

My life in Iraq was defined by three wars, a bloody uprising, and time spent in a messy embargo. Within the framework of the consequences and repercussions of the post- last war period; in the wake of the war launched on Iraq in the spring of 2003, I returned to the College of Fine Arts in Baghdad to resume my Master's Degree studies. I was utterly shocked to find that the library of the College had been completely burnt and that all the precious books had been transformed to mere detritus. All the country had transformed to Chaos.

I decided to face this insupportable status of my homeland, and use my art to call for peace. I set out to create a unique dialogue between my artworks and the viewers, producing interactive videos and installations. I wanted to address the reality of what people suffer under occupation and in war, to achieve a mental and spiritual impact, I tried to touch all the senses of the viewers, including smell, touch and hearing. I wanted to provoke a deep and continuous dialogue with the viewer.

The Story I continue to tell is a collective Iraqi tale, maybe a humanitarian chronicle, of the tragedies we --me, my friends and relatives and millions of other Iraqis-- faced. It is a documentation of the transformative political, social and economic history of modern Iraq during the last 30 years, one artist's rendering of this critical era. I want to remove the curtains that hide the reality of the Iraqi scene, and convey a message of truth, peace, justice and love which I see as the most critical topics of these times.

I want to show the American viewer the consequences of war, to shed light on the political machinations behind the scenes and create an opportunity to reflect on how governments, and religions cause distress by treating human beings as expendable resources in their quest to survive.

The mural on exhibit here was painted with a group of Iraqi/Palestinian and Jordanian youth in Amman Jordan in June, 2008. I painted a second mural on the 4th of July in San Diego California, with a group of American children and youth filling half the canvas with significant American symbols; the mural is being completed by a group of Iraqi children/youth in Amman. Facilitating these links is an important part of pacifying the conflict of civilization between the US, Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. As Human Beings, each Iraqi or American or any Humankind, can gain insight and understanding from art; it opens a dialogue across culture, religion and politics.

Qais Al-Sindy, January 2009