

JEREMY DELLER: IT IS WHAT IT IS

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT IRAQ

Week of October 12–18

Tuesday, October 13

10:30 am–1:30 pm, Jeff Leys and Gerald Paoli

Jeff Leys is Co-Coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence. In February 2003 he traveled to Iraq with the Iraq Peace Team project, Voices in the Wilderness, to nonviolently oppose the then-impending US-led invasion. He returned to Iraq again in November 2003 to see the impact of the invasion on Iraqi citizens.

Gerald Paoli is Co-Coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence. In May 2009 he traveled to Iraqi Kurdistan with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) to document human rights abuses against Kurdish mountain villagers on the country's borders with Turkey and Iran. In various articles published on the CPT and Voices for Creative Nonviolence websites, as well as CommonDreams.org, he has written about the experiences of Iraqi citizens and refugees.

1:30–4:30 pm, Usama Alshaibi

Usama Alshaibi is an Iraqi American filmmaker. Born in Baghdad, he spent his formative years living in both the United States and the Middle East. In early 2004 he returned to Baghdad with his wife to shoot his first feature documentary, *Nice Bombs*, which won Best Documentary at the 2006 Chicago Underground Film Festival. Depicting Alshaibi's unique relationship to a contemporary Iraq that is very different from the country of his childhood, *Nice Bombs* also captures the conflicting reactions to the war in Iraq and current conditions in Baghdad. His numerous films and videos have been screened at international film festivals and venues across the globe. Currently, Alshaibi is in post-production on his second narrative feature titled *Profane* and a web-based projected titled *Baghdad, Iowa*.

4:30–7:30 pm, Esam Pasha

Esam Pasha is an artist, journalist, and translator. Born in Iraq, he now lives in the United States. He has worked as an interpreter for the British Embassy in Baghdad and coalition forces in Iraq, including the 101st Airborne and the Florida National Guard as well as for the *Boston Globe* and *Christian Science Monitor*. He was also a freelance journalist for the United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network. A well-known artist in Iraq, Pasha has published articles in art journals and exhibited his artwork in the United States and Europe. In Baghdad in 2003, he completed the first public mural in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq by painting over the largest portrait of the deposed leader and replacing it with depictions of the history of Iraq.

Wednesday, October 14

10:30 am–1:30 pm, Suhad Turayhi

Suhad Turayhi is an Iraqi American artist, interior designer, and spokeswoman for the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq. She was born in Baghdad and lived there until 1978, when she moved to the United States. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Baghdad with a bachelor of arts degree in Design and began working at the Iraqi National Museum. In 1982, she received a bachelor of arts degree in Industrial Design from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has organized exhibitions of Iraqi and Arab artists in Chicago for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee as well as the Iraqi American Association of Illinois, for which she also participated in an exhibition of local Iraqi artists in August 2005.

1:30–4:30 pm, Chuck Tucker

Major General Chuck Tucker is Executive Director of the International Human Rights Law Institute (IHRLI) at DePaul University and has been working in international and humanitarian law for more than 25 years. As Director of the IHRLI, Tucker has been involved with a number of human rights and rule of law projects in Iraq including the Iraq History Project, which documents personal narratives of human rights violations during the regime of Saddam Hussein. In 2005 and 2006, the IHRLI provided training for high-level Iraqi officials in post-conflict justice, federalism, and domestic security as well as programming to support the Iraqi constitutional process. Major General Tucker also acted as a legal adviser in Baghdad for the US Ambassador in Iraq and served as the Military Legal Adviser for State Department and Department of Defense missions.

Thursday, October 15

10:30 am–1:30 pm, Major Brad Leighton

As the Director of Public Affairs for the National Guard, Major Brad Leighton is responsible for overseeing the public affairs of more than 10,000 soldiers and 3,000 in-duty airmen. He interacts daily with the press and the US and Iraqi militaries as well as American and Iraqi citizens. A 1996 graduate of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, with a background in journalism, Major Leighton served as a traditional guardsman for 19 years prior to his deployment to Iraq. During his first tour of duty from October 2005 to 2006 he acted as a Media Outreach Officer, and in his most recent tour from June 2007 to 2008 he was employed as Senior Press Officer for the Multi-National Force in Iraq.

1:30–4:30 pm, Esam Pasha

See bio from Tuesday, October 13.

Friday, October 16

10:30 am–1:30 pm, Major Brad Leighton

See bio from Thursday, October 15.

1:30–4:30 pm, Esam Pasha

See bio from Tuesday, October 13.

Saturday, October 17

10:30 am–1:30 pm, Nawaf Anaam Habib

Born in 1980, Nawaf Anaam Habib is a veterinarian and biologist from Mosul, Iraq. He fled to Syria before arriving in the United States in 2007. In Iraq, Habib was an assistant lecturer at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Mosul, his alma mater from 2004 to 2007. During that time, he also worked as a practicing veterinarian. Nawaf is currently pursuing his master's degree in Biology at Northeastern Illinois University.

1:30–4:30 pm, Ahlam Ahmed Mahmoud and Beth Ann Toupin

Ahlam Ahmed Mahmoud is an Iraqi refugee, journalist, and humanitarian aid worker. She is a cofounder and board member of the Iraqi Mutual Aid Society in Chicago, where her work focuses on outreach and casework with other Iraqi refugees. In Baghdad, Mahmoud was a humanitarian caseworker in the North Khadimiyah District. Mahmoud connected civilians with international humanitarian organizations and coordinated restitution claims with the US Army. In Damascus, Syria, she worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide aid to Iraqi refugees. For UNICEF, she studied the difficulties faced by Iraqi girls in completing their studies as refugees and ran her own small school.

Beth Ann Toupin is a cofounder and board member of the Iraqi Mutual Aid Society in Chicago. She is also an Iraq specialist with Amnesty International and coordinator of the Iraq program within the Middle East Coordination Group.

Sunday, October 18

10:30 am–1:30 pm, Esam Pasha

See bio from Tuesday, October 13.

1:30–4:30 pm, Michael Rakowitz

Michael Rakowitz is an artist based in Chicago. Rakowitz has created numerous projects that address issues in Iraq, including *The invisible enemy should not exist*, an ongoing series of sculptures that represent an attempt to reconstruct looted archaeological artifacts, and *Return*, a project that attempted to import one ton of fruit from Iraqi date palms into the United States despite United Nations sanctions and security charges from US Customs and Border Protection, and Homeland Security. He is collaborating with the artist Emna Zghal on *Dark Turquoise*, a series of public craft workshops. Led by American Indian master-craftspeople, workshop participants will attempt to reproduce ancient artifacts, and modern and contemporary artworks that have been lost, stolen, or destroyed in the aftermath of the US invasion. Rakowitz is Associate Professor of Art in the Department of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University.

Jeremy Deller: It Is What It Is is part of the Three M Project, a series organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, to commission, organize, and copresent new works of art.

The Three M Project is sponsored by Deutsche Bank.

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