclusion. The vertical and the horizontal, which here act as vectors as they divide the reality of a given space or place in time, recur as formal elements in *Pre-Image* (2010), a work in which the artist fashioned a sort of prosthesis to enable him to traverse urban topographies. Some of these terrains were not unlike those he encountered in the mid-1990s, as he made his journey from Northern Iraq to Germany, and in the accompanying footage documenting these exploits he retraces his steps in some of the places he had passed through the first time around. The prosthetic in question, made from motorcycle mirrors soldered to a metal pole, is balanced on the artist's nose for prolonged periods as it accompanies him on walks through various cities, including Gdańsk, Vienna, Porto, and, more recently, on a journey that involved walking from northern Greece to Rome. Recalling the artist's earlier journey from Northern Iraq to Germany in the 1990s — a trip that, following many failed attempts, took in Iran, Turkey, Greece, and Italy along the way — these interventions not only explore the sense of fracture and uncertainty associated with such perilous treks but, crucially, the subject's preconceptions versus actual perceptions of the places encountered.

The improvisational prosthesis in this work is effectively a vertical contraption designed to effect a horizontal mode of passage: it provides a highly provisional, partial, and unreliable view. As we watch the artist compensate his movements to balance the device on his nose and ensure onward progression, it increasingly becomes evident that, though apparently an aid to vision, it is actually propelling him forward, its movements subject to subtle changes and shifts in both topography and the artist's body. There is an inherent instability here that evokes Hiwa K's early impression of those first cities he ventured through en route to Germany. The partial view of his surroundings — seen through the unsteady and yet supportive object — reflects the disjointed moment of migration when all that is seen is covertly viewed for

the first time and, as a result, is all the more difficult to integrate into an overarching picture. The artist comments on the relative luxury of producing an image, which is of necessity deferred and abandoned in the fragmented moment of migration, and observes: “I do not have the luxury of gazing at the image, to reflect on what I see; rather, I have to penetrate one of these possibilities as they unfold before me and become an image.”³⁶ This is, in sum, a furtive existence, based on stealth and expedient intervention.

The initial view of a city, in all its unfamiliarity, is further estranged by this unconventional prosthesis, while the subject’s surroundings, and as a result the performer’s, are disarticulated across multiple sightlines. In this self-reflexive form of image making, where the image cannot be completed, the only way to move forward and “progress” is by stopping, balancing, and recalibrating one’s sight and relative position. The mirrors, as prostheses, do not reflect the wayfarer’s surroundings as much as they define his route and affect his ability to traverse it: they are both indecisive and determinative. With one mirror reflecting what lies behind, another that which lies ahead, and side-mirrors peering left and right, Hiwa K describes a sense of panic or foreboding: “What you see in the moment of panic is a pre-image; an image yet to fully become.”³⁷ This image does not have a fixed hierarchical overview, and it prevaricates as a result; refusing to fully resolve itself, it remains clandestine and deferred. This lack of an overarching view — the absence of a complete and autonomous space to survey that which lies below — has, moreover, a direct consequence when reconsidered, as in “The View from Above”, as an integral part of the application process for those seeking political asylum.

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In *Pre-Image* and elsewhere, the means of navigation and survival, literal and allegorical, need to be externalized and given over to another element, an improvised tool and aid to memory, hearing, sight, or manoeuvring.³⁸ The balance between vertical and horizontal, movement and stasis, sequence and consequence, transition and transaction, must be carefully managed and rendered both provisional and decisive in

equal measure if they are to effect a means to an end, whatever this may turn out to be. The forms and markers of stability that most people take for granted are often negotiated as pliable and shifting points of reference in Hiwa K’s work, and these approaches can in part be associated with the artist’s experience as a political refugee who travelled for five months and two days, after many false starts and in hazardous conditions, from Kurdistan to Germany in the 1990s. However, it would be a mistake to read his practice in a one-dimensional biographical sense insofar as it also proposes a concerted inquiry into what it is to be an artist in an era of accelerated global capital and the demands that institutional, social, and political orders place upon cultural producers.

Having trained as a traditional painter, Hiwa K’s departure from Iraqi Kurdistan saw him largely abandon painting and enter into another paradigm of practice, one that was at once more collaborative and transformative in its processes. Upon arriving at the Mainz Academy of Art in Germany in 2005 a formality was thrust upon him in terms of what was expected. Yet this institutionalization further encouraged a more experimental approach, as we see in works such as *Arbeitsplatz*, *Inappropriation*, *Cooking with Mama*, and *Country Guitar Lessons*, all produced during his time in the academy in Mainz (2005–10). In *Country Guitar Lessons*, for example, he taught guitar lessons to Jim White — a former American soldier and, at the time, the caretaker of the art academy — in the school’s corridors. He would later occupy the academy’s canteen to cook Iraqi food, with his mother directing the proceedings via Skype, in *Cooking with Mama*. In both instances, the interstitial spaces of the academy are used as alternative work spaces, while his actual workspace, as we see in *Arbeitsplatz*, was kept in a provocatively pristine condition. *With Jim White, Once Upon a Time in the West* (2011), another work based on aurality and collaboration, consists of a live ten-minute performance of Ennio Morricone’s score for the eponymous film’s final duel between Frank and “Harmonica”, a melody which resounds, in a wholly different context, throughout *This Lemon Tastes of Apple*. In *Chicago Boys: While They Were Singing, We Were Dreaming* (2010–ongoing), the artist formed a 1970s-inspired

Middle Eastern pop revival band, in conjunction with a study group, to examine the implications of warfare in Iraq (as he would also do in *The Bell Project* and *The Existentialist Scene in Kurdistan*). *Chicago Boys* has a strong pedagogical inclination, focused on non-didactic learning. Recalling Hiwa K's own informal, peer-to-peer education in Kurdistan, the work actively engages the participants in educating themselves and applying the knowledge obtained in the process to their individual experiences.³⁹

Authorship, and its displacement from the individual onto the collective, continues to be a foundational question in Hiwa K's work. The authorship ascribed to the artist is deferred to others he meets, who may in turn inject an incidental and unexpected element into the final manifestation of a project. In anticipation of taking up a course at the art academy in Mainz, the artist co-opted the portfolio of a painter friend so that he could enrol there. But, having been accepted on the basis of this portfolio, he realized that he was then expected to conform to a certain role — that of the artist proper, with an understanding of art history and all that had gone before him. He found the weight of expectation placed upon him unsustainable, and resisted the form of authority that comes with authorship, and its relation to specific roles and prescriptive histories. As an “artist”, and a recent arrival, Hiwa K could, to paraphrase the respective epigraphs to this essay, begin to provisionally map the world he encountered, but only with the knowledge that all naming is an act of arrogance, a makeshift passage of becoming, and, ultimately, an often unbearable weight to carry.

1 Bakhtiyar Ali, *I Stared at the Night of the City*, Kareem Abdulrahman trans. (Reading: Periscope, 2016), 7.
 2 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Myra Bergman Ramos trans. [1968] (New York: Continuum, 2007), 90.
 3 The square also goes under the name Slemani Square and has been variously known as Bar Darki Sara (Sara Gate Square) and more recently Maidani Azadi (Kurdish: مه‌دانی ئازادی). Some Kurdish media outlets have incorporated the old and new name, hence Saray Azadi.

4 Morricone's soundtrack was released four years later in 1972. Each of the main characters in *Once Upon a Time in the West* were assigned specific leitmotifs in Morricone's score, with Charles Bronson's character, referred to as “Harmonica” due to his penchant for playing one, assigned the melody of “Man with a Harmonica”.
 5 Saddam Hussein's violations of human rights are numerous. Some of the more noted are the 1980 Fayli deportations (when thousands of Kurds of the Fayli sect were persecuted and Fayli women were imprisoned or put into camps); the 1983 Barzani Abductions (when more than 5,000 males, some as young as 10, were disappeared and murdered); and, in the 1990s, the devastation of the Marsh Arab's land in the south and east of Iraq.
 6 The number of deaths associated with the Anfal campaign vary but it is widely agreed to have been genocidal in its intent and scope. Human Rights Watch estimates that between 50,000 and 100,000 people were killed, whereas Kurdish sources put it closer to 180,000. Human Rights Watch report (July 1993), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/>. The Halabja attack, which resulted in the deaths of between 3,200 and 5,000 people, and injuries to 10,000 more, is still historically recognized as the single most devastating use of poison gas on a civilian population.
 7 Chemical weapons had already been used in April 1987 in an attack on the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) headquarters in the Jafati valley. The man responsible for this attack, and the one in Halabja the following year, was Ali Hassan al-Majid, colloquially known as “Chemical Ali”. In Appendix A of the 1993 Human Rights Watch report, noted above, Al-Majid is recorded saying: “I will kill them all with chemical weapons! Who is going to say anything? The international community? Fuck them! The international community and those who listen to them.” Full transcript: http://pantheon.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/APPENDIXA.htm#P34_4799.
 8 The artist specifically used the phrase “midwife” in conversation to give a sense that everything in this film existed before he arrived, and his presence is but one, albeit dynamic, component in the scenario. Conversation with Hiwa K, Berlin, November 28, 2016.
 9 Situated in the Sulaymaniyah Governate of autonomous Kurdistan, Sulaymaniyah is a city of approximately 350,000 people. It is also known as Sulaimani or Slemani and has long been associated with poets, artists, historians, and scholars, including the poets Nali, also known as Mullah Xidir Ehmed Sawaysi Mikayali (1797–1856); Tawfeq Mahmoud Hamza, or Piramerd (1867–1950); and Sherko Bekas (1940–2013). The city was the site of popular resistance to Saddam Hussein's rule (1979–2003) and more recently witnessed a popular revolt against the Kurdish government in 2011. It provides the backdrop to a number of Hiwa K's works including *Moon Calendar* (2007), *This Lemon Tastes of Apple* (2011) and *Do You Remember What You Are Burning?* (2011).
 10 The ideal of the intellectual as a basis for reasoned argument and prescribed forms of knowledge is, likewise, actively undermined and the artist often speaks of himself as an “extellectual”. See “Performative Resonances: Hiwa K in Conversation with Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf”, *Ibraaz* (July 30, 2015): www.ibraaz.org/interviews/171.
 11 Conversation with Hiwa K, Berlin, November 28, 2016.
 12 When filming *Once Upon a Time in the West*, Leone insisted that Morricone's score be played on the set so that the actors could mould their performances around it. “[T]he relationship of music and character”, Dave Kerr writes, “is certainly unusually tight, almost operatic.” See *When Movies Mattered: Reviews from a Transformative Decade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 266.
 13 In the wake of the first Gulf War (1991), alongside the aftermath of the Iran–Iraq War (1980–88), there was a widespread perception that Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party had been fatally weakened and popular uprisings broke out in the northern and southern regions of Iraq. The so-called National Uprising, in the north, was led by a coalition of Kurdish forces, including the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), jointly referred to as the Peshmerga. The uprising in Northern Iraq began on March 5, 1991, and recorded successes in taking town after town with little or no resistance.
 14 In the late 1990s, Amna Suraka was converted into the Museum of War Crimes in Kurdistan. For a full account of Amna Suraka, and its current status as a museum, see Adalet Garmiany, “On the Ground: Cultural Institutions in Iraq Today”, *Future Imperfect: Contemporary Art Practices and Cultural Institutions in the Middle East*, Anthony Downey ed. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 115–18.
 15 As a result of Amna Suraka's liberation, rebel forces were able to retrieve and deposit over 14 tonnes of documents with Human Rights Watch. See Human Rights Watch, *Genocide in Iraq: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds* (July 1993): <http://www.refworld.org/docid/47fdfb1d0.html>.

- 16 There has been an upsurge in accounts of how and when torture can be used in light of terrorism and the apparently unending “states of emergency” that governments worldwide have ushered in since September 11, 2001. These debates have gained further urgency in light of comments, made in the US in January 2017 by President Donald Trump, that torture “works” (despite the US Senate voting overwhelmingly to ban torture in 2015). For a nuanced discussion of the moral impermissibility of torture under any conditions, see J. Jeremy Wisniewski and R. D. Emerick, *The Ethics of Torture* (London: Continuum, 2009).
- 17 Known for its frequent use of torture and summary executions, Abu Ghraib, located to the west of Baghdad, held on average 50,000 men and women in appalling conditions under Saddam Hussein’s regime. The building would later play a central role in one of the most notorious events of the early 21st century when American soldiers, deployed to the prison as part of the allied invasion of Iraq in 2003, submitted Iraqi detainees to horrendous forms of abuse, including torture, rape, physical and sexual abuse, and murder. See Philippe Sands, *Torture Team: Deception, Cruelty and the Compromise of Law* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), and Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure: A War Story* (London: Penguin, 2008).
- 18 *Moon Calendar* was first shown as part of *Manifesta 7* (2008). See Anthony Downey, “What was Lost: *Manifesta 7* and the Soul of Modernity”, *Third Text*, 22.6 (2008), 787–90: www.anthonysdowney.com/2008/11/01/what-was-lost/.
- 19 The artist did subsequently perform a flamenco dance as part of the *Manifesta* programme in 2008, but this occurred in a notably different context.
- 20 Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* [1974] (London: Pluto, 2008), 95–136.
- 21 In 1972 Boal ran for public office in Rio de Janeiro and won in what he considered to be an explicit act of theatre. After his unexpected election, he deployed his support staff and effected a number of legislative proposals, through his so-called “legislative theatre”. Of the many proposals considered, some 13 were passed into law. See Augusto Boal, *Legislative Theatre: Using Performance to Make Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998).
- 22 Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, 23. Boal, considered a threat by the junta in Brazil in the late 1960s and early 1970s (due to his activism and engagement with social issues), was himself a victim of torture having been abducted in 1971, and imprisoned by order of the military. Upon his release, he was exiled to Argentina where he lived for 5 years. While in solitary confinement, in Tiradentes jail in São Paulo, he began writing *Torquemada*, a play about power, torture, and violence in the Ibero-American experience, first performed in Buenos Aires in 1971.
- 23 Augusto Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 72.
- 24 *This Lemon Tastes of Apple* also recalls in part Boal’s theory of “invisible theatre”, a form of theatre performed in an unexpected environment — a market place, a prison, or a street, for example — that, through disguising itself as theatre, encourages the audience to see it as a real event. The performances for this type of event are often rehearsed and then re-enacted in public space in real time, making it at once theatre and real life. Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, 122–26.
- 25 See Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History”, in *Illuminations* [1955] (London: Fontana, 1973), 255–66, 264.
- 26 The artist first encountered Nazhad in 2007 while he was researching mines in the mountains between Iraq and Iran. Hiwa K has observed that for the 5 million Kurdish inhabitants, there were approximately 15 million mines. Some of these were being deactivated and transported to Nazhad’s scrapyard when the pair first met.
- 27 Some of the armaments were brought to Nazhad by individuals who could not deactivate them, which Nazhad took it upon himself to do despite the fact that he was wounded in 2003 while dismantling bullets from a DShK machine gun, which are highly volatile. Nazhad was also victim to a landmine during the Iran–Iraq War, which has left him with a pronounced limp.
- 28 The Kingdom of Iraq was granted independence by Britain in 1932, prompting a series of coups and counter-coups. The Anglo–Iraqi War of 1941 saw the United Kingdom invade Iraq, where it still had air-bases (and continued to have until 1954). From 1958 onwards, following yet another coup, the Ba’ath party emerged as the single biggest political force in the country. The movement came under the control of General Saddam Hussein, as he was then known, who acceded to the presidency and assumed control of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) giving him, in turn, supreme power over Iraq. There followed a catastrophic war with Iran (1980–88), an equally ruinous invasion of Kuwait (1990), followed by military intervention by coalition forces (in the first Gulf War), and an all-out invasion, by an allied force led by the United States and Great Britain in 2003. Since then, Iraq has seen an increase in internecine violence, felt the impact of the Syrian civil war (March 15, 2011–present), and has been overrun by the forces of ISIS.
- 29 For more on the bell’s metallurgical structure and tone, see “Performative Resonances: Hiwa K in Conversation with Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf”.
- 30 It was Milton Friedman’s influence as an economist on the so-called Chicago Boys that was to prove, for some commentators, detrimental to the development of a democratically elected government in Chile in the 1970s. The “Chicago Boys” were a group of Chilean economists who trained under Friedman at the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago. The group rose to prominence under the dictatorial rule of General Augusto Pinochet, whose regime was responsible for human rights abuses, including torture, disappearances, murder, and political persecution. The events of September 11, 1973 — when the death of Salvador Allende, following a US-backed coup in the same year, was announced — augured not only despotism and the brutal regime of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, but also, according to some, a period of extreme neoliberal experimentation under the aegis of the “Chicago Boys”, many of whom held key positions in Pinochet’s government. The connection between neoliberal economic policy and human rights abuses are significant elements to both David Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005) and Wendy Brown’s *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015). These links, in the context of both Chile and Iraq, are also starkly outlined in Naomi Klein’s *The Shock Doctrine* (London: Penguin, 2007), a text that Hiwa K has cited as a key influence on projects such as *Chicago Boys: While They Were Singing, We Were Dreaming*, (2010–ongoing).
- 31 Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*.
- 32 It was Bremer who issued Order Number 1 on May 16, 2003, which dissolved the entire former Iraqi army — under the guise of the de-Ba’athification of the Iraqi army and civil service — and sowed the seeds of insurgency and internecine conflict that has continued to this day. For some, Bremer’s issuing of Order Number 1, alongside Order Number 2, which specified the entities to be dissolved, gave rise to ISIS, among other issues across Iraq, Syria, and the broader Middle Eastern region. For a complete list of Bremer’s edicts, see: <https://web.archive.org/web/20100206084411/http://www.cpa-iraq.org/regulations/>.
- 33 I earlier alluded to the seminal figure that lies at the heart of Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History”. Appearing midway through the text, the allegorical Angel of History, observed by Benjamin in Paul Klee’s 1916 painting *Angelus Novus*, cuts a forlorn figure: with his gaze focused on the past, he can only see history in terms of catastrophe, as a pile of debris piled up before him. “The angel would like to stay,” Benjamin explains, “awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise... This storm is what we call progress” (259).
- 34 Klein observes how the initial promise of democracy for the Iraqi people, alongside free elections, was quickly revoked by the Bush government, under Bremer’s stewardship, when it became obvious that Iraqis were not going to be intimidated into voting for candidates approved by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) that was then overseeing Iraq. See *The Shock Doctrine*, 360–65.
- 35 For a careful analysis of Bremer’s infamous Order 81, and its disastrous effect on Iraqi agriculture, see Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 142–50.
- 36 Conversation with Hiwa K, Berlin, November 29, 2016.
- 37 Conversation with Hiwa K, Berlin, November 27, 2016.
- 38 In “Pin Down”, a conversation with the artist included in this volume, Hiwa K recounts an episode of the television show *Tarzan*, “Deadly Silence”, where the deaf protagonist holds a deer as a means to hear his enemies. “Men are waiting for him in the jungle with guns to kill him”, the artist recounts, “and Tarzan resorts to holding a deer in his arms because deer have sensitive ears. The deer hears for him. It moves when it detects the slightest movement, so that Tarzan will know when there is something afoot.”
- 39 There is a further link to Augusto Boal and his idea of “Transitive Learning”, a process that encourages an active engagement with learning through destabilizing any formal relationship between stage and audience, subject and object, actor and perceiver. See Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire*.

راست و رهوان؟* نه خیر، خوار و خپچ

له هه شتاکاندا، له کاتی شه‌ری ئیران و عیراقد، زۆربه‌ی خه‌لک به‌دوای که‌سوکاری ونبووی ناو سوپادا ده‌گه‌ران. ئازادی براشم یه‌کیک بوو له‌و ونبووانه. ته‌له‌فیزیۆنی عیراقي ته‌نها به‌شیکي رووداوه‌کانیان پيشان ده‌دا و به‌هه‌مان شیوه‌ش ته‌له‌فیزیۆنی ئیرانیش ته‌نها سه‌رکه‌وتنه‌کانی خو‌یانیان ده‌گواسته‌وه.

ئه‌گه‌ر بتویستایه‌ نیوه‌که‌ی تری راستیه‌کان بزانیته‌ یان به‌دوای برا یان باوکیکی ونبوودا بگه‌رپیت، جا ئه‌گه‌ر ده‌ستگیرکراپیت، برینداربووپیته‌ یان کوژراپیت ئه‌وا ده‌بوو که‌نالی ئیران بدۆزیته‌وه. ئه‌مه‌ش له‌ریگه‌ ئاریه‌له‌ باوه‌کانه‌وه ئاسان نه‌بوو که‌ هه‌موویان به‌یه‌ک شیوه‌ی تایبه‌ت دروستکراوون و ئه‌و شیوه‌یه‌ش ته‌نها که‌ناله‌ ناوخۆییه‌کانی وه‌رده‌گرت. بۆیه‌ خه‌لک ده‌ستیان کرد به‌ دروستکردنی ئاریلی خو‌یان به‌شیوه‌یه‌کی نایاسایی بۆ ئه‌وه‌ی که‌نالی ئیران وه‌ربگرن.

ئه‌و ماوه‌یه‌ چه‌ندین شیوه‌ ئاریلی پپچاوپپچم بینی که‌ له‌ مادده‌ی جیاجیا دروستکراوون. جا ئه‌وه‌ی سه‌یره، پاش چه‌ندین سال که‌ گه‌رامه‌وه، بینیم دووجۆر له‌و ئه‌ریله‌ ناره‌سمیانه‌ که‌وتبوونه‌ بازاره‌وه‌ و ببوونه‌ ئاریلی فه‌رمی ناوچه‌که‌.

* راست (straight) له‌ زمانی ئینگلییدا، جگه‌ له‌ مانا باوه‌که‌ی، ئاماژه‌یه‌ بۆ ئاراسته‌ی سیکیسی که‌سیک که‌ مه‌یلی سیکیسی ته‌نها بۆ ره‌گه‌زی به‌رامبه‌ر هه‌یه، واته‌ ژن بۆ پیاو و پیاو بۆ ژن.

Straight? No, Twisted

In the eighties, during the Iran–Iraq War, most people were searching for relatives who had gone missing in the army. My brother Azad was one of them. Iraqi television told only half the story. Likewise, Iranian television only showed their victories.

When you wanted to search for a missing brother or father, whether captive, injured, or missing for any other reason, you had to intercept Iranian TV signals, which was impossible using local antennae that were all made in a particular shape. So people started to construct their own antennae illegally in order to intercept the signals.

During that period I saw all kinds of twisted forms made from different materials. The funny thing is that when I went back after many years I found that one of those strange forms had made its way to become the only form of antenna that was mass produced. It became official.

پروقهی ئەم نمایشه، که هه‌رگیز پيشان نه‌دراوه، له سه‌ردانیكا بۆ ئەمنه سورکه که ئەنجامدراوه. له پروقه‌که‌دا له ئەمنه سورکه، هونه‌رمه‌ند سه‌مای پت (tap-dance) له سه‌ر ریتمی ده‌نگی دل‌ی خو‌ی ده‌کات، که له‌ریگای سه‌ماعه‌یه‌کی پزیشکبه‌وه گو‌ی ل‌ی ده‌گر‌یت. له‌گه‌ل زیادیوونی جو‌له‌کانی سه‌ماکه‌دا، خ‌یرایی پ‌یکان و تریه‌ی دل‌ هاوکاتیی له‌ده‌ست ده‌دن و به‌شیوه‌ی ل‌یدان و ل‌یدانه‌وه‌ی نه‌شاز دوای یه‌کتري ده‌که‌ون. ریتمی دل‌ه‌که، هونه‌رمه‌ند له چواردهری خو‌ی داده‌پر‌یت و فه‌زایه‌کی تاییه‌ت و شاراوه بۆ بیره‌کانی دروست ده‌کات. ره‌هه‌ندی خو‌به‌خو‌بوونی سه‌ماکه بوارده‌دات حاله‌تیکی نکو‌ل‌یکردن دروست ب‌یت که کاره‌ساته‌که وون ده‌کات له‌کاتیکیدا هیشتا هه‌ر له‌و شو‌ینه‌دایه‌ت.

له‌ریگه‌ی ته‌رکیز خستنه‌سه‌ر ره‌هه‌ندی ریتیمی جو‌له و ریتمه‌وه، کاره‌که ترازان‌یکی مانایی به‌ره‌مه‌دیته‌ی که بوار به‌تیرامان له‌کات و کاتیی بوون ده‌دات.

ئاماژه‌کردن به‌رۆژمیری مانگی بوار به‌جو‌ریکی دیکه له‌تیگه‌یشتن له‌کات تپه‌رین ده‌دات و ئەمه‌ش ده‌ب‌یته‌ بزو‌ینه‌ری گو‌رانکاریه‌ک له‌هه‌ستکردن به‌رووداوه‌کاندا. رۆژمیری مانگی پال به‌بینه‌روه‌ه ده‌ن‌یت که تیگه‌یشتنیکی لابه‌لا بۆ ئەو رووداوانه‌ی ئەمنه سورکه‌که دروستبکات که وه‌سف نا‌کر‌ین. له‌ریگه‌ی نامه‌رکه‌زیه‌تی ده‌رکه‌وتن و ئەگه‌ری ناره‌سه‌نبوونی به‌شداري هه‌ستوسۆزه‌وه، ئاماژه به‌رابردوو ده‌دات به‌لام هه‌رگیز ئاشکرای نا‌کات، به‌مشپوه‌یه فه‌زایه‌کی دژه‌گیرانه‌وه‌ی تیرامان فه‌راهه‌م ده‌کات.

وه‌ک هیوا که‌ی ده‌ل‌یت، «ئەم نمایشه توانای ئەوه‌ی هه‌یه‌ئه و فه‌زایه‌ بگو‌ر‌یت که تیايدا پيشان ده‌کر‌یت. ئەو ق‌یر‌زنه‌ی له‌ئەمانیا بۆ مانیف‌یستای ۷ تۆمارکرا زیاتر په‌یوه‌سته به‌و په‌یوه‌نده‌ی (communication) له‌گه‌ل ئاماده‌بوанда هه‌مه. ئەوه‌ی که له‌ئەمنه سورکه‌که نمایشکرا زۆر جیاوازه. هه‌رچه‌نده ق‌یدیۆه‌که ته‌نها پروقه‌که پيشان ده‌دات له‌به‌رئ‌وه‌ی کاره‌که هه‌رگیز نمایش نه‌کرا، ئاماده‌بووان له‌چوارچ‌یوه‌ی رووداوه‌ میژو‌وبیه‌کاندا خو‌یندنه‌وه بۆ کاره‌که ده‌که‌ن.»

The rehearsals for this unrealized dance performance took place during a visit to Amna Suraka (the Red Security Building) in Northern Iraq. This building complex used to be one of the infamous jails where Saddam Hussein detained political prisoners and today it hosts the Iraqi National Museum of War Crimes. The artist tap-dances in the buildings of Amna Suraka to the rhythm of his own heartbeat, which he follows by listening through a stethoscope. With the increasing intensity of the dance, the speed of his feet and that of his heart lose simultaneity and chase and run after one another in a discordant beat and counter-beat pulsation. The rhythm of the heart isolates the artist from his surroundings, thus creating a private and hidden space for his own thoughts. The ludic dimension of the dance allows for a state of denial that makes trauma absent while still being present in the place.

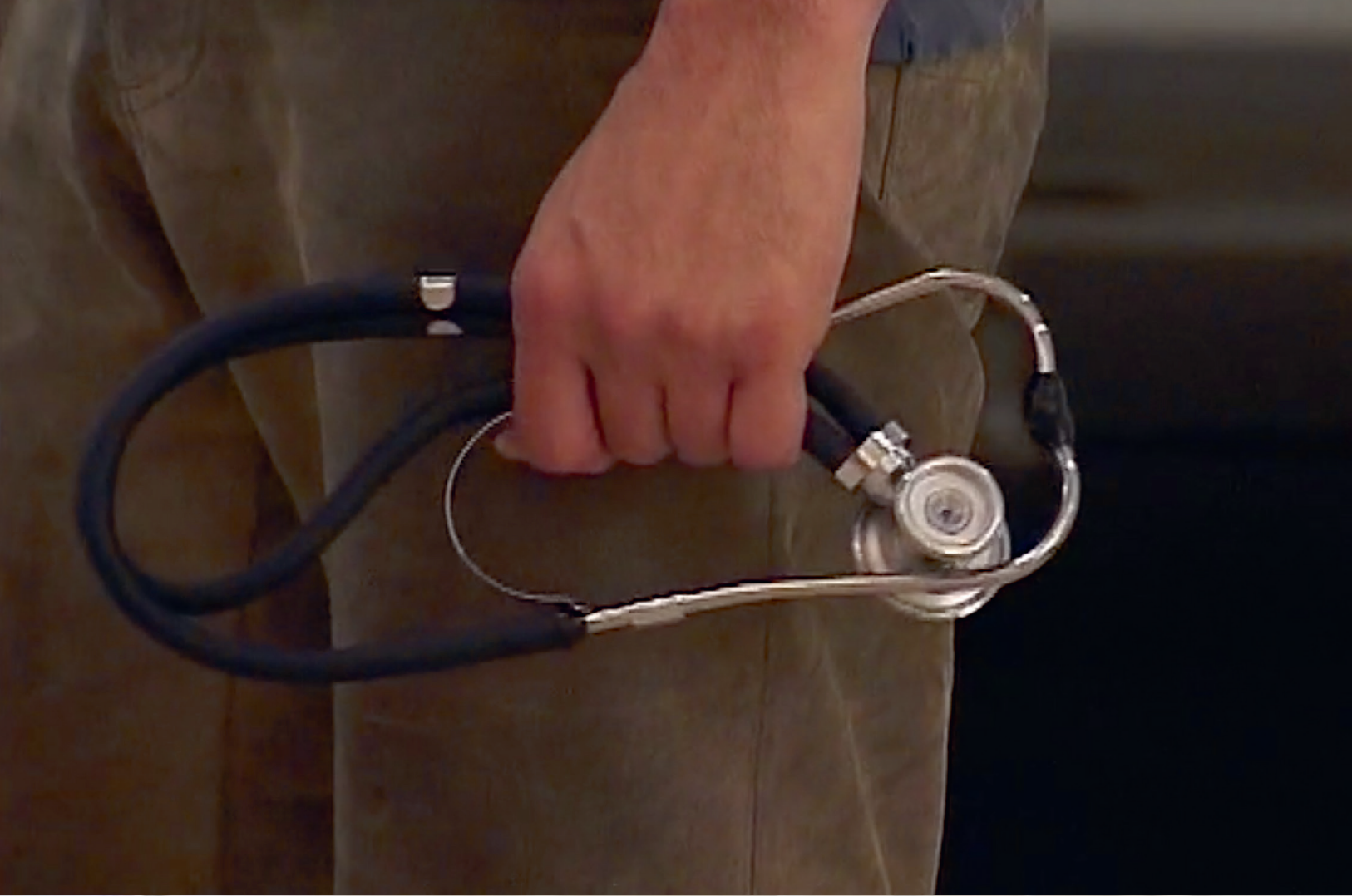
By focusing on the rhythmic dimension of the movement and the beat, *Moon Calendar* generates a semantic slippage that allows for a reflection on time and temporality. The reference to the lunar calendar opens to a different understanding of the passing of time and hence triggers a shift in the perception of the events. The piece leads the viewer to a lateral understanding of the unspoken events that happened in the Red Security Building. Through a decentralization of its prominence and the possible banality of the viewer's emotional engagement, *Moon Calendar* hints at the past but never reveals it, thus offering a counter-narrative space of reflection.

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









باوكم هه موو روژيک کاتژمير ٥٥ سهر به يانی له خه و هه لده ستا و به دهم شيعر وتنه وه وه
له موبه قه که مانه وه ده هات و ده چوو. ئيمه ش به دهنگی پي خه به رمان ده بوه وه.
سهره پاي ئه مه ش له شيعره فارسيه کانيشی تينه ده گه يشتين.
ناچار روژيکیان پرسيارمان ليکرد ئه و شيعرانه چيه که هه موو به يانیه ک به دهم خو ته وه
ده يانیته وه.

وتی، «ئه مانه شيعری حافزی شیرازین.»

منیش پيم وت، «بو فارسيش ئه زانی!»

«نا، فارسی تيناگه م.»

منیش لام سهير بوو.

ئینجا وتی، «به منالی که له حوجره بووم، مه لایه کمان هه بوو له ماوه ی ئه و چوار
ساله ی له وی بووین کتیبکی ته واوه تی شعیره کانی حافزی پی له بهرده کردین. پاشان
ده بوايه مانای شيعره کانی پی بوتینایه. ئيمه ی نه گهت ته نها گروپ بووین که فریای
فیربوونی مانای شيعره کان نه که وتووین چونکه پاش ئه وه ی هه موو کتیبه که مان له بهر کرد،
مه لاکه مرد. بویه له ناو هه موو قوتابيه کاند، گروپه که ی ئيمه ته نها گروپ بوو که هه موو
شيعره کانی له بهر بیت به بی ئه وه ی هيچ له ماناکه ی تیبگات.»

Years ago, I came to Europe by foot, walking through Iran, Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, and Germany. I belong to the mid-1990s immigrant generation who came from Iraqi Kurdistan. The journey took five months and two days. This long and often dangerous trip was an experience of space and time, in which I was destined for the unknown through the fracturing of spatial and cultural experience. I later built an object-sculpture out of prefabricated elements — a stick and motorbike mirrors — which became an adaptation tool for re-experiencing the city in a way that characterized this sense of fracture. By balancing this contraption on my nose I found my way through the city by looking at the reflection in the different mirrors.

The use of such a device made it possible to include things in the fragmented perception of the surrounding city. In this way, the transmutation of the historical meanings of the city is made possible. It is also an extension of my organs and senses. Here, I am dealing with the notion of balance as the activity that signals the will to comply within a given condition. The mirrors are not meant to only reflect an environment but to navigate it. I never get the full picture of the place through which I am strolling but the functionality of the device helps me to complete my journey. It is an attempt to see my fractured self from the vantage point of a hierarchical eye and from something that is external to my body. Longing to be part of my body rather than belonging to it, this self-made prosthetic is an extension of myself. Every reflection pulls this temperamental device in a certain direction. A subject has to adapt to this mood in order to keep the balance and continue walking.

The inherent lack of stability makes me penetrate other possibilities, or pre-images, before they become images. I don't have the luxury of gazing at these images as images. I am walking through spaces with which I am quite unfamiliar. They are scattered, fragmented, puzzled spaces; spaces with no overview. It is difficult to have a relationship to those spaces — only an affair. This is a non-belonging which makes me stick to it but not stuck in it. I am a swinging centre who doesn't know where it comes from any more because of amnesia; a centre who also doesn't know where it is heading to because of disorientation. One of the mirrors is showing me what is behind me, while another one is warning me of what is coming my way. The other ones are reflecting my surroundings, including myself. What you see in the moment of panic is a pre-image; an image yet to fully become.



Sadam Hussein used to call Iraqi Kurdistan "Allah's paradise on Earth". I started to understand the irony after 1988 when I was told by some of our relatives who survived the chemical attack in Halabja that the chemicals smelled like apple.

The video documents an intervention undertaken by the artist on April 17, 2011 in Sulaymaniyah, during one of the last days of the civil protest that lasted two months. The international media never properly covered the protest, which was ended brutally by the armed forces of the local government. The matter has been somewhat swept under the carpet, as if this protest was an unwanted one because it wasn't a revolution against officially anointed tyrants, like in other Middle Eastern countries, but rather a surge against (in theory) democratically elected politicians. In this protest there was a strong call for transparency, participation, and equal access to the country's wealth. This sentiment reaches across generations, professions, and cities, and seemed to produce an entirely new basis for the further development of a civil society in Kurdistan. The wave of protests started on February 17, 2011 in the Kurdish region of Iraq and continued for eight weeks at the cost of a minimum of ten deaths and four hundred injured in clashes between citizens and the militia.

The "Man with a Harmonica" theme by Ennio Morricone, from the movie *Once Upon a Time in the West*, which the artist previously used in his performance *With Jim White, Once Upon a Time in the West* (2011), is transformed here into a signal of protest, a call to go forth, and a song for the unexpressed. The film *Once Upon a Time in the West* conjures up the promise of freedom apparently associated with Western modernity and democracy. Hiwa K plays the harmonica, with Daroon Othman playing the guitar over megaphones. The day of the performance was the last day of the legal demonstration, which was subsequently prohibited and the stage from which the activists were addressing the people was burned. The artist came twice with the protesters from Saray Azadi (Freedom Square) towards the frontline, before and after gas attacks. The inhalation of tear gas through the harmonica internalizes the same process that the protestors were experiencing, but the work occurred within the protest and is not necessarily a work about the protest *per se*.

The title, *This Lemon Tastes of Apple*, refers to the use of gas against Kurdish people in a genocide attempt. When, in 1988, Saddam's forces were pouring suffocating gas into Halabja and other Kurdish settlements, the gas smelt like apple. The smell has since had a strong association in the political memory of the country. During the recent months of demonstrations, the people of Kurdistan were attacked with tear gas deployed by their own Kurdish regional government. To relieve the impact of the gas the protesters used lemon as an immediate detoxifying agent. The fruity smells connect the two ends of this twenty-three-year history. This work has intentionally not been translated into English; there are no subtitles to the film. The words of protest remain

in their own language and are not adapted to the rhetorical frames of protest elsewhere, which could be a dubious link to make. Through the image and the music the work brings the atmosphere of the moment. In not subtitling the film, the non-Arabic-speaking viewer is inevitably implicated in an alternative mode of involvement with the original event. Lacking the subtitles to understand the event, the viewer cannot easily compartmentalize the film. The assumption is often that the content of protests are the same but the event of participating is always different. The film operates in a communicational gap but does not expose a lack of communication.

This Lemon Tastes of Apple, 2011. HD & SD video, 16:9, colour, sound. 13.26 mins.
Courtesy of the artist, KOW, Berlin, and Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan – Lucca









له دوا سهردانماندا بۆ هه له بجه بۆ «پرۆژهی دایران»، کوریکم بینی به ته په دۆرئیکي ئاسکریمه وه که سهرتاپای به له زگهی یاریزانانی دووگۆلئی خوله کانی ئه وروپا داپۆشیوو. ئه م له زگانه ی له و ئاسکریمان ه کۆکردبو ه وه که ده فیرۆشتن. ئه مه ش ئه و کاته ی یاد هینامه وه که هه شت سال بووم و ده بوو ئیش بکه م. ئه وکاته، داوام له دایکم کرد دیناریکم باتی بۆ ئه وه ی سندوقئیکي ته په دۆر بکړم و دیناریکی تریش بۆ کړینی ئاسکریم به نیوه قیمه ت له کارگهی ئه رخه وان.

له جیاتی ئه وه ی وه ک منداله کانی تر سندوقه که پر ئاسکریمه که به جاده کانا بگئیرم، بیرم له وه کرده وه وا باشته بچه گۆره پانئیکي دوو گۆلئی و به یاریزانه کانی بفروشم، که هه میشه دوا ی جیمی یه که م زۆر تینویان ده بیئت. ئه مه به لامه وه باشته رین ریگه بوو بۆ ئه وه ی به زووترین کات چلووره کانم سهرف بکه م.

ئه وه نده ی نه برد چه که م فیکه ی لئیدا و جیمی یه که م ته واو بوو، یاریزانه کان به ره و ته په دۆره که م هاتن و ئاسکریمیان تیا نه هیشت. منیش هاوارم ئه کرد «ژماره ۵، تۆ چوار ئاسکریمت لایه. ژماره ۸، تۆ ۳ ئاسکریمت لایه، ژماره ۶...» ئیتر به مشیوه یه. زۆر دلَم خۆش بوو و به په رو شه وه چاوه رپی فیکه ی کۆتایی بووم بۆ ئه وه ی پاره که م بده نی. به لام نه مزانی یاریزانه کان تی شیرته کانیا ن داده که نن و ئیتر نازانم کئی کیه و کئی چه نه. دوا یی، ده ستم کرد به گریان و به به رد دوا بان که وتم، به لام نه مده زانی به رد بگرمه کئی. که به ده ستی به تاله وه چوومه وه ماله وه، دایکم وتی، «کورم، ئه مجاریان ئه بیئت یاریزانه کان به ده موچاوا بناسیته وه نه ک به ژماره.»

*Don't Shrink Me to the Size of a Bullet:
The Works of Hiwa K*

This book is published on the occasion of Hiwa K's reception of the Schering Stiftung Art Award 2016 and the artist's accompanying exhibition at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art as part of the prize. Hiwa K's works will be presented in a solo exhibition at S.M.A.K., Ghent, in 2018.

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Don't Panic

The time I saw my mother before my final farewell, I said, Mom, I am leaving for good, maybe I will not see you again. She said, Son, if death comes don't panic... it is just death

مه تۆقه

كاتبك بو جهوتهم جار ههولي ههلهاتتمدا، نه مدهزاني به سه لامه تي نه گه مه نه ورويا
يان له وريگا نه مرم بهس دايكم شتيكي يتونم ئيسناش له يادمه: كورم، نه گهر مردن هانه
ریت لئی مه تۆقه، مردن مردنه و لنگه فرتي ناويست.