



Talk:

The Times of Revolution in Jawad Salim's Monument to Freedom

SARA PURSLEY

Talk:

Pre-occupation, Epistemic Violence, and Collateral Damage in Iraq

SINAN ANTOON

MAY
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THU

1:30–5:00 pm
McCune Conference Room, 6020 HSSB

The Iraqi artist Jawad Salim's famous *Monument to Freedom*, which still stands in Baghdad's Liberation Square, is usually read as a linear historical narrative of the Iraqi nationalist movement and the 1958 revolution it produced. Pursley's talk explores heterogeneous conceptions of time in the work, including depictions of cyclical forms of temporality that reference Khaldunian historical time, Shi'i messianic time, and the time of mourning. I suggest that these forms of time do not work against promises of radical change in the monument, but, on the contrary, give such promises more imaginative purchase than they typically achieve in linear modernization narratives, with their tendency to open onto a singular and static future.

Sara Pursley is Assistant Professor in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 added new layers to an already complex and crowded history of violence with multiple villains and multitudes of victims. Much of the discourse on Iraqi violence tended, by and large, to reduce and essentialize it by attributing it either to the supposed resilience of trans-historical, ethno-sectarian conflicts and identities, which are taken to be side-effects of an inherently violent and monolithic Islam, or to the Iraq-as-a-failed-state model, cobbled together by British colonialism in 1917. Antoon's talk will reflect on these themes and take stock of the aftermath of war fifteen years later, in which Iraqis are still paying the heavy price and confronting the destructive effects of an imperial blunder.

Sinan Antoon is an award-winning author and Associate Professor at the Gallatin School at New York University.

Followed by a reception. Sponsored by the IHC's Crossings + Boundaries Series and by the IHC's Harry Girvetz Memorial Endowment. Photo Credit: Encounter Productions/About Baghdad