

# ART

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# INIRAQ

# TODAY



## O Tigris

Through my work, I try to investigate the answers provoked by my personal confrontation with a changing world—the remains of war, wandering from one country to another, and finally accepting expatriation as a late psychological outlet. These changes and the windows they opened, with regard to information and experience, were positively reflected in my artistic work and its relation to personal pain.

Shapes that are taken from reality have symbolic meanings that become more effective and inspiring when seen in relation to other shapes, lending them a motive for the imagination. Loaded with a power that emulates the language of Sufi poetry in its approach, a path is opened to wide channels of knowledge that invite the recipient to become an important player in the space of this art.

Such concepts, by which I orchestrate the natural shapes with perceptions that surround us in our daily lives, create the “shock” I aim to achieve. A shock that leads to the creation of a new vision with clear symbolic renderings that are evident in the variant Islamic and Arabic literary and scientific scripts, which have a creative presence in building my art work.

In my recent work, I use different approaches to highlight the imaginary world I want to create. I do this by printing a silky grid along a photograph, and other concepts, to achieve layers of different temporal eras that seem both to converge and diverge simultaneously.

The Tigris River is the subject that links the works I present in this exhibition. They were created through the

use of different media on fabrics of different sizes, and revolve around the alteration of the Tigris River from a space of beautiful memories to an arena stained with sectarian conflict and policy, thus overwhelming my dreams.

I was born near this river and watched its rapidly flowing water, carrying boats, wandering between Karkh and Rasafa every day in the placid, peaceful life of the people of Baghdad. This transports me from what I know of it now: it is a river that conceals anonymous massacred victims, feeding the fish in its waters. A nightmare resonates within the river which turned into ink and blood at the time of the Mongols. It is now turning into blood and radiant toxic substances.

The clash of this age of occupation can be heard against the voice of Al-Jawahiri when he addressed the Tigris as an expatriate:

*I greet you from afar, O greet me back,  
O blessed Tigris, river of gardens green.  
I greet your banks, seeking to quench my thirst,  
Like doves between water and clay aflutter seen.  
O blessed Tigris, oft have I been forced to leave  
To drink from springs which didn't my thirst relieve.\**

Nazar Yahya  
Houston, Texas  
August 2010

\* translated by Hussein Hadawi, excerpt cited in Venetia Porter, *Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East* (London: British Museum Press, 2006), p. 8

b. Baghdad, 1963

**Education**

**1987**

BA in Painting, Academy of Fine Arts,  
Baghdad

**Solo Exhibitions**

**1994**

*Graphic Expiation*, Al-Rewaq Gallery,  
Baghdad

**2000**

French Cultural Centre, Amman

**2001**

French Cultural Centre, Doha

**2002**

*Steel and Asphalt Memory*, French  
Cultural Centre, Doha

**2004**

*Blocks*, Orfali Gallery, Amman

**2007**

*Bird Land*, Karmin Gallery, Amman

**2008**

*Bird Code*, Sultan Gallery, Kuwait

## Group Exhibitions

**1985**

Fredrikstad Biennial, Fredrikstad

**1997**

*Environment and Surroundings in Iraqi Art*, Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman

*Homage to Jewad Selim*, Athar Gallery, Baghdad

**1999**

*Three Iraqi Artists*, Agial Gallery, Beirut  
*Fifty Years of Iraqi Graphics*, Darat Al-Funun, Amman

**2000**

Fredrikstad Triennial, Fredrikstad

**2001**

*Six Iraqi Artists*, Albareh Gallery, Manama

**2002**

Asian Art Biennial, Dhaka

**2003**

*Five Contemporary Artists from Iraq*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai

**2005**

*Improvisation: Seven Iraqi Artists*, Bisson Gallery, Doha, Al-Riwaq Gallery, Manama, and 4 Walls Gallery, Amman

*Dafatir. Contemporary Iraqi Book Art*, University of North Texas, Houston, Texas  
*Iraqi Artists*, Musée du Montparnasse, Paris

**2006**

*Dafatir. Contemporary Iraqi Book Arts*, Carleton College, Northfield; Minnesota, Minnesota Centre for Book Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota; University of Texas, El Paso, Texas; Daura Gallery, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Virginia  
*World into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East*, British Museum, London

**2007**

*Dafatir. Contemporary Iraqi Book Art*, The Centre for Book Arts, New York; Minneapolis Athenaeum, Minneapolis, Minnesota; NIU Art Museum, DeKalb, Illinois; The Jaffe Centre for Book Arts, Boca Raton, Florida

*Negative Positive to Iraqi Artists*, Albareh Gallery, Manama

**2008**

*Dafatir. Contemporary Iraq Book Art*, Denison University, Granville, Ohio  
*Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East*, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Dubai

**2010**

*A Chair and Painting*, Albareh Gallery, Manama

*My Home Land*, Art Sawa Gallery, Dubai

*Sajjil: A Century of Modern Art*, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha

*Art in Iraq Today: Part II*, Meem Gallery, Dubai

**2011**

*Art in Iraq Today: Conclusion*, Meem Gallery, Dubai

## Awards

**1997**

Three artistic awards, Athar Gallery, Baghdad

**2004**

First Prize in Painting, Emaar, Dubai

## Public Collections

British Museum, London

Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman

Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha

Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad





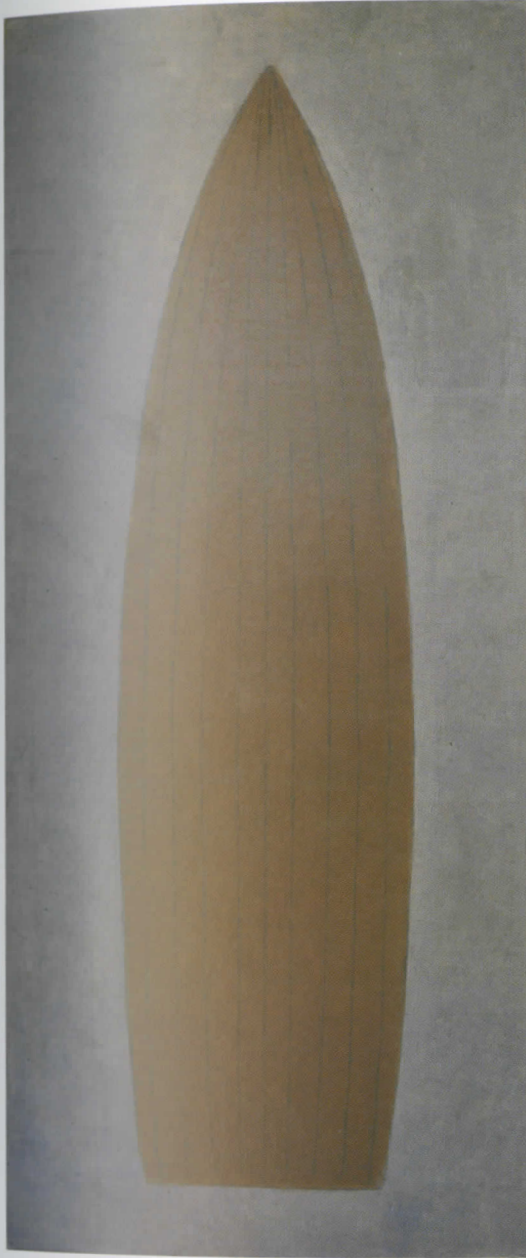


Al-Jawahiri (2010)  
Acrylic on Chinese paper on canvas  
229 x 206 cm

Love Dijla 1 (2010)  
Acrylic on Chinese paper on canvas  
198 x 244 cm (triptych)

Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah

Following pages  
Al-Sinara (2010)  
Acrylic on Chinese paper on canvas  
173 x 437 cm (diptych)  
Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah



الجواهري (٢٠١٠)  
أكريليك على ورق صيني على قماش  
٢٢٩ \* ٢٠٦ سم

عشق دجلة ١ (٢٠١٠)  
أكريليك على ورق صيني على قماش  
١٩٨ \* ٢٤٤ سم  
(لوحة ثلاثية)  
مؤسسة برجيل للفنون، الشارقة

الصفحات التالية  
السنارة (٢٠١٠)  
أكريليك على ورق صيني على قماش  
١٧٣ \* ٤٣٧ سم  
(لوحة مزدوجة)  
مؤسسة برجيل للفنون، الشارقة







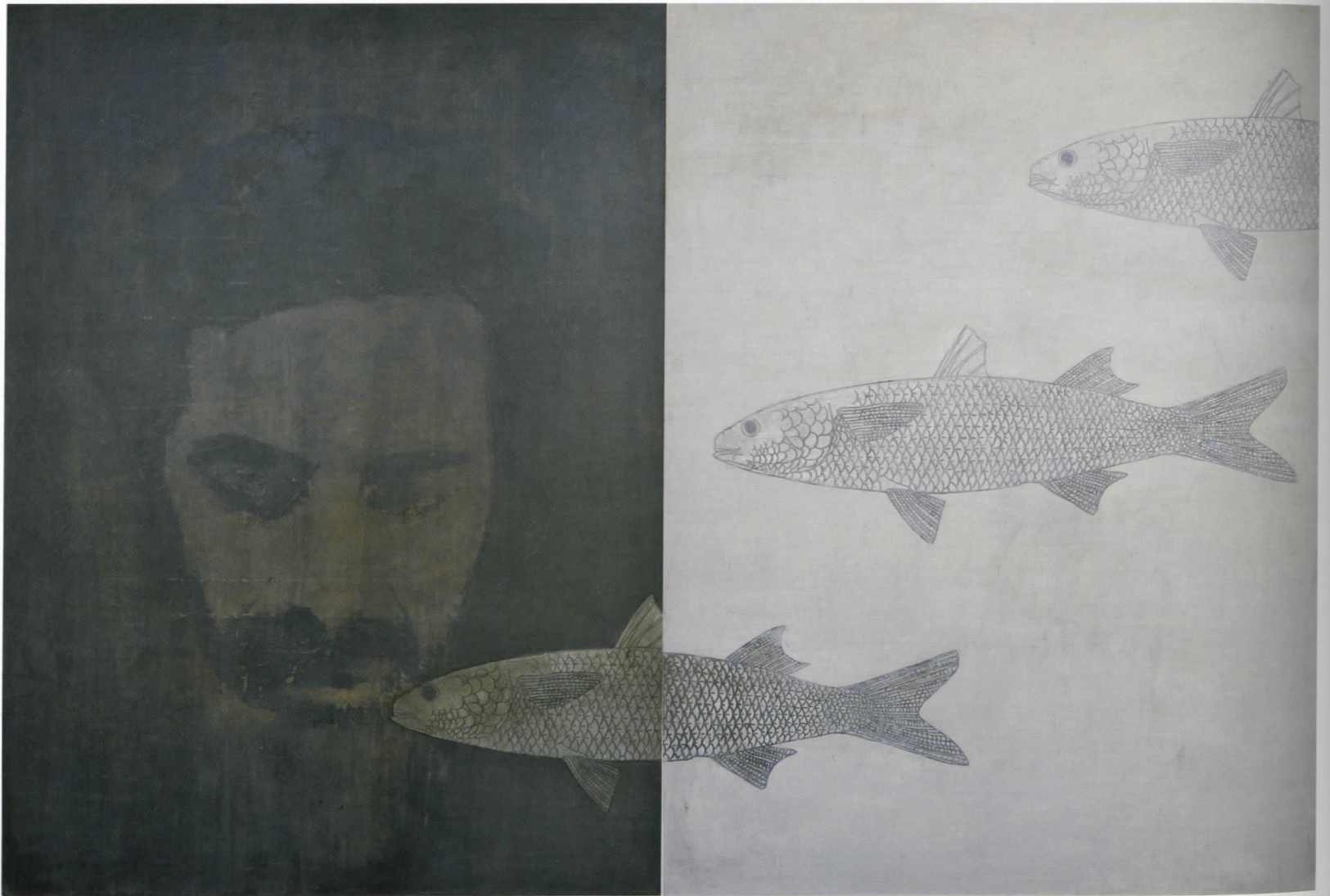




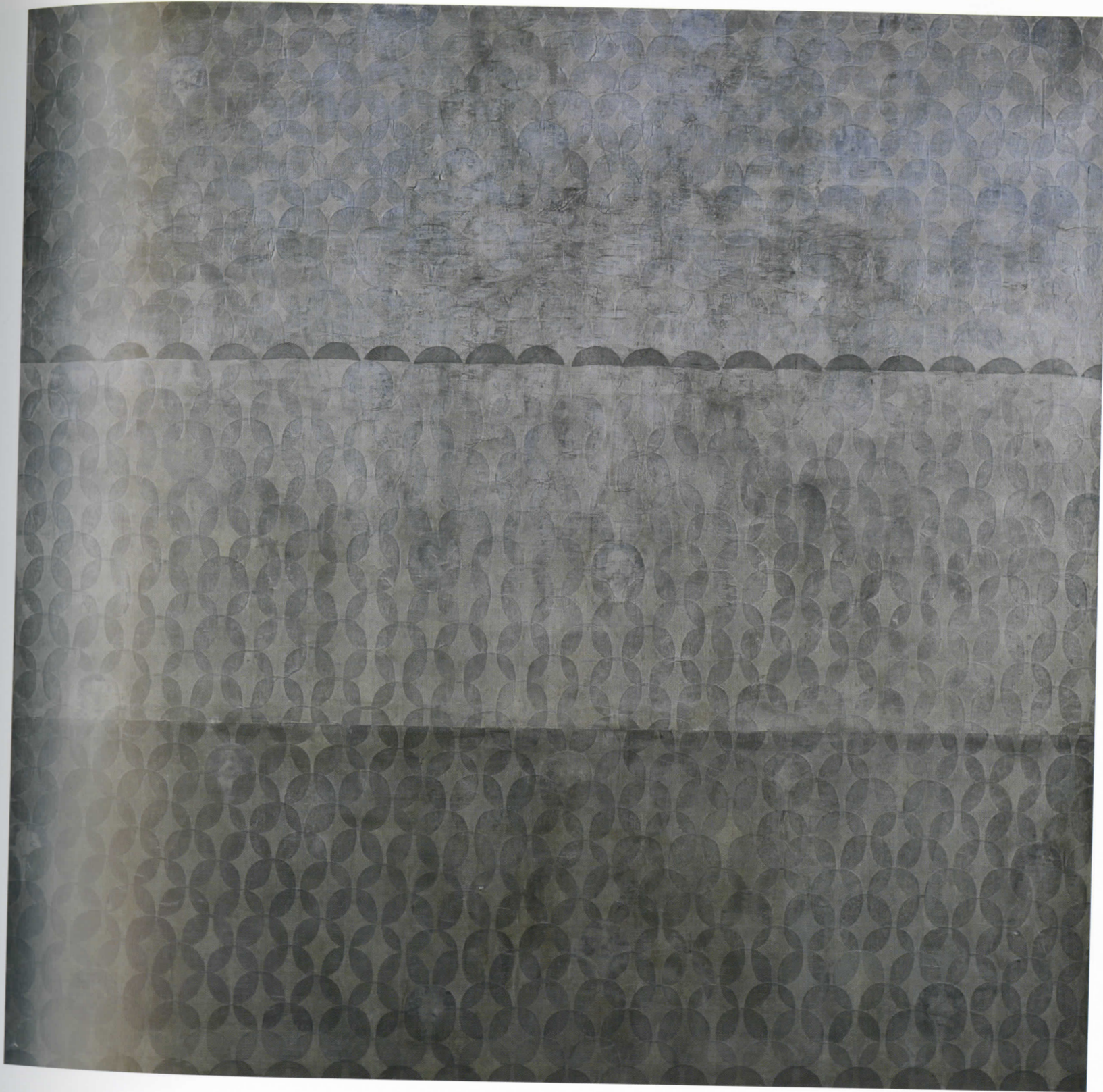
*Love Dija 2* (2010)  
Acrylic on Chinese paper on canvas  
160 x 234 cm  
Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah

*Love Dija 3* (2010)  
Acrylic on Chinese paper on canvas  
168 x 168 cm

*Following pages*  
*Spring* (2010)  
Acrylic on Chinese paper on canvas  
168 x 335 cm (diptych)







الصفحات التالية

عشق دجلة ٢ (٢٠١٠)  
أكريليك على ورق صيني على قماش  
١١٠ \* ٢٣٤ سم  
(لوحة مزدوجة)  
مؤسسة برجيل للفنون، الشارقة

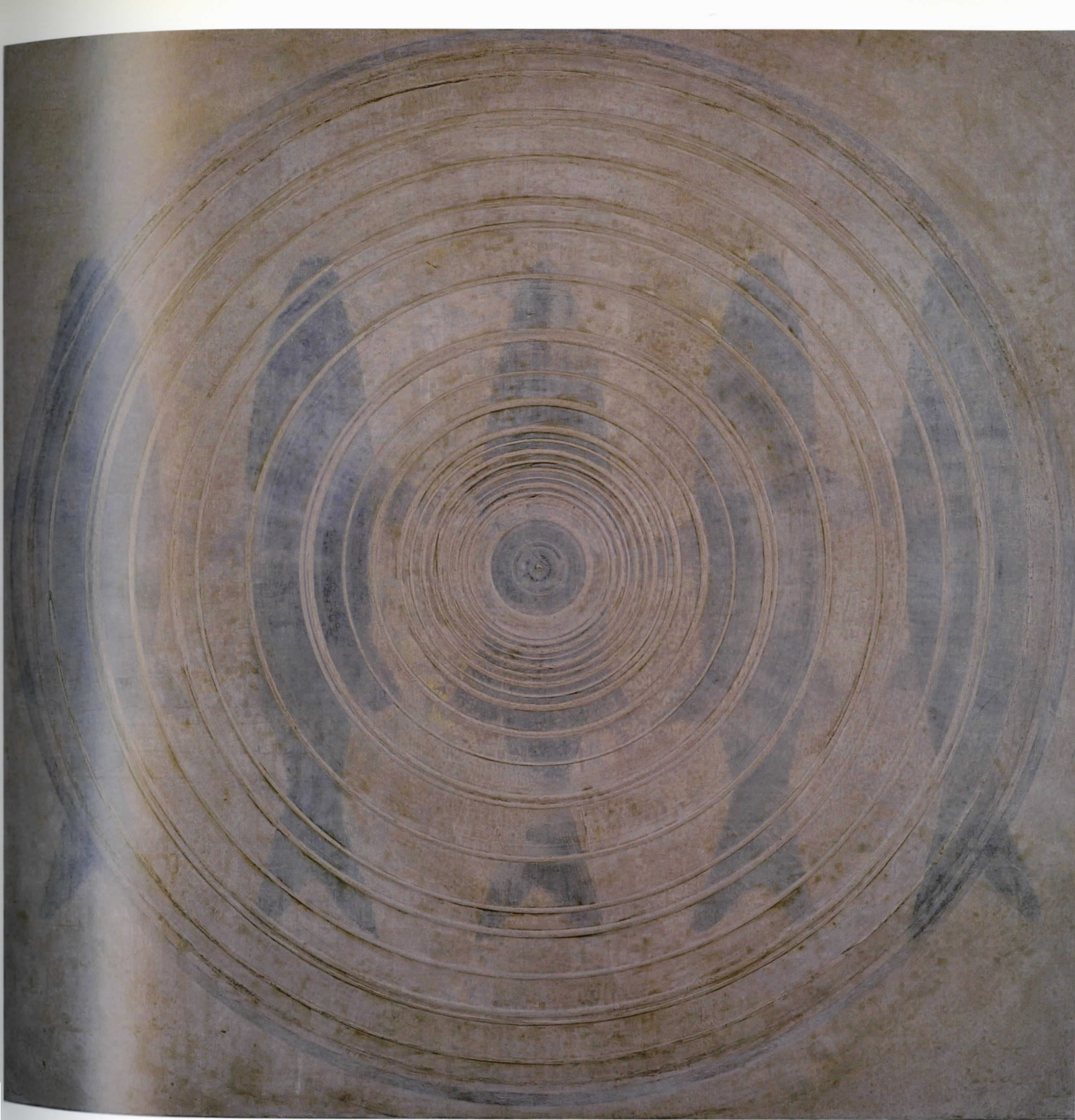
عشق دجلة ٣ (٢٠١٠)  
أكريليك على ورق صيني على قماش  
١٦٨ \* ١٦٨ سم

نبع (٢٠١٠)  
أكريليك على ورق صيني على قماش  
١٦٨ \* ٣٣٥ سم  
(لوحة مزدوجة)













*The New Recipe* (2009)  
Clay paper mache and nails on wood  
50 x 50 x 18 cm

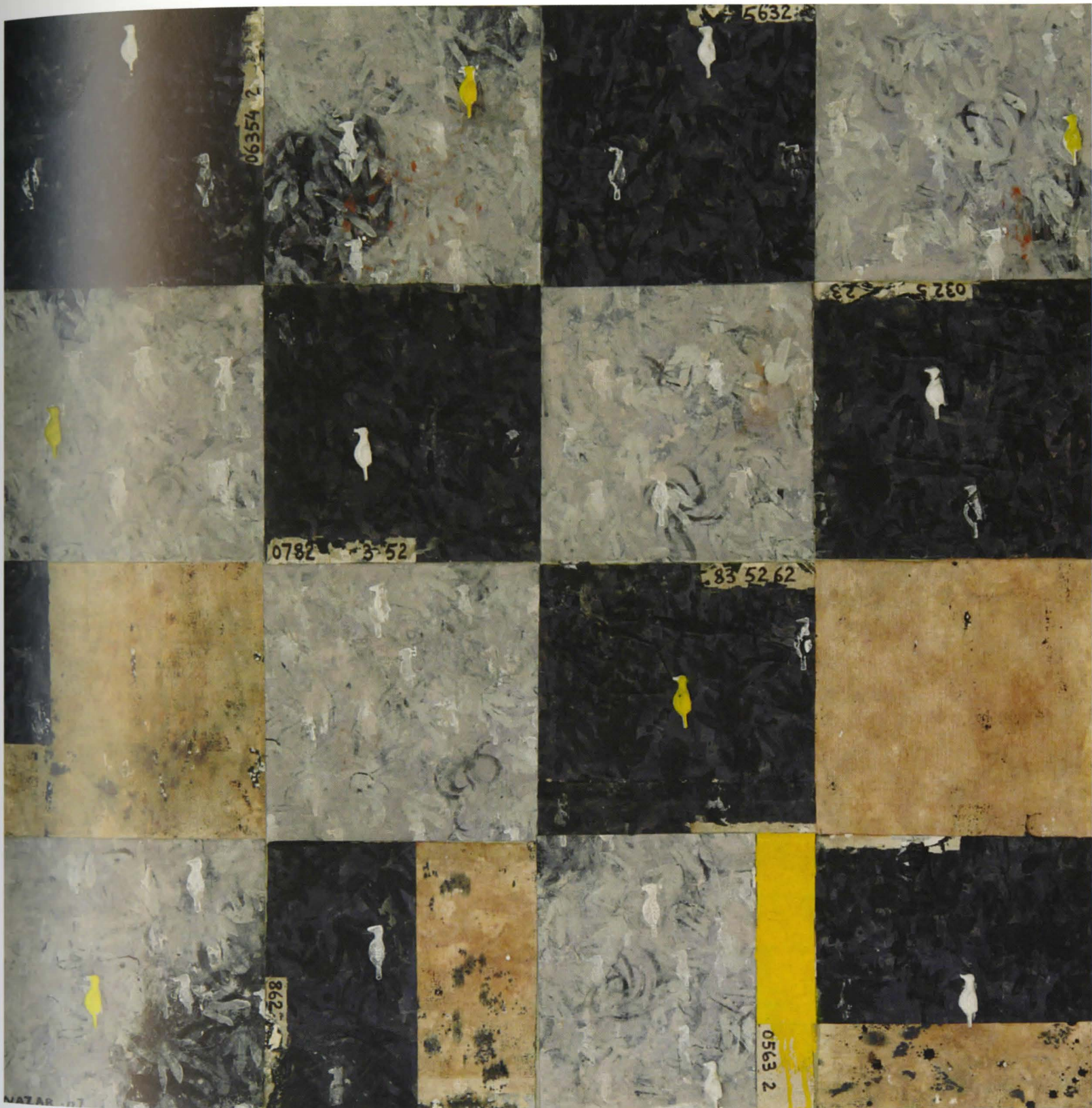
*Unknown Stuff* (2009)  
Clay paper mache, nails, canvas, toilet  
paper, and gauze on wood  
50 x 50 x 10 cm



الوصفة الجديدة (٢٠٠٩)  
عجينة الورق الطينية مع  
المسامير على خشب  
٥٠ \* ٥٠ \* ١٨ سم

اغراض غير معرفة (٢٠٠٩)  
عجينة الورق الطينية. مسامير.  
قماش. ورق تواليت. شاش طبي  
على خشب  
٥٠ \* ٥٠ \* ١٠ سم





*Bird Code (2007)*  
Mixed media on canvas  
100 x 100 cm

شيفرة الطير (٢٠٠٧)  
مواد مختلفة على كanvas  
١٠٠ \* ١٠٠ سم