

artesmundi¹⁰

MOUNIRA
AL SOLH — NIGEL PRINCE

RUSHDI ANWAR
— OMAR KHOLEIF

CAROLINA
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— LIV BRISSACH

ALIA FARID — BRIDGET GUARSCI

NAOMI RINCÓN
GALLARDO — LAURA G GUTIÉRREZ

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FANTASMIC NOT PHANTASMIC: CROSSING THRESHOLDS WITH RUSHDI ANWAR

Home is not where you were born. Home is where all your attempts to escape cease. – Naguib Mahfouz¹

The beginning of my life had no pictures in it. Except, that is, for the few pictures that puncture through the smog of suppressed memory. The first two decades of life revolved around time spent dreaming, conjuring, and eventually summoning an escape from traumas so recurrent that they soon became loose in definition, contour and form, so much so that I could no longer remember the details. The performative art of becoming a historian, contrarily, would rely on the precise act of detailed reference and citation.² An

¹ This quote is commonly attributed to Mahfouz and was provided to me by the artist, Rushdi Anwar.

² For more extensive debates on the study of knowledge and archives, please refer to the following key sources: Azoulay, Ariella Aisha, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, Brooklyn and London: Verso Books, 2019; Hartman, Saidiya, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, London: Serpent's Tail, 2021; Hall, Stuart, *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*, London: Penguin, 2018; Tagg, John, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2021; Moten, Fred, *Black and Blur (Consent Not to Be a Single Being)*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, (2017).

Placeless Burden: Towards of Uncertainty, 2020
Digital photograph on paper. Photography/
Image courtesy: Rushdi Anwar

Fotograff digidol ar bapur. Fotografaeth/
Delwedd trwy garedigwyd: Rushdi Anwar

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Nid y man lle cawsoch eich geni yw eich cartref. Cartref yw lle mae'r angen i ddianc yn dod i ben. – Naguib Mahfouz¹

Nid oedd lluniau ar ddechrau fy mywyd. Ac eithrio, hynny yw, yr ychydig luniau sy'n pigo drwy niwl cof a ffrwynwyd. Roedd dau ddegawd cyntaf fy mywyd yn gyfnod a dreuliwyd yn breuddwydio, yn galw delweddau i'r cof, ac yn y diwed yn chwilio am ffodd o ddianc oddi wrth brofiadau trawmatig a oedd yn codi mor aml nes eu bod cyn bo hir yn mynd yn annelwig o ran diffiniad, amlinell a ffurf, cymaint felly fel na allwn gofio'r manylion mwyach. Byddai celfyddyd berfformiadol hanesydd, ar y llaw arall, yn dibynnu ar y weithred benodol o gyfeiriadu a dyfynnu.² Arbwraf

¹ Priodolir y dyfyniad hwn yn aml i Mahfouz ac fe'i rhoddwyd i mi gan yr artist, Rushdi Anwar.

² Am ddadleuon manylach ynglŷn ag astudio gwybodaeth ac archifau, gweler y prif ffynonellau a ganlyn: Azoulay, Ariella Aisha, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, Brooklyn a Llundain: Verso Books, 2019; Hartman, Saidiya, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, Llundain: Serpent's Tail, 2021; Hall, Stuart, *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*, Llundain: Penguin, 2018; Tagg, John, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2021; Moten, Fred, *Black and Blur (Consent Not to Be a Single Being)*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, (2017).

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experience dependent upon substantiating pieces of indexical data and meta-data that corroborate [*sic: sanction*] the *historical* into being. The interiority of "feeling", of evoking the artist's inner world, thus emerges as an act of defiance against notarised history.³

German Expressionism, a movement that began in the early 20th century in cinema and the visual arts, is a key anchor that reorientates the ocular inwards. Creative output during this time materialised as a response to Germany's isolation during the interwar period. Adroit spectators will note that the most celebrated of these examples, such as the silent films *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, 1920, and *Nosferatu*, 1922, were codified within the horror film genre – moving images staged within a scenography of visual and psychological distortion. Recognised for their abnormal stylistic detailing, aided by the development of special effects, the genre has since that time become closely associated with a visioning of so-called madness, as well as with repressed subconscious desire; an experience of seeing and feeling aesthetic pleasures, indulgences in what was once perceived as a form of visual chaos.

The slanted walls, irregular ceiling heights and optical shifts in depth and field found in *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* for instance, can be read as a specific detail that operated outside 19th-century modernism's lush romanticism. In painting, the

³ Price, Dorothy *German Expressionism: Der Blau Reiter and its Legacies*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022.

yn dibynnu ar brofi darnau o ddata mynegeiol a metadata sy'n cadarnhau [*sic: cymeradwyol*] yr *hanesyddol* i fodolaeth. O ganlyniad, mae elfen fewnol "teimlo", portreadu byd mewnol yr artist, yn dod i'r amlwg fel gweithred o herio hanes sydd wedi'i ardystio.³

Mae Mynegiadaeth Almaenaidd, mudiad a ddechreuodd ar ddechrau'r 20fed ganrif ym maes sinema a'r celfyddydau gweledol, yn angor allweddol sy'n ailgyfeirio'r gweladwy tuag at i mewn. Yn ystod y cyfnod hwn ymddangosodd cynrych creadigol fel ymateb i unigrywyd yr Almaen yn ystod y cyfnod rhwng y rhyfeloedd. Bydd gwylwyr craff yn sylwi bod yr enghrefftiau mwyaf adnabyddus, er engraifft ffilmiau tawel *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, 1920, a *Nosferatu*, 1922, wedi'u codeiddio yn y genre ffilm arswyd – delweddau symudol wedi'u llwyfannu o fewn senograffiaeth o a夫uniadau gweledol a seicolegol. Yn cael eu cydnabod oherwydd eu manylion arddulliadol anormal, â chymorth datblygiad effeithiau arbennig, mae'r genre ers hynny wedi datblygu cysylltiad agos â darlunio gwallgo'rwydd honedig, yn ogystal ag awydd isymwybodol wedi'i ffrwyno; profiad o weld ei theimlo pleserau esthetig, ymbleseru yn yr hyn a oedd yn cael ei weld ar un adeg fel math o anhreft gweledol.

Gellir darllen y walau ar ogwydd, uchder afreolaidd y nenfwd a newidiadau optegol mewn dyfnder a maes a welir yn *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* er engraifft, fel manylion penodol

³ Price, Dorothy *German Expressionism: Der Blau Reiter and its Legacies*, Manceinion: Manchester University Press, 2022.

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scenes by figures such as Franz Marc, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee eschewed the neat folds of realist representation. The incongruous line, the gestural brush mark, the ethereal and metaphorical – all this would find favour instead. These were acts of recodification, and of declassification, creating a space of value within the spectator's potential to infer and draw corollaries. Contrary to post-modernity's cerebral "meta-musings" on subjectivity,⁴ this art was orientated towards the body as a vessel for feeling, which in turn could elicit interpretive readings that were brittle and violent, as much as they could thrill with the sublime of not-completely-knowing the artist's intent.

This reading of the expressionistic layer cake – the elucidation of these complex, often contradictory aesthetic, social and political tenants, is where the art of Rushdi Anwar finds root. Conversely, the route of his "inner feelings" and their reification emerges from a culturally situated lived experience, one, not unlike my own, where memory is sealed, ruptured, unbuckled and redrawn. Anwar was born and raised in Iraq, of Kurdish heritage. To begin to define or make any proclamation of what it means to be a "Kurd" is a scalable burden, one that feels an epic task to delimit. For to be Kurdish, in one view of the collective imagination, could simultaneously suggest an Iraqi identity, as much as it elides any such concept of possible

⁴ Cohen, Noam, "Meta-Musings: The Self-Reference Craze", *The New Republic*, 5 September 1988.

existence. To be Kurdish often means to bear no official language, or rather to embody myriad, creolised versions of speech. One's mother tongue may be one of several of the Zaza-Gorani languages, which belong to an intricate web of Iranian vernaculars, or it could be prescribed as Arabic, as a necessity for survival. For some Kurdish people, identification with the Arabic language existed due to the sustained influence of pan-Arab ideologies, which reached their political apex in the 1950s. But this encouraging prospect did not hold or unify. Formally, as a state, Kurdistan does not exist – despite the more than 44 million people who claim this political identity. It is a *fantasme* in the Freudian sense that it is tethered to an inconsistent and irregular imaginary – a series of repressed disguises, repressions.⁵

An ethnicity, a religious category, they have been called, but they are not, officially. Kurdish daily life is invisible to many. The majority of the accounted population is associated with the 16 government identified refugee camps in Iraqi Kurdistan, to the north-east of the country, which house over two million individuals, and offer shelter to millions more asylum seekers, increasingly, from Syria.⁶ I do not articulate these facts to

⁵ I glean my current usage here from the critical and philosophical positions found in Scheid, Kirsten L., *Fantasmic Objects: Art and Sociality from Lebanon, 1920–1950*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2022.

⁶ Figures vary according to source. I consulted recent figures according to the charitable organisation, The Kurdish Project: <https://thekurdishproject.org/infographics/kurds-and-the-refugee-crisis/>, accessed 1 August 2023.

reduce an artist to their biography, but rather to make evident the blurred context for and through which existence springs for this artist. Rushdi Anwar may have grown up in a family that was supportive of his creative impulses, but by the time he graduated from high school in the late 1980s, the possibilities of him pursuing his passions seemed slim to none. The Academy of Fine Arts, also referred to as the Baghdad College of Fine Arts, one of the first formally constituted art schools in West Asia, was not a possibility for him. Enrolment required that students be registered as supporters of the ruling Ba'ath Party, and instruction was performed primarily in Arabic – privileging Arabic speakers (that is, Arabs not Kurds).⁷

Kinship emerged in the early 1990s for Anwar through the support of artist Ismail Khayat. Working out of Sulaymaniyah, a city in the south of Kurdistan, Khayat was recognised for paintings that sought to engage and disentangle mythologies that related to West Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean region. Rushdi Anwar's life would then take a turn, first when he lived as an asylum seeker in Turkey, and then when he emigrated to Australia under a UN-sanctioned programme. Here Anwar found another mentor in Dr Muhammed Kamal, a scholar in Islamic studies at the University of Melbourne, who encouraged Anwar's academic pursuits, opening a world of intertextual references that stretched from Andalucian

⁷ Please note that the term Arab is a contested one within the field of ethnicity studies, ie regarding whether it is indeed a term that can be used to constitute an ethnicity in itself.

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times into the "imaginal" realm of philosopher Ibn al- 'Arabī, engaging the artist in histories of Sufism, mysticism, and their possible transcendence.

Anwar did not speak English upon arrival in Australia. His formal language as an artist was and continues to be a container for an experience that is as singular as it is shared. Vessels thus play an integral part in the artist's practice, serving as spaces to collect memory, but they also operate as portals into multiple seats of prospective imagination – a site for the re-authoring of history. In *We Have Found in the Ashes What We Lost in the Fire*, 2018, 12 wooden boxes are filled with heirlooms of varying form and context. These reanimated vestiges propel the viewer into a surreal journey, one of reconciliation and reconstitution for the artist. The project began after the Battle of Mosul (2016–17), which resulted in the Iraqi and Kurdish government retaking the city of Mosul, which had been seized by ISIS in 2014. After Kurdish forces liberated the city, the nation's second largest, it lay a barren shell of its former self. In 2016, Anwar returned to Iraq after an extended absence and spent four months initially observing the lives of the Kurdish community across seven refugee camps. The segregation, based on people's presumed religion or beliefs, although unsurprising to some, tugged at Anwar's longing for possible coexistence. In conversation, we discussed references to Alhambra as the last Muslim state of Al-Andalus. Anwar sketched out a prospective space in history that, although not without its complications, was suggestive of a possible non-hierarchical way to live. "The creole, the intertwined,

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a oedd yn gweithredu y tu allan i ramantiaeth gyfoethog modernaeth y 19eg ganrif. Ym maes paentio, roedd y golygfeydd gan ffigurau megis Franz Marc, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Wassily Kandinsky a Paul Klee yn osgoi pligiau taclus portreadu realaidd. Y llinell anghyson, y marc brwsh ystumiol, yr etheraidd a'r trosiadol – dyma yn hytrach yr hyn a fyddai'n ennill ffafra. Roedd y rhain yn weithredoedd o aiglodeiddio, ac ailddosbarthu, creu gofod o werth ym mhontensial y gwylwr i wneud casgliadau a ffurfio canlynebau. Yn groes i "feta-synfyfyrion" ymenyddol ôl-foderneidd ar oddrychedd,⁴ roedd y gwaith celf hwn yn gogwydd tuag at y corff fel cyfrwng i deimlo, a allai yn ei dro ysgogi darlleniadau deongliadol a oedd yn frau a threisgar, yn gymaint ag y gallent gynhyrfu â'r arddull addurnol o beidio â gwylod yn iawn beth yw bwriad yr artist.

Yn y darlleniad hwn o'r gacen haenau fynegiadol – esbonio'r elfennau cymhleth hyn, sy'n aml yn gwrteddweud ei gilydd o safbwyt esthetig, cymdeithasol a gwleidyddol – y mae gweiddiau celf Rushdi Anwar. I'r gwrtwhyneb, mae trywydd ei "deimladau mewnol" a'u diriaethiad yn datblygu o bobriad personal diwylliannol, un nid annhebyg i'm profiad i, lle mae cof yn cael ei selio, ei agor, ei ddatod a'i ail-luniadu. Cafodd Anwar, sydd o dreftadaeth Gwrdiadd, ei eni a'i fagu yn Irac. Mae dechrau diffinio neu wneud unrhyw ddatganiad ynglŷn â beth mae'n ei olygu i fod yn "Gwrd" yn dasg enfawr, y mae'n anodd iawn pennu ffnniaw

⁴ Cohen, Noam, "Meta-Musings: The Self-Reference Craze", *The New Republic*, 5 Medi 1988.

iddi. Oherwydd gallai bod yn Gwrdiadd, mewn un agwedd o'r dychymyg cyfunol, awgrymu hunaniaeth Iracaidd, ac yr un pryd, gallai ollwng unrhyw gysyniad o'r fath o fodolaeth bosibl. Mae bod yn Gwrdiadd yn aml yn golygu bod heb iaith swyddogol, neu yn hytrach, gorffori myrdd o fersynau cymysgrwy o iaith. Gallai mamaith rhywun fod yn un o nifer o'r ieithoedd Zaza-Gorani, sy'n perthyn i we gymhleth o ieithoedd llafar Iranaidd, neu gellid ei nodi fel Arabeg, sy'n angenreidiol er mwyn goroesi. I rai pobl Gwrdiadd, roedd uniaethu â'r iaith Arabeg yn digwydd oherwydd dylanwad parhaus ideolegau pan-Arabaidd, a gyrraeddodd eu huchafbwyt gwleidyddol yn y 1950au. Ond nid oedd y gobaith calonogol hwn yn dal nac yn uno. Yn ffurfiol, fel gwladwriaeth, nid yw Cwrdistan yn bodoli – er bod mwy na 44 miliwn o bobl yn hawlio'r hunaniaeth wleiddyddol hon. Mae'n *fantasmé* yn yr ystyr Freudaidd ei fod ynghlwm wrth ddarlu meddyliol anghyson ac afreolaidd – cyfres o guddwigoedd gorthrymedig.⁵

Maent wedi cael eu galw'n categori ethnig, yn categori crefyddol, ond nid ydynt yn perthyn i'r categoriâu hyn yn swyddogol. Mae bywyd bob dydd Cwrdiadd yn anweledig i lawer. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r boblogaeth y mae cyfrif onhon yn gysylltiedig â'r 16 o wersyloedd ffaoduriaid a gefnogir gan y llywodraeth yn y Gwrdistan Iracaidd, yng ngogledd-ddwyrain y wlad, sy'n gartref i dros ddwy filiwn o unigolion, ac yn cynnig

⁵ Rwyf wedi casglu'r hyn a ddefnyddiaf yma o safbwytiau beirniadol ac athronyddol yn Scheid, Kirsten L., *Fantasmic Objects: Art and Sociality from Lebanon, 1920–1950*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2022.

Iloches i filiynau yn rhagor o geiswyr lloches, mwy a mwy ohonynt yn dod o Syria.⁶ Nid wyf yn rhannu'r feithiau hyn er mwyn cyfngu artist i'w fywgraffiad, ond yn hytrach er mwyn egluro'r cyd-destun aneglur sy'n rhoi bodolaeth i'r artist hwn. Mae'n bosibl bod Rushdi Anwar wedi'i fagu mewn teulu a oedd yn gefnogol i'w ddiddordebau creadigol, ond erbyn iddo raddio o'r ysgol uwchradd yn y 1980au hwyr, nid oedd llawer o obaith iddo ddilyn ei ddiddordebau. Nid oedd yr Academi Celf Gain, y cyfeirid ati hefyd fel Coleg Celf Gain Baghdad, un o'r ysgolion celf ffurfiol cyntaf yng Ngorllewin Asia, yn bosibl wrwydd iddo. Er mwyn cael eu derbyn roedd yn ofynnol i'r myfyrwyr fod wedi'u cofrestru fel cefnogwyr y Blaid Ba'ath a oedd mewn grym, ac roedd yr hyfforddiant mewn Arabeg yn bennaf – gan roi mwy o faint i siaradwyr Arabeg (hynny yw, Arabiaid nad Cwrdiaid).⁷

Newidiodd pethau i Anwar yn y 1990au cynnar drwy gefnogaeth yr artist Ismail Khayat. Roedd Khayat yn gweithio o Sulaymaniyah, dinas yn ne Cwrdistan, ac yn cael ei adnabod am baentiadau a oedd yn ceisio defnyddio a datblethu mytholeg a oedd yn gysylltiedig â Gorllewin Asia ac ardal Dwyrain Môr y Canoldir. Daeth tro ar fyd i Rushdi Anwar, yn gyntaf pan oedd

⁶ Mae'r ffigurau'n amrywio gan ddibynnu ar y ffynhonnell. Edrychais ar y ffigurau diweddar yn ôl sefydliad elusennol The Kurdish Project: <https://thekurdishproject.org/infographics/kurds-and-the-refugee-crisis/>, cyrchwyd 1 Awst 2023.

⁷ Sylwer bod y term Arab yn un dadleol ym maes astudiaethau ethnigrwydd, h.y. o ran a yw mewn gwirionedd yn derm y gellir ei ddefnyddio i olygu ethnigrwydd ynddo'i hun.

yn byw fel ceisiwr lloches yn Nhwrci, ac yna pan ymfudodd i Awstralia dan raglen wedi'i chymeradwyo gan y Cenhedloedd Unedig. Yno canfu Anwar fentor arall yn Dr Muhammed Kamal, ysgolhaig mewn astudiaethau Islamiaid ym Mhrifysgol Melbourne, a anogodd ddiddordebau academaidd Anwar, gan agor byd o gyfeiriadau rhyngdestunol a oedd yn ymestyn o'r cyfnod Andalwsaidd i faes "delweddaidd" yr athronydd Ibn al- 'Arabī, gan enny'n diddordeb yr artist mewn hanesion am Swffiaeth, cyfriniaeth, a'u trosgynoldeb posibl.

Nid oedd Anwar yn siarad Saesneg pan gyrraeddodd Awstralia. Mae ei iaith ffurfiol fel artist yn parhau'n gyfrwng i brofiad sy'n unigol ac yn gyffredin. O ganlyniad, mae cynwysyddol yn chwarae rhan annotad yn ymarfer yr artist, gan fod yn lleoedd i gasglu atgofion, a hefyd yn byrth i nifer o feysydd delweddau dychmygol ynglŷn â'r dyfodol – safle i ailsgrifennu hanes. Yn *We Have Found in the Ashes What We Lost in the Fire*, 2018, mae 12 blwch pren wedi'u llenwi â thrysorau teuluol o wahanol ffur a chyd-destun. Mae'r pethau bach hyn sydd wedi'u hafifywogi yn gyrru'r gwylwr ar daith surreal, un o aiglymodi ac ad-drefnu i'r artist. Dechreuodd y prosiect ar ôl Brwydr Mosul (2016–17), a arweiniodd at y llywodraeth Iracaidd a Chwrdiadd yn adfeddiannu dinas Mosul, a oedd wedi'i chipio gan ISIS yn 2014. Ar ôl i luoeedd Cwrdiadd ryddhau'r ddinas, yr ail fwyaf yn y wlad, gorwedda'i gragen ddiffaith o'r hyn a fu. Yn 2016, dychwelodd Anwar i Irac ar ôl absenoldeb math a threuliodd bedwar mis i ddechrau'n arsylwi ar fywydau'r gymuned Gwrdiadd mewn saith gwersyll ffaoduriaid. Roedd y gwahanu, ar sail crefydd neu gredoau tybiedig pobl, er nad oedd yn syndod i rai, yn perni i Anwar hiraethu am

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transcultural subject existed in a mixed context for hundreds of years, together, in peace [In Iraq]", Anwar mentioned. Why was this no longer to be?

The composition of these boxes evokes a series of light boxes that Anwar found amid the rubble of the local church in the town of Bashiqa in December 2016. The images framed in the boxes were from the Stations of the Cross, of Christ on the journey to Crucifixion. Civilian women's clothing – assumed to have belonged to individuals killed by ISIS, had accumulated around weathered pews, dirt and detritus, a sarcophagus formed. *We Have Found in the Ashes What We Lost in the Fire* assembles research materials by the artist that document the expansive and inclusive history of both Islamism [*sic*] and historic religious conquests. Here they sit in an open casket, charred, in epoxy, a toxic chemical developed through oil production. Geometric patterning printed on each box's cover speaks to the infinite possibilities developed during the Islamic Golden Age (8th to 14th century) – a time that bore witness to innovations in technology, from writing systems and architecture through to the blueprint of the pinhole camera. The last of these was set out by polymath Ibn al-Haytham in *Book of Optics*, believed to have been published around 1011 and 1021.

Laid atop plinths of human height, these containers begin to resemble bodies – the decay of one human history overlaid with the speculative prospect of another person (the artist's) act of return and reconciliation. At the National Museum Cardiff, across from these coffers sit three pictures in black colonial era-style frames. The wreckage of this site is presented

as three photographs bordered by these frames and sit atop a wallpaper of the historic Al-Nabi Yunus Mosque. This significant icon of Islamic architecture and tradition since 1365 was demolished by ISIS in 2017, due to a paranoid belief that it had become a site of "apostasy". The palimpsest-like presentation, layering image upon image, speaks to Anwar's interest in decay not as an inevitable fact of existence but rather as an errant product of religious militarism. The consequence is that one's own idols become targets: ISIS began to shell their own buildings, until there was nothing left but ideology.

Nearby are presented photographs treated with soot (the smoke and latent embers of the decaying corpse of history). *A Few Lines of History*, 2011, reveals pictures of a quotidian life that has been blighted by oppressive dogma. Inspection of the accompanying prose by the poet Sherko Bekas reveals this to be a treacherous setting. The scene is of the massacre and seizure of the city of Halabja, Anwar's hometown, through a chemical attack. Thousands of civilians died, including several members of Anwar's family. The intimate scale of the pictures paired with their painterly aesthetic suggests a possibility for collective imagination.

It is one that is abstracted into blackness; it awaits a painter to recompose the scene and setting. Rushdi Anwar's vestiges of time seem to sit in longing, that is until he locates us within his orbit of inquiry, situating history as it has been lived and experienced. The installation, *A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace*, 2023, satirically delineates the invention of the modern "Middle East" as we know it by exploring the historical

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context of the polemical Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916. The charter was a colonial document, often referred to as a "secret treaty", that was the result of ambivalent posturing between two diplomats, which eventually divided what is largely the Levantine region and its surrounding nations through a mythical "line in the sand".⁸ The culprits were British and French diplomats – Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot, respectively. In this deal, France took hold of Lebanon, Syria, south-eastern Turkey, northern Iraq and the north Kurdistan region. The British effectively took control of Palestine, Jordan, southern Iraq and the southern Kurdistan region. This cartography – one that ruptured any possible unification along political or identitarian lines – was anchored around certain access requirements for both countries at the end of the Ottoman Empire. It ensured a fractious colonial stronghold, and would begin a process of continued extraction, dissection and negligence, one so harrowing that millions have been displaced from within this region in the intervening years.

In Anwar's presentation, this nebulous cartography is hand embroidered on a prayer rug that is positioned towards the *qibla* (the Muslim prayer point). Amid your eye's line of sight are two images of Sykes and Picot, developed with the scale and the decorative pomp of the historic "swagger portrait", which

⁸ Referring to the popular historical account, Barr, James, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France, and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East*, New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 2012.

was a self-important gesture, one that proffered the preserve of the aristocratic. A gramophone nearby emits an unfolding bricolage of sounds gleaned from radio propaganda by colonial forces. These whir into mantras and discussions from and about contemporary extremist political entities from across a region that today might be delineated as the "Arabian Peninsula", "West Asia", "the Gulf", "the Middle East" – although it is none of those things, not to those who inhabit those sites today.⁹

The boxed-in colony constructed by Sykes–Picot ricochets across the gallery to reveal a world where the mind and body are subtracted from the object of life itself. Anwar's interest in the interiority of self plays a vital role in our understanding. Heirlooms are reconstituted, burned and materialise again in different forms – evoking a skin burnished by the sting of time. Anwar's containers, his fragments of memory, are part of a body abstracted, one that lives unaware of the potential of being made "welcome" – his is a body constantly awaiting expulsion. Whether Anwar was able to appear cognisant to himself as his body ventured into the unsettled realm of absence from the phantasmic (the mythic) to the fantasmic

⁹ These terms, often relics of an imperial past and a militarised language that sought to divide and conquer such lands and its peoples, are not an appropriate or just mechanism through which to construct an ontology, perspective or reflection of this world. This is something that I have discussed with Rushdi Anwar, the artist, as a site of mutual concern. We are in search of our own language, eternally.

'FANTASMIC' NID 'PHANTASMIC': CROESI TROTHWYON GYDA RUSHDI ANWAR

gydfodolaeth bosibl. Mewn sgwrs, buom yn trafod cyfeiriadau at Alhambra fel gwladwriaeth Fwslimaidd olaf Al-Andalus. Amlinellodd Anwar ofod posibl mewn hanes a oedd, er nad oedd heb ei gymhlethododau, yn awgrymu ffordd anhierachaidd bosibl o fyw. "Roedd y greoliaith, y gwrthrych cymhlethedig, trawsddiwylliannol yn bodoli mewn cyd-destun cymysg am gannoedd o flynyddoedd, gyda'i gilydd, mewn heddwch [yn Irc], meddai Anwar. Pam na allai hyn fod mwyach?

Mae cyfansoddiad y blychau hyn yn sbardun i gyfres o flychau galau y daeth Anwar o hyd iddynt yng nghanol rwbwl yr eglwys leol yn nhref Bashiqa ym mis Rhagfyr 2016. Roedd y delweddua a fframiwyd yn y blychau yn rhai o Orsafoedd y Groes, o Grist ar y daith i'r Croeshoeliad. Roedd gwisgoedd menywod cyffredin – y cymerwyd eu bod yn perthyn i unigolion a laddwyd gan ISIS – o amgylch seddau ag ôl tywydd arnynt, budreddi a malurion, ac allor garreg wedi'i ffurio. Mae *We Have Found in the Ashes What We Lost in the Fire* yn cydosod deunyddiau ymchwil gan yr artist sy'n dogfennu hanes eang a chynhwysol concwestau Islamiaidd a choncwstau crefyddol hanesyddol. Yma maent yn eistedd mewn cased agored, wedi deifio, mewn epocsi, cemegyn gwenwynig a ddatblygir wrth gynhyrchu olew. Mae patrymau geometrig wedi'u hargraffu ar glawr pob blwch yn tystio i'r posibiliadau di-ben-draw a ddatblygwyd yn ystod yr Oes Aur Islamiaidd (yr 8fed i'r 14eg ganrif) – cyfnod a welodd arloesi mewn technoleg, o systemau ysgrifennu a phensaernïaeth i lasbrint y camera twll pin. Amlinellwyd yr olaf o'r rhain gan y polymath Ibn al-Haytham yn *Book of Optics*, y credir ei fod wedi'i gyhoeddi tua 1011 a 1021.

Mae'r cynwysyddion hyn, sydd wedi'u gosod ar blinthau o daldra dyn, yn dechrau ymdebygu i gyrrf – dirywiad un cyfnod yn hanes dyn wedi'i drososod â gobaith damcaniaethol gweithred rhywun arall (yr artist) o ddychwelyd a chymodi. Yn Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Caerdydd, ar draws y coffrâu hyn saif tri llun mewn fframiau du arddull cyfnod trefedigaethol. Cyflwynir malurion y safle hwn fel tri ffotograff â'r fframiau hyn o'u cwmpas, ac maent wedi'u gosod ar bapur wal o'r Mosg Al-Nabi Yunus hanesyddol. Dymchwelwyd yr icon hwn a oedd ag arwyddocâd pensaerniol a thraddodiadol Islamiaidd er 1365 gan ISIS yn 2017, oherwydd cred baranoiaidd ei fod wedi mynd yn safle "apostasi". Mae'r cyflwyniad tebyg i balimpsest hwn, sy'n gosod haenau o ddelweddua ar ben ei gilydd, yn dangos diddordeb Anwar mewn dirywiad nid fel ffaith anorfol o fodolaeth ond yn hytrach fel cynyrrch anghywir militariaeth grefyddol. Y canlyniad yw bod y pethau rydych chi eich hun yn eu haddoli yn dod yn dargedau: dechreuoedd ISIS beledu eu hadeiladau eu hunain, nes bod dim ar ôl ond ideoleg.

Heb fod ymhell cyflwynir ffotograffau wedi'u trin â huddyg! (mwg a marwor cudd corff pydredig hanes). Mae *A Few Lines of History*, 2011, yn datgelu lluniau o fywyd beunyddiol sydd wedi'i ddifetha gan ddogma gormesol. Mae archwiliad o'r rhyddiaith gysylltiedig gan y bardd Sherko Bekas yn datgelu'r dichell. Yr olyga yw lladd a chipio dinas Halabja, y dref le magwyd Anwar, drwy ymosodiad cemegol. Collodd miloedd o bobl gyffredin eu bywydau, gan gynnwys aelodau o deulu Anwar. Mae graddfa fanwl y lluniau yngyd â u hestheteg arlunyddol yn awgrymu posibilrwydd ar gyfer dychymyg cyfunol.

Mae'n un sy'n cael ei haniaethu i dduwch; mae'n disgwy i arlunydd ailgylfansoddi'r olygfa a'r gosodiad. Mae darluniau Rushdi Anwar o amser fel pe baent yn aros, hynny yw nes bydd yn ein lleoli ni o fewn ei faes ymholi, gan leoli hanes fel y mae wedi cael ei fyw a'i brofi. Mae'r gosodiad, *A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace*, 2023, yn darlunio'n ddychanol y modd y dyfeisiwyd y "Dwyrain Canol" modern fel yr ydym ni'n ei adnabod drwy archwilio cyd-destun hanesyddol Cytundeb dadleuol Sykes–Picot 1916. Roedd y siarter yn ddogfen drefedigaethol, y cyfeirir ati yn aml fel "cytundeb cyfrinachol", a oedd yn ganlyniad ymhonnio amwys rhwng dau ddiplomydd, a arweiniodd yn y pen draw at rannu rhanbarth y Lefant i raddau helaeth a'r gwledydd o'i gwmpas drwy "linell [fytholegol] yn y tywod".⁸ Y ddau a oedd yn gyfrifol oedd y diplomyddion Prydeinig a Ffrengig – Mark Sykes a François Georges-Picot, yn y drefn honno. Yn y fargen hon, cymerodd Ffrainc reolaeth dros Lebanon, Syria, de-ddwyrain Twrci, gogledd Irac a rhanbarth gogledd Cwrdistan. Cymerodd y Prydeinwyr i bob pwrras reolaeth dros Balesteina, Gwlad yr Iorddonen, de Irac a rhanbarth de Cwrdistan. Roedd y gwaith mapio hwn – un a chwaloedd unrhyw posibilrwydd o uno ar hyd llinellau gwleidyddiaeth neu hunaniaeth – yn seiliedig ar ofynion mynediad penodol i'r ddwy wlad ar ddiweddu yr Ymerodraeth

⁸ Yn cyfeirio at yr adroddiad hanesyddol poblogaidd, Barr, James, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France, and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East*, Efrog Newydd a Llundain: Simon & Schuster, 2012.

Otomaniaid. Roedd yn sicrhau cadarnle trefedigaethol anhydrin, a byddai'n dechrau proses o wasgu, dadelfennu ac esgeuluso parhaus, un mor ddirdynol fel bod miliynau wedi gorfad gadael y rhanbarth hwn yn ystod y blynnyddoedd ers hynny.

Yng nghyflwyniad Anwar, mae'r gartograffeg niwlog hon wedi'i brodio â llaw ar garped gweddio sydd wedi'i osod yn wynebu'r *qibla* (man gweddio Mwslimiaid). Yng nghanol llinell welediad eich llygad mae dwy ddelwedd o Sykes a Picot, wedi'u datblygu â graddfa a rhodres addurniadol y "portread swagn" hanesyddol, a oedd yn ystum hunanbwysig, un a oedd yn cefnogi aristocratiaeth. Mae gramoffon gerllaw yn rhyddhau *bricolage* o siniau a gasglwyd o bropaganda radio gan rymoed trefedigaethol. Mae'r rhain yn grwnan i fantrâu a thrafodaethau gan ac am endidau gwleidyddol eithafol cyfoes o ranbarth y gellid ei ddiffinio heddiw fel y "Penrhyn Arabaidd", "Gorllewin Asia", "y Gwlf", "y Dwyrain Canol" – er nad yw'n ddim un o'r rhain, nid i'r bobl sy'n byw yn y safleoedd hyn heddiw.⁹

Mae'r drefedigaeth sydd wedi'i chau mewn blwch a ffurfiwyd gan Sykes–Picot yn adlamu ar draws yr oriel i ddatgelu byd lle mae'r meddwl a'r corff yn cael eu tynnu o amcan bywyd ei hun. Mae diddordeb Anwar yn elfen fewnol yr hunan yn chwarae rhan

⁹ Nid yw'r termau hyn, gweillillion gorffennol imperialaidd, ac iaith wedi'i milwreiddio yn aml, a oedd yn ceisio rhannu a choncro tiroedd o'r fath a'u pobl, yn ddul priodol na theg o lunio ontelog, perspectif neu bortread o'b yd hwn. Mae hwn yn bwnc yr wyl wedi ei draffod gyda Rushdi Anwar, yr artist, fel mater sy'n peri pryer i'r ddua ohonom. Rydym yn chwilio am ein hiaith ein hunain, yn dragwydd.

FANTASMIC NOT PHANTASMIC: CROSSING THRESHOLDS WITH RUSHDI ANWAR

(a space of enchantment) is part of the ongoing process that his art makes visible. Whether a seasoned code-switcher or not, Anwar speaks to the experience of being alien not only within one's own culture, but also within one's own body – a fact made evident through the constant threat of lived violence, and the prospect of possible danger, which the artist subjects himself to in the making of his art.

As I pause to reflect on these metaphors, I recall my most recent conversation with Anwar. "What would it mean to live in a place without language?" He responded, "it means to constantly be asked, where do you come from?" How can one answer such a question, we both responded, my sense of aggravation seemingly more palpable than his. Through meandering hours of conversation, Anwar returned me to the poetry of the Palestinian, Mahmoud Darwish. He presented me with a quote, which I distil as follows: which language should we dream in? If art is a space of interrogation and language is an expression of our identity, where does the exiled subject exist? In the realm of the imaginary, or on the precipice of barely surviving? Perhaps Anwar's art is a summoning to rupture both art and language. For only then, as we begin to reconstitute the pieces, might we find the truth of feeling, as opposed to the haunting spectre of mere re-presentation.

'FANTASMIC' NID 'PHANTASMIC': CROESI TROTHWYON GYDA RUSHDI ANWAR

hanfodol yn ein dealltwriaeth. Mae eiddo etifedol yn cael eu hadsefydlu, eu llosgi a'u hymrithio eto mewn gwahanol ffurfiâu – yn portreadu croen wedi'i lyfnhau gan frathiad amser. Mae cynwysyddion Anwar, ei ddarnau o gof, yn rhan o gorff wedi'i haniaethu, un sy'n byw heb fod yn ymwybodol o'r potensial o gael ei "groesawu" – mae ei gorff yn un sy'n aros i gael ei alltudio o hyd. Mae'r cwestiwn a oedd Anwar yn gallu ymddangos yn gyfarwydd iddo'i hun wrth i'w gorff fentro i faes ansefydlog absenoldeb o'r hyn y mae'n ei ystyried yn 'phantasmic' (y mythig) i'r hyn mae'n ei ystyried yn 'fantasmic' (gofod o hudoliaeth) yn rhan o'r broses barhaus sy'n gwneud ei gelf yn weledol. Boed yn un sydd wedi arfer â newid codau a'i peidio, mae Anwar yn siarad am y profiad o fod yn estron nid yn unig yn ei ddiwylliant ei hun, ond hefyd o fewn ei gorff ei hun – ffaith a amlygir drwy'r bygythiad parhaus o brofi trais, a pherygl posibl, y mae'r artist yn rhoi ei hun yn agored iddo wrth wneud ei gelf.

Wrth i mi oedi i feddwl am y trosiadau hyn, rwy'n cofio fy sgwrs ddiweddaraf gydag Anwar. "Beth fyddai'n ei olygu i fyw mewn lle heb iaith?" Ei ateb oedd, "mae'n golygu bod rhywun yn gofyn i chi o hyd, o ble rwyt ti'n dod?" Sut all rhywun ateb cwestiwn o'r fath, ymatebodd y ddau ohonom, fy ymdeimlad i o gael fy nghythrudo yn ymddangos yn fwy amlwg na'i un ef. Wedi oriau o drafod, daeth Anwar â mi yn ôl at y bardd Palestinaidd, Mahmoud Darwish. Cyflwynodd ddyfyniad i mi, a oedd yn gofyn: ym mha iaith y dylem freuddwydio? Os yw celf yn ofod i holi ac os yw iaith yn fynegiant o'n hunaniaeth, ble mae'r unigolyn alltud yn bod? Ym myd dychymyg, ynteu o fewn trwch blewyn

The kingdom of dust ruled by stones, 2023

O 'A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace' (2023-yn parhau) TMT Pres a dur, 260 × 250 × 100 cm. Ffotograffiaeth/Delwedd trwy garedigrwyd: Rushdi Anwar
From 'A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace' (2023-ongoing). Brass and steel TMT, 260 × 250 × 100 cm.
Photography/Image courtesy:
Rushdi Anwar





← Re-frame “Home” with Patterns of Displacement, 2019

Golygfa arddangosfa, 52 Artists 52 Actions, Artspace, Sydney. Carped a chyfryngau cymysg, 600×270 cm; gosod fideo a sain HD sianel sengl, 20.30 munud. Ffotograffiaeth/ Delwedd trwy garedigrwydd: Rushdi Anwar

Exhibition view, 52 Artists 52 Actions, Artspace, Sydney. Carpet and mixed media, 600×270 cm; single channel HD video and sound installation, 20.30 min. Photography/Image courtesy: Rushdi Anwar



When you pray for black gold, you must deal with the burning smoke too, 2023

O ‘A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace’ (2023 – yn parhau). Map brodwaith, mat gweddi traddodiadol wedi’i wehyddu â llaw; printiau digidol ar bapur, dimensiynau amrywiol. Gyda chymorth gan Lywodraeth Awstralia trwy Gyngor Celfyddydau Awstralia, ei gyllid celfyddydol, a’i gorff cyngori. Trwy garedigrwydd yr artist

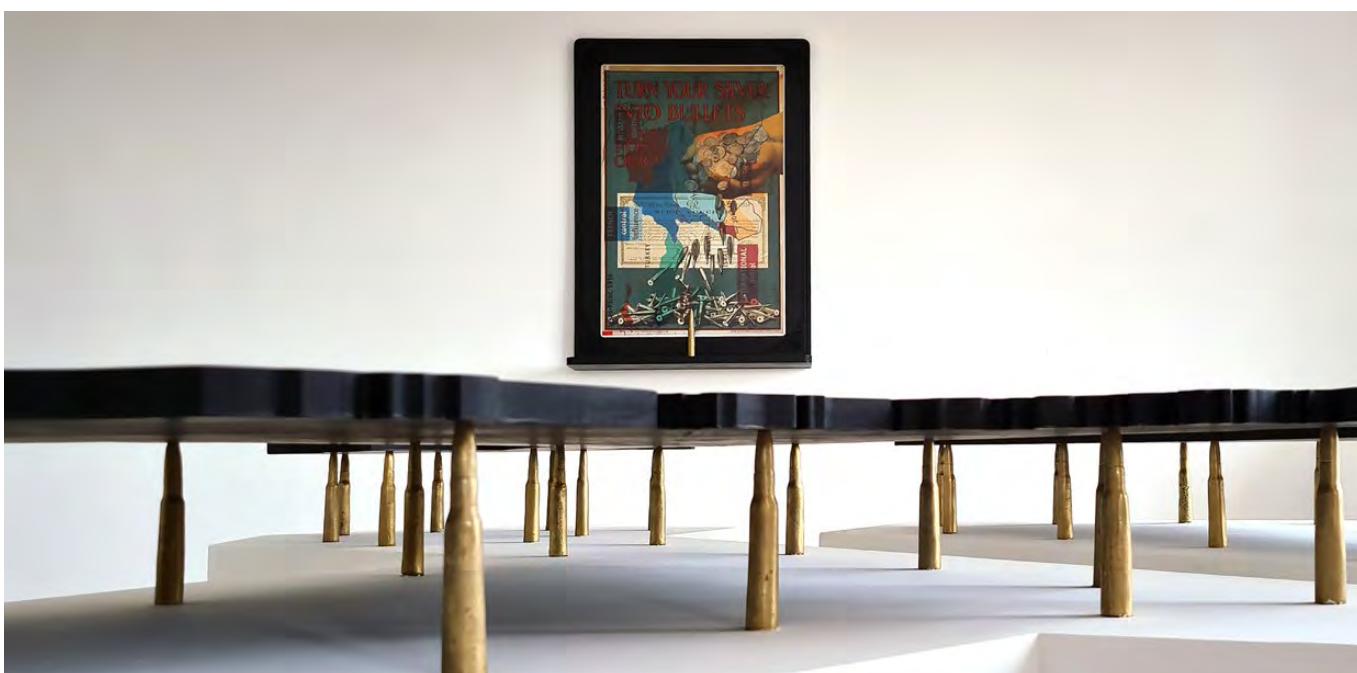
From ‘A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace’ (2023 – ongoing). Embroidered map, traditional handwoven prayer rug; digital prints on paper, dimensions variable. With assistance by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding, and advisory body. Courtesy the artist

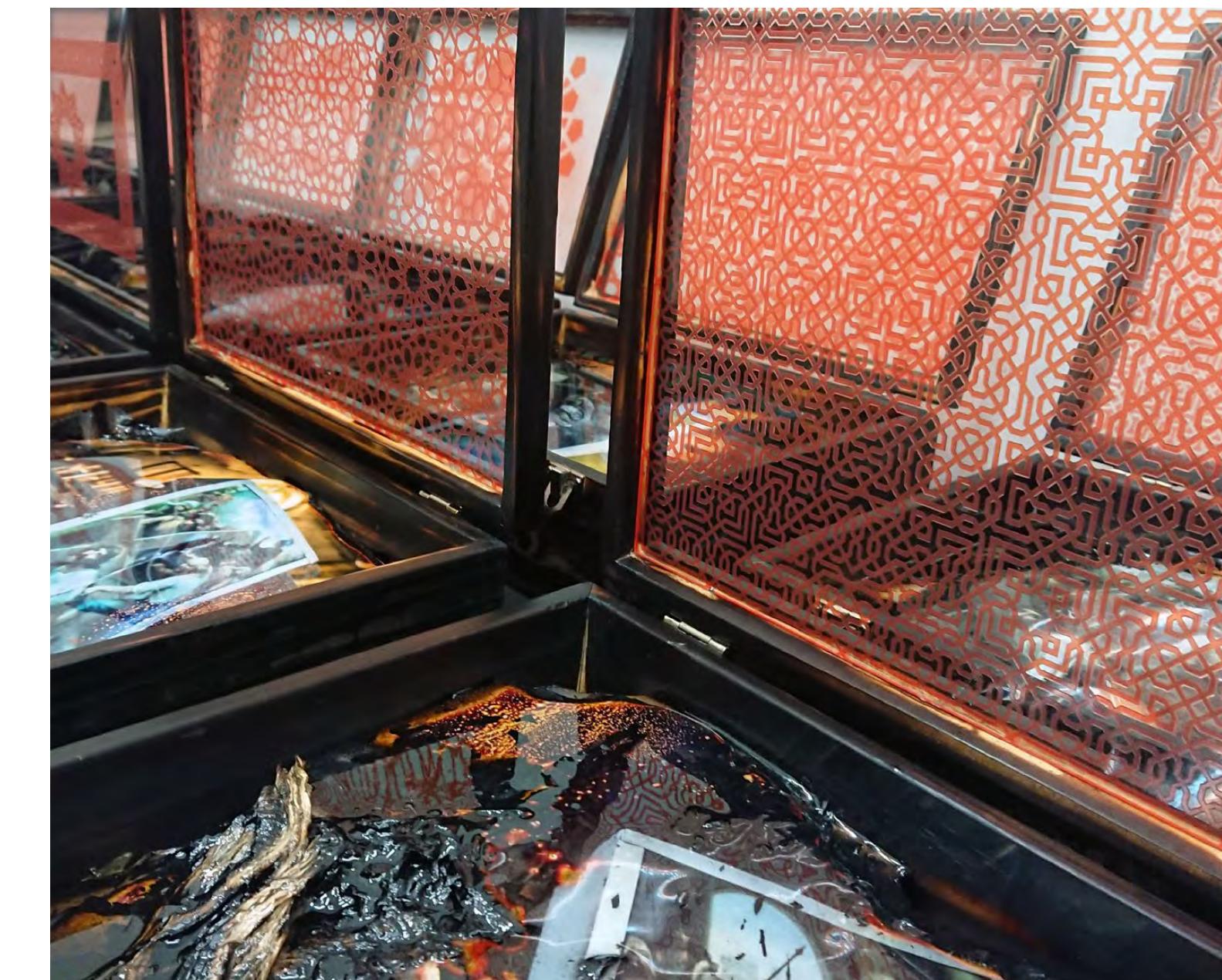


Turn your silver into bullets, 2023

O 'A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace' (2023 – yn parhau). Print digidol-UV ar ddur di-staen, pres bwrw, paent synthetig ar bren, 91×64×17 cm. Gyda chymorth gan Lywodraeth Awstralia trwy Gyngor Celfyddydau Awstralia, ei gyllid celfyddydol, a'i gorff cyngori. Trwy garedigwyd yr artist

From 'A Hope and Peace to End All Hope and Peace' (2023 – ongoing). Digital-UV print on stainless steel, cast brass, synthetic paint on wood, 91×64×17 cm. With assistance by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding, and advisory body. Courtesy the artist





*We have found in the ashes what we have lost
in the fire* (detail), 2018

12 blwch. Printiau fotograffig ar bapur, lludw, cyfryngau cymysg a phren, dimensiynau amrywiol. Gyda chymorth gan Lywodraeth Awstralia trwy Gyngor Celfyddydau Awstralia, ei gyllid celfyddydol, a'i gorff cyngori. Trwy garedigrwyd yr artist

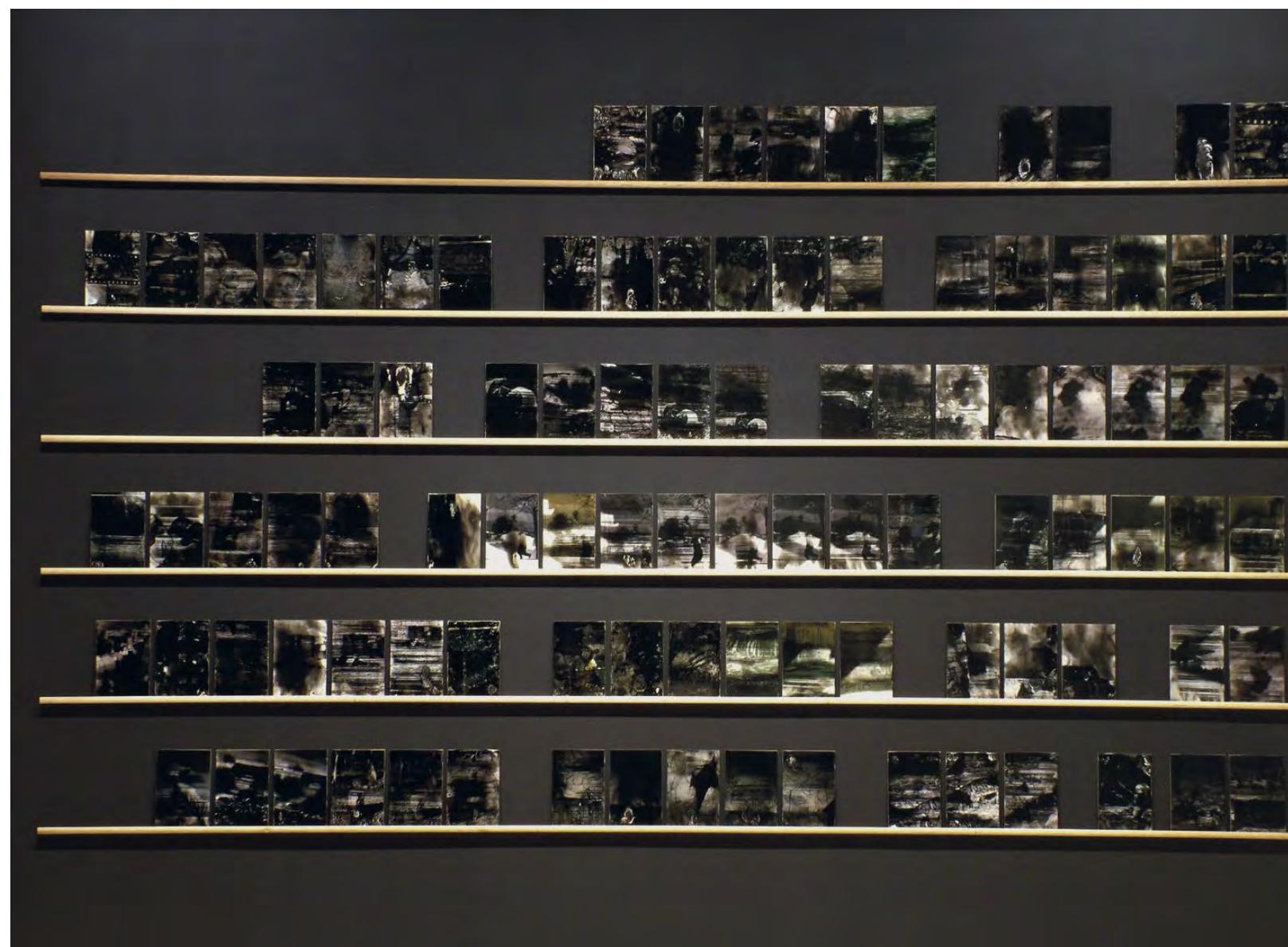
12 boxes. Photographic prints on paper, ash, mixed media and wood, dimensions variable. With assistance by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding, and advisory body. Courtesy the artist



Few Lines of History, 2011

Printiau ffotograffig wedi'u trin â mwg
(huddygl) wedi'u gosod ar fyrdau pren;
silffoedd pren ar wal wedi'i phaentio,
dimensiynau amrywiol. Trwy garedigrwydd
yr artist

Photographic prints treated with smoke
(soot) mounted on wooden boards;
wooden shelves on painted wall,
dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist



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Ac yn olaf, diolch i'r holl asiantaethau diwylliannol eraill, partneriaid, orielau, prifysgolion, rhoddwyr, noddwyr a gwirfoddolwyr, sydd wedi darparu cyllid, cydweithrediad a chefnogaeth hanfodol i'n rhagleni yn 2022–24.

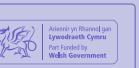
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Artes Mundi 10 Jurors | Artes Mundi 10 Rheithwyr

Katya García-Antón
Director of the Northern Norway Art Museum (NNKM), Tromso
Cyfarwyddwr a Amgueddfa Gelf Gogledd Norwy (NNKM), Tromso

Wanda Nanibush
Anishinaabe-kwe image and word warrior, curator and community organiser from Beausoleil First Nation. Currently Nanibush

is the inaugural Curator of Indigenous Art and co-head of the Indigenous & Canadian Art Department at Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Toronto

Rhyfelwraig dros ddelweddau a geiriau, curadur a threfnydd cymunedol Anishinaabe-kwe yw Wanda Nanibush o Genedl Gyntaf y Beausoleil. Ar hyn o bryd, Nanibush yw Curadur cyntaf Celfyddyd Frodorol a chydbennaeth Adran Celfyddyd Frodorol a Chanadaidd Oriel Gelf Ontario (AGO), Toronto

Gabi Ngcobo
Artist, curator and educator living in Johannesburg, South Africa. Since the early 2000s Ngcobo has been engaged in collaborative artistic, curatorial and educational projects in South Africa and internationally. Ngcobo is Curatorial Director at the Javett-UP

Artist, curadur ac addysgydd yw Gabi Ngcobo sy'n byw yn Johannesburg, De Affrica. Ers dechrau'r ganrif hon, mae Ngcobo wedi bod ynghlwm â phrosiectau artistig, curaduol ac addysgol ar y cyd yn Ne Affrica ac yn rhyngwladol. Cyfarwyddwr Curaduol Javett-UP yw Ngcobo

For the selection in 2022, we were also joined by | *Ar gyfer y detholiad yn 2022, ymunodd y canlynol â ni hefyd*

Zoe Butt
Curator and writer, and Artistic Director of the Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City (2009–21). She is a MoMA International Curatorial Fellow; a member of the Asia Society's "Asia 21" initiative; and a member of the Asian Art Council, Solomon R Guggenheim Museum Curadur ac awdur yw Zoe Butt. *Un o Gymrodwr Curaduol Rhyngwladol MOMA yw Zoe, yn aelod o fenter 'Asia 21' Cymdeithas Asia ac yn aelod o'r Cyngor Celfyddyd Asiaidd, Amgueddfa Solomon R Guggenheim*

MOUNIRA
AL SOLH — NIGEL PRINCE

RUSHDI ANWAR
— OMAR KHOLEIF

CAROLINA
CAYCEDO

— LIV BRISSACH

ALIA FARID — BRIDGET GUARASCI

NAOMI RINCÓN
GALLARDO — LAURA G GUTIÉRREZ

TALOI HAVINI
— WANDA NANIBUSH

NGUYỄN TRINH
THI — ZOE BUTT