

Press Release  
30 November 2013

*Threads of Light* - Hanoos Hanoos  
*Al Mutanabbi Street Starts Here* - Various Artists  
17 January - 21 February 2014  
Private View: Thursday 16 January, 6.30-8.30pm  
Exhibition Open: Tues-Sat, 11am-6pm, FREE  
The Mosaic Rooms, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW



Hilos de Luz n° 17, Hanoos Hanoos



Evidence vol. 48, 6134, 27,537, 1129, Ania Gilmore & Annie Zaybekoglu

The Mosaic Rooms is pleased to present a two-part exhibition featuring paintings by Iraqi artist Hanoos Hanoos in the main space, and a selection of art books and broadsheets from the project *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here* in the lower gallery.

Hanoos Hanoos was born in Iraq in 1958, where he studied at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad. He moved to Madrid, Spain, in 1984 where he obtained his PhD and has lived ever since.

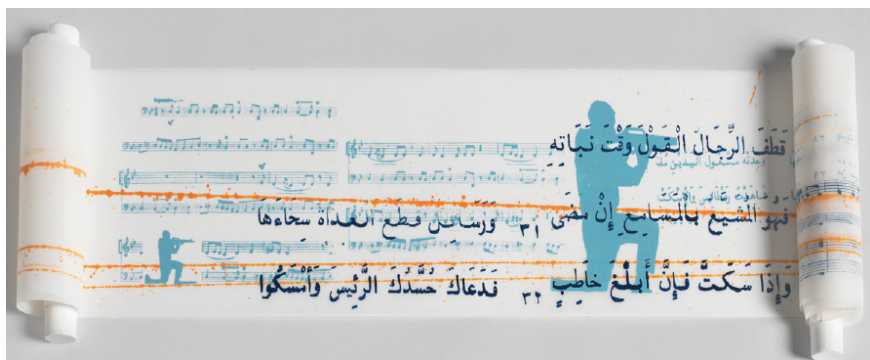
The paintings in *Threads of Light* are made up of layers of textured colour, using Modernist flatness and the legacy of collage to conjure contemporary chaos. Indeed, Hanoos Hanoos' international education and experience has prompted work that intertwines Western and Arab aesthetic traditions. Calligraphy is a key influence, particularly Kufic script's virtuosic abstraction.

*Threads of Light* references a poem of the same name by the pioneering Iraqi poet Abdel-Wahab al-Bayati, whom Hanoos Hanoos met in Madrid in the early 1980s and whom he cites as a "spiritual influence" upon his artistic practice. While Hanoos Hanoos' work has previously engaged with "the need as an Iraqi and as a painter to reflect the horror and death that (were) happening in my country" during the occupation, this new series engages with the universal. It seeks to celebrate and introduce contemporary audiences to the cultural work of previous generations in order to inspire the next. As al-Bayati writes in his poem *Thread of Light*: "I saw him: stretched out from generation to the next, a thread of light / In a world of chaos."

Hanoos Hanoos' investment in the power of poetry and script and their relationship to memory chimes with *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here*, a project that collated hundreds of visual and textual responses by artists and writers to the tragic 2007 bombing that destroyed Baghdad's cultural and intellectual hub: Al-Mutanabbi Street. In July 2010, the poet Beau Beausoleil and artist Sarah Bodman put out a call for book artists to join *An Inventory Of Al-Mutanabbi Street*, to reassemble and honour the vast breadth of reading material which previously mingled on the street. The coalition asked each artist to create three books (or other paper material) over the course of a year. These works reflect both the strength and fragility of printed matter, and the endurance of the ideas within them, using Al-Mutanabbi and its printers, writers, booksellers, and readers as a touchstone.

Just as Hanoos Hanoos draws upon "a language which, through a tightly-woven network, connects and interweaves spaces and places...revealing this complex spiral of competing perspectives," the Al-Mutanabbi Street Project unites myriad international voices. A commemoration of the singular power of words, it hopes to make visible the literary bridge that connects us all, relating the Baghdad space to similar sites the world over, the common ground of the bookstore at its core.

A complete set of all the books will be donated to the Iraq National Library in Baghdad. This will be the first stop in London for the project during its international exhibition tour, and will feature a selection of both art books and broadsheets. Having exhibited predominantly in Spain, this exhibition is also the first opportunity for UK audiences to see Hanoos Hanoos' work. **For further details, images and to arrange interviews contact Rosa Attwood at [press@mosaicrooms.org](mailto:press@mosaicrooms.org) or on + 44 207 370 9990.**



#### Notes to Editors

- Available for interview: The artists Hanoos Hanoos and Sarah Bodman, and poet Beau Beausoleil.
- Entry to the exhibition is free. The Mosaic Rooms are open from 11am–6pm Tuesday to Saturday.
- A programme of related events will accompany the exhibition, for further details visit: [www.mosaicrooms.org/talks-events](http://www.mosaicrooms.org/talks-events).
- The Mosaic Rooms, a leading independent arts space in west London, delivers a high quality, contemporary and progressive cultural programme from the Arab world and internationally. They are managed by the A.M. Qattan Foundation, a UK charity dedicated to the support of culture and education in Palestine and the Arab world. The Foundation's London office, headed by one of its trustees, Omar Al-Qattan, is responsible for the Mosaic Rooms' programme. The Rooms are part of the Foundation's Culture and Arts Programme.
- The Mosaic Rooms is situated on the corner of the Cromwell Road and Earl's Court Road in Kensington, London, a short walk from Earl's Court Underground Station and Exhibition Centre. For further information about The Mosaic Rooms and the A.M. Qattan Foundation visit [www.mosaicrooms.org](http://www.mosaicrooms.org)
- The Iraqi Cultural Centre is dedicated to nurturing and promoting cultural ties between the United Kingdom and Iraq, both through British exposure to Iraq's cultural history and achievements, and through exposure of Iraqi artists and scholars to British trends, institutions, and professional counterparts. Visit [www.iraqiculturalcentre.co.uk](http://www.iraqiculturalcentre.co.uk)

Exhibition supported by:



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