

Hayv Kahraman (b. 1981, Baghdad; lives and works in Los Angeles) has exhibited throughout the world and is included in such public collections as Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; North Carolina Museum of Art; Rubell Family Collection; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; and the Mathaf Museum of Modern Art, Doha. Kahraman's recent solo exhibitions include: *Audible Inaudible-Hayv Kahraman*, Joslyn Museum of Art, Omaha; *Sound Wounds*, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; *Collective Performance*, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, and Duke University, Durham; *Audible Inaudible*, The Third Line Gallery, Dubai; and *How Iraqi Are You?*, Jack Shainman, New York. Recent group exhibitions include: *Dreamers Awake*, White Cube Bermondsey, London; *No Man's Land: Women Artists from the Rubell Family Collection*, Miami; *UNREALISM: Presented by Larry Gagosian and Jeffrey Deitch*, Miami Design District; *June: A Painting Show*, Sadie Coles HQ, London. Kahraman was shortlisted for the 2011 Jameel Prize at the Victoria and Albert Museum and has received the award of Excellence in Cultural Creativity, Global Thinkers Forum.

Hayv Kahraman: Acts of Reparation is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator.

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Related Programs

Perspective: Artist on Artist
Vivian Watt
Thursday, September 21, 6:00 pm

Parallel Artifacts
Thursday, October 26, 6:00 pm

Sunday Studio: Arabic Calligraphy
Sunday, October 29, 1:00 pm

Performance: Gendering Memories of Iraq
Wednesday, November 29, 6:00 pm

Gallery Guide
Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

September 8–
December 31, 2017



Hayv Kahraman

Acts of Reparation



Hayv Kahraman, *Bab el Sheikh*, 2013. Oil on wood, 111 × 142 inches. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Fueled by her experience as an Iraqi immigrant, Hayv Kahraman is concerned with the multitude rather than the self. *Acts of Reparation* presents a collection of paintings that span multiple bodies of work from 2011 to the present, offering Kahraman's insights into notions of migrant consciousness, collective memory, and gender politics. Central to the artist's practice is the representation of the female body as a way to further explore these ideas. As part of the process in creating these works, Kahraman uses her own body to choreograph poses that she photographs, sketches, and then paints onto the canvas.



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The punctured or shredded canvases suggest the notion of a violent uprooting, making reference to the forced movement of people and its physical impact on the body and on the mind. In her most recent series, Kahraman applies to her canvas a weaving technique inspired by the Mahaffa—a hand-woven fan symbolic of her native Iraq. One of the few objects that traveled with the artist and her family as they fled to Sweden, the Mahaffa carries memories of a past both idealized and imaginary. In that sense, repetitively weaving the canvas is both a form of mourning past trauma and an act of forgetting.

The sculptural work, *Icosahedral Body*, is based on a three-dimensional rendering of the artist’s own body scan. Reminiscent of the Islamic Mashrabiya technique in which arabesque designs are cut into wood, the sculpture is created by cutting the segments of the actual body scan into the panels. *Icosahedral Body* represents an experience many refugees know—the multitude of ways in which a body and one’s self can be broken up and divided.



Hayv Kahraman, *Dolma Kick*, 2015. Oil on linen, 96 × 73 inches. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Translation of Texts in the Paintings of Hayv Kahraman

Dolma Kick, 2015

Black text: What does the dolma have to do with the kick?
Red text: The dolma is eaten with a spoon, and the kick is eaten with a foot.

This is an Arabic proverb/saying in popular culture, specific to Iraqis, which is said to someone who is not making sense. To “eat a kick” is an expression a parent may say to a misbehaving child, “You’re going to eat a kick if you don’t behave.” Dolma is typically known as a stuffed grape leaf, usually stuffed with rice and eaten across the Arab region (including Turkey). In addition to grape leaves, peppers, and other vegetables are also stuffed—in this painting it’s a red pepper.



Hayv Kahraman, *Ummodach*, 2015. Oil on linen, 100 × 79 × 2 inches. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Ummodach, 2015

Black text: Ummodach / Ummodakuom
Red text: [Ummodach / Ummodakuom] is a hand gesture indicating whomever it is aimed to as ignorant. Now commonly used in Swedish schools among children of all ethnicities



Hayv Kahraman, *Nabog*, 2014. Oil on linen, 115 × 55 × 2 inches. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Nabog, 2014

Black text: I have a Nabog fruit, you have a Nabog fruit. I give you from my Nabog fruit, you give me from your Nabog fruit. If my Nabog fruit is tastier, I give you from my Nabog fruit. If your Nabog fruit is tastier, you give me from your Nabog fruit.
Red text: I remember singing this when I was a child in school and we had this Nabog tree in our garden in Baghdad.



Hayv Kahraman, *Read Me From Right to Left*, 2017. Oil on linen, 150 × 78 inches. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.