

Hussain Muttar

Photographer, Writer



ساحة التحرير

١٩٨٠-٢٠٢٢

يعتبر نصب الحرية في ساحة التحرير الذي صممه الفنان العراقي جواد سليم، روح الشعب العراقي وأحد أهم رموز العراق، تم افتتاحه في تموز ١٩٦١. لسوء الحظ، توفي جواد سليم قبل الافتتاح بضعة أشهر فقط بسبب توبة قلبية مفاجئة وأكمل العمل كل من زوجته لورنا سليم ونسيده محمد عني حكمت، إنكرواد سليم.

نخبة قبة لسترد ثورة ١٤ تموز ١٩٥٨ التي أسقطت النظام الملكي العراقي وأعلنت جمهورية العراق، وهو عمل فني يعبر عن الكثير من الألم والمعاناة في التاريخ العراقي.

يتكون تمثال الحرية، الذي يبلغ ارتفاعه ٨ أمتار، من ١٤ منحوتة برونزية منقوشة مثبتة على قاعدة بنمط عملاقة يبلغ عرضها ٥٠ مترًا من تصميم المعماري رفعت الجادري. قام جواد سليم في الأصل بتصميم النصب التذكاري على مستوى سطح الأرض، ولكن، أصغر مهندس المشروع المعماري رفعت الجادري على رفحه ليمدو أكثر تذكارية ورمزية.



ساحة الخلافي

١٩٨٥-٢٠٢٢

التقطت الصورة لساحة الخلافي عام ١٩٨٥ ويمكن رؤية جامع الخلافي وهو أحد أهم المساجد القديمة في بغداد ومبنى أمانة بغداد خلفه والذي صممه المهندس المعماري العراقي (هشام منير) عام ١٩٧٨. كان مبنى الأمانة بالنسبة لهشام منير يمثل منحوتة أكثر من كونه مبنى.

وقد صممه بشكل مكعب مرتفع محاط بأقواس مثلثة الشكل من جميع الجهات وهذا النوع من الأقواس يعتبر هوية رمزية وضرورية للعراق، وأضاف الفناء في وسط البناية والمبنى محاط بالمساحات الخضراء من جميع الجهات، وهذا في الواقع يعد انسجام حقيقي باستخدام العناصر المحلية في التصميم ورمز حقيقي لمدينة بغداد.

Hussain Muttar, b. in Baghdad 1998, graduated as a civil engineer from the Baghdad University in 2021. He currently works as a freelance writer and translator. Since 2017 he follows his passion to city landscape photography and storytelling. His photographs capture the urban development of the city of Baghdad in the last 100 years, investigate the architect's contribution in the past, both international and Iraqi architects, and question the current urban planning of the city. His writings take readers on an imaginary journey. His short novels are both fantastic and based on Iraqi natural history.

Contact

hussainmuttar@gmail.com

+964 774 420 8920

Instagram: [hussain_a_muttar](https://www.instagram.com/hussain_a_muttar)

الحارس الاول
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
٥٠/١١/٢٠٢٢
الخباب
م هلايين

DAR DUR

Found object
2022

DAR DUR is addressing the basic human right of education. The two words Dar Dur are used to teach children spelling and reading in the first grade of elementary school. Hussain Muttar presented a school board prepared to take any lesson with the remark by the teacher how many of the pupils are missing: 3 Million.

3 Million is a symbolic number representing school-aged Iraqi children out of school. According to UNICEF the number is close to 3,2 million. According to the Ministry of Education the exact number cannot be confirmed as Iraq does not have conducted a census yet.



5. BAGHDAD WALK, Al Rasheed Street, 2022

1000 STORIES AND A STORY - Vol. 2



شارع الرشيد
1930-1940

شارع الرشيد من أشهر شوارع الكويت القديمة، حيث كان يمتد من سوق الخضار حتى سوق السمك. كان الشارع مزدهراً بالحكايا والمساكن المبنية من الطين والبنتون، وكان يمتد على طول البحر. كان الشارع يمتد من سوق الخضار حتى سوق السمك، وكان يمتد على طول البحر. كان الشارع يمتد من سوق الخضار حتى سوق السمك، وكان يمتد على طول البحر.



شارع القشة
1930-1940

شارع القشة من أشهر شوارع الكويت القديمة، حيث كان يمتد من سوق الخضار حتى سوق السمك. كان الشارع مزدهراً بالحكايا والمساكن المبنية من الطين والبنتون، وكان يمتد على طول البحر. كان الشارع يمتد من سوق الخضار حتى سوق السمك، وكان يمتد على طول البحر.



ساحة كهمانة
1930-1940

ساحة كهمانة من أشهر ساحات الكويت القديمة، حيث كانت تسمى ساحة كهمانة. كانت الساحة مزدهراً بالحكايا والمساكن المبنية من الطين والبنتون، وكانت تسمى ساحة كهمانة. كانت الساحة مزدهراً بالحكايا والمساكن المبنية من الطين والبنتون، وكانت تسمى ساحة كهمانة.

1000 STORIES
AND A STORY
Hussein Yalcar

1000 STORIES AND A STORY - VOL. 2

Poster
2022

"1000 STORIES AND A STORY" is a photo series by Hussain Muttar comparing architectural cityscape and sights in Baghdad as a contrasting juxtaposition of the past and today. He selects one photo from the past and take the same photo with the same angle and perspective of today. The first edition of the series was published as a book in 2018. In this year's festival, he presents an extension of his photo series showing changes in Alawi Square, Al Koshla Street, Al Rasheed Street, Al Khilani Square, Al Tahrir Square and Al Kahramane Square. Each of the six photo pairs are presented with a description giving background information.



8. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Iraqi Artists Syndicate, 2022

BAGHDAD WALK IN BERLIN

Group Exhibition

23.06.-26.06.2022

Salon am Moritzplatz, Berlin

BAGHDAD WALK is an annual group exhibitions series which takes place in public spaces across the city of Baghdad, since 2018.

The exhibition BAGHDAD WALK IN BERLIN revealed how the participating artists developed artistic strategies and narratives in Baghdad's public space and presented selected works from the last four editions. The exhibition showcased the book "1000 STORIES AND A STORY" and "NATOR" by Hussain Muttar



THIS PICTURE WOULD REMAIN AS A SOUVENIR.
FROM AN UNKNOWN PERSON, WHO CONSIDERS YOU AS A SIBLING.
A SON OF YOUR CITY AND HOMELAND, A PERSON EAGER TO SHOW YOU HOW BEAUTIFUL OUR HOME IS.
AND HOW IT DESERVES ALL OUR SWEAT AND TOIL.

IN ORDER TO TAKE THIS PICTURE, I ASCENDED THE TOP OF A BUILDING.
AIDED BY THE HELP OF A ONE-CONVERSATION ACQUAINTANCE.
THE BUILDING HAS BEEN CLOSED DOWN FOR A LONG TIME.
HE SAID: GO UP AND TAKE YOUR PICTURE.
SHOW IT TO EVERYBODY.

AFTER YOU SEE THIS PICTURE, KEEP IT IN YOUR MIND.
EVERY TIME YOU SUFFER FROM TRAFFIC OR HIGH TEMPERATURES OR ELECTRICITY CUTS.
THIS IS YOUR HOME, AND SOMEDAY ALL THE STRANGERS WILL STEP OUT.
AND WE WILL REBUILD IT TOGETHER.

WHEN THEY BUILD HAIFA STREET, THEY BUILD IT TO SUIT YOU.
EVERY PART OF IT, IS YOUR HOME.
ALL ITS ARCHES EMBRACE YOU.
JUST LIKE THE REST OF BAGHDAD.
DO NOT HATE YOUR CITY AND HOME. MAKE IT WORTH LIVING IN.

ALL OF US, DREAMERS OF BAGHDAD.
WE CARRY A LOT OF DREAMING.
AS YOU READ THIS MESSAGE, I AM NEAR YOU IN THE MANSOUR DISTRICT IN OLD KARKH.
A PERSON KNOWN AS AL HALLAJ, LIES IN PEACE. HE DESCRIBED DREAMS SAYING:
"A DREAM IS THE EMBRYO OF REALITY."

IN IRAQ, EVERY BUILDING IS A STORY.
ISHTAR GATE, ZIGGURAT OF UR, AL MUSTANSIRIYA SCHOOL, SAMARRA MALWIYA,
THE MARTYR'S MONUMENT AND HAIFA STREET.
WRITE YOUR OWN STORY, RIGHT HERE.
EVEN IF IT HAD BECOME HELL.
THE STORIES WRITTEN HERE ARE IMMORTAL.

Poster of the project NATOR
2022

ANKAA



ANKAA

Ceramics on palm leaves
2021

'Ankaa' is the Arabic word for firebird, which is a mythical Arabian creature that resembles a bird that rises from ashes of the desert and once disappeared in the horizon of the sunset. The work ANKAA shows ceramic pieces collected from the dome of Al Haj Bunnia Mosque, which is currently under reconstruction. Al Haj Bunnia Mosque was designed by the Iraqi pioneer architect Kahtan Al Madfaai and built in 1970. In 2021 the mosque is being renovated and the traditional ceramics of the dome got removed.

Hussain Muttar collected parts of the 51 years old ceramics in order to save Iraqi cultural heritage. He presented his collection on a carpet made out of branches of palm trees, which stands for another symbol of Iraqi cultural heritage rooted back in the Sumerian era. The carpet was placed in the lake showing Al Haj Bunnia Mosque in the horizon. Like the firebird which rises from ashes to disappear in the horizon, ANKAA rises from trash to swim back to its origin in the horizon.



7. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Al Zawraa Park, 2021

JAFFAR & MAAMOUN



JAFFAR & MAAMOUN

Short Novel

Release

2021

JAFFAR & MAAMOUN is a short novel by Hussain Muttar telling the story of four friends: Jaffar and Maamoun, Eva and Maryam. The four were born in 1998 in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Marouf in Al Karkh (western part of Baghdad). The four friends try to simply play soccer in their usual streets in their neighbourhood. But what stands in their way of doing so are their families, the residents and certain lobby groups. By using the boardgame Tawli, they undergo together a journey throughout the history of Iraq to discover similarities to their present situation.

Will the four be able to overcome borders and play soccer? Or will they look somewhere else far from their neighbourhood and Baghdad? How will the four use the board game "Tawli" to their advantage in their mission?



7. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Al Zawraa Park, 2021



ORBIT

ORBIT

Photographs
2021

“The focal point of your sight, or the focal point of attention, is always at the center and we orbit around it, for that reason the center should be always very special.” – Hussain Muttar

ORBIT by Hussain Muttar is a photo series which captures the dome of the train station at a 360° angle. For the artist, the dome should be the centre of attention to the viewer. Can the viewer see the dome of all 360 degrees? Did the architect succeed in making the center of the building work to its cause?



4. BAGHDAD WALK, Baghdad International Train Station, 2021



NATOR



NATOR

Series of postcards
2020

NATOR is a postcard with a landscape photo by Hussain Muttar showing the horizon of one of Haifa Streets residential building complex, which was part of the Haifa Development Plan constructed between 1981 and 1985. In a limited edition of 30, he presented different messages to visitors on the back of each postcard.



3. BAGHDAD WALK, Haifa Street, 2020

NATOR



MUALAKA



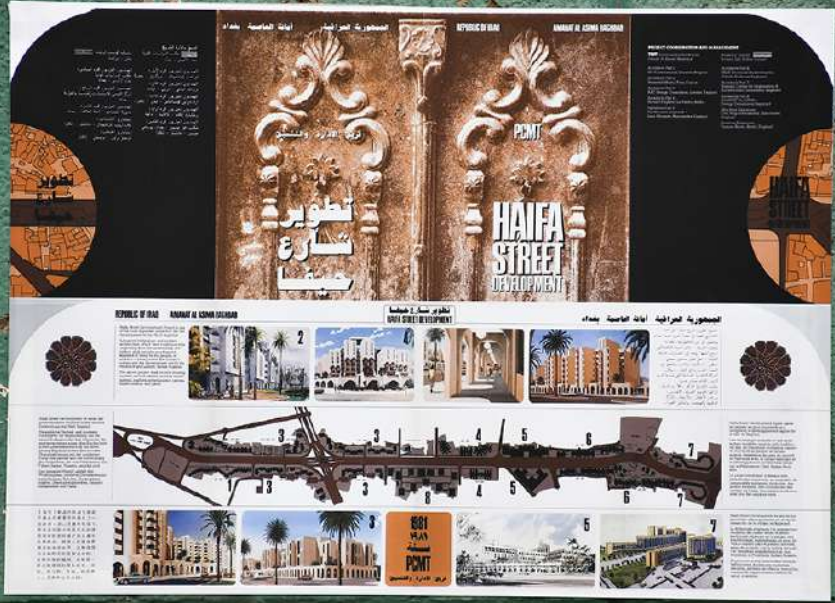
MUALAKA

Booklet, research project
2020

MUALAKA is a research project by Hussain Muttar introducing the Haifa Street Development Plan, which was built from 1981 to 1985 and commissioned by Amanat Al Assima, Baghdad's municipal administration. He presented a poster introducing the Haifa Development Plan in its eight phases. An accompanying booklet includes materials published by Amanat Al Assima in 1985, describing the six completed phases of the project with site plans, colour photographs, and programme details, as well as a pamphlet outlining the preliminary design strategies and planning approach to the comprehensive redevelopment of the Al Karkh neighbourhood, prepared by Alousi Associates Technical Studies.

3. BAGHDAD WALK, Haifa Street, 2020





MUALAKA

CHARAKCHI



CHARAKCHI

Intervention, hanging posters
2019

Two posters were installed on the Al Jumhuriya Pedestrian Bridge. They blended in with the usual advertisements and political poster campaigns. One of the posters was an image taken from a newspaper archive depicting an Iraqi listening to a transistor radio on the Al Jumhuriya Pedestrian Bridge. It dates back to around 2003, when the medium wave was used for US propaganda radio broadcasting in Iraq, and Iraqi radio stations like Radio Tikrit were a CIA source of 'black propaganda', which disseminated pro-American information but were supposedly supporters of Saddam Hussein. The other poster was very similar, showing a present-day Iraqi checking the latest news on his Twitter account.



2. BAGHDAD WALK, Shorja Market, 2019

CHARAKCHI

Intervention, hanging posters
2019

The title of the public intervention by Hussain Muttar is Charakchi, an old Baghdadi word of Turkish origin that means 'night guard'. The night guard used to walk in the small alleys dragging his rifle along, making a 'charkh' sound as it scratched the ground. The sound made people feel safe, knowing the guard was on duty. The charakchi has always been part of the neighbourhood and known by the people. But what happens if one can't be sure who he is?

Everything changes when the night guard is thousands of miles away, if you can't even see or talk to him, if it is something you can't even mention, if you don't end your sentence with 'god bless him'. Is it time to leave the radio and the mobile phone, the propaganda and fake news, and to pull the curtain that separates us from the ones who pretend to be the charakchi, once and for all?

2. BAGHDAD WALK, Shorja Market, 2019



CHARAKCHI



POSTCARDS FROM BAGHDAD



POSTCARDS FROM BAGHDAD

Booklet

Collaboration with the German Vincent Haiges
2019

POSTCARDS FROM BAGHDAD is a photo-booklet, where the German photographer Vincent Haiges portrayed people in six places in Baghdad as postcards, which were neglected and forgotten. The Iraqi Hussain Muttar, ambitious to cityscape photography, took from each of these places a cityscape photograph and add a description about the place.

5. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Abu Nawas Theater, 2019

Suq Al Ghazil

Suq Al Ghazil located southern by the side of Khulafa Mosque in Khulafa Street is one of Baghdad's most popular and oldest markets. The market's name comes from Ghazil & Suwf (wool & yarn), from cotton sellers, who first populated the area until it became a market for animals of all kinds during the 90s.

The market used to be in the small alleys that come from Al Dahana neighbourhood and ended near the back surface of Khulafa Mosque. In the last three decades Suq Al Ghazil expanded and occupied the square in Khulafa Street southern of the Khulafa Mosque.

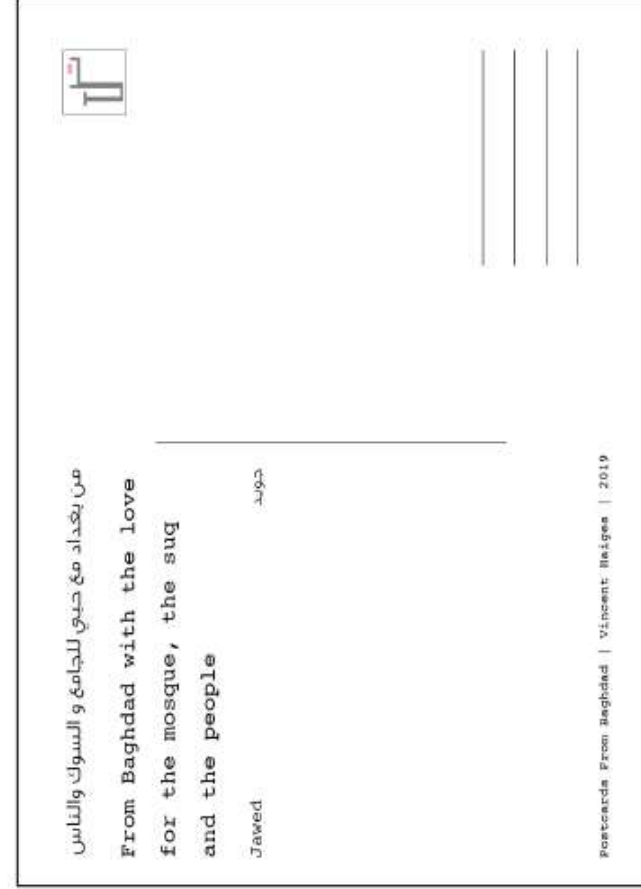
Al Khulafa Mosque with the Suq Al Ghazil Minaret was constructed between 902 and 908 by the Abbasid Caliph Ali Al Muqtafi. In 1957, through the extension of the business street Al Khulafa, which cut a cross Al Shorja Bazaar, the mosque was demolished and reconstructed with a design by Mohammed Makia. The Suq Al Ghazil Minaret is the oldest minaret in Baghdad, the only minaret in Iraq with a twelve-sided base and exhibits elaborate arabesque-carved brickwork and geometric patterns.

30



31

POSTCARDS FROM BAGHDAD





AAKD

Arch sculpture
2019

„Our MAHALA (Arabic word for neighbourhood) owns an a'akd. Everything in it is from our remains. Its colour refers by the differences of our tongues and origins. The future somehow hides behind and sees in us hope and pain.“ Hussain Muttar

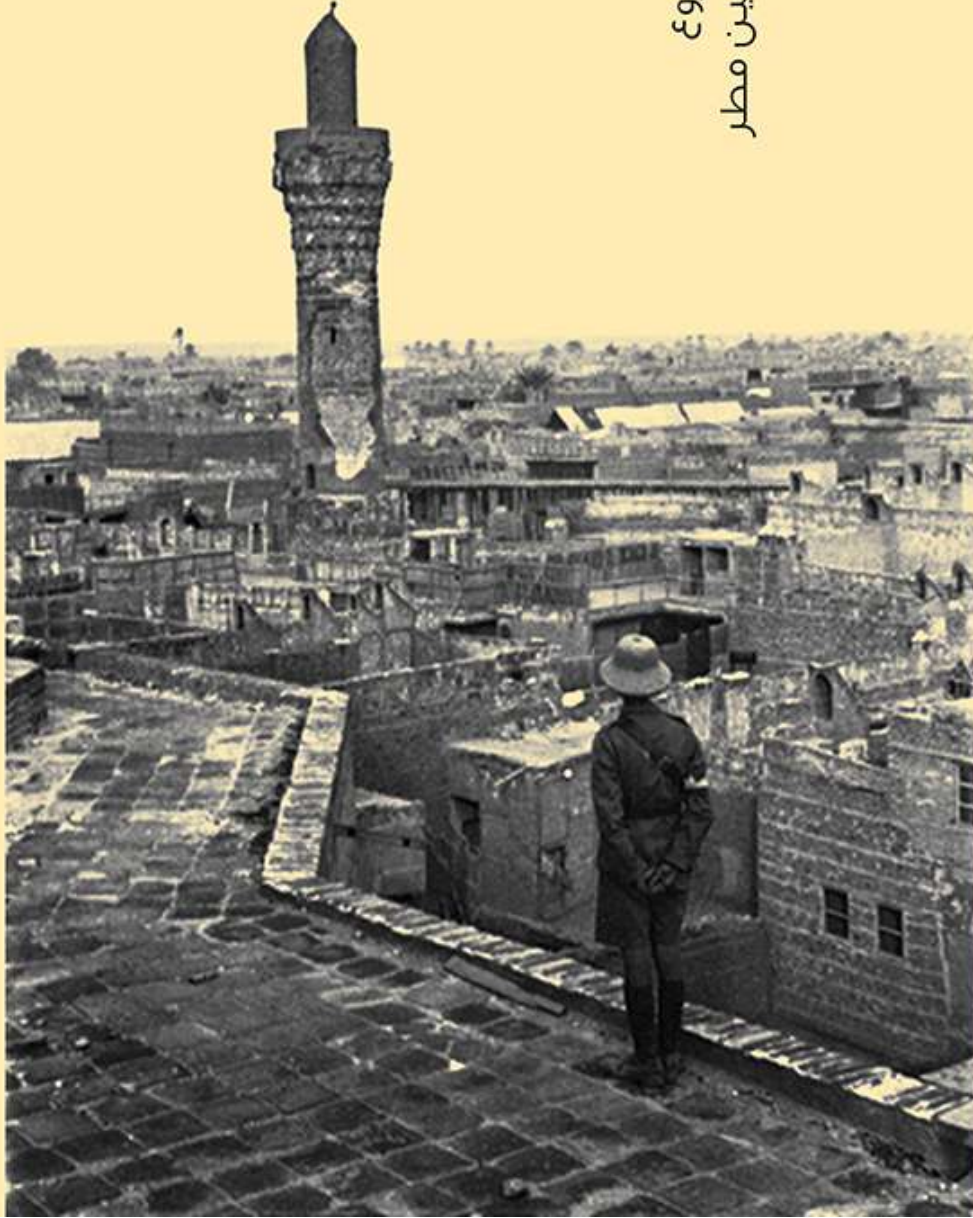
Hussain Muttar presented a self-build arch in TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival 2019. It is part of his researches about the architectural feature of arches and how they were built in the past.



5. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Abu Nawas Theater, 2019

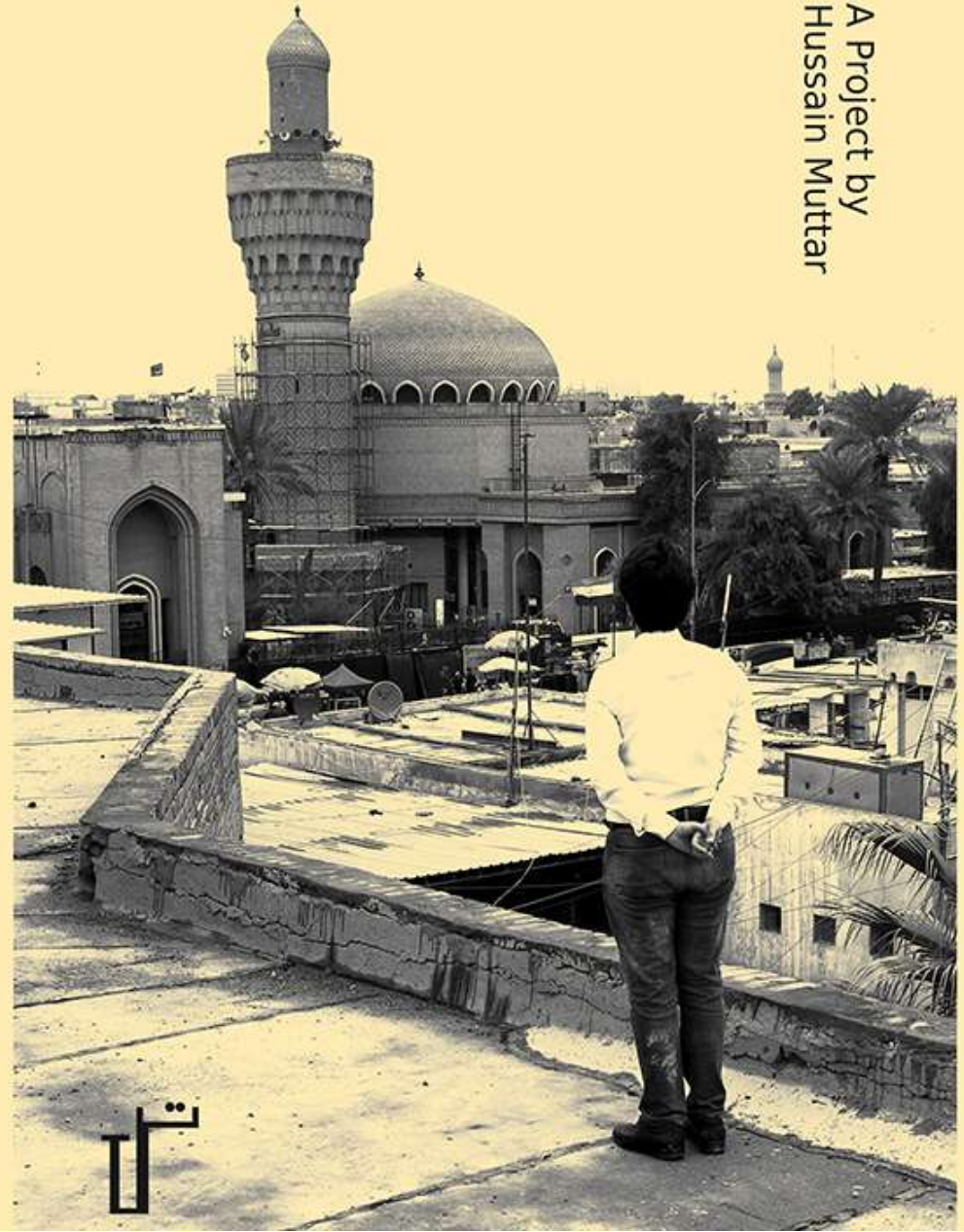
1000 STORIES AND A STORY

**الف قصة
و قصة**
لمشروع
لحسين مطر



**1000 STORIES
AND A STORY**

A Project by
Hussain Muttar



1000 STORIES AND A STORY

Booklet
2018

Hussain Muttar's photo collection "1000 STORIES AND A STORY" shows 10 and 1 comparisons of architectural landscapes and sights in Baghdad as a contrasting juxtaposition of the past and today. He selected one photo from the past and took the same photo with almost the same angles and perspective from today.

First presented at TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival 2018 he hung in a second step 20 big-size printings on the facade of 20 buildings in Al Rasheed Street, on the occasion of BAGHDAD WALK, a group exhibition in public space.

Hussain Muttar, ambitious to architecture, demonstrates with his photo collection the interaction of humans and architecture.

Hayder Khana Mosque, Al Rasheed Street, Rusafa



Hayder Khana Mosque, 1932

Situated in Al Rasheed Street opposite to Mutanabbi Street the mosque was originally built by and attributed to Hayder Pasha Jalabi, who was buried in the same place, in 1819. Hayder Khana literally means Hayder's Place. The mosque is considered one of the finest examples of the Ottoman design in Baghdad. The photo shows the azan caller Mahmoud Al Nadeem.

28



Hayder Khana Mosque, 2018

During the decades of the last century, beginning with the 20s, the mosque was used as an assembly for revolutionaries or opposition supporters. Nowadays it collects people from the neighborhood and all over Baghdad mainly on Friday. Since 2014 the mosque remains under reconstruction. The photo shows the azan caller Abd Alkadir.

29

I met the azan caller of the mosque Abd Alkadir in 2017. Abd Alkadir preferred that I explain him my project idea on top of the mosque, near the dome. We were sitting in the footsteps of Mahmoud Al Nadeem like in 1932. "These iron bars suddenly became like prison bars for me. I can not feel that I am at home anymore," he said, lifting up his head. Abd Alkadir is concerned about the execution of the building's maintenance and reconstruction. The original ceramics were removed and snored up in the dustbin of history. When I realised this, and with the agreement of Abd Alkadir, I could not help but saving a few of the remaining pieces.

30



31

1000 STORIES AND A STORY



1000 STORIES AND A STORY

Intervention, hanging poster
2018

The photo collection 1000 STORIES AND A STORY shows 10 comparisons of architectural landscapes and sights in Baghdad as a contrasting juxtaposition of the past and today. He selected one photo from the past and took a photo from the same location with almost the same angle and perspective.

First presented at TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival 2018 he hung in a second step 20 big-size printings on the storefront of 20 buildings in Al Rasheed Street from Zinek Bridge until Midan Square. Hussain Muttar, ambitious to architecture, demonstrates with his photo collection the interaction of humans and architecture.

For BAGHDAD WALK he chose specifically Al Rasheed Street to underline, how architecturally and historically valuable treasures dwindle away through human missuse.



1. BAGHDAD WALK, Al Rasheed Street, 2018

1000 STORIES AND A STORY



1000 STORIES AND A STORY



1000 STORIES AND A STORY

Photo-Installation

2018

Baghdad, the city of thousand night and a night is also the city of thousand arches and an arch. Since more than thousand years ago and until these days, the Baghdadian architecture represents the jewel of the east.

Hussain Muttar's photo-installation shows a collection of architectural landscapes and sights as a contrasting juxtaposition of the past and today.



3. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Bait Tarkib, 2018

1000 STORIES AND A STORY



o.T.
Photograph
2017

In 2017, German artist Klaus Killisch and US poet Robert Fitterman - both founding members of the art collective Collective Task - collaborated with about a dozen of Iraqi artists. The artists from Baghdad chose the task: **MAKE MUSIC WITH YOUR OWN TOOLS!** As is the guideline with Collective Task, they had one month to complete their responds.

