

You resist me, but I will break you anyway

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12:09 mn

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Venue: Amna Suraka Museum, Sulaymaniyah / Kurdistan

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Plato's Stone

Every representation of reality runs the risk of a deformed reflection. When described in words or stylized by the artist, violence and war become reflected shadows the cavern's inhabitants must decipher. Spectators know nothing other than the shadows from the fire lit by the artist against the walls of their protecting cavern. Reality made up of reflections and mechanical sounds reaches them only through representations, even if these throw light on it. Death brought on by an armored car, violence through oppression are nothing but images for them.

As a teenager, the artist threw stones at them. *"You resist me, but I will break you anyway, my resistance will be stronger than you are."*

This scenography set off by the abyss of a mirror, puts in opposition the hardness of an armored car that seems so tangible, with its own image that will fall apart under the obstinate pounding with a stone. What the spectator sees is a reconstitution in which the sound will remind him of the mortal spitting from a machine gun. The artist as midwife provides the spectator with an allegory of confrontation for him to see and hear.

Daniel Fleury

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This performance took place in Southern Kurdistan, in Irak, one of the four parts of Kurdistan which was split and shared between Irak, Iran, Turkey and Syria by dominant States that met in Lausanne one hundred years ago.

The armored vehicle shown in the the video is one among the many such vehicles that killed thousands of Kurds under Saddam Hussein's regime.

The venue in which the performance was held is a former torture center, now a memorial: the Amna Suraka Museum. Under Saddam, Amna Suraka (Red Prison) served as headquarters for the Northern wing of Mukhabarat, Irak's secret intelligence organization. In the memory of the region's Kurdish population, it is also "the house of tortures".

Between 1986 and 1989, the Iraki State conducted Operation Anfal, a genocide against Kurds. Ordered by Saddam Hussein's Iraki regime, it was conducted by Ali Hassan al-Majid, with the aim of annihilating the Kurdish population. Anfal used bombings, terrestrial attacks, chemical and gas weapons, destructions of homes, massive deportations, executions, tortures... The massacre in Halabja with its 5 000 killed with chemical weapons is one of the most cruel phases in the Anfal which globally caused a minimum of 50 000 and perhaps up to 100 000 systematic and premeditated assassinations of Kurdish civilians, according to the report by Human Rights Watch.

This venue in which thousands of Kurds were arrested, tortured and assassinated was liberated in 1991 during the Desert Shield Operation, the first phase in the Gulf War, following attacks led by the Peshmergas.

Henceforth, Amna Suraka has the status of war museum and memorial.

Translation by Renée Lucie Bourges