Nada Shabout

306 words

**Haidar, Kadhim (1932-1985)**

Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Kadhim Haidar studied art at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad after receiving a degree in Arabic Studies from the Higher Institute for Teachers in 1953. Later, in 1961 and 1962, he pursed a BA in theater design and graphics at the Royal School of Art and Graphics in London. After his return from London, he taught at the Institute of Fine Arts in 1962 and the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 1968. He founded the Design Department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 1974 and chaired the Visual Arts Department there in 1981 and 1982. He was a contributing writer and a poet for various publications including *Al-Takhtit wal Elwan* (Sketching and Colors), which became a standard textbook at the Academy. Haidar’s work explored key political shifts in Iraq during the 1950s and 1960s through a re-imagination of popular religious symbolism that was seen in opposition to the new secular modern thought favored by his generation of artists, and thus had been absent from the work of modern Iraqi artists. His most noted series of work is *Melhamet al-Shahid* (The Martyr’s Epic), which is based on a poem he wrote in Baghdad in 1965. Through his negotiation of the martyrdom of the Prophet Mohammed’s grandson, al-Hussayn, at the battle of Karbala gained added significance for contemporary Iraqis within the turbulent political years of coup d’états and unsettled affairs.

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