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Last Summer in Baghdad

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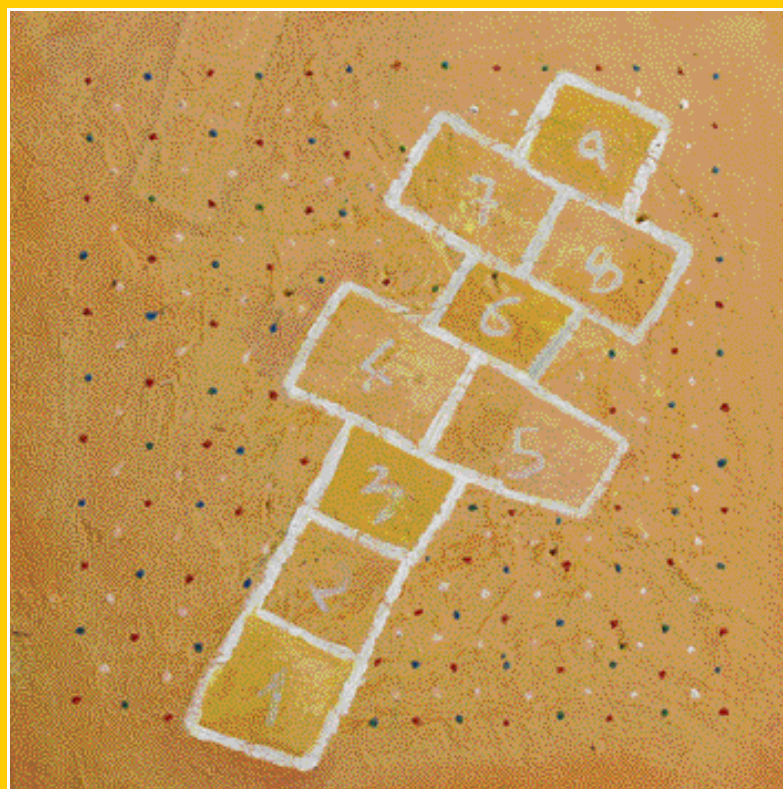
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Last Summer in Baghdad, assemblages by Qassim Alsaedy, 2003



The Dutch-Iraqi artist, Qassim Alsaedy (Baghdad, 1949), is highly interested in the traces of history left on ancient walls. Now living in exile far from his birthplace in the area of ancient Mesopotamia, he is engaged in an artistic dialogue that reaches beyond time and space and which expresses his deep connection with history—both its beauty and its sadness. In his paintings and assemblages Alsaedy expresses his sense of ancient and recent history. And although he paints the burned fields of Kurdistan (where he once lived and worked as a peshmerga and artist hold-

ing exhibits in tents for refugees and guerilla fighters), his paintings and mixed media works always contain a deep sense of hope. There is, in his work, a slight thematic parallel with the famous Dutch artist, Armando, who painted the well known series of 'guilty landscapes', which alluded to the eternally doomed grounds of Auschwitz. But there is one important difference between the two artists. Armando, through his art, displays a deep sense of the tragedy of one specific place whose traces will probably never heal. Qassim Alsaedy, on the other hand, who saw

the burned and poisoned fields of Kurdistan himself (among the world's guiltiest landscapes), always conveys through his art the message that history will eventually heal and redeem. Last summer, Qassim Alsaedy visited Baghdad after 25 years. His impressions of this visit were shown at the fourth edition of the Biennale Internazionale dell'Arte Contemporanea di Firenze, from 6 till 14 December, 2003.

For more information on Qassim Alsaedy, please contact Floris Schreve at: florisschreve@hotmail.com