

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

***Not About Bombs* Exhibit Featuring Prominent Iraqi Female Artists Opens in Minneapolis on February 3**

Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN (1/10/2012): The Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project (IARP) and Intermedia Arts are pleased to announce the opening of *Not About Bombs*, a collection of contemporary works by eminent female Iraqi artists exploring an identity in flux. *Not About Bombs* will open on February 3, 2012 at Intermedia Arts and run through March 3. An opening reception will be held on February 3 at 7:00 p.m. at Intermedia Arts. Admission to the reception and the exhibit is free.

Curated by IARP's Tricia Khutoretsky, the exhibit will feature prominent Iraqi female artists, including Tamara Abdul Hadi, Julie Adnan, Dena Al-Adeeb, Sama Alshaibi, and Sundus Abdul Hadi. Participating artists have been featured in exhibitions in New York, San Francisco, Rome, Paris, London, Istanbul, Dubai, Cairo, Damascus, and other cities around the world. Khutoretsky says the exhibit will be, "a platform for a generation of female artists who are undeniably influenced by the aesthetics of conflict and the stereotypes that define them, but not in the least bit limited by them. The six women in the exhibit contribute art that is visually and conceptually accomplished, but unpredictable and emotionally engaging."

The exhibit will build on two previous exhibits presented by IARP, *The Art of Conflict* in 2010 and *Navigating the Aftermath* in 2011. Both took as a subject the Iraq War and its effects, but neither focused specifically on the perspective of Iraqi women. Given the unique experience of Iraqi women during the Iraq War and the role that women are playing today in the Arab Spring uprisings, IARP organized *Not About Bombs* to create a space for Iraqi female voices. According to Khutoretsky, the exhibit will present contemporary art by Iraqi women "in an attempt to deliberately explore and challenge expectations." Khutoretsky says that, "not much has shifted in the controlled and contrived representation of Iraqi women in Western media. This exhibit will address how a female perspective can fit into the modern context of turmoil and conflict through art and avoid falling into the typical ways that women are represented... and misrepresented."

With the withdrawal of the US military from Iraq, almost 9 years of war ended. But it's not over for the millions of Iraqis who still lack access to clean water, are living as refugees, or dealing with trauma-related disorders. Minnesotans and Americans, too, need a way to heal and move forward. *Not About Bombs* will contribute to that effort.

For more information, please visit the exhibit page at <http://reconciliationproject.org/iraqi-art/not-aboutbombs/> or contact:

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This activity is funded, in part, by appropriations from the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the State's general fund, and its arts and cultural heritage fund that was created by a vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

This presentation is a part of Intermedia Arts' Catalyst Series.

Opening reception sponsor: Bryant Lake Bowl.

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About Intermedia Arts | www.IntermediaArts.org

As Minnesota's premier multidisciplinary, multicultural arts center, Intermedia Arts builds understanding among people by catalyzing and inspiring artists and audiences to make changes in their lives and communities. We are a nationally recognized leader in empowering artists and community leaders to use arts-based approaches to solve community issues. From graffiti art to digital technology to performance art to spoken word, we work from the community up to unearth and enliven new and emerging artists and art forms while challenging and exploring the role of art in our lives. By stimulating civic dialogue and giving voice to the issues and experiences of underrepresented communities locally, nationally and internationally, we contribute to a stronger, healthier society.

About the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project (IARP) | <http://reconciliationproject.org>.

IARP supports reconciliation between Iraqis and Americans through art, education, health and cultural exchange programs. IARP provides opportunities for Iraqis and Americans to engage in artistic expression and dialogue around war and its consequences. Partnering with the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT) in Iraq, IARP also provides opportunities for Americans to directly support the basic needs of Iraqis through water, sanitation, and healthcare projects, and facilitates the sharing of expertise among Iraqi and American professionals to help rebuild a country devastated by war.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Three Iraqi Female Artists Coming to Minneapolis for *Not About Bombs* Artists' Talk and Reception on March 2

Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN (2/16/2012): The Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project (IARP) is pleased to announce that it will bring 3 Iraqi women artists from its *Not About Bombs* exhibit to Minneapolis for an Artists' Talk and Reception on March 2, 2012. The three artists are Dena Al-Adeeb, Sundus Abdul Hadi and Tamara Abdul Hadi, all of whom currently reside in North America. The free event will take place at 7:00 p.m. on March 2 at Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis. Curator Tricia Khutoretsky will host a discussion with the artists regarding their work, experiences, and perspectives on the current situation facing Iraqi women. There will also be time for audience questions and a reception with the artists.

Not About Bombs features contemporary work by Iraqi female artists. The exhibit opened on February 3 with more than 300 attending a reception at Intermedia Arts, and will run through March 3. Al-Adeeb, Abdul Hadi and Abdul Hadi will also participate in a session at the Nobel Peace Prize Forum at Augsburg College on March 3 with Minneapolis artist Camille Gage, "Illustrating the Cost of War: Artists Respond to a Decade of Conflict."

Sundus Abdul Hadi was born to Iraqi parents in the UAE in 1984 and raised in Montreal, Canada. As a painter and multi-media artist, Abdul Hadi works around the concepts of media representation and subverting existing images. Her work has been featured and exhibited in the UAE, Palestine, Iraq, Australia, Canada and the US, with solo shows of her multimedia series "Warchestra" held in Toronto and Ottawa.

Tamara Abdul Hadi, Sundus' sister, has worked for *Reuters* and the *New York Times* as a photojournalist and has also published in *The Guardian*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Financial Times*, to name a few. Alongside photojournalism, Abdul Hadi created and gave photography workshops in Lebanon and Palestine, with the goal of empowering women and children through creative arts. Abdul Hadi is a founding member of the photography collective *Rawiya*, which consists of 6 women photographers based in the Middle East.

Dena Al-Adeeb is an artist/scholar born in Baghdad, Iraq. Forced out of Iraq just before the Iraq/Iran War in 1980, she and her family escaped to Kuwait until the beginning of the 1991 Gulf War, when she was forced to relocate to San Francisco. Her work explores the mappings of imagined and real memories, architecture objects and cityscapes, and has been presented in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, Michigan, Sweden, Cairo, Dubai, and Tunisia.

In a review of the exhibit for *City Pages*, Sheila Regan writes, "In a stunning photograph by Tamara Abdul Hadi, titled *My Window*, seven female figures all in black veils stand in line to receive their monthly widow's pension. In Iraq, there are a million widows, the majority of whom have lost their husbands during the war. Hadi's stark, black-and-white image eloquently presents this reality. Like the



other Iraqi women artists featured in *Not About Bombs*, she offers an alternative viewpoint that shows how Iraqi women have survived in the aftermath of the violence." *Not About Bombs* builds on two previous exhibits presented by IARP, *The Art of Conflict* in 2010 and *Navigating the Aftermath* in 2011.

For more information or to inquire about interviews with the visiting artists, please contact:

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Exhibit sponsors include the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota, Saffron Restaurant and Lounge, Bibelot, Twin Cities Daily Planet, Minnesota Women's Press, and Bryant Lake Bowl.