

# Iraqi Uprising through the Arts



**An interior view of "the Theater of Operations - Gulf Wars 1991-2011" exhibition at the MoMA PS1 in New York, United States on November 15, 2019. (Tayfun Coskun/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)**

## The Media Line Staff

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Anyone who thinks that the war in Iraq has ended is hallucinating. This is confirmed in a new exhibition titled "Theater of Operations," which opened this month at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The exhibition, which will last until March 2020, includes 300 works by 80 artists, mostly Iraqis, some who live at home and others in the diaspora, as well as works of Arab and Western artists who opposed the invasion of Iraq. The show explores the complex reality of war, as well as the notion of patriotism. Most notably, it brings together some of the youngest Iraqi

artists, such as Ali Ayal (born in 1994), and the oldest ones, such as Zia Al-Azzawi (born in 1939). The works displayed at the Museum of Modern Art paint the difference between different Iraqi generations and their experience of violence and conflict. They feature different styles ranging from Cubism to modern Arabic calligraphy. Ali Ayal's centerpiece is a mural formed from real pillowcases that express the dreams and nightmares of the Iraqi people. Another interesting display is that by the artist Hana Malallah, who created a mural of 400 photographs of the victims of the 1991 Amiriyah shelter bombing; a massacre of innocent civilians who were killed by US Air Force guided munitions. The uprising of Iraqi expatriate artists and their brethren at home reveals that the war in Iraq is far from over. The exhibition is a huge international festival that features daily film screenings by Iraqi directors, including people like Sinan Anton, Uday Rashid, and Qutaiba al-Janabi. The timing of this exhibition coincides with the 29th anniversary of the Gulf War, providing a stark reminder of how the gruesome war continues to affect the people of Iraq almost three decades later. –*Muhammad Aref (translated by Asaf Zilberfarb)*