



My Brother (Where are the Disappeared Saharaouis?) Mi Hermano (Donde estan los Saharaouis desaparecidos)

A project for ARTifariti 2010 by BETTINA SEMMER

Upon invitation of ARTifariti 2010, I conceived and executed a wall piece in Tifariti, in the liberated territories of Western Sahara, on the central wall of the building which served as venue for the Art and Human Rights encounter. The complex, constructed in Spanish style with arched arcades and a large court was formerly used as school, military quarters, and now again being used for the newly inaugurated Nomad School. A large tent - Haima - formed the central gathering point for ARTifariti,

The theme for the piece - The Disappeared Saharaouis - was suggested by curator Alonso Gil, whereas the site was chosen by the representative of Frente Polisario in Andalucia, Abidin Yama.

The technique, a mix of real fresco work with fresh lime and pigment, applied on a day-to-day basis, and "a secco" work with acrylics of the unaltered dirty white of the wall seemed to be the approach best suited for the given situation. With respect to the representational level, the difference between the fresco part - the tent, or Haima, with its inhabitants - and the secco part - the people protesting with the pictures of their disappeared family members - echoes the dichotomy between the private and the public sphere. At the same time these two spheres interlace in terms of imagery, scale and manner of representation: on the inside, one woman is describing and mourning her missing brother, on the outside, the shadow figures of women (and one man), as well as children, by way of their undefined faces, represent the total of the people suffering this situation, just like the empty picture frames represent the total of the disappeared, whose number up to now exceeds 500, according to AFAPREDESA, 200 of which are without photographic trace.