

Question 3: Outline a pair of opposites discussed in the lecture series. For example 'Weight and light' 'silence and noise'; ephemeral and permanent showing examples of 2 artists AND 1 writer who have explored these opposites in their work.

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REVOLUTION AND PEACE

Popular protests were launched on the first of October in the Iraqi capital Baghdad and a number of southern provinces have also joined in the protests. In essence, the protests demand an increase in job opportunities, fighting corruption, dissolving the current parliament and fair elections that prevent the current political class from running again. If we examine the history of modern Iraq, we find that it is a country that was based on uprisings, revolutions and coups. In the 1920s, the Iraqi people fought the first revolution in the Middle East against British colonialism. At the time, it was a revolution for self-determination and ruling the country without external interference. The revolution was subsequently followed by military coups and regime change from royal to republican and then to parliamentary. Despite the youthful character of the current ongoing protests, the elderly are also participating in it, including those who witnessed the July 14 revolution against the monarchy in 1958. The current consensus among the protest is that after the end of the Baath Party era at the hands of the US invasion in 2003, 16 years later, and the change of rule from presidential to a parliamentary, there has been no reform that satisfies the people. The country suffers from abhorrent political quotas and theft of the country riches by the current political class.



Jawad Saleem and the Freedom Monument

Jawad Saleem (1921-1961), is an Iraqi painter and sculptor. He is considered one of the most famous sculptors in the history of modern Iraqi. Born in Ankara, his father was a military man and amateur artist, his mother, brother and sisters were all skilled artists as well. At the age of 11 he was received the Silver Award for Sculpture at the first Art Gallery in Baghdad, 1931. Saleem left for Paris in 1938, where he studied the art of bronze sculptures and then to Rome in 1939, both times his studies were interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. Eventually he was able to continue his studies in 1946 in Slade School, London. Jawad Saleem returned to Baghdad in late 1949 and it can be said that Jawad's activity is deepening and growing after his return. His artistic works took on a new character, as the concepts of cubic and abstract art were the leader in Europe and the world at that time. Picasso's and Barak's works were especially influencing on Saleem. Saleem had a great impact on the development of the artistic movement in Iraq. He headed the sculpture department at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad until his death on January 23, 1961. He also founded the Baghdad Group for Modern Art with artist Shaker Hassan Al Said and artist Mohammed Ghani Hikmat. His sculpture 'Unknown Political Prisoner' won the second prize in the international sculpture competition, and the United Nations maintains a miniature bronze model for this sculpture.



Jawad Saleem's style was distinguished by the use of ancient assyrian symbols, through which he mixed Iraq's heritage with Islamic art and modern art. In 1959, he implemented the Freedom Monument with the architect Rifaat Al-Jadraji and the sculptor Mohamed Ghani Hikmat. It is one of the most important artistic monuments in the Middle East. Unfortunately, Saleem was unable to complete this work, suffering a heart attack at completing the final stages of the monument. Perhaps it could be argued that the stress of completing the monument contributed to his premature death.

Freedom Monument in Baghdad is one of the most important artistic sculptures that have an impact on me and all Iraqis in this particular period, perhaps because the country is going through a difficult period and because of the series of demonstrations that broke out in Baghdad since October.



The protests center around this monument day and night, as if it evokes the past and the reason that the monument was created for. Jawad Salim created this work at the request of the leader Abdul Karim Qasim after the revolution in Baghdad on July 14, 1958, which ended the monarchy in Iraq. Jawad Saleem understood that the monument should symbolize the new world which Iraq could be after the revolution but at the same time it must also represent the history of Mesopotamia. The monument has an impressive length of 50 meters and a height of 10 meters. The monument contains 14 bronze sculptures, starting from right to left, similar to Arabic writing, as if it were a sequential novel. Starting with the horse and then the pioneers of revolutions and then the child - crying - martyr - mother and child - the thinker prisoner - soldier - freedom - peace - Tigris and Euphrates - agriculture - bull - industry.

Mohammed Ghani Hikmat, also known as the Sheikh of sculptures in Iraq, was an assistant to Jawad Saleem in the creation of this piece. Jawad Saleem wanted Mohammed Ghani Hikmat, also known as the Sheikh of sculptures in Iraq to be his assistant in the implementation of this work of art. Hikmat completed the monument after Jawad Salim's premature death in 1961. Hikmat said that Jawad was interested in drawing a lot of horses and cavalry, the horse is always one of the most prominent Arabic expressions of originality, strength and courage.



The three men who surround the horse represent the masses while the fourth represents the announcement of the revolution. As for the child, it is a sign of hope and the future as if he blesses the human effort in creating a future in which freedom and justice excel.



Jawad Suleem wanted to emphasize that the woman was present, raising her cloak and damaging her body and she began to lament and shout.



No conflict or revolution in the world is without martyrs. Jawad Salim has embodied the scene of the martyr and the mother who bows down crying for her deceased son, the martyr is surrounded by crying women. To the left of the martyr, a mother bends down and embraces her newborn son. As if protecting the new generation of Iraqis.



In the center of the monument we see the symbol of the imprisoned thinker, imprisoned because he is a threat to the totalitarian ruling class. His hand stretches out for his freedom.



The soldier who jumps and smashes the prison bars and his hand with a rifle also appears in the middle to emphasize the importance and role of the army in the 1958 revolution. The military played an essential role in supporting this revolution. Hikmat says that the commander Abdul Karim Qasim asked him or suggested that the soldier's face was the leader of the revolution at the time, but he refused because he wanted this symbol to be a general symbol for the Iraqi soldier.



The sculpture following this is one of freedom achieved, represented by a woman carrying a flaming torch. Saleem particularly wanted her to seem as if she was flying with joy,

he did not make her have feet because he said feet stick to the ground and I want her to fly high.



After the revolution, the dream is for peace. The imprisoning bars turn into branches of a tree with a woman standing in front of it. A bird sits on the shoulders of the woman, which Saleem said symbolizes the birds that are found in the Baghdad Mosques.



The two important rivers in Iraq are represented by two healthy Arab women in the following sculpture, the river Tigris and the river Euphrates. The word Tigris in Arabic means the palm fronds and Euphrates means fertility. The palm fronds are seen above the woman on the right and the woman on the left is pregnant. The little girl standing between the two women carries the goods of Iraq on her head.



In the last sculpture, Saleem put two workers, one Arab and the other Kurdish standing together as an expression of unity. The Arab in Sumerian uniform and the Kurdish in Assyrian uniform, symbolizing the two civilizations in Iraq. Taurus, one of the oldest symbols of Iraq, is a symbol of Sumer power and fertility. Finally, the factory worker that stands firmly beside the wall, refers to industrial advancement and prosperity for Iraq.

Guernica

Guernica is one of the most powerful and political famous paintings of the twentieth century, painted in a monochrome epic of black, white and grey, it without a doubt shows the tragedy of war. Portraying a living witness to the killing of innocents, considered an anti-war symbol and the embodiment of peace. Picasso's Guernica was inspired by the fierce and brutal bombardment of the small town of Guernica in the Basque Country on April 26, 1937 by the warplanes of the German Condor Army and Italian troops supporting the Spanish rebellion under commander Franco.

The spanish government commissioned Picasso to paint a mural for the spanish pavilion at the Paris world fair, but when the news of the bombing reached Picasso and news that the town was totally destroyed in just three and a half hours Picasso abandoned his original idea for the mural and began to sketch his new idea. By mid June, after 35 days of working on it the finished work was being mounted on the wall of the spanish pavilion, it stands 3.5 metres long and 7.8 metres across. Picasso made his statement about the war exclusively in symbolic form (Warncke, 2006)



Guernica has attracted a variety of interpretations. We start with the horse, taking the centre stage, is clearly seen shouting in agony and painfully falling apart. A lot of opinions have suggested that the horse represents the Spanish people, although in an interview with Picasso when asked about this interpretation he responded firmly saying "that this bull is a bull and this horse is a horse and it is the right of every viewer to interpret them as he pleases".

Wilhelm Boeck and Jamie Sabartes book on Picasso (Boeck and Sabartes, 1955) tries to explain the characters of Guernica by taking the view of Picasso's surrealist mind rather than from the point of view of the beholder. Although in interviews conducted with Picasso between 1944 and 1955, Picasso denied that his work, including Guernica, were unconscious or portraying persons or political events. There are some that hold the view that the horse represents the death of the fascist horse. Although this view contradicts the way in which the horse is portrayed in other works by Picasso, which is that of passion. The horse is universally recognised as man's companion in war, which may have been intended by its portrayal in Guernica. If we consider this view, the fallen warrior here could represent a tortured warrior who fell like the female matador in Picasso's *Minotauromachy* (1935). The wounded soldier fallen into justice with his broken sword. In contrast to this, some critics argue that the falling horse is an expression of defeat.

The woman who holds in her hand the lamp over the head of the tortured horse in its fall as she looks at him with a look dictated by passion and pride. Compassion and sympathy in most of Picasso's paintings were shown in scenes of bullfights, but in this painting she was represented by a woman holding the lamp, the other woman underneath were trying to get up and head towards the horse trying to help.

The bull in Guernica has some opinions describing it as a symbol of violence, but the writer here in Picasso's book had an opinion that contradicts it, that the bull is in fear, contrary to the one he takes in most of Picasso's paintings.

Representing the dark side, brutality, or violence was the bird. Although the bird in most cultures is represented in expressive arts as a symbol of peace and hope.

As for the lamp at the top of the picture, which hangs over this terrible scene and the light that radiates from it, is interpreted by some as a ray of hope. The authors Wilhelm and Jaime, have interpreted it as a victory of mercy over cruelty and to illuminate the darkness that prevailed in Guernica.

Edvard Munch in 1937, who was strongly impressed by this painting is quoted saying "This painting is not cruel at all, imagine how Goya would have done it and yet represent war. It's good that the pictures running with blood are no longer painted."

In Guernica, every living thing is bombed indiscriminately, people and animals alike suffer. The chaos of the fires that flare up and spread after the bombing is represented in Guernica most ghastly perhaps by the woman to the far left, who is trying to escape with a dead child in her lap from the burnt house. Picasso tried to portray her in many of his initial preparatory drawings, after that, Picasso moved the woman to the far right, freeing her arms to the top while she was screaming and wailing, a symbol of all women victims of wars everywhere, as writer Eileen suggests.

In 2003, in an unprecedented act in the history of the United Nations, officials there covered up a reproduction of Picasso's Guernica with a large blue curtain during the presentation of US Secretary of State Colin Powell on the issue of the US war on Iraq on 5 February 2003.

UN officials claimed that the cover-up was aimed at creating a more effective backdrop for the cameras because of the presence of many crowds and the importance of this meeting. However, some of those officials, who declined to be named, noted that the United States had adopted or somehow suggested that it relied on UN officials to cover the wall when presenting the war issue. Art critic Peter Goddard wrote that “the coverup may have been prompted by UN realization that images of the mural’s vivid anti-war message were televised world-wide when it appeared as a backdrop to the Jan. 27 interim report by chief weapons inspector Hans Blix.”.



The Portuguese cartoonist Vasco Gargalo reproduced the Picasso Guernica painting to become attached to the Syrian city of Aleppo. The faces of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad are listed in the nightmare of Guernica and the horse illustrated as the United States and President Obama.

Jonathan Jones writing in *The Guardian* (Jones, 2016) explains that Guernica's strength makes us see clearly the crimes of our time and the barbarism of bombing and that it is the clearest living example to be used because Picasso painted it. Why can we compare what happened in the past in Guernica to what is now in the present in Aleppo when we look at the Picasso painting Guernica, perhaps because the human being is the same as the one who was dropped by bombs in the past is the same as that dropped in the present and the child dangling in the arms of his afflicted mother is one of dozens of children who die every day in Aleppo or remain trapped under the rubble of buildings. It was the courage of Picasso to portray this fact in Guernica's painting and today crushes the facts in the era of lies, we need to tell the truth, fight and have the same courage of Picasso, it is not only bombs that cause the killing of thousands of innocent people but also not showing the truth and not standing up to the presidents and politicians who distort the truth and spread a series of lies that deceive the world, which are more deadly than bombs. Today is Aleppo and tomorrow who knows.



Dia Al-Azzawi is a Iraqi artist who painted another massacre similar to the massacre of Guernica, the massacre of Sabra and Shatila Palestinians, which occurred in 1982-83 by Israeli troops. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut. The painting measures 7.5 meters in length and 3 meters in width and was completed with chinese ink on canvas on the day after the massacre. The artist said:

“There was only a roll of paper in my hands at the time and without any preparation or planning before the idea jumped to my mind and tried to recollect my memories of that camp in the early eighties”.



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