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| Artist | Marlene Dumas |
| Title | The woman of Algiers |
| Date | 2001 |
| Medium | Oil on canvas |
| Scale | 200 x 100 cm  |
| Scope | War or revolutions post 1850 |

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| Formal features |
| Composition | Cramped composition with cropping employed. There are figures either side of her holding her hands out of the way. The other figures are obscured because they don’t want to be recognised as being involved. |
| Colour or texture | Pale colours used for her body and darker colours used for the censor bars and the other figures clothing. Non-naturalistic colours are used. |
| Light & tone | Paler tones used on her figure, the background is also very dusky and pale. Although the black censor bars draw immediate attention to the painting. |
| Space & depth or relief | Although there is shadow it is still quite a flat image, it feels like an unsettling scene.  |
| Line or brushwork | Quite brash and unblended brushwork enhancing the cruelty of the situation.  |

Stylistic comment and artistic influence:

Influenced by a photo on the front of a newspaper in the 60s. Her face is censored or obscured proving that she could be any of the fighters. She is also wearing a Guerrilla fighter’s hat distinguishing which side she is on.

The title is borrowed from paintings by Renoir and Delacroix who both looked at the theme of women of non-European origin, albeit in an objectified manner.

Critical text quote:

"We struggle to expose and to hide the mistakes/horrors we keep on repeating."- Dumas

Influence from political factors:

This work was produced at the beginning of the Iraq war. The fact this work is called the woman of Algiers relates back to the 1960s war of Algerian independence as at the time France had colonised Algeria and the Algerians began fighting for their country back. The woman seen in the painting is one of the 'Guerrilla’ fighters these were non-official fighters who weren’t part of the army. Some of which were just young girls (much like the figure in the painting).

Non-naturalistic, bleached colour. Obscured facial expression showing the role of women within war. It’s unclear to the viewer whether she’s a victim of capture or a prisoner of war. But it’s clear that she is the property of those holding her.

Image:



Influence from cultural/social factors:

The painting is based on an actual photo from a newspaper where a young girl is held in the same pose, but it was taken in the 60s during the war between Algeria and France. It takes on new relevance for the Iraq war. (Algerian war of independence 1954-1962). The original photo shows her captors, suggesting she was a prisoner of war.