

THROUGH

Latif Al Ani's
Visions of
Ancient Iraq

THE

LENS

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CHAPTER 10

BRITTLE BUILDS:

THE HORIZONTALIZING ICONOGRAPHY OF VERTICALITY

Nat Muller

Walid Siti (b. 1954, Duhok, Iraqi Kurdistan) has been fascinated by towers for many years. On bus rides back home to Duhok in the early 1970s, when he was a young student at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad, he would see the majestic spiral-ing mud-brick minaret, the *malwiya*, of Samarra's Great Mosque (FRONT COVER, FIG. 10-2). Built in the ninth century CE during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutawakkil, scholarship suggests the *malwiya*'s unique conic design echoes the ziggurats of Mesopotamia, anchoring its form in a very specific geo-cultural context and infusing it with Babylonian architectural influences.¹ Once the largest mosque of the Islamic world, the Great Mosque marked the move of the Abbasid empire's seat of power from Baghdad to the city of Samarra, a newly created capital designed to enhance the prestige of the Abbasid dynasty by ostentatiously displaying luxurious grandeur, military prowess, and religious authority.² Largely destroyed in 1278 CE by invading Mongol forces, little remains of the mosque complex except for the minaret and its boundary walls.³ Today, its enduring towering presence on the east bank of the Tigris River persists, but stands strangely in a landscape of ever expanding urban sprawl and traffic. Nevertheless, the *malwiya* (FIG. 10-3) continues to bear witness to cycles of turbulent history, be they of a long-gone past or more recent upheavals. During the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the *malwiya* served as an American military base, and in 2005 a terrorist attack destroyed some of the architectural features of its summit.⁴ At the center of Walid Siti's varied oeuvre lies a practice of making visible the entrenched entanglements of sovereignty, architectural form, landscape, violence, and historical narration. However, Siti does much more than tell us stories about the machinations of power; he renders power and the soaring architectural structures representing it porous. As such, he performs an egalitarian gesture that flattens the notion of

FIG. 10-1. Portrait of Walid Siti, 2019.



FIG. 10-2. Latif Al Ani. Samarra, the spiral minaret of the Great Mosque. Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film. 1960. AIF: 0190an00115. Checklist no. 79.

hierarchy and exclusion, so often associated with verticality. The verticality that marks Siti's work is humble and inclusive. His builds are made with cheap and throwaway materials such as cardboard, twigs, straw, and plywood. His use of materials reflects the intent to address social and historical inequity and points to the precarity of hard-won freedoms.

Siti knows a thing or two about loss of freedoms. Growing up in a Kurdish and politically active leftist family, he experienced firsthand how the liberties of minorities and those opposing the Ba'ath party were squelched under Saddam Hussein. In the 1970s, when Siti was studying in Baghdad (FIG. 10-4), Iraq turned rapidly more totalitarian and opportunities for those who did not explicitly support the Ba'ath regime were scant. Enrollment in a postgraduate degree program at the prestigious Academy of Fine Arts was an impossibility for those who were not party members.⁵ Left with few options other than leaving the country, Siti embarked on undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at Ljubljana's Academy of Fine Arts in the former Yugoslavia. Unfortunately for Siti and his fellow Iraqi students, ties between Yugoslavia and the Ba'ath regime were warm and it was unsafe for him to return back home. In 1984 he received political asylum in London, where he resides to this day.⁶ The shape of the *malwiya*, as a signifier of a home



FIG. 10-3. Walid Siti, Still from *To the Unknown Architect*. Video (sound). 2022. Checklist no. 76.

lost, would continue to haunt him and his work. He was only able to climb the stairs of the *malwiya* in Samarra for the first time in 2019 (FIG. 10-5); an experience he describes as “overwhelming, mind-blowing and beautiful.”⁷ The footage he shot during that visit became the backbone of Siti’s second video work to date, *To the Unknown Architect* (2022), in which he poignantly underlines the tension between ascending and descending movement. Here, that tension becomes much more than simply climbing up and down the stairs of the *malwiya*. It becomes a comment on social mobility and how very precarious it is for marginalized groups to dream of possibility. The video is framed by an opening sequence that takes us by car from Baghdad to Samarra, akin to the journey the young Siti would have taken returning home during term break. Filmed through the car window with a shaky handheld camera, the video takes us past Jewad Selim’s (1919–1961) mural *Freedom Monument* (1961), one of central Baghdad’s most iconic monuments and landmarks celebrating the overthrow of the monarchy and the creation of the Iraqi Republic in 1958. Here Siti provides a conscious visual reference to Selim, a prominent modernist artist and founder of the visionary Baghdad Modern Art Group.

The latter was pivotal in the 1950s and advocated—in the spirit of a newly minted national consciousness—the concept of *istilham al-turath* (seeking inspiration in tradition), which called for a distinct Arab aesthetic that would honor heritage and tradition but also be modern.⁸ While Siti shares with Selim an interest in heritage and ancient historical landscape, his art moves, as scholar Zainab



FIG. 10-4. Walid Siti at Ctesiphon, the ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon), 1971.



FIG. 10-5. Walid Siti visiting Samarra, October 2019.

Bahrani observes, “into another direction, and reflects another historical experience of place that came afterwards . . . What we see is a complexity of identity in his work, and an art that also often brings to mind the troubled experience of exile and displacement, despite a strong link to the land.”⁹

To the Unknown Architect is propelled, as is most of Siti’s oeuvre, by a quality of fragility. This is cleverly underlined by the video’s voice-over during a trip from Baghdad to Samarra, which recounts an Mesopotamian folk tale that serves as a memento mori (FIG. 10-6). In this well-known story, a merchant’s servant attempts to trick Death in Baghdad by fleeing to Samarra, but ends up meeting Death in Samarra anyhow, hence not escaping his fate. War, brutality, and conflict have sadly dominated much of Iraq’s recent history, in particular since 1968 with the coming to power of the Ba’ath party and the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, and the political instability following the US invasion in 2003. Siti poetically conceptualizes the notion of demise and extends it to the land and its natural and built environment. Whether we encounter mountains, ziggurats, or towers, Siti renders their soaring monumentality into something brittle but delicately beautiful. A rotating miniature model of the *malwiya*, dexterously fashioned out of twigs, dances across the screen, collapsing in and out of form. In the video, this sense of ephemerality is further enhanced by ever-changing points of view. The camera



TOP: FIG. 10-6. Walid Siti. Still from *To the Unknown Architect*. Video (sound). 2022. Checklist no. 76. BOTTOM: FIG. 10-7. Walid Siti. Still from *To the Unknown Architect*. Video (sound). 2022. Checklist no. 76.

pivots from sweeping aerial perspectives, shrinking the human scale, to shaky handheld camerawork that records the labored breathing of the artist while he climbs up and down the *malwiya*, bringing everything back to human scale. The camerawork replicates the twisting and turning of the building. Nothing in this video is ever static. Siti intersperses the images with intertitles that provide historical context. What follows is a spectral image of the Great Mosque complex, on which his cursor obsessively draws repetitive ziggurat shapes across the screen: ascending and descending staircases that result in a landscape of zigzagging towers that provide a lens on how to read history, landscape, and identity as always jagged and messy (FIG. 10-7).

This approach is saliently articulated in Siti's works on paper: distinct sketches on brown packing paper mainly intended as studies for future projects. Jotted down in a frenzy with black marker, quick strokes of dripping acrylic paint, or smudged swipes of crayon, the spiring shapes exude a dynamic energy (FIG. 10-8).

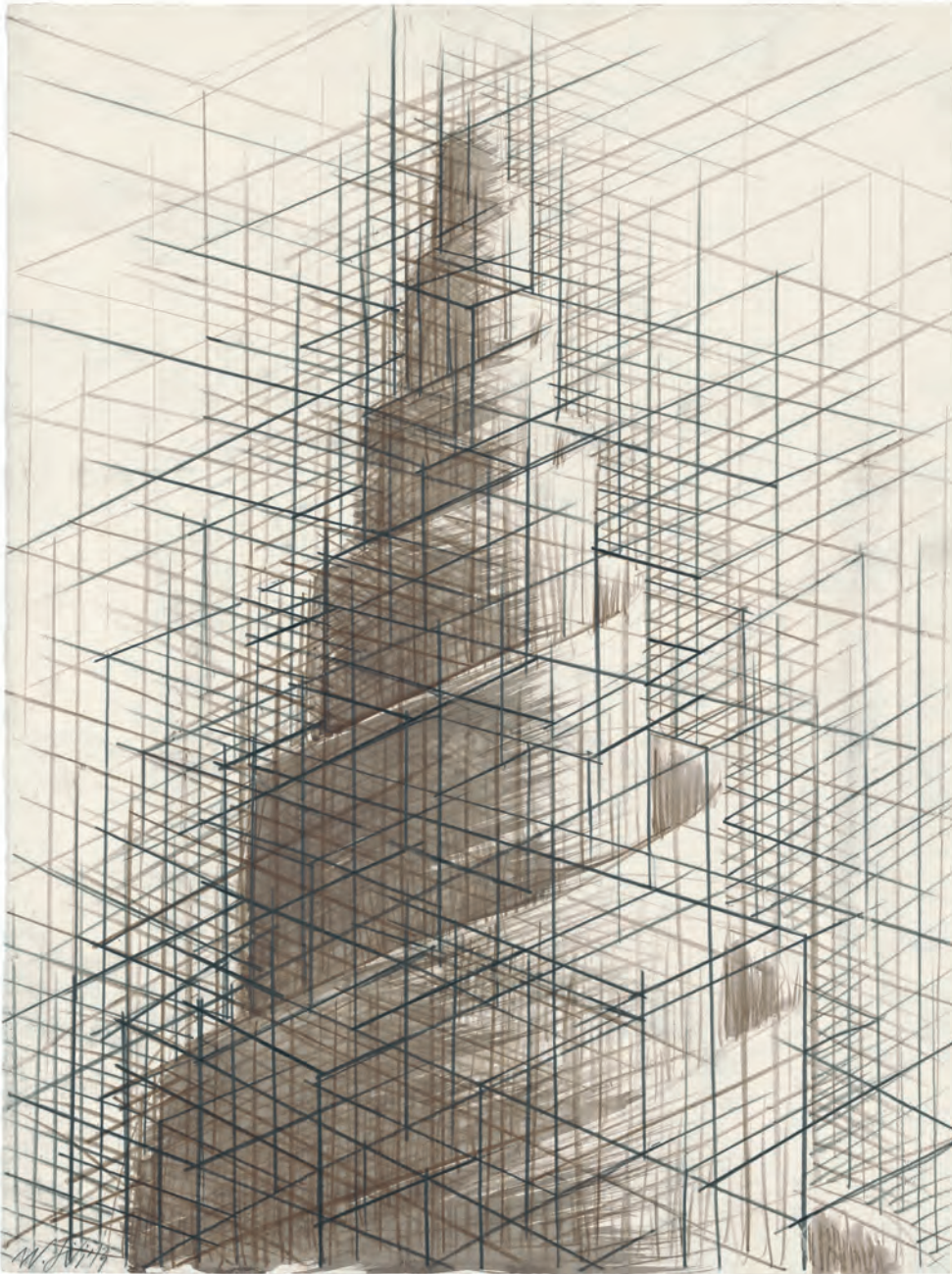


FIG. 10-8. Walid Siti. *The Seven Towers, I Series*. Graphite, colored crayon, and acrylic wash on paper. 2013. MMA: 2014.429. Gift of Ipeknur and Shwan Ibrahim Taha, 2014. Checklist no. 77.

The viewer can actually sense the artist working through a particular idea. I have written elsewhere that these drawings divulge the architectural grammar of Siti's visual language, and in them we can always discern a specific form: a square, a rectangle, an oval, a cone, an arch, or simply a line.¹⁰ Nevertheless, these building blocks remain characteristically fragile. In the work on view in this exhibition, *Tower Series* (2020), the curvature of the winding tower is produced by black vertical lines meeting white horizontal lines (FIG. 10-9). The black lines seem sharp as daggers, while the white lines bleed paint across the page. This charged encounter—in this case between two different types of lines and between acrylic and crayon—lies



FIG. 10-9. Walid Siti. *Tower Series*. Acrylic and crayon on paper. 2020. Checklist no. 75.

at the base of much of Siti's practice. By complicating ways of seeing, the artist shows how aspirational possibility can turn into violent destruction. The two seem inextricably intertwined throughout his oeuvre, but this is not to say that his works



FIG. 10-10. Walid Siti. Maquette of *Arched Tower*. Insulation board and plaster of paris. 2023. Checklist no. 1.

are devoid of hope. On the contrary, his practice is truly an art of scaffolding in which loss—signified by negative space—also becomes a foundational constituent. Siti's voids are therefore always meaningful: they trouble our perception of time and space. A rupture might be looming, but so might potential. This sense of breakability is further enhanced in *Tower Series* by the drawing being cut up into twenty-five rectangles and then reassembled like a frail puzzle. The dividing lines between the fragments stay faintly visible, which suggests the object will never be quite whole again. The towers Siti shows us are still magnificent but perhaps a little less mighty.



FIG. 10-11. Walid Siti working on the *Arched Tower* in his studio. London, 2023.

This is also true for the newly commissioned large-scale installation *Arched Tower* (2023). Here the *malwiya* is fashioned out of forty-one pointed arches made from insulation board and plaster (FIGS. 10-10 and 10-11). Stacked one on top of another, not only are they the building blocks of the towered structure, they also open multiple gateways into it. The viewer can peer through, and engage with, the installation from many different angles. Here, too, the artist's subtle repetition of form proffers an ever-changing perspective. Though large in scale, this particular work—like many of Siti's more site-specific sculptures—meets us at eye level and allows for a horizontal interaction. Our gaze is not only trained upward, but the pervious quality of the work blends with its surroundings and therefore forces us to become more conscious of the latter. Indeed, these towers, so firmly rooted in the landscape of Siti's home country, feel slightly out of place in an exhibition context—as if Siti's own involuntary exile were extended to the objects he crafts and is then shared with the viewer. The tower coils like a slow vortex, gently drawing the viewer in. Ultimately the work demonstrates how the force of verticality comes undone as a hubristic pillar of power and gradually transforms into an exercise in humility, openness, and transience. The absolute verticality of the tower is broken by a horizon of possibility, with the caveat that change often seems to come with costs: disquiet, violence, and defeat. Siti does not shy away from these aspects but poetically instills them in his work.

Many of Siti's projects can be read as an homage to those who are forgotten and written out of history, such as the architects, craftspeople, and laborers who built the marvels of Islamic architecture but are never named, as expressed in the title of his video *To the Unknown Architect*. Across his oeuvre, and originating in his

own lived experience, he foregrounds disenfranchised minorities and other groups who have been silenced. Siti's work makes these absences implicitly present by focusing on the interstitial and drawing out what is "there and not there."¹¹ Here the word *implicitly* is of importance. Siti's work is never didactic. Rather, as in the installation *Arched Tower* and the *Tower Series* drawing, he presents us with a form that is skeletal, stripped to its bare bones. Simultaneously playing with the material and the immaterial, his work places the onus on the viewer to contemplate and commemorate the omissions of the past and those which, undoubtedly, will come in the future.

- 1 Al-Qahtany 2009, 450–53.
- 2 El-Hibri 2021, 132–35.
- 3 Ahmad and Aslam 2020, 296.
- 4 Alfarra 2020.
- 5 Tripp 2007, 186–276.
- 6 For an extensive biographical essay of Siti, see Porter 2020, 20–25.
- 7 Interview with the artist, June 6, 2023.
- 8 Shabout 2007, 27–29.
- 9 Bahrani 2020, 75.
- 10 Muller 2017, 10.
- 11 Bahrani 2020, 77.



Latif Al Ani. Hatra, the Great Iwans. Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film. Ca. 1960.
AIF: 0190an01786. Checklist no. 68.

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Latif Al Ani. Hatra, a group of visitors at the Great Iwans. Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film.
Ca. 1960. AIF: 0190an01789. Checklist no. 70.

CHECKLIST

1

Walid Siti
 Arched Tower
 2023
 Insulation board, plaster of paris, and acrylic
 H. 360 cm; W. 175 cm; D. 175 cm
 Courtesy of Walid Siti
 (FIG. 10-10)

2

Latif Al Ani
 Ziggurat of Dur-Kurigalzu (Agargouf) as seen
 from a plane
 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00008b
 (FIG. 4-19)

3

Latif Al Ani
 Baghdad, Hisham Munir's Endowment Office
 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00145
 (FIG. 4-4)

4

Latif Al Ani
 Baghdad, Hisham Munir's El Rawaf Building
 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an01216
 (FIG. 4-5)

5

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *A Second Series of the
 Monuments of Nineveh*. Plate 53: "Painted
 Bricks" (Nimroud)
 1853
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
 ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1853 Folio
 (FIG. 1-11)

6

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *A Second Series of the
 Monuments of Nineveh*. Plate 54: "Painted
 Bricks" (Nimroud)
 1853
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm

ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1853 Folio
 (FIG. 1-12)

7

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *The Monuments of
 Nineveh: From Drawings Made on the Spot*.
 Plate 84: "Painted bricks from the N. W.
 Palace – Nimroud"
 1849
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
 ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1849 Folio
 (FIG. 1-13)

8

8A. Adel Abidin
 Debris. IMAM – I 1996
 2019
 Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
 H. 17 cm; W. 16 cm; D. 21 cm
 Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
 (FIG. 6-4)

8B. Adel Abidin
 Debris. IMAM – II 2004
 2019
 Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
 H. 23 cm; W. 17 cm; D. 23 cm
 Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
 (FIG. 6-4)

8C. Adel Abidin
 Debris. IMAM – III 1999
 2019
 Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
 H. 33 cm; W. 17 cm; D. 20 cm
 Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
 (FIG. 6-4)

8D. Adel Abidin
 Debris. IMAM – IV 2005
 2019
 Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
 H. 28 cm; W. 16 cm; D. 24 cm
 Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
 (FIG. 6-4)

8E. Adel Abidin
 Debris. IMAM – V 2008
 2019
 Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
 H. 27 cm; W. 15 cm; D. 23 cm
 Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
 (FIG. 6-4)

8F. Adel Abidin
 Debris. IMAM – VI 2010

2019
Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
H. 26 cm; W. 16 cm; D. 22 cm
Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
(FIG. 6-4)

8G. Adel Abidin
Debris. IMAM – VII 2006
2019
Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
H. 21 cm; W. 17 cm; D. 19 cm
Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
(FIG. 6-4)

8H. Adel Abidin
Debris. IMAM – VIII 2013
2019
Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
H. 22 cm; W. 15 cm; D. 21 cm
Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
(FIG. 6-4)

8I. Adel Abidin
Debris. IMAM – IX 2011
2019
Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
H. 21 cm; W. 17 cm; D. 19 cm
Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
(FIG. 6-4)

8J. Adel Abidin
Debris. IMAM – X 2016
2019
Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
H. 23 cm; W. 17 cm; D. 23 cm
Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
(FIG. 6-4)

8K. Adel Abidin
Debris. IMAM – XI 2009
2019
Mixed media on fragments of building blocks
H. 41 cm; W. 16 cm; D. 22 cm
Courtesy of Galerie Tanit
(FIG. 6-4)

9
Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Hisham Munir's Villa
1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (5.7 × 5.7 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00253
(FIG. 4-6)

10
Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Hisham Munir's Villa
1960

Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (5.7 × 5.7 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00269
(FIG. 4-7)

11
Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Hisham Munir's Villa
1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (5.7 × 5.7 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00268
(FIG. 4-8)

12
Latif Al Ani
Babylon, detail of a mušḫuššu dragon from
the Ishtar Gate
ca. 1961
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00630
(FIG. 1-14)

13
Frederick Charles Cooper
Austen Henry Layard. *A Second Series of
the Monuments of Nineveh*. Plate 3: "Human
headed Bull & winged figure from a gateway
in the wall surrounding Kouyunjik"
1853
Lithograph
H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
ISAW
N5380 .L3 1853 Folio
(FIG. 2-11)

14
Frederick Charles Cooper
Austen Henry Layard. *The Monuments of
Nineveh: From Drawings Made on the Spot*.
Plate 3: "A Winged human headed Lion
(Nimroud)"
1849
Lithograph
H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
ISAW
N5380 .L3 1849 Folio
(FIG. 1-10)

15
Latif Al Ani
Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Lamassu
reliefs from the palace of Tukulti-Ninurta I
1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)

Arab Image Foundation
0190an01133
(FIG. 2-12)

16

Latif Al Ani
Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Lamassu
relief from the palace of Tukulti-Ninurta I
1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01132
(FIG. 2-13)

17

Latif Al Ani
Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Ishtar
Gate
1965
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01345
(FIG. 2-8)

18

Latif Al Ani
Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Walking
lions from the Procession Street of
Nebuchadnezzar II
1965
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01348
(FIG. 2-9)

19

Hanaa Malallah
Dove – Drone Hovering over Babylon
Borsippa Twin Towers
2023
Video (sound)
Courtesy of Hanaa Malallah
(FIG. 8-13)

20

Latif Al Ani
Babylon, Babel Films shooting an ad for Arab
tourism in front of the wall of sacred bulls
and mušḫuššu dragons at the Ishtar Gate
1961
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00067
(FIG. 4-21)

21

Latif Al Ani
Babylon, musician playing the rebab in front
of the city wall
ca. 1961
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00763
(FIG. 3-5)

22

Hanaa Malallah
Babylon Curse
2023
Video (without sound)
Courtesy of Hanaa Malallah
(FIG. 8-10)

23

Hanaa Malallah
Babylon Curse I
2023
Charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, and acrylic
on paper
H. 60 cm; W. 42 cm
Courtesy of Hanaa Malallah
(FIG. 8-6)

24

Hanaa Malallah
Babylon Curse II
2023
Charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, and acrylic
on paper
H. 60 cm; W. 42 cm
Courtesy of Hanaa Malallah
(FIG. 8-7)

25

Hanaa Malallah
Babylon Curse III
2023
Charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, and acrylic
on paper
H. 60 cm; W. 42 cm
Courtesy of Hanaa Malallah
(FIG. 8-8)

26

Hanaa Malallah
Babylon Curse IV
2023
Charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, and acrylic
on paper
H. 60 cm; W. 42 cm
Hanaa Malallah
(FIG. 8-9)

27

James Felix Jones
Memoirs of Baghdad, Kurdistan and Turkish Arabia: Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, n.s., no. 63. Map of Nineveh
 1857
 Hand-colored engraving
 H. 127 cm; W. 76.2 cm
 Private collection
 (FIG. 1-7)

28

James Felix Jones
Memoirs of Baghdad, Kurdistan and Turkish Arabia: Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, n.s., no. 63. Map of Nimrud and Selamiyah
 1857
 Hand-colored engraving
 H. 127 cm; W. 76.2 cm
 Private collection
 (FIG. 1-8)

29

James Felix Jones
Memoirs of Baghdad, Kurdistan and Turkish Arabia: Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, n.s., no. 63. Map of Nineveh, the River Tigris, and the Upper Zab
 1857
 Hand-colored engraving
 H. 127 cm; W. 76.2 cm
 Private collection
 (FIG. 1-9)

30

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*. Plate 1: "The Palaces of Nimrod Restored: From a Sketch by James Ferguson Esq."
 1853
 Lithograph
 H. 39 cm; W. 60 cm
 ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1853 Folio
 (FIG. 2-10)

31

Philip Henry Delamotte
 Mr. Hormuzd Rassam vide Layard's Nineveh
 ca. 1854
 Reprinted from digital file
 Swansea Museum Library, Wales
 SWASM:SM1987.845.79
 (FIG. 2-1)

32

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *The Monuments of Nineveh: From Drawings Made on the Spot*. Plate 2: "Hall in Assyrian Palace restored"
 1849
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
 ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1849 Folio
 (FIG. 2-5)

33

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*. Plate 2: "Colossal Lion, Great Entrance (Nimroud)"
 1853
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
 ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1853 Folio
 (FIG. 2-7)

34

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*. Plate 5: "Basreliefs at an entrance to a small temple (Nimroud)"
 1853
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
 ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1853 Folio
 (FIG. 2-4)

35

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*. Plate 70: "View of the Mounds of Kouyunjik and Nebbi Yunus and of the Remains of the exterior Walls from the North"; "View of the Mounds of Kouyunjik and Nebbi Yunus and of the Remains of the exterior Walls from Mosul"
 1853
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm
 ISAW
 N5380 .L3 1853 Folio
 (FIG. 2-3)

36

Frederick Charles Cooper
 Austen Henry Layard. *The Monuments of Nineveh: From Drawings Made on the Spot*. Plate 98: "Outline of the Mound at Nimroud"
 1849
 Lithograph
 H. 38 cm; W. 57 cm

ISAW
N5380 .L3 1849 Folio
(FIG. 2-6)

37

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourists in front of the ruins of
the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00919
(FIG. 1-2)

38

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourists in front of the ruins
of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon) with
musician playing the rebab
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01178
(FIG. 4-23)

39

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourists in front of the ruins
of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon) with
musician playing the rebab
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01179
(FIG. 1-3)

40

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourists in front of the ruins of
the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00918
(FIG. 1-4)

41

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourists in front of the ruins of
the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01181
(FIG. 1-5)

42

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourists in front of the ruins of
the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00917
(FIG. 1-6)

43

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourists in front of the ruins of
the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01266
(FIG. 4-22)

44

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, tourist in front of the ruins of the
Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon) with musician
playing the rebab
1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01177
(FIG. 1-1)

45

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of
Ctesiphon)
ca. 1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00655
(P. 1)

46

Latif Al Ani
Ctesiphon, ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of
Ctesiphon) with musician playing the rebab
ca. 1964
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00560
(FIG. 4-20)

47

Latif Al Ani
 Ctesiphon, aerial view of the ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00032
 (FIG. 3-8)

48

Latif Al Ani
 Ctesiphon, view of the site
 ca. 1964
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an01595
 (FIG. 4-16)

49

Latif Al Ani
 Ctesiphon, ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
 1965
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00975
 (P. 158)

50

Latif Al Ani
 Ctesiphon, the ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon) from a Bedouin tent; a *dallah* in the foreground
 1965
 Chromogenic process film negative on cellulose acetate film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00980
 (FIG. 4-17)

51

Latif Al Ani
 Ctesiphon, tourist in front of the ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
 1964
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00977
 (FIG. 4-11)

52

Latif Al Ani
 Ctesiphon, tourist in a Bedouin tent in front of the ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
 ca. 1964

Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an01593
 (FIG. 4-24)

53

Latif Al Ani
 Ctesiphon, tourist in front of the ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon)
 1964
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00978
 (FIG. 4-12)

54

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 1. Dulab
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-5)

55

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 2. Fallujah
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-4)

56

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 3. Ramadi
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-6)

57

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 4. Habbaniyah
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-7)

58

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 5. Ziggurat
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-8)

59

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 6. Diyala
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-9)

60

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 7. Hit
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-10)

61

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 8. Saqlawiyah
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-11)

62

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 9. Hatra
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-3)

63

Nadine Hattom
 Shadows. 10. Ashur
 2016
 Archival pigment print
 H. 46 cm; W. 66 cm
 Courtesy of Nadine Hattom
 (FIG. 7-12)

64

Mahmoud Obaidi
 Fragments
 2015
 Weathering steel
 Dimensions vary

Courtesy of Mahmoud Obaidi
 Obaidi 2015 1/3 + AP
 (FIGS. 9-2 and 9-3)

65

Latif Al Ani
 Hatra, The Great Iwans
 ca. 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (3.5 × 2.5 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an01784
 (FIG. 4-14)

66

Latif Al Ani
 Hatra, The Great Iwans
 ca. 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (3.5 × 2.5 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an01788
 (FIG. 4-15)

67

Latif Al Ani
 Hatra, Temple (Iwan) of the sun god Shamash
 ca. 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (3.5 × 2.5 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an01781
 (P. 8)

68

Latif Al Ani
 Hatra, The Great Iwans
 ca. 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (3.5 × 2.5 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an01786
 (P. 142)

69

Latif Al Ani
 Hatra, tourist in front of the statue of Abu
 Bint Deimun, Wife of Santruq I
 ca. 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
 film (6 × 6 cm)
 Arab Image Foundation
 0190an00648
 (FIG. 4-13)

70

Latif Al Ani
 Hatra, a group of visitors at the Great Iwans
 ca. 1960
 Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate

film (3.5 × 2.5 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01789
(P. 148)

71

Latif Al Ani
Hatra, head of statue
1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00707
(FIG. 3-6)

72

Latif Al Ani
Hatra, The Temple (Iwan) of Shamash, mask
(architectural decoration)
ca. 1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (3.5 × 2.5 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01779
(FIG. 3-11)

73

Latif Al Ani
Hatra, South Iwan (Hall, No. 12), eagle
(architectural relief)
ca. 1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (3.5 × 2.5 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an01776
(FIG. 3-10)

74

Latif Al Ani
Hatra, Statue of Abu Bint Deimun, Wife of
Santruq I
ca. 1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (8 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00818
(FIG. 3-9)

75

Walid Siti
Tower Series
2020
Crayon and acrylic on paper
H. 210 cm; W. 142 cm
Walid Siti
(FIG. 10-9)

76

Walid Siti
To the Unknown Architect
2022
Video (sound)
Courtesy of Walid Siti
(FIGS. 10-2, 10-6, and 10-7)

77

Walid Siti
"The Seven Towers" I Series
2013
Graphite, colored crayon, and acrylic wash
on paper
H. 76.2 cm; W. 55.9 cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Ipeknur
and Shwan Ibrahim Taha, 2014
2014.429
(FIG. 10-8)

78

Latif Al Ani
Samarra, the spiral minaret of the Great
Mosque
1959
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00048
(FRONT COVER)

79

Latif Al Ani
Samarra, the spiral minaret of the Great
Mosque
1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00115
(FIG. 10-2)

80

Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Umma Park. Khaled al-Rahal's
Motherhood Monument
ca. 1960
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00612
(FIG. 1-15)

81

Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Jewad Selim's Freedom Monument
at Tahrir Square.
1961
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate

film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00047
(FIG. 3-7)

82

Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Jewad Selim's Freedom Monument
at Tahrir Square
1961
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00070
(FIG. 4-18)

83

Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Arab Biennal. Khaled al-Rahal,
Maquette
ca. 1971
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00558
(FIG. 4-10)

84

Latif Al Ani
Baghdad, Jewad Selim's Freedom Monument
at Tahrir Square
1961
Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate
film (6 × 6 cm)
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00044
(FIG. 4-9)

85

Photographer unknown
Portrait of Latif Al Ani
1956
Print (12.5 × 10.3 cm)
H. 30 cm; W. 11.81 cm
Arab Image Foundation
0190an00536
(BACK COVER)

86

Sahim Omar Kalifa and Jurgen Buedts
Latif Al Ani
2010–14
Digital still from *Iraq's Invisible Beauty*
Jurgen Buedts
(FIG. 4-1)

87

Sahim Omar Kalifa and Jurgen Buedts
Latif Al Ani
2010–14

Digital still from *Iraq's Invisible Beauty*
Jurgen Buedts
(FIG. 4-2)

88

Sahim Omar Kalifa and Jurgen Buedts
Latif Al Ani
2010–14
Digital still from *Iraq's Invisible Beauty*
Jurgen Buedts
(FIG. 4-3)



Latif Al Ani. Ctesiphon, ruins of the Tāq Kasrā (Arch of Ctesiphon). Gelatin silver negative on cellulose acetate film. 1965. AIF: 0190an00975. Checklist no. 49.

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Courtesy of Cyngor Abertawe: Casgliad Amgueddfa Abertawe. Swansea Council: Swansea Museum Collection: fig. 2-1.

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