

## Undesire

curated by:  
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cover: Dan Perjovschi, *grAFFITI*, 2003, drawing

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## Undesire

*Undesire* came on the heels of the so-called coalition forces' invasion of Iraq. The war prompted me to seek a different exhibition altogether; I was already extremely worried with the swift unrolling of the new USA masterplan following 9-11. It seemed that 9-11 was just an excuse to enforce part of a new world plan with the arms (usa), drugs (afghanistan) and oil (iraq) scheme.

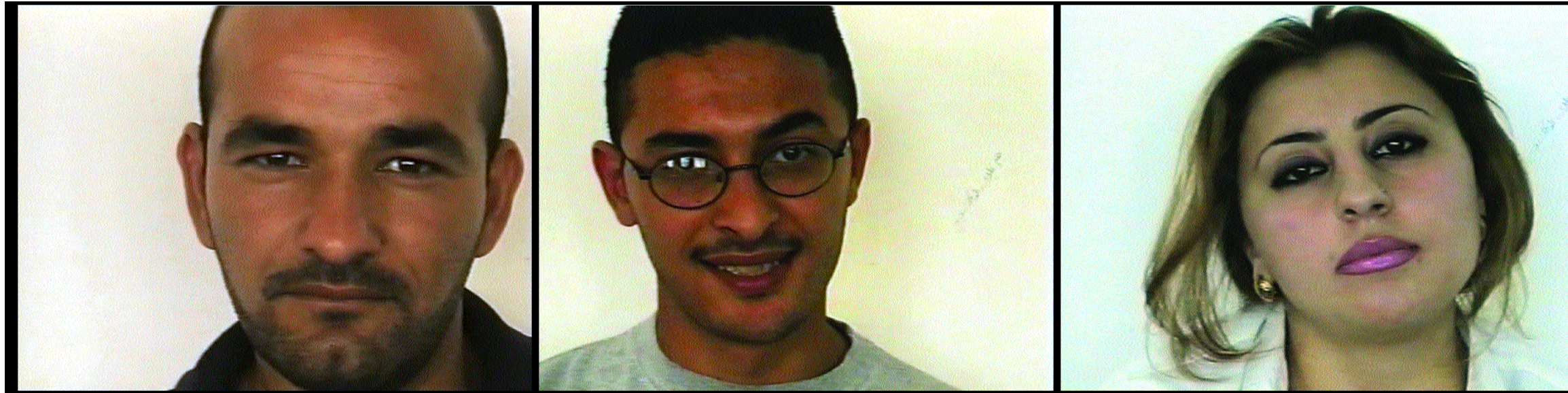
The United States, a country where I had spent many happy years, became uncanny. It was no longer a place I could recognize or want to visit again. I suspect the same would hold true for many people living in the USA or elsewhere. I am not the kind of person to give fast response to political situations, and I continue to live in a country that along with Israel is considered 'high on the list' in terms of the disregard of UN resolutions. I have never relied on contemporary art as a tool for directly

communicating political issues. Whatever can be reduced to language is often articulated more effectively and quickly through different media. Hence, *Undesire* as an exhibition is not about representation. It is not even political. I would rather pivot on a notion of proximity, that the exhibition feels close to your skin, closer than one would have liked, but it does not ask for empathy.

Fikret Atay lives close to the Iraqi Turkish border in a small city by the Tigris called Batman. Batman is a sad, oil-producing town with a phenomenally high suicide rate amongst women. The city has suffered under extraordinary security measures and



Fikret Atay, *Rebels*, 2003, video.



Phil Collins, *Baghdad Screentests*, 2002, DVD, 47 minutes

unaccounted murders for the last two decades. Imagine you are twenty years old, and the life you call normal is about living under many different guns, de facto curfews and an oppressive sense of tradition. The two low-tech real-time videos Atay has produced are of very young people. One is a kind of "war dance," a folkloric dance in what seems to be the corridor of a school, and the other is of two kids in a sort of strange local song-and-dance in the cabin of an automatic teller machine during the evening hours.

Phil Collins' video, *Baghdad Screen Tests*, is a muted travel log. The pro-

tagonists are often silent, as if to say: Why waste their time if there is no truth value ascribed to them, when even the BBC chooses no direct representation of the Iraqi populace? They may be who they are, but in the centuries-old construction of the orientalist subject in media representation, they merely become fiction. Months later, after this work was finished, the aggressive minority of the alleged coalition is busy bombing the hell out of this civilian "fiction" with "intelligent" bombs even while I write these lines.

Inci Eviner has made wallpaper for this project. The wallpaper resonates

at different levels. The wallpaper is something that conceals a place and turns it into a surface, and often covers up the poverty. Eviner's work recalls, as well, the eternal sunsets, the Alpine views, and the idyllic large landscape images used as "wallpaper" from the late 1960s and the 1970s. The images on them, however, invite a rethinking of the interior, almost holy for the various cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, as a site where conspiracy and terror, such as live bombs, can be designed intimately. In the eastern Mediterranean, the street is often thought of as a site that belongs to the colonizer, the state and an ascriptive modernity.

The home, to the contrary, is the flag-bearer of tradition, and the final border.

Dan Perjovschi works in the most efficient way possible. He makes simple and direct drawings with very brief texts that then travel across the web to any exhibition. He has created in the last few years a structure that has turned a fragile and disempowered situation into one of brilliant mobility and access. At **apexart**, they will be projected with the aid of a presentation program, and updated during the run of the exhibition responding to the changes in the international situation and the bloody war that I hope will end soon no matter who the victim may be.

Vasif Kortun ©4.13.2003

Inci Eviner, *Explosive Heart*, 2002, vinyl wallpaper

