

**Muhaned Taha**  
Visual Artist



Muhaned Taha, b. in Baghdad 1991, graduated from the visual art department at the College of Fine Art, Baghdad University in 2016. Since 2017, he is a member of the artist collective TARKIB and is since then one of the active members. He attended all activities of TARKIB as both, an artist and a coordinator.

Muhanad Taha is a painter and specialised in big-size murals. Since 2017, he works in conceptual art. Since 2020, he devoted himself to environmental art presented as performance or installation. He is mainly addressing subjects reflecting the symbiosis between nature and human.

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# CHANNELS



## CHANNELS

Video-Art  
2023

CHANNEL by the environmental artist Muhaned Taha is a video art addressing Iraq's air pollution threat. According to IQAir World Air Quality Report 2022, Iraq ranked the second most polluted country in the world. The average PM2.5 concentration was 16 times higher than the World Health Organization (WHO) annual air quality guideline value. Iraq has another stamp: unhealthy.

The poor air quality is the result of vehicle emissions, war-induced pollution, usage of generators, and fires from oil and gas refineries, to mention only a few. But in fact, the main cause of air pollution is the people themselves.



9. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Muntada Al Masrah, 2023

## CHANNELS

Video-Art  
2023

Muhaned Taha presented five videos in old televisions, assembled as a garbage mountain. Each video talked about the effect of humankind and nature on air from the perspective of the nature.

Visitors could see breathing mouths, industrial influences, wars worldwide, a forecast for the future and natural events which all together have an influence on climate change.



9. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Muntada Al Masrah, 2023

**CHANNELS**



# THREE TEACHERS

Performance  
2022

Learning Quality is beside access to education one of the challenges in education in Iraq. There is a law, but there are circumstances around us, that these laws cannot operate in the appropriate way.

The work "THREE TEACHERS" consisted of three parts: a text, a photo and a life sculpture. The text described seven features of what a teacher should be. The photo represented the ideal teacher, recognizable by the brooch the teacher is wearing on his clothes. The brooch is a symbol for learning quality, which is missing on the life-sculpture.



5. BAGHDAD WALK, Al Rasheed Street, 2022

# THREE TEACHERS

Performance  
2022

Muhaned Taha is addressing the grievances in the educational system in Iraq. According to UNICEF: "The recent growth in the total number of teachers, the number and share of qualified teachers in Iraq has decreased at all educational levels, with the exception of pre-school." For him, a good school education is an essential part of human right and the flourishing of a society.

For his work THREE TEACHERS Muhaned Taha got inspired by Joseph Kosuth's installation "One and Three Chairs" from 1965. In this work Joseph Kosuth represented one chair three ways: as a manufactured chair, as a photograph, and as a copy of a dictionary entry for the word "chair".



5. BAGHDAD WALK, Al Rasheed Street, 2022

**SPOT**



## **SPOT**

Room-Installation  
2022

"SPOT" is a room filled with sand taken from the river bench of the Tigris nearby. Muhaned Taha is devoted to environmental art. Sand for him is the expression of rest. He found the river bench unexploited, a beautiful place with harmonic weather. The river bench which was once in 2019 used by young people as a beach and a place for leisure time activities is nowadays a place where the sand is exploited and used for commercial doings. Therefore, he transformed a room into a natural place for rest full of sands. A specific light provides the coherent weather he wants to have in terms of color, air, time and place. He created a space to interact with sand and rest.



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

**SPOT**



## 12 – SOLOEXHIBITION



# 12

Soloexhibition

07.07. - 14.07.2022

Bait Tarkib

In his first soloexhibition he presented 12 emotions and feelings, 11 as exhibits and 1 piece which was created by the audience. He was working on the subject of expressions, how emotions and feelings can be expressed in an artistic way by using and combining different technics. One part presented classical ink drawings. The other part was combining printing, drawings with light effects.





## **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. Muhaned Taha presented his works "ANNOYING POINT", "HAWASSEM" and "1915".





1915  
View of a performance  
2022



HAWASSEM  
Photographs overpainted  
2022



ANOYING POINT  
Maquette  
2022



1915  
Performance  
Kottbusser Tor, Berlin  
2022

ECC



## ECG

Performance  
2021

An electrocardiogram (ECG) tests your heart's rhythm and electrical activity. Sensors attached to the skin detect the signals produced by your heart each time it beats. ECG by Muhaned Taha is a performance that is done by communicating and taking spiritual energy from nature, through relaxation on the grass. He caved the ECG device into the grass ground and placed the sensors on his body. While meditating with the nature visitors could follow his heart rate indicator, breathing rate and body temperature and were invited to join him. The performance ECG is a sensory meditation.



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

**FORGOTTEN WALL**



# **FORGOTTEN WALL**

Augmented Reality Sculpture  
2021

A wall protects and secures, and what is meant here is morality, ethics and respect. These central to Iraqi culture values have faded away in recent years with the growing distance between the old and the new generation. Elderly people are disappearing with their experience, but how can we keep and protect the beautiful part of their values?

Walls have two sides and are often considered as a symbol of division. The Forgotten Wall by Muhaned Taha is representing the opposite: solidarity and social cohesion. The bricks stand for individuals that live together and care for each other. Passing away, they don't fall down, but fly to heaven. In Taha's AR animation bricks lift up and leave irreversible gaps in the social wall that questions the future of traditions and values.



1. AR OPEN BAGHDAD, 2021

1915



**1915**

Performance  
2021

A train is a series of connected wagons that run along a railway track to transport people or freight from one place to another, usually in a peaceful manner. But not always. How to address if state authorities misuse the system?

The title "1915" marks the year, when the Ottoman Empire started the genocide against Armenian people during World War I. The performance addressed the fact that the Baghdad railway was used by the authorities as a transportation system to deport people to death. By using a grinder he minced different kind of groceries, spilling onto a plate on which the following historical events were written down:



4. BAGHDAD WALK, Baghdad International Train Station, 2021

1915: „The Bloody Baghdad Train“ - execution of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during world war 1

1959: „The Winter Train“ - execution of opponents during 1959 Mosul Uprising, a coup by Arab nationalists in Mosul to depose Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul Karim Qasim

1963: „The Death Train To Samawa“ - transportation of opponents during the 1963 Ramadan Revolution, a military coup by the Baath Party which overthrew Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul Karim Qasim



**INHALATION**



# INHALATION

Room-Installation | Light  
2020

Artist statement:

"The idea was to restore the memory of inhaling fresh air, especially after the pollution in which human beings currently live." Muhaned Taha

INHALATION is a room-installation, a white box with a grass-strewn floor. On the edges are plants, the ceiling is laminated. Smoke covers the green scene. The smoke is not the environmental pollution smoke. The smoke is the veil of repression, the veil of unconscious oblivion, the veil of oppression.

There is beauty, but you do not see it anymore because there are powers that influence your reception, and your way of seeing things, even managing your own life.

6. TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Online, 2020



**HAWASSEM**



# HAWASSEM

Photographs overpainted  
2020

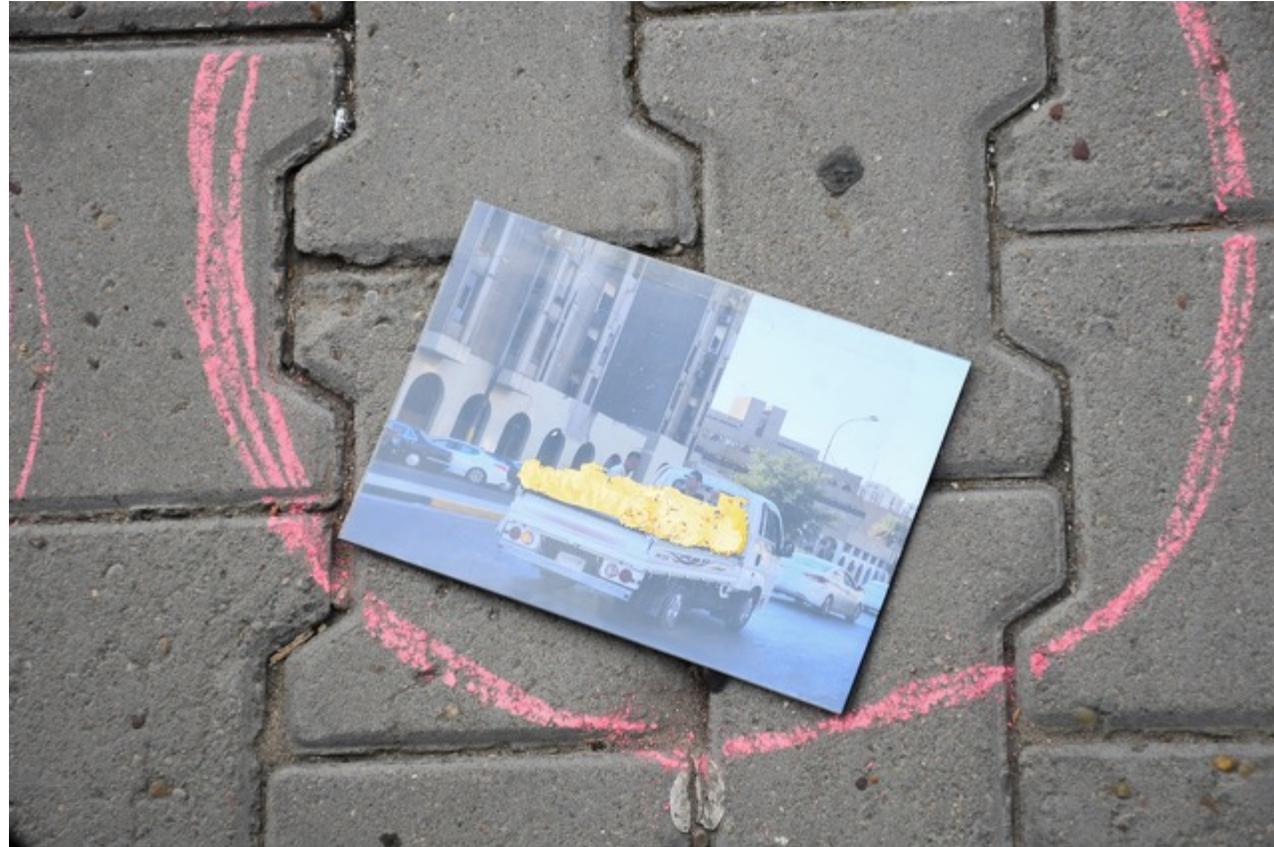
Artist statement:

"Most people are ready to commit a crime, to be somehow criminal, if there is instability in the country, if a governing authority is missing."

HAWASSEM depicts events of 2003, when governmental buildings were looted. The word 'hawassem' describes this phenomenon of looting and pillaging governmental buildings.

For his presentation HAWASSEM, Muhaned Taha took 14 photos of present-day Haifa Street and added drawings of items that were likely stolen in the 2003 lootings. He questions people's addiction to and readiness to commit a crime, and to harm the country's treasures instead of protecting them. He placed his artwork on the centre strip of Haifa Street and arranged the photos in two rows. One row depicts the buildings on the left side of Haifa Street, the other row those on the right side.

3. BAGHDAD WALK, Haifa Street, 2020





**HAWASSEM**



**HAWASSEM**



**HAWASSEM**



# ANNOYING POINT



## **ANNOYING POINT**

Maquette  
2019

Muhaned Taha's maquette for Annoying Point assembled collected objects and materials used in checkpoints and transformed them into a sculpture. Attached to a pole, the objects resembled a cartoonist's explosion of a checkpoint frozen in mid-air. Checkpoints are part of an 'annoying' collective memory for Iraqis, especially for those who lived in the country during the sectarian conflict between 2006 and 2009, when militia groups used to set up fake checkpoints, wearing Iraqi Forces uniforms. They stopped people, kidnapped people, robbed and even killed people. Even today, the purpose of the checkpoints is thought to grant safety and to secure the neighbourhoods. Yet they are symbols of distress; they cause discomfort, they cause street congestion – they are a constant reminder that peace and security have not arrived. The artist visualized the wish to make the checkpoints disappear, to render them unnecessary, and to imagine a city without checkpoints, without the troubles.

The sculpture was meant to be installed along the route of the Baghdad Walk, but it was impossible to realize the intervention for security reasons.



2. BAGHDAD WALK, 2019

# AL SIR

Lettered light panel, water, glass  
2019



## Artist statement:

There are sacred texts that show mercy and love in heavenly books, which explain the importance of humanity in all religions.

FORB - Group Exhibition, Bait Tarkib, 2019

**CHOOSE**



# CHOOSE

Mural  
2019

Artist statement:

"There are a lot of hard decisions in life. One of the hardest choice is that we leave our parents and do not give them their deserved respect and love."



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

**CHOOSE**



# HOW LONG



## HOW LONG

Plexiglas cylinder, oil on canvas  
2018

Muhaned Taha's installation consisted of a two-metre-high funnel filled with stones and three paintings arranged as a triangle. The paintings were crowded with the shape of a brain, tied to a bundle of white balloons. In *HOW LONG* he talks about the connection between dream and reality. The three paintings resemble different dreams, with scenes oscillating between sweet dreams and nightmares. He placed his installation in a triangle position, connected to other significant landmarks nearby.



1. *BAGHDAD WALK, Kahramane Square, 2018*

**HOW LONG**



**ROUTINE**



## **ROUTINE**

Ink drawings, digital drawings printed  
2018

Visitor's task:

"Create by yourself how your daily routine should look like. Choose a routine situation and stick it on the palm tree."



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

**ROUTINE**



# GRAMOPHONE

Action-Painting, performance  
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.



<https://youtu.be/KjINbEVRNMw>

COLLECTIVE TASK BAGHDAD 2017 @ BAIT TARKIB

**GRAMOPHONE**



**CONSCIOUS**



# CONSCIOUS

Room-Installation  
2017

Artist statement:

CONSCIOUS is addressing the danger of social media on our social life and co-existing.



3. *TARKIB Baghdad Contemporary Arts Festival, Shatha Al Jameel, 2017*